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History - Company C - 120th Engineer Combat Bn - 45th Infantry Div.

Nov 1943-31 May 1945

April 1: The first day of the new month was Easter Sunday, and the CP was moved from Hausen to the woods  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometer east of Sulzbach. No sooner had they arrived in the new area than most of the men went to church for Sunday services, Catholics attending services in town and PFC Schlinkert holding Protestant services in the company area. It was a holiday in more ways than one as most of the company did not do any work. All three platoons were in the area for the entire day as Capt Frank and 1st Lt Prestwood went on a reconnaissance for a new bivouac area. Finally one was found, and at 1800 hours the CP was again moved to the woods  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometer west of Gailbach, in a woods. The company arrived in the new area well after dark, and there was consequently much confusion as the men attempted to park trucks and trailer in the sparse covering of the jack-pine trees.

The area near Sulzbach found several men blossoming into artists so far as music was concerned, as PFC Vigil and Pvt Trujillo vied with 1st Lt Prestwood's trumpet on their accordions for honors. It was a really quiet day after the continual moving around of the past few days, and the men appreciated it.

April 2: Off again, as this time the CP was moved a distance of 75 kilometers to the small town of Schollkrippen. Most of the men will remember the new area as one of the first which the company had "liberated" in Germany, as more than one civilian showed a hearty fear of the men as the trucks pulled into the town. After some confusion due to the presence of the 180th in town, the men were settled for the night in buildings of all kinds, two squads of the 3rd Platoon even locating in a machine shop across from the officer's quarters. Supper was served in one end of town and then moved to the company area.

Prior to movement to the new area, the 1st Platoon swept the roads north of Strass-Bessenbach (the next town from the Gailbach area), and put in a culvert and swept roads north of the town of Keilberg. The 1st squad of the 2nd Platoon was called out for work before breakfast as it put in a culvert in Strass-Bessenbach, and also repaired two bridges there. Imagine their embarrassment when the truck broke down on the return trip to the area. Capt Frank removed ~~2~~ 6 box-mines.

April 3: After dinner, the CP was moved again, this time a distance of 30 miles to the outskirts of the town of Pfaffenhausen. This move was by far the most disconcerting one the company had ever made, as vehicles could move only 300 yards or so, and then stop, due to the size of the task force with which it was operating. A dose of the medicine being handed villages by American tanks was seen south of Wiesen as the company vehicles passed through streets lined with the still-smoking and burning ruins of some houses used as minor fortresses by the Jerries. Enemy resistance was cleared ahead of the task force of tanks, infantry and engineers as the advance continued. An interesting Jerry subterfuge was seen along the road north of Wiesen as several dummy figures were lined up in ~~few~~ drill formation at the side of the road. Several bomb holes along the road testified to the effectiveness of the deception. Once arriving at the new area, two prisoners were taken, and returned to the P. of W cage by 1st Lt Prestwood. The guard was given alert orders as the presence of many Jerries in the surrounding hills became known. The three platoons were quartered in separate barns, while company headquarters men were interspersed with

April 3(Cont'd): them. It was a cold, windy night for the men, as at approximately 0300, the next morning the men were treated to their first hailstorm in some time.

En route to the new area, plenty of work was found for the tank-dozer, as it removed 10 road-blocks between Wiesen and Pfaffenhausen, PFC Smouse having returned to duty with it. The towns of Pfaffenhausen and Wiesen both were cleared of rubble, while the 2nd Platoon cleared vehicles from the road two kilometers south of Pfaffenhausen. Most of the company vehicles arrived at the new area short of gas, and S/Sgt Frulla set off in a futile attempt to find the Bn gas dump, along with Tec 5 Archambault and the water trailer, returning to the bivouac area at 0230 the next morning with no success.

At first the night promised to be a very interesting one as a battery of 155's of the 189th FA moved in close to the company bivouac area, but fortunately no fire missions of the artillery disturbed the already troubled sleep of the men in the barns, as more than one complained the next morning of hailstones and rain finding its way somehow through the calked roof-tops.

April 4:

For the nth day since the crossing of the Rhine, the company moved, but not until the men had become thoroughly warmed and chilled by turns near fires made in the Pfaffenhausen area to keep warm. There was nothing for them to do all morning- less the 1st Platoon, which went "task-forcing" again with the 1st Bn after breakfast- but stand and squat around the fires. At approximately 1030 hours another Kraut "saw the light"- or couldn't stand the cold in the woods any longer, it was not clear which- and walked into the 3rd Platoon area via the road behind the CP, where he was greeted by PFC Mutchler, and then escorted to the 180th P of W cage in Pfaffenhausen by Pvt McCrary of the 3rd Platoon. After a hearty dinner, it was decided to move, with a "hurry-up-and wait" move in the offing, as the men were ready to leave at 1500 and the convoy did not pull out until 1700, two hours later.

