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THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY I, 399th INFANTRY
(100th INFANTRY DIVISION) IN THE VICINITY OF
BITCHE, FRANCE, 8 - 10 JANUARY 1945
(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Company Executive Officer)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY COMPANY ATTACKING AND
HOLDING A KEY TERRAIN FEATURE IN A DEFENSIVE POSITION

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ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO 2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
INDEX.....	1
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	2
ORIENTATION.....	3
Introduction.....	3
The General Situation.....	4
Dispositions and plans of the Third Battalion.....	7
The Company Situation.....	8
The Company Plan of Attack.....	8
NARRATION.....	10
The Attack on Spitzberg.....	10
The Counterattack.....	12
The First Night on Spitzberg.....	13
The Second Day on Spitzberg.....	15
The Securing of Spitzberg.....	16
ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM.....	17
LESSONS.....	19
MAP A Invasion of Southern France to Vosges Mountains	
MAP B Vosges Mountains to Maginot Line	
MAP C 100th Division's Zone	
MAP D Attack on Spitzberg	
MAP E The Action on Spitzberg	

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ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of Company I, 399th Infantry, 100th US Division in the vicinity of Bitche, France, 8-10 January 1945, during the Seventh Army's winter defense.

In order to orient the reader, it will be necessary to discuss briefly the major events which led up to this action.

On 15 August 1944, American and French forces swarmed across the southern beaches of France in the successful execution of operation "DRAGOON". (1) (2)

The allies then turned northward to pursue the retreating Nineteenth Army up the RHONE VALLEY. (3) (4)

Reaching the BELFORT GAP, the Germans wheeled about to prepare a strong defensive line through and along the entire length of the Vosges Mountains. Behind this line they planned to regroup and rearrange their shattered forces to defend the Vosges Mountains line and stop the Allied advance. (5) (6) (7) (See Map A)

The 100th US Division had landed at Marseilles on 20 October and on 14 November had taken part in Seventh Army's drive to clear the Vosges Mountains and drive the enemy north of the RHINE RIVER. (8) (9)

In early December the Seventh Army started to breach the SIGFRIED and MAGINOT defenses. Bitter fighting in the treacherous mountains covered by the MAGINOT forts was leading up to a scheduled Seventh Army thrust into the SAAR-PALATINATE. But on the night of 20-21 December,

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| (1) A-1, p. 56 | (6) A-1, p. 279 |
| (2) A-4, p. 2 | (7) A-1, p. 258 |
| (3) A-13, p. 55 | (8) A-3, p. 44 |
| (4) A-1, p. 169 | (9) A-2, p. 425 |
| (5) A-11, p. 48 | |

Seventh Army directed all divisions but the US 100th and 45th to discontinue the attack and prepare to defend in the positions they occupied. The 100th and 45th US Divisions were directed to withdraw from the MAGINOT LINE to the high ground to the south. (10) (11)

At 0015 hours, 1 January 1945, the German counter-offensive "NORTHWIND" struck all along the Seventh Army front. The right flank of the 100th US Division was extended when a German penetration caused TASK FORCE HUDELSON to withdraw to WINGEN. (12) (See Map C)

On 8 January 1945, Seventh Army was defending along a line SARREGUEMINES - REDERCHING - BITCHE - WINGEN - DAMBACK then southeast to the RHINE RIVER. (13) (See Map B)

THE GENERAL SITUATION (See Map B)

The Seventh Army occupied defensive positions from near SARRBRUCKEN east 84 miles to the RHINE, and from there south along the river to STRASBOURG. (14)

On the Seventh Army's northern front, the LOW VOSGES formed a barrier 10 miles wide between troops to the east and west. Only a few good roads cross the mountains, running east from PHALSBOURG to SAVERNE, from WINGEN to INGWILLER, and from BITCHE to NIEDERBRONN. Control of these roads was essential to the coordinated command of troops on both sides of the VOSGES. Large troop forces could not be easily employed in this mountainous area. The rugged character of the terrain offered the enemy a temporarily secure flank for his counterattack in force, but he had to gamble on holding the main lateral road for a limited time if he were to be successful in splitting the Seventh Army's forces and destroying them in detail. These factors, actual and potential, conferred upon

(10) A-2, p. 482
(11) A-2, p. 497
(12) A-5, Part VI, p. 4
(13) A-2, p. 563
(14) A-2, p. 563

the northern front an aspect of duality which complicated its maintenance.

