



CHRONICLE

517 PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM

517 PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT

460 PARACHUTE FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

596 PARACHUTE COMBAT ENGINEER COMPANY

·Italy ·France ·Belgium ·Germany·



| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----------|------|----------|-----------------|------|----------|-----------|------|----------|-----------|------|-----------|-----------------|------|----------|----------------|------|-----------|
| <u>CAMPAIGN CREDITS</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 517 Parachute Combat Team | <table><tr><td>Rome-Arno</td><td>WDGO</td><td>99, 1945</td></tr><tr><td>Southern France</td><td>WDGO</td><td>87, 1945</td></tr><tr><td>Arrowhead</td><td>WDGO</td><td>70, 1945</td></tr><tr><td>Rhineland</td><td>WDGO</td><td>118, 1945</td></tr><tr><td>Ardennes-Alsace</td><td>DAGO</td><td>63, 1948</td></tr><tr><td>Central Europe</td><td>WDGO</td><td>116, 1945</td></tr></table> | Rome-Arno | WDGO | 99, 1945 | Southern France | WDGO | 87, 1945 | Arrowhead | WDGO | 70, 1945 | Rhineland | WDGO | 118, 1945 | Ardennes-Alsace | DAGO | 63, 1948 | Central Europe | WDGO | 116, 1945 |
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| Rhineland | WDGO | 118, 1945 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Ardennes-Alsace | DAGO | 63, 1948 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Central Europe | WDGO | 116, 1945 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| <u>DECORATIONS</u> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 517 Parachute Infantry Regiment | French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, world war II, Streamer embroidered DRAGUIGNAN DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 517 PIR First Battalion | Presidential Unit Citation (Army) Streamer embroidered SOY-HOTTON DAGO 10, 1948 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, world war II, Streamer embroidered DRAGUIGNAN DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cited in the Order of the Day of the Belgian Army for action in the Ardennes DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 517 PIR Second Battalion | French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, world war II, Streamer embroidered DRAGUIGNAN DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Cited in the Order of the Day of the Belgian Army for action in the Ardennes DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, world war II, Streamer embroidered DRAGUIGNAN DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 517 PIR Third Battalion | French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, world war II, Streamer embroidered DRAGUIGNAN DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 460 Parachute Field Artillery Bn. | French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, world war II, Streamer embroidered DRAGUIGNAN DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 596 Parachute Combat Engineer Co. | French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, world war II, Streamer embroidered DRAGUIGNAN DAGO 43, 1950 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | LOCATION | BATTALION | | | ATTACHED TO / OP UNIT |
|----------------|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| BELGIUM | NAMUR BELGIUM HOTTON / SOY (SOU-LES-HYS) WERBOMONT MALMEDY ATTACK PLAN FERRIERES MANHAY | 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 3 | XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS 3rd ARMORED DIVISION (36th REG) XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS 30th INFANTRY DIVISION XVIII AIRBORNE CORPS 49th INFANTRY REGIMENT AREA |
| | 7th ARMORED DIVISION SECTOR BASSE BODEAUX TROIS PONTS ST JACQUES BERGEVAL FOSSE AREA | 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 | 3 3 | 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION 504 505 325 REGIMENTS COMBAT COMMAND A 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION 504 PARACHUTE REGIMENT |
| | PETITE HALLEAUX 505 SECTOR OPERATIONS ABREFONTAINE GRAND HALLEAUX STAVELOT CROSS AMBLEVE RIVER | 1 1 | 2 3 | 3 3 3 3 3 | 551 PARACHUTE BN ATTACHED TO 517 82 / 505 PARACHUTE REGIMENT 82 / 504 PARACHUTE REGIMENT 82 / 504 PARACHUTE REGIMENT 106th INFANTRY DIVISION 112th INFANTRY REGIMENT MISSION |
| | HENUMONT - FIRST OBJECTIVE HENUMONT HOUEGENES POTEAUX POTEAUX RIDGE | 1 1 | 3 | 3 3 3 3 3 | 424th INFANTRY COMBAT TEAM " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " |
| | NEIDER-EMMELS HUNNANGE WALLERODE/KEPPELBORN MEDELL DER EIDT WOODS | 2 | 2 2 2 2 2 | 3 | 7th ARMORED DIVISION (CC B) " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " |
| | HONSFELD GERMANY SCHEID BERGSTEIN SCHMIDT ZERKALL KALL VALLEY / HEIMBACH DAM | 1 1 1 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 3 3 3 | 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION 82 / 325 GLIDER REGIMENT V CORPS FIRST ARMY 78th INFANTRY DIVISION 78th INFANTRY DIVISION 78th INFANTRY DIVISION |
| | LES ARCS FRANCE LA MOTTE TRANS-en-PROVENCE LE MUY DRAGUIGNAN LES ARCS | 1 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 3 | D-DAY HOLDING ACTION HAD SKIRTED AROUND LE MUY ATTACKING TOWARDS DRAGUIGNAN 550 GLIDER INFANTRY BATTALION 551 PARACHUTE INFANTRY BATTALION 517 3rd Bn SUPPORT(from South) |
| | PAYENCE / TOURRETTES CALLIAN / MONTAUXOUX ST CEZAIRE-s-SIAGNE ST VALLIER-de-THIEY GRASSE BAR-sur-LOUP | 1 2 | 2 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 3 3 | 200 PRISONERS ABTF COMMENDATION : COMPANY I HAD MOVED THRU COL-de-LEQUE HAD MOVED THRU CABBIS VALLEY AND CROSSED LOUP RIVER |
| | VAR RIVER BRIDGE BOUYON / PUGET THENIERS LA ROQUETTE / ST MARTIN-d-VAR LEVENS L'ESCARENE LUCERAM (ROUTE TO COL-de-BRAUS) | 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 2 | 3 | CAPTURED BRIDGE INTACT OSS/FFI (LE BROC & COURSEGOULES) ABTF COMMENDATION : COMPANY E MOVED NORTH TO PEIRA-CAVA ABTF COMMENDATION : COMPANY D |
| | COL-de-BRAUS MT SCANDEIOUS BLOODY STUMP PEIRA-CAVA MT VENTABREN TETE-de-LAVINA / HILL 1098 | 1 1 2 | 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 3 3 3 | CAPTURED BY COMPANIES G & H PROTECT FLANK / LINK WITH FSSF COMPANIES G & H AND THRU TO HIGHER GROUND SOUTH FLANK HELD BY COMPANY D |
| FRANCE | WHIZ-BANG-HILL / RIDGE X SOSPEL FORT BARBONNET LE GOLF FORT AGAISEN / MT GRAZIAN MT GROS / MT MANGIABO | 1 1 1 1 1 1 | 2 2 2 2 2 2 | 3 3 3 3 3 3 | COMPANY F PATROLS ENTER ON 10 OCT R CP COMPANY B PATROLS |
| | GROSSETO ITALY MONTARSIO MONTEPESCALI STICCIANO GAVARRANO BATIGNANO | 1 2 | 2 3 | 3 3 3 3 3 3 | COMPANY B ADVANCE POINT 36th INFANTRY DIVISION " " " " " " " " " " " " |
| | FOLLONICA CORNIA RIVER / HIGH GROUND CORNIA RIVER CROSSING MOUNT PELLO SUVERETO VALLEY | 1 1 1 1 | 2 3 3 | 3 3 3 3 3 | " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " " 36th INFANTRY DIVISION |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| ITALY | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

NOTE: 517 Deployments assume: 75MM fire support from 460 Artillery Battalion
Engineer specialist support from 596 Engineer Co



The 517th Parachute Infantry Regiment was activated on the Fifteenth of March, 1943, at Camp Toccoa, Georgia.

The Regiment was alerted for overseas shipment while on Tennessee maneuvers and ordered back to Camp Macall for its final preparations. It was at this time that the Combat Team was formed by the attachment to the Regiment of the 460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion and the 596 Parachute Combat Engineer Company.

During the ensuing months, this Combat Team, the youngest in the United States Army, was to blaze a trail through the battle fields of Europe.

Campaigns were fought in Italy, France, Belgium, and Germany. The Team was to achieve outstanding success in all of them.

The Team sailed from Newport News, Virginia, on the 17th of May, aboard the USS Santa Rosa and the USS Christobal. Two weeks after sailing, on the 31st of May, the ships arrived at the war-torn city of Naples, Italy. The voyage by sea was over, the eve of battle was near.

Italy

After debarkation, a bivouac was established in an extinct volcano crater, equipment made ready, training conducted, and final preparations for battle were completed. Camp was broken on the 14th of June, and the Team boarded LSTs for the seaborne trip to Civitavecchia and combat, attached to the 36th Infantry Division.

On the morning of 18 June, troopers of Company B acting as lead Battalion point, were met by a blast of enemy machine gun fire. The first of many battles for the Combat Team had started.

The long months of training paid dividends once the fighting began. Although combat actions are usually trying, the men of this Team were ever able to overcome the opposition and push to their objective.

When the fighting commenced, The First Battalion commanded by Lt. Colonel William Boyle, stayed the attack while the Second Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Richard Seitz, moved to the right flank, forcing the Germans to withdraw, but not before heavy casualties were inflicted on them.

The Team pushed on rapidly to prevent the re-organization of the German defenses. The Second Battalion moved on to Montesaio, and took it on the evening of 19 June. The Third Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Zais, moved to the left and pushed through Montepescali to take Sticciano on the night of 20 June.

The following day the Combat Team moved through an area of the 142nd Infantry Regiment to a position east of Follonica. On the morning of 24 June, the Second Battalion struck to the left and moved into a section of Follonica, where it encountered heavy resistance from the Germans. Overcoming this resistance, they pushed on to capture the dominating ground to the front.

The Third Battalion moved from the outskirts of Gavarrano before dusk on the same day on an epic march that took them through the German lines under cover of darkness. Discarding all noisy equipment and using liberated mules for transportation of supplies, they slipped through the enemy lines unobserved, to occupy the high ground above the Cornia River.

The First Battalion moved through these positions at Noon, crossing the Cornia River Valley behind a screen of friendly artillery fire, and given the mission of taking the high ground facing the Suvereto River Valley. They attacked up the slopes of Mount Pello under heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire, and sporadic bursts from small arms.

By evening of the same day, the First Battalion had occupied the crest of the mount, and all positions were held despite desperate counterattacks by the Germans, attempting to dislodge them.

All elements of the Combat Team were relieved on the morning of 26 June, by the 442nd Japanese American Combat Team. The 517 had become a well seasoned Combat Team in a short period of time, and pulled back to the area of Frascati on the outskirts of Rome. Preparations were underway for the invasion of Southern France. Training continued and equipment replenished.

France

By the middle of August, plans had been finalized for the next operation. This was to be the invasion effort. The Combat Team was transported to marshalling areas located at air strips near Rome. Final briefings were conducted, chutes were issued, and men loaded into C47s.

In the early morning hours of 15 August the Team was on its way toward the goal of every Paratrooper, as an airborne spearhead for an invading army. At 0430 hours the sky over Le Muy, France filled with chutes and the attack was under way.

The action throughout the next three days threw the Germans into a state of chaos. Enemy convoys were attacked, communication lines were severed, and towns and villages were occupied as Troopers fought toward their objectives. Le Muy, Les Arcs, La Motte, and Draguignan became names to be remembered. Part of the Third Battalion landed and proceeded to Claviers shattering enemy lines and installations as they went. Remaining troops of the Third Battalion had landed in the hills East of Tourettes and were joined by British Paratroopers. The combined force annihilated a large German convoy speeding reinforcements to defensive positions near the beach.

Lt. Colonel Boyle and a handful of men made a gallant stand at Les Arcs. Remaining elements of the First Battalion captured assigned objectives.

The 460th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion, under Lt. Colonel Cato, had a bulk of its guns deployed and ready to fire by 1100 hours.

The Second Battalion pushed through to join with the First as the Germans began massing their forces on the outskirts of Les Arcs for an all-out counterattack.

The Third Battalion completed a 40 Km forced march. The Team consolidated and attacked all assigned German positions. Thus the way was cleared for the beach forces to push on towards the North.

The First Platoon of Capt. Dalrymple's 596 Parachute Engineer Company had joined assault operations with elements of the 509 Parachute Inf. Battalion near Le Muy. The Second Platoon, having been attached to 517 Second Battalion, conducted operations south of Les Arcs. The Third Platoon had joined attack operations with 517 Third Battalion near Callian and later near Les Arcs.

The 596 Equipment List consisted of 58 equipment bundles containing 6000 pounds of explosives, 2000 pounds of mines, 14 mine detectors, 2 radios, 4 complete pioneer bundles, 3 machine gun bundles, 3 Bazooka bundles, and 3 misc. equipment bundles.

By D Plus 3, German opposition within the confines of the Airhead had ceased. On D Plus 4, the Team was given a new mission to the east. The Second and Third Battalions were charged with the capture of Fayence and Callian. This was accomplished by 21 August.

St. Cezaire fell to Companies G and I on the 22nd of August. During the attack Company G had been pinned down, Company I surged through heavy fire up the mountainous slope to take the objective. For this action, it earned a Commendation from Major General Robert T. Frederick, Commanding General of the First Airborne Task Force.

St. Vallier, Grasse, Bouyon, and La Rocquette fell in quick succession. In the attack on La Rocquette, Company E distinguished itself and also earned a Commendation from the Commanding General.

The Combat Team's momentum in the late summer was slowed by a line of enemy fortifications extending from the Maritime Alps to the Sea. The Germans attempted to hold a series of forts at all costs. On 5 September Company D succeeded in taking some high ground near Col de Braus. Heavy fighting ensued. Companies G and H were successful in capturing Col de Braus. A step closer to the heavily defended Sospel Valley.

The First Battalion, supported by a Battery of the 460, pressed into Peira Cava. A red letter day of the campaign was 18 September when Ventebren and Tete de Lavina were taken by the Second and Third Battalions.

The remainder of September was spent digging defensive positions in and around Peira Cava. The Combat Team now held a thinly manned 15 mile front, using mines and booby traps to take the place of Troopers. Attacks on Hill 1098 ended the month with the roar of artillery duels echoing through the Maritime Alps.

