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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 22ND INFANTRY (4TH INFANTRY DIVISION)
IN THE HURTGEN FOREST, GERMANY, 16 NOVEMBER-3 DECEMBER 1944
(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)

(Personal Experience of a Regimental Munitions Officer)

Type of operation described: REGIMENT IN ATTACK

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 22ND INFANTRY (4TH INFANTRY DIVISION)
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(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)
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ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the 22nd Infantry (4th Infantry Division) in the HURTGEN FOREST, east of ZWEIFALL, GERMANY, 14 November - 3 December 1944.

First, let us review briefly the strategic considerations underlying the operation and the major events which led up to it.

On 6 June 1944, the US First Army, BRITISH Second Army, and the CANADIAN First Army successfully invaded northern FRANCE along the coast of NORMANDY between the ORNE RIVER and the CARENTAN ESTUARY, and the east coast of the COTENTIN PENINSULAR, and by 26 August, had secured the Lodgment area (except ST. NAZAIRE, BREST, and LORIENT), liberated PARIS, and captured firm bridgeheads across the SEINE RIVER. (See Map A)

In May 1944, it was decided that the RUHR, the nearest industrial area vital to German economy would be the primary objective in GERMANY. The operation envisaged was to make the main effort with the bulk of the forces along the axis AMIENS-MAUBEUGE-LEIGE-the RUHR, and a secondary effort with a smaller force along the axis VERDUN-METZ, to destroy the German forces west of the RHINE RIVER and to envelop the RUHR from the north and from the south. The northern route was chosen for the main effort since it was the most direct route to the Ruhr; it would insure a secure left flank resting on the channel; it was within range of air bases in the United Kingdom; it would make feasible maximum coordination with allied sea power in opening and operating

the channel ports; and, the route was through good airfield country. (1)

On 15 August 1944, the US Seventh Army successfully invaded southern France along the FRENCH-MEDITERRANEAN COAST in the CANNES-TOULON area. (2)

During the period 26 August-30 September, the allies overran NORTHERN FRANCE, LUXEMBURG, BELGIUM, and southern HOLLAND. The British forces had captured the ports of LE HARVE, BRUGES, and ANTWERP; First US Army forces had liberated MAASTRICHT, and had penetrated the SIEGFRIED LINE in the vicinity of AACHEN, and east of LUXEMBURG; Third US Army had closed to the MOZELLE RIVER in the vicinity of METZ, and secured bridgeheads at NANCY, and south of METZ; Seventh US Army, making swift progress up the RHONE VALLEY had made contact with 3rd Army from the north on 11 September at SOMBARNON, FRANCE. (3)

During the month of October, the allied drive lost its ^{Force/Impulse} impetus with the reaching of the SIEGFRIED LINE in the north, and the MOSSELLE RIVER in the south. The extensive fortifications, the extent of the area covered by the Allied forces over a short period of time, and the need for additional supplies at forward points to sustain the drive made it apparent that no further large scale offensive could be launched until additional forces could be concentrated and the logistical situation improved. By 1 November the Allied forces were disposed along a line which, beginning in the north on the banks of the RHINE RIVER, extended 500 miles southward to the border of SWITZERLAND. (3)

- (1) A-1
- (2) A-1, p. 295
- (3) A-2, p. 52

The 4th Infantry Division landed on UTAH BEACH at H-HOUR, D-Day, as an assault element of US First Army and fought continuously throughout the Normandy Campaign which resulted in the capture of CHERBOURG, and the ST. LO BREAKTHROUGH. (4)

On 10 November 1944, after breaching the enemy defense line at ST. LO, and pursuit of the enemy through northern FRANCE and BELGIUM, the 4th Infantry Division had reached the German Frontier, and was in position on the western fringe of the HURTGEN FOREST, east of ZWEIFALL, GERMANY. (4)

The First and Ninth US Army was ordered to continue the attack between 11-16 November. The First US Army was to attack to the east to reach the RHINE RIVER in the vicinity of COLOGNE, and BONN, and to seize a bridgehead across the RHINE RIVER if the situation should permit. The Ninth US Army on the left was to attack in coordination with First US Army and to protect its left flank. (5)

GENERAL SITUATION

The "SIEGFRIED LINE" (commonly known as the German West Wall), was a continuous series of pillboxes and emplacements extending along the western boundaries of Germany from KLEVE on the Dutch frontier to LORRACH, near BASLE on the Swiss border. It consisted mostly of a large number of reinforced concrete pillboxes for machine guns and antitank weapons. (See Map A) (6)

The line itself, was constructed on the first natural barrier, east of the German border. Where this natural barrier was weakest the pillbox concentration was the strongest. The basic principle behind the placement of pillboxes was simple and logical, namely to increase the defensive potential of the terrain along the German frontier. Where tanks and Infantry would have a

(4) Personal knowledge

(5) A-1, p. 328; A-3, p. 73, 74

(6) Personal knowledge

difficult job in attacking, the defenses were sketchy. Where a natural attack corridor existed (AACHEN PLAIN), there the defenses were most dense. (6)

Four years of neglect during the high tide of German conquest had made camouflage superb. Undergrowth, turf, and disguise made many of the boxes extremely difficult to locate. Pillboxes were mutually supporting and possessed excellent paths of fire. They occurred wherever the terrain indicated profitable use of a machine gun or antitank weapon. They were further strengthened by use of mines and barbed wire. (6)

Several dense patches of forest are scattered along the line. These proved dense enough to handicap armored maneuver. They also furnished excellent concealment for Infantry, and in them visibility was more suitable for defenders who did not have to move. (7)

It should be remembered that the basic design of the SIEGFRIED LINE called for the employment of mobile field armies, operating out of, and behind it. The real defense was to be an aggressive counterattacking force, basing its offense from the SIEGFRIED LINE. The object of the defenses was not to stop the enemy, but to slow him up and tire him in the attack and then hit him with strong counterattacks. No single key position presented an opportunity for any brilliant attack that would break the entire system. (8)

By this time the enemy had succeeded partially in their efforts to reorganize and reinforce their western armies. Many of the hastily organized battle groups and temporary divisions

- (6) Personal knowledge
- (7) Personal knowledge
- (8) A-3, p. 52

that had been able to block the allied rush in September had been reassembled into recognized numbered divisions. Fortress battalions were formed to man the "West Wall Defenses." The fanatical resistance was quite a contrast to the haphazard uninspired rear guard action which the enemy had put up in France and Belgium. From September onward, advances by the Allied Forces was measured in thousands of yards and, by a heavy price in casualties and material for every yard gained. For once it seemed the FUEHRERS oft repeated exhortation to "defend to the last man and the last round" was not falling on barren ground. This infusion of new blood into the "West Wall Defenses" was particularly noticeable on the First US Army front. (9)(10)

The First Army plan for the coming offensive called for a large scale coordinated attack to secure crossings of the ROER RIVER, to facilitate the advance of the US First Army to the RHINE RIVER, and the assault on COLOGNE and BONN. The VIII Corps on the right flank was to conduct an aggressive defense in its sector and be prepared to advance on KOBLENZ on Army order. The V Corps, an interior Corps, was to make a preliminary attack to secure the VOSSENACH-SCHMIDT-STRAUCH area. After securing this area, V Corps was to be prepared to advance on BONN within the Corps zone on Army order after the VII Corps had penetrated the enemy's main positions. The VII Corps, to which the 4th Infantry Division was assigned, on the left flank, would make the main effort in the direction of DUREN and COLOGNE to penetrate the enemy's main

