

ROBERT W. THORNE

UNITED STATES ARMY - CAREER NOTES

Reserve Officers Training Corps - University of Michigan, 1931-35
Elected to Scabbard & Blade, Honorary Military Fraternity

Detroit, Mich.: Assigned to 339th (?) Infantry Regiment. 1936 - 1941
Polar Bear Regiment
Trained Aerial Nurses Corps
Offered assignment to instruct ROTC, University of Mich
1939 approx

Reserve Officers Association activities:
Elected to president of Infantry Chapter, Detroit
Integrated all chapters into one, Wayne County
Chapter.
Wrote and edited Reserve Officer newspaper.

Active Duty, 1941-46:

Fort Brady, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.:

Company C, 702nd M. P. Bn. (Z/I) Executive Officer
(Headquarters Company, Signal Platoon, Commanding Officer
(Post Signal Officer

Tested radios in military vehicles: one of the first.
(District Signal Officer, Sault Ste. Marie Military District
Established Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line in Canada
Established Air Warning Center

From mobile air warning center equipment
(Director of Training: incl. training of doctors & nurses in
(Director of Internal Security: incl in charge of provost
marshal and military police
problem: 1st blacks in area

Fort Sheridan, Ill.

6th Service Command: Special Duty - Fort Brady, Manpower
survey
Officers

Fort Benning: The Infantry School, /Advanced Infantry Course

Chicago, 6th Service Command: Special Duty, signal Corps
Requested me to remain there on duty.

Fort Benning, Ga. - The Infantry School
Instructor, Map and Aerial Photograph Reading

Air Force, Key Field, Meridian, Mo - Air Ground Liaison Officers
School.
Temporary duty at several air fields.

Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. - Assigned to 70th Infantry Division, Hqrs.
Assigned as air-ground liaison officer; later known as
G-3 Air Operations Officer.
Overseas: European Theatre of Operations, December, 1944.
Combat: France & Germany (Best air ground oper.
Army of Occupation: Germany 7th Army)

Information & Education Division, ETOUSA, Paris, France (later
moved to Hochst, Germany) 1945-46
Executive Officer, Training Within Civilian Agencies (TWCA)

Bay City, Mich.: Unit Commander, 504th OR Composite Infantry Group,
Feb.. 1947

Army Career Notes, Pg. 2

Bay City, Mich (contd.):

Unit Commander, 5336th Inf. Trng. Battalion, Feb., 1949
Commanding Officer, Hq. & Hq. Co., 73rd Armd Inf. Bn.,
Nov., 1949

Assigned to 5106USAR Control Group and attached to Co.
K, 3d Bn., 333d. Inf. Regt., 70th Inf. Div.,
March, 1952

Department head, Inf. Satellite Branch, 5906USAR School,
Sept., 1953

Assigned to 5106 USAR Control Group, May, 1955.

Reserve Officer Assn: Reactivated Bay City Chapter;
served as president and in other officer positions.

Transferred to Retired Reserves, May, 1956



RECORD and PROGRESS



15 Aug 41 - Reported to Fort Brady
Mich. on active duty

11 June 42 - Promoted to Capt.

June 42 - Relieved from 702nd MP
Bn., assigned to Hqrs., Fort
Brady, as Post Signal Off.

Nov. 42 - Relieved as Post Signal
Off. + assigned as Director,
Military Training Div., also as
Director, Internal Security
Div.

June 43 - Promoted to Major

Nov. 43 - Relieved from Hqrs., Ft.
Brady, attached to Hqrs.,
Ft. Sheridan.

Dec., 43 - T.D. at Advanced Inf. &
School, Ft. Benning, Ga.

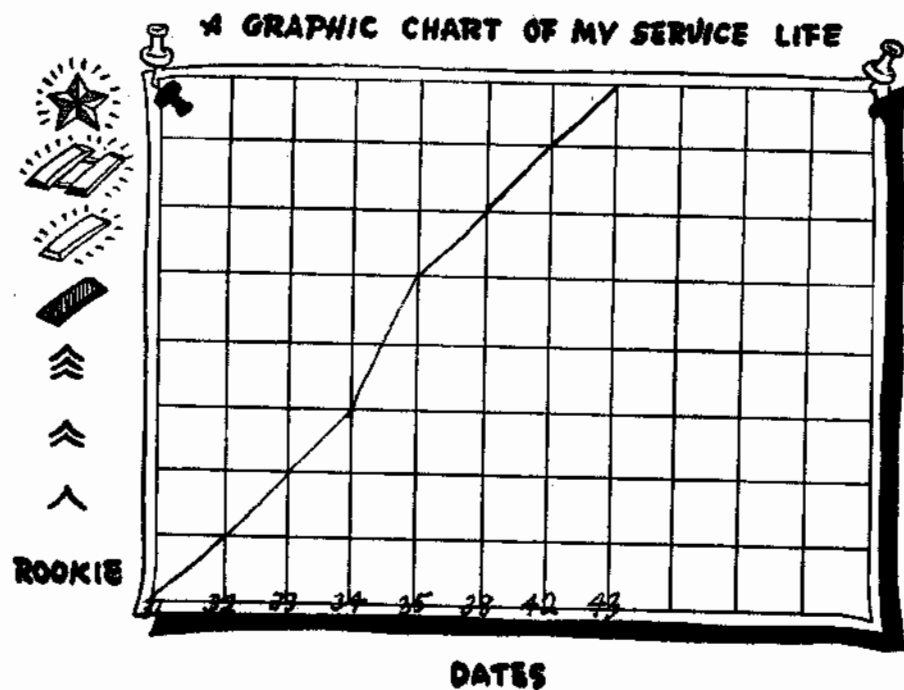
Mar., 43 - Relieved from Ft. Benning,
returned to Ft. Sheridan, Ill.

Apr., 43 - Assigned to Inf School, Ft.
Benning, (Map + Aerial Photo Rdy Comm.)

5 Aug, 43 - T.D. at Key Field, Miss., at
G.L.O. school, + with AAF

Oct., 43 - Assigned to 70th Inf Div.,
Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo.

10 Dec. 43 - Sailed from New York City
for France.



IF YOU WANT INFORMATION CONCERNING THE OFFENSIVE WATCH THIS BOARD FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS; WATCH THE MAP FOR DISPOSITIONS OF UNITS.

17 February 1945

- 0630: units moved into positions beginning shortly after midnight. After a twenty minute artillery barrage, units jumped off. Enemy resistance not too heavy in early stages.
- 0800: Enemy resistance stiffening all along the line. Heavy enemy arty on some units. Some of our elements are on their initial objectives. See map.
- 0830: All units continuing to proceed slowly towards their initial objectives.
- 0850: Fire fight in LIXING with 275th Infantry. Elements of 275th have pushed two-thirds of the way through the town. Entire regiment meeting resistance.
- 0930: 3rd Bn, 276th Infantry, running into mine fields, small arms fire, machine gun and enemy artillery fire. Tanks are forward with front line in fantry units but are having difficulty with mine fields and mud.
- 1000: Counter-attack against 274th Inf from vicinity of STIRING-WENDEL. Repulsed by our artillery fire. Captured many prisoners including a battalion commander.
- 1100: Total PWs taken - 52.
- 1345: Enemy tanks reported approximately to number 8 located just S. of ETZLINGEN (4364), heading W.
- 1445: Total PWs - 68.
- 1500: It looks as though enemy resistance is not too heavy. Altho they meet heavy resistance at strong points, this is usually a few men in pill boxes. After the pill box is knocked out resistance is scant until next strong point is hit. Some enemy artillery fire is being encountered, but our artillery is using effective counterbattery fire. Our troops continue to push forward all along the line.

OFFENSIVE CONTINUES 18 FEB.

0800: Units dug in and held during night. No strong enemy counterattacks developed, but heavy artillery fire was experienced by some units. See map for present front lines. Tanks heard in vicinity of LIXING this morning at 0730. Company B of 276th Inf. attacked a concrete bunker early this morning that they had previously bypassed and knocked it out. Intentions for today: 275th Inf. on the right to clean enemy out of GROSBLIEDERSTROFF and the woods to the NW of that town. 274th Inf. in center to push forward and take out enemy strong points along the high hills just east of FORBACH. 276th Inf. to capture enemy strong points along hills just south of FORBACH.

Total PWs reported taken for 17th Feb: 198.

Casualties: 274- 29, 275 - 34, 276 - 58

Total - 121 including 6 killed.

1100: 276th Inf: Have cleared woods NW and E of GROSBLIEDERSTROFF and entered that town. Progressing favorably.

274th Inf. Pushing forward rapidly and now on slopes of hill which was bombed from air Friday.

275th Inf. Pushing towards its objective; now on slopes of hill S of FORBACH. Two companies remaining to clean out OETING, which is the town where they had difficulties on the raids a week ago and was not able to enter due to enemy resistance.

1205 15 enemy tanks proceeding south on road from ETZLING .

