

Personal Narrative of the CO of Co A, 526
Armored Inf Bn (544) G-6-225 Capt. Irvine
①

Arrived at Stavelot at 0400, 18 December 1944. Picked up Major Solis and Lt Pehovic from Battalion Headquarters. Company and one platoon of TD parked on road on outskirts of Stavelot, while Major Solis, Lt Pehovic and myself went into town to get the situation from the Engineer Company that was in the town at the time. They had a road block across the river on the hill and it had been fired on and the men retreated back into town. I set up our CP in the Engineer Building near the bridge. At 0430 I sent the 2nd platoon and one section of TD's along Route #4 to the left to occupy the Engineer's road block. I sent the 3rd platoon at the same time along Route #4 to the right to establish a road block at the road junction. The 1st platoon positions around the CP for internal security. The Antitank platoon and TD platoon and TD platoon less one section of guns, was held in reserve to be used as the situation warranted.

At 0500 the 2nd and 3rd platoons engaged the enemy in force on the way to their objectives, and were forced to withdraw back across the bridge with a loss of 2 tracks of the 2nd platoon and some of their personnel. The 1st platoon was sent to take up positions near the bridge to cover the withdrawal of the 2nd and 3rd platoons. At 0600 the CP moved to the square by the church. The 2nd platoon was withdrawn and put in reserve and the 1st platoon occupied positions on the right side of the road near the bridge and the 3rd platoon went into position on the left side of the road near the bridge. One AT gun was dispatched to the bridge for antitank protection the TD platoon on the road near the covering the road leading from the river up the hill on the other side.

On or about 0800 two tanks were reported by the 2nd platoon moving down Route #4. The TD platoon engaged the enemy and knocked out one of them. The other tank continued to the bridge where it was taken under fire by S/Sgt Irvine with a bazooka and the tank continued across the bridge where it came under direct fire of the AT gun manned by Sgt Smith and Pfc Taylor. They fired point blank at the tank. The tank fired its 88 MM gun at them but was unable to depress its muzzle far enough to hit them. In the face of the approaching tank Sgt Smith and Pfc Taylor continued to fire at the tank until it threatened to overrun the gun and its machine gun forced them to abandon

the gun. At 0900 we radioed for reinforcements but we received no reply. At 0930 the OP withdrew to the high ground along route #3 and Major Solis gave the order to evacuate the town. Nine tracks left at that time. Some of the men were pinned down near the bridge and Lt. Evans was killed. Lt. Wheelwright organized the remaining men and withdrew up the street to the square where he passed through a group of men organized by Lt. Pehovic to hold until the rest of the men could be evacuated. Lt. Dougherty continued to fire at the tanks until a tank entered the street occupied by his gun and took him under direct fire. I ordered him to withdraw. Some of his men joined mine and we mounted up in two trucks and evacuated the town. Reinforcements arrived at 1230. Company "A", 526th Armd Inf Bn moved forward to high ground north of the town at 1230, to act as flank protection for the 117th Inf. We were relieved at 1700 and placed in mobile reserve. Bivouacked at the crossroads north of Stavelot at 1730. Drew rations and ammunition from the 117th Inf. The following day, 19 Dec 44, we moved back to the high ground Northwest of town. Lt Wheelwright had organized the remaining men into a platoon, and he was placed in command of the platoon. At 1700, the company moved into the line to fill the gap between A and C Company of the 1st Bn, 117th Inf. Established CP on high ground 1 1/2 miles north of Stavelot at 1730. Moved CP back 2 miles of Stavelot at 0700, 20 Dec 44. Attached to 1st Bn, 117th Inf. Lt Pehovic left the CP for Battalion Headquarters at 1105, 20 Dec 44. Relieved from line at 1115, 20 Dec 44 returned to bivouac area at 1210. Issued rations and ammunition, filled mussette bags with one blanket for each man. Issued entrenching shovels and returned to the line at 1300, 20 Dec 44. Established CP on high ground 1/4 mile north of Stavelot, north of railroad. Received rations, ammunition, and gas at 1400. Company went into defensive position in support of Company C, 1st Bn, 117th Inf. Under artillery and mortar fire. 21 Dec 44 still in support of Company C, 1st Bn, 117th Inf. Weather-cloudy and snow. Morale-good. 22Dec 44 on line with Company A, 1st Bn, 117th inf. Under artillery and mortar fire, morale-good; weather-cloudy. Two officers and 103 Em attached to 120th Inf at Malmedy and Stavelot. Lt. Wheelwright and Pfc Thompson and Pfc West blew up a foot bridge under enemy fire. 23 Dec 44 Company on line with Company A, 1st Bn, 117th Inf under enemy mortar and artillery fire. Snipers still

in the town and enemy plane strafed the town at 1600. Morale-good, weather-fair and cold. 24 Dec 44 Company in line with Company A, 1st Bn, 117th Inf and repelled two enemy counterattacks. Enemy planes appeared today and our own air force out in strength. Weather-clear and cold, morale-good. US Air Force bombed Malmedy and Capt Mitchell, 1st Sgt Lowry, Pfc Moonik, and Pvt Schottlaender were cut off by a bomb crater and had to spend the night at Service Company, 526th Armd Inf Bn. 25 Dec 44 Service Company, 526th Armd Inf Bn sent turkey sandwiches, coffee and cranberry sauce to the men on the line. Morale-good, weather-cold and clear. 26 Dec 44 Company still on the line of defense with Company A, 1st Bn, 117th Inf. US Air Force bombed Stavelot. One casualty, Pvt Shureck, minor wound in thigh. Organization pretty well accounted for now and up to the present has lost 2 halftracks, 16 EM wounded, 3 EM missing in action, 1 officer and 4 EM killed in action

*foregoing given to Capt. J. Ferriss, 4th
? + H., during interview held by Capt. Ferriss
+ CP of 526 Armored Inf Bn on 7 Jan '45*

*J. Ferriss
Capt., A US*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

HEADQUARTERS
526TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION
A.P.O. 655, U. S. ARMY

25 January 1945

Capt. Franklin Ferriss,
Historian, A.U.S.,
XIX Corps, U. S. Army

Dear Capt. Ferriss:

In checking my records I find that this Battalion with attached Co "A", 825th T.D. Bn., arrived in Malmedy on Monday morning 18 December 1944 at approximately 0200 hours and set up defensive positions immediately on the S., SE, and SW outskirts of the city.

It had been my understanding that this force was the first combat unit to arrive in Malmedy and was also the impression of the rest of the Staff. However, on investigation I find that Co "B", 99th Inf. Bn. (Force Melvin) did arrive at 2400. This company occupied positions around our roadblock #3 which was also covered by one platoon of our attached TD's. Officers and men of this TD Company state that when they went into position they saw nothing of Baker Company of the 99th and did not see them until later in the morning. I have been unable to find the exact time that B - 99th went into position, but from all indications it was after we had. Naturally, I can't be positive of this.


In the case of the six men with the AT gun squad their full names and serial numbers are as follows:

McCullum, Lilliard B.,	Pfc	35700539
Hollenbeck, Donald E.,	Cpl	39695978
Buchanan, Dallas N.,	Pvt	39463193
Higgins, James L.,	Pvt	39041885
Frazier, Francis H., Jr,	Pvt	39463289
Bicker, Ralph G.,	Pvt	39911648

All these men are from Co "B", this Battalion.

I sincerely hope this clears up the matter for you and if in the future I can be of any more help please feel free to call on me.

Yours very truly,


ROY E. BATTSON
Major, Infantry
S-3

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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ROY E. BATTSON
Major, Infantry
S-3

Headquarters,
526th Armored Infantry Battalion,
A.P.O. 655, U. S. Army.