(9) A-3, p. 84

(10) A-4, A-5

positions and to advance to the RHINE RIVER in the vicinity of COLOGNE. (11)

The attack by First Army was to be coordinated with an attack by Ninth Army, and was scheduled to follow an intensive aerial bombardment by 2392 heavy bombers, 107 medium bombers, and 485 fighter bombers from the American and British Airforce, along the entire First and Ninth Army front. The attack by First Army was not to be launched during the period 11-16 November until weather conditions permitted the use of fighter bombers. On 16 November the attack was to be launched regardless of weather condition. (12)

The weather continued bad, the attack was postponed from day to day until 16 November, when it was finally initiated. (13)

VII Corps planned to attack with the 104th Division; 3rd Armored Division; 1st Infantry Division; and 4th Infantry Division in that order from left to right. The 1st Infantry Division would make the main effort by attacking in the direction of LANGERWEHE to seize crossings of the ROER RIVER north of DUREN, and capture the town of GRESSENICH and the HAMMICH-NORTHEBERG RIDGE. The 104th Division was to attack with its main effort north of ESCHWEILER and the INDE RIVER to pinch out enemy defenses in the vicinity of ESCHWEILER. The 3rd Armored Division, initially supported by the attack of the 104th Division on the left, and

(11) A-3, p. 67

(12) A-3, p. 73,74

(13) Personal knowledge

the 1st Division on the right, would attack when ordered by Corps in conjunction with the 1st Division to seize the area HASTENRATH-WERTH-KOTTENICH. The 4th Division, to which the 22nd Infantry was assigned, on the right, was to seize a crossing of the ROER RIVER in the vicinity of DUREN and to the south thereof; to assist the advance of the 1st Infantry Division to seize (14) COLOGNE; and to protect the right flank of the VII Corps. (See Map B)

The SIEGFRIED LINE stretches across the entire 7th Corps front. To the south the HURTGEN FOREST constituted a natural barrier which would be difficult to penetrate. In general, the terrain consisted of numerous streams and steep slopes which made it unsuited for armor. The terrain, combined with almost continuous adverse weather conditions favored the enemy's defenses. In addition to the SIEGFRIED LINE defenses, and its natural barriers, the Corps was opposed by the 7th German Army, which was well organized and well trained. (15)

The closing of the campaign in northern France against comparatively weak enemy resistance, followed by a more stabilized situation, enabled the Division to properly indoctrinate and train its replacements. The Division was in fighting trim, and the morale and esprit was high. Although the German forces had suffered defeat in France, and many of the units were not up to their normal strength, they were well organized and well trained, and consisted mostly of combat veterans. Their morale was good. Their disadvantages, however, were off-set by the advantages afforded by the terrain and adverse weather conditions. (16)(17)

(18)

- (14) A-3, p. 72, 73
- (15) A-3, p. 52, 84
- (16) Personal knowledge
- (17) A-6, A-7
- (18) A-8, A-9

DISPOSITION AND PLANS OF THE 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The Division was poised along a line extending approximately 7,000 yards south along the western fringe of the HURTGEN FOREST. Confronting the Division on a line extending south through the HURTGEN FOREST, were elements of the 2nd Panzer Division, the 344th Grenadier Division, and the 89th and 91st Infantry Division's. (17) (18) (19)

*S of
C
B*

In accordance with the Corps plan the division planned to attack in conjunction with the 1st Division to secure the high ground east of SCHEVENHUTTE, and capture the towns of GROSSHAU and KLEINHAU. The 8th Infantry on the left, would attack east in its zone to seize the high ground east of SCHEVENHUTTE, astride the SCHEVENHUTTE-GURZENICH road. The 22nd Infantry would attack east in its zone of action to seize the towns of GROSSHAU and KLEINHAU, and secure the GROSSHAU-KLEINHAU opening (clearing in the forest). The 12th Infantry would attack to the northeast to seize a line of departure, and provide routes for Combat Command "R" 5th Armored Division, and to clear mines from Route "A" and "B" and protect the right flank of the division.

Combat Command "R" 5th Armored Division would be prepared, when objectives of the 12th and 22nd Infantry had been secured, to advance by route "A" or "B" to seize HURTGEN and the HURTGEN-BERGSTEIN RIDGE, successively. The 24th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (less 1 troop) would maintain contact between the 8th and 22nd Infantry; the 4th Reconnaissance Troop (mec) would maintain contact with the 12th Infantry and the 24th Cavalry

(17) A-6; A-7
(18) A-8; A-9
(19) A-10

Reconnaissance Squadron. The line of departure would be the line presently held by the 47th Infantry Regiment and the 298th Engineer (C) Battalion. H-hour and D-day would be announced. (20)

REGIMENTAL SITUATION

The "SIEGFRIED LINE" in this sector was a continuous obstacle extending across the entire Regimental front. It was here constructed to implement the natural barriers formed by the HURTGEN FOREST. (21)

The forest constituted one of the major obstacles to the advance of the Regiment. Tall, closely packed fir trees rise seventy-five to one hundred feet above the damp, rugged floor of the forest allowing little sunlight to filter through even on the brightest days. The heavy carpet of pine needles provided concealment for all types of mines. The tall fir trees caused artillery projectiles to detonate in the air, causing the same casualty effect as air-bursts. Appreciating the value of the forest as a natural obstacle the enemy used all the resources at his disposal to strengthen the barrier. Liberal and clever use was made of wire, pillboxes, and mines. The perpetual gloom of the forest destroyed morale. The denseness of the forest quite naturally precluded that close air and artillery support to which the division had been so accustomed. The terrain in the forest was hilly with numerous unbridged icy mountain streams, and steep slopes. The road net, combined with deep mud, was woefully inadequate to support a unit of this size. The forest was dense enough to handicap the maneuver of armored vehicles, and the hilly terrain and flooded unbridged streams canalized

(20) A-10

(21) Personal knowledge

the movement of all vehicular traffic. It furnished excellent cover and concealment for infantry, however, visibility was more suitable for the defender, since he did not have to move.

(22)

Enemy forces opposing the regiment consisted of elements of the 1056th, 1057th and 1058th Infantry Regiments. These forces were well organized and well trained. The terrain and thickly wooded forest gave the enemy advantage over an attacking force. (23) (24)

On 10 November the regiment had completed its plans for the attack, and had made arrangements for the reinforcement of the outpost line held by the 298th Engineer (C) Battalion should that action become necessary. Most of the reconnaissance was accomplished from the line of departure, which was outposted by the 298th Engineer (C) Battalion. The wait for suitable weather to launch the coordinated offensive provided the regiment with valuable time for the preparation for the attack. Schools were conducted for all company grade officers, in woods fighting and adjustment of artillery fire. Anticipating the difficulties of maintaining communication during the operation, detailed arrangements were made to augment the regimental communication system. A surplus of wire and radio equipment was accumulated and communication personnel of the battalions were doubled, and in some instances tripled. Special attention was also given to supply and evacuation problems, and additional hand-carrying parties and litter squads were formed. (22) (25)

(22) Personal knowledge

(23) A-6; A-7

(24) A-8; A-9

(25) A-10

During this five day lull, continuous rain, hail, or snow had turned the fields and trails into streams of mud. Icy mountain streams had flooded over their banks, which handicapped the movement of all vehicular traffic. (26)

Although limitations were imposed on the expenditure of 105mm artillery and 81mm mortar ammunition, the regiment had accumulated a stock pile of this type ammunition which could be used to supplement existing allocations from higher headquarters. (26)

THE REGIMENTAL PLAN OF ATTACK (27)
(See Map C)

The Regiment planned to attack initially in a column of Battalions in order 2nd, 1st and 3rd Battalion. (27)

The 2nd Battalion would attack to the northeast to seize the high ground dominating ROAD "A". After crossing the line of departure, it would drop one Company to form a defensive north (left) flank. The 1st Battalion would follow the 2nd Battalion, swing to the north and pass through the 2nd Battalion Rifle Company protecting the north flank and attack astride TRAIL "E" to seize HILL "X" and the TRAIL JUNCTION on its north slope, and protect the left (north) flank of the Regiment. The 3rd Battalion, in reserve, would follow the 2nd and 1st Battalion to clear TRAIL "E" and protect the right flank of the Regiment.