Despite heavy artillery fire, a patrol from Company F pushed into Sospel on 29 October. The Germans withdrew and Company B moved up through the positions to push on and occupy Mt. Azaisen.

The siege of Sospel was over after 51 days of continuous fighting and the Combat team fanned out in pursuit of the enemy. The campaign was terminated on 17 November. The Team marched 48 Kilometers over the mountains and down into the sunny Riviera.

On 6 December the Team moved from La Colle to entrain at Antibes. The men crowded into small 40 & 8 rail cars for the train ride to the North. Destination, Soissons, France.

On 12 December the destination was reached, only a few days before Von Rundstedt unleashed his Ardennes Offensive. The Team was alerted and two days later sped northward to the vicinity of Namur, Belgium.

Belgium

Orders were received through XVIII Corps which directed the First Battalion to the 3rd Armored Division sector near Soy, Belgium. Pressure from German armor had made the situation so fluid that it was impossible to tell exactly where the front began. Company C was immediately attached to Task Force Kane. This unit alone held the key point on which the front hinged.

Companies A and B detrucked Northeast of Soy and were ordered to attack along the highway leading from Soy to Hotton. The situation was so critical that no rest could be allowed following the 24 hour trip from Soissons.

The mission of the First Battalion was to take the commanding ground around Haid's Hits, then capture the high ground at Sou-Les-Hys, and breakthrough to free the surrounded 3rd Armored Division elements in Hotton.

Company B led the attack until forced to hold a line due to heavy fire encountered from tanks and automatic weapons. It became necessary for Company A to by-pass the planned route to Hotton. While this maneuver saved casualties, it was necessary to fight for every foot of ground along the entire route.

On the return trip from Hotton to Soy the fighting was as heated as on the trip in.

The mission was so well executed despite fanatic resistance, that the First Battalion was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for the action.

On 26 December the Team received a most important mission when ordered to take Manhay at any cost. Manhay had been captured by elements of Second SS Panzer Division, the unit responsible for atrocities at Malmedy a few days earlier. Manhay contained a junction of five roads and commanded the all important highway through Werbomont to Liege. The task of leading the attack into Manhay was given to the Third Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Paxton.

The Manhay attack succeeded on the initial try, following a 25 minute barrage from 15 artillery battalions. An enemy counter-attack supported by tanks began almost immediately but was driven off within an hour. It was at Manhay that the German offensive was halted and hopes for a quick thrust northward were frustrated.

On 3 January, the Combat Team, acting as left flank of the 82nd Airborne Division, attacked south along the Salm River. The 551st Parachute Infantry, as an attached Battalion, fought thru Basse Bodeaux, while the 517 Second Battalion captured Trois Pons. The attack continued to Monte Fosse where it was held up by heavy fire.

The First Battalion moved up through the ground already taken to seize St. Jacques and Bergeval. The Third Battalion continued its attack and pushed across the Salm River to the east.

The First and Third Battalions were now attached to what remained of the 106th Infantry Division. This assignment involved attacks across the L'Ambleve River between Stavelot and Trois Pons. The actions resulted in the capture of Henumont, Lozbieme, and Poteaux, despite determined enemy resistance.

The Second Battalion, assigned to 7th Armored Division, plunged into the defenses of St. Vith. With the capture of St Vith, the last vestige of an effective German offensive was wiped out.

The Combat Team was now moved to Stavelot for a short rest. For the first time in many weeks the Troopers did not have to sleep in fox holes and many even had roofs over their heads.

Germany

On 4 February, Colonel Graves received orders to move the Team from Stavelot to Germany for operations with the 82nd Airborne Division. This was accomplished and actions ensued near Honsfeld and Scheid.

Following this action the Team was assigned to First Army V Corps and attached to the 78th Infantry Division. The Team moved through the tank traps and shattered pill boxes of the Siegfried Line towards an assembly point near Rotgen. From here the Team moved through the Hurtgen Forest to the tactical objective of Bergstein.

The Team moved out of Bergstein at 2400 Hours on 6 February against a high ridge east of the Roer River. This area was defended by the German 1st Parachute Division. The Team's mission was to occupy the ridge thus cutting off the German escape route from Schmidt.

Numerous obstacles had been erected to prevent a crossing of the river and to help repel attacks. The German defenders had 6 weeks to prepare the positions and had made the most of them by building reinforced concrete emplacements. They had also laid the largest mine field ever deployed in the European Theatre.

The 596 Parachute Engineer Company worked endless heroic hours under heavy enemy fire removing mines and clearing a path for attacking elements of the Team.

The battle grew in intensity and by twilight of the second day had reached a violent pitch. An artillery duel was being waged by both sides with Troopers in fox holes and deserted buildings on the receiving end. The cross roads that had been an insignificant sector turned into the most hotly contested area on the front.

The Companies that had started the attack with from thirty to forty men were down to twenty, and some of the best leaders gone.

The First Battalion continued to attack with Company A assaulting Zerkall and Company B sending patrols through the mine fields towards the river.

The Second Battalion cut through a network of trip-wire mines to push almost to the river where mortar and small arms fire halted their advance.

The Combat Team kept up continuous pressure against the German positions and fulfilled the slogan "Attack" until relieved by the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment on 8 February.

The Team pulled out of the lines to Laon and then to Joigny where it joined the 13th Airborne Division. Following replenishment of manpower and equipment it moved to a marshalling area at Air Field B 54, near Bapaume, to await a new airborne mission.

Missions were assigned to jump into areas ahead of the forces spearheading the American attack. Briefings was completed and final preparations made, but at the last minute friendly units over ran the Drop Zones and the missions canceled. The last hope for another airborne mission died with the fall of Germany and the Team pulled back to Joigny early in June.

The Team departed Europe on 14 August and arrived in New York City by 22 August 1945...

• PARTIAL LISTING OF DECORATIONS AWARDED TO MEMBERS OF THE TEAM •

| | |
|------------------------------|-----|
| CONGRESSIONAL MEDAL OF HONOR | 1 |
| DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS | 6 |
| LEGION OF MERIT | 5 |
| SILVER STAR | 131 |
| BRONZE STAR | 557 |
| AIR MEDAL | 2 |
| SOLDIERS MEDAL | 4 |
| FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE | 17 |

Some Quotes:

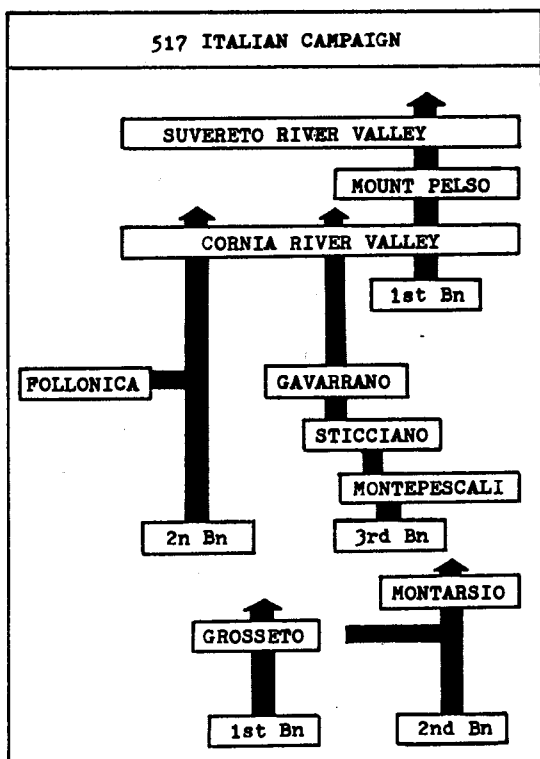
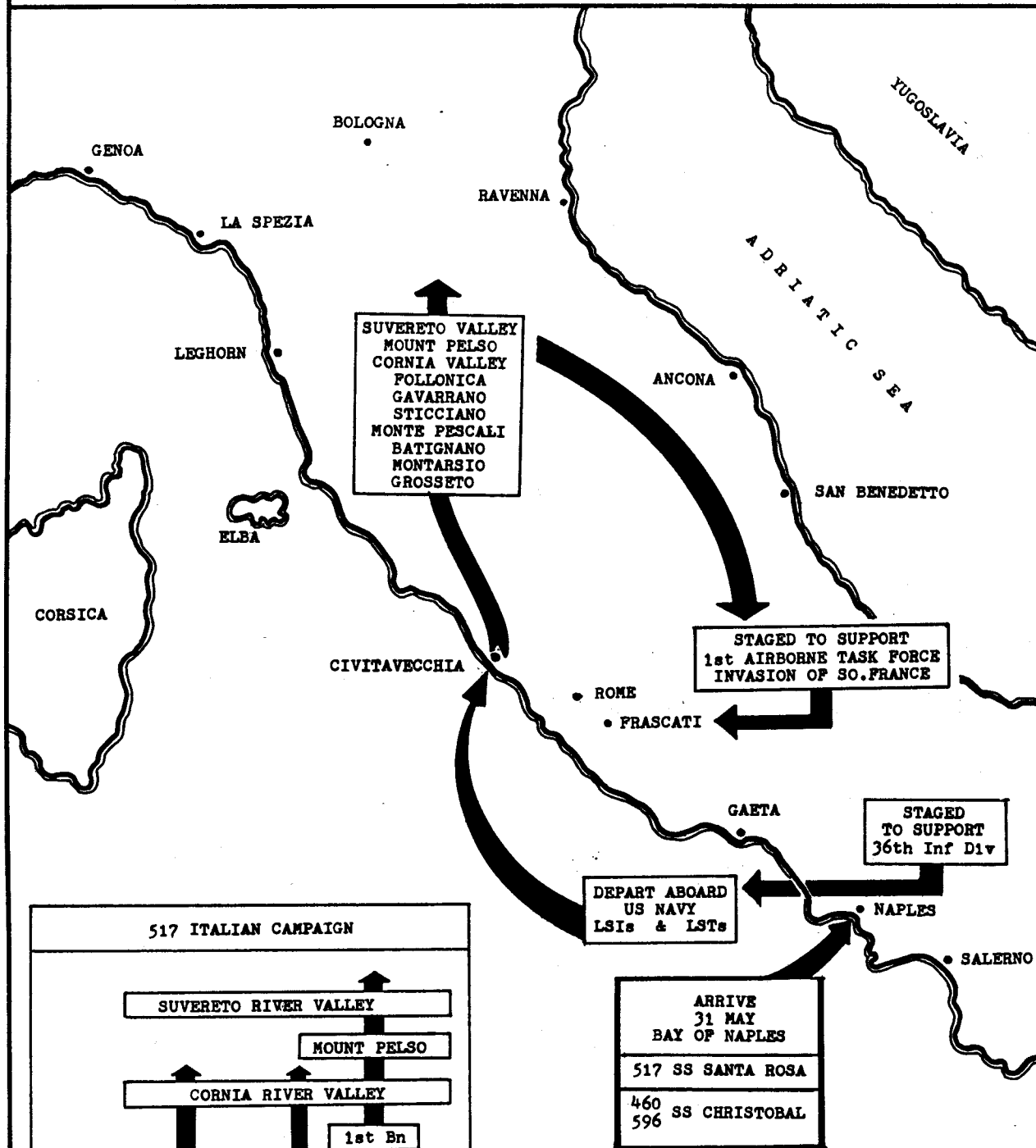
- BERLIN SALLY "You Men of Five-Seventeen are much better than we anticipated. You are foolhardy... you will lose many Men!"
- MAJOR GENERAL FRED L. WALKER, 36th INFANTRY DIVISION, commended the Combat Team for their part "in inflicting on the Wehrmacht, the worst defeat in the history of the German Army"
- COLONEL R.L. HOWZE, 36th ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3rd ARMORED DIVISION, in commending the First Battalion said, "They are clearly the highest type troops of this or any other Army"
- MAJOR GENERAL MAURICE ROSE, 3rd ARMORED DIVISION, in commending the First Battalion added, "The operation was highly commendable and gained the admiration of the entire Division"
- COLONEL W.S. TRIPLET, COMMANDING OFFICER of COMBAT COMMAND A, 7th ARMORED DIVISION, "The superior manner in which the Second Battalion executed the plans of this Combat Command reflected the highest standards of proficiency. Their courage and skill is a credit to a fine organization"
- MAJOR GENERAL R.W. HASBROUCK, COMMANDING GENERAL, 7th ARMORED DIVISION, added, "I am pleased to forward this Commendation and add my personal appreciation for the splendid manner in which your unit assisted this Division in accomplishing its mission during recent operations"
- MAJOR GENERAL J. LAWTON COLLINS, COMMANDING, VII CORPS, "It is with pleasure that I transmit this tribute to the superb fighting qualities of the 1st Battalion, 517th Parachute Regiment and their commanders, Lt. Col. W.J. Boyle and Major D.W. Fraser"

THE 517 PARACHUTE COMBAT TEAM BRED A UNIQUELY SUPERIOR TROOPER. ITS INFANTRY, ARTILLERY, AND ENGINEER COMPONENTS ESTABLISHED TRAINING AND COMBAT PERFORMANCE STANDARDS SECOND TO NONE. THE COMPONENTS WERE CONCEIVED AS THE PARACHUTE ARM OF THE 17th AIRBORNE DIVISION. HOWEVER, FATE INTERVENED AND THRUST THEM TOGETHER AS AN INDEPENDENT PARACHUTE UNIT. RAPID ADJUSTMENT TO CHANGE WAS TO BECOME A FORTE OF THIS UNIT. THE TEAM:

PREPARED FOR BATTLE, MORE BY INVENTIVENESS, THAN BY USE OF REQUISITION.
PERFORMED IN BATTLE, MORE BY INSTINCT, THAN BY RESPONSE TO BRIEFING.
SUCCEEDED IN BATTLE, MORE BY DETERMINATION, THAN BY BENEFIT OF FAVORABLE ODDS.
WHILE OUR CHAPTER IN HISTORY IS BRIEF, IT IS RICHLY ENDOWED WITH ACTS OF HEROISM, SACRIFICE, AND MOST IMPORTANTLY, CONTRIBUTION TO OUR BELOVED COUNTRY.
THE "TRUE AS STEEL" ESPRIT; THEN AS NOW, SELDOM RIVALED, NEVER SURPASSED.