[Distance which
526 A I Bn travelled
to get to Malmedy, where
it was committed. F.F.]

Dear Captain Ferriss:

Your letter came in while I was away and this is my first opportunity to answer.

The distance which you requested the information about was 42 kilometers. The location at the time orders were received was Harze which is 3 miles South of Aywaille on N 15. The companies were scattered over a large area. Company "B" was about 8 kilometers from the Battalion C.P. All companies were several miles apart at the time, each one in a chateau by themselves. Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company were together.

I'm very sorry that this is so late in reaching you and hope you haven't been inconvenienced by the delay. If there is any other information I can give you don't hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,


ROY E. BATTSON

Major, 526th A. I. Bn.

S - 3

DECLASSIFIED
Authority: NND-2357017

HEADQUARTERS
 1111TH ENGINEER COMBAT GROUP
 APO 230

2 January 1945

SUBJECT: Certificate of Circumstances Involving EM of the 526th A.I.B.

TO : Commanding Officer, 526th A. I. B., APO 655.

1. This is to certify that the following named enlisted men of Co "B", 526 A.I.B., did engage the enemy, who far outnumbered them, on the 18/23 Dec, 1944, under the circumstances narrated here:

a. Name	Rank	ASN	Present Status
Settlemyer	T/Sgt		Returned to organization
Smith, Albert	S/Sgt	34082797	" " "
Evin, E. G.	T/5	39329120	" " "
Burdine, E. R.	Pfc	35139106	" " "
Isaacs, Boyle	Pvt	35798443	" " "
Surdo, J. H.	Pvt	39288375	" " "
McCollum			Killed in action
Hollenbeck			" "
Buchanan			" "
Higgins			" "
Frazier			Missing in action
Bicker			" "

b. On 18 Dec. 1944, the above named enlisted men did establish a road block consisting of a string of mines and one (1) 57 mm gun in the vicinity of TROIS PONTS, BELGIUM. An enemy armored column was reported as approaching on N-23 from STAVELOT. [At approximately 1230 the first tanks approached and were stopped by Frazier and Bicker pulling a string of mines in front of the lead tank. Although there were eight (8) tanks visible, the above named enlisted men showed no panic and manned the 57 mm with the result of the lead tank being disabled and possibly the second one. A direct hit on the gun manned by McCollum, Hollenbeck, Buchanan and Higgins resulted in the gun being disabled and the gun crew killed. The remainder of these enlisted men escaped and joined elements of this unit assisting in operations against the enemy for the next few days.]

↑
 Mr Sgt C. J. A.

ROBERT N. JEWETT,
 Captain, CE.

la true copy:

F. Ferris,

Capt., AUS

Sgt. Lowell Jones, Interviewer
4th I. & R.

62-225
(3)

DEFENSE OF SPA GAS DUMP

(12 Jan 45)

1st Lt WALTER R BUTTS, JR

On Monday, 18 December 44, Hq Co, Ninth US ^{Armored} Army Group, received orders from ⁴ Col Lowell S. Love, Armored Section, First US Army, to take up defensive positions south of the gas dump in the vicinity of Spa and provide a radio security net for First Army. The company had never been in action.

Initially three company officers were in charge: Capt Olaf W. Christolpherson, CO; 1st Lt Walter R Butts, radio net officer, and 2d Lt Donald Miles, in charge of the assault guns. Equipment consisted of five half-tracks and three assault guns. The halftracks had their regular crews, each consisting of a driver, an assistant driver, and three radio men.

Initial reconnaissance of four proposed positions was carried out by the three officers in the morning, and it was evident that additional officers were needed. Capt Christolpherson and Lt Butts returned to Spa and First Army assigned two additional officers, Capt John L. Fellows and Capt James W Gooley.

The men had moved to their positions about 1000. The officers returned to the positions at ¹⁵³⁰ 0330.

Positions of the four road blocks follow:

1. North of Francorchamps at road junction 735087. Its defenses included three assault guns and one half track. Lt Miles was in charge of this block.

2. Near Baronheid at road junction 745104. This block was defended by a single half-track. Capt John L Fellows was in charge.

3. At road junction 679071. One half-track. Lt Butts was in charge. This was the block at which the action to be described took place.

4. On a hill above Stoment and just to the south of Mouthouet. Capt Gooley was in charge and had one half-track. One radio was at Spa to act as net control.

Before the officers returned from Spa, at ¹⁵⁰⁰~~0300~~, the men at road block three saw three P-47's fly over the valley to the south, and then saw German anti-aircraft in the valley open up on the planes, knocking down two of them. This was in the vicinity of Moulin du Rey. This was the first indication that the enemy were in the vicinity. Lt Butts and the other officers believed that the enemy was a considerable distance away, and that the blocks were simply security measures against individual enemy troops who might infiltrate behind the lines.

The enemy, however, was coming up the valley in force, apparently searching for a weak point. ~~He had no knowledge of the existence of the gas dump in the Spa area, because he never made a serious attempt to break through there.~~ Apparently he had no knowledge of the existence of the gas dump in the Spa area, because he never made a serious attempt to break through there. One column was sent against Lt Butts' position and was driven away. Later, another column was sent against Capt Gooley's position. The fight here was a much larger action, and again was driven back.

Also 3 J. The
about 1000 yds
to Spa, being
bombed by our AC

The significance of the small action fought by Lt Butts' little group, however, rested in what might have happened rather than in what actually did happen.

Lt Butts' road block was located on the southern edge of what is said to have been the largest gasoline dump on the continent. At least 4,000,000 gallons of gasoline were stored there, and the southernmost stacks were actually south of the road block. And for a short period, 1000 Monday 18 December to 1600 Tuesday, 19 December, the men on this block were the dump's only defenders. The ten-minute action fought by the men may have saved millions of gallons of gasoline.

At the end of the period, the 30th Inf Division came in with tanks, and reinforcements continued to arrive until a division was in position between the dump and the enemy. From Monday through Thursday, truckers hauled the gas back to a safer place, working 24 hours a day.

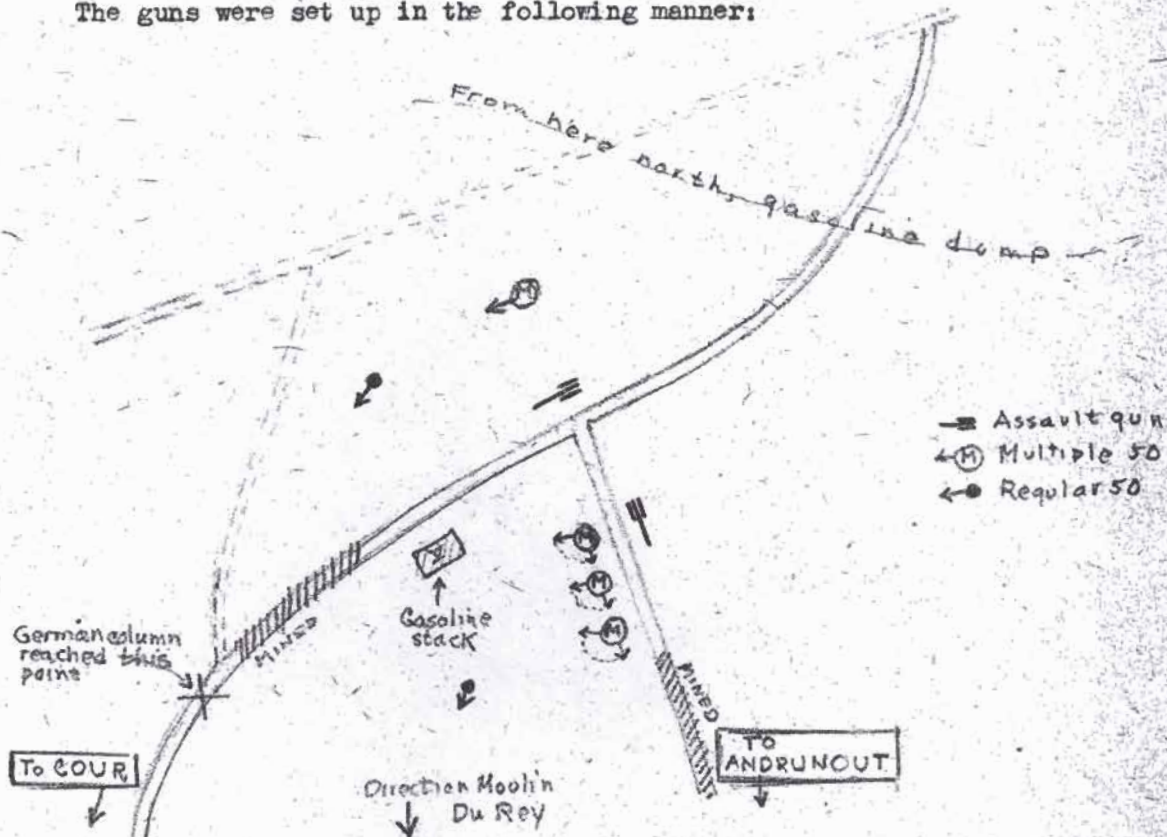
¹⁵⁰⁰
At 0900 Monday, Lt Butts returned to the road block, and the position of the track was changed. There was no immediate evidence of the enemy in the vicinity.