1230 Artillery broke up counterattack led by tanks; scattered tanks and they moved East and West of the road.

1430 Enemy cleared out of OETING. Large portion of GROSBLIEDERSTROFF has been taken. All units still moving forward.

1520 ETZLING taken.

1800 Continue to advance in all sectors. GROSBLIEDERSTROFF nearly cleared out.

Total PW's today 132

Total for offensive 330

1845 Enemy tank attack repelled by 276th Inf Reg't

2400 261 PWs - total for day.

OFFENSIVE CONTINUES 19 FEB. 1945

- 0800 - Enemy tank activity in all sectors during night. 20 assault guns reported to be in SPICHEREN. Our artillery shelled the town. GROEBLIEDERSTROFF reported cleared of enemy.
- 2000 -Units continued to advance during the day. Fought off numerous counter-attacks. 275 Inf completed cleaning our GROEBLIEDERSTROFF and woods to the NW. 274 Inf kept pushing ahead against increasing resistance but finally moved up on the hill-mass E of FORBACH. 276 Inf pushed forward on the right of their sector and after an all-day battle took CASTLE-HILL on the S edge of FORBACH. This is a high hill which overlooks all the terrain to the E, S, and W and was well defended by automatic weapons and artillery OPs in a castle on top of the hill.
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20 Feb. 1945

- 0800 Enemy counter-attacks led by tanks and assault guns during yesterday and last night in all sectors were beaten off. Two more counter-attacks against 275 Inf at 0730 in vicinity of S and SW of SPICHEREN are still in progress. 275 Inf is fighting in the towns of ALSTING and ZINZING and are half way thru both towns. 274 Inf pushed ahead during the night and has occupied the hill-mass E of STIRING-WENDEL and sent patrols into that town. 276 Inf is moving into FORBACH from the hills from the S and SE. Total PWs - for 19 Feb. 48: Total for this offensive since 17 Feb.-378.

INTENTIONS: 275 Inf to occupy woods directly N of GROEBLIEDERSTROFF and reduce the resistance along the SPICHEREN - GROEBLIEDERSTROFF road; then continue the attack to take the main objective-PPAFFENWALD woods. 276 Inf to capture FORBACH. 274 Inf to move thru STIRING-WENDEL to railroad; neutralize SPICHEREN and interrupt traffic on the FORBACH-SAARBRUCKEN road.

- 1300 F Co 275 Inf getting hit by counterattack. Successfully beat it off.
- 1430 276 Inf meeting heavy opposition in FORBACH including heavy concentration of artillery and mortar fire.

OFFENSIVE CONTINUES 20 Feb 45

1800 276 Inf has progressed about 1/3 of the way thru FORBACH. House to house fighting is intensive. 274 Inf has a good hold on the hill-mass E of STIRING-WENDEL and has control of the road between FORBACH AND SAARBRUCKEN. 275 Inf is pushing ahead against heavy resistance and closing in on SPICHEREN.

21 Feb 45

0800 276 Inf pushing thru FORBACH. Receiving very heavy artillery fire. Part of FORBACH is on fire. 275 Inf has units on objective. 274 Inf sent patrols into STIRING-WENDEL during night which reported many enemy there. 274 will jump off to take STIRING-WENDEL at 1000A. PWs - for 20 Feb -- 103. Total since 17 Feb -- 481.

1800 275 Inf was hit by 2 counterattacks today, one at 0830 led by 3 SP guns and one at 1230 led by three tanks. This forced A Co, which was out in front to withdraw about 1 Km. This unit is still being hit by heavy enemy attacks but is repulsing same and continuing to advance on the left of it's sector. 274 Inf has pushed forward on the right of it's sector in order to get up on high ground directly E of STIRING-WENDEL. These forward elements are almost on their objective. The units have been digging in on the left of the 274 Inf sector and firing into FORBACH and STIRING-WENDEL as well as controlling the main highway between FORBACH AND SAARBRUCKEN. 276 Inf continues to advance slowly in severe house to house fighting in FORBACH. They are facing heavy artillery fire, including 88mm and 240mm or larger. Most of this artillery fire appears to be coming from SAARBRUCKEN and in the area NW of FORBACH. One of these areas was hit by an air mission today by our request. Civilians are fighting along side German troops. The CO, 276 Inf, reported that one civilian shot an officer in the back and killed him and, "We are not taking any prisoners including civilian men, women and children".

OFFENSIVE CONTINUES 23 Feb 45

2000. During 22 Feb all units continued to move ahead. 275 on the right was able to get up on it's objective with certain elements and hold. 274 Inf pushed closer to STIRING-WENDEL on the left of it's sector and took the high ground on the right of it's sector. 276 Inf on the left continued to fight in FORBACH from house to house. During 23 Feb 275 Inf was able to push up on it's entire objective and is holding despite severe enemy action which was led by tiger tanks. 274 Inf is now approaching the FORBACH-SAARBRUCKEN highway and is ready to enter STIRING WENDEL. 276 Inf has now reached the RR thru FORBACH and holds about 2/3 of the town. The enemy has used everything to stop the offensive including 5 to 6 tanks leading counterattacks, self propelled guns, artillery and mortars. They have thrown more artillery at us in this sector than they have during all the previous time that we have been here.

Air Action: The mission on 22 Feb against 4 pillboxes and intrenchments, which were located within 400 yds of our front lines was one of the finest coordinated efforts that this officer believes possible. The situation was somewhat difficult for the planes as they had no room for maneuver due to the necessity of strafing and bombing from S to N since our troops were on 3 sides of the target area. The flight leader, with very little briefing picked up the target as he entered the area. Horsefly was present to assist in location of target. The first round of artillery smoke hit one of the pillboxes and the flight leader immediately picked it up. 18 bombs were dropped and Horsefly reported that he saw all but 2 hit the target area. The CO, 3rd Bn, 274 Inf who requested the mission reported that all bombs hit the target area.

Total PWs for 22 Feb - 297.

Total PWs since beginning of offensive 17 Feb - 1156

Total PWs to date for 70th Div - 2179

0800. All units dug in during the night to hold present positions. 275 Inf, being on the objective, is holding and improving present positions and mopping up the enemy remaining in the woods in rear areas. The enemy continues to infiltrate thruon the flanks of this unit. 274 Inf held on present positions during the night which is generally along the hill E of STIRING WENDEL with the most forward units just S of the FORBACH-SAARBRUCKEN highway. 276 Inf has all elements up to the RR in FORBACH. They are holding in this position until ordered by Div to move forward along with 274 Inf to take final objectives. 63rd Inf on our right expected to jump off this morning and take their final objectives E of BUBINGEN. 101st Cav Gp on our left will probably start their advance shortly after 276 Inf moves forward.

Total PWs for 23 Feb: 137.

Total PWs since beginning of offensive 17 Feb; 1293.

26 Feb 1945

0800. During the period of 24 Feb all units continued to hold on present positions. Enemy continued sporadic counterattacks in various sectors, but all counterattack were repulsed. During the period of 25 Feb the division secured present positions. 275 Inf is organizing ground for defense of present positions. 274 and 276 Inf are holding on present positions, conducting active patrolling and preparing to continue the attack to secure Div objective upon Div order. The counterattack against 274 Inf at Q4166 from vicinity of STIRING-WENDEL at 0515A this morning has been repulsed. The enemy continues to move new troops into the area but has not been able to push our units off of present positions.

Official corrected total of PWs:

For current offensive	1591
PWs to date	2614

SITREP 1 March.

0800. All units continue to hold on present positions and improve defenses. Enemy operations during the past 3 days has been limited to patrols, scattered small arms, artillery and mortar fire. At times the artillery fire has become very intense, especially in the FORBACH area. Our own units continue very aggressive patrolling. It is expected that orders will be issued in the near future for the Division to move up onto their objective.

PWs to date:

For current operations	1602
Total to date	2625

Journal of Major Robert Thorne
Assistant G-3 and Air Operations Officer
70th Infantry Division
Dec 1944 – October 1945

1 Dec 1944

Departed from Ft. Leonard Wood via train. As train commander, was kept busy. (1508 AX unit)

2 Dec 1944

Arrived Camp Joyce Kilmer late at night. Unloaded and moved in.

3 Dec 1944 to 5 Dec 1944

Drawing supplies, receiving special training. Pass to NYC 4 Dec for a few hours.

6 Dec 1944

Boarded SS Marine Devil at NYC as one of loading officers to prepare ship for troops. This is a United Fruit Line ship; not too bad.

10 Dec 1944 (Sunday)

Troops were delayed and didn't board until 9 Dec. Had to stay aboard ship since 6 Dec. Very boring. We are quite crowded, but not too uncomfortable. Departed N.Y.P.E. at 0500.

11 Dec. to 19 Dec. 1944

Busy as compartment commander. Rough sea second to fourth day out and over 75% personnel sick. Taking southern route past Bermuda and Azores. No incidents. In convoy with DD escorts; planes and blimps for first few days. Didn't feel too good during the rough weather, but was not sick.

20 Dec 1944

Saw land on both African and Portugal sides. Both very rocky and interesting. Sawa, Rabat, Oran, Cadiz, many ships including Spanish, small fishing boats, planes, dolphins, straits and rocks and city of Gibraltar. All quite exciting. Entered Mediterranean Sea.

21-22 Dec 1944

No incidents. Part of convoy has left us. Become very rough, many sick.