All 81mm mortars of the Combat Team were to be massed and emplaced in position to support the attack. The mortars with wire communication to each of the Rifle Battalions would provide their massed fires where needed. Priority of fire would be given initially to the 2nd Battalion.

(26) Personal knowledge
(27) A-11

Company "C", 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion (less one Platoon) would be in general support of the Regiment.

The 44th Field Artillery Battalion reinforced by the fires of the 20th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzers) would be in general support of the Regiment. To deceive the enemy, heavy concentrations would be placed to the right (south) and left (north) flanks of the area the Regiment planned to penetrate. Initially, priority of fire was to be given to the 2nd Battalion.

Company "C" and Company "D" (less three platoons) 70th Tank Battalion and one platoon Company "C", 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion would initially be held in reserve. The nature of the terrain and the denseness of the forest precluded their use.

Company "C", 4th Engineer (C) Battalion would support the advance of the Combat Team by clearing mines, barbed wire entanglements and booby traps in the Regimental zone of action, facilitate the advance of Tanks and Tank Destroyers, and clear the MSR -- priority initially given to TRAIL "E".

At 0100, 16 November, CT 22 was notified that D-day was 16 November, and later that H-hour was 1245. (28)

NARRATION

FIRST DAY OF ATTACK (16 November)

The day dawned overcast and cloudy. As the morning wore on, the sky began to clear. At 1100 there was a ceiling of broken clouds over the entire Regimental sector. At 1145 the Air Attack commenced. Artillery preparations commenced at H-60 and continued to H-hour. (28)

(28) Personal knowledge

The 2nd Battalion, led by Lieutenant Colonel Glen D. Walker, crossed the line of departure promptly at 1245 hours. Resistance was relatively light immediately following the air and artillery bombardment. However, slow progress was made against extensive mine fields, and dense woods. At 1335 hours the Battalion dropped one Company to form a defensive flank to the north. Continuing against moderate resistance, the Battalion advanced approximately 600 yards before making contact with the enemy. By 1500, the enemy had begun to recover somewhat from the shock of the initial Air and Artillery bombardment, and resistance began to stiffen. By 1610, after gaining approximately 1500 yards, the Battalion was stopped by murderous machine gun, artillery, and mortar fire, and secured its position for the night. Enemy forces from the north caused the Battalion to swing to the north, thereby making its front almost perpendicular to the line of departure. (29)

The 1st Battalion, led by Major Hubert L. Drake, following the 2nd Battalion, crossed the line of departure, swung to the north, passed through the 2nd Battalion Rifle Company protecting the left (north) flank and attacked along TRAIL "E". Slow progress was made in negotiating extensive mine fields and barbed wire entanglements. After advancing approximately 500 yards the attack struck the flanks and rear of a dug-in enemy Battalion which occupied a defensive position on the forward slopes of HILL "X" along the general trace of STREAM "T". By 1640, the Battalion had maneuvered its right (east) flank about halfway up the southern slope of HILL "X" and secured its position for the night. (29)

(29) A-4, p. 3,4

The 3rd Battalion, led by Lieutenant Colonel Arthur S. Teague, was ordered to relieve elements of the 2nd Battalion securing the southern part of TRAIL "E" and to clear this fire break for use as a temporary MSR. At 1500, Company "I" and "L" moved to the right (south) flank to relieve elements of the 2nd Battalion and open TRAIL "E". (30)

In the four daylight hours of its first day of attack, the Regiment had gained approximately 1500 yards at a cost of 46 Enlisted Men and 9 Officers. (30)

During the night enemy artillery and mortar fire increased in intensity. The tall firs caused the projectiles to detonate above the ground with the same casualty effect as air bursts. Maintenance of communications caused considerable difficulty despite continuous efforts of communication personnel. Telephone instruments, wire lines, and radios were destroyed faster than they could be replaced. (31)

SECOND DAY OF ATTACK (17 November) (32) (33)

The scheme of maneuver for the attack on 17 November called for the 1st Battalion with one platoon of tanks attached, to continue its attack along TRAIL "E" to seize HILL "X" approximately 1000 yards to the north and the TRAIL JUNCTION on its forward slope. The Battalion would then swing to the east and attack abreast of the 2nd Battalion to seize the high ground approximately 500 yards to the front which dominated ROAD "A". The 2nd Battalion would continue its advance to the east to seize

(30) A-4, p. 4

(31) Personal knowledge

(32) Personal knowledge

(33) A-4, p. 4,5

the high ground dominating ROAD "A". The 3rd Battalion would continue to protect the right (south) flank of the Regiment and aid in clearing TRAIL "E".

The attack, scheduled to jump off at 0830, was delayed until 0945 by extremely heavy enemy artillery and mortar concentrations throughout the Regimental zone of action, the death of the 1st Battalion Commander (Major Hubert L. Drake), the wounding of the 3rd Battalion Commander (Lieutenant Colonel Arthur S. Teague), and extensive minefields. However, with a 30 minute artillery bombardment, and with pursuit aircraft of the IX Tactical Air Command in support, the attack jumped off at 0945.

Against heavy artillery, mortar, and machine gun, and small arms fire, the 1st Battalion, led by Lieutenant Colonel George M. Goforth, pushed forward, and by 1145 had secured the TRAIL JUNCTION on the north slope of HILL "X". By 1330 it had pushed a defensive flank 500 yards further to the north. During this action two tanks supporting the attack were knocked out by mines. The remaining three tanks of the attached platoon were unable to advance with foot elements because of the dense woods bordering the mined fire breaks. As planned, the 1st Battalion then attacked to the east. The advance was slow - control difficult. The minefields, barbed wire entanglements were continuous, every foot of advance was bitterly contested. The enemy was making a determined effort to prevent the cutting of ROAD "A" - the main north-south road running through the HURTGEN FOREST. However, by 1630 leading elements of the 1st Battalion had reached a position on the north-east slope of HILL "X" from which ROAD "A" could be dominated by fire. Here, the Battalion was ordered to secure its position for the night.

The attack on 17 November made it necessary for the 2nd Battalion to readjust its position for the attack, since the line now held ran almost perpendicular to the line of departure, and faced generally north. The 2nd Battalion continued its attack to the east at 0945, against an unending belt of minefields, booby traps, barbed wire entanglements, enemy entrenchments, and heavy concentrations of accurate enemy artillery and mortar fire. The attack was slowed by enemy infiltration to its rear. At approximately 1630, it had reached a position on the eastern slope of the high ground east of Stream "T" from which ROAD "A" could be dominated by fire. After reaching this position, the Battalion was ordered to secure its position for the night.

