

DECLASSIFIED  
735017  
NARA, Dab

Interview Number \_\_\_\_\_

Unit: 3d Battalion, 320th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division.

Action: 8 November 1944 to 18 January 1945.

Source: Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Joseph D. Alexander, Battalion Commander.

Interviewer: Capt Jacob Goldman.

Place and Date of Interview: Battalion CP at Warendorf, Germany, on 24 May 1945.

Maps: Series 4040, Sheets: 106, 121, 122, 137 and 152. Series 4471, Sheets: XXXV-13 and 14; XXXVII-12 and 13; XXXVI-12, 13, 14 and 15; XXXIII-13; Journals: XXXIV-14.

#### COMMENTS

Person interviewed expressed difficulty in remembering events because of the lapse of time. The Battalion Journal and After Action Reports were used as a guide and to refresh his recollection.





3d Battalion, 320th Regiment

Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Joseph D. Alexander at Bn CP, Warendorf, Germany on 24 May 1945.

On 6 January the battalion was in contact with the enemy in the woods north and east of Hellange (53-47). It was badly in need of reinforcements and rest. It had spent 8 to 9 days in the snow without relief and continually in contact with the enemy. The strength of each rifle company had dwindled to approximately 50 men. During the same day we were ordered to proceed to Bastogne (55-58) to relieve elements of the 6th Armored Division. We were relieved on line by elements of the 1st Battalion, 101st Infantry. The relief took place before dawn at 0700 the following morning while we were still in partial contact with the enemy. The battalion then proceeded to Bastogne where it closed prior to noon and was quartered in the partially wrecked buildings, throughout that day.

On the evening of the 8th, this battalion proceeded to relieve the 49th and 50<sup>th</sup> Armored Battalions of CCB, 6th Armored Division.

The battalions being relieved were holding a defensive line located on the high ground north and east of Bastogne roughly extending from the railroad at Pont de Pierre (548593) east to Bizery (5959) and continuing south to the town of Mont (5757) where it joined up with another battalion of CCB. This battalion took over the area held and continued its defense. A company of tanks of the 6th Armored Division was attached to the battalion and the whole team was named Task Force Alexander.

There was little or no activity to our front except sporadic enemy patrolling. We were subjected occasionally to enemy SP,

DECLASSIFIED  
735017  
HANA, GIN

~~artillery~~, tank and artillery fire. The battalion from the very outset was very substantially reinforced by considerable artillery support and responded with counter battery fire many times, using several battalions at a time.

On 9-12 January there was no change in the situation. The battalion continued to hold its present position and was subjected to the same enemy fire. At 0900 13 January, the battalion attacked with two companies abreast, Company K on the right and Company L on the left, ~~with~~ <sup>and</sup> with the mission of seizing the woods at 578602. The battalion was to advance to the north, coordinating with the 101st Airborne Division on our left, ~~the~~ <sup>and</sup> CCB of the 6th Armored Division, <sup>which</sup> was attacking on our right in the direction of the town of Mageret (6059). Although considerable artillery and mortar fire was encountered, the battalion was able to advance to the objective. Both companies were in positions abreast and facing generally to the northeast, Company K on the right at the edge of the woods at 592602 and Company L at 598604. The reserve company, Company I, was moved from the area around Bizery to the left rear of the battalion at 588602.

At 1330 Company L, supported by the remnants of a company of tanks, was ordered to assault the woods at 602602. Two platoons ~~were~~ <sup>were able to</sup> ~~able~~ and some tanks entered the woods from the northwest. The right platoon and the remaining tanks advanced from the southwest, up a slight rise into the open ground between the woods from which they jumped off and the objective. Here they were taken under very heavy SP and tank fire. Two of our tanks were disabled and several casualties suffered including <sup>d</sup> tank platoon leader and a platoon leader of Company L. Due to the fierce resistance in these woods the tw



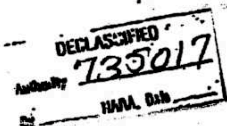


plateons which had entered the woods were forced to withdraw to their original position in <sup>the</sup> woods at 598604.

Communications were good, in that good, constant control was maintained through the use of <sup>FAE SCR</sup> 300 radio. The snow was approximately 14 inches deep and the weather was ~~otherwise~~ clear and cold. Evacuation difficulties were created by the inability to reach the wounded and the dead because of the heavy enemy small arms fire. However, the wounded were gradually evacuated by sled and jeep.