23 Dec 1944

Arrived Marseille and moved to bivouac area some 25 miles from city. Many ships in harbor are sunk; port and piers badly damaged; some parts of town, especially near port in ruins.

24 – 25 Dec 1944

Busy drawing supplies, getting ready to move. Very cold and uncomfortable living. Marseille very interesting and novel.

26 Dec. 1944

Was up all night (25th) getting ready to move. It was long, hard and tiring work. Left at 0830, drove 160 miles, bivouacked at St. Rambert in a French airport. Some towns in ruins; pieces of German equipment strewn all along road – vehicles incl horse drawn, tanks incl Tiger, big guns search lights, etc. Am S-3 of convoy.

27 Dec 1944

Drove another 160 miles. Biv. in Dijon. More equipment and ruined towns. Some are entirely razed.

28 Dec. 1944

120 miles and biv in Epinal. Seeing more and more evidence of battle as we advance. Stayed at a French hotel, very cold but hot bath. Fine Red Cross building.

29 Dec 1944

Drove to our destination – Sarrebourg. Met our guide and continued to Bischwiller. More ruins, American cemeteries and individual graves, trees cut for road blocks, half cut to be shot down, towns more devastated but some not touched at all. Very different type of France than southern – these people are cleaner, more thrifty, better dressed. We are in the Alsace-Lorraine sector near Haganau and east of Saverne. Have joined 1508 VQ (first echelon of division and Inf regts) quartered in French hotel – very nice and wonderful beds. People here are pro-German to a large extent. Germans were here for over four years; just left two weeks ago. We're staying in this same hotel. We are four miles from Rhine and our front lines. Enemy on three sides of us. Not too good a feeling.

Sentries in vicinity have heads crushed in if caught alone. While enroute in the convoy we heard of enemy paratroopers and strafing of convoys. Now we have constant evidence of it all around us – individual cars being strafed, guards and our patrols being fired upon. Went on duty as G-3. we are under 6th Corps, 7th Army.

30 Dec 1944

En. patrols crossing Rhine frequently. Towns in vicinity being strafed and under arty fire but not Bischwiller. We have a 22 mile front.

31 Dec 1944

En paratroopers in vicinity – 25 seen. More En planes and arty. Busy 12 to 15 hours per day as Asst. G-3; never in bed before 0100. Interesting work.

1 Jan 1945

Major attack developing in 45th Div sector on our left – an armored attack. Has penetrated within 8 miles of our left flank. 275th has left us and been attached to 45th Div and 276th being pulled out in Corps reserve. 274th has entire front – 22 miles. Reports of 3 sentries on outpost duty captured. Increased en. patrols.

3 Jan 1945 (Wed)

En patrols actively increasing; atkg units on our left especially 45th Div area. (Sm?) in MG and arty fire on 274th in line; strafing by single en plane in Bischwiller; arty fire on nearby towns. Increased tension at night due to civilian activities pro-German and especially En patrols. Believe they could infiltrate to Bischwiller. 274th completed occupation of entire sector and then began withdrawal to Maginot Line. 79th Inf on our immediate left also withdrawing. Our arty increasing fire. Closed out CP at Bischwiller at 1600. We left our cozy hotel at 1945. Movement by convoy over unknown roads, inexperienced drivers, black as pitch, fog, icy roads – tough going. I was convoy commander. Shot at by En patrol enroute. Had approx 27 miles to go. Arrived at Le Petite Pierre in Vosges 0130, 4 Jan. Our arty fire seen along route. Many of our bombers going over. To CP early.

4 Jan 1945

Slept in old castle dating to 1300 for 2 hrs. All our units on line; strongly atckd by En; we had to withdraw vic of Wingen. Arty firing all day. Went to 45th Div CP. We were relieved from atckd to 79th and attached to 45th upon arrival here. Our units mixed in with others. 274th 2nd Bn organizing line fr Volksberg to Rosteig. 3rd Bn 276th atkg Wingen fr E. 2nd Bn, 276 org hi grd W of Rothbach. 275th w 1st Bn 274th atckd in position W of Dambach. 3rd Bn 274 S of Rothbach. En planes strafing in vicinity, our arty firing along line. On trip back blacked out from 45h CP very ticklish – knew patrols were in vicinity of roads, our sentries have trigger fingers, our arty fires seen and heard all nite long. Slept in small house this nite – German speaking people. All signs are in German. Working 18 hours per day – no washing, no change of clothing. En armor constantly atkg.

5 Jan 1945

We are atkg at Wingen and trying to drive En out – attk at 0930. It's a tough job as En are strong. Units got into Wingen late in afternoon. Continued pushing through town. Fighting all night. To continue attk in AM. En armor and Inf atkg all day along entire front. We are rec our first casualties – quite (long?). Examined personal effects of a dead German, 20 years old, good looking chap. He had some personal items of an American soldier on him. 274th 3rd Bn fighting N of Rothbach. Preparing to move again. Had a good sleep last nite – needed it – was just about done in. Requesting a few air rcn missions flown.

6 Jan 1945

Still fighting in Wingen. En MG and mortar fire still hitting our troops there. We occupied most of town after atkg at 0800 with 3rd Bn 276 atkg NW, 2nd Bn 276 from N and S and 2nd Bn 274 making main effort from W. ? most of the way through town. At dark our tanks (781st attached) retired and enemy attacked and drove half way back thru town. We attacked again and drove En out. We had many casualties but krauts had many more. It's been very tough going against well trained and experienced troops.

7 Jan

Attkd Wingen again at 0900 and cleared it out by noon hour. Our first big battle as the Task Force Herren has been won. Moved from Le Petite Pierre to Reichshoffen – left there at 1800 – again black out driving – bad roads – ice and fog. New CP in large home adjoined to a factory where iron fittings and hinges were made. Lots of machinery around. Family moved out in a hurry as left food in kitchen, closets and cellar. Clothes on bed and in closets. Letters strewn around. These letters show the (?) was a sort of local commandant and a very much a Nazi. We helped ourselves to the food, jams, etc. Am sleeping in a living room of a nice home. Most of these people are very pro Nazi and send info to the Germans, cut our wires, etc.

Now that we have moved into the area we have regained control of 275th Inf and 1st Bn, 274th. Our troops have been fighting in the Phillipsbourg - Dambach area.

8 Jan

Troops moving over from Wingen area. Plans to move 1st Bn, 274th into right sector to relieve 1st Bn 275, 1st Bn 275 to go into right reserve. 276 being employed under 45th Div on our left, after reaching objectives, will hold and revert to our control. We will then hold line from Dambach to 2 miles W of Baerenthal. The day spent in generally moving units to rear assembly areas.

Had no sleep last night – 40 hours without sleep and am dirty and aching. Our arty firing all day long, shaking the house and rattling windows. Watched En F/B fly over and over. AA took some shots at him.

9 Jan

Units moving to positions. 274th on right and 275th on left of TF Herren sector. Some enemy activity on our front – mostly arty and patrols. 276th attacked on our right at 0800 under 45th Div control and captured initial objectives by early afternoon without much resistance. Met more resistance and dug in for the night. Tough going due to the rugged mountains. Supply is the big problem – men eating cold meals, melting snow for water. General Herren suggests getting pack mules.

Quite a bit of snow, quite cold. Took a good nap from 1 AM to 9 AM, then a “French” bath and shave. Feel better.

10 Jan

274th and 275th sectors quiet. They are regrouping their troops and preparing to attack. 276th attacking on left, but have not been able to capture objectives due to dug in enemy. Have asked for help from 275 on the left flank of 276th.

11 Jan

We are now able to wear 70th Div shoulder patches and mention the unit in news releases. Also, we can tell where we have been after 14 days lapse of time and are some 25 miles from that location.

We were to continue the attack this morning by all regts, but 276th was still held up and had to have help from 275th to take high ground on 276th right flank – just N. of Baerenthal. It's been a tough fight all day and most of the 1st Bn, 276th is very badly shot up. The boundary lines are now: 276th – just E of Mouterhouse to Baerenthal, 275th – Baerenthal to Phillipsbourg, 274th – Phillipsbourg to 5 km E of that town. Front line approx Q8337-Q8539-Q8340-Q8441-Q8843-Q9243. 276th fighting all day and into the night without any material advance. 275th taking high ground W of sector late in the afternoon and pushing W and NW to hills 403 and 364. 274th sector quiet but have made one Bn available as a reserve to 157th Inf on our right.

Casualties so far reported:

Killed - 14 off and 68 EM

Wounded - 18 Off and 171 EM

Missing – 7 Off and 231 EM

Non Battle Casualties: 190

Total Prisoners taken – 478

Cold has been getting me down – don't feel too well. Our arty constantly firing rattling the house, windows and our teeth. En arty hit house 500 yds from our CP at 2300 – heard blast.

12 Jan

276th still attacking with 275th attkg towards two hills on their left flank; finally took objectives at 1645. It has been tough fighting all day in very rugged country. Mules and pack boards being used to get supplies up to front lines.

Enemy arty fire hitting our front lines hard as well as a few scattered rounds landing in our vicinity. Our own arty continues to blast away mostly at night.