One Company of the 3rd Battalion (in reserve) was committed at 1415 to clear the enemy infiltration in rear of the 2nd Battalion. The 3rd Battalion continued to protect the south flank of the Regiment and assist in clearing TRAIL "E".

In the second days operations, the Regiment had advanced approximately 1000 yards to dominate ROAD "A" -- the main north-south road through the HURTGEN Forest. The Regiment suffered 104 enlisted men and 2 Officer casualties during the day.

Of importance in the enemys defenses were his extremely heavy and accurate artillery and mortar concentrations on all trails and firebreaks which could be used as supply and evacuation routes. The Engineers were seriously hampered by this heavy fire in the mine sweeping and road maintenance necessary for supply and evacuation, and for supporting armor.

The long hand carry of casualties and supplies had become a major problem. Additional carrying parties and litter squads

were formed from Headquarters, Service Company, and reserve elements of the Regiment -- even replacements had to be used as carrying parties.

THIRD DAY OF ATTACK (18 November) (34) (35)

The mission of breaching the SIEGFRIED LINE soon boiled down to the job of effecting a penetration of the HURTGEN FOREST, and then cleaning out the enemy that remained in it.

The scheme of maneuver for 18 November was to attack to the east at 0830 with the 1st and 2nd Battalions abreast, 1st Battalion on the left; with the 3rd Battalion, in reserve, protecting the MSR (TRAIL "E"). The 1st and 2nd Battalion were to cross ROAD "A" and seize hills "Y" and "Z" respectively.

An enemy counterattack was launched against the 2nd Battalion at 0700 hours but was quickly repulsed by artillery and small arms fire. The attack jumped off as scheduled and advanced slowly against heavy machine gun and small arms fire, and an extensive anti-personnel mine field which was both wide and deep. Considerable time was spent in negotiating this minefield. Meanwhile, Company "F", which had been protecting the right (south) flank of the Battalion, and which had beaten off the enemy counterattack early that morning, lost both direction and contact. The Company was not located until late in the afternoon. The attack was further slowed by heavy and extremely accurate artillery fire; and, the evacuation of the Battalion Commander (Lieutenant Colonel Glen D. Walker), the Battalion S-3 (Captain George F. Kerr), and the Battalion Communication Officer, who was wounded by enemy artillery fire. The Battalion Executive Officer

(34) Personal knowledge

(35) A-4, p. 5, 6

(Major Joseph T. Samuels) moved forward with a new Battalion S-3 to assume command. Within five minutes after reaching the Battalion Command Post the new Battalion Commander had been wounded and the new S-3 was killed. The Regimental S-2 (Major Howard Blazzard) was sent forward to take command of the 2nd Battalion. By the time he reached the Battalion Command Post no member of the staff remained -- all had been wounded and evacuated. Assisted only by one runner, Major Blazzard started the Battalion forward at 1430. At 1650 it had pushed forward and had reached its objective (HILL "Z"). Here, it was ordered to tie in with the 1st Battalion and secure its position for the night.

The 1st Battalion advanced against strong artillery and mortar fire. Fighting hard, the Battalion crossed ROAD "A" 1013; and from there advanced an additional 500 yards, seizing HILL "Y" by 1430 hours.

As the attack developed, the 3rd Battalion echeloned to the north, maintained contact between the 1st and 2nd Battalions, and protected the north flank of the Combat Team.

Since the Combat Team was once more fighting with both flanks and rear open, and with a frontage of more than 3,500 yards of dense woods, and with only about 1,500 yards of which were occupied, the nightly buttoning up procedure of the Rifle Battalions approximated the idea of the British hollow square (a square with one line parallel with the enemy lines, and one line parallel to each flank).

A two day's supply of rations and ammunition was kept moving forward to within each Battalion's perimeter. These

supplies were to make the Battalion self sustaining, if cut off by the enemy, until physical contact could be regained.

Heavy artillery and mortar fire continued to interdict the heavily mined fire-breaks which were made masses of deep mud by the continual rains and snow. Two additional Platoons of Company "C" 4th Engineer (C) Battalion were placed in direct support of the Combat Team, but it was impossible to get supporting armor to the attacking elements. Long hand-carries were necessary to supply these units and to evacuate casualties. Communication was seriously hampered as enemy mortar and artillery fire destroyed radios and cut wire lines.

The Combat Team had gained approximately 1,000 yards at a cost of 150 enlisted men and 13 Officer casualties.

FOURTH DAY OF ATTACK (19 November) (35) (36)

Although plans called for the resumption of the attack on 19 November, this was impractical and Division directed that the attack be postponed. The major reasons for this were: TRAIL "E" had been so heavily mined that engineers were not yet able to clear it -- after the trail had been swept twice, vehicles still hit mines in the deep ruts, and a third sweeping disclosed addition mines; hand carry of wounded and supplies was so long that a further advance was an impossibility. The hand carry of supplies and wounded had become so long that the use of all available personnel, including newly arrived replacements, was still not enough to provide adequate supply and evacuation services; the bridge across the swift mountain stream near the junction of ROADS "A" and "B" had been blown out -- the bridge

(35) Personal knowledge

(36) A-4, p. 6

site, together with the valley, was under such heavy and continuous artillery fire, including railroad guns, that it had been impossible to bridge the stream, thus forcing carrying parties and litter squads to ford the neck-deep icy water of the stream which had flooded out of its banks. The 3rd Battalion was no longer an effective fighting force. Company "I" which had taken over the defensive flank to the north when the 1st Battalion turned east, had not been relieved by the 24th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, although this relief had been ordered 24 hours earlier; Company "L" had been seriously disorganized by loss of key personnel and by failure of mop-up parties to return.

The day was used for regrouping, reorganizing, consolidating positions, opening TRAIL "E", and resupplying. Intense artillery and mortar fire repeatedly knocked out all communications and, together with the precipitous terrain, seriously hindered resupply. Patrols were active on both sides.

Better
A by-passed enemy strong point opened fire on the security outpost of the Regimental Command Post at 1545. Company "K", ordered to the Command Post to bolster security and reduce this strongpoint, was in position by 1830. The position of this strongpoint suggested the possibility of its having been used as an observation post to adjust unusually accurate artillery fire which the 2nd Battalion had received the day before.

Although action had been comparatively light, the Regiment suffered 102 enlisted men and 7 Officer casualties during the day.

FIFTH DAY OF ATTACK (20 November) (37) (38) (39)
(See Map D)

On 20 November, the regimental zone of action was reduced in width by approximately 1000 yards by moving the boundary between the 22nd and 12th Infantry Regiments to the north.

The attack was resumed at 0850, 20 November. The 1st and 2nd Battalions were to attack abreast, 2nd Battalion on the right, along the axis of ROAD "B" to seize the dominating terrain 600 yards to the east. The 3rd Battalion, in reserve, was to open ROAD "A" as an MSR, clearing it north to the Combat Team boundary.

The enemy launched a coordinated attack against the 2nd Battalion's positions at the same time that the 2nd Battalion attacked. In the vigorous close-in fight resulting from this head-on collision of two attacks, the 2nd Battalion advanced slowly and had one Company on its objective at 1000. An Infantry-armor counterattack was launched against 2nd Battalion positions from the southeast at 1050. Company "L" was ordered to reinforce the 2nd Battalion. The counterattack was repulsed with machine gun and artillery fire; and the situation was cleared by 1215 hours. Company "L" was attached to the 2nd Battalion and went into position to cover the Battalion's right (south) flank.