During the evening, plans were effected to have an air strike <sup>the</sup> following day, on the woods offering the stubborn resistance. At 1100, 14 January, American planes using Napalm bombs, bombed and strafed the woods immediately to our front. It had been hoped to burn the woods down, but for some unknown reason <sup>the</sup> ~~trees~~ did not burn. The effectiveness of the bombing and the strafing was later disclosed when we entered the woods. Numerous enemy dead were found. Radio and telephone equipment indicated that an enemy battalion CP had been located there and <sup>just</sup> the woods <sup>HAD BEEN</sup> defended by a sizable force.

On 15 January this battalion reverted to regimental reserve. Companies I & L were located in the woods at 602602 and protected the right flank of the regiment. ~~Company K protected the right flank of the regiment.~~ Company K protected the left rear from <sup>its</sup> original ~~its~~ position in the woods to the west. During the day, the 1st Battalion <sup>seized</sup> ~~seized~~ the town of Oubeurcy. The 2d Battalion attacked to the left of the 1st Battalion through the woods and continued to the northeast. This battalion supported the regimental attack, by blocking and guarding numerous vital areas on the left of the regimental zone. A portion of Company K was sent to the woods at 598615. Company I was sent to the area in the vicinity of



the  
Quarry (609627) until <sup>the</sup> 1st Battalion cleared Oubourcy after which it advanced to the northeast and occupied Oubourcy.

On 16 January the 1st and 2d Battalions attacked to the northeast to seize the town of Michamps. The 3d Battalion effected numerous road blocks to the northwest and southwest to secure these areas in support of the assault battalions. While in this area, the battalion occupied dug outs and fox holes originally occupied by the Germans. In some cases shattered houses which were barely standing were occupied. Shelters formerly held by the Germans were found infested by body lice and filth but were cleaned and used. The battalion was relieved at Michamps by the 2d Battalion, 134th Infantry, on 18 January and with the regiment moved into assembly area in the vicinity of Saliniez (5348) in Division reserve.

PERIOD: 8 NOVEMBER TO 24 DECEMBER

At 0600, 8 November, this battalion attacked in its zone with the mission of seizing Fresnes (0427), a strongly fortified town which apparently was the center of communications for that area. After a one hour artillery preparation, the battalion moved out with <sup>two</sup> companies abreast, Company K on the right and Company L on the left, <sup>and</sup> Company I remained <sup>ing</sup> in support. Considerable small arms, artillery and mortar fire was encountered on the jump off and numerous casualties resulted. Company L, advancing along the north south road leading to Fresnes, secured Hill 282 to the left thereof and continued north along the stream towards Fresnes. Resistance was extremely heavy in this area because of the numerous fortified houses bristling with machine guns along the stream beds and across the open ground in front of Hill 282, and Company L was pinned down.





Company K advanced slowly and by 1500 reached the vicinity of 048271, east of Hill 282, meeting stubborn resistance and heavy small arms fire from the vicinity of Fresnes. Company L, although having suffered heavy casualties, held firmly and occupied the enemy, while Company K continued to slowly advance to the north. By 1700, Company K had reached the cemetery at 040274, where it was pinned down by the same type of enemy fire.

At this point <sup>Co. I was</sup> ~~we were~~ ordered to cross the stream to the west of the Hill 282 and attempt an entry into the town from the west while the other two companies continued the attack from the south. The heavy machine guns supported the attack from the edge of the woods at 047264 and 043266. The mortars of Company M supported the attack from the road junction at 049263. By dusk Company K and L had entered the town from the south and elements of Company I had been able to maneuver to <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ right and entered it from the west. House to house fighting continued throughout the night and the morning of <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ next day, 9 November. Approximately 150 PW's were taken. By noon, the town was cleared. Positions in and around Fresnes were consolidated and the battalion reverted to regimental reserve.

On ~~the~~ 10 November this battalion, passing through 2d Battalion, attacked to the east into <sup>THE</sup> ~~the~~ Chateau Salins woods with two companies abreast, Company K on the right, <sup>and</sup> Company I on the left. Company L, in reserve, was to move on battalion order. The woods <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ extremely rough, heavily wooded and muddy making movement difficult. The enemy was disposed with numerous delaying positions throughout the entire length of the forest which harassed our troops and slowed up the movement. By nightfall the battalion had been able to reach and occupy a line extending from 083294 to 091297. The attack

DECLASSIFIED  
735017  
HALL Bldg

was continued the following morning, 11 November, to the northeast through the woods, and by the end of the day positions extending from 092315 to 097312 were reached. On 12 November the battalion continued the attack in a column of companies with Company K leading, and having met very little resistance, made a rapid advance to the battalion objective, the high ground in vicinity of 119-328, occupying it by 1530 that day.