ITALY

IT WAS IN THE COLD AND MUD OF THE TENNESSEE MANEUVER AREA THAT ALL PARACHUTISTS IN THE 17th AIRBORNE DIVISION WERE ALERTED AND PULLED BACK TO CAMP MACKALL TO FORM THE 517 PARACHUTE COMBAT TEAM. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, THE TEAM STAGED AT CAMP PATRICK HENRY AND SHIPPED TO ITALY. THIS REPRESENTED THE FULFILLMENT OF A DREAM THAT SPRANG FROM THE SHADOWS OF MT CURAHEE IN CAMP TOCCOA, GEORGIA.



| 517 PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM |
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| 517 PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT |
| Consisted of 3 Battalions, each organized with a Headquarters Company and 3 (3 Platoon) Companies |
| 460 PARACHUTE FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION |
| Consisted of a Headquarters Battery and 4 (3 Weapon) Fire Batteries. The weapon being the 75 MM Pack Howitzer. |
| 596 PARACHUTE COMBAT ENGINEER COMPANY |
| Consisted of a Headquarters Section and 3 (3 Squad) Line Platoons. One Platoon was normally assigned to each of the Parachute Infantry Battalions. |

DRAGOON

DRAGOON

DRAGOON

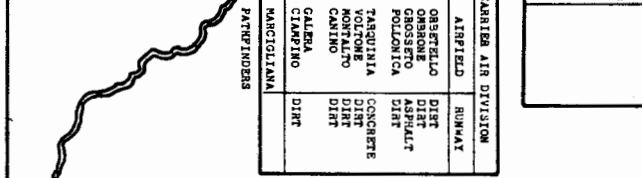
| DELIVERY SCHEME | | | | |
|-----------------|------------|--------|---------|--|
| ELEMENT | MISSION | TROOPS | SORTIES | |
| PALACIOTE | PARACHUTER | 121 | 9 | |
| | AIRBORNE | 5630 | 396 | |
| | CANARY | 713 | 41 | |
| | | 686 | 446 | |
| GLIDER | BLUESAND | 375 | 75 | |
| | DOVE | 2550 | 232 | |
| | | 2625 | 407 | |
| TOTAL AIRBORNE | | 9111 | 853 | |

| PARACHUTE ELEMENTS | | 6,500 |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| 517 | Parachute Combat Team | Graves |
| 512 | Parachute Infantry Regiment | |
| 466 | Parachute Artillery Battalion | |
| 496 | Parachute Infantry Company | |

| PARACHUTE ELEMENTS | | 6,500 |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------|
| 517 | Parachute Combat Team | Greenase |
| 460 | Parachute Infantry Regiment | |
| 461 | Parachute Infantry Battalion | |
| 506 | Parachute Engineer Company | |
| 409 | Parachute Infantry Battalion | Yarborough |
| 465 | Parachute Artillery Battalion | Juring |
| 466 | Parachute Infantry Battalion | Pitchford |
| 704 | British Parachute Brigade | |

2,600

| MARINE AIR DIVISION | |
|---------------------|----------|
| AIRFIELD | RUNWAY |
| OBSESTELLO | DIRT |
| OMRONO | DIRT |
| GROSSFLO | ASPHALT |
| POLLONICA | DIRT |
| TARQUINIA | CONCRETE |
| VOLTRINO | DIRT |
| MONTALTO | DIRT |
| CANINO | DIRT |
| GALLERA | |
| CIAMPINO | DIRT |
| MANGIOLIANA | |

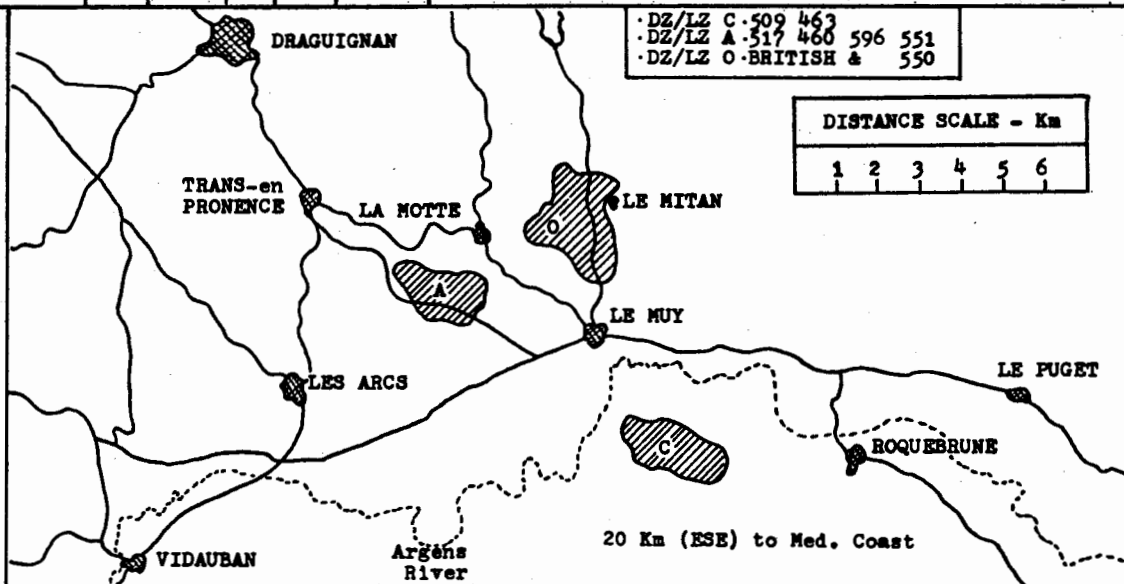


ABTF DRAGON

Paratroop Missions

6485 TROOPS DELIVERED IN 446 SORTIES

| UNITS | SER | CRAFT | D Z | WING | GROUPS | PATHFINDER MISSION | 121 TROOPS |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---|-------------|
| PATH- FINDERS | 1 2 3 | 3 3 3 | C A O | FROM IX TCC | | PATHFINDERS FOR 509/550/551 - DROPS AT 0353/0400/0415 PLANES LOST IN FOG DISPERSED BETWEEN PREJUS & GRASSE PATHFINDERS FOR 517 - DROPPED 2 MINUTES TOO SOON 0328 ALL 3 TEAMS WIDELY DISPERSED - APPROX 3 1/2 MILES FROM DZ PATHFINDERS FOR BRITISH - LANDED ON SCHEDULE & NEAR DZ HAD 2 EUREKA BEACONS OPERATING BY 0430 NEAR MITAN | |
| UNITS | SER | CRAFT | D Z | WING | GROUPS | ALBATROSS MISSION (INITIAL PARATROOP DROP) | 5628 TROOPS |
| 509 463 596/1 | 1 2 | 45 45 | C C | 50 50 | 442 441 | DROPPED AT 0421 - 1/2 MILE FROM DZ-C - 20 INJURED ON DROP 441 GROUP FAILED TO MAKE CONTACT WITH 442 GROUP OVER ELBA 441 SET ITS OWN COURSE - GOT LOST - DROPPED 2 STICKS IN SEA DROPPED COMPANY A & PART OF COMPANY B NEAR ST. TROPEZ DROPPED BATTERY B & PART OF BATTERY C NEAR ST. TROPEZ BALANCE OF 509/463/596 1st PLATOON LANDED 1/2 MILE FROM DZ-C | |
| BRITISH SECOND PARA BRIGADE | 7 8 9 10 | 36 27 36 27 | O O O O | 51 51 51 51 | 62 62/435 64 64/436 | DROPPED AT 0454 - ON SCHEDULE - ON OR NEAR DZ-O DROPPED AT 0459 - ON SCHEDULE - ON OR NEAR DZ-O DROPPED AT 0505 - NEAR DZ -O (4 STICKS WERE 20 MILES OFF) DROPPED AT 0514 - NEAR DZ (PART OF 5th BN NEAR PAYENCE) | |
| 517 R HQ 517 2 Bn 596 2 Pl | 3 | 45 | A | 50 | 440 | DROPPED AT 0431 - MEN OF 2nd BN/R HQ/596 2nd PLATOON WIDELY DISPERSED - 200 LANDED NEAR DZ-A - 300 DID NOT ASSEMBLE UNTIL D+1 | |
| 517 3 Bn + 596 3 Pl | 4 | 45 | A | 50 | 439 | DROPPED 3rd BN AND 596 3rd PLATOON - BLINDLY DISPERSED BASICALLY IN 3 GROUPS 2 TO 4 MILES APART (15 MILES FROM DZ) SOME NEAR PAYENCE - SOME NEAR CALLIAN AND TOURETTES | |
| 460 FA Bn | 5 | 45 | A | 53 | 437 | DROPPED 460 BN - PART OF SERIAL LANDED NEAR DZ-A TROOPS IN 20 PLANES HAD JUMPED 4 MINUTES TOO SOON 100 MEN DID NOT JOIN THE BATTALION UNTIL D+1 | |
| 517 1 Bn | 6 | 45 | A | 53 | 438 | DROPPED AT 0453 THROUGH DENSE FOG SEVERAL MILES FROM DZ-A SOME LANDED TO THE WEST NEAR LOURGES-SOME 1 1/2 MILES FROM DZ ASSEMBLED 150 MEN BY 1200. ACHIEVED BATTALION OBJECTIVES. | |
| UNITS | SER | CRAFT | D Z | WING | GROUPS | CANARY MISSION (SECOND PARATROOP DROP) | 736 TROOPS |
| 551 | 1 | 41 | A | 53 | 437 | DROPPED AT 1804 THRU 1810 D-DAY (ALSO 10 TONS OF EQUIPMENT) | |



Glider Missions

2600 TROOPS DELIVERED IN 410 SORTIES

| UNITS | SER | CRAFT | DLZ | WING | GROUPS | BLUEBIRD MISSION (INITIAL GLIDER LANDING) | 375 TROOPS |
|---|---------------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|-------------|
| BRITISH 64th LIGHT ARTILLERY BATTALION & OTHER SUPPORT | 1 2 | 35 40 | O O | 53 53 | 435 436 | TOWING 35 Horsa GLIDERS (CARRYING 6900 LBS EACH) 248000 LBS ARTILLERY SUPPORT FOR BRITISH WITH 233 TROOPS & 35 JEEPS FIRST FLIGHT ABORTED. RETURNED TO TARRUNIA. (FOG AT LZ) FLEW MISSION AT 1750. RELEASED 2 GLIDERS OVER THE OCEAN | |
| 550th AIRBORNE INFANTRY BN & OTHER SUPPORT | 3 4 5 1 6 7 2 | 332 | O/A A O/A O O A O | 50 50 50 50 51 51 53 | 439 440 441 442 62 64 438 | TOWING 332 WACO GLIDERS OF THE 550th AIRBORNE INFANTRY BN 442 GROUP RELEASED 1 GLIDER PAST CORSICA 441 GROUP RELEASED 3 GLIDERS OVER THE OCEAN GLIDERS TOWED BY 62 AND 64 GROUPS FORCED TO CRASH LAND 11 PILOTS KILLED - 30 SERIOUSLY INJURED - 100 TROOPS HURT ONLY 26 OF THE 332 GLIDERS WERE SALVAGEABLE | |
| UNITS | SER | CRAFT | DLZ | WING | GROUPS | DOVE MISSION (SECOND GLIDER LANDING) | 2250 TROOPS |

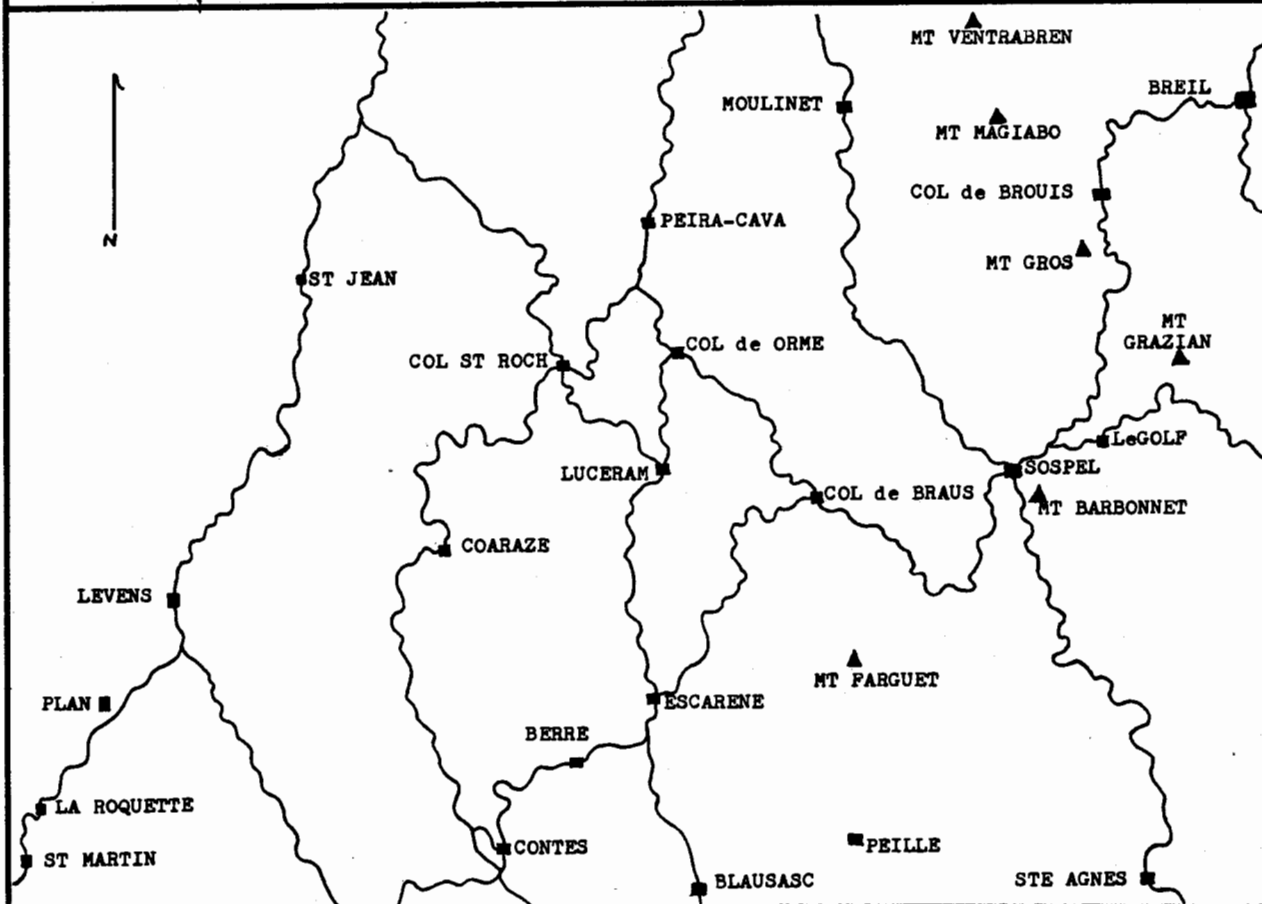
396 1st Plt in ops with 509 assault group near La Haye.
2nd Plt in ops with 517 2nd Bn. / Removing LG mines.
3rd Plt in ops with 517 3rd Bn. Aftake near Payerne

