

HEADQUARTERS III U. S. CORPS
3RD INFORMATION AND HISTORICAL SERVICE
(Team "K")

22 January 1945

ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

3rd Battalion, 134th Infantry Regiment
(28 December 1944 to 12 January 1945)

On the 28th of December, the battalion was at full strength. Replacements had been received at METZ, and a training program had been initiated. However on the 26th, the battalion had moved from METZ to ATTERT (P5929). There, orders directed movement by motor to an assembly area in the vicinity of HEINSTERT (P5530). The order of march was Cos K, L, and I. The 134th Infantry Regiment was to be in division reserve initially, prepared to motorize and to either follow or pass through the 137th Infantry Regiment on a half-hours notice. The order to move, including an overlay, came by regimental liaison officer.

At 0800 on the 27th, the Division attack jumped off. Capt. ^{HUSTON} ~~HUGHSON~~, S-3, 3rd Bn, visited regiment at 1530 and there received instructions to move to a final assembly area in the vicinity of WARNACH (P5542). The time of movement was to be announced later.

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On the 27th at 1810, a warning order was issued by the 3rd Bn to its Cos. At 280145 the movement order was issued. The Battalion CP opened in the vicinity of WARNACH (P5542), at 0530.

at 281140, a possibility of working with the 4th Armored Div was indicated by a telephone message from the regimental S-3. Plans were underway to use the 3rd Bn to relieve a battalion of the 80th Infantry Div, at that time located in a woods north of SAINLEZ (P5448).. General Ernest, of Combat Command B of the 4th Armored Div, indicated the need for the occupation of LUTREBOIS (P5653). The Armored Div furnished eight 2½ ton trucks which moved Co L up to make the relief. Eight trucks from the Service Co moved Co I up, and the trucks which had moved Co L made a second trip with Co K.

At 282000, contact was made with the 137th Infantry Regiment on the right, which unit had been committed while the 134th was still in reserve.

On the day of the 28th, verbal orders had been received for an attack on the morning of the 29th through the woods in the direction of LUTREBOIS. The regiment was to jump off in a column of battalions, 3rd, 1st, and 2nd. The 3rd Bn planned to move out in column of companies, L, I, and K. The 161st Field Artillery Bn and Co C, 3rd Chemical Bn were in regimental direct support. In direct support of the 3rd Bn were the 2nd Platoon, 554th Tank Destroyer Bn; 3rd Platoon, Anti-tank Co, and 3rd Platoon, Co A, 60th Engineer Bn. The mission was to attack and seize LUTREBOIS, and to continue the attack to the north toward MARVIE (P5756). The attack was to be launched along a narrow frontage. If the 3rd Bn w

road, around the woods, and up the hill. Just outside of town enemy in the woods opened up with a curtain of small arms fire which scattered and disorganized the platoon. T/Sgt Vanlandingham, in charge of the platoon, exhibited outstanding leadership qualities in reorganizing the platoon and withdrawing into town. The Sgt had joined the outfit at METZ as a non-commissioned officer replacement. He was killed the next day.

Cos I and K were moved up to the right, east of town P571531. By 1600 Co L was entrenched in the town, and Cos I and K were established east of town. At 1850, Capt Campbell, CO of Co K, reported hearing tanks withdrawing along the road at P573529. This was the first indication of the presence of enemy tanks in the vicinity.

At 1900 artillery fire was placed on the area in which the tanks had been heard. A call from regiment was received stating that civilians evacuated from LUTREBOIS (P5653) the night before had given information regarding five enemy tanks, one big gun, and 500 Germans, half of them wearing American overcoats. A minefield was laid covering the northern approaches to town (P565533-569533), and the Tank Destroyer platoon took up a position at P565536).

The Battalion was deep in uncontrolled ground. A gap existed between the 134th and the 137th Infantry Regiments. The 2nd Bn of the 134th Infantry Regt was committed to fill this gap on the right of the 3rd Bn. The 1st Bn, in accordance with the regimental plan, bypassed the 3rd and headed toward MARVIE (P5755), REMOIFORSE (P5554) having been taken by the 4th Armored Div. During the night of the 29th, the 1st Bn established contact with the 101st Airborne Div around BASTOGNE (P5557).

