

1 March 1945

The month of March 1945 lived up to its expectations. United Nations' forces made substantial gains on all fronts.

Our own armies on the Western Front cut deep into Germany, crossed the Rhine, and were well on their way into the heart of Germany.

The Russians were still making substantial gains on their Eastern Front.

In the Pacific, the Philippines were again under our control and the islands of Japan proper were under constant air attack by B29's.

This accumulation of successes boosted the morale of our Regiment to a very high degree. In addition, the mail situation was extremely good and showers, clean clothing, PX supplies, movies, and USO shows were available thruout the month.

Our own unit successes were recognized by higher authorities and our 3rd Bn was awarded a Presidential Citation for its outstanding performance in combat during the period 17 to 21 Dec 1944, near Bitche, France. Our Service Company was awarded the Meritorious Service Plaque by direction of the President for superior performance of duty and achievement of a high degree of discipline. Copies of orders of both awards are inclosed.

At the opening of this period the 100th Infantry Division, commanded by Maj Gen Withers A Burress, was part of the XVth Corps, 7th Army, 6th Army Group, ETOUSA.

The 398th Infantry Regiment, commanded by Lt Col Robert M Williams, opened the period with its CP in Montbroun, France, and the Regiment was holding a defensive position. The 399th Inf was on our left and the 222nd Inf, 42nd Div was on our right. The 1st Bn held the center of our front with the 3rd Bn on its left and the 2nd Bn on its right.

The Regiment continued to hold its defensive position. Combat patrols concentrated their efforts by probing the enemy positions. Enemy mine fields hindered their progress on the entire Regimental front. Ambush patrols remained in position to intercept enemy contact patrols.

Supporting Units:

Co B 325th Engrs Bn.
375th FA Bn
Co A 824th TD Bn (Towed)
Co B 325th Med Bn
100th Rcn Troop (-1 platoon)

PWs: From 8 Nov 44 to 1 March 45—373.

Weather: Mild and cloudy.

Visibility: Good.

Rg Hqs: Montbroun, France.

Sv Co: Sarre Union.

AT Co: Montbroun.

Cn Co: Montbroun.

Hq 1st Bn: St Louis.

Co A: Lemberg.

Co B: Lemberg.

Co C: Lemberg.

Co D: Lemberg.

Hq 2nd Bn: Meisenthal.

Co E: Goetzenbruck.

Co F: Sarreinsberg.

Co G: St Louis.

Co H: Goetzenbruck.

Hq 3rd Bn: Enchenberg.

Co I: Lemberg.

Co K: Lemberg.

Co L: Lemberg.

Co M: Enchenberg.

2 March 1945

Weather: Clear and cold.

Visibility: Good.

The Regiment continued its present defensive mission, improving front line positions and preparing reserve lines and switch positions within the Regimental sector. Patrolling was active thruout the night. Front lines received scattered artillery and mortar fire thruout the period.

PWs: To date 376 prisoners of war have been processed

3 March 1945

Weather: Partly cloudy, cold, snow flurries.

Visibility: Good.

The Regiment continued to defend along present lines. Aggressive patrolling continued thruout the period. Wire, concertina, and flares were laid in front of front lines. Arty and mortars fired counter-battery missions.

4 March 1945

Weather: Snow and cloudy.

Visibility: Poor.

The 398th Infantry remained in its present positions and continued with present defensive mission. Combat and rcn patrols continued to probe enemy positions during the period. Eny arty and mortar fire fell on front line positions along the entire Regimental front.

PWs: 377 to date.

5 March 1945

Weather: Cloudy.

Visibility: Good.

No change in the situation. Intermittent arty and mortar fire continued to fall on our positions.

6 March 1945

Weather: Rain and cloudy.

Visibility: Poor.

The Regiment remained in position, continuing its present defensive position. Safe conduct leaflets were fired into known enemy positions by the 375th FA. Loud speakers were set up on front lines vic Goetzenbruck and a broadcast was held at 1915. Arty and mortar fire fell on front line positions during the period.

PWs: 378 from 8 Nov 44 to date. One PW stated that his arty was given orders not to fire unless an attack occurred.

7 March 1945

Weather: Rain and cloudy.

Visibility: Poor.