Not clear

The Seventh Army planned to delay on the following general lines: first position on the MAGINOT LINE by daybreak 2 January, second position on the BITCHE - NIEDERBRONN - BISCHWILLER line on order, third position on the BITCHE - INGWILLER - STRASBOURG line on order, and, finally, the main VOSGES MOUNTAINS position on order. The existing front lines were to be held thinly with light, highly mobile forces only, these forces to be withdrawn under pressure. With Sixth Army Group's specific authority, the Seventh Army could use the Seventh Army's divisions, now earmarked for SHAEF reserve, to restore any adverse situation in the XV Corps sector. (15)

*79th Div
?
See map B.*

XV Corps continued to maintain and improve its defensive positions, with the 44th US Division on the left and 100th US Division on the right. The first battalion, 142nd Infantry, 36th US Division, protected the extension of the right flank while the Second Armored Division, the 36th Division, and two regimental combat teams of the 63rd US Division occupied secondary battle positions in corps reserve.

On both flanks of the XV Corps sector the terrain presented major difficulties. On the east the LOW VOSGES MOUNTAINS, with its heavily wooded and mountainous terrain, formed a ten mile barrier. SPITZBERG HILL, on the high ground south of BITCHE, controlled the only good north-south road in the zone. The terrain on the west was open rolling country, only moderately wooded. The SARRE RIVER with its parallel canal and lakes invited a sudden thrust by the enemy. Upon analysis, the terrain, the framework of the tactical scheme, showed a bias in favor of the enemy. The defense plans were therefore focused on maintaining the high ground in the Corps sector. (16) (17)

(15) A-2, p. 580
(16) A-2, p. 585
(17) A-4, Part VI, p. 5

XV Corps planned continuous offensive action by raids and limited objective attacks to restore positions, deceive the enemy, and continue to organize reserve positions.

The 100th US Division was occupying defensive positions along an eleven mile front. Confronting the division -- on a line extending east from RIMLING to URBACH -- were elements of the German 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, and, from URBACH to BITCHE, elements of the German 559th and 257th Volksgrenadier Divisions; while from BITCHE south to LEMBERG, the 100th US Division was faced by elements of the German 6th SS Mountain Division. (See Map C) (18)

Since being committed, the 100th Division had fought for 69 days through rough mountainous terrain and had suffered heavy casualties. Replacements had been received, but many key personnel had been lost. Nevertheless, these replacements quickly acquired the fighting spirit of the battle veterans and morale was excellent. Supplies were adequate, with the exception of a few items of combat clothing. (19)

On the other hand, the German divisions had suffered heavy losses and were not up to normal strength. Their morale had been raised somewhat since their long-awaited counter-offensive had begun in December. The Germans' supply situation was good; they had stripped the countryside in retreating and had well stocked dumps suitably located for close support. Almost continuous snow and cloudy weather had reduced the advantage of our air superiority; there can be little doubt that the enemy had taken full advantage of the opportunity afforded him by the bad weather to move needed supplies to the front and to advanced supply depots. Generally, the combat efficiency of the opposing forces was equal. (20)

(18) A-4, Part VI, p. 4

(19) Personal Experience

(20) A-4, Part VI, p. 2

In accordance with Corps and Division instructions, the 399th Infantry planned to attack SPITZBERG. For the attack, Division attached the Second Battalion, 398th Infantry, to the 399th. The 397th was to remain in defensive positions; and the 398th, less one battalion, was to occupy reserve positions in the division sector. Other attachments to the Division included the First and Second Battalions of the 255th Infantry, were earmarked for the division reserve. (21)