That night about 2030, the men began hearing tank engines turning over in the valley, and an immediate attempt was made to obtain reinforcements. At 2100, a gasoline company which was working in the dump sent out 16 men in a 2½-ton truck to help outpost. Patrols were sent out, and the roads were outposted. It was very foggy and there was practically no visibility.

About midnight, Col Love came to the road block, and Lt Butts asked for additional support. About 0400, the 110th AAA Bn sent in two 90-mm guns and four multiple 50-mm AA guns. A Capt _____ Rivers was in charge

of the detachment, but left the defense of the crossroads to Lt Butts while he took charge of the guns themselves.

The guns were set up in the following manner:



Lt Butts says, "It was simply a case of sweating out the night. We couldn't see anything, but we could hear the tanks every now and then. We just waited for something to happen, and thank God, nothing did."

About 1030 Tuesday morning, 19 December, Col Love returned. One of his reconnaissance men had reported a tank to the south of the roadblock. Lt Butts and a patrol ~~went down the road toward Cour to a hill overlooking Borgoumont. They saw an enemy tank (type unknown, probably a Panther) just outside of the town. The crew members were out of the tank and were working on it. They wore blue uniforms and leggings. They apparently had no security and no fear of any enemy in the vicinity.~~ went down the road toward Cour to a hill overlooking Borgoumont. They saw an enemy tank (type unknown, probably a Panther) just outside of the town. The crew members were out of the tank and were working on it. They wore blue uniforms and leggings. They apparently had no security and no fear of any enemy in the vicinity.

The patrol returned at 1130, and Lt Butts sent out foot patrols to cover southeast to southwest. One patrol set off to the southeast just before noon. The other was ready to set out at noon.

It was at noon that the detachment's only action took place.

A German column came up the road from from the west. It consisted of two armored cars, two trucks, ~~an~~ and two self-propelled 88's (with prime movers), and, according to townspeople, a tank. The tank was in the rear of the column and was not seen by any men in the detachment.

The men had orders not to fire on any enemy column until it actually got into the minefield, but Lt Butts believes the minefield was placed a bit too far to the ^{west} ~~east~~. The road curved ~~westward~~ and the idea was to place the field so that ~~the~~ enemy vehicles would hit it before they could stop. As it was, the enemy saw the mines too quickly and the column halted just around the bend and beyond the ~~range~~ line of fire of the 90 at the crossroads.

Two men got out of the leading German armored car and went up to the minefield. A member of the 110th, who was manning the multiple 50 furthest south, could see them through a clearing and had the best line of fire. Although he had been ordered not to fire until the order was given or until the column was within range of the 90, he opened up on the men. The column immediately returned the fire and killed the gunner.

That was the signal for everything to open up. The other multiple 50's sprayed the column, making a terrific racket. The men let go with small arms. The two ground-mount 50's joined in.

"Jerry must have thought he hit a regiment," Lt Butts said. "I don't know how much damage we did, we made a hell of a lot of noise. After ten minutes, the column pulled out. We just ~~the~~ let it go. We didn't have anything to follow up with, and there was nothing to do but sit there."

The enemy column returned down the road to the valley, and the men on the road block continued to patrol. At the time, there were about 100 men in all. There were no casualties except the man who opened fire. His name is not known.

About 1600, 400 men of the 30th Inf Div came through the block with a company of the 743d Tank Bn. These units moved into Cour, combing the woods as they went. Throughout this period, enemy tanks could be heard in the valley below.

The block was maintained until 1200 Thursday when the company was drawn back and relieved. During this time, a number of stragglers came in from the 202d Engineers at Stavelot.

(-6-223)
SECRET
Call Home

3 Jan. 1945

The following is a report of the action taken by TASK FORCE HANSEN in the vicinity of Malmedy.

Sunday Dec 17 at 1800 the 99th Inf Bn (Sep) - ("A") moved to Malmedy from Tilff for the propose of blocking the further advance of the Germans in that sector. Attached to this Bn was the 526 Armd. Infantry Bn and "B" Company of the 825 TD Bn to form Task Force Hansen.

Lt. Col. Hansen and Major Bjornstad proceeded ahead of the Bn and arrived in Malmedy at 2130. (By that time the town had been evacuated by all military personnel with exception of approximately sixty men of the 291 Engineer Bn under the Command of Lt. Col. Runkin. The engineers had established road blocks consisting of mines and were prepared to dynamite bridges and trees to further block the approaches to the town.)

[Because of the congested roads caused by the great quantity of personnel and materiel being evacuated from the threatened areas the progress of ~~the column~~ ^{both these battalions} toward Malmedy was ~~extremely~~ slow. ~~Company B~~ Company B, 99th Inf Bn, ~~(Sep)~~ took a sepearte route and arrived at the destination at approximately 2400. ^B The company immediately took up positions to the SW of town to block the roads and occupy the high ground commanding the approach to the town from the south. (3)

At 0300 Dec 18 the remainder of the Task Force - ("A") company arrived at the destination. Company "C" 99th Inf Bn (Sep) took positions to the NE to block the road from Eupen. "A" company 526 and one plat TD's was detached and proceeded to Stavelot. "B" company of 526 Armd Inf Bn and TD Guns blocked the approaches to the town from the SW.

"A" company 99th Inf Bn (Sep) which had been occupied on Guard duty around St. Hubert was assembled when alerted and at 0530 the 18th proceeded to Malmedy. The column arrived outside of Stavelot at 1030 and was unable to proceed through Stavelot so continued around the town and back into Spa and then proceeded to Malmedy arriving there at 1130.

On the 18th at 1645 three Germans with two American prisoners riding on the hood of a American jeep, taken from the 106 Div, approached the road block maintained by "B" company 99th Inf Bn (Sep) One of the Germans was shot trying to escape the others were taken prisoner. The PW's were from the 1st SS Div.

At 1830 one Bn of the 117 Regt and one Bn of 120 Regt arrived in town and went into position. At 2110 four parachutists were reported dropped one-half mile west of Malmedy.

