

NARRATIVE HISTORY  
of the  
399TH INFANTRY REGIMENT  
(Annex Included)

. GERMANY  
. 1-30 APRIL  
. 1945

MAP REFERENCES

MANNHEIM

Germany, 1:100,000  
First Edition AMS 1  
U-3

Compiled by U.S.Army Map Serv, 1943 from German G.S. Maps

KARLSRUHE

Germany, 1:100,000  
First Edition AMS 2  
V-3

Compiled by U.S.Army Map Serv, 1943 from German G.S. Maps

ELWANGEN

Germany, 1:100,000  
First Edition AMS 2  
V-4

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RUETLINGEN

Germany, 1:100,000  
First Edition AMS 2  
W-3

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ULM

Germany, 1:100,000  
First Edition AMS 2  
W-4

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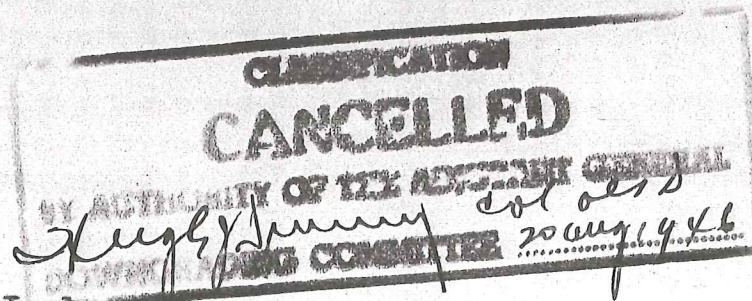
HEADQUARTERS 399TH INFANTRY  
A.P.O. 447 U.S.ARMY

7 April 1945

SUBJECT: Regimental History.

TO : TAG, War Dep't., Washington, D.C.  
(through channels)

Transmitted herewith Regimental History of 399th Infantry Regiment for month of April, 1945.



EDWARD J. MALONEY  
Colonel, 399th Infantry  
Commanding.

7 Incls:

- 1- Regt'l History (in quin.)
- 2- Copy S-1 Strength Reports
- 3- Copy S-2 Periodic Reports and Overlays
- 4- Copy S-2 Journal
- 5- Copy S-3 Periodic Reports, Overlays and Operations Instructions
- 6- Copy S-3 Journal
- 7- Copy S-4 Periodic Reports

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advance for the night.

Seventy-six prisoners were captured during the day's operations. Of these, 57 were taken by our 2nd Bn. The PW's identified the units facing us as the 103rd and 104th VGR, 47th VGD. They contended they had been holding Hockenheim and Reilingen until ordered to withdraw at 2000 hours of March 31st. Our PW roster now totaled 1527.

Four road blocks were encountered by our 1st Bn at the northern edge of the woods south of Schwetzingen. Two blown and mined bridges northwest and northeast of Hockenheim were reported by our patrols.

Continuing southeastward on April 2nd toward the communications center of Heilbronn, CT-399 relieved elements of the 397th Infantry in the vicinity of Walldorf to permit that regiment to shift further to the east. With "A" Co, 781st Tk Bn, still attached to our Regiment, our 1st Bn closed into Walldorf and completed relief of the 397th Infantry at 1325 hours while our "G" Co reinforced elements of our 1st Bn still in Reilingen.

No contact was made with the enemy, but five Krauts, stragglers from defeated units, were taken prisoners.

Contact liason was maintained with the 397th Infantry on our left flank and the II French Corps on our right.

At 2130 hours, our 2nd Bn, minus "G" Co, assembled in Rauenberg. A Regimental CP was opened at Walldorf at 2000 hours.

At 1545 hours of April 3rd, our 1st Bn, motorized, left their assembly area in the vicinity of Walldorf and proceeded to Steinsfurt. They were followed by our 2nd Bn who had left Rauenberg for Wiesloch earlier in the day. The 2nd Bn now moved from Wiesloch to Sinsheim at 1630 hours.

At 1235 hours, our CP moved to Wiesloch.

Enemy opposition still consisted primarily of delaying tactics. Road blocks and blown bridges continued to hamper the speedy advance of our Regiment while the enemy withdrew southeastward.

A second CP was opened at Sinsheim at 1800 hours.