The 398th Inf remained in position, continuing present defensive mission. Loud speakers were set up in Lemberg and broadcasts were made to the enemy on the safe conduct pamphlets which were fired into known enemy positions during the period. Arty and mortar fire fell on front line positions.

8 March 1945

Weather: Intermittent rain.

Visibility: Poor.

The Regiment continued its defensive mission along present lines; wire-laying teams laid more concertina and trip flares on forward positions. Searchlights were used during the period on enemy positions in the 1st and 3rd Bn sectors. Training was conducted at reserve positions. Arty and mortar fell on forward positions. Reconnaissance and combat patrols probed into enemy positions during darkness. Ambush parties remained in observation to intercept enemy patrols. A PW stated that he was only able to hear snatches of the broadcast because of wind and rain. He also stated that fifty percent of his company would desert if a chance presented itself.

PWs: 380 to date.

9 March 1945

Weather: Cloudy and cool.

Visibility: Fair.

No change in situation. Training continued by rotating groups from forward positions.

10 March 1945

Weather: Cool and cloudy.

Visibility: Fair.

No change in situation; training continued.

Reconnaissance patrols probed enemy positions during hours of darkness. Searchlights were coordinated with ambush patrol activities. Enemy arty and mortars fell on forward positions.

11 March 1945

Weather: Cloudy and cool.

Visibility: Fair.

The 398th Inf continued its mission of defending along present front lines. Patrolling was active during the period. Ambush patrols remained in position of observation. Eny arty and mortars fell in forward position.

12 March 1945

Weather: Fair.

Visibility: Good.

The Regiment remained in position and continued its present defensive mission. The 3rd Bn sent a combat patrol to raid eny position vic 754456 with excellent results. Estimated eny casualties: 8 killed or wounded, one enemy MG and burp gun knocked out. Other patrols continued to probe enemy positions.

13 March 1945

Weather: Fair.

Visibility: Good.

The Regiment (-) remained in position and continued its present defensive mission. The 2nd Bn and Co B were relieved on position by elements of the 71st Div. Co B was relieved at 2015 and reverted to 1st Bn control. 2nd Bn relief was completed at 2215 and it moved to vic Pisdorf. AT Co was relieved at 1957. Co L relieved Co I on position at 1845 and reverted to Bn reserve. Enemy arty and mortar fell on forward positions increasingly. Four enemy planes strafed Enchenberg and St Louis at 1510 and Montbroun at 1515.

PWs: 381 to date.

14 March 1945

Weather: Warm and clear.

Visibility: Excellent.

The 398th Inf (-2nd Bn and Cn Co) remained in defensive position until relieved on position. The 1st Bn was relieved at 2215 and moved by foot to assembly area vic 675440, closing in at 0015. The 3rd Bn was relieved at 0100 and moved by foot to assembly area vic 695455, completing movement at 0330.

Rg Hqs: Moved from Montbroun to vic Frohmuhl. New CP opened at 1200.

Sv Co: In Sarre Union.

AT Co: In Petit Rederching.

Cn Co: Siersthal.

Hq 1st Bn: Legeret Farms.

Cos A and B in Holbach.

Co C in Nassenwald.

Co D in Montbroun.

Hq 2nd Bn: In Enchenberg with all companies (E, F, G, H).

Hq 3rd Bn: CP and all companies in Enchenberg.

15 March 1945

Weather: Warm and clear.

Visibility: Excellent.

Before the Ides of March broke clear and warm the 398th Inf had launched its attack on the Lorraine fortress town of Bitche, which had not fallen to attacking troops since the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). Having had to go on the defensive because of the Belgian "Bulge" just before Bitche was ready to fall in December, the 398th "Doughs" were ready to show this SS citadel that they had what it takes. Their eagerness was not one born of love for battle; rather it was a determination to end this struggle with the "Supermen" and to get back to Brooklyn, Main Street, and the wide open spaces they left months ago, where freedom is an inheritance and "Superman" a comic figure.

Hq 1st Bn: The 1st Bn moved during the hours of darkness by motor from the assembly area vic SW Montbroun to assembly area vic 735507. It attacked the high ground SW of Schorbach at 1258. No resistance was met during period of attack but AP, At, and Shu-mines, and arty were encountered.