The 1st Battalion attacked at 0920 against moderate resistance, and by 1017, had reached its objective. The Battalion immediately blocked ROAD B with mines, and covered it with bazooka teams. An enemy counterattack from the north was launched against the 1st

- (37) Personal knowledge
- (38) A-4, p. 6, 7
- (39) A-12

Battalion at 1037. The Battalion waited until it was within close range before opening fire from its hastily prepared positions. The counterattack was repulsed with heavy artillery and small arms fire, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy and taking 25 prisoners.

At the Combat Team Command Post, Company "K" attacked at 1300 to destroy the by-passed strongpoint. The strongpoint had not been reduced by dark, and resumption of the attack was planned for 21 November. This strongpoint had caused several casualties among Command Post Personnel, and in one skirmish, the Headquarters Commandant (Captain David Mitchell) was killed.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions were well established on their objectives by 1420. However, major difficulties confronted the Combat Team. Forward units and all possible supply routes were constantly subjected to extremely heavy artillery and mortar fire; the essential bridge near the junction of ROADS "A" and "B" had not yet been rebuilt. As enemy shelling made the crossing site untenable, the bridge was built in sections in the woods above the valley; the one available motor route (TRAIL "E") was an axle-deep quagmire which had not yet been cleared. Along this trail, into which vehicles were canalized by the thick woods, the enemy buried mines three-deep -- some so that they would not explode until deep ruts had been cut in the mud by traffic. Box mines were found along the shoulders and ditches bordering the trail. Anti-lifting devices were attached to the great majority of mines, which necessitated destroying the mines in place, and additional work to fill the resulting craters. As a result of these conditions, a hand carry of more than 1,500

yards was necessary to supply forward elements and evacuate casualties. Armor and antitank weapons were unable to get forward.

During the day the Regiment had gained approximately 600 yards at a cost of 195 enlisted men and 8 Officer casualties.

SIXTH DAY OF ATTACK (21 November) (40) (41)

In view of the difficulties encountered, Combat Team 22 was not ordered to continue the advance on 21 November. During the night 20-21 November the Engineers, working waist deep in icy water, installed the bridge near the junction of ROAD "A" and "B". TRAIL "E" was cleared of mines and opened to traffic. This had facilitated the movement of armor to the attacking elements. Shortly after daylight a small group of enemy surrendered to armored vehicles which had just crossed the completed bridge. This small group of enemy undoubtedly had been directing the effective artillery fire which had kept the area untenable.

The Combat Team was directed to clear all of ROAD "A" in its sector, and, in addition, to mop up all of the north portion of its sector between TRAIL "E" and ROAD "A", and to make contact with Combat Team 8 on the left. A heavy patrol moved without difficulty and without enemy contact to a previously agreed upon point just short of the Combat Team's boundary, and there awaited contact with Combat Team 8. This contact had not materialized by late in the afternoon. Therefore, the Division Commander directed that a reinforced Company attack beyond the Regimental boundary until contact was established with the 8th

(40) Personal knowledge
(41) A-4

Infantry attacking to the south. The 8th Infantry reported that it was held up by entrenched Infantry and dug-in tanks astride ROAD "A". Company "I" supported by tanks and tank destroyers, attacked north along ROAD "A" at 1555, swept the area, and contacted Company "L" 8th Infantry at 1655.

At 1100 Company "K" resumed the attack on the enemy strong-point near the Regimental Command Post. Supported by a tank and a tank destroyer, the Company dislodged the enemy and captured 20 prisoners.

Although action in the Regimental zone was comparatively light, the Regiment sustained 303 enlisted and 3 Officer casualties, which were caused mostly by enemy artillery and mortar fire.

SEVENTH DAY OF ATTACK (22 November) (42) (43)

The Regiment resumed its advance on 22 November at 0800. The plan of attack called for the 1st Battalion to feint several frontal attacks, and revert to Regimental reserve. The 3rd Battalion (reassembled), would move at daylight, swing to the north from its reserve position and attack around the left flank of the 1st Battalion. The 2nd Battalion was to advance south of ROAD "B" in the direction of GROSSHAU.

At 0930, the 3rd Battalion attacked around the left flank of the 1st Battalion, and advanced to the southeast. This envelopment proved highly successful. Although contact with attacking echelons was lost when key personnel became casualties; the 3rd Battalion's attack against strong artillery and mortar fire gained approximately 1,200 yards eastward to within sight of GROSSHAU. During its advance one antiaircraft flak gun and

(42) Personal knowledge

(43) A-4, p. 8, 9

two 88mm guns were captured. The Battalion dominated and cut by direct fire the main road junction southwest of GROSSHAU, and had consolidated its positions so as to cut the roads leading to this junction from the west and northwest.

The attack of the 2nd Battalion was met by an enemy attack on its left (north) flank (attack evidently resulted from the 1st Battalion's feints to the east). Aided by tank destroyers, the attack was quickly repulsed, and the attack continued at 0950. Stubborn resistance was immediately encountered, including fire from two dug-in self-propelled guns. Aided by Cal. .50 machine gun fire from tank destroyers, the Battalion slowly pushed across ROAD "C" and, despite heavy casualties, gained approximately 1000 yards. The Battalion's south flank became more exposed as the attack progressed, 100 replacements which had just reported to the 2nd Battalion were used to secure its south flank.

The 1st Battalion, in reserve, sent one Company to the south to strengthen the 2nd Battalion's right (south) flank.

During the day the Regiment had gained approximately 1,200 yards at a cost of 162 enlisted men and 5 Officer casualties.

EIGHTH DAY OF ATTACK (23 November) (44) (45)

The Regiment was not ordered to continue the advance on 23 November. Operations were limited to consolidation, readjustment, resupply, reorganization, mopping up enemy pockets, clearing ROAD "B" to the trail junction west of GROSSHAU, moving up armor and antitank guns.

(44) Personal knowledge

(45) A-4, p. 9

The 2nd Battalion consolidated its positions during the day and gained control, by fire, of two trail junctions approximately 500 yards to its front.

A small task force of the 1st Battalion, including a platoon of tanks and a mine sweeping detachment of engineers, moved eastward along ROAD "B" at 0850. Against moderate artillery and mortar fire, but negligible Infantry opposition, the forces cleared the area and road to the 3rd Battalion by 1330. The platoon of tanks remained in support of the 3rd Battalion.

Enemy pressure on the north flank of the 3rd Battalion increased during the day, but the Battalion held its positions and, after a stiff fire-fight, cleared a nearby hunting lodge of enemy.

Heavy artillery and mortar fire continued to pound the Regimental area; with 3rd Battalion positions under direct artillery fire from GROSSHAU. Although action was comparatively light, the Regiment sustained 238 enlisted men and 6 Officer casualties.

NINTH DAY OF ATTACK (24 November) (46) (47)

The 24th of November was another day of resupply, consolidation, reorganization, mopping-up of enemy pockets, and movement of armor to attacking elements.

The 12th Infantry's advance south of the Regiment relieved some pressure on the 2nd Battalions south flank. In view of this development, Company "B" (extending and protecting the 2nd Battalions south flank) was relieved of its mission and returned to the 1st Battalion area at 1450.