At 0730 hours of April 4th, our Regiment continued the attack toward Heilbronn. Our mission today was the capture of Schwaigern, Schluchtern and Grossgartach, west of Heilbronn while protecting

April 1st, the beginning of our sixth month of sustained combat, found our Regiment firmly established across the Rhine prepared to continue the attack southeastward. First objectives now were the towns of Hockenheim and Reilingen, mere waystops on our route to the important industrial and communications city of Heilbronn.

As a prelude to our attack, our Cos "L" and "I" had relieved elements of the 254th Infantry, 63rd Division, on positions south of Brühl and west of Schwetzingen, the 63rd Division shifting to a new sector on our own Division's left flank.

Then, pushing our offensive with all possible speed to prevent the disorganized Germans from recovering from their defeat west of the Rhine, CT-399 left assembly areas in the vicinity of Brühl and Schwetzingen and crossed the LD at 0800 hours.

Our Regimental plan of attack placed our 1st and 2nd Bns in the attacking echelon with our 2nd Bn, whose objective was Hockenheim, on the right. In support of each of the battalions was a platoon of tanks from Co "A", 781st Tk Bn. Both battalions were to pass through our 3rd Bn, holding front line positions, after which our 3rd Bn was to retire to Brühl from where they were to enter special Corps duty.

In addition to capturing Hockenheim and Reilingen, our Regiment was to establish liason between the 397th Infantry on our left and the 2nd French Corps on our right. We were also to protect our Division's right flank and rear.

Kraut resistance to our advance took the form of numerous road blocks in the woods across our path and blown bridges. Despite these obstacles, our troops pushed ahead. By 1042 hours, our 2nd Bn, with "F" Co on the right, "G" Co on the left and "E" Co in reserve, was in Hockenheim, and by 1530 hours the town had been completely cleared and the objective secured.

Meanwhile, our 1st Bn, moving forward with "C" Co on the right, "B" Co on the left, and "A" Co in reserve, had occupied Reilingen; "A" Co having cleared the town while Cos "E" and "C" were cleaning out the patch of woods to the east of their objective.

With both our objectives attained, CT-399 established outposts in a semi-circle facing south and southwest and paused in their

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the Division's right flank and rear. In the meanwhile, the 398th Infantry was to cross the Neckar River and attack Heilbronn from the north in conjunction with the 397th Infantry, on our left flank, who was to storm the city from the west.

Leaving their assembly area at Steinsfurt, our 1st Bn, supported by the 1st Plat, Co "C", 325th Engr C Bn, a platoon of tanks and a platoon of TD's, moved via motor toward Gemmingen along the highway to Schwaigern. No opposition was encountered until the 1st Bn had reached Gemmingen. Here the enemy made a determined stand on terrain ideally suited for defense and commanding approaches to the towns and roads along our route. From a large woods to the south, heavy mortar and artillery fire from enemy emplacements on a hill 336 meters high within this woods, began to fall upon our troops.

Unable to proceed further by motor over roads which came under perfect enemy observation, our 1st Bn detrucked and with Co "A" leading and Cos "C" and "B" following in a column of companies, advanced on foot, supported by the tanks. The attack moved slowly over the open, rolling terrain while the Krauts continued to pour fire upon our troops from the high, wooded ground to the south and fought stubbornly to protect the abatis across the highway which passed through the woods and continued to Heilbronn only 9 miles to the east.

Our coordinated tank-infantry attack proved too much for the enemy entrenched in the woods, however, and by 1305 hours our spearheads had penetrated to the eastern edge of the forest barrier. Open ground now lay between our 1st Bn and the objective of Schwaigern, two kilometers further east. Leaving Co "C" to mop-up the woods which were literally infested with Jerry mortar, artillery and small arms positions, "A" Co, preceded by a platoon of tanks, ran the gauntlet of open ground and by 1410 hours had reached the outskirts of Schwaigern.

At 1520 ours, Co "A" advanced into Schwaigern, passing through the town against only light resistance from the enemy at the eastern end. Co "C", having cleared the woods to the southwest in a fierce action, joined "A" Co in Schwaigern at 1620 hours. One hour and ten minutes later, the town had been completely occupied.

Co "B", thereupon, returned to Gemmingen to protect our right

flank and rear. This was necessary since the French, on our right flank had been left far to the rear in the vicinity of Eppingen by the rapidity of our advance and our flank had become dangerously exposed.