Nothing else new. Working 15 to 18 hours per day.

13 Jan

Another move. Left two Bns of 274 where they were, put their 2nd Bn on their right. Pulled out 276th and put it on the right of 274th and started putting 275th in on the right of 276th. Front line now generally from just W of Phillipsbourg to just W of Windstein for 274th, then to Mattstatt for 276th, then to Drachenbronn (sp?) for 275th. Not much activity except in Phillipsbourg area where the Boche patrol aggressively and the 274th are trying to take the hills to their immediate front. We relieved the 157th and 36E on this last move.

14 Jan

Before completing the transfer given above – all completed except 275th – we received orders that attached us to XXI Corps in the Sarreguemines – Saarbrücken sector. We relieve the 103rd Div there and they relieve us in this sector. The relief started to assemble its Bns.

Not much activity except the Phillipsbourg area again with the 274th fighting hard to take the hills to their front.

15 Jan

275th relieved and on their way to the new sector. Relief of 276 started. All else quiet. 274th attacked to take the high ground to their front and had taken part of objective by 1250. Very bitter fighting. Enemy counter attacked and 274th suffered casualties, but beat off attack. 274th still attacking late in afternoon, on edge of hill at 878432 and consolidated positions.

Casualties of unit to 14 Jan incl.:

Killed 17 offs 111 EM

Wounded 23 offs 379 EM

Missing 11 off 383 EM

Non battle 7 offs 287 EM

Trench foot casualties – 243

PWs

274 – 186

275 – 329

276 – 189

Total – 704

16 Jan

276th relief completed today late. All Div Hqrs left this morning except Sgt Waldo and myself who will hold the fort here until all units have left. Busy with checking and coordinating the relief all day. Not much activity on the front except artillery giving 274th some concern.

The 103rd Div is composed of the 409th, 410th and 411th Inf. Maj. William White, my old room mate at Benning, is S-4 of the 410th. Am trying to contact him.

So we leave our pro-nazi iron worker's home and factory where we had a very comfortable CP. I had lived with a nice family in a large house, but didn't see them very much except in the morning when I arose as my hours at work kept me away from my room during most of their working hours.

17 Jan

Relief of the 274th began today. Hope we get out of here by tomorrow at least. Not much activity except artillery. A TD outfit has moved into this CP – colored unit.

Artillery hit close by early this AM. It was all large caliber; one missed this CP by 300 yds – shell over 11” in diameter – probably railway gun. Looks at though by the number of shells in near vicinity that they were after this place. Sure did shake this house and rattle windows. Some plaster fell but no other damage.

18 Jan

The 274th is to remain attached to the 103rd Div for present time. So Sgt. Waldo and I took off from Reichshoffen for our new CP at St. Jean Rohrbach. It was a long cold 80 mile trip. Saw some American nurses on the way – first American girls I’ve seen in France – and they surely looked fine. The towns along the road haven’t been long evacuated by the Boche and they were very badly beaten up. Usually not one house left in its entirety. Rubble of all kinds along the road – guns, vehicles, tanks – minefields still marked, barbed wire, PW enclosures, concrete pillboxes and other fortifications.

At St. Jean Rohrbach our CP and living quarters in an old French camp where officers and enlisted men, who manned the Maginot Line, lived with their families. Later it was a German concentration camp. Undoubtedly a lot of suffering has been witnessed here. The entire camp and town does not have one building without severe bomb damage. Not one room of every building in the camp has escaped damage entirely. So we’ve patched doors, walls, windows, etc., and made offices for work and sleeping quarters. We do not have a stove in our sleeping quarters and it’s cold as the devil, especially in the morning.

19 Jan

The 275th and 276th are in the line with two Bns in line and one in reserve. We are holding a line which is in the vicinity of the Maginot Line and we have developed defenses in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Maginot Line, and we have plans to withdraw to each of these if necessary, in turn.

Our mission at present is to hold and defend the present line. The direction of our attack is generally NNE with our line (MLR) about WSW. The 276th is on the left generally from Rosbruck to Bousbach, the 275th from there to Welferding. This latter town is just west of Sarreguemines. Important towns still held by the enemy and immediately in front of us is Forbach, just in front of 276th, and Grossbliederstroff, in front of the 275th. The vital or key point is the large city of Sarrebruch or Sarrebrucken, thru which the Sarre River flows. This city is the capital of the Saar Basin and was returned to Germany after the plebiscite in about 1935. We are only about five miles from this city so we are very near the German border.

Went to Corps this morning to check on air support. Had an hour conference with Capt. Inge, from Army, as to the air picture. XXI Corps is very new and so plans are not too well formulated as yet, but are progressing rapidly. The 106th Cavalry Group is on our left for the forward portion of the sector and our boundary squeezes them out at the 1st

Maginot Line. On the left of the cavalry is the 95th Div, of the 20th Corps of the Third Army. On our right is the 44th Div.

Back on duty in the afternoon as asst. G-3 for the twelve hour stretch.

20 Jan

All quiet in our sector. They have been holding this line for some time without either side doing much except artillery exchanges and strong patrol activity.

Requested an air mission on a factory in Forbach today, but it isn't flying weather. It's been snowing a lot most of the day.

21 Jan

All quiet in our sector. 274th remains attached to 103rd Div. 275th and 276th continue to improve defensive positions and organizing switch and alternate positions; also improving 1st and 2nd Maginot Lines as positions for withdrawal and the third Maginot Line as the Main Battle Position. Not much action on the front except small patrols and artillery exchanges.

Casualties

Killed Off-18 EM-180

Wounded Off-24 EM-472

Missing Off-13 EM-369

Non Battle Off-9 EM-492

Total PWs – 772

22 Jan

All quiet on the Western Front. Nothing stirring. “No change” is the by-word in all sitreps. Working daily on air support set-up but can't do much until I get relieved of this asst G-3 duty.

23 Jan

It's been twelve days since I've had a letter. Wish news from home would arrive. Worried about the kids especially the twins as they had a strep infection at last word from home. Still “no change” on the front except increased small arms fire and patrols. The Russians are going great guns and are reported only some 200 miles from Berlin. Hope they get there soon.

24 Jan

Letter from Lorraine last night with news that all was well from home. So glad to receive it. Also a fine picture of her – mail and pictures mean so much. We pass them around day after day and look at them time and again. All of us know how much the pictures mean to one concerned.

Still quiet in our sector. Believe many of the better En troops being sent to Russian front to stop the five terrific drives. Too bad we can't start a real offensive, but need 274th before doing so. They are now attached to the 45th Div. Hope we get them back soon. Had some enemy air activity today in our sector with twelve enemy planes going across our hqrs. Also, we had some air support in our sector today.

Casualties to date:

Killed Off-18 EM-182

Wounded Off-15 EM-546

Missing Off-13 EM-352

Non Battle Off-9 EM-394

PWs

274 - 215

275 - 357

276 - 228

Total - 800

3 Feb

Task Force Herren dissolved and 70th Div reorganized.

All has been quiet in this sector. We've had some artillery fire, enemy patrol activity and a few enemy planes strafing and bombing in vicinity of Div CP as well as in Regtl sectors. On Jan 25th we were attached to XV Corps and relieved from XXI Corps. Enemy planes (4 Me -109s) strafed Div CP area on Jan 29th, but we got in contact with on eof our flights and our P-47s came in within a very few minutes and chased them out. Went to XV Corps Hqs, 30 Jan, and contacted Lt. Col. Dye, G-2 Air, and Major Avelman, G-3 Air. Had pleasant chats with both, got plans straightened out, stayed for dinner - ice cream too. Got lost on return while driving at night and nearly wound up in front lines. Devil of a night - blizzard, hard driving snow, windshield covered with ice, roads icy, drifting snow, etc. Sgt. Waldo gave out and so took over driving. Finally arrived back OK after taking three hours to go 25 miles.

Started eight hour shift in War Room 30 Jan so have a few extra hours to spend on G-3 Air. Col. Richardson went to hospital with pneumonia Jan 27th; very ill. Major Ross went to hospital 1 Feb. Am watching myself very carefully so I won't get sick. Set up G-3 air office on 2nd Feb, hope I can get on that job full time soon.

Sent on a mission by Col. Bessette, 2 Feb, to inspect positions along defensive line 2 where 1st Bn 276th Inf. was working on defensive positions.

Enjoyed being out all day in the air - it was sunny and quite warm. Walked up and down hills for miles; jumped over minefields and booby traps - was rather scared of them. Some enemy artillery fire and small arms fire noted; also enemy planes flying around looking for us.

8 Feb

Nothing new to report. Everything has been fairly quiet. Remainder of 70th Inf Div – the Divarty and Special troops plus rest of Div Hqrs – has been arriving with everyone closed in by 7th Feb. 274th Inf still attached to 100th Division. Seven raids conducted during daylight on Feb 6th, with each approx a company strength. 276th had four raids and 275th had three raids. Took 55 prisoners total, we had some casualties. Expected to try and hold territory gained by raids as OPLR, but although 275th Inf got into Grossbliederstroff, enemy was too strong to allow progress thru town so they withdrew to original line. 276th tried to get into Oeting but was not successful. The elements of the four raids had to withdraw the nite of Feb 7-8 due to increasing enemy pressure plus enemy tanks. Returned to former lines by morning of the 8th.