At 300430 December, Cos I and K reported a counter-attack by enemy infantry along Co I's front. The Germans were moving across open ground (P569532). Artillery was placed on them at 0435 and observed results were good.

At 0515 Co L reported an infantry counter-attack against their positions in LUTREBOIS (P5653). The enemy moved around to the north of the town and hit the buildings adjacent to the cemetery. By 0640 contact with the elements of Co L in the northeastern portion of the town was lost. Meanwhile, Co E, in 2nd Bn reserve, had been ordered to move up. Cos I and K closed in to strengthen the flank.

A prisoner later reported that a light machine gun covering the northeast approach to town prevented the enemy from entering there and compelled them to move around and hit the town from the north.

The enemy fanned out in the open terrain and came inside the field of fire of Co L's heavy machine gun support, still located along the road at (P562530) covering the town. A prisoner reported that the advance of the enemy was held up for one hour at this point. The men manning the machine guns reported that ⁶⁷six or seven waves moved up and were mowed down. Finally the gunners withdrew as the enemy infantry, by maneuvering, threatened to cut them off. The Anti-tank platoon withdrew from its position at (P560537) leaving the guns, but taking the breech mechanisms.

Between 0900 and 1030 of the 30th, enemy groups of infantry continued to filter through the lines. One group reached (P558515) where they set up a machine gun interdicting the road south of LOSANGE (P555516) where the Battalion CP was located. These infiltrating groups had apparently passed through Co E which was in the process of moving up from

LOSANGE to reinforce the 3rd Bn.

Lt Baumberger, Co I, who had made his way back to the CP, was charged with setting up a defense. Several half-tracks with mounted cal.50 machine guns were formed into a circle around the chateau. Germans commenced firing on the CP with small arms and were answered by the cal. 50's. Two men from the anti-tank platoon fired eight clips of ammunition with their M1 rifles and knocked out the machine gun at (P555516). Mortar fire was placed on the woods east of LOSANGE. These combined efforts apparently stopped the enemy.

At 1000, five enemy tanks were spotted along the LUTREMANGE (P5851)-LUTREBOIS (P5653) road in front of Cos I and K. An air strike was requested. The tanks were a mixed group of M IV's and M V's. An artillery reconnaissance plane reported fifteen enemy tanks approaching the town. At 1041, Capt Gibson CO Co I, looked toward LUTREBOIS and saw enemy tanks fanning out north of the town preparing to attack. He directed an artillery concentration at (P569533), and at 1120, he reported that two enemy tanks had been hit and that the enemy infantry was returning to the woods. Shortly thereafter, Co K reported two heavy tanks, probably M V's, along their front. At 1205, Capt Gibson adjusted the 4.2 mortars as they fired on the tanks. A direct hit set one of the tanks on fire. Meanwhile, the Tank Destroyer platoon at 556536 took care of four tanks that were spreading out north of the town. One enemy tank ran into the minefield covering the northern approaches to town. Tanks of the 4th Armored Div at REMOI-FOSSE (P5554) also fired on the enemy tanks.

At 1210 Capt Gibson reported that six of the seven tanks in his area had been knocked out. At 1220 P-47's came over to deliver the requested air strike, along the LUTREBOIS (P5653)-LUTREMANGE (P5851) road. Both Cos I and K were close to the target, ~~so the infantry hunched deep in~~ ^{of fox} their holes while the planes strafed up and down the road with machine guns, cannons, and rockets. Hence, the infantry was unable to gauge the results of this air strike.

Capt Campbell, Co K, had counted fourteen enemy tanks in the woods across the road from Cos I and K. These had come up the road from LUTREMANGE. As they approached along the road, ^{pages 133 through 134} the riflemen opened up on them, disregarding the warnings of the leaders, who preferred not to have their location disclosed. (Co K had no bazookas) The tanks buttoned up and turned their barrels to face the ^{direction} ~~source~~ of the small arms fire. After firing two or three heavy rounds, and some machine gunning, they turned and hightailed down the road toward LUTREMANGE.