On 5 January the 399th Infantry was in defensive positions south of BITCHE with three battalions abreast. (22) (See Map D)

The regiment planned to hold the First and Second Battalions in their defensive positions. The Third Battalion, with two platoons of tanks from Company A, 753rd Tank Battalion, attached, was ordered to attack SIGNALBERG and SPITZBERG to their front, restore defenses to their original positions, and deny the enemy of the advantageous use of REYERSVILLER RIDGE.

DISPOSITIONS AND PLANS OF THIRD BATTALION (23) (See Map D)

The Battalion planned to jump off from the line held by the front line companies on the reverse slopes of SIGNALBERG and SPITZBERG at 0730 hours, 8 January 1945.

Company I, with a platoon of tanks and one platoon from Company L attached, would pass through Company K and flank the enemy on SPITZBERG from the south. Company K, echeloned to the left of Company I, would attack through the saddle between SIGNALBERG and SPITZBERG, and capture and hold the forward slopes of SIGNALBERG. Company L, less one platoon attached to Company I, would attack across the wooded draw and up the heights to STEINHOPH. One platoon from Company C would relieve the left flank of Company L and block the REYERSVILLER road during their attack. Company F, 398th Infantry, would be in battalion reserve in LAMBACH prepared to assist in any reverses on the right flank.

(21) A-2, p. 496
(22) A-5, p. 24
(23) A-8, p. 83

THE COMPANY SITUATION (See Map D) (24)

From its positions on the reverse slope of Hill 415, south of GLASSENBERG, Company I sent out patrols, led by the executive officer, who was very familiar with this area, to develop the situation. By 7 January the following information had been reported: that the trail on Company K's right flank ran directly to SPITZBERG and joined an east-west trail on top of SPITZBERG; that due to the heavy snow and woods, tanks could operate only along the trail until they reached the top of SPITZBERG; and that the entire area was cut up by World War I-type trenches and dug-outs covered with heavy logs. These patrols brought in additional information which indicated that the enemy held strong positions all along the line in front of the Third Battalion. The executive officer reported that with white uniforms it was possible to approach to within a few hundred yards of the Germans' main positions before being detected.

The enemy had registered his artillery and mortars on every approach to his positions and he harassed our positions continually.

Since the German counterattack and during this reconnaissance and preparation, the artillery and mortars had been firing numerous time-on-target shoots and preparations to deceive the Germans.

The weather was cold, with heavy snow. The trails were impassable to jeeps because of snowdrifts. Supplies, however, continued to be delivered in adequate quantities.

COMPANY PLAN OF ATTACK (See Map E) (25)

The line of departure would be the line held by Company K, along the trail leading to SPITZBERG; H hour, 0730 hours, 8 January 1945.

(24) A-4, Part VI, p. 5

(25) A-8, p. 87 and Personal Experience

The company planned to cross the line of departure with two platoons abreast, first on the left of the trail; second on the right; with the third platoon and the first platoon, Company L, following the second platoon. The first platoon would attack parallel with the trail until it reached the east-west trail on SPITZBERG, then attack northwest across the open ground and capture the high ground west of the draw. The second platoon would attack parallel with the trail, and capture and secure the east side of the draw. The third platoon and first platoon, Company L, would follow the second platoon and be prepared to attach on order around the right of the second platoon, and capture and secure the east section of the company objective. They would also maintain contact with Company B, 142nd Infantry, on the right. The machine gun section would be attached to the first platoon. The 60-mm mortar section would follow the company up to the open area along the trail where it would go into position in rear of the second platoon. The machine gun platoon, Company M, would attach one section to the second platoon and one section to the third platoon. The first platoon, Company A, 753rd Tank Battalion, would follow along the trail behind the company and be in position on the objective to assist the company in reorganization and be prepared to assist in repelling any counterattacks.