It was not long before the 1st Platoon found work to do, as at approximately 1430 hours, the platoon's and the infantry's advance was brought to a halt in the small town of Jossa, approximately 16 kilometers from the previous bivouac area near Pfaffenhausen. The bridge across the small stream in the center of the town had been blown by enemy demolition. First, the tankdozer made a bypass past the old bridge site, and then dug in the abutments for the new one. Setting to work, the 1st Platoon put in a simple-stringer one-trestle-bent bridge, completing the job at approximately 2300 hours. (In the meantime, the company convoy passed through the town via the bypass, locating in the next town at Altengronau, where the 1st and 2nd Platoons were barracked in the schoolhouse and the 3rd in an old beer hall.). Continuing on beyond the town, the tankdozer removed the rubble caused by the demolition of a railroad overpass-bridge, which had been neatly blown into the path of vehicles 50 feet below. Once the rubble had been removed and the road made passable for tanks, a loud rumbling and crash was heard as the remainder of the overpass caved in. This posed a new problem for the 1st Platoon, which, with the help of the small bulldozer<sup>(1st)</sup> and a large quantity of dynamite, soon

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removed the huge pile of rubble by dint of scooping and blasting by turns. An accident ~~xx~~ occurred during the latter operation, as PFC Lamkins' truck banged into the small bulldozer, necessitating the removal of the truck to Ordnance for repair the next day. Also, the 2nd Platoon assisted in the advance of the convoy by removing trees, rubble, and vehicles from its path. As ~~xx~~ usual lately, prisoners were garnered in the town to which the company moved, after which a "late" supper was served at about 2045 hours.

April 5: April 5, 1945 was best described as "Gene Gallegos" Day for the entire company, as the shy lad from Las Vegas single-handedly routed a Jerry truck with the .50 caliber machine gun mounted on the 2nd squad of the 2nd Platoon's truck. The incident occurred at approximately 1400 hours of the afternoon. As the 2nd Platoon approached a small town in the line of the advance of the 2nd Bn of the 180th infantry, a colonel from a unit in the advance party told Sgt Waibel- Gallegos's squad sergeant- to post someone on the .50 caliber machine gun on his truck, that soon they might have a little business for the gunner. "Keep your eyes on that road leading out of town" he cautioned Gene. Sure enough, after fifteen minutes of concentrated tank fire, a Jerry truck was seen ~~running~~ tearing madly out of town. Seeing the truck, PFC Gallegos cut loose with the .50 caliber, and he soon "bracketed" the target with the result that two Jerries leaped out of the truck into holes by the side of the road. Unfortunately, at this point, the .50 ran out of ammo, and PFC Gallegos clamored for more. The ammo was finally found underneath barrack bags, tarp and bed-rolls (one bandolier even being found in PFC Soo's barrack bag) and Gene cut loose again. In the meantime, another Jerry leaped from the truck and was soon lost to view, no doubt hastened by the deluge of rifle fire from the other members of the truck. Five more minutes of rifle and machine gun fire drove the first two Krauts neatly into the hands of the infantry, who grabbed them. No sign of the other Kraut was evident as the colonel congratulated Gallegos on his fine shooting.

Other members of the company were a bit luckier than Gene in the matter of prisoners as 1st Lt Prestwood, S/Sgt McQuaid, PFC's Caschette and Ego and Pvt Pike flushed six from the woods- like a covey of quail- lining the road leading out of Altengronau. Col Monnier's driver bequeathed 11 more not-unwilling German veteran supermen to the company at 1200 hours, and they were finally dispatched to the 180th just prior to the movement of the company again. En route to the new area, PFC Bomero and Pvt Otero bagged two more prisoners also.

The majority of the company was too busy chasing the enemy to do any prisoner chasing. The 2nd and 3rd squads of the 1st Platoon went back to Jossa and maintained the bypass leading out of the town, and also cleared rubble in the town. The 2nd Platoon- which together with the 3rd went out to work immediately after breakfast- cleared twelve road blocks along the route of advance of the 2nd Bn. The 3rd Platoon, with the help of the tank-dozer, cleared two roadblocks and removed demolition from the bridge at Chm<sup>au</sup>. In all three cases, it was a simple game of following the infantry's rapid advance then waiting until resistance had been cleared, then removing road blocks and then moving on to the next town.

The company's movement rate reached a new high in exasperation as the CP was moved again, along with platoon headquarters vehicles to the small (cow) town of Utrichshausen, an odiferous village reminiscent of the towns in Alsace. The movement took place at 1700 hours, arriving at the new area at 2000, and was followed by supper at 2100 hours.

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6 April 1945: The CP was moved again on this day, to the small town of Wustersachsen, at approximately 1800 hours. The men arrived at the new area at approximately 2000 hours to find that most of the buildings had been taken over by the 180th Inf, so for a time it was a case of finding whatever rooms were left available. The 1st and 2nd squads of the 1st Platoon were located in the sewing machine factory building, with its 3rd squad in the schoolhouse. The 3rd Platoon was next to the 1st and 2nd squads of the 1st Platoon, in the building beside it. The 2nd Platoon was bivouaced in the neighboring town of Seiferts for the night, as it had chased the enemy all day behind the 2nd Bn of the 180th. In doing so, the platoon removed an enemy tank from the road south of Batten and vehicles from the road south of Seiferts.