155-mm artillery fire was placed on the road and in the woods opposite Cos I and K. It was believed that the fourteen tanks had taken cover in these woods (P574527). Six came out and moved southward.

It was decided to bring Cos I and KK back across the draw to the ridge above the road at (P564527). By 1700 Co K had moved to its new position and had tied in with the 2nd Bn. Enemy machine gun fire was received as the company crossed the road. Co I followed Co K and formed a line on its left. Contact was established between Co I and armored infantry of the 4th Armored Div. on the left. Machine gun fire received from an

enemy pocket in the vicinity of (P557526) resulted in the battalion's left flank being bent back somewhat.

On the evening of the 30th a twelve-man patrol went back toward LOSANGE (P5551) to determine whether or not the supply route was open. At the same time the Battalion was informed that the 6th Armored Div was moving up on the left to relieve the pressure. Guides were set up to direct the armor. 1000 yards north of LOSANGE the tanks *were held* up.

At the end of the 30th of December, the lines had been shortened; some gaps eliminated; and contact made with the 2nd Bn and the 137th Infantry Regiment. The patrol sent out to investigate the supply route returned. At Battalion HQ all available bazookas were gathered to be sent forward the next morning. Artillery fire was placed on LUTREBOIS.

A captured map indicated the German plan of attack. The 331st Regt of the 167 Volksgrenadier Div and the 1st SS Div were to make *two* ~~thrusts~~ ^{attacks}. One thrust was aimed through LUTREMANGE (P5851) and LUTREBOIS (P5653) to cut the ARLON (P5 5)-BASTOGNE (P5557) highway, and thence north along the highway to BASTOGNE. The second thrust was to consist of a wider development through LOSANGE across the ARLON-BASTOGNE highway, cutting the secondary northbound roads, and thence ~~north~~ toward BASTOGNE. The attack petered out before reaching the main highway. A prisoner stated that the Germans had employed two battalions, an anti-tank company armed with fifty bazookas, and twenty-nine tanks.

A counter-attack to regain the town was launched on the 31st. At 0958 it was reported that the Germans were moving through LUTREBOIS. The 2nd Bn, having moved up alongside Co K, jumped off to get across the valley

Co F had attacked prior to the rest of the 2nd Bn and ran into a hornet's nest swarming with small arms fire. The men were pinned down and artillery fire was called for. A total of eleven 80-mm mortars from the 2nd and 3rd Bns fired 98 rounds within a minute. At 1440 the 2nd Bn was stopped, and ninety casualties were reported. At 1830 the 6th Armored Div artillery, in support, stated a willingness to fire on any targets.

On the evening of the 31st, Corps Artillery fired A TOT on LUTREBOIS. Previously, infantry and five enemy tanks had been reported in the town. At 2255 Capt Gibson reported that the enemy armor had withdrawn after the TOT, but at 0025 it was back in town.

Two prisoners from the 339th Volksgrenadier Regt, 167th Div, stated that the enemy would attack on 1 Jan. The attack was to have taken place on the 31st but had been broken up by the artillery fire.

At 1300 1 January, the 3rd Bn attacked toward LUTREBOIS. In side-slipping northward and turning eastward toward the town their rear would be exposed to fire from the enemy pocket which still existed in the vicinity of (P556526). Therefore a task force from the 6th Armored Div was commissioned to operate on the pocket.

The Battalion jumped off according to plan, Co K on the right, Co I on the left, and Co F, consisting of 25 men, in reserve. At 1500 enemy pocketed along high ground to the west of town were engaged in a fire fight. Co K headed for town and by nightfall was at the outskirts.

An enemy anti-tank gun was positioned at 566528. The infantry drove off the crew, but when they approached the gun, they received enemy small arms fire. However, the effectiveness of the gun was destroyed.