Following the lead of our 1st Bn, our 2nd Bn, at 0807 hours, moved to a new assembly area in Ittlingen. At 1305 hours, our "F" Co, supported by a platoon of tanks, began the difficult operation of clearing the woods north of Gemmingen. The task was completed by 1530 hours and the 2nd Bn pushed forward toward their objectives of Schluctern and Grossgartach.

Heavy enemy artillery and mortar fire along the Schwaigern-Schluchtern road from the woods to the south where an estimated 200 Krauts held positions, forced a change in the direction of our 2nd Bn's thrust. Shifting to the north, the 2nd Bn passed through Massenbach and hit Schluctern from the northwest. By 1730 hours, Schluchtern was firmly in our hands and "F" Co was entering Grossgartach.

But the Krauts had no intention of giving up this important communications and rail town without a struggle. Battling against bitter enemy resistance, "F" Co, still supported by the platoon of tanks, was engaged in a torrid small arms fire fight for four hours before the Jerries finally withdrew at 2206 hours, leaving us in possession of the town.

During the afternoon our CP was moved to Massenbach, opening at 1715 hours.

Twenty-six prisoners were captured from diverse units, increasing our total to 1558 for 155 days of combat.

All elements of our combat team held up the advance on April 5th while awaiting further orders.

Artillery concentrations were leveled at the woods south of Schwaigern into which the Jerries had retreated when we had pried them loose from that town. During the day, our outposts observed forty Jerries at the edge of this wood and some accurate artillery sniping by our 925th FA Bn killed an estimated 25 of their number.

Our I & R Plat, working in conjunction with patrols from our 2nd Bn, contacted elements of the 10th Armored Division at Bock-

ingen and elements of the French CC5 at Klingenberg.

Our engineers made repairs on a blown bridge on the outskirts of Schluchtern and removed mines from the Gemmingen-Grossgartach road.

Moderate enemy artillery, mortar and small-arms fire fell in our 1st and 2nd Bn sectors during the period from enemy positions in the woods south of Schwaigern.

One hundred and twenty five prisoners, representing 34 enemy units, were captured on this, our 156th day of combat. Our total PW grab-bag was now 1683.

Still entrusted with the mission of protecting the Division's right flank and rear on April 6th, CT-399, minus our 3rd Bn, mopped-up the remaining enemy held territory in our sector and moved to positions nearer the river in preparation for a crossing on Division order. Our 3rd Bn, detailed on April 1st to duty as Corps guards and occupation troops within the Corps area, remained on Corps duty.

At 0045 hours of April 6th, our 1st Bn left Schwaigern and moved east via shuttle to Bockingen, directly across the river from the Division objective of Heilbronn.

Once our 1st Bn CP had been established in Bockingen, our Co "A" took up positions astride the double-track railroad passing around the southern end of the town while "C" Co deployed to the northeast along the western bank of the Neckar. "B" Co, placed in reserve in Bockingen, dispatched a combat patrol in platoon strength at 1300 hours to clear the area on "C" Co's left flank between the southern end of the Kanalhafen Canal and the river. The Patrol combed the area but could find no trace of the enemy.

During the afternoon, elements of the 397th Infantry, holding positions on the east bank of the river, reported having made contact with the enemy fortified in houses within Heilbronn and on high ground to the east and southeast of the city. Accordingly, our "C" Co was attached to the 397th Infantry at 1515 hours as additional support, relief being effected at 1745 hours after Co "B" had relieved Co "C" on position.

A patrol from our "A" Co, sent to reconnoiter the west bank of the Neckar River opposite Sontheim, made no contact with the Jerries but drew observed machine gun cross-fire from the east bank of the

river. One of our men was wounded.

Jerry artillery and mortar fire from high ground east of the river was moderate throughout the period with most of the shells falling around the approaches to the blown bridge in our Co "C" sector.

Eighteen Jerry stragglers were added to our PW list, increasing our total to 1716.

At 1500 hours, a new CP was opened in Frankenbach.

Continuing our role of protectors of the Division's right flank and rear while operations were proceeding along the right bank of the Neckar River, CT-399, less our 3rd Bn and minus our "C" Co, attached to the 397th Infantry, remained in previously established positions through April 7th.