ADRP Casualties: 434 Killed/Captured/Missing
204 Wounded
283 Injured in drops & landings

| TROOP CARRIERS | SOURCE CAUSE |
|---|-----------------------|
| 2 Slides from 509 { 50 Wines / 441 Group } | Dropped in sea- |
| 1 Place with 517 { 439 Group } | Crested on take-off |
| 1 Place with 509 { 50 Wines / 441 Group } | Ht by ground fire |
| 1 Plane | on return flight |
| 2 Motors Gilders { 53 Wine / 432 Group } | Ditched past Corvica |
| 1 Motor Gilder { 53 Wine / 432 Group } | Landed in sea |
| 1 Motor Gilder { 53 Wine / 432 Group } | Ditched past Corvica |
| 1 Wheel Gilder { 50 Wine / 441 Group } | Released into the sea |
| 6 of the 10 arrivals in the Albatross Mission dropped slides without benefit of Pathfinder guidance, i.e., 270 of 396 planes. | |
| 26 of the 328 Gilders used on Dye Mission were salvagable. | |

FRANCE

| | |
|--|---|
| 517 RCT | SCATTERED ENGAGEMENTS CONTINUE THROUGH D+4 AND ELEMENTS OF THE SEVENTH ARMY HAVE CROSSED BLUE-LINE. THE 36th AND 45th INFANTRY DIVISIONS HEAD NORTH UP THE RHONE VALLEY. ABTF RELIEVES THE 141st REGIMENT TO PROTECT FLANK OF SEVENTH ARMY. |
| 517 RCT 2nd Bn 3rd Bn * 1st Bn 2nd Bn | D+5 THE 517 COMBAT TEAM REORIENTS FOR ATTACK MISSIONS TO THE EAST. MOVES THROUGH CALLAS, CLAVIERS, BARGEMON, AND SEILLANS TO CAPTURE FAYENCE MOVES THROUGH TOURRETTES TO CAPTURE CALLIAN AND MONTAUXOUX. THEN CAPTURES ST. CEZAIRE MOVES THROUGH COL-de-la-LEQUE TO CAPTURE ST VALLIER. ENEMY WITHDRAWS PAS-de-PAYE MOVES THROUGH CABRIS AND CAPTURES GRASSE CAPTURES BAR-sur-LOUP |
| 517 1st Bn RCT 2nd Bn ** 1st Bn 2nd Bn | CAPTURES BRIDGE INTACT ACROSS THE VAR RIVER WITHIN THE NEXT FEW DAYS BOUYON, COURSEGOULES, LE BROU, AND PUGET THENIERS FALL FORDS THE VAR RIVER AND CAPTURES LA ROQUETTE FROM THE REAR. CAPTURE LEVENS MOVES THROUGH L'ESCARENE AND DRIVES NORTH TO PEIRA-CAVA MOVES THROUGH L'ESCARENE AND DRIVES TOWARDS COL-de-BRAS |
| 517 3rd Bn 2nd Bn *** 3rd Bn 3rd Bn 3rd Bn | MOVES TO MT SCANDEIOUS TO PROTECT RIGHT FLANK. CONNECT WITH SPECIAL SERVICE FORCE MOVES THROUGH LUCERAM. TAKES HIGH GROUND NORTH OF COL-de-BRAS RELIEVES 2nd Bn (D COMPANY). 3rd Bn (G COMPANY) ATTACKS COL-de-BRAS COMPANIES G AND H CAPTURE COL-de-BRAS. OCCUPY POSITIONS AT "BLOODY STUMP" COMPANY I ATTEMPTS TO JOIN-UP WITH REST OF BATTALION FROM MT SCANDEIOUS |
| 517 1st Bn RCT RCT 2&3 Bns RCT | TAKES PEIRA-CAVA AND PUSHES THROUGH TO HIGHER GROUND MOST AREAS ARE UNDER 170mm FIRE FROM FORT BARBONNET AND MT AGAISEN AREA DEFENDED BY ELEMENTS OF THE GERMAN 13th AND ALPINE DIVISIONS SEIZE MOUNT VENTEBREN AND TETE-de-LAVINA THE COMBAT TEAM IS DEFENDING A 15 MILE FRONT. LAUNCH ATTACK ON HILL 1098 |
| 517 1st Bn 2nd Bn 3rd Bn RCT 2nd Bn | ENTRENCHED ON RIDGE X AND OCCUPYING TETE-de-LAVINA HOLDING THE SOUTH FLANK OF TETE-de-LAVINA (COMPANY D) HOLDING POSITION AT PEIRA-CAVA PATROLS REACH AREA NEAR FORT BARBONNET AND SOSPEL PATROLS ENTER SOSPEL |
| 517 1st Bn 1st Bn 517 RCT RCT RCT | MOVE THROUGH SOSPEL AND OCCUPY MOUNT AGAISEN SOSPEL FALLS. PATROLS SENT TO ITALIAN BORDER. SEIZE MOUNT GRAZIAN & MOUNT GROS START DRIVE TO MT MANGIABO OCCUPY LE GOLF ON BEVERA RIVER RELIEVED AFTER 94 DAYS BY ELEMENTS OF THE 14th ARMORED DIVISION PULL BACK TO REST AREA IN LA COLLE-s-LOUP. (NORTH OF CAGNES) COMBAT TEAM ALERTED FOR MOVEMENT NORTH. DEPART ANTIBES VIA RAIL ON 6 DECEMBER |
| | <p>* For actions in capture of St. Cezaire, <u>Company I</u> received the commendation of Gen Frederick: "The irresistible drive and desire to close with the enemy as shown by the members of the Company on this occasion exemplify the fighting spirit of the American Infantryman and should be a source of pride to all members of this Command."</p> <p>** For actions in capture of La Roquette, <u>Company E</u> received ABTF Commendation.</p> <p>*** For actions in taking high ground above Col-de-Bras, <u>Company D</u> received the commendation of Gen Frederick: "I wish to commend the Officers and Enlisted Men of this unit for their courage, aggressiveness and devotion to duty in combat during the period 5 September to 7 September 1944"</p> |



Prelude to the Bulge

• THE CENTRAL SECTOR OF THE ALLIED FRONT WAS BEING HELD BY US 12th ARMY GROUP •

US NINTH ARMY - SIMPSON - NORTHERN AREA - NEAR AACHEN
 US FIRST ARMY - HODGES - CENTRAL AREA -
 US THIRD ARMY - PATTON - SOUTHERN AREA - NEAR METZ

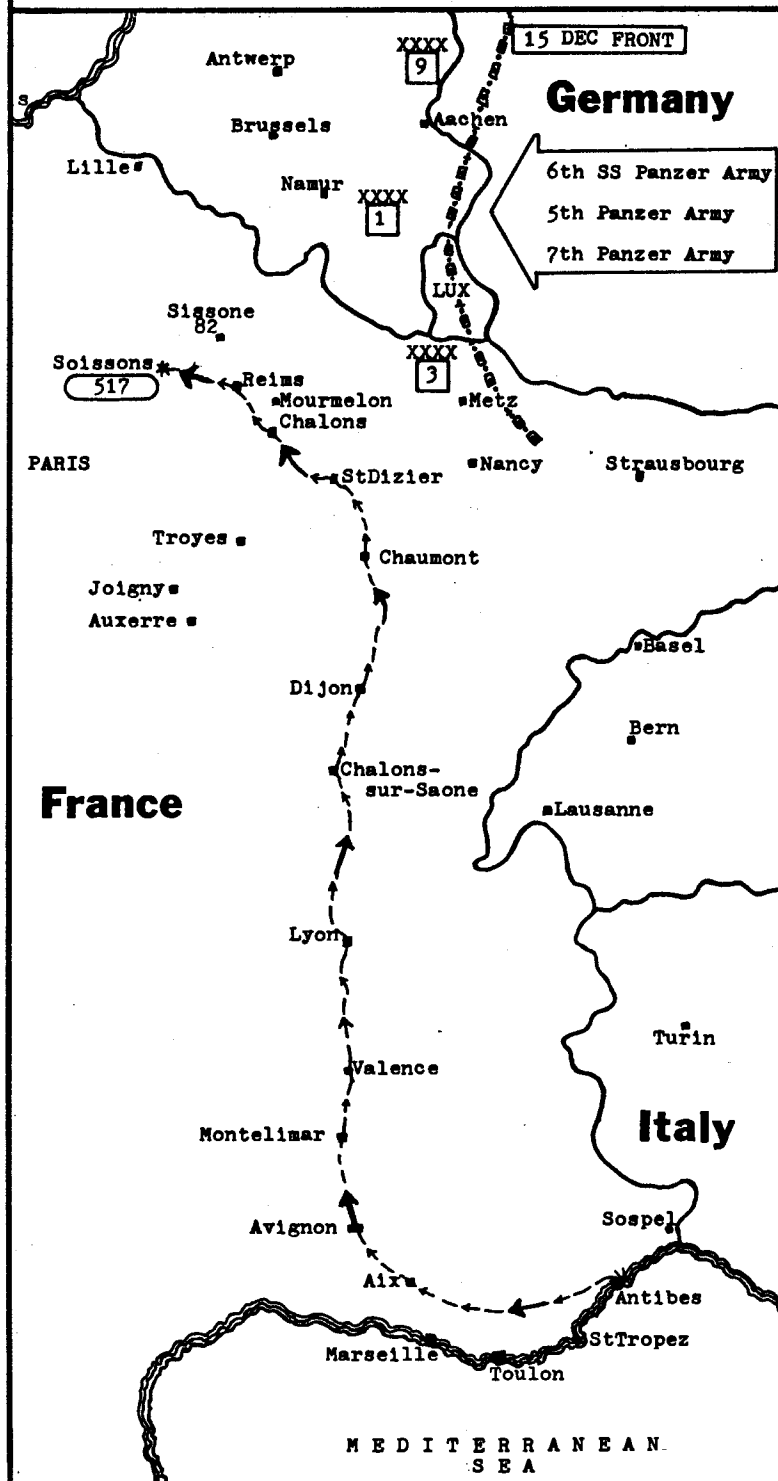
• THE SOUTHERN PORTION OF US FIRST ARMY AREA WAS BEING CONTROLLED BY ITS VIII CORPS

US 14 CAVALRY GROUP NORTH FLANK
 US 106 INFANTRY DIVISION NORTH CENTRAL
 US 28 INFANTRY DIVISION CENTRAL
 US 9 ARMORED DIVISION DISPERSED
 US 4 INFANTRY DIVISION SOUTH FLANK

• DECEMBER INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATED 4 GERMAN DIVISIONS FACING VIII CORPS

GERMAN 18 DIVISION NORTH SECTOR
 GERMAN 26 DIVISION CENTRAL SECTOR
 GERMAN 352 DIVISION CENTRAL SECTOR
 GERMAN 212 DIVISION SOUTH SECTOR
 ACTUALLY THERE WERE 25 DIVISIONS IN AREA

• 517 MOVEMENT NORTH • DEC 1944 •



COMMENTS ON THE BULGE

- ALLIED DECISION TO STRIKE HARD TO THE EAST FROM AACHEN (9th ARMY) IN NORTH SECTOR AND FROM ALSACE (3rd ARMY) IN SOUTH SECTOR HAD RENDERED THE CENTRAL SECTOR (1st ARMY) WEAK.
- THE VIII CORPS (1st ARMY) HELD A STATIC POSITION OVER 75 MILE FRONT.
- OF THE 70 GERMAN DIVISIONS ON THE WESTERN FRONT, 15 WERE ARMORED.
- VON RUNSTEDT ACQUIRED 10 PANZER AND 14 INFANTRY DIVISIONS FOR THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE.

GERMAN MISSIONS :

- 6th SS PANZER ARMY - STRIKE FROM NORTH SECTOR TO ST VITH/MALMEDY.
- 5th PANZER ARMY - STRIKE FROM THE CENTRAL SECTOR TO DINANT/CELLES.
- 7th ARMY - STRIKE FROM THE SOUTH SECTOR. PROTECT FLANK OF 5th PANZER ARMY AGAINST US 3rd ARMY.
- ALLIED COMMAND BROUGHT UP 6 DIVISIONS FROM THE SOUTH AND 4 FROM RESERVE (6th AB FROM ENGLAND).
- FUEL DUMPS SOUTHEAST OF SPA AND NORTH OF STAVELOT WERE MAJOR TARGETS FOR 6th SS PANZER ARMY.