On 2 January, the attack was resumed at 0830 in the same formation. Co K was to enter the town. Co I was to eliminate the enemy pocket and then move into the town. Co L was to support with fire. By 0930, Cos K and I were in the town, and at 0940 twenty prisoners had been taken by Co I. At 0950 troops assualting the town reported enemy machine gun fire on both flanks. Cos I and K, using bazookas, mortars and grenades, eliminated enemy ~~nest~~ house by house. Co K, the first in town, was held up by a machine gun nest in the first house. T/Sgt Cunningham, platoon leader leaving his men in comparative safety, took off by himself, climbed to the roof of the building and tossed in white phosphorous and hand grenades, thereby ~~eliminating~~ the obstruction. He was responsible for the killing of twenty-six Germans.

Meanwhile, the 2nd Bn had succeeded in crossing the valley south of town. A squad of Medics, attempting to reach the leading elements of the Battalion, were captured.

A wounded man from Co L found in the town, stated that the enemy had three tanks and a company of infantry in the neighborhood and planned to launch an attack that night (2 January).

At 1110, an artillery TOT was requested on the northern half of town. In one hour the fire was on the way. During the night of the 2nd, the 3rd Bn cleared the town as far as the stream which bisected it.

On the 3rd, more artillery fire was put on the far edge of town. Enemy small arms fire was received as the companies moved against the remaining portion of the town.

On the 4th of January, the 1st Bn was moved from a line east of MARVIE (P5755) back through the town to SEWE (P5654), whence it made a pre-dawn attack to the southeast on the woods above LUTREBOIS (P5653) to effect contact with the 3rd Bn at (P569533). In the attack Co C pushed beyond the LUTREBOIS trail deep into enemy territory and lost physical contact.

On the 4th, the 3rd Bn, without Tank Destroyer support, sneaked through the town, and reached the edge of the woods beyond town. Co I was on the left, Co K on the right, and Co L with the machine guns along the road west of town. No contact was made with the 1st Bn attacking down through the woods. The town was outposted for the night. However the regimental right flank was open. The 3rd Bn Anti-tank platoon minus guns, the regimental I and R platoon, and the MP platoon were formed into a task force outposting the right flank in the vicinity of (P565526).

On the 5th the woods were heavily defended by the enemy. The 3rd Bn was pinned down by machine guns. The Tank Destroyers in support of the Battalion fired tracers, adjusting by radio. The Battalion 57-mm's then opened up on the targets designated by the tracer fire. This combined fire effectively pinned down the enemy and enabled the battalion to push into the woods. However, the tenacious resistance put up by the enemy required the Battalion to pull back and give the woods a thorough mauling before attempting another penetration. At 1100, Tank Destroyers, artillery, 4.2 mortars, and machine guns firing across the valley participated in the softening up of the area. At 1150 all fires were lifted.

The machine gunners were telephoned, the anti-tank gunners and Tank Destroyers radioed. At 1152 the infantry assaulted the woods. On the right the 2nd Bn placed diversionary small arms fire to their front, to which the enemy replied. The 57-mm's knocked out an enemy machine gun nest, the target having been designated by a runner. The Tank Destroyers knocked out a tank with HE. By 1310 penetration of 125 yards had been made.

At 1510 the enemy, attired in American overcoats counter-attacked on the left flank of Co I, and at 1640 the right flank of Co K was also hit. Both Companies pulled back into town and reoccupied their former positions. At this time the average company strength was about seventy men. The woods were shelled by artillery and mortars on the night of the 5th.

The order for the 6th involved another attempt, this time with reinforcements. The 1st Bn of the 320th Infantry Regt had moved up the BASTOGNE highway to an assembly area at 560551. From there it was to move southeast through the woods, join the 1st Bn of the 134th Infantry Regt at 0700 on the 6th, and move forward abreast of the latter. At 0940 contact between the 3rd Bn 134th and 1st Bn 320th was made, but the fresh battalion was stopped as Cos I and K had been.

On 7 January, there was a warning of a counter-attack. At 0330 a 100% alert was announced. The 2nd Bn at 0820 pushed as far as the LUTRE-WANCE-LUTREBOIS road where it was flattened by machine gun fire. A prisoner stated that the enemy had been strengthened by 200 artillerymen the night before.

On the 7th and 8th of January little progress was made.