Many of the old friends who we left back in the States now with us again. Good to see them.

63rd Div is now on our right. 106th Cav Group on our left.

9 Feb – 16 Feb

During this period sector was fairly quiet. Enemy remained on the defense using only harassing arty fire, MG and AW fire. We continued strong patrol activities constantly feeling out enemy lines. Their patrols were few and not aggressive. 274th Inf rejoined the division and now for the first time we have the entire division together. 274th Inf took over center sector of division. Our active patrolling and aggressive daylight raids accomplished mission of taking prisoners and in securing more information about the enemy. Training of reinforcements pushed. Attack plans were prepared on Corps order and orders issued to attack with mission of seizing high ground just south of Saar River in division sector including Schoenbach, Stiring Wendel, Schoeneck, Claerthal, and Wehrden.

On 13th Feb we directed our first close support mission. Target: enemy strong point in (?) factory and buildings W of Marienau, or SW of Forbach. Results: excellent, many Jerries killed in buildings, woods and as they ran up the road. On 16th Feb had our second mission (?): again excellent results.

Made several trips to Corps and to regiments. On 14 Feb went to 358th Fighter Group hqrs at Toul, with Lt. (Hudgens?), my forward controller. Had a good visit with many of the air force including intelligence and operation officers, also some of the GLOs. Attended a dance that evening. They had some American nurses and French girls for partners. Had a very nice time. Returned next morning. Our route took us thru Nancy so had a good look at the city.

17 Feb

Division attacked at daylight 0630 with the three regiments attacking abreast. First objective of the 275th Inf was the Brandenbusch Woods; of the 274th Inf: Kreutzberg Ridge – Stiring Wendel; 276th Inf: Kleinwalchen – Fahrberg-Kellsberg Hills. Enemy resistance to our attack was strongest in the left portion of the zone. Considerable MG

and SAF was encountered from the enemy in entrenched positions. Some enemy track vehicles were employed without much effect. Enemy artillery increased sharply. Considerable AT + AP mines were found scattered throughout the entire area. At end of day enemy was still resisting in Grossbliederstoff (Q4862), Le Hartwald Forest (Q4562), on the southern slopes of Le Kreutzberg Ridge (Q4164), Oeting (Q4063), and Le Kleinwaeldchen (Q3964). Enemy counterattacked late in the day near Etzling (Q4364) but it was repulsed. Enemy had been cleared from le Brandenbusch Woods (Q4763), Lixing (4662), Kerbach (Q4363), and Behren (Q4263).

This is the first time in which the 70th Division as a whole has participated in an attack. It looks as though we will work well as a team; sincerely hope so.

Casualties of this operation so far:

Killed Off-0 EM-7
Missing Off-0 EM-14
Wounded Off-9 EM-110
Captured Off-0 EM-0

Total to date
Killed Off-19 EM-259
Missing Off-13 Em-427
Captured Off-1 EM-15

POWs
Today: 191
To date: 1211

17 Feb [on separate sheet]

Attacked with 3 Regts abreast this morning. 63rd on right also attacked. All units moved forward shortly after midnight. All were meeting en SA + MG fire by 0500. Our tanks were moving along with the front line elements but M/F and mud were giving them lots of trouble. Units were progressing slowly all day through minefields. En arty heavy at times. By end of day most forward units had pushed approximately two miles. 275th on right was in Brandenbusch woods to NW of Grossbliederstoff. 274th N of Kerbach and Behren. 276th on left were N of Oeting. Total PWs taken 198. Casualties: 274 – 29(3), 275-34(2) 276-58(1) Total-121 incl 6 killed.

18 Feb

Enemy continued to defend but was pushed back all along zone of attack and we took all initial objectives. Enemy counterattacked near Etzling with attack led by 15 tanks but were repulsed mainly by our artillery. In order to stop our attack enemy committed a number of miscellaneous small units including school and replacement troops, alarm companies and reconnaissance companies. Our attacks met with constant SAF, MG and mortar fire from positions on Le Kleinwaldchen (Q3965), and Le Kreutzberg (Q4166) and Le Hardtwald (Q3965), also from N + S of Grosbliederstoff (Q4862) until cleared of

enemy. Enemy withdrew from Oeting and driven out of Etzling, also finally from Le Hardtwald Forest. The strong enemy positions on Le Kleinwaldchen – Le Kreutzberg Ridge were penetrated.

All seems to be going well; the division is fighting like hell. Total POWs now: 1482.

19 Feb

Enemy continued to defend; Jerry put up quite a fight on Le Kleinwaldchen Ridge, but was chased out and partially cleared from Le Kreutzberg Ridge. Our troops have now reached the eastern edge of Forbach. Enemy was improving his positions in vicinity of Spicheren (Q4466). He tried another counter attack today but failed. POWs: 1530.

20 Feb

Enemy continued to defend positions strongly. House to house fighting continued in E part of Forbach. He still held most of Forbach and all of Stiring-Wendel, but had been cleared from Zingzing (Q4764), Hesselung (Q4664) and Alsting (Q4565). Enemy counter attacked from two directions in the Le Kreutzberg-Spicheren area without success.

21 Feb

Enemy defended with increased intensity. A counterattack supported by tanks regained about 1000 yards NE of Spicheren. Elements of 275 Inf were on NE portion of regimental objective. 274 Inf was consolidating positions after capturing Spicheren in a tough battle, and preparing to continue attack. 276 Inf was creeping from house to house in Forbach in some of the hardest village fighting seen on the western front; enemy still holds most of the town.

POWs today: 249

POW total: 1882

22 Feb

Enemy still resisting strongly. Jerry tried two counterattacks today, but failed in both. Enemy being slowly driven out of Forbach and now holds only NW portion. 274 Inf has consolidated positions on the heights overlooking Stiring-Wendel and 275 Inf was sitting along the Spicheren Heights looking down on Saarbrucken, just 2 km to the N.

A PW stated that “he who holds Spicheren Heights, holds Saarbrucken.”

23 Feb

Jerry made three counterattacks today, with armor supporting two, but failed to gain ground. Forbach finally cleared to RR on W edge. 275 now on Division objective in their sector and organizing to defend. Enemy still holds Stiring-Wendel. Enemy cleared from Sangenwald Woods (Q4266) and Gifertwald Woods (Q4467).

POWs today: 137

POW total: 2316

24 Feb

We continued to hold on present positions. Enemy continued to hold along RR W of Forbach and all of Stiring-Wendel. Counterattacked with tanks in Bois de St. Arnual (Q4667) and penetrated 1400 yds before being eliminated; he is eager to regain Spicheren Heights.

An enemy balloon passed over zone last night. This is becoming a regular occurrence. It's nicknamed the "Forbach monster." Am going to try to get night fighters after it.

25 Feb

276 Inf continued to hold positions on E side of RR track located W of Forbach. 274 Inf pushed to E side of Forbach-Saarbrücken highway and is holding there. 275 Inf continued holding high ground S of Saarbrücken. All units digging in and securing present positions.

Had four missions today and hit some excellent targets including town of Schoeneck (Q4169), which was well plastered – tough for the Sunday church goers, and the Simon Mine (Q4067) located W of Stiring-Wendel, an enemy strongpoint. Reported that there are from 1000 to 2000 civilians in the mine – tough on them!

Am very tired. Have been working over 18 hours per day. This constant battling wears one out quickly.

POWs total: 2614

26 Feb

275 and 276 Inf continued to hold on present positions. 274 Inf received a strong counterattack and due to their constant infiltrating attempts, withdrew to the high commanding ground SE of Stiring-Wendel and reorganized.

27 Feb – 2 Mar

All units continued to hold on present positions. Enemy pounded various sectors with heavy artillery especially Forbach - 400 rds fell there on 27 Feb. On 28 Feb the division was relieved from attachment to XV Corps and attached to XXI Corps. Beginning 27th Feb – full time duty to G-3 Air. Visited XXI Corps G-3 Air, Maj. Morrison (sp?). Made plans for future air operations (?)

3 Mar

275 Inf continued to holding and improvising its position on the heights. 274 and 276 Inf launched a coordinated attack at 0817. Enemy resistance consisted of heavy small arms and artillery fire. Enemy pillboxes and mines slowed attacking units. 276 Inf pushed through NW edge of Forbach. 274 Inf fighting in Stiring-Wendel.

4 Mar

274 and 276 Inf continued attack. About 1/4th of Stiring-Wendel occupied by 274th and Marienau (Q3765) cleared by 276th and continued to push enemy back to NW in Foret de Forbach.

POWs: today – 246

total – 2471

5 Mar

House to house fighting continues in Stiring-Wendel, but enemy have been forced to NW of RR. Most of Forbach cleared. Enemy throwing a lot of artillery.

6 Mar

Enemy counterattacked with tanks in Foret de Forbach and heavy fighting continued most of the day, but he gained no ground. Enemy was driven from woods S + SE of Simon Mine, (Q4067) and fighting continued for the mine area. House to houé fighting continued in Stiring –Wendel. Enemy throwing many rockets now.