(46) Personal knowledge

(47) A-4, p. 9

Company "A" 1st Battalion (in reserve), was moved eastward to tie in with, and extend the 3rd Battalion's north flank.

Enemy artillery and mortar fire continued to pound the Regimental area. Even though action during the day had been limited, the Regiment sustained 90 enlisted men and 2 Officer casualties.

Replacements through this date now totaled 1,093 enlisted men and 32 Officers, as compared to 1,317 enlisted men and 52 Officer casualties, which left the Regiment considerably under strength and painfully short in experienced combat men and specialists.

TENTH DAY OF ATTACK (25 November) (48) (49)

On 25 November the Regiment planned an early attack by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 2nd Battalion on the right. To effect surprise, the attack was to be made without artillery support. The 3rd Battalion was to envelop GROSSHAU from the north and take the town from that direction. The 2nd Battalion was to push to the eastern edge of the woods from which direct fire could be placed on both KLEINHAU and GROSSHAU. The 1st Battalion would be in reserve.

Attacking at 0745 hours, the 3rd Battalion rapidly pushed northeast to the edge of the woods north of GROSSHAU, took 50 prisoners during the operation and paused to reorganize before pushing south to the town. The latter attack, delayed by difficulties in getting tanks and tank destroyers forward, jumped off at 1145. As the Battalion started across the open ground north of GROSSHAU, the assault was met with immediate and

(48) Personal knowledge

(49) A-4, p. 9, 10

powerful enemy reaction. Self-propelled guns, mortar, artillery, and machine gun fire from the town stopped the attack, disabling four tanks and two tank destroyers. Further 3rd Battalion attempts to assault the town from the north were repulsed, and at 1500 the Battalion dug in for the night.

As tanks were unable to negotiate the poor roads to the 2nd Battalion, the Battalion attacked at 0820 without armored support. Against bitter resistance, the Battalion pushed eastward approximately 800 yards to its objective -- the edge of the woods southeast of GROSSHAU -- by 1039. After considerable trail repair and mine clearing, tanks were able to reach the Battalion's forward positions late in the afternoon.

The 1st Battalion, in reserve, moved east following the advance of the 3rd Battalion, with one company astride ROAD "B". This company dug in for the night near the road junction 700 yards west of GROSSHAU. The remainder of the 1st Battalion moved eastward to positions held the previous night by the 3rd Battalion.

Even though gains made during the day had cost the Regiment 195 enlisted men and 11 Officer casualties, it had reached positions on the eastern fringe of the HURTGEN FOREST, from which an assault could be launched against the towns of GROSSHAU and KLEINHAU.

ELEVENTH DAY OF ATTACK (26 November) (50) (51)

No major attack was scheduled for 26 November as the Regiment was again in need of reorganization. Positions were consolidated and improved. It was apparent that GROSSHAU, instead of

(50) Personal knowledge
(51) A-4, p. 10

TWELFTH DAY OF ATTACK (27 November) (52) (53)

No major attack was scheduled for 27 November. The day was devoted mostly to consolidating positions, and mopping up enemy pockets which had been by-passed.

Patrols from the 3rd Battalion which had been sent into the town of GROSSHAU during the night returned at 0015 and reported enemy activity in the town. Entrenching, and the sound of armored vehicles were heard. The fact had been definitely established that the enemy intended to defend the town at all costs.

Company "B" attacked at 0900 to retake the ground west of GROSSHAU which Company "C" had taken and lost the day before. The bitterness of this attack typified the action in the battle of the HURTGEN FOREST. Company "B" under direct artillery fire, attacked with 105 enlisted men and Officers against a well organized position on dominating ground. Enemy automatic fire dominated all feasible avenues of approach. The Company was almost immediately pinned down by withering machine gun fire. The attack had been completely stopped, and only by several examples of outstanding individual heroism was the objective reached. Individual soldiers worked up the hill, knocking out automatic weapons one by one. In this action Pfc Macario Garcia, ASN-38246362, advanced alone after being hit, and knocked out two enemy machine gun crews. He received the medal of honor for this action. At 1230 the company, now reduced to 35 men, assaulted across the short stretch of open ground to their objective. Company "E" aided the attack by attacking to the

(52) Personal knowledge
(53) A-4, p. 10, 11, 12

north and east and reached a position on the right of Company "B". By 1440 hours Company "B" and "E" had secured the woods at the west edge of GROSSHAU. Armor and tank destroyers were reluctant to go to the support of this force due to the possibility that ROAD "B" was mined, and to the possibility of direct fire weapons covering the road. First Lieutenant William P. Jourdan, antitank platoon leader, realizing the urgency of immediate antitank support for this depleted force, ordered the crew of his half-track out of the vehicle and, alone, moved it over the road proving that it was not mined. As a result of this example, the tanks and tank destroyers moved forward and the positions occupied by Companies "B" and "E" were consolidated by 1800.

During the day heavy artillery and mortar fire continued to pound the Combat Team area. The Regiment sustained 113 enlisted men and 9 Officer casualties during the day.

THIRTEENTH DAY OF ATTACK (28 November) (52) (53) (54)

On 28 November the 12th Infantry Regiment which had been on the right (south) flank of the 22nd Infantry was assigned a zone of action on the left (north) flank of the 22nd Infantry. The new boundary reduced the width of the Regimental zone to 1200 yards, compared with the original 3500, and for the first time the Regiment was able to cover its entire zone of action, except for minor gaps.

There was no major attack scheduled for 28 November. The day was devoted to readjustment, and consolidation of positions, and resupply.

- (52) Personal knowledge
- (53) A-4, p. 10, 11, 12
- (54) A-13

A task force of the 3rd Battalion coordinated with the 12th Infantry, on the left, attacked northeast at 1000 to secure HILL 90 north of GROSSHAU. The usual heavy artillery and mortar fire was lacking. By 1350 the task force had secured HILL 90, which had been used for artillery observation by the enemy.

During the night 28 November a patrol from the 3rd Battalion reached ROAD "D" north of GROSSHAU and succeeded in mining it to deny its use to the enemy.

During the day the Regiment sustained 113 enlisted men and 4 Officer casualties.

FOURTEENTH DAY OF ATTACK (29 November) (55) (56)
(See Map E)

The scheme of maneuver on 29 November called for an attack by the 3rd Battalion to bypass GROSSHAU to the north through the edge of the woods, and seize the high ground northeast of the town. This terrain overlooked the eastern approaches to the town. The 1st Battalion was to follow the 3rd Battalion and protect its flanks. The 2nd Battalion was to contain GROSSHAU and protect the Combat Team's right flank south of the town. It was hoped that this would make the town untenable and force the enemy to surrender without the Regiment making a costly frontal assault against the town.

Ordered to attack at 1100, the 3rd Battalion was delayed by heavy artillery fire, and jumped off at 1200. The Battalion pushed northeast against continued determined resistance, and at 1620 was 700 yards north of its objective -- ready to swing south. Resupply was difficult and heavy fire was received from HILL 92

(55) Personal knowledge
(56) A-4, p. 12, 13

(to the northeast) which was not completely controlled by the 12th Infantry on the left. Despite the approaching darkness, the Battalion was ordered to continue the attack. At 1830 it reached its objective northeast of GROSSHAU.

The 1st Battalion moved to the east, and by 1445 had occupied the original positions of the 3rd Battalion. The Battalion remained in this position to assist the 3rd Battalion in the capture of GROSSHAU.