SECRET

The afternoon of the 19th Dec. "B" company 99th Inf Bn (Sep) remained in position and the rest of the Bn withdrew one-half mile to the NW of Malmedy and went into position as 120 Regt. reserves.

On the 20th Dec. at 1700 "B" company captured two Germans on a Motorcycle, and killed two more approaching their positions.

On the 20 Dec. "B" company 99th Inf Bn (Sep) changed positions with "B" company 120 Inf Regt. (see Overlay) *3/99 was supported by 1 HMC platoon of 1st Sgt AI, which RO'd 1 J. MG nest &*

On the 21 Dec. at 0655 at Coord. 777037 on road block number 5 held by "B" company 99th Inf Bn (Sep), the enemy tried to break through with a column of armor and infantry. The column consisted of three American jeeps, one half track, one American M 8, one German Mark VI tank, two Sherman tanks. Three of the lead vehicles hit our mines and at the same time were fired upon by our 3" TD guns. Mortar and MG fire and all weapons of "B" company were placed on the vehicles and personnel. Artillery fire was concentrated along the entire column towards the rear. The attack was repulsed and about 100 enemy Infantry were killed by small arms fire and artillery. Three PW's were taken, two from the 1st Co. 11 para. Regt. and one from the 1st SS Div. Two jeeps and one M 8 were recovered in usable condition. Prisoners stated that they had Tiger and Panther Tanks as well as some American Equipment. Their mission was:

1. Destroy our artillery positions.
2. Destroy the road block they attacked.
3. Capture RR crossing SE of Malmedy.

At 0915 one platoon of "A" company 99th Inf Bn (Sep) was sent to investigate heavy small arms fire in the town of Burnenville. The remainder of the Bn was moved to comb the woods and the area West of Malmedy. No enemy was located in the area searched. By 1800 that evening the desposition of the Bn was as follows: "B" company in the same position it had originallz occupied SW of Malmedy.

"A" company in Burnenville, Hq Co. and "C" co, "D" co in the vic of 786046. Two 90mm Guns, 1 40mm AAA gun and two Quad 50 cal AAA guns all from the 110AAA Bn were also in this area. At this time one company - one platoon, of the 740 Med Tank Bn were attached to Task Force Hansen and remained in the Bn area. At 2110 Custer reported the possibility of a enemy airborne attack during the night and all personnel were alerted.

On Dec 27 at 1600 "C" company 99th Inf Bn (Sep) supported by artillery from the 230 FA Bn raided the town of Hedamont. One PW was taken from the 193 Regt. of 18th Volks Gren Div. An estimate of thirty enemy were killed during the raid.

On Dec. 29 at 1630 "B" company 99th Inf Bn (Sep) supported by

6-2-225
(5)

AWARD: Congressional Medal of Honor
NAME: Francis S. Currey
GRADE: Pfc
ASN: 12225906
ORGN: Co K 120th Inf
DATE: 21 December, 1944
LOCATION: Approximately 1½ miles from Malmedy, Belgium
TIME: 0430 to approximately 1700
WEATHER: Cold and Clear
VISIBILITY: Poor in early part of day but cleared up
ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS: Misty during early morning, but cleared up
MORALE: Friendly; Excellent; Enemy: Good
CASUALTIES: Friendly; 6 killed, 3 SWA, 11 LWA; Enemy: Heavy
STATUS AT TIME OF ACTION: BAR man
PRESENT STATUS: Same
This man received slight facial burns from backfire of bazooka during this action.

AWARD: Silver Star
NAME: Adam Lucero
GRADE: Pfc
ASN: 6572852
ORGN: Co K 120th Inf
This man was not wounded in this action.

R E S U M E

1 January 1945.

Private First Class Francis S Currey, while an enlisted man of the Army of the United States, in action involving actual conflict with the enemy, distinguished himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty. On 21 December 1944, at about 0430, Company K 120th Infantry was occupying defensive positions about a mile and a half southwest of Malmedy, Belgium, on the Warche River near the Malmedy-Stavelot road. It was a cold, misty morning and visibility was poor. The road was adjoined by two hills, of which one was only about 500 yards away. Because the enemy's positions were not known, it was necessary to establish a broad defense, covering a wide sector in this area. The third platoon of Company K was manning a strong point on the left flank of the company's position, which was also defended by two three-inch TD guns and two 57-mm antitank guns. At about 0430 a force of enemy tanks and infantry approached the strong point, led by an American M-36 tank, with American markings. Because of the poor visibility, as well as this more obvious method of deception, the enemy was able to advance within close distance of the positions before being observed. As the tank drove past him, Pfc Currey fired his BAR from his slit trench at the tank commander, who was looking out of the turret. The commander ducked into the tank in time and was not hit. At this time the tank was about 15 yards away from Pfc Currey and firing in the direction of the Company's CP. It was soon apparent that the enemy was attempting to overrun this strong point and swing northeast on the main road leading into the town of Malmedy. With the assistance of supporting machine guns in position on the hill, the tanks overran the antitank and TD guns and moved ahead toward the platoon's positions. One tank was able to move freely in the area, while five others gave supporting fire with machine guns and 88's. The third platoon continued to fire on the enemy with every weapon at its disposal but, after about six hours of fierce fighting, was pushed back and took up positions about 50 feet away in a paper factory. While the defense was being organized there, Pfc Currey found a bazooka in the building.

There was, however, no ammunition for it, so he went across the street, while under enemy observation and intense machine gun fire coming from tanks and an enemy-occupied house about 150 yards away, and took some rockets from a half track. He then recrossed the street, again braving intense enemy fire, and returned to the paper factory, a distance of 15 yards. He and Private First Class Adam Lucero then took the bazooka and, disregarding the continuous hail of enemy fire, sneaked around to the left of the building and took a about 75 yards away from the nearest tank. Although they had no cover and were in clear view of the enemy, Pfc Currey calmly loaded the bazooka and Pfc Lucero fired one round at the nearest tank, scoring a direct hit on the turret. The two men then returned to the paper factory, where Pfc Currey helped to give first aid treatment to three wounded men. He then went out again with Pfc Lucero and returned with their bazooka to the position from which they had fired on the tank. Realizing that it was not a good position from which to fire on the other tanks, they (also Gould) crossed the street, which was still being sprayed with intense small arms fire, and took up a position on the second floor of Company M's platoon CP (see diagram). From this point they observed three enemy tanks and a house, about 150 yards away, in which there were enemy tank men and infantry. Pfc Currey saw three enemy soldiers standing in the doorway of the house, and fired on them with his BAR, killing or wounding all of them. He then loaded the bazooka, and Pfc Lucero fired it at the house. The round fell short, and the enemy opened fire on the two men. They came downstairs, and Pfc Currey, taking more bazooka ammunition with them, went out alone with the bazooka. While subjected to intense enemy fire coming from both the tanks and the house, he crept to within 50 yards of the house. He was also within 20 yards of the three tanks, all of which were in a stationary position. Pfc Currey was then pinned down behind some coal cars by enemy fire. It was impossible for him to stand up to fire his bazooka without being hit, so he called back for assistance. Pfc Lucero and Gould laid a covering fire from the second floor of Company M's CP, and while he was doing this, Pfc Currey rose in full view of the enemy and fired his bazooka at the house, knocking down half the wall. He then noticed several men pinned down in a hole between the tanks and the house the enemy was occupying. These men had been pinned down in the hole the entire day and could not rise to get out of it without attracting enemy fire. Moreover, one of them was wounded, and, of course, could not be evacuated while the enemy had the group pinned down. Quickly sizing up the situation, Pfc Currey realized that the men could not leave the hole until fire from both the tanks and the house was stopped. [He ran across the street to a half track, where he procured an armful of antitank grenades. Then, while still subjected to intense enemy fire, he moved around to various positions until he found a satisfactory one from which to fire on the tanks. He then fired on the enemy tanks, forcing their occupants to leave them and run for the house. He made his way about 15 yards under heavy small arms fire coming from the house to a half track. He climbed on the vehicle and fired a 50 caliber machine gun at the house. While doing this he was in full view of the enemy only about 150 yards away. He soon realized, however, that his fire was not having the desired effect. He therefore ran 30 yards to a heavy 30 caliber machine gun, about 10 yards from the Company M CP. The crew of this gun had been killed, and the gun itself was jammed. Pfc Currey swung it around and put it into action, firing on the house occupied by the Germans. Under cover of this fire, the men in the hole were able to withdraw.] Pfc Currey then left the machine gun and once again crossed the road under intense enemy fire, to the paper mill. There he assisted in the evacuation of five wounded men on two jeeps. He himself rode on one jeep, holding a litter on it. The jeep went down the road and across the bridge over the Warche River, while in clear view of the enemy. During this action Pfc Currey, while exposing himself to extreme hazards, assisted in knocking out or neutralizing the bulk of the enemy's armored force as well as accounting for numerous enemy casualties. His gallant action, which was above and beyond the call of duty, was in large part responsible for the failure of the enemy to reach and capture Malmedy. In acting as he did he not