The 1st Platoon caught the majority of the company work for the day as the 3rd Platoon was again idle. In all, the platoon filled two craters and removed two road blocks on the road from Schmalnau to Wustersachsen, with the assistance of the tank-dozer. This was one of the more unevenful days for the company of recent ones.

7 April 1945: For once, the company had no work to do, and the CP was moved to the German barracks 1/8 kilometer south of Rudenschwingen, in the daytime for a change, also, the convoy leaving Wustersachsen at 1400 hours and picking up the 2nd Platoon en route at Seiferts.

The new area was one of the best in some time from the standpoint of conveniences and administration. A great quantity of enemy equipment was seized by the men- Tec 5 Stevason even picking up and donning a complete German uniform- not the least of which were the beds. One and all availed themselves of them for the night. PFC Eugene Gallegos and Pvt Karau even attempted to put the shower room back into operation, but with little success. Almost all the barracks soon blazed with light, (and stoves were installed) as the men went to work making the barracks into something like those in the states. The mess hall was a boon also, as it resembled those in the US, and the men ate a hearty supper in it, before retiring for one of the best nights' sleep in many a day. At 1630 Capt Frank read the General Orders from 7th Army etc re the problems of looting and other relationships with the German and French civilians. 2200 hours found the barracks quiet and dark, as most of the men knocked off for the day.

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8 April 1945: With company morale at its highest point since leaving the Rest area at Deinvillers, the light mood of the men was brought to a halt when word was given to move out from the barracks near Rudenschwingen. The 2nd Platoon pulled out after breakfast, followed by the 1st and 3rd squads of the 1st Platoon. The notice to move did not deter Tec 4's Cantrell and Fleetwood and PFC Kain from taking luxurious "Turkish" baths in the vats used for cooking in the German mess hall. Those men remaining in the area immediately went to work washing clothes, when the order came for the rest of the company to move after dinner.

In the meantime, the 1st Platoon was removing (less the 2nd squad, as indicated above) one road-block south of Sands. The 2nd Platoon, in the words of most of its men, just "rode and rode" as they travelled after the infantry of the 2d Bn. Finally, some work was found for them, as they removed 3 vehicles (including one Jerry tank) on the road from ~~Kel~~ Heufurt to Nordheim, and an artillery piece outside the town of Waltenshausen, together with a road-block at Mellrichtstadt. The 3rd Platoon was idle.

The entire company came together again at the large town of Konigshofen, with the 1st and 3rd Platoons in ~~mess~~ kitchens and barracks respectively, and the 2nd Platoon in the hospital, above the officer's quarters. The unusual feature of Konigshofen was the prevalence of Australian prisoners-of-war who had many tales to tell of the dullness and monobony of working the German land-strips outside the town. K. was one of the largest towns the company had seen since crossing the Rhine. Still no casualties, one breathed to one's self. *Start of Convoy ~~the~~ side line hills.*

Top individual honors for the day went to the tank-dozer crew and 1st Lt Prestwood, who cooperated in the eventual capture of an undetermined number of prisoners in a field outside of a town near Konigshofen. Espying the Krauts dashing madly across the field, (they were estimated at 300) the 'dozer cut loose with the ~~xxx~~ business end of the machine as .50 and .75 fire routed the Krauts, killing several and wounding more.

9 April 1945: A day of rest and clean-up for a change as the company remained in Konigshofen for the entire day- except those who took advantage of the opportunity to go to Bn for showers, that is. All motor vehicles were oiled and greased, and practically everyone washed clothes, shaved, and had hair-cuts too. Happiest man of the entire company was PFC Barkovski, who received notification that he was to go home as a prisoner guard. He left at 1700 with Archie to Bn. All in all, the day came at a propitious time, when the men needed a day off, with a little time to write letters and otherwise enjoy themselves.

April 10: The company remained in the town of Konigshofen for the second day, and once again no work was done, as the 180th was collecting supplies and refitting to resume the offensive soon. Church services were held for Catholics by Father Carney behind the 1st Platoon's building for the only real unit activity for the day.

Individually speaking, package-mailers odd themselves as a strange assortment of shotguns, flags, helmets, knick-knacks, and even a bolt of cloth for suit material found their devious way to the hands of ~~Exp~~ Tec 5 Archambault. Once again work was continued on the company vehicles.

April 11: Back to work for the entire company as the word was given to move from Konigshofen to one kilometer east of Ebern at approximately 1430 hours. The new area was in a woods below the town, as for once the general line of advance for the 180th was in a southern or southeasterly direction in place of the usual north or northeast. The new area was reached about an hour before dark, and as supper was prepared, the rest of the men (3rd and Hq platoons) made haste to bed down before nightfall.