During the morning the Chief of Staff, 4th Division, called the Regimental Commander, and in the name of the Division Commander, directed that GROSSHAU be taken that day. This superseded the previously approved plan of encircling GROSSHAU and then calling for its surrender under a flag of truce. The order came from General Collins, (VII Corps Commander) and could not be changed. Against the better judgment of the Regimental Commander (Colonel Charles T. Lanham), the 2nd Battalion was ordered to assault GROSSHAU from the west. The 2nd Battalion began its assault on GROSSHAU at 1250. Simultaneous with the attack of the 2nd Battalion, tanks located on the south (right) flank of the Battalion were to assault the town from the south. The tanks almost immediately ran into a heavy mine field and two tanks were lost. A bog further restricted the movement of the tanks, but they continued seeking a route into GROSSHAU. The attack of the 2nd Battalion was immediately met with an enemy counterattack against its right front. Fighting against fanatical resistance, the attack had carried only 75 yards beyond the first house in the town by 1635 hours. Meanwhile, the tanks had gotten around the bog and joined the Battalion in the western

part of the town. The Battalion was ordered to continue the attack regardless of nightfall. The Infantry-Tank attack progressed slowly against mine and automatic weapons, however, by 1915 the town had surrendered. GROSSHAU, in reality, was a well fortified position. The town was found to consist of buildings with reinforced concrete basements, equipped with steel doors and firing slits. Air bombardment and artillery fire had had little effect on these fortifications. Its anti-tank weapons dominated the entire GROSSHAU-KLEINHAU opening (a clearing in the forest). More than 100 prisoners were taken. Patrols from the 2nd Battalion, in GROSSHAU, and patrols from the 3rd Battalion on the high ground, northeast of GROSSHAU, established contact at 2304.

Roads and trails that had been taken during the day were cleared of mines, and antitank weapons were rushed forward to support the 3rd Battalion, and to further reinforce the 2nd Battalion of GROSSHAU. Supplies were rushed forward to effect resupply before daylight 30 November.

At 1630 the 46 Armored Infantry Battalion was attached to the combat team, prepared to attack in coordination with the Regiment on 30 November.

During the day the Regiment sustained 158 enlisted men and 4 Officer casualties.

FIFTEENTH DAY OF ATTACK (30 November) (57) (58)

Although there was no enemy action during the night 29-30 November, heavy artillery and mortar concentrations pounded the area.

(57) Personal knowledge
(58) A-4, p. 13

The plan of attack on 30 November, was to attack with the 3rd and 2nd Battalions, and the 46th Armored Infantry Battalion abreast, in that order from left to right, to seize the edge of the forest south and west of GEY, a position from which a coordinated Infantry-Armor attack could be launched against DUREN. The 1st Battalion, in reserve, would follow the 3rd Battalion and cover the gap between the 3rd and 2nd Battalions. The attack was to be preceded by heavy artillery and mortar concentrations.

Following the artillery and mortar concentrations, the 3rd Battalion attacked at 1130. At first the 3rd Battalion met relatively little resistance, and at 1500 was 300 yards short of its objective. However, opposition stiffened, and the attack was stopped by increasing artillery and machine gun fire, forcing the Battalion to dig-in and secure for the night.

The 2nd Battalion, leaving one Company in GROSSHAU attacked east across open fields against machine gun and increasing mortar and artillery fire. By 1335 the Battalion had pushed 300 yards beyond its line of departure, but its advance had been halted by automatic weapons and enemy dug-in positions. The Battalion requested armored support and at 1500, received four tanks and two tank destroyers. However, intense artillery and automatic weapons fire against the Battalion's forward positions held the unit. There was considerable enemy pressure on the 2nd Battalion from the east and southeast.

The 46th Armored Infantry Battalion, in an approach march to its line of departure, received small arms fire at 1020 from the high ground northeast of KLIENHAU, which had been reported secured the previous day by elements of Combat Command "R" 5th

Armored Division. This was not an unusual occurrence. The Battalion, forced to fight unexpectedly across open ground and assault a fortified hill, reached its planned line of departure only after severe fighting. The Battalion had reached the edge of the forest southeast of GROSSHAU at 1516. Additional small gains were made against heavy artillery and enemy dug-in positions, and the battalion secured for the night at 1630, after suffering heavy casualties; 50% of its fighting strength, in the days' operation.

The 1st Battalion, in reserve, staged forward to positions in rear of the 3rd Battalion. It controlled the high ground approximately 400 yards northeast of GROSSHAU, and covered an 800 yard gap between the 2nd and 3rd Battalion.

During the day the Regiment had gained approximately 600 yards at a cost of 142 enlisted men and 9 Officer casualties.

SIXTEENTH DAY OF ATTACK (1 December) (59) (60)

Plans for the attack on 1 December called for the 3rd Battalion to attack to the northeast to secure the edge of the woods southwest of GEY. The 1st Battalion, from positions in rear of the 3rd Battalion, was to attack to the southeast hitting the flank of the enemy facing the 2nd Battalion. Having disrupted the enemy's defense to the front of the 2nd Battalion, the Battalion was to secure the woods edge abreast of the 3rd Battalion. Simultaneously, the 2nd Battalion was to make a holding attack, and then advance to the northeast. The 46th Armored Infantry Battalion was to continue its attack against the high ground north of KLEINHAU and secure the edge of the forest south and west of GEY.

(59) Personal knowledge
(60) A-5, p. 1, 2

The 3rd Battalion attacked at 0900, and against light opposition had reached its objective by 1010.

Screened by smoke, the 1st Battalion's attack to the southeast at 1000 achieved complete surprise, overran enemy machine gun positions, artillery observation posts, and advanced through the woods to a point about 500 yards northeast of the 2nd Battalion. The Battalion then turned left (northeast), leaving one Company behind to work back to the 2nd Battalion. By 1220, leading elements of the Battalion had reached the edge of the woods west of STRASS, and tied in with the 3rd Battalion on the left (north). The remaining Company swept the woods and contacted the 2nd Battalion during the afternoon.

The 2nd Battalion attacked to the northeast at 1120. In spite of the assistance by the 1st Battalion, the Battalion made slow progress through the woods against heavy enemy artillery and small arms fire. The Battalion paused under cover of the woods to reorganize. At 1220 the Battalion was ordered to advance to the high ground south of the 1st Battalion. While advancing east a strong enemy counterattack struck the Battalion at 1645. The remainder of the Battalion was committed and the position was restored at 1730 hours. Severe casualties were suffered during this engagement, especially Company "F".

Despite heavy casualties on 30 November, the 46th Armored Infantry Battalion attacked at 0900. The Battalion made small gains against stiff resistance. In view of its depleted strength, the Battalion was authorized, at 1112, to withdraw to its line of departure. The Battalion was detached from the Regiment at 2400.

The Regiment sustained 137 enlisted men and 7 officer casualties during the day's operation, and had reached the edge of the woods within sight of GEY and STRAUSS.

THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF THE ATTACK (2 December) (61)(62)

The plans for the attack on 2 December called for an attack to the south by the 1st and 3rd Battalion, 1st Battalion on the right, to clear the woods in front of the 2nd Battalion, and assist its advance. However, before the attack could be started, a strong enemy counterattack by a battalion of 250 fresh infantry troops hit the 3rd Battalion, broke through the line held by Company "I", and headed for the high ground northeast of GROSSHAU. Company "K" moved south to seal the penetration. At 0740 the Regimental Commander sent all available men from rear elements forward. The 60 man detachment of riflemen organized from anti-tank company was moved forward from its reserve position in GROSSHAU. Shortly thereafter, an 80 man detachment, organized from Regimental Headquarters and Service Companies moved to GROSSHAU as a combat team reserve, and to defend the town.

