

4a. (2) NARRATIVE OF FACTS: 1st Battalion, 194th Glider Infantry Regiment

The 1st Battalion, 194th Glider Infantry Regiment took off from airfields A-58 and A-55 near PARIS, FRANCE approximately 0800, 24th March 1945 to cross the RHINE RIVER in the airborne invasion of GERMANY.

Heavy anti-aircraft fire hit the glider column as it crossed the RHINE RIVER and continued until the gliders landed. After the landing, the German guns continued firing on the gliders and the personnel as they left the gliders. The glider troops immediately assaulted the gun positions and killed or captured the crews. Almost every glider was hit in the air by flak or machine gun fire. The small fields caused many crash landings and several gliders were set aflame by enemy fire.

A Company, re-inforced with one platoon of heavy machine guns, led the Battalion in and was on its objective within thirty minutes in spite of intense small arms and machine gun fire from infantry, well dug in on the position they were to occupy. Three glider loads were lost. C Company, which was assigned a zone on the left of A Company, landed with a loss of two gliders and moved toward its objective, seized the bridges assigned and in spite of heavy opposition from its front and right flank, drove forward toward its flank position until temporarily stopped by fire, estimated at a rifle company supported by mortars and artillery. Here fighting went on all night as C Company fought to effect a juncture with the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment on the left. The C Company attack was halted temporarily on several occasions during the night to repel enemy counterattacks from the front, both flanks, and on one occasion on the rear. Elements of B Company were committed on both flanks of C Company at various times during the night to erase the counterattacking Germans. At dawn only three hundred yards separated C Company from the unit on the left and the entire area was filled with German dead. The three hundred yards was effectively covered by fire.

B Company, the reserve Company, landed with the loss of two gliders and moved immediately into assigned positions, clearing the area assigned to Battalion Headquarters as it moved.

D Company, less one platoon of heavy machine guns, landed with pre-arranged, primary, alternate and supplementary plans. It was largely due to the timely fire of the heavy mortars and heavy machine guns that the entire unit was successful in its mission, the first mortar round being fired seven minutes after the squad had landed.

Battalion Headquarters Company landed with a number of casualties. The Battalion Executive Officer and Battalion Adjutant, plus the Operation Sergeant and several Intelligence men were killed on landing. The Battalion Intelligence Officer landed in enemy held territory alone and, after expending all his ammunition, was captured. His Intelligence Section, except two men, was wiped out. The Communication Platoon landed intact. The Supply Platoon landed intact and despite sporadic small arms fire, began assembling ammunition and supplies. The Anti-Tank Platoon was able initially to get only one gun into action, due to wrecked gliders but, despite enemy fire, used axes to chop out another Anti-Tank gun and employ it within 1 1/2 hours after landing.

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The Medical Detachment was functioning as it cleared its glider. The Battalion Surgeon had an aid station, crude as it was, operating within five minutes of landing. This station was later removed to a pre-designated spot without interruption of its functioning.

The clearing and occupation of assigned areas was completed within one hour after landing, except for the area held by the Company of enemy riflemen on C Company's left flank.

The Battalion was occupying a frontage of 4700 yards, with very little depth. Casualties were roughly 1/2 platoon per rifle company. Reorganization within companies was quickly effected so that smooth functioning continued. A Staff reorganization was effected in which S-3 assumed duties of Executive Officer and S-1, and Battalion CO assumed duties of S-2 and S-3. Trained personnel were not available to replace the Operations and Intelligence Sections lost in the landing and subsequent action. Green personnel, brought from the Companies functioned efficiently enough. The great stress laid on communication in training proved its worth during the landing phase and ground action subsequent thereto. The Battalion at no time was at a loss with regard to communication.

As darkness approached on 24 March 1945, it became increasingly evident from the pressure on the left flank and center of the Battalion that trouble was brewing. Local counterattacks up to platoon strength were experienced along the entire Battalion front, beginning at about the center of A Company's front. These were repulsed until about an hour before darkness, when an attack, estimated at Company strength, struck C Company's position and made a slight penetration, which the enemy held for about 1/2 hour when a counterattack by elements of B Company drove him out and the lines were re-established.

B Company was withdrawn to reserve position and was immediately committed in the gap between A and C Companies. After repulsing a counterattack of Company strength at 2200, B Company was again withdrawn to its reserve position.

At or about 0100, rear security of C Company reported Germans in its rear, driven there by action of other friendly units landing nearer the river. This pressure was reduced by mortar fire and bayonet by B and C Companies. During the night 24-25, attacks varying from a squad to Company strength continued. The Artillery Observers did an excellent job in getting massed artillery on the larger attacks as was evidenced by the large number of dead and wounded Germans found the next morning. C Company had sustained 8% casualties and had been incessantly in action throughout the night. At dawn, they were relieved by B Company and placed in reserve.

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Pressure throughout the day at different points resulted in much shifting of troops to meet threats and at darkness of 25-26 a German attack of about Company strength, supported by tanks and other armored vehicles was stopped by massed artillery, mortar, machine gun and rifle fire after it penetrated the front of B Company. All of the enemy were killed, captured or driven out. Immediately following this, C Company was hit on its left flank in the gap between B Company and the right elements of the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment. A platoon of C Company was immediately committed to extend the left flank of B Company and restore the position. This platoon was almost immediately enveloped and a second platoon of C Company was thrown in to further extend the left flank. The Germans were able to envelope this platoon also and the rest of C Company was committed. The position was restored and held the rest of the night against continuous German attack. Thru the night 25-26 troops were constantly shifted to meet threats, increasingly more violent. At 0830 on 26 March 1945, the Battalion reserve consisted of 8 Communication men, 5 Command Group, and 3 Officers. Well adjusted artillery fire falling within 75 yards of the front lines, relieved a great part of the pressure and enabled the Battalion to reconstitute a reserve. About 0800, C Company, in entirety, constituted the reserve.

At 0900 the Battalion attacked, B and A Companies abreast, left flank open, and gained the objective, "the New York Line", against moderate opposition, at 1700. Lines were consolidated for the night.

The 1st Battalion, 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, took and held all objectives assigned to it, despite casualties, determined opposition and repeated counterattacks.



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