The 1st and 2nd Platoons, in the meantime, were very busy as enemy resistance was encountered in strength in towns and on roads south of Ebern. The 1st Platoon cleared vehicles from the road en route to Laimbach (south of Ebern) from the old area at Konigshofen, the 1st and 2nd Platoons having set out an hour or so before the rest of the company. Two prisoners were taken by the platoon in Laimbach. The 2nd Platoon had the lion's share of the company's work, as it supported the 3rd Bn of the 180th in going through the towns of Sendelbach and Laimbach, and also Baunach. In the second of these three towns--Laimbach--the platoon put in a culvert. Roadblocks were removed north and south of Baunach, and 1st Lt Prestwood, Capt Frank, PFC's Vigil, and Tavernaris, and D'Amico and Markel, together with S/Sgt McQuaid, made a reconnaissance of the Main River south of Baunach. The 2nd squad of the 2nd Platoon, earlier in the day, cleared vehicles from the road en route to the area at Ebern from Konigshofen. Late at night, the entire 2nd Platoon put in a treadway at Reckenneusig, across the stream south of the town.

A sample of the duplicity and undercover work of the Germans was brought home to the company when the Division CIC detachment revealed that there were 10 SS men (and one girl) still in the town of Konigshofen after the company left-- a brief but pointed warning of things to come.

April 12: Immediately after breakfast the 1st Platoon went out on the job of maintaining the ford at a point southeast of Oberbronn. The 1st and 3rd squads hauled the rock and rubble for the maintenance, while the 2nd squad spread it. The 1st Platoon also removed aerial bombs from the railroad bridge  $\frac{1}{2}$  kilometer ~~south~~ south of Brietengussbach. At the same time, the 3rd squad of the 2nd Platoon ran into trouble in constructing a treadway bridge near Brietengussbach. Not only was it a miserable night to work, but enemy shell fire (possibly from SP guns) didn't help matters any, as they shelled the bridge area until almost daylight. Once the bridge was completed, the squad returned to the company bivouac area, which was still  $\frac{1}{4}$  kilometer north of Rattelsdorf, having moved there at approximately 1500 hours from Ebern. In addition, the 2nd squad and the 1st squads of the platoon

cleared rubble from the streets of Brietengussbach, and removed two aerial bombs from the bridge in the town. The roadbank on the way from Ebern to Rattelsdorf was also repaired.

It was probably the wettest night the company had experienced in some time, as at approximately 2000 the water began to come down, washing out more than one makeshift tent. (Personal notes: 1st Lt Prestwood, S/Sgt McQuaid, Sgt Waibel, PFC Markel accounted for (indirectly) one (1) 88mm gun and crew, as they espied it on the far bank of the Main River near Brietengussbach, and called for artillery and m.g. fire, with which the artillery and m.gunners were only too glad to oblige. Result: One less 88mm for Mr Hitler, and several wounded Krauts in the bargain.) The rain made a mess of the bivouac area, miring everything from the huge Brockways- attached for the crossing of the River- to peeps. Most helpless victim of all was the captured fire-truck, which floundered around in mud of its own making. The cats worked overtime pulling out the vehicles.

April 13: Friday, the 13th of April, was no more unusual than any other day, fortunately. If anything, it was more profitable for most of the men of the company as they struck a bonanza of loot in the German Panzer OCS school in the northeastern suburbs of the city of Bamberg, the new location of the CP after 1400 hours. Many and varied were the trophies collected, even to the several shells thrown into the new area at approximately 1600 hours.

So far as work was concerned, the 1st Platoon did mostly maintenance jobs on the road from Hallstadt to Bamberg, in the vicinity of the new area. The 1st squad hauled rock and rubble for the craters (caused by bombs) to be filled, while the 2nd squad drained the water off the sides of the blown craters, before the rock and rubble was put in. The 3rd squad filled and hauled both. The Platoon also removed a Jerry tank and a roadblock near the OCS school area, and removed vehicles on the road from Bamberg to Gundelsheim.

The entire 2nd Platoon was out on the job of putting in a foot-bridge at Hallstadt, and for once, the operation was not visited with shell fire. More than 75 feet of bridge were flung across a tributary of the Main River. Not only the 2nd, but also the 3rd Platoon was on a bridge job as the 3rd (under the direction of S/Sgt Frulla, newly-appointed Platoon Sgt-Platoon Leader), construction of the bridge began at 2100 hours and continuing until 0600 the next morning. The job was completed without mishap, but as Frulla expressed it, "Bamberg was a pretty hot town before that bridge went in".

The whole company was shocked to learn of the death of President Roosevelt, and radios were crowded places as the men awaited more details. Pyrotechnical note: The darkness surrounding the 1st Platoon and company headquarters barracks was rudely shattered at 2130 hours as an enemy flare illuminated the entire building, landing on the roof.

April 14: A quiet day so far as the platoons were concerned, with the exception of the 3rd Platoon. The rest of the men remained in the barrack area of the previous day, as most of them recalled the carpentry training they had had way back in Engineer basic training to construct boxes of all sizes and shapes for the transshipment of rifles, helmets, etc. which had been picked up in and around the school area. The bivouac area soon rang with the sound of hammers and saws as the men went to work with a will. Others were content merely to ride the captured bicycles around the area.