During the operation in the woods from 8-12 November the weather had been rainy. There were only a few foot paths through the woods, and supply and evacuation were extremely difficult. As a result of these factors and the enemy resistance, blanket rolls, and rations were often late in coming up to the companies. Several cases of trench foot had to be evacuated. This phase of combat was the most trying of the combat experiences of this battalion. Both EM and officer casualties were high.

On 13 November the 320th Infantry regiment reverted to Division reserve, and this battalion assembled in Vannecourt (13032). The regiment remained here in reserve until ~~the 13~~<sup>17</sup> November when it displaced to the town of Morhange (20-36). Reinforcements were received in this town and the company strength increased to 70 per-cent.

On 18 November, when the regiment resumed the attack, this battalion remained in reserve in the vicinity of Racrange (21-36). Later in the day it was committed in an attack, <sup>to</sup> the northwest to outflank the resistance holding up the attack of the 2d Battalion, by advancing along the road extending from Morhange northeast to Virming (28-39). Companies L and K, abreast, led the attack. Company I followed as support. <sup>with C & K on the right</sup> <sup>at an interval of 400 yds</sup> Artillery and mortar fire and some small arms were encountered all along the route. By the end of the day





the battalion was in position in the woods at 233377, It continued the attack the following day, 19 November, advancing northeast along the road leading to Virming, in the same formation as the previous day. Casualties were mounting heavily. When the forward elements reached a point short of Bermering, (25-37) they came under heavy enemy small arms and artillery fire and were pinned down. In the afternoon the battalion was reinforced by a company of tanks of the 4th Armored Division. The advance continued to a point about 500 yards east of Virming where the tanks deployed and supported the advance of Company K, which entered the town from the southwest, and the advance of Company L which entered the town from the west. The town was entered at dusk. Approximately 40 PW's were taken. Tank and artillery fire had ~~been~~ very badly burned and shattered the town. Several fires were still burning. The battalion outposted the town and remained there for the night.

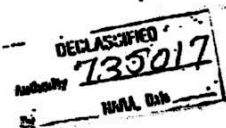
At 0800, 20 November, the battalion attacked in its zone, with two companies abreast, Company K on the right and Company L on the left. The initial objective, the town of Obrick (28-39), was overrun with the attached company of tanks, and the attack was <sup>continued</sup> toward the northeast to seize the town of Francaltroff (31-40). Companies L and K were halted along the road running from Virming to Francaltroff at a point 600 yards southeast of the objective by heavy enemy fire. Company I, <sup>the</sup> reserve company, was then ordered to execute an enveloping movement to the left and enter the town from the northwest while the other two companies entered from the south and southwest. The supporting tanks continued battering the town <sup>from</sup> the southwest. By nightfall, the battalion <sup>had</sup> entered the town from three directions, south, southwest, and <sup>from the</sup> west, with one company



DECLASSIFIED  
735017  
NARA, Dab

from each of these directions. The enemy, however, withdrew from the town to the northeast before our troops entered. ~~and then~~ heavy <sup>ENEMY</sup> artillery and mortar fire <sup>FELL</sup> into the town as our troops entered and continued ~~to~~ throughout the night and the following morning. The <sup>Town</sup> was moderately occupied by French civilians, most of whom were hiding in the cellars at the time of our entry and appeared none too friendly towards the liberators of the town. Under the circumstances, our troops were compelled to treat them as enemy. The town had been badly hit by both friendly and enemy artillery and mortar fire and approximately 20 per-cent of the buildings were badly shattered but none razed, as was the case after we entered the aerial bombarded areas.