Sporadic enemy artillery fire fell in our "B" Co sector and our 1st Bn outposts were subjected to sniper fire from the right bank of the river throughout the period.

Our artillery fired a total of 494 rounds during the period, comprising eight troop missions and one tank mission.

Six more prisoners were rounded up on the west bank of the river. A breakdown of prisoners captured by our combat team since our jump-off from Meyersviller on March 15th, showed 396 captured by our 1st Bn, 260 by our 2nd Bn and 56 by our 3rd Bn (an Corps duty since April 1st), with 220 compiled by all other elements for a total of 932 in 23 days and 1722 in 158 days of combat.

At 1130 hours of April 8th, our 1st Bn, less "C" Co, still attached to the 397th Infantry, began to move across the Neckar River with the mission of protecting our single pontoon bridge from possible enemy attacks from the south and east.

"B" Co was the first to reach the east bank of the river, taking up positions in the southwestern end of Heilbronn, followed by "A" Co who dug-in on "B" Co's right flank. The operation was concluded at 1345 hours with our "C" Co, released from control of the 397th Infantry at 1445 hours, joining our 1st Bn in positions on "B" Co's left flank.

To fill the gap left by our 1st Bn on the west bank of the river and protect the crossing site on that side, our "E" Co moved from

Schwaigern and at 1200 hours took over positions previously held by Co "B" while "G" Co, at 1415 hours, assumed responsibility for the sector vacated by Co "A". Co "F" remained in previous positions in Grossgartach, sending one platoon to Schluchtern as added protection to our rear and right flank.

Action wasn't long in coming to our 1st Bn. As soon as "A", "B" and "C" Cos were in position, our 1st Bn launched a limited attack in an effort to enlarge their bridgehead and better their positions. The attack had barely gotten under way when "B" Co intercepted a group of 15 Jerries moving north from Sontheim and led by a Mark IV tank. The Krauts, obviously unaware that we had crossed the river, walked right into our hands. In the melee which ensued, 12 Krauts were killed, three captured, and the tank was knocked-out by well directed bazooka fire from two "B" Co men.

Two more Krauts were killed by shell-fire from one of our SP's which slipped up on the flank of two squads of enemy dug-in along the highway while they were occupied in beating off our 1st Bn attack.

At 1800 hours, two platoons from "E" Co, supported by two medium tanks from the 1st Plat, Co "A", 781st Tk Bn, moved northward with the mission of clearing the triangle of land formed by the river and the Kanalhafen Canal. Sniper fire from that area had been growing in intensity and our orders were to clean out the area completely of civilians as well as enemy troops and block off the land triangle. Over 300 civilians were rounded up before the mission was completed.

Enemy artillery and multi-barrel mortar fire was considerably heavier than on the previous day. Particularly large concentrations were fired at our pontoon bridge which was finally destroyed by a direct hit from a 150mm shell, forcing us to rely wholly upon ferrying supplies across the Neckar.

A n enemy counter-attack against our 1st Bn's bridgehead positions at 1731 hours, was beaten off with small arms and 50 cal machine-gun fire.

Forty-eight prisoners were tallied for the period, increasing our Regimental PW total to 1772. PW's were from the 1st, 5th, 6th

and 14th Cos, 223rd VGR, 16th VGD. They revealed their mission as being to hold the Neckar River line "to the last man" and prevent us from crossing. Capture of Heilbronn would open the doors to the Neckar River Valley and a continuation of our drive southeast toward Stuttgart or Munich. The enemy was going to stop that drive if he could.

March 9th found the enemy still clinging grimly to Heilbronn. Our advance had been slowed by a house-to-house battle in which every room had to be cleaned out before we could advance a few yards to the next building.

The enemy's front line consisted of a series of strategically situated houses in the southern end of town with an MLR extending from Horkheim northeast along the road paralleling the river to the northern end of Sontheim. From here it curved southeast to Flein and then continued eastward along high ground and through the large woods from which his artillery had been shelling our positions. According to PW reports, at least one Company of SS troops, supported by three Koenigstiger tanks, was dug-in along this line between Sontheim and Flein. This was in addition to 12 known companies of regular Grenadier troops in the line defending Heilbronn.

Despite the destruction of our pontoon bridge, we continued making satisfactory progress in getting personnel, tanks and other equipment across the river on a pontoon ferry-boat constructed by our Engineers.