Hq 2nd Bn: The 2nd Bn launched its attack on the Maginot Line Forts on the high ground NW of Bitche at 0500. Co E moved out at 0500 and captured Fruedenberg Farm. Co G on the right attacked and captured Fort Fruedenberg and Fort Schiesseck on the high ground NW of Bitche. Heavy mortar, arty, rockets and both AP and AT mines were encountered.

15 March 1945

3rd Bn: In Regtl reserve; moved from assembly area vic 695455 to assembly area vic 735507.

Supporting Units:

Cn Co: D/S.

AT Co: D /S

Arty: 375th FA Bn D/S.

Engrs: Co B 325th Engr Bn G/S.

Aarmor: Co B 781st Tk Bn (Atchd).

Cml: 2nd Cml Mortar Bn (less Cos A & C) D/S.

Med: Co B 325th Med Bn D/S.

PWs: 27 captured for the period, bringing the total since 3 Nov 44 to 408.

16 March 1945

Weather: Clear and warm.

Visibility: Excellent.

The hour was 0600A; the previous day at ended with success but no one underestimated the job that the 16th brought. From within the shadows of this military city, the 398th now hardened and experienced, jumped off to attack. The objectives were many—Bitche itself, Camp de Bitche, Forts Petite Otterbiel, Ramstein, and Petite Hohekirkel, and Grande Otterbiel.

AT Co: Moved from Siersthal to Bitche. CP and kitchen operating in city. Gun platoons in direct support of battalions; subjected to artillery and sniper fire.

Cn Co: Moved into Bitche at 1100. Fired on German 88, results unknown.

1st Bn: The Bn atkd at 0600A from vic Q777523-783530, column of companies, Co C leading. At 0645 Co G captured Ft Otterbiel. Co B moved up to Petite Otterbiel at 0840, Co C on W side of hill, Co B on E side, both facing S toward Grande Otterbiel. Cos B and C attacked abreast to capture Grande Otterbiel at 1205A. Co A moved up to Petite Otterbiel. Hv mortar, arty, A/W, and S/A fire were encountered during attack on the two forts. Hv sniper fire received during period from Grande Otterbiel. At close of period Co A secured positions vic Q783521, Co B vic 786515 and Co C vic Q783514.

2nd Bn: The 2nd Bn attacked simultaneously with the 1st Bn from positions Q765515-Q777520 to capture the forts vic Ramstein. The attack on the city itself was made with a column of companies, Co E leading and Cos F and G following in rear protecting the flanks. At 0620A Co E, followed by Cos F and G, was on obj in Bitche and the Stars and Stripes hung in what was once a proud Stormtrooper center. The 375th FA Bn (reinforced) preceded the infantry attack with intense bombardment. Cos E and F followed closely to surprise the enemy which took cover. Some S/A fire from snipers was encountered and eny arty and mortar fire. At close of period 2nd Bn consolidated its positions and outposted Bitche. Co E vic Q780508, Co F vic Q777508, Co G vic 774506.

16 March 1945

3rd Bn: The 3rd Bn moved at 0900A from assembly area vic 733507 thru Bitche along highway (Bitche-Camp de Bitche), clearing Bitche at 1145A, Co K leading. Contact was made with the enemy at 1300A at the W end of Camp de Bitche with direct fire being received from S/A and S/P weapons. Company K attacked Petite Hohekirkel and captured it. Co I on right of Co K followed main road into Camp de Bitche. Co L, assisted by Cos A and B, 399th Inf, swept thru Camp de Bitche S of main road. Camp de Bitche fell at 1745A. Several vehicles were captured. One S/P weapon knocked out by bazooka. Hv mortar, arty, and S/A fire were received during the attack. The companies which were decorated by the Presidential Citation fittingly outposted the Camp. Co K was in the northern half of the Camp, Co L E and S, and Co I in reserve. Contact was made with Elms of 397 and 399 Inf Regiments.

PWs: 75 captured during period, bringing the total since 8 Nov 44 to 483.

17 March 1945

Weather: Cloudy and cold.

Visibility: Poor.

The Regiment continued to clear Bitche, Camp de Bitche, and Grand Otterbiel. Elms of 14th Inf Regt relieved the 3rd Bn on position vic Camp de Bitche. The 2nd Bn 398th Inf relieved 2nd Bn 397th Inf.

