

4a. (3) NARRATIVE OF FACTS: 3d Battalion, 194th Glider Infantry Regiment

The 3d Battalion, 194th Glider Infantry Regiment took off from two airfields in FRANCE on 24 March 1945 and about 2 1/2 hours later the leading echelon crossed the RHINE at approximately 1500 feet. Considerable flak was encountered but was inaccurate because of smoke. After the gliders were cut loose and descended the anti-aircraft fire became more intense and many gliders were hit and casualties inflicted. The ground was partially obscured by smoke, however there were very few bad crash landings

The enemy was well deployed against airborne landings and nearly every field had dug in positions from which they could be swept by small arms and machine gun fire. These took the gliders under fire as they came in and swept them with fire as the men came out. It was at this stage that a great percentage of the casualties were sustained. The immediate areas had to be cleaned out before equipment could be recovered from the gliders. Personnel remaining near the gliders were subject to heavy small arms and observed mortar fire. The men rushed for nearest cover, oriented themselves and then proceeded to take the nearest enemy under fire. It was this bold and aggressive action combined with the continual pouring in of more gliders which overcame this main resistance initially. The glider loads soon joined and formed platoons and some groups attained near Company size. With these larger forces, enemy strong points were more easily eliminated. During this assembly action a large number of enemy were killed and wounded and several hundred were captured. Several 88 mm guns were knocked out and the anti-tank platoon knocked out two tanks and damaged a third. The 3d Battalion was organized in force and had cleared the entire assembly area by 1600 which was good time considering the manner in which the gliders were scattered, the distance involved, and the varying degree of enemy resistance which was encountered.

The Battalion continued its organization of the area and patrolled vigorously during the night, making contact with the 507th and 513th Parachute Infantry Regiments. At 2200 an attack by approximately 30 enemy on the North side of the perimeter, was smashed by I Company, with 2 dead, 6 wounded and the rest captured. K Company moved out on patrol towards WESEL, but artillery fire was intense and forced a withdrawal. L Company at 2200 attempted to contact the British at WESEL, but were engaged in a heavy fire fight. A small patrol did finally establish contact at 0300, 25 March 1945.

The 3d Battalion continued in its assembly area until 1315, 25 March 1945, D plus 1, when it moved to a forward assembly area. Passing through the 1st Battalion, 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, the 3d Battalion jumped off from its line of departure at 1600 and executed a turning movement to straighten the Divisional line for an attack the next day. During this attack considerable enemy resistance was encountered consisting of machine gun and small arms fire from dug in positions. With the excellent support of its 81 mm mortars and heavy machine guns these positions were dislodged and many enemy killed, wounded and captured. The objective was reached at approximately 2000 and the Battalion dug in for the night. The casualties for these two days were heavy due mainly to small arms fire received while landing and during assembly and consisted of 10 officers and 150 enlisted men.

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The Battalion attacked to the East (85° azimuth) at 0800. I Company on the left and L Company on the right. K Company was in Battalion reserve. Weapons of M Company attached to the leading rifle companies with the exception of mortars which were under Battalion control.

The attack progressed with intermittent resistance, none of which was too heavy. Air support was received during the day which greatly assisted in countering any armored attacks the Germans may have been thinking about.

The attack progressed approximately six kilometers to the Battalion objective across the Reich Autobahn. The Battalion objective was taken and consolidated by 1800 on the 26th March 1945.

During the movement of this day approximately 80 Germans taken prisoner along with numerous German artillery pieces captured. The artillery pieces captured during the day varied in size from 20 mm ack-ack guns to 80 mm artillery pieces.



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