only displayed amazing disregard for personal safety, but also a keen knowledge of the weapons and tactics of the infantry soldier. He was not wounded during this action, although he did receive slight facial burns caused by bazooka backfire.

24 December 1944.

SUBJECT: Enemy vehicles knocked out or captured during present operation.

TO :

1. Enemy vehicles knocked out from 588045 to 655033.

- 1 Sherman Tank
- 8 MK V Tanks
- 1 MK IV Tank
- 3 Flack Wagons
- 1 75mm AT Gun
- 1 U.S. Half Track
- 3 U.S. Jeeps

2. Enemy vehicles captured or knocked out from 655033 to and including LA GLEIZE area.

- 6 MK IV Tanks
- 15 MK V "
- 7 MK VI "
- 70 Half Tracks
- 4 Amphibious Jeeps
- 8 Armored Cars
- 3 2¹/₂ ton Trucks
- 1 Red Cross Ambulance
- 1 Half Track Motorcycle
- 3 Half Track Ambulances
- 6 American 1/4 ton Trucks
- 4 Flack Wagons
- 6 SP Howitzer 150 or 170mm
- 2 75mm Assault Guns
- 5 20mm AA Guns
- 6 120mm Mortars
- 6 75mm or 80mm AT Guns

3. Totals:

a. Tanks.

U.S. Sherman .	1
MK VI's	8
MK V's	23
MK IV's	7
Total:	39

b. Half Tracks:

70

c. Miscellaneous Vehicles:

30

d. Guns:

33

Grand Total:

172

Oscar S. Stonesifer

OSCAR S. STONESIFER

Major

Infantry

~~SECRET~~

HEADQUARTERS XIX CORPS
Office of G-2
APO 270

* Secret *
* Auth: G-2 XIX Corps *
* Date: 30 Dec 44 *
* Init: gjh *

GL-725

G-2 PERIODIC REPORT

8

From: 300001A Dec 44
To : 302400A Dec 44

See Annex # 2

No. 198

Maps: No change

1. ENEMY SITUATION AT END OF PERIOD

a. Enemy Front Lines

No change

b. Units in Contact

The 47th VG Div has an NCO school at SCHAVEN F2425. The school operates 3 classes at one time, each class lasts 3 weeks and graduates between 20-25 NCOs. This same school is used to convert GAF NCOs into Inf NCOs. The school for GAF NCOs is 3 weeks long and graduates 10 men at the end of each session.

The 353rd Inf Div appears to be in process of refitting while still occupying a sector in the line. The first group of replacements for 353rd Inf Div were from 801 March Bn on 19 Dec 44. PWs captured 24th and 25th Dec 44 state that 1,000 replacements arrived via WINDEN 21 Dec but had not been assigned on 23rd Dec. This coupled with report that 942 Regt, 353rd Div was being reorganized at KELZ F1941 is a good indication that this refitting is now in effect.

PWs from 352nd Regt, 246th VG Div captured in V Corps sector indicate that 272nd Inf Div has returned to its old sector, which was in the ROLLESBROICH - KESTERNICH area. PW captured at approx 2230A hours by 78th Inf Div at K999277 identified as 2nd Co, 982nd Regt, 272nd Div substantiates this statement.

c. Artillery

Thirty-eight shellreps received at Corps FOC.
Two new enemy battery locations reported.
Fourteen new suspected enemy battery locations reported.
Fifty counterbattery missions fired by Corps Arty.

d. Reserves and Other Forces Capable of Intervention

With the identification of elms of 59th Inf Div on XIII Corps front, and the 167th VG Div on Third US Army front, two divisions previously considered as an enemy reserve can now be dropped from the list.

It is possible that 59th Inf Div relieved 340th VG Div in XIII Corps sector. However, it is also possible that the 340th VG Div is occupying a sector from JULICH to TETZ.

Of the Pz Divs, the 10 SS Pz Div, 21 Pz Div, 3 SS Pz Div, 17 SS Pz Gren Div, and 11 Pz Div are reported out of contact.

It is believed that 6th SS Mtn Div will be ready to move from Denmark after 1 Jan 45. ~~There is no definite information as to where it will move.~~

B

Reports continue to be received stating that 6th Pz Div and 7th Pz Div are W of the RHINE. Although it is not known that these Pz Divs are definitely in the W, the reports of armor in the area NE of DUREN and the GEMUND-SCHLEIDEN area would indicate the presence of at least one unidentified Pz Div in the area.

2. ENEMY OPERATIONS DURING PERIOD

a. General Summary

104th Inf Div - Early in the morning about 50 enemy attempted to cross the

river N of BUREN but were driven back by small arms and machine gun fire. During the remainder of the period light sporadic arty and mortar fire was reported in vic front lines.

8th Inf Div - Arty fire was generally light, however sporadic heavy shelling was reported at BERGSTEIN and BRANDENBURG. Foot bridge at F115405 was destroyed. Our OPs reported small groups of enemy moving around in SCHMIDT - KOMMERSCHIEDT area.

78th Inf Div - At 0300A hours an enemy patrol of 10 men was seen near bridge upstream from the SCHMIDT dam. Our small arms fire drove this patrol back to the enemy lines. OPs report some vehicular movement on road S of DREIBORN. Arty fire light to moderate with the bulk of the fire falling in LAMBERSDORF.

b. Operations of Component Elements

(1) Artillery - Light throughout the period with the bulk of fires reported falling in zone of 8th Inf Div. Fires were harassing in nature falling in vic front lines.

(2) Aviation - No enemy aircraft over Corps sector during the period.

(3) Armor - An arty OP reported 5 heavy enemy tanks moving SW at F14202790 observed at 0828A hours.

3. MISCELLANEOUS

a. Weather 302300A to 312300A Dec 44

Low overcast with light fog tonight and early tomorrow morning. Overcast breaking and fog dissipating in late morning. Broken clouds with haze tomorrow afternoon. Overcast again tomorrow evening.

b. Report From First US Army and Third US Army Fronts

2. First US Army - 10th PGR of 9th Pz Div has pulled out of ROCHFORT F2077. Our troops are in N part of the town, and have only ~~encountered slight~~ resistance.