At approximately 1730 hours, our 1st Bn, with "A" and "B" Cos in the attacking echelon, supported by tanks, launched a limited attack southward in an effort to better our positions and drive the enemy from buildings from which he had been sniping at our troops. The Krauts met this threat with about 50 rounds of 105 mm and 150mm artillery, SP, bazooka and small-arms fire. But by 1800 hours, both "A" and "B" Cos had advanced through about 200 yards of houses and captured 50 prisoners in bitter house-to-house fighting.

West of the river, our 2nd Bn established contact with elements of the 824th TD Bn @cn Plat at the road-junction marked by grid S06786296 near the northwestern edge of Heilbronn.

On April 10th, armor and mortar reinforcements began to arrive on the east bank of the Neckar to bolster the hard-pressed line troops. Heavy enemy shelling still prevented the construction of a bridge by our engineers. But at 0630 hours, a motor powered pontoon assault ferry capable of transporting a tank, was placed in operation. By 1130 hours, a platoon of tanks from the 781st TK Bn and a platoon of TDs from Co "A", 824th TD Bn, in addition to an 81mm mortar platoon, had been carried across the river. Our 1st Bn, greatly strengthened, resumed their drive to the southeast.

At 1310 hours, a raiding party from Co "A" moved southeast across the highway and trolley tracks leading to Sontheim with the mission of clearing the approaches to the formidable enemy military barracks, capture of which would open the way to the wooded high ground beyond. The Krauts had been wreaking havoc on our bridgehead with their observed artillery and mortar fire from this wooded vantage point and it was of paramount importance that the enemy be cleared from these positions before our bridgehead could be called secure.

The raid was a difficult one. The Jerries literally clung to the cornerstones of every building and had to be pried out of their miniature fortresses in bitter house to house fighting. Nebelwerfers, 88mm, 105mm and 150mm observed fire rained down upon our men from the enemy's positions on high ground to the southeast. Despite this fierce resistance, however, by 1500 hours the last row of buildings had been cleared and "A" Co had moved to positions about one kilometer east of the barracks. Thirteen prisoners were captured during this operation.

At 1700 hours, "C" Co moved through "B" Co, occupying positions on "A" Co's left flank, and continued the advance southeastward, gaining 200 yards by 1800 hours and capturing an additional 15 prisoners at a cost of two men wounded.

The Air Corps aided by giving the German garrison buildings to the southeast of our front lines a thorough going over. A number of direct hits were observed by our 1st Bn and excellent results were reported.

Our Cannon Co fired 97 rounds with emphasis on what our S-2 reported to be the enemy MLR between Sontheim and Flein.

In all, 74 prisoners were captured during the day's operations. The PW's, primarily from the 1st, 5th, and 6th Cos, 223rd VGR, raised our total PW bag to 1846.

Our mission remained the same on April 11th; to protect the Division's right flank and rear and defend our bridge-site across the Neckar from possible enemy attacks from the south and southwest. In the process, our 1st Bn was to make every effort to widen our bridge-head and push south and southeast toward Sontheim, the Schlieffen Barracks and enemy held high ground to the east.

Under cover of early morning darkness, our 2nd Bn, less two platoons from "G" Co, two platoons from "E" Co, one machine-gun section and one mortar section from "H" Co, moved from assembly areas in Seeluckter, Grossgartach and Bockingen to Biberach to act as a mobile Division reserve. At 1100 hours, the two "E" Co platoons left their positions on the west bank of the river and joined the 2nd Bn in Biberach, closing at 1200 hours. One platoon from "G" Co and the mortar and machine-gun sections from "H" Co followed at 1400 hours. One platoon from "G" Co remained on the west bank of the river to protect the crossing site. They established an outpost line to include the "E" Co positions.

At 1300 hours, elements of Co "C" moved eastward in a successful advance across the Heilbronn-Flein highway. Five blocks of houses were cleared of Krauts before the "C" Co men halted their advance, having gained positions due north of the Schlieffen Barracks.

The enemy relied heavily upon artillery and mortar fire to slow our advance and prevent reinforcements from pouring across the Neckar. Rocket fire and 105mm artillery fire fell consistently upon our front site and our front line troops were under concentrated 88mm, 81, 120mm and 210mm shelling during the entire period. The enemy, however, seemed incapable of launching a sustained counter-attack of more than company strength. His defense was confined to important high ground designed primarily to slow our advance. But with the Jerries picking the spots and our troops forced to follow and clean them out, our progress was slow and costly.