7 Mar – 12 Mar

Division held on present positions. Enemy strongly defended on his positions especially in the Simon Mine and along RR in Foret de Forbach. He continued shelling by artillery. Division assumed a defensive mission on (?) Feb [editor note –should be Mar] and continued to organize and defend on new MLR, also continued active patrolling during entire period.

Division CP moved to Freyming (Q3261) on 11 Mar.

Have had close support missions every day during good flying weather. Am spending many hours searching for targets, then planning the operations. It's a lot of work. I'm just mentally exhausted at times.

13 Mar

Division remained on defensive mission. Plans were being made for an attack by the entire 7th Army. I was busy with plans concerning air operations.

Due to learning of enemy withdrawal along left of division sector, 274 and 276 Inf were ordered to vigorously pursue the enemy. Very little enemy resistance was encountered. At end of day our units were pushing rapidly toward Saar River.

14 Mar

Enemy continued withdrawal in left sector under constant pressure of 274 and 276 Inf. Attacking units cleared Stiring-Wendel, Schoeneck, Krughutte, Petite Roselle (Q3568), Furstenhausen (Q3672) and Gersweiler (Q4170). Our front line lements all along river from SW portion of Saarbrucken to Furstenhausen.

Planes up all day searching for retreating troops and vehicles and pounding hundreds of them.

15 Mar

Enemy now generally defending along river from pillboxes on N bank and in Saarbrucken S of river. Only small groups and snipers operated S of river in left portion of Division zone.

101st Cav Group on left of us moved to Saar River's banks. 63rd Inf Div on our right. Jumped off in co-ordinated attack with 7th Army to uncover Siegfried defense positions.

16 Mar – 18 Mar

Division continued to outpost and patrol along river banks except on right where enemy continued to hold Saarbrucken south of river including St. Annual.

We continued probing for river crossings. Enemy was alerted and brought heavy MG, mortar and arty fire to bear on any movement on S bank of Aasr. On the 17th division took over 101st Cavalry sector and now front lines extend from Wadgassen (Q3274) along river to SW edge of Saarbrucken, then to S for 2 km, then east to river.

65th Inf of XX Corps, Third Army, is on our immediate left. 63rd Inf is pushing ahead on our right and has bypassed Saarbrucken. Third Army is pushing directly east and has taken St. Wendel, which is 30 km NE of Saarbrucken. The enemy there has been put in a bad spot.

Enemy continued to pound our units with heavy artillery including CPs he could locate. Some regtl CPs took a blasting. We experienced some shelling at Freyming. Jerry was very alert for our patrols and they received promptly heavy AW, MG, mortar and artillery fire. One patrol from 275 Inf of 15 men attempted to proceed along edge of river toward St. Annual (Q4769), and only 5 came back, 4 of them wounded. Every pillbox is manned and brings cross fire on any movement.

Our planes are up constantly; weather has been quite good and we've been pounding enemy constantly – especially his convoys. Have had many close support missions to handle.

19 Mar

All elements continued to probe for weak spots in enemy defenses to obtain a river crossing. Finally at 2230 elements of 276th Inf crossed Saar River. Remainder of 1st Bn was streaming across. We continued to have a lot of air support missions all day.

20 Mar

274th and 276th Inf streamed across Saar River after fast withdrawing enemy. 275th Inf fighting in Saarbrucken. Forward elements of 276th Inf reached Puttlingen and contacted elements of Third Army. Elements of 274th Inf reached Fischbach and Dudweiler.

Elements of 275th Inf continued to clear Saarbrücken. Forward patrols pushed on so fast that our exact front lines were unknown.

I left early afternoon and inspected Schoeneck and Gersweiler, also Forbach and Stiring-Wendel. Picked up a few items in Gersweiler. All towns badly bombed.

21 Mar

Division continued mopping up in sector. Units regrouping and reorganizing. Division relieved from XXI Corps, reverted to control of Seventh Army in Saarbrücken area as army reserve. Total PWs – 21 April [should be Mar] 3711.

I left today and inspected St. Arnual and Saarbrücken. Towns severely damaged by bombing and shelling.

22 Mar – 24 Mar

Division remained in Army reserve, mopping up and reorganizing. Third and Seventh Armies are pushing forward rapidly. Third has made bridgeheads across Rhine. We received orders late on 24 Mar to be prepared to leave the following morning.

I spent each day in Saarbrücken, looking over the town and inspecting bomb damage. Picked up a few weapons.

25 Mar

Division began to move to new CP. Our hqrs expected to move to Landstuhl but Sixth Army Group chose that as their CP and our recon parties were out looking for a new CP. So we spent the day awaiting word to move.

26 Mar

Entered Germany as an entire division today. Our CP moved from Freyming to Otterberg, Germany. Drove through St. Ingbert and Homburg, which were bombed a great deal. Land is well farmed, country is beautiful. The civilians watch us with thoughtful stony stares; we return them with more frigid stares. Spent the day getting settled.

Our G-3 air hqrs is in a home very nicely furnished, formerly owned by a captain in the German army.

27 Mar – 28 Mar

Spending out time in getting settled, being ready to move on. Seventh Army has crossed the Rhine. I'm working on our files and maps, etc.

29 Mar – 15 Apr

Division continued to patrol in assigned areas and conducted training and rehabilitation program. Remained in Seventh Army reserve. Reconnoitered routes to north and east to Rhine River. Advance CP of Division opened in Bad Kreuznach on 2 April. We then came under Third Army. We were in reserve for Third Army, but guarding the area by

direction of SHAEF. Units continued to move around and spread out on until we had April 8 the 274th CP at Gonsenheim and guarding and patrolling in that sector including bridges at Oppenheim, Nierstein and Mainz. Motorized patrols also operating along Rhine River. The 275th CP was at Algesheim and this unit was patrolling and guarding in sector including bridges at Gau Bickelheim, Hochstaden and Bingen; also the 2nd Bn was on garrison duty at Wiesbaden and elements of the 3rd Bn on garrison duty at Koblenz with one company at Saarbrücken. The 276th Inf CP was at Rheinbollen and was patrolling and guarding bridges at Boppard, St. Goar and Lorch; also had guards riding all trains from Bad Kreuznach to Neunkirchen. Divarty also was on guard duty in an assigned sector.

On 11 April elements of 275th Inf moved to Frankfurt to start guarding and patrolling in that area. On 14 April 3rd Bn, 275th Inf. relieved of duty at Koblenz and moved to Frankfurt.

Division's mission during this period was guarding, especially of bridges, public utilities, and military government installations, patrolling and maintaining law and order in the assigned area.

Total PWs captured by 14 April – 4882.

Report of casualties to 5 April:

From 28 Dec to Feb 17:

Killed – Off 21 EM-254

Missing – Off 16 EM 407

Wounded – Off 40 EM 859

From 17 Feb to 5 April:

Killed – Off 22 EM 287

Missing – Off 4 EM 253

Wounded – Off 91 EM 1683

Totals: 28 Dec to 5 April:

Killed – Off 43 EM 541

Missing – Off 20 EM 660

Wounded – Off 131 EM 2542

During this period of guarding we had some instances of sabotage, many of looting by civilians and allied personnel – mostly Russian and Polish PWs that had been freed. We continued screening civilians and picking up prisoners daily.

I spent most of my time checking files, getting various reports in shape and doing odd jobs including many personal details that needed taking care of. Went on several reconnaissance missions in area and also visited units. Roamed about the hills and nearby towns; assisted crashed pilots to return to units, inspected Mainz on 7 April and amazed

at the damage in the city. Many towns are blasted including Bad Kreuznach. Our CP is located in a famous hotel – the Kurhaus Palace – and we are living in solid comfort and enjoying a complete rest after 87 straight days in the line.

16 Apr to 23 Apr

Division continued guarding installations as detailed in previous account. Elements of 274th Inf began moving east of Rhine on the 17th. Adv. Div. CP moved to Frankfurt on the 18th; G-3 Air officer moved on 19th; Div CP moved on the 21st and all units were east of the Rhine by that date. 274th Inf CP was at Schierstein near Wiesbaden and their area included Wiesbaden, along the west bank of the Rhine to Lahnstein, east to Limburg, and south to Kastel. 275th Inf CP was at Frankfurt and area included all around vicinity of Frankfurt. 276th CP was at Darmstadt and its area was from there west to west bank of Rhine, along west bank to just south of Mainz, east to 10 km east of Hanau, then south to Oberburg (N0139), then west to Darmstadt. Divarty CP was at Bad Nauheim and area was from Limburg east to Giessen, excl., then SE to Langenselbold (M9376), then west to Hofheim (incl.) 270th Engr Bn and 70th Rcn Trp had interior areas to guard. Division's mission was to guard bridges, public utilities and military government installations, to patrol and to maintain law and order.

PWs by 22 April – 5538.

Our CP was located in a large German barracks area on the N edge of Frankfurt. Our quarters and offices were quite comfortable, but not nearly as fine as our previous resort hotel. Frankfurt's central districts were a mass of rubble – block after block having been bombed until not one building in those districts was left in its entirety.