Rg Hqs: Moved from vic Frohmuhl to Bitche, a distance of four miles.

Sv Co: Left Sarre Union by motor convoy shuttle movement at 1400 and completed shuttle movement to Bitche at 2330, traveling a distance of 24 miles.

AT Co: All guns in defense of Corps flank completed missions under heavy barrage. One enemy was killed, one seriously wounded, and the capture of two others made possible.

Cn Co: Moved into Bitche at 1015; fired night interdiction fire.

1st Bn: The Bn continued to clear the forts on Otterbeil of snipers which harassed troops during period. Demolitions were placed in the openings to neutralize the forts. Eny trapped in forts surrendered; ten prisoners were taken. Contact was made with 2nd Bn 398th Inf on right and 2nd Bn 397th Inf on left. Routes of adv to NE were reconnoitered. Preparations were made move forward on order to protect Corps east flank.

2nd Bn: The Bn, after clearing Bitche, outposted the town. At 0730A Bn reld 2nd Bn 397th Inf on position. Patrols were sent out E. Contact was made with 1st Bn on right.

17 March 1945

3rd Bn: After clearing Camp de Bitche the Bn outposted the camp and patrolled to east and southeast. Antitank weapons were placed in positions guarding avenues of tank approach, from E and SE. Elms of 14th Inf Regt reld Bn on position at 1015A. Bn moved into assembly area vic Bitche. At 1015A Cos I and L moved into blocking position from Q793521 to Q817516, Co I on right and Co L on left with mission of protecting Corps right (E) flank. Contact was made with Elm of 14th Inf Regt. At 1430A Bn was ordered to move into position N of Q816514 to vic Haspelschiedt with mission of protecting Corps E flank. Co K in reserve.

PWs: 33 PWs captured, bringing the total since 8 Nov 44 to 516.

18 March 1945

Weather: Fair.

Visibility: Good.

The frontline infantrymen pressed on thru Bitche with the satisfaction of having completed a difficult mission and with memories of beautiful mademoiselles.

The Regiment moved to assembly areas vic Schorbach, Hottviller, Nousviller, and Lengelsheim, which for the most part were "Ghost Towns". The 2nd Bn moved by foot to vic Lengelsheim, crossing the IP at 1400. The 1st Bn moved by foot to vic Bousviller. The 3rd Bn remained in position, holding a line N of 814514 to vic Haspelschiedt. At close of period the 3rd Bn was in process of being relieved by 3rd Bn 14th Inf and moving to vic Schorbach.

PWs: 11 were captured at end of period. Among them was a 1st Sgt, a former bank director of Potsdam. He stated that he would have come over sooner but for Hitler's recent order which declared all non-wounded captured personnel deserters and threatened their families.

19 March 1945

Weather: Clear and warm.

Visibility: Excellent.

Rg Hqs: Bitche, France.

Sv Co: Bitche.

AT Co: Hottviller, France.

Cn Co: Left Bitche by motor at 1830 for Hottviller, arriving at 1900.

1st Bn: CP in Nousseviller.

Co A: Dallenbach, France.

Co B: Dallenbach.

Co C: Nousseviller.

Co D: Nousseviller.

Hq 2nd: CP in Lengelsheim, France.

19 March 1945

Cos E, F, G, H in Lengelsheim.

3d Bn: CP and Cos I, K, L in Schorbach.

Co M north of Bitche, France. Relieved from blocking positions NE of Bitche by units of 71st Div.

20 March 1945

Weather: Clear and cool.

Visibility: Excellent.

The Regiment remained in present assembly areas. Special training was conducted during the day including weapons firing. Units reconnoitered roads to N and NW.

PX rations were distributed and showers were available in Bitche.

21 March 1945

Weather: Clear and mild.

Visibility: Good.

The Regiment remained in its assembly areas. Special training was conducted during the day including weapons firing. Units reconnoitered alternate routes to the N and NW.

22 March 1945

Weather: Clear and mild.

Visibility: Good.

The Regiment prepared to move from its present positions to assembly area vic Rieschweiler, Dellfeld, Stambach, and Contwig. The 1st Bn began moving by motors at 1630, the 2nd Bn at 1700, and the 3rd Bn at 1730. The Regtl CP closed vic Bitche at 1800.