Ninety-four Krauts were taken prisoners. The PW's were made up of scattered elements which had been shattered in previous actions and had been combined into new units. One of these companies, the

Battalion Wagensee, comprising 20 men, was entirely liquidated after a raid against our 1st Bn in which all 20 men including the CO were either killed or captured.

Despite the enemy's efforts to prevent us from reinforcing our 1st Bn on the right bank of the Neckar and continuing our attack southward, our 2nd Bn, released from Division reserve, began the difficult operation of crossing the river at 0515 hours of April 12th.

Moving from their assembly area in the vicinity of Biberach, with one platoon of tanks and one platoon of TD's in support, the 2nd Bn passed through Frankenbach and Bockingen to reach the ferry site just as dawn was lighting the eastern bank of the river. Then, while the tanks and TD's were shuttled across the water barrier on the pontoon ferry, the infantrymen swarmed across to the opposite bank in assault boats and rafts. By 0845 hours, the crossing had been completed and the 2nd Bn moved into an assembly area at grid 8078603 in the southern end of Heilbronn. One half hour later, "F" Co had relieved "A" Co on positions gained the previous afternoon north of the German garrison.

In the interim, our 1st Bn had launched their attack against the Schlieffen Barracks at 0815 hours. With "B" Co spearheading the assault on this strongly held enemy position, our 1st Bn moved south through "A" Co's positions in an attempt to take the garrison from the north flank. The "B" Co men rapidly cleared the last few blocks of houses on the southern outskirts of Heilbronn and crossed the LD a few moments later against only moderate small arms resistance. By 1025 hours they had occupied a line of trenches only 150 yards from the northern edge of their objective. But here enemy resistance stiffened considerably and twenty minutes after reaching the trenches, "B" Co was engaged in the fiercest fire fight we had experienced since crossing the border into Germany.

By 1300 hours, it became apparent that the enemy, unless routed from the garrison by direct assault, would hold their positions indefinitely. Followed by "C" Co, and supported by tanks and TD's, "B" Co began to move south in the face of the enemy's fire. The Jerries threw everything in their arsenal at the "B" Co men as they advanced over the few hundred yards of open ground in a well coordinated tank-infantry attack. Artillery TOT's, SP, mortar and small-

arms fire cut down some of the 1st Battalionites. But the remainder continued the assault. Fighting from building to building, "B" Co had occupied the northern half of the garrison by 1400 hours and by 1540 hours the 1st Bn was in possession of Schlieffen Barracks and had seized their objective.

With their left flank cleared, our 2nd Bn, led by "F" Co and with "E" and "G" Cos following, launched an attack on the town of Sontheim at 1630 hours. Moving south with a platoon of tanks and a platoon of TD's, "F" Co had advanced to the northern outskirts of Sontheim against light opposition by 1900 hours. But after clearing a few blocks of the town, the enemy showed his hand. From a factory building which the enemy had converted into a fortress, severe small arms, automatic weapons and SP fire stopped our troops cold. An attempt to encircle this enemy resistance from the west was frustrated by a road block.

The fight for Sontheim continued under artificial moonlight long after darkness had thrown a protective mantle over our troops. Inching ahead, our troops finally overcame the fanatical enemy resistance in the factory and by 2215 hours had reached the center of the town. Here the advance was again halted when the enemy unleashed a terrific artillery barrage combined with raking machine gun fire from every road vantage point.

There was no sleep for the tired 2nd Bn fighters that night. With "E" Co on the left flank, "F" and "E" Cos, following an artillery preparation, resumed the attack against an estimated 200-250 Krauts still holding the southern half of Sontheim at 0340 hours of April 13th. The Krauts continued their stubborn resistance, but with two companies driving through the town abreast, our weight began to tell. By 0512 hours, "E" Co had overrun the Sportplatz in the southern part of town and had cleaned out the Wilhelmsruhe to the southeast against heavy machine-gun opposition by 0830 hours.