The company commander arranged with the tank platoon leader to have his tanks whitewashed and brought up on the night of 7 January. (26)

The executive officer was instructed to lay wire to the objective during the attack. He also was instructed to have each squad leader and platoon runner carry his sound-powered phone. Each platoon runner would carry a reel of W-130 wire and, as soon as the platoon CP was established on the objective, would lay a wire to the company CP and then to each squad in his platoon. The communication sergeant would lay wire to each platoon. (27)

(26) Personal Experience
(27) Personal Experience

The forward observers from the artillery and 81-mm mortar platoon would accompany the company commander, who would be on the trail between the first and second platoons. Normal artillery and mortar concentrations and harassing fires were planned before the attack.

The battalion CP would remain at GLASSENBERG. The battalion aid station would be located in the schoolhouse in GLASSENBERG.

NARRATION

THE ATTACK ON SPITZBERG (28) (See Map E)

Company I, led by Captain Alfred E. Olson, crossed the line of departure at exactly 0730 hours on 8 January 1945, moving very quietly astride the trail through the deep snow, which made progress very slow. The company moved approximately 1000 yards before being discovered by the Germans. This, however, brought heavy mortar and artillery concentrations and long range sniper fire upon the company, inflicting many casualties. Artillery in heavy wooded areas has the same effect as time fire. When the enemy opened fire, the company took up marching fire and moved forward from tree to tree toward the objective. When the leading elements of the company were approximately 35 yards from the top of the hill, the enemy's main battle line of 8 machine guns opened up, inflicting heavy casualties on the first and second platoons and forcing them to halt and seek cover. Captain Olson, making a quick estimate of the situation, had the forward observers lay down their fires just as close as possible and ordered the Third Platoon and First Platoon of Company L to attack down through the draw and assault their objective immediately. He ordered the First and Second Platoons to assault the positions; but when he saw that they were slow in moving in, he rushed forward firing into the German lines. This action on the part

(28) Personal Experience

of Captain Olson inspired the two platoons to assault their objectives. The first platoon pushed across the open ground and after bitter fighting succeeded in pushing the enemy from the east side of the draw and securing the position. This action assisted Company K's right platoon to seize its part of the hill. The second platoon pushed on to the objective but came under flanking fire from the right after crossing the trail. This was relieved when the third platoon made its attack and secured its position.

The Third Platoon and First Platoon, Company L, attacked abreast through the deep draw. They encountered a large enemy force in the bottom of the draw. After a short battle approximately 35 Germans were captured, then the advance continued on to the top of SPITZBERG. By sheer determined effort a line was established along the top of SPITZBERG from the second platoon to the edge of the woods just short of the LEMBERG - BITCHE road on the right. The attack was stopped here by increased resistance. By this time the two platoons were down to two officers and 16 men; 8 of these men, however, were armed with BAR's.

The executive officer was sent back to get the tanks, as they failed to follow the company during the attack. The battalion commander was bringing them forward when the second tank threw a track approximately 500 yards from the company. This blocked the trail and only the first tank got through to support the attack. This tank was employed at the head of the draw between the first and second platoons.

After inspecting the company's positions, the battalion commander arranged to attach more men to I Company. He also instructed Company K to place its reserve platoon in the woods south of Company I's first platoon.

By 1030 hours all wire lines were in, but defensive positions could not be prepared because of the heavy artillery and mortar fire. By telephone, Captain Olson instructed all squad leaders to take advantage of all the covered positions the Germans had prepared and to hold the ground they now had, because if they did not, it would mean that they would just have to retake it again. The company's previous experience in mountain fighting, where squads would be isolated from contact with the rest of the company, had shown the value of this voice link with the company commander.

The artillery and mortar forward observers were registering their close defensive fires.