In the meantime, the 3rd Platoon



In the meantime, the 3rd Platoon was hard at work in the Bamberg-Hallstadt area, removing three road blocks in Bamberg, and clearing the road from Bamberg to Hallstadt. Two tanks in Litzendorf were destroyed also, and it was a very tired platoon which arrived at the OCS school area at 1130 hours.

April 15-16:

These two days were distinguished by the growing presence of the German Luftwaffe, which was becoming more than a nuisance in strafing and bombing convoys in the vicinity of the company work and bivouac areas. On the 16th especially, the company headquarters fire truck was victimized by a bombing raid, two bombs falling on one side of the road, and another on the other side of the super-highway Reichsautobahnen from Neunkirchen a Sand to Fischbach.

At 1315 hours on the 15th of April, the CP was moved from the OCS school in the outskirts of Bamberg to a field 300 yards east of Pretzfeld, where the company was treated to the first of many raids in the local area, as JU-88's ranged far and wide. For the first time in many a day, the kitchen served 10-in-1 rations in place of B's or K's, and the men appreciated the change- for the time being at least. At 2345 hours the entire 1st Platoon was called out on the job of removing vehicles etc from the road behind the task force of the 1st Bn. As PFC Kucera put it, "We liberated four towns without firing a shot", eventually landing in the small town of Neunkirchen a Sand. In Wannbach, the platoon removed a tank from the center of the road, most of the roads in the area being lined with dead horses and destroyed vehicles. The Platoon also cleared the road from ~~Kirchze~~ Wannbach to Hamerbuhl. The 2nd Platoon found work to do en route to Pretzfeld, as it constructed a 20-foot timber trestle bridge over the overpass's blown crater- caused by a neatly-placed bomb- near Hirschaid. The 3rd Platoon was idle.

On another day ~~quite~~ punctuated with increased enemy air activity, the company as a whole was idle. In the late afternoon, the 1st squad of the 2nd Platoon attempted to remove a roadblock in the vicinity of the superhighway near Fischbach, but were stymied by mines in the block. Capt Frank, Tec 5 Moore and Williams removed 6 improvised box-mines and 4 dummy-mines near Lettern, for the only other work done.

At 1000 hours, the CP was moved from Pretzfeld to Neunkirchen a Sand, where the men ate dinner (K-ration) and supper both in the box and metal factory area, and slept most of the afternoon, with the exception of the 2nd Platoon, which was out, of course. After supper, the CP was again moved, to a turnaround of the superhighway running from Lauf to Fischbach, ~~and~~ and the company vehicles were dispersed in the woods. The men bedded down for one of the most uncomfortable nights in some time, due to the continual passage of Jerry planes overhead, and to the chilliness of the air in the woods.

April 17-18: Moving from the area two kilometers east of Fischbach, the company was located in a wooded area next to a barracks for political prisoners 4 kilometers southeast of Nuremberg as the struggle for the city began in earnest.

The first of these two days- the 17th- found the 1st Platoon idle in the bivouac area near Fischbach for the entire day. Most of the men of the platoon took time out to try their newly-acquired cameras and musical instruments of one sort or another. Sgt Sanders developed some film for men of the platoon. The 2nd Platoon was on a continual alert basis for the entire day also, the 2nd and 3rd squads returning to the bivouac area at 1100 hours after doing nothing all morning but wait for orders of the 2nd Bn. Nightfall found the platoon pulling into the new company area near Nuremberg. Most of the day's work was done by the 3rd Platoon which cleared rubble from Fischbach, removed two roadblocks two kilometers west of the town, and removed the roadblock formed by the blown-out overpass four kilometers west of Fischbach. Tec 4 Zeider and Cpl Pellow destroyed 6 88mm guns by placing charges in the breeches of the guns and then detonating them. Capt Frank blew up 6 Nebelwurfers.

PFC Russell and Pvt Marson, and S/Sgt Frulla and Tec 5 Shije set some sort of record for prisoner-taking on the part of Company C as they bagged 41 and 50 Jerries between them. Russell's and Marson's "windfall" occurred on the afternoon of the 17th as they were "up front" in the outskirts of the city of Nuremberg to see what they could see in the line of work for the D-7. Strolling into a yard behind a house, the startled engineers saw a large group of Jerries behind a fence at the rear of the yard. Armed only with a captured .32 pistol- and covered by PFC Russell- Pvt Marson had little difficulty in convincing the officer in charge of the 40 men of the advantages of surrender. The prisoners were turned over to the 2nd Bn 180th MP's for removal to the PW cage. S/Sgt Frulla and Tec 5 Shije's capture was a more routine one, although it netted them a little more- Frulla counted nine watches and three cameras removed from the ~~XXIX~~ prisoners.

The next day- the 18th- saw the 1st Platoon clearing a road block and starting to clear another in the vicinity of the railroad underpass in the outskirts of Nuremberg. The 2nd Platoon re-moved a tank from the road leading to the Stadium in the outskirts of Nuremberg. The Stadium was a huge amphitheater affair, embellished by a monster 40-foot square swastika in its center. It was a huge affair is a better way to put it, as bomb holes gaped in several places, and two American tanks burned in the center of the playing field. The 2nd Platoon also filled two bomb craters and removed three road-blocks on the outskirts. Snipers caused a little trouble in the latter operation until Lt Prestwood told the people of the area to turn in all pistols and rifles or suffer the consequences. After that, the platoon experienced no further difficulty. The 3rd Platoon was out the entire day, removing three road blocks in Nuremberg, clearing rubble and filling bomb craters.