"F" Co, moving parallel to the river, advanced along Heilbronner Strasse to Adolf Hitler Strasse, clearing the town on the west. By 0940 hours, Sontheim had been fully occupied, the remaining Jerries who had not been killed or captured retreating southward. Midday found an "F" Co patrol probing the outskirts of Horkheim, one kilometer to the southwest.

At 1300 hours, "G" Co, who had been relieved from attachment to the 1st Bn at 1200 hours, advanced on Horkheim with the infantry mounted on tanks. Flanked to the east by "E" Co's advance south of Sontheim, the Krauts relinquished Horkheim without a struggle and "G" Co had fully occupied the town by 1315 hours.

Giving the enemy no respite, our 2nd Bn continued to push their attack. Supported by tanks, "E" Co rapidly overcame weak enemy resistance one kilometer south of Sontheim at 1400 hours. Then, teaming with "G" Co on their right flank, both Cos pivoted southeast at 1515 hours to seize the high ground dominating Sontheim. Advancing steadily despite heavy enemy artillery fire and an S-mine field encountered by "E" Co at grid S065565, "G" Co was 1700 yards south of Horkheim by 1800 hours and "E" Co had reached positions at grid S0756.

At this point "G" Co encountered three enemy pillboxes similar to those we had come up against in the Siegfried line. These pillboxes met the same fate as the rest of the vaunted Siegfried and by 2100 hours "E" and "G" Cos had joined forces approximately one mile northwest of Talheim.

While the 2nd Bn was chalking up these important advances, our 1st Bn was by no means idle. After having reduced the Schlieffen Barracks the previous afternoon, our 1st Bn, at 2200 hours of April 12th, had dispatched reconnaissance patrols from both "A" and "C" Cos to investigate the edge of the large woods to the east of the barracks. These woods, situated on high ground, completely encircled Heilbronn from the east. Actually, they consisted of a huge ridge segmented by deep ravines, a picture of tortured topography which, in our sector, rose sharply to a height of 373 meters. Almost as if the Jerries had planned it that way, the western slopes of this hill besides being exceedingly steep, were bare and open. The whole, with the addition of large quantities of enemy mortars and artillery, made a natural fortress seemingly impossible to capture in a frontal attack. That, however, was exactly what we had been called upon to do. Observed artillery fire had been plaguing our troops from this wooded ridge and its clearance was of paramount importance before our advance could continue to the south.

Working their way over open ground with utmost caution and calling upon every trick they had learned in six months of unbroken combat, the two patrols reconnoitered the western approaches to the woods under the very noses of the enemy and returned with the information that each of the houses at the edge of the woods was occupied by enemy troops.

Probably realizing that this would be their last opportunity to use their artillery from these positions, the Krauts continued to pound elements of our 1st Bn in and around the Barracks with a terrific artillery and nebelwerfer barrage. The 1st Bn took everything the Jerries could throw at them. An then, at 0400 hours, with "A" Co on the right, "C" Co on the left and "B" Co dogging "C" Co, the 1st Bn moved stealthily southeast under cover of darkness toward the woods and high ground.

By 0615 hours, "C" Co had entered the woods at a point several hundred yards north of the Heilbronn-Donnbronn road and was continuing east toward the Concentration Camp, some 700 yards ahead, against only light resistance.

"A" Co, advancing down the road, however, met much more determined opposition in the form of machine-gun fire and a road block at the edge of the woods. Despite these obstacles, "A" Co maintained the pace of the advance and by 0900 hours had cleared the road block and pushed 500 yards into the woods.

By 1030 hours, "C" Co had driven to a point just southeast of the Concentration Camp while "A" Co had cleared the southwestern neck of the woods along the highway and was about to break out into open ground.

With the western portion of the woods cleared and our left flank secure from enemy attack and artillery fire, "B" Co, at 1500 hours, launched a drive to seize the town of Flein and high ground to the southeast while "C" Co continued to sweep the woods eastward to our Regimental boundary.

The Krauts made a valiant effort to hold Flein against the persistent pressure of our "B" Co men, employing artillery, mortar and tank fire in an attempt to stop our advance. But by 1720 hours, "B" Co had flanked the hill guarding the approaches to Flein from the north and at 1800 hours the Jerries began a general withdrawal south-

eastward from the town, speeded by the accurate fire of our artillery.