The counterattack penetrated to the hill northeast of GROSSHAU. All available armor and tank destroyers under the command of the Executive Officer, 70th Tank Battalion, were ordered to retake and defend the hill northeast of GROSSHAU. As the attack developed, Company "G" moved north to the edge of the clearing northeast of GROSSHAU. Companies "K" and "L" sealed the initial penetration and re-established the front. Elements of the 3rd Battalion had again dominated the high ground northeast of GROSSHAU, and by 1025 the tanks and tank destroyers of the 70th Tank Battalion were supporting the troops on this high ground. By 1155 the situation was well in hand. Front lines had been re-established on original positions.

Information was received at 1500 that the Regiment would be relieved on 3 December by the 330th Infantry of the 83rd Infantry

(61) Personal knowledge
(62) A-5, p. 2,3

Division. In view of this fact positions were further prepared defensively.

The day's operations had cost the Regiment 49 enlisted men and 3 officer casualties.

RELIEF OF COMBAT TEAM 22 (3 December) (63)(64)(65)(66)

The relief of the Regiment began on the morning of 3 December. It was delayed by an enemy attack against the 1st Battalion in the morning, and an air attack of approximately 40 enemy fighter planes in the afternoon. Any movement in the 2nd Battalion area brought heavy enemy machine gun and artillery fire upon the battalion positions. Smoke was used to screen the movements, but even with this aid the relief could not be completed until after dark.

Responsibility for the area was turned over to the Commanding Officer, 330th Infantry, at 1900 and the 22nd Infantry moved to assembly areas approximately five miles west of the front lines preparatory to moving to Luxembourg.

Although action had been comparatively light, the Regiment sustained 178 enlisted men and 1 Officer casualties.

Combat Team 22 had completed its battle through the HURTTGEN FOREST--the most difficult task assigned to it during its combat operations in Europe. It had made a great contribution to the 1st US Army attack toward COLOGNE. In the eighteen days of the campaign the Regiment had suffered 2575 enlisted men and 103 Officer casualties, of which 126 enlisted men and 12 Officers were killed in action. During this time the Regiment had received 1951

- (63) Personal knowledge
- (64) A-5, p. 3
- (65) A-13
- (66) A-7; A-8

3. EXCESSIVE PERIODS OF EXTREME COMBAT

The failure to relieve the regiment after a few days of severe fighting, was, in my opinion, the direct cause of unnecessary casualties which could have been avoided by timely relief of the regiment. Forced to live under extremely hazardous conditions for long periods results in a higher percentage of casualties than might be expected normally. Excessive fatigue causes the individual soldier to become indifferent and careless in the performance of his combat duties. To avoid conditions of this nature the operational plans of higher commanders must include provisions for the frequent relief of units from combat for rest, rehabilitation, and training. Excessive casualties, combined with severe fighting, necessitated immediate employment of replacements as fast as they arrived thereby reducing the combat effectiveness of the regiment. The exposure of these inexperienced troops to extreme combat conditions before they had been integrated into the Combat team caused unnecessary waste of manpower, and could have been avoided.

4. OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES OVER ESTIMATED

The offensive capabilities of friendly forces in this type terrain were over estimated. This was probably attributable to under estimation of the casualty rate, optimism resulting from the rapid successes in France and Belgium, and the opinion that the German Army was about to collapse. It may also have resulted in a failure to appreciate fully the vast difference between fighting in open terrain under favorable weather conditions and fighting in thickly wooded terrain under adverse weather conditions and, too, for the most part the infantry was forced to fight

enlisted men and 45 Officer replacements. It had pushed 7,500 yards through the most difficult terrain in Germany, under adverse weather conditions, and had captured 775 prisoners belonging to 87 different German units.

For its action in the HURTGEN FOREST, the regiment received a commendation from the VII Corps Commander (General J. Lawton Collins). The regiment was later cited for this action.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

1. SUPPLY AND EVACUATION

Supply and Evacuation personnel were inadequate to cope with the supply and evacuation problem, even though this personnel had been augmented with personnel from other elements of the Regiment. Evacuation of casualties was unable to keep pace with the casualties received. This resulted in unnecessary delay in removing casualties from the battlefield, and evacuation. The advance of the regiment was actually stopped several times by the excessive hand carries necessary to resupply and evacuate casualties.

2. ZONE OF ACTION

The frontage assigned the Regiment initially, 3,500 yards, could not possibly be covered adequately by a unit of this size, in this type of terrain. Consequently, in order to employ sufficient strength in its effort, the regiment was compelled to confine its attack to approximately half its assigned zone, which resulted in exposed flanks, bypassed enemy positions, enemy infiltration, and the constant threat of encirclement. A normal zone of action in this type of terrain would have resulted in considerably fewer casualties than were sustained.

without the close effective support of artillery to which they were accustomed.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

The communication personnel assigned to the regiment, despite continuous and aggressive efforts, was not sufficient to adequately maintain and operate lines of communications in operations in this type terrain, even though communication teams were augmented with personnel from other elements of the regiment. The failure of higher headquarters to make provisions for additional communication personnel made control difficult, and the coordination of attacking units was frequently delayed.

6. ARTILLERY

Although effective in counterbattery action, in the destruction of certain defended localities, in hampering the movement of reserves, and in breaking up counterattacks as could be detected before they were launched, the dense tree growth and the close proximity of opposing forces, rendered the artillery generally incapable of assisting effectively and continuously the immediate advance of the Infantry. Consequently, the artillery had to resort to huge concentrations to smash through the thick tree growth to stun or kill the enemy along the route of advance. The effectiveness of its fires was further reduced by poor visibility afforded forward observers.

7. ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS

The adverse weather conditions seriously handicapped the operations. Heavy precipitation, rain or snow, and extreme cold caused innumerable casualties, and reduced roads and trails to pools of mud which became impassable to both wheeled and track laying vehicles, and taxed road maintenance crews beyond their

capabilities. The weather conditions caused the regiment to fight without continuous and effective air support, and, for the most part, without armored support. The postponement of the attack pending favorable weather conditions would have resulted in a much quicker decision with far less casualties than were sustained.

8. ARMORED UNITS

Thickly wooded areas prevented maneuver of armored units and canalized their movements. The effectiveness of their firepower was greatly reduced because of poor visibility.

LESSONS

1. In situations requiring resupply and evacuation by hand carrying parties over long distances, additional personnel must be assigned to this duty.
2. Zones of action must be small enough to permit observance of the principle of mass, and should be considered along with the terrain and enemy capabilities.
3. Combat under extremely hazardous conditions for extended periods without relief reduces the combat effectiveness of a unit.
 - a. Units should be removed from front line positions when excessive casualties have been sustained.
 - b. Replacements should be integrated in the unit and trained before being committed to action.
4. The capabilities of friendly and enemy forces must be correctly estimated.
5. In woods fighting, against heavy enemy artillery support, communication facilities must be reinforced to reduce the possibility of a complete breakdown.

6. In general, the artillery cannot assist effectively and continuously the immediate advance of infantry engaged in woods fighting.

7. Weather conditions is one of the most important single factors effecting combat operations.

8. The effectiveness of armored units in woods fighting is greatly reduced.