ALLIED MISSIONS :

- XVIII AB CORPS - DRIVE NORTHERN SHOULDER OF BULGE TO SOUTHEAST.
- VII CORPS - CONTAIN NORTHERN FLANK OF BULGE. DRIVE SOUTHEAST.
- III CORPS - DRIVE NORTH FROM US 3rd ARMY POSITIONS.
- COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN US 12th ARMY GROUP (BRADLEY) AND US 1st ARMY (HODGES) BROKE DOWN. CONTROL OF US 1st AND US 9th ARMIES WAS GIVEN TO MONTGOMERY.
- THE FIRST ENGAGEMENT BY ALLIED COUNTER-ATTACK FORCE OCCURED ON 8 JAN 44 WHEN US 2nd ARMORED DIVISION ATTACK NEAR CELLES.
- MONTGOMERY'S "SWINGING DOOR" ATTACK PLAN ALLOWED WHAT WAS LEFT OF THE GERMAN ARMIES TO RETREAT IN A REASONABLY EFFECTIVE MANNER.

GERMAN LOSSES

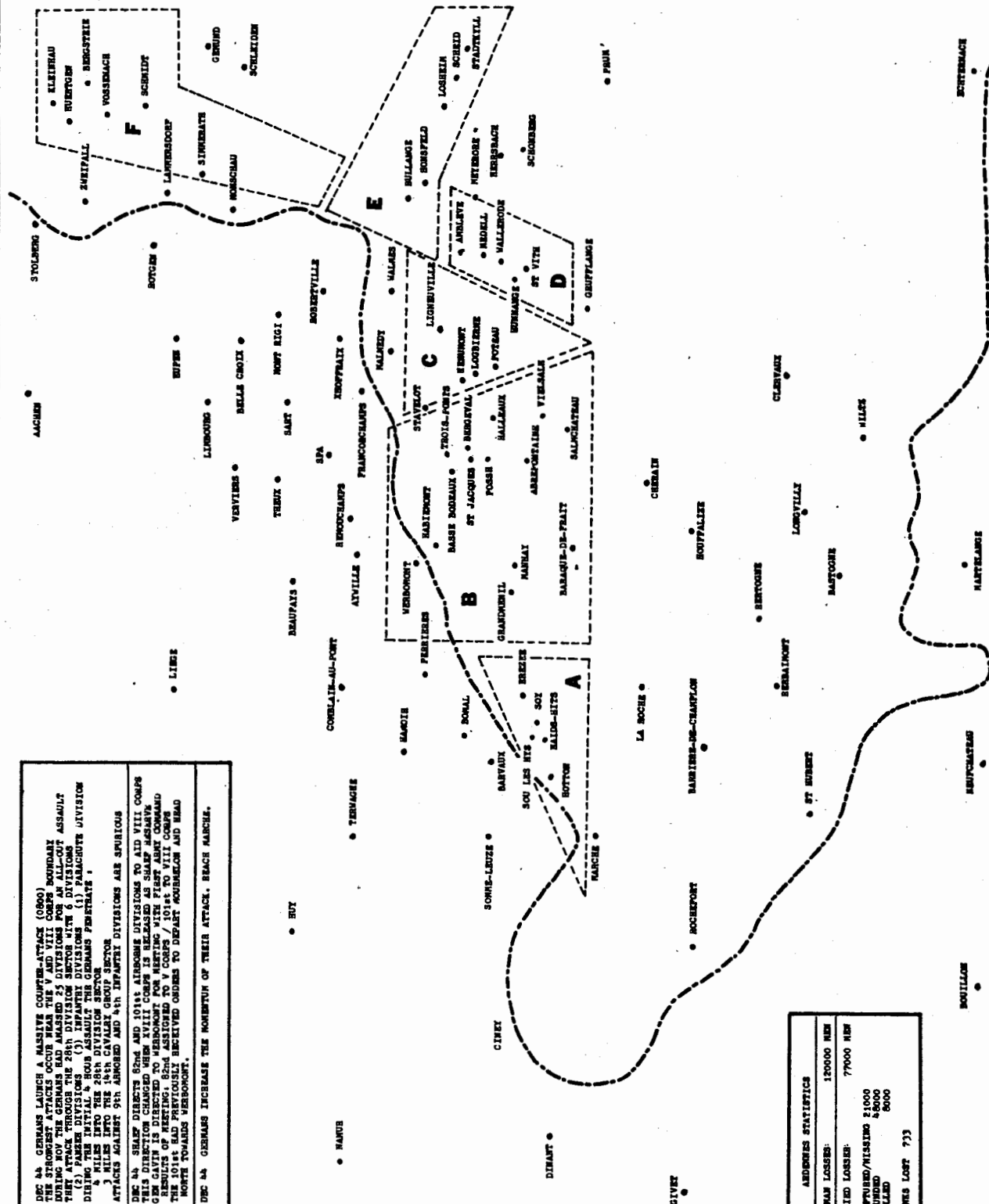
120,000 CASUALTIES
 600 TANKS & ASSUALT GUNS
 1,600 AIRCRAFT
 6,000 VEHICLES

16 DEC 45 GERMANS LAUNCH A MASSIVE COUNTER-ATTACK (0900). THE STRONGEST ATTACKS OCCUR NEAR THE V AND WILL CORPS BOUNDARY DURING NOV. THE GERMANS SEND ANAHEIMED 55 DIVISIONS FOR AN ALL-OUT ASSAULT AGAINST THE V CORPS. THE GERMANS HAVE 100 DIVISIONS (1) PARACHUTE DIVISION (2) FANDED DIVISIONS (3) INFANTRY DIVISIONS (4) PARACHUTE DIVISION DURING THE INITIAL 4 HOUR ASSAULT. THE GERMANS PENETRATE 4 MILES INTO THE 28th DIVISION CORPS. 3 MILES INTO THE 30th DIVISION CORPS. 1 MILE INTO THE 31st DIVISION CORPS. ATTACKS AGAINST 9th ARMORED AND 10th INFANTRY DIVISIONS ARE SPURIOUS

17 DEC 45 HEAVY DIRECTED AND 40th INFANTRY DIVISIONS TO AND WILL COMPS THIS DIVISION CHANGED FROM WILL COMPS IN BELGIUM. THE 40th INFANTRY DIVISION GAVIN IS DIRECTED TO WEINHOFF FOR MEETING WITH FIRST ARMY COMMAND. RESULTS OF MEETING, 8th DIVISION ASSIGNED TO V CORPS, 101st TO WILL COMPS. 101st DIVISION ASSIGNED TO DEFEAT ANAHEIMED AND HEAD NORTH TOWARDS WEINHOFF.

17 DEC 44 SHAF DIRECTS 82ND AND 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISIONS TO AID VIII CORPS
THIS DIRECTION CHANGED WHEN VIII CORPS IS RELEASED AS SHAF RESURVE
GEN GAVIN IS DIRECTED TO MEMORANT FOR MEETING WITH FIRST ARMY COMMAND
RESULTS OF MEETING: 82ND ASSIGNED TO V CORPS / 101ST TO VIII CORPS
THE 101ST HAD PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED ORDERS TO DEPART AUBURN AND HEAD
NORTH TOWARDS WERNBERG.

11P DEC 44 GERMANS INCREASE THE MOMENTUM OF THEIR ATTACK. BRACH MARCHES.

[illegible]

GERMAN ATTACK PLAN - ADDRESSING OFFENSIVE

| | | | |
|--|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| XX 12 VOLKS- GERNADIER | XX 1 SS PANZER | XX 3 PARACHUTE | XX 9 SS PANZER |
| ATTACK LINE, STADTULL/SPA | XX 1 SS PANZER | XX 12 SS PANZER | XX 9 SS PANZER |
| 1 SS PANZER LATER MOVED BEHIND 3 SS PANZER | XX 1 SS PANZER | XX 12 SS PANZER | XX 9 SS PANZER |
| 12 WO STALLED | XX 1 SS PANZER | XX 12 SS PANZER | XX 9 SS PANZER |
| STRIKE FROM THE CENTER POSITION - ATTACK LINE(FROM/MARCH) | XX 1 SS PANZER | XX 12 SS PANZER | XX 9 SS PANZER |
| PROTECT SOUTH FLANK OF FIFTH PANZER - ATTACK LINE(BURNING/OVERT) | XX 1 SS PANZER | XX 12 SS PANZER | XX 9 SS PANZER |

| 517 BCT DEPLOYMENTS | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|
| A SUPPORT | 3rd ARMORED DIVISION |
| B SUPPORT | 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION |
| C SUPPORT | 106th INFANTRY DIVISION |
| D SUPPORT | 7th ARMORED DIVISION |
| E SUPPORT | 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION |
| F SUPPORT | 78th INFANTRY DIVISION V CORPS |

| ADDRESS STATISTICS | |
|---|------------|
| CERAM LOSSES: | 120000 NEW |
| ALLIED LOSSES: | 77000 NEW |
| *CAPTURED/MISSING 21000 *WOUNDED 48000 *KILLED 8000 | |
| *TANKS LOST 733 | |

BELGIUM

| | | |
|--------|------------|--|
| 17 DEC | SHAEP | SHAEP DIRECTS 82nd & 101st AIRBORNE DIVISIONS TO SUPPORT VIII CORPS (FIRST ARMY) |
| 18 DEC | | THE GERMAN OFFENSIVE HAS PENETRATED 50 MILES INTO ALLIED LINES (MARCHE, BELGIUM) |
| 19 DEC | 517 RCT | COMBAT TEAM RECEIVES ORDERS TO PROCEED TO WERBOMONT. REPORT TO XVIII CORPS HQ |
| 20 DEC | 517 1st Bn | ATTACHED TO 3rd ARMORED DIVISION IN VICINITY OF HOTTON. (CO.C TO TASK FORCE KANE) |
| | 517 RCT | 2nd AND 3rd BATTALIONS ARE DIRECTED TO AN AREA NEAR WERBOMONT. R HQ AT KHAFPPRAIX |
| 21 DEC | 517 1st Bn | ENGAGES STRONG GERMAN SS FORCE BETWEEN HOTTON AND SOY |
| | 1st Bn | COMPANIES A & B TAKE COMMANDING GROUND NEAR ROAD JUNCTION AT HAIDS-HITS |
| 22 DEC | 517 1st Bn | ESTABLISHES A STABLE LINE AND CHECKS GERMAN PENETRATION |
| | 517 RCT | RECEIVES ORDERS TO SUPPORT 30th INFANTRY DIVISION NEAR MALMEDY |
| 23 DEC | 517 1st Bn | INITIATES STRONG ATTACK AGAINST SS FORCES. GERMANS PULL BACK. |
| | 1st Bn | COMPANIES A & B CAPTURE HIGH GROUND AT SOU-LES-HYS. |
| | 1st Bn | CONTINUE OPERATIONS AGAINST HEAVY OPPOSITION. SUFFER MANY CASUALTIES. (1) |
| 24 DEC | 517 RCT | ATTACK IN THE MALMEDY AREA IN SUPPORT OF 30th INF DIV DOES NOT MATERIALIZE |
| 25 DEC | 517 1st Bn | CONTINUE OPERATIONS WITH 3rd ARMORED DIVISION IN HOTTON/SOY AREA |
| | 1st Bn | BREAK THROUGH TO HOTTON (3rd ARMORED ELEMENT WAS SURROUNDED) AND RETURN TO SOY |
| 26 DEC | 517 RCT | 2nd AND 3rd BATTALIONS RETURN TO XVIII CORPS RESERVE. FOLLOWING MALMEDY PREP. |
| | RCT | RECEIVES ORDERS TO ATTACK AND CAPTURE MANHAY (JUNCTION OF 5 ROADS). ELEMENTS OF THE 7th ARMORED DIVISION HAD WITHDRAWN. ON MAIN ROAD LEADING TO LIEGE. |
| 26 DEC | 517 3rd Bn | MOVES 12 MILES FROM FERRIERES INTO AN ASSEMBLY POSITION NEAR MANHAY. |
| | | MANHAY IS OCCUPIED BY ELEMENTS OF THE 2nd SS PANZER DIVISION. |
| 27 DEC | 517 3rd Bn | LAUNCHES ATTACK AGAINST MANHAY AT 0200 FROM THE NORTH AND EAST (2) |
| 28 DEC | 3rd Bn | CAPTURE MANHAY AT 0300. REPEL GERMAN TANK COUNTER-ATTACK. |
| | 517 RCT | RECEIVES ORDERS FOR A NEW ATTACK MISSION IN SUPPORT OF 82nd AIRBORNE DIVISION |
| | 517 1st Bn | RETURNS FROM 3rd ARMORED DIVISION SECTOR TO FERRIERES |
| | 517 2nd Bn | HAD MOVED DEEPER INTO THE 7th ARMORED DIVISION SECTOR |
| | 517 3rd Bn | CONTINUES TO HOLD MANHAY |
| | 82 AB Div | MISSION: DRIVE NORTHERN SHOULDER OF THE BULGE INWARD 5 MILES |
| | 517 RCT | ATTACK TO THE SOUTH WITH SALM RIVER AS EAST FLANK. MANHAY AS WEST FLANK. |
| | | ASSIGNED SECTOR IN ATTACK PLAN; EXTREME LEFT BANK OF SALM RIVER. A PORTION OF THIS SECTOR BEING HELD BY 505 PIR (505 TO DISPLACE TO THE WEST). |
| | 517 2nd Bn | ASSIGNED THE MISSION OF LEFT ASSAULT GROUP |
| | 517 1st Bn | MOVER FROM FERRIERES TO SUPPORT ATTACK MISSION |
| | 551 PI Bn | ATTACHED TO THE 517 RCT FOR THIS MISSION (OPERATE ON RIGHT) NEAR BASSE-BODEAUX |
| | 517 3rd Bn | RELIEVED IN MANHAY BY ELEMENTS OF THE 75th INFANTRY DIVISION |
| | 3rd Bn | REJOINS THE COMBAT TEAM AT BASSE-BODEAUX |
| 3 JAN | 82 AB Div | ATTACK INITIATED AT 0800 WITH 505-325-517 (504 SERVED AS RESERVE) |
| | 517 RCT | REGIMENTAL CP MOVED TO BASSE-BODEAUX |
| | 517 2nd Bn | CAPTURES TROIS PONTS LAUNCHES ATTACK NEAR MONT POSSE (3) |
| | 82 AB Div | GEN. GAVIN ISSUES ORDER FOR IMMEDIATE ATTACK ON ST. JACQUES |
| | 517 1st Bn | MOVES THROUGH THE AREA ASSIGNED TO THE 551 PIB TOWARDS ST. JACQUES |
| | 517 2nd Bn | COMPANY F SIEZES THE AREA BEHIND POSSE |
| | 517 1st Bn | ATTACKS FROM A FLANK POSITION AND CAPTURES ST. JACQUES 2300 (4) |
| 4 JAN | 517 1st Bn | CONTINUES THE ATTACK FROM ST. JACQUES TOWARDS BERGEVAL |
| | 82 AB DIV | GEN. GAVIN ISSUES ORDER TO CONTINUE ATTACK MISSION TO THE SALM RIVER |
| 5 JAN | 517 1st Bn | MOVES THROUGH BERGEVAL AND CONTINUES TO THE SOUTH |
| 5 JAN | 517 1st Bn | ASSUMES NIGHT POSITION IN AN AREA BEING HELD BY THE GERMANS |
| | 3rd Bn | MOVES TO ASSIST THE 1st BATTALION. CONTINUES THE ATTACK. |
| | 551 PI Bn | MOVES TOWARDS PETITE HALLEAUX ALONG THE SALM RIVER |
| | 551 PI Bn | CAPTURES PETITE HALLEAUX. 504 MOVES FROM RESERVE POSITION. (5) |
| | 82 AB Div | GEN. GAVIN ISSUES ORDER FOR COMBAT TEAM TO RELIEVE 505 PIR |
| | 517 3rd Bn | REMAINS WITH THE 504 PIR. MOVES TO VICINITY OF ABREFONTAINE. |
| | 1st Bn | AND 2nd BATTALION MOVE INTO THE AREA PREVIOUSLY ASSIGNED TO THE 505 PIR |
| | 82 AB Div | RELIEVED BY ELEMENTS OF THE 75th INFANTRY DIVISION. READY NEW ATTACK PLAN. |
| | 517 RCT | ATTACHED TO THE 106th INFANTRY DIVISION. ASSIGNED NEW MISSION. |
| 11 JAN | 106 In Div | HAS BEEN DECIMATED. ATTEMPTING TO REORGANIZE. |
| | 517 RCT | ASSUMES THE MISSION PREVIOUSLY ASSIGNED TO THE 112th INFANTRY REGIMENT |
| | 424 RCT | ONLY REMAINING OPERATIONAL ELEMENT OF THE 106th INFANTRY DIVISION |
| | | TO ATTACK IN THE VICINITY OF TROIS PONTS |
| | 517 1st Bn | MOVES INTO THE 12th INFANTRY REGIMENT SECTOR TO ATTACK DEPARTURE POINT |
| 12 JAN | 517 1st Bn | CROSSES THE AMBLEVE RIVER - SECURES POSITION SOUTHEAST OF STAVELOT |
| | 3rd Bn | MOVES FROM 504 PIR SECTOR TO THE NORTHEAST IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE ATTACK |
| | 517 3rd Bn | NOTE: 517 3rd BATTALION HAD PREVIOUSLY CROSSED THE SALM RIVER WITH 504 SECURED A POSITION AT GRAND HALLEAUX |
| 13 JAN | 517 1st Bn | MOVES ONTO ATTACK DEPARTURE POINT (424 RCT ON RIGHT FLANK) |
| 14 JAN | 517 3rd Bn | MOVES ACROSS THE AMBLEVE RIVER AND SECURES THE FIRST OBJECTIVE |
| | 517 1st Bn | MOVES FROM DEPARTURE POINT (ON THE EAST) AND CAPTURES HENUMONT |
| | | GERMANS CONTINUE TO HOLD LOGBIERME AND COULEE |
| | 517 1st Bn | AND 517 3rd BATTALION NOW ATTACHED TO THE 30th INFANTRY DIVISION |
| | | 517 2nd BATTALION STILL ATTACHED TO THE 7th ARMORED DIVISION - ST VITH |
| 15 JAN | 1st Army | HEADQUARTERS NOW LOCATED AT SPA |
| | 517 3rd Bn | REACHES HOUVEGENES AND MOVES SOUTH TOWARDS POTEAU |
| | 517 1st Bn | PUSHES ONTO THE RIDGE AREA TO THE WEST OF POTEAU |
| | 106 In Div | HAS NOW REACHED PLANNED OBJECTIVES OF THE OPERATION |