THE COUNTERATTACK (29) (30) (See Map E)

At approximately 1100 hours, mortar and artillery concentrations began to fall on the company's positions. This was the preliminary to the expected enemy counterattack. Suddenly the counterattack materialized and hit Company I on both flanks. The attack up the draw on the left was stopped almost immediately, mainly by the flanking fires of the first and second platoons and the tank at the head of the draw. In repulsing this attack, Company I killed 50 and captured 5 Germans.

The attack on the right was of furious proportions; the enemy made a determined effort to push Company I from SPITZBERG and regain its positions. The right flank of Company I was exposed as Company B, 142nd Infantry, had failed to take its objective across the LEMBERG - BITCHE road. Although the men, now under the command of Lieutenant Hedgekoff, fought hard, they were over-run by the Germans attacking in waves. At this point Lieutenant Hedgekoff suggested to Captain Olson that artillery be placed on their positions, since all his men were in covered fox holes. This fire was very effective and caused the Germans to withdraw with heavy casualties.

(29) A-3, p. 115, and Personal Experience

(30) A-8, p. 89, and Personal Experience

By approximately 1430 hours the counterattack had been stopped. The company spent the rest of the daylight hours cleaning out other implacements in the area where the Germans had taken cover. At this time one- and two-man outposts were established in front of the company.

A patrol from the 60-mm mortar section established contact with Company B, 142nd Infantry, on the right. This patrol also laid wire between the two companies. It was agreed to establish a 6-man outpost at the junction of the LEMBERG - BITCHE road and the trail leading on to SPITZBERG with 3 men from each company.

At this time the company numbered 52 men and officers. During the day the company had taken 99 prisoners, including a battalion commander, an artillery commander, and 2 company commanders, and killed over 150 Germans. The company suffered 32 casualties during the day.

THE FIRST NIGHT ON SPITZBERG (31) (32)

At 1900 hours, when the executive officer was establishing the outpost at the road junction, a German patrol was surprised and captured. Soon afterwards heavy artillery concentrations began to fall all along our line, although it was inconceivable that they should know our exact positions. These heavy concentrations lasted for approximately an hour.

Support artillery answered the company's frantic calls for counter-battery fire, but because of the rugged terrain the concentrations did not silence the well placed enemy mortars and artillery.

The mortar and artillery concentrations started moving to our rear. At 0300 hours the familiar crackle of machine-pistols started. Suddenly the attack materialized and hit the Third Platoon and First Platoon, Company L, on the right flank, and continued on around the nose of the hill and up the draw between the First and Second Platoons. The attack on the left was stopped cold, mainly by the cross-fire the two platoons placed down the draw and also by the well directed artillery fire.

(31) Personal Experience

(32) A-8, P. 91, and Personal Experience

This was the second time that well directed artillery fire was brought on the enemy. The control of artillery fire was made possible by the well planned company communication system. Squad leaders hearing enemy activity to the front would call for 60-mm mortar illuminating shells. Once located, the areas of enemy activity were reported to the artillery observer by pre-registered concentration numbers.

The attack on the right, however, was not so easily stopped. The enemy had an ideal line of departure on the LEMBERG - BITCHE road, with REYERSVILLER on the right and the trail leading on to SPITZBERG on the left. They used this to good advantage. For the second time that day the Third Platoon and First Platoons, Company L, were over-run after a bitter fight. They were able to inflict heavy casualties on the enemy. The 60-mm mortar illuminating shells were of great help but there were just not enough men to properly cover the area. Again artillery was called down upon their positions. Together with this fire and the small arms fire from the 60-mm mortar section, the enemy was finally forced to withdraw after suffering heavy casualties. (33)

During reorganization, the battalion commander arrived and after an inspection ordered Company M and Battalion Headquarters Company to send all available men to Company I immediately. The company commander requested that the company be relieved by Company F, 398th Infantry, but his request was refused. The battalion's situation did not warrant their employment at this time.