At 081935 orders were issued for the next day. The three battalions of the 134th Infantry Regt, the 1st Bn of the 320th, a Task Force from the 6th Armored Div, which included the 2nd Bn of the 320th were to coordinate in an attack on the high ground northeast of LUTREBOIS. On the evening of the 8th, the 1st Bn 134th Infantry Regt relieved the 1st Bn of the 320th, thereby extending its line. The 1st Bn 320th, together with the 3rd Bn 134th moved by foot to the north and assembled at (P570546). From this Line of Departure, the Task Force from the 6th Armored Division on the left, and the 3rd Bn 134th Infantry Regt with the 1st Bn 320th on the right attacked southeast clearing the woods as far as the LUTREBOIS trail. There the attack swung to the northeast, joining with the 1st and 2nd Bns of the 134th advancing from LUTREBOIS. Supporting the attack was the 161st Field Artillery Bn. To screen the assault of the 1st Bn 320th and 3rd Bn 134th, the flank of the wood (P570540-574543), was smoked from five minutes before jump-off time until fifteen minutes after the attack started. Co C of the 3rd Chemical Bn had been lost, so the 81-mm mortars delivered the smoke. Co A, 654th Tank Destroyer Bn, employed as tanks, fired direct support missions into the woods.

At 0500 on the 9th, the 3rd Bn moved to an assembly area, wires being used to guide the men. At 1000 the attack jumped off. While the Tank Destroyers sprayed the woods with cal. 50 and fire, the 3rd Bn attacked with Co I on the left, Co K on the right and Co L in reserve. Co I was the base company. One section of heavy machine guns supported each assault company.

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On reaching the woods, the battalion fanned out. Moving fast against slight opposition, the riflemen ~~produced~~ the Germans out of their holes. Because of the quick progress, the regimental line was bent somewhat, and patrols were used to maintain flank contact. By 1400 the Battalion had reached the LUTREBOIS trail.

Meanwhile the 2nd Bn, with one company holding the town, cleaned out several pockets to the rear. The 1st Bn pushed eastward and made contact with the battalions attacking to the southeast.

On reaching the LUTREBOIS trail, the axis of the attack angled to the left moving up the trail to the northeast. The line from left to right was formed as follows: 2nd Bn 320th Infantry Regt on the left of the trail, 3rd Bn 134th Infantry Regt on the right, 1st Bn 320th echeloned to the right rear followed by the 1st Bn 134th deployed similarly. The 2nd Bn 134th guarded the right rear.

On the 10th of January reinforcements were received.

There were indications that the enemy was withdrawing. Plans were made to press the attack on the next day, the 11th. The 2nd Bn 320th Infantry Regt was attached to the 134th Infantry Regt.

The attack pushed northward at 0800. The 3rd Bn had Cos I and K abreast with elements of Co K echeloned to the right rear, and Co L in reserve.

The 81-mm mortars displaced to SEWE (P5855), and the pocket to the rear was eliminated by the 2nd Bn.

On the 11th, the line (P584548-594538) was reached.

In the woods orientation was difficult. To overcome this, flares were fired by the troops and artillery planes reported locations by radio.

Many dead Germans in the woods were mute testimony to the effectiveness of the artillery fire,

On the 12th of January, the 1st and 2nd Bns of the 320th Infantry Regt and the 3rd Bn of the 134th, abreast, coordinated in attacking Hill 550 (95853) which had been holding up the advance of the 6th Armored Div. The attack commenced at 0830 and followed an azimuth of 72 degrees. The assault elements fanned out in a skirmish line which maneuvered in frontage to hasten progress. The objective was reached by 1415.

The battalions of the 320th Infantry Regt reverted to their parent unit and the 3rd Bn of the 134th remained to hold the Division objective.

On the 15th the battalion was informed that the 90th Infantry Div and the 6th Armored Div had made contact. At 1048 patrols of Co I made contact with Co C of the 358th Infantry Regt.

J.A. initials? Huston
Source - Capt *initials?* Hughson, S-3, 3rd Bn, 134th Infantry Regt.

Interviewer - T/Sgt C. J. Angulo.

Date of Interview - 15 January 1945.

Map Reference - GSGS 4040-Sheet 121, 1:50,000.