NOTE: PFC Melvin E. Biddle (B Company/Second Platoon) was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for heroic achievements during the Soy/Hotton engagement.

GERMANY

| | |
|--|---|
| 22 JAN 517 2nd Bn | LAUNCH ATTACK ON HUNNANGE. RECEIVE HEAVY FIRE FROM NEIDER-EMMELS, PREVIOUSLY REPORTED AS CAPTURED. COMPANY D (HIDING ON TANKS) AND COMPANY F (ON FOOT), ATTACK ACROSS AN OPEN FIELD. CAPTURE HUNNANGE. 149 PRISONERS/7 MARK IV's. ESTABLISH DEFENSIVE POSITIONS. SET UP ROAD BLOCK NEAR LORENTSWALDCHEN. (6) GERMAN WEBELWERFER FIRE CONTINUES. SEND PATROLS TO OUTSKIRTS OF ST VITH. |
| 23 JAN 517 2nd Bn 2nd Bn 2nd Bn 2nd Bn | ORDERED TO ESTABLISH DEFENSIVE POSITIONS. PREPARE FOR ATTACK ON ST VITH. ENEMY PLANES STRAFE AREA ON 2 OCCASIONS. CONTINUE PATROL ACTIVITY. COMBAT COMMAND B MOVES THROUGH POSITIONS AND INITIATES ATTACK ON ST VITH. COMPANY D ORDERED TO REINFORCE TASK FORCE WEMPLE. RECEIVE NEW ATTACK PLAN. |
| 25 Jan 517 2nd Bn 2nd Bn 2nd Bn | TASK FORCE SEITZ MOVES THROUGH DER EIDT WOODS TOWARDS DEPARTURE POINT. MEDELL HAS NOT BEEN CAPTURED AS PLANNED. 424 RCT (ON FLANK) HAS NOT MOVED. TASK FORCE SEITZ CROSSES AMBLEVE / ST VITH HIGHWAY. FLANKS ARE EXPOSED. COMPANY D IS PINNED DOWN. COMPANY F REACHES WOODS NEAR OBJECTIVE. TASK FORCE OBJECTIVES ARE CAPTURED. 30 ENEMY DEAD. TAKE 40 PRISONERS. WALLERODE IS CAPTURED. PROGRESS ON LEFT FLANK OF TASK FORCE IS STALLED. 424 RCT CAPTURES MEDELL. CONTINUE PATROLS. ORDERED TO REJOIN COMBAT TEAM. |
| 26 JAN | |
| 27 Jan 517 RCT 517 1st Bn | ORDERED TO REJOIN 82nd AB DIV FOR OPERATION TOWARDS SIEGFRIED LINE & GERMANY. PLANNED DIRECTION: FROM NORTH OF ST VITH THROUGH HONSFELD/SCHIED AREA. POSITIONED TO COVER 325 GIR FLANK IN ATTACKS ON HONSFELD/SCHIED. |
| 1 FEB 517 RCT RCT RCT | ORDERED TO SUPPORT V CORPS (FIRST ARMY) LOCATED IN EUPEN (GEN GEROW). ATTACHED TO THE 78th INFANTRY DIVISION NEAR SIMMERATH. ATTACK PLAN: CAPTURE SCHMIDT. PREVENT GERMANS FROM DESTROYING ROER RIVER DAMS ATTACK THROUGH AREA ADJACENT TO 8th INFANTRY DIVISION. |
| 2 FEB 517 RCT 3 FEB 4 FEB 78 In Div 6 FEB 517 RCT 7 FEB 517 1st Bn | OPERATIONS CONTINUE IN AREA OF BERGSTEIN, SCHMIDT, AND ZERKALL. KALL VALLEY. INFANTRY DIVISION FORCED TO WITHDRAW CP FROM BRANDENBERG. GERMAN DEFENDERS IN AREA ARE FROM 6th PARACHUTE DIVISION. (HEIMBACH DAM) ATTACKS ON SCHMIDT AND SURROUNDING AREA PROGRESSING SLOWLY. (MINE FIELDS) CONTINUED OPERATIONS FOR 3 DAYS WITHIN CONFINES OF LARGEST MINE FIELD EVER ENCOUNTERED ON THE ALLIED FRONT. COMPANY A JOINS ATTACK ON ZERKALL. (7) |
| 8 FEB 517 RCT 9 FEB RCT RCT 517 RCT | ENTER SCHMIDT. RELIEVED BY 508th PARACHUTE REGIMENT OF 82nd AB DIVISION. ORDERED TO PROCEED TO LAON. ATTACHED TO NEWLY ARRIVED 13th AIRBORNE DIVISION. MOVE THROUGH BRANDENBERG, AACHEN, LAON, AND FINALLY JOIGNY, FRANCE. PREPARE FOR RHINE JUMP. REQUIRE 800 REPLACEMENTS. MOVE TO BAPAUME AIRFIELD. |

NOTES

- (1) 517 First Battalion received Presidential Unit Citation for actions in support of the 3rd Armored Division.
- (2) 517 Third Battalion moved through lines of the 49th Infantry Regiment.
- (3) 517 Second Battalion received a Commendation from Major General Hasbrouck for actions in support of 7th Armored Division.
- (4) 517 First Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel William J. Boyle, was seriously wounded during attack operations near Bergeval.
- (5) 551 Parachute Infantry Battalion Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Joerg was killed by mortar fire. He was replaced by Major William Holm. This occurred while the 551 was attached to the 517.
- (6) 517 Second Battalion's capture of Hunnange assured success of Combat Command B's attack on St. Vith.
- (7) 596 Parachute Engineer Company distinguished itself by heroic efforts in removing booby traps and clearing mine fields.

From STARS & STRIPES (Feb 1944) Article :
VAST GERMAN MINE FIELD FOUND BY AIRBORNE UNITS

"WITH 82ND AIRBORNE DIV.--Paratroops and glidermen of the 82nd have discovered a mine field that "extends as far as you can see", according to 1/Lt. Joseph J. Novik, of Tarrytown, N.Y. and the Airborne Engrs. "It is worse than anything I have ever seen or heard about." Discovered by the 517 Parachute Combat Team, the field is intricately crisscrossed with booby traps and anti-personnel mines and is perhaps the most elaborate encountered, First Army officers said. A Co. (517) advanced down a mud-bound road, and hit six dug-in pillboxes, which covered the roadway with a curtain of cross-fire. The company called for artillery. B Co. (517) armed with information passed on by the 517 Parachute Combat Team reconnaissance and accompanied by Engineers (596) set out to pass directly through the mined field under cover of darkness, exploding charges as it went. They encountered Schu mines, with charges in small wooden boxes, designed to blow the feet off advancing soldiers. There were "potato mashers", egg grenades and rockets fastened to trip wires. "S" mines were set to spring into the air when stepped on, spraying shot for yards around. There were cylindrical concrete mines, filled with shrapnel, armed with trip wires. Despite such intricacy, B Co. cleared a path. Aided by 155 mms A Co. pushed the Germans from the pillboxes. The two companies swept aside the infantry opposition, converged, and took their objective."

Ardennes 517 1 A&B

COVERS COMBAT ACTIVITIES OF COMPANIES "A" & "B" DURING THE PERIOD 21 - 26 DECEMBER 1944. FROM A REPORT PREPARED BY COLONEL RUPERT D. GRAVES: "OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST BATTALION—517 PARACHUTE COMBAT TEAM—BATTLE OF THE BULGE"

22 DECEMBER 1944

The Battalion Convoy arrived at NAMUR at 0400 and there the Battalion Executive Officer received orders from an XVIII Corps(Airborne) staff officer to move the Battalion to the vicinity of SOY, Belgium, where the Battalion Commander would meet them. Three trucks were missing from the convoy, having dropped out because of motor trouble, and instructions were left to have these trucks proceed to SOY. Company "C", under the command of Captain CHARLES E. LA CHAUSSEE, was ordered to proceed to the 3rd Armored Division C.P. to report to Major General MAURICE ROSE. Very little information could be obtained from this staff officer, except that the situation remained vague and apparently the advance of the German forces had not been checked.

At 1600 the Battalion detrucked in the wooded area northeast of SOY(426912 - see attached map). The town of SOY, in which was located the C.P. of the CCR, 3rd Armored Division, Colonel R.L. HOWZE, commanding, was receiving heavy and continuous artillery fire. Lt. Colonel BOYLE furnished this information: The towns of MARCHE and LA-ROCHE had been engulfed by German armor; HOTTON, manned by 3rd Armored Headquarters troops, had been bypassed and surrounded; German armor was moving astride the two main highways leading north, probing a salient toward LIEGE. There was no contact on the right with the 84th Infantry Division, and none to the left with the 82nd Airborne Division. Colonel HOWZE was holding HOTTON and SOY with depleted armored forces that had already met and stayed the might of the German attack.

The Battalion was ordered immediately to attack at 1715 along the highway leading southwest from SOY to HOTTON. The gravity of the situation was so severe that no rest for the troops could be considered although they had been traveling for 23 continuous hours; no time could be used for the preparation of a hot meal.

The Battalion moved to SOY, the men stacked bedrolls, and crossed the line of departure, the north-south road through SOY, and jumped off in the attack toward HOTTON.

Enemy forces had cut the SOY-HOTTON highway and were well dug-in in woods on commanding ground around the road junction at HAIDS HITS. The mission of the First Battalion was to capture this commanding ground; to capture the high ground SURLES-HYS, commanding the road net at HOTTON; to clear the woods on each side of the road; to establish a main line of resistance between SOY and HOTTON; and to break through to the HOTTON garrison.

The Battalion moved west to point 406897, Company "A" leading, Company "B" echeloned to the left, Company "C" in reserve, Headquarters Company's 81 MM Mortar Platoon in position at 412897. At this point enemy fire was received from machine-gun emplacements at 405893, 399891 and 397893. Flat-trajectory fire was received from approximately the positions 399890 and 396895 from an estimated six self-propelled guns, possible tank fire. Artillery and mortar fire fell over the entire area.