During this period I kept busy on several jobs including working on the awards and decorating committee. On the 17th April investigated a Lancaster bomber of the RAF which had crashed and burned some time ago. Evidence of two bodies was found in the wreckage, and one more body found near the plane. On the 20th April made a reconnaissance to Bad Nauheim.

All going well; not working hard.

24 April to 10 May

Division continued to patrol, guard and maintain law and order in assigned sector. Division passed to control of XIX Corps May 9th. There were some minor changes during period in unit areas. At one time units were guarding over 6,000 sq. miles of territory. All units on guard duty incl Rcn troops, Divarty and Engrs.

CPs during period: Div Hqrs – Frankfurt; 274th – Schierstein (near Wiesbaden); 275th – Frankfurt; 276th – Lohr; Divarty – Bad Nauheim, Bruckenau (May 3); 270th Engr – Florsheim, Bad Schwalbach (Apr. 28).

Made several trips during period to Wiesbaden, Mainz, Lohr, Aschaffenburg, Bad Orb. On 4 May an HE-111 landed at an airport in our area, crew captured by 276th Inf.

Total PWs by 8 May: 8,302 (final total).

During this period our armies kept pushing rapidly forward; Germans surrendering by thousands. Front line units received word to cease forward action morning of May 7th. The surrender was signed at Rheims on that same day (May 7). VE Day (Victory in Europe) was May 8th. We received the news very calmly; no great enthusiasm displayed; continued doing our job. It seemed that the thoughts were of home and celebrations there.

11 May – 22 May

Left Frankfurt by plane for Paris to attend I&E school on 11 May. Flew in a C-47, landed at Luxembourg, arrived in Paris at Villacoublay in 2 1/2 hours. Lt. Fred Giles and self obtained billets in Rhone Hotel. Dinner at St. Augustine Officer's Mess. In evening went to Rue de Pigalle, sat in a sidewalk café and watched the sights. Very interesting and entertaining. Went to Bal(?) Tabourin – one of the best night clubs in Paris with an excellent floor show. Stopped in Hotel Rhone bar for a few drinks.

May 12th: Met Don (?) he drove us out to Cite Universitaire to register in and get settled. Spent evening chatting with Don and walking around town.

May 13th: Too the scenic tour around Paris and saw the noted spots: Concorde square, Champ Elysees, Grand Palais, Arc de Triumph, Eiffel Tower, Napoleon's Tomb, Notre Dame, Louvre Palace, etc.

Went to the Club La Lido with Capt. Harry Klynn in evening. Also to Club La Villa.

First day of classes on May 14th. School consisted mostly of lectures, some discussion groups. Wasn't too impressed with the school. Ran into Carroll York, Gault (702nd), Tom Cassady (at the school) Huckelberry. Had classes all week with Wednesday and Saturday afternoons off. Met Don on Wednesday again. Attended Folies Bergere on Thursday. Found a nice bar which we visited often – Chez Florells. Moved to Hotel Normandie on Saturday. Expected to leave by plane on Monday, 21 May, but grounded due to rain. Left Tuesday for Wiesbaden – 1 ½ hrs flying time.

During week division units began moving to new areas. Changes in area gave us Province of Nassau to occupy. Div CP moved to Oranienstein, near Diez, on 18 May. 274th and 275th CPs remained same, 276th Nastatten, Divarty – Bad Orb; not any changes in mission.

Div CP in old castle, very picturesque. We live in old homes on castle grounds, quite comfortable.

Have been assigned as Asst G3 Security Officer; have responsibility of checking on all installations we are guarding and make recommendations for changes, etc. Also working into I&E program.

23 May to 5 June

Div CP remained at Oranienstein, 274th at Schierstein, 275th Inf at Hamberg, 276th Inf at Nastatten, Divarty at Bad Orb. Division with attached units (AA, FA, TD) occupies Province of Nassau less SHAEF Security area. Division continued to patrol, guard, govern and maintain law and order in the assigned sector; furnished guards for trains repatriating allied PWs and DPs.

I kept busy on security measures and I&E program. Awoke Sunday morning, June 3 with an infection in my left eye and despite treatment it kept getting worse.

6 June to 16 July

Division continued same mission in assigned area. No changes until 7 July in boundaries. On 15 June division passed to control of Seventh Army and attached to XIX Corps. On 7 July division began withdrawing from certain landkreises along east bank of Rhine which was the French occupational zone. On 7 July Div CP moved to Weilburg; 276 CP to Wetzlar. On 10 July the French assumed responsibility for its area.

Due to my eye getting worse I was evacuated to the Division Medical Collecting Company and then to the 13th Field Hospital at Montabaur(sp?) on 6 June. The following day I was evacuated to the 180th General Hospital at Frankfurt where an eye specialist looked at the eye and stated I had iridocyclitis, severe, acute. Treatment of drops, hot packs and intravenous shots of triple typhoid was begun. I was given good care; very fine hospital – formerly a German Luftwaffe hosp.

Informed I was to be evacuated further and probably to the states, I returned to division; CP at Oranienburg, by ambulance for a few hours in order to get some of my affairs straightened out on Sunday, 10 June. Evacuated to an airfield near Mainz to a Medical Clearing Co. on 11 June where we laid around in tents for two days due to bad weather. It was cold and wet and I did not receive proper treatment and the eye got worse. Evacuated to Mourmelon, near Rheims, by air on 13 June to 189th General Hospital and transferred to 195th General Hospital the next day as the eye doc at the former was leaving.

Received excellent care by a Capt. Weeks, of California, a very fine doctor. He was able to get my pupil to dilate and healing started at once. Went through a complete physical exam without finding foci of infection; had penicillin shots, triple typhoid shots, atropine, etc. Within a week I was out every day to enjoy the sunshine, USO shows, officer's club etc. The doc said the eye would not heal completely for another 60 days so was boarded for the U.S. and evacuated to the 1st General Hosp. at Paris on 6 July. Was out on pass daily in Paree, saw Paul D. and Don, went sightseeing, saw (?) and Fontanne in "Love in (?)". Due to my desire to return to my unit and the doc thought it was O.K. I was reboarded and discharged from the hospital on 16 July; flew to Wiesbaden; then to division CP at Weilburg. I was glad to be back. (From John Thorne - That's Major Don Donnelly, his best friend all through high school (and beyond) in Bay City, Mich., and his brother-in-law (my uncle) Captain Paul DeWaele (an army surgeon).

17 July – 14 Aug

Upon my return found that the division was in Category IV, which means it will return to the states to be deactivated. I was sure we would be a Cat II unit, which meant the Pacific. Already many of my friends have left or are about to leave – Bob Brenner, Joe Schmidt, (??), Al Krebs, Ollie (?), Walt Greenburg, Ed Lucky, and Jim Owen, Inwood and Witt have left during the period. I hate to see the division break up and so many friends part.

The division started to shift somewhat during the period and also lose all attached units until division – what's left of it – will occupy only 3 landkreises: Unter(?)kreis, Limburg and Oberlahnkreis. Mission of division remained the same in its sector.

I started to work into G-3 training work. Made a four hour flight one day over area in an L-4.

On 3 Aug left for a 7 day leave at Cannes on the Riviera. Flew down from Frankfurt, flew over Lake Geneva and the Alps in Switzerland. It was a beautiful trip. The Riviera was grand: lots of fun and frolic, wine and dancing, boating and swimming. Stayed at the Gonnet Hotel located on the beach, and had a fine front room. Due to weather we had two extra days and didn't return until Aug 13th. Good flight back, but somewhat rough. The vacation was tops!

15 Aug to 15 Oct

Upon return from the Riviera and learning that the division was to be redeployed to the U.S. beginning in early Sept., I was presented with the problem as to whether I should stay with the division and return to the states or remain here for the time being. I decided to remain and get a job in Paris rather than take any job which would be handed out. Also, this would enable me to become reacquainted with Paris and learn some French. Therefore, I obtained orders placing me on D.S., left the unit at Weilburg on Sunday 19 Aug for the airfield at Frankfurt. Due to weather the planes were cancelled and I remained overnight in a hotel in Frankfurt and flew to Paris the next day.

Contacted I&E Division who had twice requested me, and succeeded in landing a job as Administrative Officer in the Training Within Civilian Agencies Section, (?) Branch. Had a pleasant stay in Paris and returned to Frankfurt by air on 24 August, and got to Weilburg late that afternoon in time to attend the Farewell Trailblazer party by Division Hqrs. It was a grand brawl.

Spent the following week saying goodbye to my many friends and took off for Paris on Monday Sept 3rd, in a captured Opel which was loaded to the utmost with all my belongings. Went thru Koblenz – badly bombed out – and many other towns which were in ruins, stopped overnight at Metz, and arrived in Paris on the following night. It was a long, hard, dusty ride in the Opel with difficulties in tires, the fan and getting lost complicating the trip but it was an interesting tour.

Am billeted in the Hotel Pennsylvania located about four blocks from the Arc de Triumph. The office is in the Shell building on Rue de Barri, just off the Champ Elysees, and I mess at the Hotel Majestic, on Avenue de Kleber. All quite convenient and located in the heart of Paris and the night life area along the Champs.