At 1100, 21 November, this battalion was passed through by the 2d Battalion of this regiment in the attack on Grening, (36-42) and became regimental reserve. At 0630, 22 November, the battalion was committed on the right of the 2d Battalion to assist it in the attack on Grening with two assault companies abreast, Company L on the right and Company K on the left. Enemy infantry, supported by artillery and tanks, ~~was~~ encountered at approximately 0900, and after continuous and severe fighting in the rain and mud, this battalion gained the woods at 344427. It attempted to advance through these woods but was pinned down by two enemy tanks and heavy mortar, machine guns and artillery fire in the vicinity of 349429. A request for TD's was made to regiment in order to destroy the resistance caused by the <sup>enemy</sup> tanks to our left front. Our artillery support could be used to only fair advantage because of the fact that the tanks were in observation only a small part of the



time. The mortars of Company M were in position on the high ground to the west ready to support an attack on the town. While the TD's were engaged in seeking out the tanks, Company L sent three 8-men, officer-led, patrols into the town from the west. They concealed themselves in houses when they noted enemy tanks <sup>cruising</sup> ~~crusing~~ up and down the town. When the town was entered by one of the patrols it came face to face with a German soldier. The patrol opened fire, but the enemy soldier was able to conceal himself. and escaped unharmed. <sup>HE</sup> ~~HE~~ later guided the enemy tanks to the house where our patrols had apparently taken shelter. The enemy tanks made a hasty search of the buildings calling for our soldiers to surrender. A few did surrender but others who had taken refuge in the upper floors of the buildings which were not searched did not come out when ordered to do so by the enemy. The tanks fired several shots into these buildings at random and departed. No casualties were suffered. There appeared to be no other enemy in the town. The patrols remained in the town all night and at 0700, 23 November, the entire battalion entered the town, unopposed, and took possession.

At 1100 the same day, this battalion was ordered to seize Nelling (37-41), and it was decided to test the town for resistance with one patrol from Company L, consisting of one platoon. The patrol made its way to the town unopposed. Thereupon, the balance of the company moved in and was later followed by the remainder of the battalion.

At 0800, 24 November, this battalion was ordered to seize the towns of Insming (37-40) and Renning (35-39). Platoon patrols were sent forward to reconnoiter each of these towns. They were found





unoccupied by the enemy and <sup>were</sup> organized by the battalion for defense until 28 November. In this area too, the French civilians apparently strongly resented being liberated and were unfriendly. As a consequence, we treated them as Germans.

On 28 November, this battalion, along with the balance of the regiment, assembled at Pontpierre (20-49) in Division reserve, and on 1 December, moved to assembly area at Kappelkingen 39041. At 0300 the latter day the battalion set up defensive positions and <sup>relieved</sup> ~~reliving~~ the 44th Armored Infantry Battalion. Company L was dispatched <sup>to</sup> Uberkingen (39-42,) Company K to Hirbach (43-46) and Company to Steinbach (42-43). The battalion mission was to protect the right flank of the Division. It remained in position until 3 December 44, when the battalion assembled at Hirbach (4346).

At 0600, 4 December, the battalion attacked in a column of companies with Company K leading, followed by Companies L and I respectively, with the mission of seizing Didering 43-46 before daylight. The leading elements of Company K overcame the enemy outposts of the town, taking many of them prisoners and cleared it against scattered small arms fire. Meeting such little opposition ~~that~~ they proceeded across the Maderbach River on an available bridge <sup>and</sup> by 0930 entered the town of Bettering (43-46) against light opposition, consisting of sniping and scattered small arms fire which they set about to mop up immediately. During the action considerable small arms fire was streaming in from the vicinity of the cemetery at Holving (4446).

While Company K was mopping up Bettering, Company L was ordered to seize Holving and overcome the enemy resistance in the vicinity of the cemetery. A careful reconnaissance indicated that the area



east of Bettering to Holving was a slight ridge containing well dug pill boxes. They were later discovered to be unoccupied. Excellent artillery support was given the attacking companies throughout the morning. Prior to the jump off by Company L, our supporting artillery and the heavy <sup>weapons</sup> ~~weapons~~ of Company H placed very accurate and effective concentrations of fire on the ridge and the area in and around the cemetery. When the fires were lifted Company L closed in from two sides, took the area around the cemetery and captured 32 PW's. Company K, having completed the mop up of Bettering, entered Holving from the north, moved through the town, and found it necessary to clear a number of buildings to the south and west, taking another 18 PW's. The battalion occupied the three towns for the balance of the night.

On 5~~1~~ December at 1100 the battalion moved to an assembly area in Grundviller (4449) and was there ordered to take the town of Hambach (4951). However, the 2d Battalion of this regiment had <sup>already</sup> ~~already~~ occupied the town without opposition when the battalion arrived there at 2315.