In the absence of Lt Simmons, who went to the hospital for the 8th time with malaria, 2nd Lt Arlis D Foster assumed command of the 1st Platoon, from H&S Company.

The rapid advance of the Allies through Germany posed many problems for the troops, one of the most irritating but sensitive ones being that of released forced laborers from all Allied countries, including Russians, Poles, French, Belgians, Dutch, even

Australians. Most of them in the present bivouac area lived in the barracks across the street from the CP. Rejoicing in their new liberation, the slightly bewildered nationals wandered up and down the main highway, or even rode bicycles on it. Hunger was their chief problem (how hungry they were was shown when three Russians ate from the kitchen's garbage can, and with evident enjoyment), and the nearest collecting point for foreigners was seventy kilometers away, at Bamberg. It was necessary to post a guard in the bivouac area to run out the nationals, as they bade fair to overrun the area unless something was done.

April 19-20: It was time to move again, and the company did so, the CP of the new area being approximately  $\frac{1}{2}$ -kilometer southeast of Nuremberg, as the net around the large city drew tighter and tighter. The new area was one of barracks, behind the huge Stadium used by Hitler as a rallying-point in the heyday of Nazism. The area also contained more barracks, an artificial outdoor pool, another (incomplete) stadium, and a sports arena. The men lost no time in taking pictures of the stadium area, and taking loot from the storehouses underneath the rostrum of the huge bowl, and from the arena.

These two days were almost identical so far as work was concerned as it was a case of clearing the streets of Nuremberg of rubble, filling bomb and shell craters, removing the overhead trolley wires, and the old standby- removing roadblocks. On the 19th, Cpl Martin of the 3rd Platoon ended the usefulness of an 88mm gun by destroying it with TNT for individual mention for the day. On the 20th, PFC's Ego and Soo-together with about four majors, a colonel, and a general- relieved a photography shop (destroyed) of film material, much to the disgust of the other platoons, whose members had "beaucoup" cameras but little film. One of the more annoying features of the work of these two days was the GI's habit of picking up parked vehicles for a joy-ride, then running them into trees or curbs, necessitating their removal by the men of the platoons, with the assistance of the bulldozer.

1st Lt Lipscomb, fresh from his job as chief of the Map Section at the office of the Chief Engineer at Paris- revisited the company, and was warmly welcomed by the officers and men alike. After spending most of the day, he departed, taking with him a flag obtained by Capt Frank, a package from PFC Durkin, and the good-wishes of all the company. On the 20th, too, the men were particularly watchful for any signs of overt acts by Germans and other nationals in "celebration" of Hitler's birthday, but the only celebrating that was done was done by the GI's as Nuremberg fell on the 20th.

April 21-22: April 21 was a new low in inactivity for the company as the men had no definite work to do. Again the camera fiends were out, and the halls of the barracks echoed the clicking and skipping of dice in the several rooms. A few surreptitiously sneaked off for the finer pleasures of Nuremberg itself, but were back in time so as not to miss anything.

On the 22nd Lt General Patch visited the stadium area in connection with the parade and honors for the men of the 3rd Division, who from all accounts, were receiving sole credit for the capture of the city. As might have been expected, there was some resentment among members of the company at this, the feeling existing that the 45th had not ~~been~~ been given its full share of credit. This feeling was dispelled, however, after the classic demolition of the swastika of gold atop the rostrum of the stadium by men of the 10th Engrs, 3rd Division. With the rain pouring down, the gold emblem went up in a single blast of TNT. The new type "C" rations were consumed for supper, meeting with the full approval of the men, and the company moved at 1700 hours to  $\frac{1}{2}$ -kilometer south of Roth.

April 23-24: During the period covered by these two days, the steady advance of the 45th continued, with half of the distance between Nuremberg and Munich covered by midnite of the 24th. The company's part in the general advance was chiefly concerned with the maintenance of roads and clearance of road blocks and the construction of bypasses.

For the first time in several days, on the 23rd the company moved out at night, at 2200 hours from the wooded area outside of Roth to the southern outskirts of the large town of Weissenburg. This night move was further complicated by the steady rain, which began before the convoy left the old area. Ask the 1st Platoon if the rain didn't make a mess of the side roads. The 2nd squad maintained the bypass two kilometers north of Pleinfeld, while the 1st and 3rd squads maintained that two kilometers north of Ellingen, and then went on to construct a bypass through the blown underpass  $\frac{1}{2}$ -kilometer west of the town. As the 2nd Platoon was ~~only~~ idle, the 3rd Platoon helped ~~the~~ the 1st Platoon maintain the bypass north of Ellingen.

And for once, the company convoy (at the time the 2nd Platoon and company headquarters vehicles) became separated en route, with the result that the 2nd Platoon was late in pulling into the (generator-factory) area. The new area was speedily remodelled by the ingenuity of the men, as they made full use of the generators and stoves.