A PW deserter ^{who} taken at F4587 was an orderly at Div Hq 12 SS Pz Div. He states he attended a conference held by ~~SNIP DIETRICH~~ SE of LAROCHE ~~at~~ at which the General stated that attack objective LIEGE would be made with main axis between HOTTON ~~3107~~ and GRANDMENT ~~5290~~. Also overheard at Div Hq that attack would be made by 1 SS, and 12 SS followed by 2 SS and 10 SS, 9 SS and 17 SS Divs, Grossdeutschland Brigade and Battle Group Degrelle.

Remainder of front quiet.

3. Third US Army - Report received of a counterattack at LUTERBOIS ~~9503~~ at 0500A hours ~~this morning~~. Strength was estimated as a bn of inf and a bn of tanks. Heavy fighting has been going on all day ^{and with very heavy} and 25 enemy tanks ~~are claimed to have been~~ knocked out. Two small counterattacks by inf and a few tanks ~~in the~~ ^{W of BASTOGNE}. Another report received of the identification of the 1st Bn, 33rd Regt, 167th VG Div and the reidentification of 15th Para Regt of 5th Para Div today. Heavy resistance is being met at ~~2600A~~. ~~952 VG Div reported out of contact for 4 or 5 days.~~ It is thought that they are reforming and refitting. 3rd FG Div arrived ~~in the~~ ^{W of} BASTOGNE area ~~this morning~~ and attacked immediately. Time of attack was 0630A hours ^(yesterday).

4. ENEMY CAPABILITIES

No change.

SE of WILTZ

2 Incls.

Annex #1 - Consolidated Corps PW Report

Annex #2 - Observations of an American Field Officer

Who Escaped From the 1st SS Pz Div

"Adolf Hitler"

George F Graybill
Major, GSC
WASHINGTON PLATT
Colonel, GSC

G-2

Annex #1 to
Periodic Report #198

CONSOLIDATED CORPS PW REPORT FROM 282400 TO 292400

- Total PWs reported from cages of Corps units for the period: 5.
- Breakdown of PWs according to units of origin:

Div	No. of PWs	Regiment or Separate Unit	No. of PWs	Capturing Unit
29	3	1056 Regt, Medics	3	8th Inf Div
?		Marsch Bn z.b.V. 2nd Co	1	" " "
?		CT KREIFEL	1	113th Cav Gp

- Breakdown of PWs according to capturing units follows:

113th Cav Gp	1
104th Inf Div	0
78th Inf Div	0
8th Inf Div	4
	5

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| Total PWs reported through 282400 Dec | 41,085 |
| PW from 104th Inf Div not incl previously
(559th AT Bn, Supply Co) (Straggler) | 1 |
| Total PWs reported from Div cages 29 Dec | 5 |
| Total PWs reported through 292400 Dec | <u>41,091</u> |

IPW TEAM #39

* * * * *

Start
Annex #2 to
Periodic Report #198

OBSERVATIONS OF AN AMERICAN FIELD OFFICER WHO ESCAPED FROM
THE 1st SS PANZER DIVISION "ADOLF HITLER".

The following is an account, in his own words, of the experiences of Major Hal. D. McGown, Commanding Officer of the 2nd Bn, 119 Inf, 30th Inf Div who was captured by the armored spearhead Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler in the vicinity of Stoumont on 21 December 1944:

On the afternoon of 21 Dec about 1600, I, my radio operator and orderly were captured by a German patrol which had us covered from all sides in a trap; a machine gun fired over our head and individuals from another patrol closed in on us from three directions. At that time I was moving away from the front lines where I had inspected the front line positions of my battalion which was flanking STOU MONT from the German's rear. I was taken back to the German CP at STOU MONT and as I passed through the town observed preparations everywhere for departure among the Germans. The German commander later told me that it was the appearance of my troops on his rear in STOU MONT that caused him to evacuate the town that night. I was taken back to the main headquarters at LA GLEIZE passing through several areas where fire fights were going on between my men and the surrounding Germans. Knowing my own plans for the capture of STOU MONT were put into effect at that time I was halfway expectant to be recaptured before I reached LA GLEIZE. This was not the case, however. In LA GLEIZE I was taken to the cellar containing the commander of the German troops whose name I later found out was Lt Col Foedar Pieper, 1st Regt, 1st Panzer SS Adolf Hitler Division. An interpreter (Joseph Becker) who had spent 16 years in Chicago, USA, served as interpreter. I later found out that the majority of German officers spoke English fairly well. The Colonel spent a few minutes trying to get tactical information from me but seeing the attempt was worthless, sent me away again. I was then taken to a cellar containing a German 2nd Lt and several high-ranking NCO's; they were dressed very faultlessly in their black Panther uniforms, each with several decorations. I mentally noted at the

time that this would probably turn out to be one of their "bluff" attempts to get information. All of the added effects were there, - I was placed in a chair apart from the other occupants of the cellar where the light of a small electric bulb would fall mainly upon my face leaving the rest of the room in semi-darkness. One of the DPO's drew his luger, examined his clip, reloaded the weapon and laid it on the table in front of him. It was with difficulty that I managed to suppress a smile at these obviously studied and rehearsed preparations in a place so identical with what intelligence officers back in the States teach our troops to expect when in the hands of the enemy. The only distracting feature to an otherwise perfect setting, as far as they were concerned, was the frequent crashing of an American artillery concentration sometimes quite uncomfortably close. The next thirty minutes was spent in an attempt to extract from me the information I had refused to give the commander earlier that afternoon. I was surprised to see that as my failure to respond to their threatenings continued, they grew no angrier but instead seemed to lose interest in the procedure. Finally I was taken to another cellar where a warrant officer searched me thoroughly taking my flashlight and knife but leaving me my wrist watch, ring, a little food I was carrying, and my personal papers. I was conducted to a very small cellar which contained four other American officers, all Lieutenants of my own Regiment. We exchanged information about our present situation.

During the entire time I was in this town I gathered all the information I could from other captives as well as German officers and men (who talked to a surprising degree) about the strength, disposition and condition of the Germans in that area. The Germans in the LA GLEIZE pocket were part of the 1st Panzer SS Division Adolf Hitler. Lt Col Pieper - normally a regimental commander - commanded this column which consisted of more than his normal command. (I learned later that the LA GLEIZE pocket consisted of only a portion of his column, a considerable portion being near STAVELOT, the remainder near TROIS PONTS and further back on the route of the breakthrough.)

(Initial order to Col Pieper contained the information that he could not expect supplies from the rear during the attack, that he would capture both gas and food for subsistence.) Extra ammunition was carried and strict orders against wastage of ammunition was emphasized.

I did my best to determine the objectives of this unit and gained from several sources among the German officers and men that this Division would be the first element in LIEGE and MAASTRICHT. Col Pieper questioned me fruitlessly several times about road and bridge conditions in the MAASTRICHT area.

An amazing fact to me was the youth of the members of this organization. the bulk of the enlisted men were either 18 or 19 years of age recently recruited but from my observations thoroughly trained. There was a good sprinkling of both Privates and NCO's from the years of Russian fighting. The officers for the most part were veterans but were also very young. Col Pieper was 29 years old, his tank battalion commander was 30; his captains and lieutenants ran from 19 years to 27 years of age. The morale was high throughout the entire period I was with them despite the extremely trying conditions. The discipline was very good. The noise discipline on the night movements -- which I will mention later -- was so perfect that I could hardly believe that they could accomplish it. The physical condition of all personnel was good, except for a lack of proper food which was apparent more strongly just before I escaped from the unit. The equipment was good and complete with the exception of some reconditioned half-tracks among the motorized equipment. All men were practically new boots and had adequate clothing. Some of them wore parts of American uniforms, mainly the knit cap, gloves, sweaters, overshoes, and one or two overcoats. I saw no one, however, in American uniforms or in civilian clothes. The relationship between the officers and men, particularly the commanding officer - Col Pieper, was closer and friendly than I would have expected. On several occasions Col Pieper visited his wounded and many times I saw him give a slap of encouragement on the back of heavily loaded men as we were climbing the steep hills and speak a couple of cheering words.