Lt. Colonel BOYLE ordered Company "B" to move across the road to the south, deploy, and attack on the left flank. Company "B" reduced two machine-gun positions and killed or drove out a platoon of enemy from positions at 405893 but drew an attack from six tanks. One of these tanks was knocked out by rocket-launcher fire, and the others were forced into retirement although their heavy armor was impenetrable to rocket fire.

23 DECEMBER 1944

At midnight it was felt by Lt. Colonel BOYLE that continued frontal attack on these excellently prepared positions would be a needless waste of life. He was granted permission by Colonel HOWZE to take Company "A" into HOTTON by the road leading through NY, supported by four medium tanks and six half-tracks. The remainder of the Battalion, under the command of Major DONALD W. FRASER, was disposed as follows: Company "C" to the high ground overlooking road junction at 416892, and to supply protection for five tanks concealed in position north of the road; Company "B" and one remaining platoon of Company "A" were to move to a position at 410900; all to be prepared to launch a coordinated attack toward HOTTON to meet the forces of Lt. Colonel BOYLE attacking from HOTTON. With the resistance of the German forces drawn to the south of the attack of Company "B", it was hoped that the forces of Lt. Colonel BOYLE would meet light resistance on the northern road through NY and the plan was based on this expectation.

The force of Lt. Colonel BOYLE rolled quickly through NY, receiving fire from a small enemy position on the south of the town(394895). On the north of HOTTON, at 375885, this force received sudden and heavy 20 MM fire from a German outpost, which was quickly dispatched by tanks and the paratroopers manning the machine guns of the half-tracks. Lt. Colonel BOYLE then pushed in to relieve the besieged garrison of HOTTON at daylight 23 December 1944. As he sought to wheel to return to SOY he was held up by German armored artillery fire. The narrow street walled in by houses on both sides, made German defense easy and attack by Lt. Colonel BOYLE difficult. By continually engaging the enemy substantial forces were diverted from resisting the remainder of the Battalion.

The force of Major FRASER, Company "B" and one platoon of Company "A", with five medium and four light tanks attached, renewed the attack toward HOTTON along the SOY-HOTTON railroad, jumping off from the vicinity of 405901. At 403899 German self-propelled, high velocity guns that had been used as anti-personnel weapons the previous night, opened up from wooded positions to the southwest and within a few minutes six of the tanks were knocked out. At the same time the German forces laid heavy mortar concentrations in the area of the tanks, further wounding the tankmen and supporting paratroopers. The entire remaining forces consolidated in the wooded area at 400900 and continued a determined push through the woods, south along the railroad. This was extremely thick undergrowth, and not suitable to the use of tanks; the remaining tanks returned to the vicinity of SOY.

Throughout the second night of continued fighting the First Battalion pressed the attack through incredibly dense undergrowth and scrub cedar shrubbery that limited visibility often to 10 yards and never more than 30 yards.

24 DECEMBER 1944

With Major FRASER at this time were 187 officers and men from the three companies. The attack continued throughout the night with every inch of the wooded area between 400900 and 397891 fanatically defended by enemy fire groups of an estimated reinforced company. All of these positions were overrun and the defenders killed in position. As a manifestation of the excellent morale and determined resistance of the enemy, the machine-gunners as they fired on the attacking First Battalion, yelled the American words they had been taught, "Mer Christmas." In attacking through this short stretch the First Battalion force suffered 31 casualties, against 50 for the enemy. Any other approach, across the open terrain, would have been much more costly, if not impossible, as demonstrated by the earlier attempts of the previous day.

Capitalizing on this bloody success the First Battalion regrouped at 0600, brought up two medium tanks, and moved out. Two enemy tanks at 297890 wheeled on the First Battalion to open fire and were knocked out by Colonel HOWZE'S tanks before they could train their guns. The force continued on the north side of the road to HOTTON hampered by many snipers and hastily formed defensive groups of never more than a squad. Advancing with marching fire, all resistance along the highway folded up and at point 287880 two self-propelled guns, holding up Lt. Colonel BOYLE'S force in HOTTON, were knocked out and supporting infantry fled in disorganization.

By 1130 hours Major FRASER'S force had joined Lt. Colonel BOYLE in HOTTON, relieving most of the pressure on the beleaguered garrison.

At 1230 hours after hastily eating "K" rations, weary with two days and nights of continuous fighting in freezing weather, the First Battalion pushed off again to further clear the SOY-HOTTON highway, while the enemy was still reeling and disorganized. The remaining enemy did not stand to fight, but fled before the advancing First Battalion which overran the high ground at SUR-LE-RYS (385879) commanding ground overlooking HOTTON and controlling the road network at HOTTON. Company "B" and one platoon of Company "A" were left to occupy SUR-LES-HYS to set up a main line of resistance and to defend it against possible attack from the south. At the road junction at HAIDS HITS, six German tankmen, fighting as Infantrymen, were captured. Company "B" was assigned further responsibility of setting up a road block there. It was later determined that escaping enemy troops probably withdrew to high ground east of WERDIN.

Bedrolls were brought up and the men obtained their first rest since departing SOISSONS 21 December 1944.

The remaining elements of the Battalion, two platoons of Company "A" and one platoon of Company "C" returned to SOY at 1630. These men received their first hot meal and warm sleep since they first entered. This group of the First Battalion was placed in reserve for the forces of Colonel HOWZE, now including the 290th Infantry Regiment, just attached.

26 DECEMBER 1944

The German drive to the north had been stopped; the forces in HOTTON had been relieved; enemy elements between HOTTON and SOY had been destroyed; the high ground had been captured and a stable line of resistance had been established from which an attack to the south could be launched. The mission of the First Battalion had been completely accomplished.

The First Battalion was taking a well-deserved breather, holding the line it had established and constituting Colonel HOWZE'S reserve. The 290th Infantry was to attack to the south.

25 DECEMBER 1944

Just prior to midnight, 24 December 1944, the 290th Infantry pushed off in a night attack from the SOY-HOTTON MLR manned by Company "B", reinforced. Two battalions were attacking abreast, southward, with objectives on the high ground at LA ROUMIERE OL FAGNE (406877) and the nearby town of WY (421881). The First Battalion of the 290th was assigned the right objective and the Second Battalion was assigned the left objective. This Regiment, part of the 75th Division, later to become a top-rate fighting unit, but at this time yet untried in combat, facing the fanatical, advancing, inspired troops of Marshal VON RUNDSTEDT, in weather bitter cold and spotted with snow flurries, had two strikes against it before it crossed the line of departure.

At 1200 hours, 25 December 1944 Colonel HOWZE informed Lt. Colonel BOYLE that the left battalion had failed to accomplish its mission, the regimental reserve battalion had been committed, and it too had failed to reach the objective and was badly disorganized. Lt. Colonel BOYLE was given orders to attack and take the objective LA ROUMIERE OL FAGNE.

The forces of Lt. Colonel BOYLE consisted of Company "A" with 30 men, one platoon of Company "C" with 21 men, 22 attached machine-guns from Headquarters Company and the 81 MM Mortar Platoon in position at 413897. It was vitally essential now for Company "B" to continue to hold the MLR. Lt. Colonel BOYLE made plans to attack the right flank of the enemy position with Company "A" Company "C" in support. The two battalions of Infantry were somewhere in the area north of the objective; it was reported that all men that had reached the objective had apparently been killed.

At dusk the men of the First Battalion, 517th Parachute Infantry, were on the objective, the enemy annihilated.

The enthusiasm, the fighting spirit, the stout-hearted will to close with the enemy had never been greater among the men of the First Battalion. Jumping off from 417893 at 1400 hours, the First Battalion moved through the thickly wooded approaches from the northeast, preceded by artillery. Initial progress was slow, as the high ground was approached, due to intense small-arms fire from machine-guns, rifles, and a high proportion of machine pistols.

Knowing that to be pinned down would invite mortar fire, the men charged across the stream LISBELLE and up the slope through the intense fire, engagement with the enemy was close enough for wide use of hand grenades. The Battalion, suffering the loss of 46 men, slashed through and folded up the enemy positions facing them, outflanked and made untenable all others, and by 1730 was on the objective and patrolling to the reverse slope.

Information from prisoners indicated that the objective was occupied by an enemy battalion, reinforced. Further information, received from prisoners taken later in the night, indicated that none of the occupying forces escaped. An exact count of the enemy casualties cannot be quoted inasmuch as the Battalion was relieved the following morning. The First Battalion does not assume credit for all the casualties, but the entire enemy battalion was annihilated. The determination with which they fought can be measured by the fact that not more than 15 prisoners were taken by all of the attacking forces.

The early part of the night was spent in patrolling the wooded area to wipe out remaining scattered enemy groups. During the night Colonel HOWZE placed Lt. Colonel BOYLE in command of all the troops on the objective, including the two battalions of the 290th Infantry.

These troops were badly scattered and disorganized. Lt. Colonel BOYLE with his staff and Company officers, personally oriented each company commander of the 290th Battalion, assisted them in reorganization, and placed them in defensive positions along the south edge of the woods on the objective. At 0600 as one of the companies was being placed in position a counter-attack was launched from the south by an estimated platoon; they were completely routed, fifteen of them killed, and four prisoners taken, without loss. Enemy artillery was received throughout the remaining time the First Battalion occupied the position.

At 0800 hours the First Battalion was informed that it would be relieved by the two battalions of the 290th on the hill; this relief was completely effected at 1600. The Battalion was assembled from its position on the SOY-HOTTON highway and LA ROUMIERE OL FAGNE and marched back to SOY.

Unschooling in the military art of retreat, and ignorant of the word defeat, the First Battalion paid its price of 157 casualties, but in doing so, accounted for at least 210 enemy dead, took 18 prisoners, knocked out 3 tanks and 9 self-propelled guns, destroyed over the period in actual engagement one of each; a half-track, an armored reconnaissance car, a Volkswagen, and an ammunition truck.

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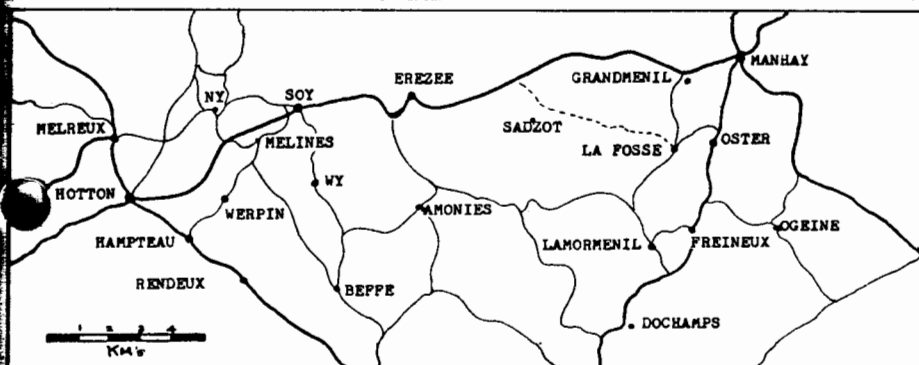
COVERS COMBAT ACTIVITIES OF COMPANY "C" DURING THE PERIOD 21 - 26 DECEMBER 1944. FROM A REPORT PREPARED BY CAPTAIN CHARLES E. LACHAUSSEE: "STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS OF "C" COMPANY"

Company "C", 517th Parachute Infantry, (less one platoon) was personally dispatched by Major General Rose, Commanding General of the Third Armored Division, to join "Task Force Kane" on the evening of 22 December 1944. The company moved by truck, and arrived at Freyneux, Belgium, at 1900 hours that night.

The parachutists found the Armored Task Forces holding two small villages (Lamormenil and Freyneux) which they had taken during the afternoon. Lt. Colonel Kane, commanding the task force, had received the mission of pressing the attack to the south of capture the strategic road crossing at Dochamps, two miles distant. It was planned accordingly that the paratroopers would launch an immediate infantry assault, to be followed by the tanks when they had seized the objective.

The difficulties confronting the paratroopers were numerous. They had to attack at night, over terrain not previously reconnoitered, against an enemy which later was revealed to be six times their strength, a determined, reinforced battalion of the Second SS Panzer Division. Nevertheless, Company "C" moved out, with fixed bayonets, at 2000.

The paratroopers first encountered resistance at a wooded hill two-thirds of the way to their objective, on which an enemy platoon was serving as outpost for their main body. After an initial setback, caused by an enemy patrol to their rear, the paratroopers cleared the woods, engaging in extremely close combat with bayonets, sub-machine guns, and hand grenades, killing sixteen Nazis and suffering losses on one man killed and three wounded. The company then proceeded toward their objective.



| 517 FIRST BATTALION FORCE STATISTICS (22 DEC-26 DEC 1944) | | | |
|--|--------------------------|----------|-------|
| COMPANY | OFFICERS | ENLISTED | TOTAL |
| HQ & HQ | 8 | 153 | 161 |
| A | 10 | 141 | 151 |
| B | 11 | 131 | 141 |
| C | 3 | 29 | 32 |
| C- (FORCE KANE) | 6 | 117 | 123 |
| FORCE 22 DEC 44 | 38 | 571 | 609 |
| CASUALTIES | 11 | 146 | 157 |
| FORCE 26 DEC 44 | 27 | 425 | 452 |
| GERMAN LOSSES: | 210 DEAD 18 PRISONERS | | |

The enemy held in force the thigh ground surrounding the village, covering the open fields leading to it with grazing cross fire of machine guns. The paratroopers were in plain sight, under a bright moon, and their dark uniforms stood out against the snow-covered field.

As the company closed in on the objective the enemy machine guns opened fire, pinning them down in the open field. At the same time a flank security patrol reported an enemy column moving against their right rear. Seeing the element of surprise had been lost, and that his seventy men were outnumbered, the Company Commander ordered a withdrawal to the wooded hill they had left, where the paratroopers dug in and prepared to repeat the attack with tank support in daylight. Throughout the remainder of the night the small force received intermittent mortar and machine gun fire.