The 24th found the company still in the same area as the previous day, with road maintenance being the chief chore. The 1st Platoon maintained roads south of Steffenheim to Strozelsbach, while the 2nd Platoon maintained roads southwest of ~~Wen~~ Wenersheim to Alesheim. The 2nd Platoon also removed a road block west of Weissenburg. The 3rd Platoon unloaded its trucks and maintained the road from the junction two kilometers west of Wenersheim to Trommetsheim. They also maintained the approaches to the Bailey Bridge in Trommetsheim. PFC Fussell and the D-7 bulldozer hoisted burned vehicles from the road 1 kilometer south of Diefurt, and improved bypasses 4 kilometers and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  kilometers south of Diefurt respectively.

Something new was added to the company entertainment as the 2nd Platoon operated a (captured) movie projector in the platoon's shed, with a slightly novel twist as it was discovered that the film (of Naples and its environs) had been put in the projector backwards. The men did not mind, however. The generator factory proved a great windfall for the men as they went to work hooking up all available lights- or so it seemed- to the several small generators requisitioned for the use of the company. As usual, other outfits were quick to see a good thing as unit after unit sent down  $\frac{3}{4}$ -tons and trailers of all kinds to haul away the no-longer rare generators.

A tragic accident befell PFC Weber in the company area. Upon returning from the road jobs of the day, Weber's squad truck was parked in the area. In attempting to dismount from the truck Weber slipped and fell, on the hard cement, suffering a brain concussion. He was immediately hospitalized.

April 25-26: Into these two days was crowded more excitement and shelling than most of the men cared for, and also brought with them the first casualties, with the exception of PFC Smouse, that the company had had since the crossing of the Rhine River.

The 25th was just another day so far as the men were concerned, as they remained in the generator-factory area south of Weissenburg. The D-7 bulldozer widened the bypasses  $4\frac{1}{2}$  kilometers south of Diefurt on the road to Hammersfeld. At 1300 hours, the CP was moved again, this time to 400 yards south of Uebersfeld, small town filled with civilians and the 180th infantry. The new area was on the side of a hill, with plenty of wood available to break the cold chill of the dawn and mornings. The entire company was together for the last time for a few days, although they did not know it at the time.

April 26 was a black day indeed in the history of company C. It was the day of the crossing of the Danube River by the 45th Division. For their part in the operation, the 1st Platoon ferried the 1st Bn across the river near Bertoldsheim beginning at 1800 hours. At approximately 1830 hours the enemy on the opposite side of the river struck back for the 1st time. En route from the enemy shore back to the friendly side of the river, the 1st Platoon sustained several casualties as enemy m.g. and artillery fire broke out in earnest. No one was sure whether it was artillery or m.g. fire, or a combination of both, but after the fire was over, PFC Brandefine was seriously wounded in the head and back, PFC Myers in the stomach, Pvt Simms in the arm, Pvt Chavez in the neck, and PFC Merrill was nicked slightly in the cheek. All but Merrill were hospitalized. The 1st Platoon headquarters section witnessed the entire proceedings from a house 200 from the friendly shore. In subsequent calls for infantry to cross the river in assault boats, some of the doughboys were sent from the building in which the 1st Platoon headquarters was, with the resultant enemy barrage blowing one of the infantry boys to bits under the very eyes of the platoon. Due ~~the~~ to the number of wounded (both the company's and the infantry's), the 1st Platoon did not go to the company area until 0200 of the 27th.

The 2nd Platoon was idle for the day, but the 3rd Platoon witnessed an ~~ansi~~ episode which was at once both tragic and heroic as they ferried the 3rd Bn across the river, in the vicinity of Stepperg at 1600 hours. A short time after the crossing began, the boat in which Tec 4 Conklin, PFC Pocratsky and Pvt McCrary were, together with nine assorted infantry and artillery, overturned when the guide line thrown over the line from bank to bank snubbed, hurling the boat's occupants into the river. Tec 4 Conklin and PFC Pocratsky swam ashore, but Pvt McCrary was drowned, due to the swiftness of the current and his inability to swim. In the melee which followed, an infantry lieutenant and an enlisted man were saved from a similar fate by Cpl Martin, for which feat recommendation for the Soldier's Medal was to be made. Hours later Pvt McCrary's body had still not been recovered, and a chilled Tec 4 Conklin was brought to the company area, which was now one kilometer west of Rohrbach. A fine rain in the night brought an end to the good weather of the past few days.

April 27-28: The chase was on again, as the enemy fell back in confusion just as they had done after the crossing of the Rhine took place.

At 0500 hours on the 27th, the 2nd Platoon relieved the 1st and 3rd Platoons, supplying bridge equipment and operating boats in the vicinity of Bertoldsheim. The 1st Platoon cleared streets in Burgheim and also cleared the town of Ortlfing. Three craters on the road from Illdorf to Buch were filled also. The 3rd Platoon cleared the road from Burgheim to Neuburg, filled craters and constructed a bypass on the road from Strass to Sinning, and then slept all night- or what there was left of the night rather- in the town of Nahermuhlhausen, where in the words of the platoon leader "Each and every man had a bed" ~~xxx~~. At midnite, PFC Caschette was called out to help the 1st Platoon out, returning to the area with the bulldozer at 0400 hours.