Later on during the night of 21 Dec at approximately 2300 I was again taken to the cellar headquarters of Col Pieper. I found him in a very much different mood than the cold impersonal attitude which he used formerly. He and I talked together from 2300 until 0500 the next morning, - our subject being mainly his defense of Nazism and why Germany was fighting. I have met few men who impressed me in as short a space of time as did this German officer. He was approximately 5 ft 8 inches in height, 160 lbs in weight, long dark hair combed straight back, straight well-shaped

with remarkable facial resemblance to the actor, Ray Milland. He is the holder of the iron cross with oak leaves and had fought in Russia for a long period of time and briefly at MORTAIN and CAEN. He was completely confident of Germany's ability to whip the Allies. He spoke of Hitler's new reserve army quite at length saying that it contained so many new divisions, both armored and otherwise, that our G-2's would wonder where they all came from. He did his best to find out from me of the success V-1 and V-2 were having and told me that more secret weapons like those would be unlocked. He said a new submarine campaign is also opening up and that they had been told that there had been considerable tonnage sunk in the English Channel just recently by the new underwater attack. The German Air Force, he said, would now come forth with many new types and which - although inferior in number to the Allies - would be superior in quality and would suffice their needs to cover their breakthrough in BELGIUM and HOLLAND and later to the French coast. Concerning treatment of prisoners by the SS, I can state that at no time were the prisoners of this organization mistreated. Food was scarce but it was nearly as good as that used by the Germans themselves. The American prisoners were always given cellar space to protect them from the exceedingly heavy American artillery barrages. I was taken for a brief period to the main prisoner inclosure which was a large two-room, well constructed cellar quite superior to any I saw in LA GLEIZE. The men were considerably overcrowded and were allowing the guards to bully them a little. I organized the entire group of some 130 into sections, appointed a First Sgt and laid down a few rules concerning rotation sleeping, urinating, equality and distribution of food and got the German warrant officer in charge of the prisoners settled upon a fairer method of giving water to prisoners and providing ventilation.

I was taken back the morning of 22 Dec and again placed in the small cellar with the four other American officers. All that day American artillery pounded the town incessantly, even the guard detachment - consisting of 5 Germans - came down into our cellar with us which was heavily overcrowding the tiny room. In the afternoon a 105 shell made a direct hit on the wall of our cellar throwing the German sitting beside me half-way across the room. A hole approximately 2 1/2 ft in diameter was knocked in the wall. Lt Henley and Lt Youmans of my Regiment helped pull the German out from under the rubble and got him on the floor of the undamaged part of the cellar. Within a few minutes another shell landed a few feet outside the hole in the cellar wall and shrapnel and stones flew through the room. Lt Henley was killed instantly and three Germans were wounded. One of the Germans died within about thirty minutes. We administered first aid as well as we could. For several hours then the shelling continued without appreciable let-up and the dead and wounded together with those who were unhurt were cramped close together in the unharmed half of the small cellar.

Late in the afternoon parties of American enlisted men came to the cellar and removed the dead and wounded; the litter bearers told me that German casualties had been heavy throughout the town.

(Late in the afternoon of 23 Dec I was called once more to Col Pieper's headquarters. He told me that he had received orders from the commanding general to give up his position and withdraw to the East to the nearest German troops. He said that he knew it to be impossible to save any of his vehicles, - that it would have to be a foot withdrawal.) His immediate concern was what to do with the American prisoners of which he had nearly 150 as well as his own wounded. He dictated to me a plan of exchange whereby he would leave all American prisoners under the command of the senior PW, a Captain, to be turned over to the American commander as the Americans entered the town the next day. He said that his wounded would also be left in the cellars of LA GLEIZE and that he would leave a German medical officer in charge of them. He had previously left a considerable number of wounded in the chateau at STOUICNT which had already been captured by Americans. In exchange for the American prisoners, all German wounded would be turned over to the 1st SS Pz Div wherever they might be when the wounded were assembled. I would then be released back to the American lines as I would be the only prisoner retained during the foot movement of the Germans East from LA GLEIZE. I told Col Pieper that I could not give him any assurance that the exchange would be carried out as it was a matter for higher headquarters. He said that he fully understood and all of the plan concerning the American prisoners was carried out as already stated.

(All during the night of 23-24 Dec plans were laid for the evacuation of LA GLEIZE. At 0300 24 Dec the foot column began to move: Col Pieper and I moved immediately behind the point, the remainder of his depleted regiment following in single file. Col Pieper told me that he had 800 men to evacuate. I later watched the column pass three separate times and this number was correct) according to my

We crossed the L'AMBLEVE river near LA GLEIZE on a small highway bridge immediately underneath the railroad bridge and moved generally South climbing higher and higher on the ridge line. At 0500 we heard the first tank blow up and inside of thirty minutes the entire area formerly occupied by Col Pieper's command was a sea of fiercely burning vehicles, the work of the small detachment he had left behind to complete destruction of all of his equipment. He told me later that there were a few vehicles he had not destroyed. I could not ascertain the exact reason why.

The foot column was closed into a thickly wooded slope on a very high hill. Col Pieper, his staff and myself with my two guards spent all day of the 24th reconnoitering for a route to rejoin other German forces. No food was available at any time after we left LA GLEIZE; the only subsistence I received was four small pieces of dried biscuit and two swallows of cognac which one of the junior officers gave me. The German regimental surgeon later gave me one piece of Charms candy, the sugar of which did me lots of good during the later long march. At 1700, just before dark, the column started moving again on the selected route; we pushed down into a valley in single column with a heavily armed point out ahead. (The noise made by the entire 800-man group was so little that I believe we could have passed within 200 yards of an outpost without detection.) As the point neared the base of the hill I could hear quite clearly an American voice call out "Halt! Who is there?" The challenge was repeated three times, then the American sentry fired three shots. A moment later the order came along for the column to turn around and move back up the hill. The entire column was half-way back up the hillside in a very few minutes. A German passed by me limping who was undoubtedly leading the point as he had just received a bullet through the leg. The Col spoke briefly to him but would not permit the medics to put on a dressing; he fell in the column and continued moving on without first aid. The point moved along the side of the hill for a distance of a half mile, then again turned down into the valley, this time passing through undetected through the valley and the paved road which ran along the base. Several American vehicles "chopped" the column but at no time was its presence detected. The entire 800 men were closed into the trees on the other side of the valley in an amazingly short period of time. I could tell then that Col Pieper was basing his direction of movement on the explosion of American artillery fire as the probable location of his friendly forces. His information as to the present front lines of both sides was as meager as my own as he had no radio and no other outside contact. He continuously consulted his map, thus proving that he was quite thoroughly lost. We continued moving from that time on continuously up and down the rugged hills, crossing small streams, pushing through thick undergrowth and staying off and away from roads and villages. At around 2200 Col Pieper, his Executive, and his S-3 disappeared from the forward command group. I and my two guards were placed in charge of the regimental surgeon whose familiar Red Cross bundle on his back made it easy for me to walk behind. I tried in vain to find out where Col Pieper went; one friendly enlisted man of Col Pieper's headquarters told me that Col Pieper was very much tired out and I believe that he and a few selected members of his staff must have holed up in some isolated house for food and rest, - to be sent for from the main body after they had located friendly forces. The change of command of the unit also wrought a change in method of handling the men. A young Captain in charge of the leading company operated very close to me and my knowledge of Latin as well as the German I had picked up enabled me to understand to some degree practically every order he issued. I heard him tell my guards to shoot me if I showed the slightest intention of escaping, particularly when we neared Americans; whereas Col Pieper had given a rest "break" every hour or so, there were no "breaks" given under the new command from that time until I escaped. The country we now were passing through was the most rugged we had yet encountered. All of the officers were continuously exhorting the men to greater effort and to laugh at weakness. I was not carrying anything except my canteen, which was empty, but know from my own physical reaction how tired the men with heavy weapons load must have been.