At dawn, an enemy force of approximately forty men launched a coordinated attack upon the American force from the rear. (It being, very likely, the column which the flank patrol had reported during the night.) The paratroopers momentarily surprised, sprang to their weapons and dispersed the attack, killing thirteen and capturing two wounded. At this time a runner reported that the village of Lamormenil, a quarter mile to the east, was under attack and badly in need of infantry support. Without hesitation, the paratroop force, under heavy small arms fire, fought their way to the village, and taking positions in the buildings, assisted the armored elements in dispersing the enemy attack. The enemy then proceeded to post Mark VI tanks on the high ground on three sides of Lamormenil, taking the town under accurate tank fire. As the day drew to a close, the tank force commander, making an estimate of the situation, decided that a continuation of the attack was impractical. The towns of Freyneux and Lamormenil, eight hundred yards distant from each other, were organized for defense. However, no further infantry attack developed during the night, although the tank fire continued to take its toll of vehicles and men.

During the night information was received from higher headquarters that the enemy armored drive had swept past and to the rear, capturing Odeigne to the east, Manhay to the north, Grandmenil to the north and west, and La Fosse and Le Batty to the west, thereby isolating the paratrooper-armored garrison.

Next morning, Christmas Day, the enemy launched a determined tank-infantry attack upon Freyneux from the north (which was the direction of the friendly lines). The attack consisted of a battalion of infantry supported by Tiger tanks. The approaches to Freyneux were taken under machine gun fire from Lamormenil, but the enemy pressed on. A platoon of Company "C", under supporting 37mm gun fire, moved out to the assistance of the beleaguered village. The enemy had succeeded in gaining a foothold in the outskirts of the village; desperate house-to-house fighting ensued, with the enemy finally dislodged. The Germans then took up positions in the woods close to the town and kept the streets hot with sniper fire.

The Americans, in a command conference, then decided upon two possible plans of escape: (1) To burn the vehicles and infiltrate through the enemy's line in small groups; (2) To have the infantry mount the vehicles and fight their way out. It was decided that the latter plan was preferable; therefore immediate patrolling began, and continued through the night and the following day, probing for a route of escape or a soft spot in the enemy's line. All of these patrols consisted of parachutist personnel, as they were the most experienced scouts present. Working day and night without rest or food, the small paratroop parties reconnoitered in all directions, encountering enemy forces blocking all main roads.

At 1500 of the 26th of December the "break" was found. It consisted of a small trail through heavy woods, west of La Fosse, held by a small group of enemy. The parachutist patrol returned immediately with their information, and based upon it, the plan for escape was made.

At 1900 supporting American artillery threw down a heavy white phosphorous barrage around three sides of Freyneux and Lamormenil, effectively screening the area from observation. The paratroopers jumped upon the tanks, determined to fight their way through. At La Fosse, the enemy group opened fire with small arms upon the leading vehicle but was soon destroyed by return fire. The entire column then passed through to the safety of friendly lines.

At 1700 hours, 22 January 1945, the attack jumped off. This force dashed across this open terrain with a devastating output of fire power. All tanks were firing, the .50 caliber machine guns were manned by the troops on the tanks, and all men were firing their individual weapons. As the tanks reached approximately the center of the field between the line of departure and their objective, they began to receive heavy assault gun fire from NIEDER-EMMELS, BELGIUM (838908). This town was reported to have been taken before the attack of Task Force Seitz jumped off. It was discovered later that only the northwest portion had been taken. Part of the tanks immediately changed direction and attacked toward NIEDER-EMMELS, BELGIUM (838908). Both towns of NIEDER-EMMELS, BELGIUM (838908), and HUNNANGE, BELGIUM (844899), soon became flaming wrecks. Company "Y" on foot, in the face of heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire, pressed on across the open field of snow toward HUNNANGE, BELGIUM (844899). Company "D" rode the tanks into the towns and soon thereafter Company "F" entered. The sudden attack and heavy fire completely demoralized the enemy. However, many small groups of the enemy had sought refuge in the cellars of the town from the assault fire of the attacking force. Here, either crazed by fear or for fanatical reasons, they fought fiercely like "cornered rats". The troops of the Task Force also seemed to have become imbued with an additional battle spirit, so with fierce determination, they wiped out these pockets with grenades and small arms. By 2100 hours, 22 January 1945, organized resistance had ceased and the town was secured. The results of this attack was 149 prisoners taken, seven Mark IV assault guns knocked out, a division radio vehicle captured intact with personnel, and an estimated 100 killed. Deep snow and burning buildings prevented an accurate account of the number killed or damage done.

Though impossible of description by words, the macabre picture of war's destruction presented by this village is some indication of the damage dealt the enemy in this attack. In the half light of dusk, flaming buildings and enemy armored vehicles filled the air with the stench of burning bodies and lit the gruesome scene with a weird flickering light by which could be seen the scattered wreckage of war. Numerous dead and wounded lay in grotesque postures amid the litter of machine guns, broken weapons, individual equipment, and gory remnants of human beings. Through this could be heard the sound of bursting grenades, the crack of a rifle, the rattle of a Tommy-gun, interspersed with the shout of "Kamerad" and the moans of severely wounded men as small streams of sullen, dejected enemy swelled the total of prisoners. Gradually the sounds subsided and a dangerous quiet fell upon the village, broken only by frequent bursts of shells or the scream of a nebelwerfer. Through this could be seen the shadowy movements of small groups of men going about their work of mopping up and preparing for what might come next.

Hasty defensive positions were assumed and a road-block established near LORENTSWALDCHEN, BELGIUM (848893). Task Force Wemple on the left and the unit on the right in NIEDER-EMMELS, BELGIUM (838908), was contacted. Also, patrols were sent to the outskirts of ST. VITH, BELGIUM (855880). (See General Situation Map "Front Lines 221900 Jan 45 - 231400 Jan 45".) All men remained on the alert against probable counterattack and attacks by scattered groups of disorganized enemy. Artillery fire and nebelwerfer fire was heavy and constant throughout the night. Daylight arrived without any outstanding incidents except patrol action. The troops had now been without sleep, rest or much food for a period of 54 hours, continually attacking or advancing the entire time under most inclement weather conditions. Despite this, however, the spirit and morale of the unit was exceptionally high. An example of this factor was demonstrated by the attack of Company "D". The tanks bearing the infantry rushed across the field firing their guns at buildings and enemy assault guns. As buildings or assault guns would be hit and burst into flames, wild cheers of "Hit him again" could be heard above the din of battle. One outstanding accomplishment was that devotion to duty on the part of our medical section combined with the cooperation of tanks of Task Force Wemple in evacuating wounded saved many lives and much suffering on the part of troops of our Task Forces. No roads were open and evacuation was possible only by tanks, and supply was practically impossible.

At daylight, 23 January 1945, orders were received to organize a defensive position as shown on Special Situation Map No 3 and obtain as much rest as possible. Another force was to pass through and capture ST. VITH, BELGIUM (855880). Much rest was impossible; nevertheless, any was welcome. As a road from BORN, BELGIUM (853941), was opened, 10-in-1 rations and ammunition were brought in and wounded and prisoners were sent to the rear. Throughout the day constant and heavy artillery and mortar fire fell upon the town. (See attached "Statement of Artillery Liaison Officer"). Enemy planes attacked and strafed the town twice. At 1400 hours, 23 January 1945, Combat Command "B" passed through Task Force Seitz, attacked and captured ST. VITH, BELGIUM (855880). From reports and enemy activity, a strong enemy counterattack was considered most probable. At 1800 hours, 23 January 1945, Company "D", which was in Task Force reserve, was ordered to reinforce Task Force Wemple, and moved to positions shown on Special Situation Map No. 3. All troops remained constantly on the alert throughout the night. However, except for extremely heavy shelling, nothing of any importance materialized. Throughout the day 23 January 1945, the Task Force held its positions. (See General Situation Map "Front Lines 231400 Jan 45 - 251400 Jan 45").

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COVERS COMBAT OPERATIONS OF SECOND BATTALION DURING THE PERIOD 22-27 JANUARY 1945. FROM AN 'AFTER-ACTION' REPORT PREPARED BY THE SEVENTH ARMORED DIVISION: COVERING OPERATIONS OF "TASK FORCE SEITZ" DURING THE BATTLE FOR ST. VITH

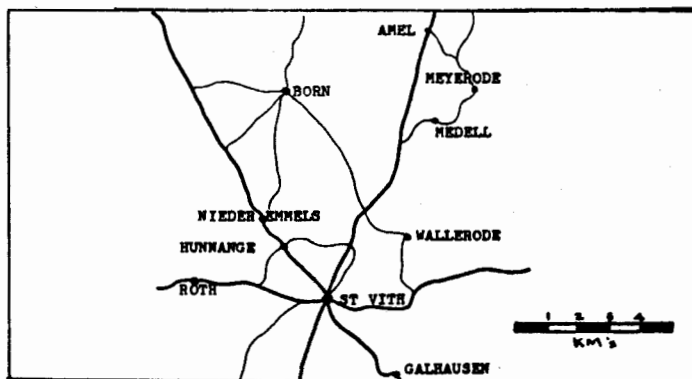
About 1400 hours, 24 January 1945, orders were received to prepare for an attack to take place the following day. The plan, in general, was for Task Force Rhea to attack at 1000 hours, 25 January 1945, from the southwest and capture a portion of WALLERODE, BELGIUM (878901); for Task Force Griffin to attack at 1000 hours, 25 January 1945, and capture the remainder of WALLERODE, BELGIUM (878901), and KEPP-ELBORN, BELGIUM (878906). The 424th Regimental Combat Team from the 106th Division was to attack at 0700 hours and capture MEDELL, BELGIUM (885925), and woods to the south. For lines of departure, boundaries, and objectives, see Special Situation Map No. 4. It was desired that the objective of MEDELL, BELGIUM (885926), be taken before the attack of Task Force Seitz took place. Company "B", 17th Tank Battalion and 3rd Platoon, Company "A", 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, was relieved from attachment to Task Force Seitz.

In order to take advantage of darkness to cover the movement to the line of departure, Task Force Seitz moved at 0600 hours, 25 January 1945, to a forward assembly area as shown on Special Situation Map No. 4. The plan of Task Force Seitz was to attack with two companies abreast, one in reserve. (For line of departure, sectors and objectives, See Special Situation Map No. 4). Smoke would be laid to cover the passage across the open terrain. In the cold of early morning, the troops, wearied by 100 hours of incessant action, moved out quietly and efficiently. Dawn found them moving through IN DER KIDT WOODS (855915) toward their assembly area. Sniper fire began to harass them even there. At 0800 hours, they had reached their assembly area and combat leaders went on reconnaissance.

At 1000 hours, 25 January 1945, MEDELL, BELGIUM (885925), had not been taken and the attack of the flank unit had not progressed much beyond its line of departure in the AUF DER HARDT WOODS (865935). (See Special Situation Map No. 4). Due to other dire needs for artillery fire, smoke could not be laid. However, the 81mm mortars began laying smoke and the attack jumped off promptly. The difficulties confronting the Task Force in this attack were many. From the line of departure to the objective stretched approximately two miles of open terrain covered with snow from knee to waist deep. The objective was a commanding terrain feature which afforded excellent observation of the entire valley. Almost immediately as the attack began, the assault units came under artillery fire. As the troops made their way forward into mortar range, then into automatic and small arms range, the power and effect of the enemy fire power increased steadily. Slowly but surely, the attacking wave struggled forward in the snow. Men could be seen to stumble and fall. Then, they would reappear again above the snow, for this was caused by sheer weariness and exhaustion. However, many were seen to fall who, as enemy fire took its toll, did not reappear again. Back and forth along the lines of attack could be seen the figures of combat leaders, heedless of danger and the targets they presented, encouraging their men and urging them forward. It was only by the superior example in combat set by the leaders and the individual bravery and grim determination of the men that the attack continued. Slowly but firmly the arduous two mile advance continued. As the objective was approached, the AMBLEVE (885962) - ST. VITH (855880) highway was reached, and though the flank units had not advanced to this line, the attack of the Task Force pushed forward, now leaving its flanks exposed. Enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire had not been too heavy nor accurate up to this point. It now began to increase both in accuracy and in intensity as the range decreased. Company "D" became pinned down by extremely heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire. Company "F" continued its attack, reached the woods in its zone of advance and moved through the woods. This attack combined with artillery and mortar fire allowed Company "D" to continue and by 1400 hours, 25 January 1945, all Task Force objectives were taken and defensive positions were being organized. Forty prisoners were captured and approximately 30 killed, a large amount of individual weapons, equipment, and automatic weapons had been abandoned, including one 75mm anti-tank gun intact.

WALLERODE, BELGIUM (878901), was captured about three hours later, but the attack on the left had not progressed. At 1515 hours, 25 January 1945, Task Force Seitz was ordered to prepare to assist the unit on the left in the attack on their objective and the woods to its south. Plans were made for this attack, but the orders were later revoked due to the fact that the 424th Regimental Combat Team reported that they were now making satisfactory progress and would need no assistance. However, MEDELL, BELGIUM (883925), was not captured until the next day. The woods on that side of our sector to the north had not been taken and cleared, and this presented a dangerous route for counterattack. These woods required constant patrolling by the Task Force as evidenced by the fact that the following afternoon a patrol from Company "F" surprised an enemy group in the woods, killing five, capturing one, and causing the remainder to flee.

The defensive positions were held until 1400 hours, 27 January 1945. (See General Situation Map, "Front Lines 251400 Jan 45 - 271400 Jan 45). The weather continued to be exceedingly severe and much suffering was caused by exposure. Deep snow drifts made supply by anything but tanks impossible except on one supply road. No fires could be allowed. Water froze and could be obtained only by melting with heat tablets. "K" rations and some 10-in-1 rations could be heated only in the same manner and supplies of these were scarce. With only limited activity, however, the positions were held and at 1400 hours, 27 January 1945, the Second Battalion, 517th Parachute Infantry, was relieved and returned to STAVELOT, BELGIUM, for a rest and reorganization. However, such was short, for on 1 February 1945, the regiment was alerted and on 2 February 1945 moved to Germany for operations.



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