23 March 1945

Weather: Clear.

Visibility: Good.

CT 398 moved by motors in rear of CT 399 to RJ (065820) thence N and NE to Frankenstein, Bad Durkheim, Oggersheim, and Ludwigshaven.

24 March 1945

Weather: Clear and cold.

Visibility: Good.

The 398th Inf moved from vic Contwig, Dellfeld, Stambach, Reischweiler to vic Oggersheim, Maxdorf and Reicheim.

1st Bn moved by motors to vic Oggersheim; leading elements passed IP Reischwiller (230515A), closing into Oggersheim 1230A. Bn remained in Oggersheim until 241250A and then moved to vic Schieferstadt.

2nd Bn moved from vic Dellfeld at 231301A to vic Oggersheim, closing into area 231800A; moved to vic Dannstadt 241230A, closing into area at 1730.

3rd Bn moved to vic Maxdorf, leading elements crossing IP Stambach at 231902, and closing into vic Maxdorf 240430A. Bn moved to vic Assenheim—Hochdorf, passing vic 392980 at 241200.

CP opened vic Hafsloch at 241700.

Supporting Units:

Cn Co: D/S.

AT Co: D/S.

Arty: 375th FA Bn.

Engrs: Co B 325th Engr Bn.

Aarmor: Co B 781st Tk Bn.

Med: Co B 325th Med Bn.

25 March 1945

Weather: Clear and mild.

Visibility: Excellent.

The Regiment (-) remained in present positions in reserve. 1st Bn closed into Schifferstadt relieving the 2nd Bn of the 397th Inf. 1st Bn was attached to the 399th Inf. Co G, 398th Inf moved to vic Neustadt as guard for Corps CP.

26 March 1945

Weather: Clear and mild.

Visibility: Excellent.

The Regiment continued its present mission. 1st Bn (atcd 399th Inf) reverted to regtl control at 1640, but remained in present assembly area vic Schifferstadt. 2nd Bn remained in present assembly area vic Dannstadt. Co G reverted to unit control as of 1000 and moved from vic Neustadt, closing into Dannstadt 1145. The 3rd Bn moved from vic Hochdorf to vic Frankenthal 0800.

27 March 1945

Weather: Cloudy and rain.

Visibility: Fair.

The Regiment continued its present mission. 1st Bn remained in position vic Schifferstadt and continued search of buildings in vic for enemy hideouts. 2nd Bn remained in present position vic Dannstadt and carried out special training. AT, Cn, Hq and atcd units moved from Hassloch to assembly area vic Dannstadt. CP closed vic Hassloch 0940 and opened vic Dannstadt 0940.

28 March 1945

Weather: Cloudy to clear and mild.

Visibility: Good.

The Regiment (-) remained in assembly areas vic Dannstadt, Schifferstadt and Assenheim. During the period special training was conducted. Orientation and critiques were held on the last operation. Special attention was given to conduct in enemy territory, looting, military courtesy and discipline.

29 March 1945

Weather: Rain. and cool.

Visibility: Poor.

The 398th Inf (-) remained in present assembly areas vic Dannstadt and Schifferstadt. Training was conducted during period including practice marches. Movies and showers were available for troops.

30 March 1945

Weather: Intermittent rain and mild.

Visibility: Good.

The Regiment (-) remained in assembly areas vic Dannstadt, Schifferstadt and Assenheim. During the period special training was conducted. Orientation and critiques were held. Special attention was given to conduct in enemy territory, looting, military courtesy and discipline.

31 March 1945

Weather: Partly cloudy, cool.

Visibility: Good.

CT 398 (-) moved by motor from vic Schifferstadt, Dannstadt, Frankethalt to assembly area vic Friedrichsfeld.

1st Bn (-) crossed IP vic Mutterstadt at 1705. 2nd Bn (-) crossed IP at 1722. 3rd Bn (-) crossed IP at 1826.

Regtl CP opened vic Friedrichsfeld, across the Rhine, at 1815.

Supporting Units:

Arty: 375th FA Bn D/S.

Engrs: Co B 325th Engr Bn G /S.

Med: Co B 325th Med Bn D/S.

Armor: Co B 781st Tk B plus 1 pltn Co D 781st Tk Bn D.S.

Cn Co: D/S.

AT Co: D/S.