Eleven men arrived from battalion and were immediately sent to the third platoon. The action from then until daylight consisted of enemy harassment by artillery fire and small combat patrols. Several enemy tank-hunting teams were driven off after causing several casualties.

(33) A-4, Part VI, p. 6, and Personal Experience

All wounded were evacuated by daylight. The evacuation was delayed by enemy artillery and patrol action.

Supplies were delivered during the night. Their delivery was delayed because the trail was blocked by the tanks.

THE SECOND DAY ON SPITZBERG

There was no action during the day of 9 January except harassing enemy artillery and mortar fire. During the day the line was adjusted to establish better support to the platoons. Wire was constructed completely around each platoon area. Trip flares and other obstacles were constructed.

An antitank gun was emplaced at the road junction on the right. The Battalion Ammunition and Pioneer platoon put antitank mines on position near the right flank and planned to lay a mine field across the LEMBERG - BITCHE road under the cover of darkness.

About noon 22 replacements were received and assigned to the platoons. The men attached from battalion were relieved.

In late afternoon, officers from Company F, 398th Infantry, made a reconnaissance of the area. At 0745 hours, 10 January, Company F was to attack through Company I and then west to drive the enemy from the forward slopes of SPITZBERG and SIGNALBERG. Upon completion of their mission, they were to return to LAMBACK. (34)

The tanks were to be attached to Company F for their attack. (35) During the night sporadic artillery fire was received throughout the company sector. At 2330 hours the enemy made several attempts to infiltrate, supported by tanks, in the Third Platoon's sector. However, these attempts were stopped by artillery and small arms fire.

The company continued to improve its positions and prepare gaps in the wire for Company F to use in passing through the company.

(34) A-5, p. 29, and Personal Experience

(35) A-3, p. 120, and Personal Experience

THE SECURING OF SPITZBERG

At 0745 hours, Company F attacked. After a short advance, heavy small arms, mortar, and artillery fire forced the company to withdraw with severe casualties. They withdrew to the draw in rear of Company I. The company was reorganizing and firing artillery concentrations preparatory to continuing the attack when orders were received for them to return to LAMBACK. This was the last offensive action until our great spring offensive in the middle of March, other than raids and patrols. (37)

The company's zone remained quiet throughout the day until late afternoon. At 1630 hours the enemy attacked along the entire company line under the cover of smoke. Captain Olson reassured all squad leaders not to worry about the smoke. They were to report all activity and not to fire until he gave the order. The enemy was 50 yards from our positions when Captain Olson gave the order to fire. This coordinated fire took the Germans by surprise. The fire laid down by the company was very effective, causing the Germans to withdraw in disorder. The Germans evacuated their wounded during the night but left over 100 dead on the soft white snow. (38)

This was the last large scale enemy counterattack. Both sides continued to harass each other by artillery and mortar fire and with small combat patrols and raids. (39)

In summary, it can be concluded that the company was successful in its mission. Although greatly under strength, it successfully attacked a larger and well entrenched enemy. It withstood heavy artillery concentrations and repelled three large coordinated counterattacks. The use of the 60-mm mortar illuminating shell and the fighting spirit of the men aided greatly in the accomplishment of this task. The attack on SPITZBERG forced the enemy to commit strong forces and expend tremendous

(37) A-7, p. 70, and Personal Experience

(38) A-5, Jan., p. 29, and Personal Experience

(30) A-3, p. 121, and Personal Experience

amounts of material. This action was best summed up by Sergeant Julius Del Mese, second platoon leader, in his answer when the regimental commander asked him about the situation. "Sir, the Germans must have looked up the records and seen that the 36th Division was a rugged old Anzio outfit, because all the German counterattacks seemed to hit our lines. And depth, Sir, you can't have depth where you ain't got men." (40)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

1. ARTILLERY

In the planning phase great detail was given to the communication system. This was done to give the artillery observer the use of all squad leaders as observers. All concentrations were numbered and squad leaders could call for fire by number or distance from the registration point. All squad leaders were very familiar with this terrain, having fought over it before. This enabled very accurate artillery fire to be placed on enemy counterattacks. The casualty effect of artillery is increased in woods. This is due to tree bursts. However, artillery has little effect on troops in covered fox holes. The artillery fire placed on the third platoon during the enemy counterattacks forced him to withdraw with heavy casualties. However, there was not one casualty in the third platoon from the fire placed on it.