At 0500, 6 December, the battalion moved to Siltzheim (51-53) in preparation for an attack to the northeast in the direction of the Sarre River. A combat patrol from Company K was sent to Zetting (56-53) with the mission of reconnoitering the enemy situation <sup>there and</sup> ~~therein~~ investigating the condition of the bridge directly east of the town as a means of crossing the Sarre River. A patrol from Company L with a similar mission was sent to Wittring (57-50) to investigate the enemy situation therein and if possible to seize the bridge ~~cross~~ in east of the town. The patrol from Company K reported few enemy in the town and that the bridge had been blown. Company L's patrol





did not return and was unheard from.

At 1000 , after receiving no word from the Company L patrol I ordered Company L to take the town of Wittling, clear it of the enemy, and seize the river crossing. The area around Wittling was found to be held by numerous well dug-in enemy groups. A formidable enemy strongpoint was located in the quarry southeast of the town. Across the river the enemy occupied commanding terrain and was well dug in for several hundred yards north and south. The heavy weapons company fired several hundred rounds into this quarry and at the targets on the opposite side of the river and inflicted numerous casualties on the enemy during their several attempts to evacuate the positions. Our artillery interdicted these enemy positions throughout the day. At one occasion, an enemy ammunition truck was observed coming down the road in the vicinity of the junction at 5751, by a mortar OP of Company M. Three mortar rounds blew up the truck, its cargo, and three occupants. Supported by the fire , Company L seized and cleared Wittling with little opposition. The remainder of the 3d Battalion moved into the town and occupied points of vantage in the upper stories of houses facing the river. From these positions, they engaged the enemy. Our artillery OP was located in the attic of one of the houses which gave it perfect observation and enabled it to deliver very accurate fire throughout the day.

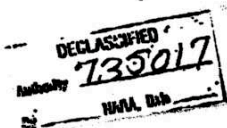
This same type of warfare was engaged in by this battalion on 8 December. During the night of 8-9 December, a footbridge was built across the Sarre River and just before daylight the battalion crossed the river in a column of companies in the order of Company K, L, I, respectively, with the mission of seizing the town



of Wiesviller 58-53. Upon crossing the Sarre River, a junction was effected with <sup>the</sup> 328th Infantry of the 26th Division, and as the town of Wiesviller was approached it was discovered that <sup>the</sup> 26th Infantry Division had already taken the town by a movement from the south and east. Several hundred rounds of artillery had been fired by us on the town and when we entered it we found a tank repair factory almost destroyed and two tanks, in the process of being repaired, still afire. Civilians told us that several tanks had been able to withdraw during the lulls in the fire. The civilians, although French, spoke very good German and seemed hostile. They were also treated as enemy.

The battalion remained in Wiesviller during the balance of the night and on the morning of 10 December at 0700 <sup>the</sup> battalion attacked in conjunction with the 1st Battalion of our regiment, on our left, to the north along the Wiesviller-Bliesbruck highway. This battalion moved out with <sup>two</sup> companies abreast, Company L on the right and ~~Company~~ <sup>I</sup> Company on the left. Company K was in reserve. In order to achieve ~~the surprise~~ surprise, no artillery preparations preceded the attack, but artillery preparations were available on call. No resistance was encountered until the leading elements of the battalion reached the road junction at Hill 344 (585-553) where they were taken under small arms, SP and artillery fire from well dug in positions on the high ground to the north. The advance from there was slow and arduous, and the leading elements of the battalion were able to reach the woods at 5955, where they were compelled to halt temporarily along the single track railroad. The battalion was then subjected to considerable enemy artillery fire. Casualties were high. The battalion CP was located in a house at 589559. It was noted from time to time that ~~fairly~~ accurate fire was being





placed on the CP. It was a little mystifying to the occupants as to how such accurate fire could be placed on so small a locality, since there was no enemy observation. Several days later a German artillery observer riding an American jeep unexpectedly ran into one of our patrols. On his person was found a map showing enemy artillery concentrations on the CP area, the cross roads to the north, and several areas which our troops occupied along the railroad. This accounted for the direct hits in our sector and the high <sup>casualty rate</sup> ~~casualty rate~~.

On 11 December the battalion was occupying a defensive position along the railroad <sup>with</sup> ~~and~~ Company L on the right and Company I on the left. At 0830, Company K passed through the two forward companies spearheading an attack on the town of Bliesbruck (59-57). After Company K had gained several hundred yards, Company L moved out to the north, echeloned to the right rear of Company K, to assist in the assault on Bliesbruck. The enemy strongly held the outskirts of Bliesbruck from well concealed, dug in and strongly fortified positions. The attack was halted on the outskirts of Bliesbruck by ~~the~~ heavy fire of all types from these enemy positions.