I heard repeated again and again the warning that if any man fell behind the tail of the column he would be shot. I saw some men crawling on hands and knees. I saw others who were wounded but who were being supported by comrades on either side up the steep slopes; there were fully two dozen wounded in the column, the majority of whom were going along quite well by themselves. There was one Captain who was rather severely wounded, the Col had told me, who moved along supported by another officer and a medical NCO and was still with the unit the last I saw of him.

We approached very close to where artillery fire was landing and the point pushed into American lines three times and turned back. I believe the Germans had several killed in these attempts. Finally the commander decided to swing over the ridge and come down in the next valley and try to reach their lines. I was

firmly convinced by this time that they did not know where they were on the map as there were continuous arguments from among the junior officers as they held their conferences. At around midnight the condition of the men was such that a halt would have to be given as well as warmth and food provided. I heard the Captain say that he would attempt to locate a small village where the unit could hole up for the rest of the night. At approximately 0100 I believe I heard word come back that a small town was to the front which would suffice. At this time I was not forward near the point, - my guards held me back near the position which was occupied by the covering force between the village and the west, - that is to say, towards the American rear.

The outpost had already moved into position before firing broke out not very far from where I was standing. My guards and I hit the ground, tracer bullets flashed all around us and we could hear the machine gun bullets cutting the trees very close over us. The American unit, which I later found out was a company, drove forward again to clear what it obviously thought was a stray patrol, this time using mortar fire as well. The mortar fire fell all around on the German position. I do not know if my guards were injured or not - shrapnel cut the trees all around us. The American machine gun and rifle fire was very superior to that of the covering force. I could hear commands being shouted in both German and English with the latter predominating. There was considerable movement around me in the darkness. I lay still for some timewaiting for one of my guards to give me a command. After some time I arose cautiously and began to move at right angles from the direction of the American attack watching carefully to my rear to see if anyone was covering me or following me. After moving approximately 100 yards I turned and moved directly toward the direction from which the American attack had come. I can remember that I whistled some American tune but I have forgotten which one it was. I had not gone over 200 yards before I was challenged by an American outpost of the 82nd Airborne Division.

I was taken successively from their Battalion CP to the 82nd Airborne Div CP to VIII Corps CP; then back to my own Division CP from whence I rejoined my unit.
(Source: FUSA Periodic Report #201)

STOP



HEADQUARTERS 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION

GENERAL ORDER:

APC #30

6 January 1945

NUMBER 6 :

26-225
⑦

Award of Silver Star-----
Award of Bronze Star-----

SECTION

I

II

I--AWARD OF SILVER STAR -- Under the provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943, and pursuant to authority contained in paragraph 4, Section I, Circular 66, Headquarters First United States Army, 18 May 1944, the Silver Star is awarded to the following officers and enlisted men:

First Lieutenant David Oglensky, 01016415, Cavalry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for gallantry in action on 20 December 1944, in Belgium. Lieutenant Oglensky distinguished himself by leading a platoon of tanks in an attack against the enemy. His tank was hit to such an extent that his gun was put out of action. After evacuating the crew, he reentered the tank and placed it across the road as a block. Taking over command of the tank immediately behind this roadblock, he continued to fire at the enemy until the second tank was also knocked out of action by enemy fire. The inspiring fortitude, courage, and outstanding devotion to duty demonstrated by Lieutenant Oglensky reflect great credit on himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the Armed Forces. Entered military service from New Jersey.

Second Lieutenant John E. Callaway, 01017628, Cavalry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for gallantry in action on 20 December 1944, in Belgium. As Lieutenant Callaway was leading his platoon into the attack, he had just rounded a curve in the road when he came face to face with a German Panther tank. With speed and accuracy, he was able to deliver the first shot, which struck the enemy tank and stopped its advance. He quickly fired two more shots into the tank and set it afire. At this point, Lieutenant Callaway's gun jammed. Undaunted by the heavy fire falling in the area, he left his tank and took command of the one directly behind him and continued in the advance. The splendid display of courage, tactical skill, and fortitude demonstrated in this engagement are worthy of high praise and recognition. Entered military service from Delaware.

Second Lieutenant Charles B. Powers, 01016503, Cavalry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for gallantry in action on 22 December 1944, in Belgium. During an attack on an enemy held chateau, Lieutenant Powers commanded one of the four tanks that had been brought up to engage the enemy. Although subjected to direct anti-tank fire, Lieutenant Powers advanced his tank around the right flank of the chateau where he engaged a German Panther tank at one hundred yards. He was successful in destroying the enemy tank and also placed such withering fire on the enemy position that a number of trapped friendly infantrymen were able to escape under cover of his fire. The bravery and fortitude displayed by Lieutenant Powers on this occasion are deserving of high praise and reflect great credit on himself. Entered military service from Illinois. Co C

Staff Sergeant Charlie W. Loopey, 38400022, Infantry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for gallantry in action on 22 December 1944, in Belgium. During an attack against the enemy, Sergeant Loopey courageously and aggressively moved his tank into position near a building occupied by the enemy and despite heavy hostile fire being directed against the tank, remained in the turret directing the firing until the enemy positions were neutralized. During the action, the vehicle was hit three times, but Sergeant Loopey remained in the exposed position in order to direct more effective fire. Entered military service from Oklahoma.

Corporal William H. Beckham, 38474417, Infantry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for gallantry in action on 21 December 1944, in Belgium. During an attack, when his unit encountered resistance from an enemy held chateau, Corporal Beckham, serving as gunner of a tank destroyer vehicle, advanced to within fifty yards of the building, and in the face of intense small arms, machine gun, and anti-tank gun fire, poured heavy fire into the enemy positions and silenced them. He then turned his attention to a machine gun nest which was interfering with the advance, fired several rounds at a wall which was protecting the position, and brought it down, burying the machine gun and its crew. Though his vehicle was struck three times by enemy fire during this action, Corporal Beckham demonstrated outstanding gallantry and aggressiveness. Entered military service from Texas.

II--AWARD OF BRONZE STAR -- Under the provisions of AR 600-45, 22 September 1943, and pursuant to authority contained in paragraph 4, Section I, Circular 66, Headquarters First United States Army, 13 May 1944, the Bronze Star is awarded to the following officer and enlisted men:

Lieutenant Colonel George K. Rubel, 0193524, Infantry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for heroic achievement in connection with military operations against the enemy during the period 19 December 1944 to 24 December 1944, in Belgium. Entered military service from Arizona.

Staff Sergeant Charlie W. Looney, 38400022, Infantry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for heroic achievement in action on 19 December 1944, in Belgium. Entered military service from Oklahoma.

Staff Sergeant William H. Netchich, 37076312, Infantry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for heroic achievement in action on 22 December 1944, in Belgium. Entered military service from Missouri.

Sergeant Alton N. Fleming, 38371532, Infantry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for heroic achievement in action on 23 December 1944, in Belgium. Entered military service from Texas.

Technician Grade 5 James E. Flowers, 36474586, Infantry, 740th Tank Battalion, United States Army, for heroic achievement in action on 21 December 1944, in Belgium. Entered military service from Texas.

L. S. Hobbs
L. S. HOBBS
Major General - U. S. Army
Commanding