The CP was moved on the 27th from 1 kilometer west of Rohrbach to the railway station at Strass, where anything from boxcars to the station were used as shelter for the night. It rained again, making the poor roads poorer, if possible. Gone indeed were the happy days of the smooth autobahmens of the Nuremberg and adjacent areas, as the company's vehicles plowed through roads best classed as "I-F" in pursuit of the enemy. The men of the line platoons were very thankful for one thing- the almost complete absence of enemy minefields.

"Task-forcing" was the lot of the company on the 28th, with a fine (0400) breakfast to start things off right. The 1st Platoon blasted the remains of the old bridge in Schrobenshausen, while the 2nd Platoon put in ~~two~~ corduroy road strips over two blown craters en route from Strass to Schrobenshausen. A warning of mines was taken in the form of a 180th truck blown up by one as it attempted to bypass the blown crater previous to the arrival of the 2nd Platoon. Moving rapidly ahead after leaving the convoy near Schrobenshausen, the platoon removed a burning 45th Recon car from the road southeast to Aresing, a car in which two GI's were cremated. The 3rd Platoon followed the 3rd Bn Task Force, and cleared en route from Fern to Schrobenshausen, where the 1st squad put a traffic strip on a wooden bridge. The intense chill in the air brought the men together around fires in an area south of the town, as the entire company was together again in a field, where supper was served, and it was a welcome change from the "K"-ration diet of the men while on the road. Frequent contact was made with the as-yet-untested 20th armored division, a new one to most of the men. Once the entire company was assembled, the convoy moved from the field to the flour mill at the edge of town, for the night. Never did a floor or sack of flour look so good to the tired, worn-looking men of the platoons, and at 2200, the company less the 1st Platoon- which was maintaining the road in Schrobenshausen, until relieved by the 1277th Engrs at midnite- bedded down for the (short) night, only to be awakened for chow call the next morning at 0400 hours!

Top individual honors for the 28th went to Pvt Anderson of the 2nd Platoon who casually strolled into a bar in a small town, where he was met- unarmed- by a German officer. Composing himself, Anderson ~~turned~~ turned on his heel and walked out!

April 29: After a hearty breakfast at 0415, the 2nd Platoon went off in support of the 2nd Bn, removing vehicles and horse-drawn wagons from the roads. The D-7 bladed the road near Hirschhausen, and debris on the road ~~from~~ south of Unter Schleissheim was removed. The 3rd Platoon did no work, although the fast pace of the last few days was causing the men to consider riding in the trucks so much a kind of "work". The 3rd Platoon spent most of its time pulling its own vehicles up and down hills and out of ~~dirt~~ ditches in the miserable roads. A late "C-ration" supper was their lot as they pulled into the area at the same time as the 2nd Platoon, where both platoons consumed C at 2130 hours.

"Something new" was added to the day's routine of chugging over almost-impassable roads, as the 1st Platoon and company headquarters vehicles and men were caught in an enemy tank barrage at approximately 1755, en route to Unter Schleissheim's burned barracks (where the CP was finally located). The men of the 1st Platoon and company headquarters were all agreed that the shelling episode did not invite repetition. The company headquarters "suffered" the most as the 1st Platoon received only the tail-end of the barrage.

April 30: At 1600 hours the CP was moved from Unter Schleissheim to the western edge of the airfield on the outskirts of Munich. The new area was bounded almost entirely by woods, which were filled with various types of German planes, among them the JU - 88 and a new jet-propelled plane. The platoons were located in various wings of the Luftwaffe barracks, what there was left of the barracks after the continual bombings.

The 1st squad of the 1st Platoon removed a tree road block by hand, and the 3rd squad by TNT on the main road leading south of the airport. Primers from a stack of 20 bombs were removed, in the vicinity of the airport road, the bombs being wired with TNT. The 2nd squad filled shell craters on the airport road. At 2200 hours the 1st squad was called out again, but this time there was no work for it to do.

Also on the main road leading from the airport to Munich, the 1st squad of the 2nd Platoon cleared brush off the road, and cleared a pile-type road block from the entrance to Feldmocking. The 2nd squad cleared trees felled by shell fire from the main road south of the airport. The 3rd squad did not arrive ~~in~~ at the company area until 2300 as it was on the job of removing a burning American tank from the street at the northern edge of Munich.

Although it did no work in the afternoon, the 3rd Platoon was busy in the morning, as the 2nd squad removed a roadblock one kilometer southeast of Unter Schleissheim, and the 3rd squad removed a road block from the bridge over the Schleiss Kanal in the northern outskirts of Munich. Another booty windfall was encountered by the 3rd Platoon as they stumbled on a radio factory.

Rumors of peace talk were rife, and the men stood by their several radios anxiously awaiting news.

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