2. ILLUMINATING SHELLS

The use of 60-mm mortar illuminating shells was of great aid to the company. It enabled the defenders to locate the area of enemy attack and to place fires on these counterattacking forces. This technique was employed wonderfully in repelling the German counterattack during the first night.

(40) A-8, p. 91, and Personal Experience

3. COMMUNICATIONS

The well planned communication system was a great factor in Company I accomplishing its mission. This was evident in the control the company commander maintained. It also aided greatly in the use of supporting weapons. Although over-run by the enemy, the troops could readily be informed of the situation. It is felt that this voice link with the company commander had a great effect on the morale of the troops. The commander being well informed of the situation was able to make better decisions and influence the action of his company. The squad leaders were able to assist the artillery forward observer, thereby giving the squads better support in accomplishing their mission. It can be concluded that the communication system was the dominating factor in the success of the company.

4. THE FAILURE OF ADJACENT UNITS TO ADVANCE

The failure of the unit on the right to take its objective resulted in the right flank of the third platoon becoming exposed, thus permitting the enemy to place flanking fire on the third platoon. It also invited strong counterattacks from that flank. It is believed that if more fire and pressure had been brought against the enemy in this sector, the enemy would not have been able to concentrate his troops in that area. However, with the strong outpost at the road junction and the good communication between the units, these positions were maintained.

5. COVERED FOX HOLES

The company used the entrenchments on the objective to the utmost. It is believed that without these emplacements, it is doubtful if the company could have withstood the ferocious German counterattacks and artillery fire. It can be recalled that on two occasions artillery fire was placed on the third platoon's positions, forcing the Germans to withdraw, yet not receiving one casualty of their own. They were also a great help in protecting the troops from the elements of the weather.

6. SURPRISE

The company was able to surprise the Germans by the limited observation in the woods and the mountainous terrain, also by the detailed plan to have all men and equipment white to blend with the terrain. The failure of the Germans to maintain proper security enabled the company to get close to their positions. The company had two days to plan this attack. Detailed plans were well coordinated with other units and all supporting weapons. As planned, once the attack was discovered, all men would fire their weapons. It was found from experience when fighting in wooded and mountainous terrain that the volume of fire of all men was as effective as well aimed fire. It builds confidence in the troops and is demoralizing to the enemy.

7. INFANTRY AND ARMOR COORDINATION

There is an urgent need for better coordination between tanks and infantry. This can be better brought about by each having a better knowledge of each other's missions. The company commander had made detailed plans with the platoon leader for their employment. An infantry-tank team has a great shock action and fire power. It is felt that if the tanks were with the infantry in the attack, their armor would have been an influencing factor. It was later proven to be an important factor in the defense of the position.

LESSONS

1. Artillery support can be made very effective by using squad leaders in the defense as observers.
 2. Illuminating shells aid the defender by increasing visibility during darkness.
 3. A well planned and maintained system of communication in the defense will aid in the morale of the troops and use of supporting weapons.
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4. Attacking units should press vigorously forward in their zones of action to deny the enemy the opportunity of flanking attacks or fire on adjacent units.

5. Covered fox holes will minimize casualties from artillery and mortar fire when fighting in woods.

6. Surprise followed by aggressive action on the part of the attacker can defeat an enemy although he is well entrenched and superior in number.

7. Coordination must be effected between Infantry and Armor if mutual support is to be accomplished.