During a lull in the fighting, a patrol worked its way along the highway and was about to approach the first few houses of the town when it <sup>was</sup> cut off by the enemy. It was assumed that this patrol was captured. The two assault companies made several attempts to take the town but to no avail. Casualties were heavy and it is estimated that the battalion probably lost 40 EM and two officers, which included killed, ~~and~~ wounded and MIA.

At 0900, 12 December, the battalion, supported by a company of tanks, launched another assault against Bliesbruck from the south and



and east, and was able to secure that part of the town, south of the Blies River, clearing it of all enemy and garrisoning and outposting it to 598-582. The 1st Battalion crossed the Blies River west of the town at the same time ~~and~~<sup>after</sup> this battalion and occupied the north half of Bliesbruch. The regiment was preparing to assault the town of Reinheim, Germany, and in preparation ~~for~~ for the assault, our heavy weapons were placed on the commanding ground to the west and east, where excellent observation of the new regimental objective was possible. The battalion remained in the vicinity of Bliesbruch during 13 - 14 December.

At 0700, 15 December, Companies K and L crossed the footbridge at Bliesbruch which had been constructed during the occupation of the town, ~~executed a wide envelopment on Hill 312 (5858) and secured it with~~<sup>executed a wide envelopment on Hill 312 (5858)</sup> and secured it with little opposition. The battalion then continued the advance north ~~to the~~ <sup>to the</sup> woods at 5860, in an attempt to make a wide flanking movement to the west of the town of Reinheim. In the meantime, however, the town had been taken by the 1st Battalion. Heavy fighting was engaged in the vicinity of <sup>the</sup> woods at 5860 and casualties were suffered. The woods were finally cleared and the battalion took up defensive positions in these woods taking advantage of the emplacements formerly occupied by the enemy.

At 0600, 16 December, the battalion jumped off with companies K and L abreast, with the mission of seizing the high ground north of Reinheim in the battalion zone. Both companies had overrun the objective during the latter part of the morning with little ~~opposition~~<sup>opposition</sup>, but were shelled heavily by the enemy on the objective.

At noon the battalion was ordered to seize the town of Gersheim (61-61). Tanks were requested by me because of the fact that we had just entered Germany and stubborn resistance was anticipated



DECLASSIFIED  
735017  
NARA, DAB

At 1730 a company of tanks which had been attached to the battalion moved towards the town of Gersheim, shelling it heavily. The infantry troops <sup>were</sup> following behind, supported by tank fire, Company K entered the town at 1810 from the direction of the main highway at 612608, and Company L entered the town directly from the west.

The only resistance encountered was sniping from the windows on first and second floors as well as from covered positions in basements. There was no organized resistance. The battalion occupied that part of the town west of the river. During ~~the~~ 17 December Companies K & L continued to clear the town of enemy hiding in cellars and others <sup>SHELTERS</sup> ~~houses~~, afraid to surrender. Some 40 PW's were captured in the process. Company I, the ~~reserve~~ Company, was still at Reimheim with the Battalion CP and on 17 December, both were moved into Gersheim. By this time the strength of the rifle companies had been reduced considerably, <sup>Co I</sup> to 71 men; Company K, 67; and Company L, 41. Considerable enemy artillery of all calibers fell in the town throughout the occupation by this battalion. A large cave was discovered just west of the town ~~located~~ <sup>AND</sup> on the high hill, was occupied with some 30 German soldiers and about 3000 civilians. It was here that the CIC first made its appearance to screen and <sup>To</sup> attempt ~~to~~ to control civilians.

On 18 December <sup>at</sup> 0600 Company I undertook the mission of clearing the woods northwest of Gersheim. Because of more resistance than was expected, it was joined by Company K, the following <sup>day</sup>, and the woods <sup>were</sup> finally cleared and occupied. On ~~the~~ 20 December the situation remained the same. Heavy enemy artillery fire still fell in ~~on~~ the town and on our positions in the woods. On 21 December this battalion



was relieved in position by elements of the 87th Division and on 22~~1~~  
December moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Uberkingen  
(39-42.) On 24 December, the entire battalion mounted trucks, followed  
a circuitous route towards Metz because of enemy road strafing, and  
closed into the town early on the morning of the 25th of December.