The job consists of handling all the office details, being assistant to the executive, answering correspondence, giving information on the TWCA schools, setting up SOPs on procedure, etc. TWCA is concerned with setting up of the schools in civilian education institutions, such as the Sarbonne, Nancy, Grenoble, Oxford, Edinburgh, Glasgow, etc., and in industries; operating the schools, getting out information to the units concerning all schools, allotting quotas, and maintaining records in connection therewith. It's quite interesting work and keeps me quite busy. (See paragraph next pg)

Within a few days after reporting, Lt. Col. Hawkins the exec, left for the states so I took over that job, too – a full colonel job per the T/O.

On Sept [no date] our offices to moved to Camp de (?)tory, located near Versailles, and I moved into billets in a fine apartment house in St. Cloud(?). Lt. Dick Tolley, of the TWCA, is my roommate and we have a grand apartment with a large living room and veranda. We can see the Eiffel Tower in the distance and the Seine flows past almost under our windows. The only difficulty is we have no heat or hot water and the nights are becoming quite chilly.

[paragraph referred to above] Col. John C. Chamberlain, Jr. is the chief, of TWCA, and a fine boss. We have two regional hqrs under us – at Paris and London – with another opening soon in Switzerland. Under those headquarters are various residential staffs at the main school centers.

Am enjoying Paris and expect to see a lot of it. Have done some sightseeing, attended a few dances and parties and meeting a lot of friends.

END OF ENTRIES

Editor Note: the following notations appeared on separate sheets and appeared to have been torn at one point.

27th Dec 1944 –

MLR on the Maginot Line

274 moved into pos by 2350

275 moved into pos

276 closed into biv area in TF reserve by 1700 (relieved TF Harris and TF Linden in assigned sector and occupied def positions.

28th Dec

275 closed into assigned area 0015

Dec 27 – 28

Moved into pos. 274 by 2350. 275 by 0015 28 Dec. 276 in reserve.

Dec 29

276 relieving TF Harris

Dec 30

274 elements (1st Bn) relieved by TF Linden and occupied new pos on right of right front.

275 – moved to new position

276 – 3rd Bn 157. 2nd Bn relieved 1st Bn

Dec 31

274 Inf 3rd Bn began to move

275 Inf reliefs completed of 36E, (?) Inf, 157th Inf. Plans for 276 to 103rd Div sector.

paratroopers in vic

Jan 1, 1945

275th Inf moved into new area

elements of 276th relieved and in assigned area

TFH CP opened St Jean Rohrbach 161400

274 attchd 103 Div. TF Herren assumed command of sector 171100

276 to new area

strong patrol activity

Jan 2

274th Inf completed occ of entire sector 020145. Withdrawal to Maginot Line at 022000.

Jan 3

274th Inf. moving to new area vic of Niederbronn (1st), Puberg (2nd), Weinbourg (3rd)

275th – attchd 45th

276th – reverts to TF Herren (?) on arrival replaced TF Harris

TFH relieved elements of 275

Jan 4

274 completed – began movement to 1st attachment to 45th Div

276 – occupied portion of 275

TFH – 274 rel elements of 276 occ.

Jan 5 and 6

entire TF front 3rd Bn R3035 to R2421, 2nd Bn R2421 to R1311, 1st Bn reserve

Jan 7

275 completed move to 45th Div – attchd

276 moving to assembly area Camp Oberhoffen

TFH num 275 attchd 79 Div

Jan 8

All units completed moves to new areas.

Jan 9

3rd Bn 274 rel 1st Bn 275 – 276 att to 45th Div

Jan 10

1st Bn 274 rel by 3rd Bn 275

Jan 13

2nd Bn 274 rel 1st Bn 157th

1st Bn 275 relieved by 1st Bn 36th Eng and then 1st 275 rel by 2nd Bn 36th Eng

276 returned to TFH control. 1st Bn rel 3rd Bn TF in new area.

315th then opened CP in La Petite Pierre 1600

Jan 14

Move to vic of Petite Pierre

315th (?) att 275

(?) ttack Wingen 1323

Jan 15

MLR line Volksberg – Ingwiller

attkg Wingen

Wingen taken 1600. Units alerted

Jan 16

Move to new area TF Herren CP moved Reichshoffen 2000.

Jan 17

275th reverted to TFH control.

Jan 18 – Feb 2

Units to occupy sector

Jan 25

to control of XV Corps

Jan 26

New right boundary

Information on the 358th Fighter Group that is mentioned in the journal. [Editor addition]



358th FG



Constituted as 358th Fighter Group on 20 Dec 1942.

Activated on 1 Jan 1943.

Trained with P-47's. Moved to England during Sep-Oct 1943. Began operations on 20 Dec 1943 and served in combat with Eighth and, later, Ninth AF until V-E Day. Engaged in escort work until Apr 1944 to cover the operations of bombers that the AAF sent against targets on the Continent. Dive-bombed marshalling yards and airfields during Apr to help prepare for the invasion of Normandy. Continued attacks on enemy communications and flew escort missions during May. Escorted troop carriers over the Cotentin Peninsula on 6 and 7 Jun, and attacked bridges, rail lines and trains, vehicles, and troop concentrations during the remainder of the month. Moved to the Continent in Jul and took part in operations that resulted in the Allied breakthrough at St Lo. Continued to fly escort, interdiction, and close-support missions during the Allied drive across France and into Germany, earning four citations before the end of the war. Received first DUC for operations from 24 Dec 1944 to 2 Jan 1945 when the group not only supported Seventh Army by attacking rail lines and rolling stock, vehicles, buildings, and artillery, but also destroyed numerous fighter planes during a major assault by the German Air Force against Allied airfields. Received second DUC for 19-20 Mar 1945, a period in which the 358th destroyed and damaged large numbers of motor transports and thus hampered the evacuation of German forces that were withdrawing from the area west of the Rhine. Received third DUC for performance between 8 and 25 Apr 1945 when the group attacked enemy airfields in the region of Munich and Ingolstadt, engaged the enemy in aerial combat, and supported advancing ground forces by attacking such targets as motor transports, tanks, locomotives, guns, and buildings. Received fourth citation, the French Croix de Guerre with Palm, for assisting in the liberation of France. Returned to the US in Jul 1945.

Inactivated on 7 Nov 1945.

Redesignated 122d Fighter Group. Allotted to ANG (Ind) on 24 May 1946. Extended federal recognition on 9 Dec 1946. Ordered into active service on 1 Feb, 1951. Assigned to Air Defense Command.

Redesignated 122d Fighter-Interceptor Group. Trained with F-51 and F-84 aircraft.

Inactivated on 7 Feb 1952. Relieved from active service, returned to ANG (Ind),

Redesignated 122d Fighter Bomber Group, and *activated*, on 1 Nov 1952.

1951-1952. *365th* (later 163d) : 1943-1945; 1951-1952. *366th*: 1943-1945. *367th*: 1943-1945

STATIONS. Richmond AAB, Va, 1 Jan 1943; Baltimore, Md, 28 Apr 1943; Camp Springs AAFld, Md, 28 May 1943; Philadelphia Mun Aprt, Pa, 16 Jun 1943; Richmond AAB, Va, 13 Aug-25 Sep-3; Goxhill, England, 20 Oct 1943; Leiston, England, 29 Nov 1943; Raydon, England, 31 Jan 1944; High Halden, England, 13 Apr 1944; Cretteville, France, 3 Jul 1944; Pontorson, France, 14 Aug 1944; Vitry-le-Francois, France, 14 Sep 1944; Mourmelon, France, 16 Oct 1944; Tohl, France, 9 Nov 1944; Sandhofen, Germany, 2 Apr 1945; Reims, France, c. 23 Jun-Jul 1945; La Junta AAFld, &lo, 3 Aug? Nov 1945. Stout Field, Ind, 1 Feb 1951; Baer Field, Ind, 10 Mar 1951-17 Feb 1952.

COMMANDERS. Col Cecil L Wells, 1 Jan 1943; Col James B Tipton, 20 Sep 1944-unkn; Lt Col John M Thacker, 1945. Col John A Carey, 1951-c. Feb 1952.

CAMPAIGNS. American Theater; Air Offensive, Europe; Normandy; Northern

SQUADRONS. *223rd*: 1951-1952. *266th*: France; Rhineland; Ardennes-Alsace; Central Europe.

DECORATIONS. Distinguished Unit Citations: Ardennes, 24 Dec 1944-2 Jan 1945; ETO, 19-20 Mar 1945; Germany, 8-25 Apr 1945. French Croix de Guerre with Palm.

Editor Notes:

Retyping a journal in cursive proved a tough nut to take on. I tried my best on spellings and where something was unclear to me you will see (?) in the narrative. Notes from me will be in [brackets].

I want to thank John Thorne, son of Robert Thorne, for sending me the pictures and journal.

During the Feb period French place name are followed by map co-ordinates. These were in the journal. They do match the 1:50,000 scale period map on our file site found here: <http://www.files.trailblazersww2.org/forbachmaps.htm#Forbach>

I added information about the 358th Fighter Group that is mentioned in the journal at the end of the narrative. This information was not in the journal.