Our 1st Bn lost no time in following up the retreating enemy. By 1900 hours, "B" Co had advanced to positions southwest of Flein and was proceeding toward the edge of the woods into which the enemy had been withdrawing. "A" Co slashed southwest from the edge of the woods and by 2100 hours had entered Flein without opposition. "C" Co outposted high ground along Schweinsberg Ridge in the woods northeast of Flein, after which the 1st Bn dug-in for the night.

Our PW toll for the period established a new record for CT-399 with 270 "Supermen" captured. The PW's, representing the battle-groups Krebs, Prior and Mokros, swelled our Regimental total to 2271 for 164 days of combat.

Co "G" was the first to continue the 2nd Bn's attack on April 14th. Surging forward at 0615 hours from positions gained under cover of darkness approximately 500 yards northwest of Talheim, "G" Co had reached the northern outskirts of town by 0650 hours. The advance on Talheim was a fight all the way. The enemy had prepared a crossfire machine-gun defense perimeter around the southern edge of the town with at least two machine guns firing from the patch of woods to the southeast, one from a vineyard to the south and another from a field to the southwest. Fifty and eighty millimeter mortar fire backed up the Krauts holding the northern end of town with unusually heavy fire concentrations which kept the "G" Co men hugging the ground. From further south, 105mm shells hit the bridge in the center of Talheim and fell accurately on the important road junction on the western side of town.

In the meanwhile, "E" Co, who had started moving south toward Talheim at 0618 hours, had reached the medieval castle one kilometer northeast of the town 42 minutes later. Striking across a vineyard and through an orchard toward a junction with "G" Co for a combined assault on Talheim, the "E" Co men by 0830 hours had advanced to a point 300 yards north of the "G" Co positions by the time "G" Co had fought their way to the northern end of Talheim. With the combined attack now in full swing, the Krauts began to give ground more rapidly and by 0915 hours, "E" and "G" Cos were in full possession of Talheim.

At 1100 hours, "F" Co, in Bn reserve, moved to Flein.

"G" Co dispatched patrols to Lauffen at 1130 hours. The patrols found the French in possession of the town which extended on both sides of the river. But the French only held the town while the Jerries controlled the ground between Talheim and Lauffen.

At 1700 hours, "E" and "G" Cos continued their advance toward the 2nd Bn and regimental objectives, "E" Co moving southeast to clear the patch of woods some 600 yards from Talheim and "G" Co proceeding southwest to cut the Lauffen-Illsfeld road. By 1800 hours, "G" Co had reached their objective and "E" Co was making good progress through the woods when they were halted by the Jerries upon attempting to cross open ground. Sustained artillery concentrations now began to fall along our entire 2nd Bn front and "E" and "G" Cos were ordered to withdraw to the vicinity of Talheim for the night.

Our 1st Bn launched their attack at 0600 hours. Leaving Flein to be occupied by "B" Co who went into Battalion reserve at 0730 hours, "A" Co passed through the "B" Co positions at 0635 hours and continued southeast along the Flein-Illsfeld road. In the narrow waist of the woods two kilometers southeast of Flein, however, they encountered two road blocks defended by about 60 Krauts. The enemy, a rear guard to cover the withdrawal of an estimated 200-300 Jerries seen falling back on Illsfeld, fought furiously to delay the "A" Co advance. Four machine guns emplaced along the road leading from the woods and heavy small arms fire from the 60 entrenched Krauts, pinned down the "A" Co men, making further progress impossible. Artillery and 50 rounds of SP fire was finally placed on the road blocks and the wooded area to the southeast. But it was 1700 hours before the Krauts were driven from their positions and "A" Co was able to continue their advance along the road leading southeast skirting the edge of the woods to their objective at grid S093541. One hour later, the "A" Co men had reached this objective.

Co "C", on the left flank, joined the 1st Bn drive at 0700 hours. Leaving positions on high ground in the woods northeast of Flein, "C" Co continued southward through the woods with the mission of meeting "A" Co at grid S093541, the extreme southern edge of the woods. The Untergruppenbach-Heilbronn road was crossed at 0800 hours and the advance continued slowly over the extremely rough, forested terrain. By 1430 hours, "C" Co had reached a point two

kilometers due west of Untergruppenbach, meeting only light enemy resistance. In attempting to swing southwestward through the woods toward a junction with "A" Co which would pocket the Jerries in the 1st Bn sector, resistance to the "C" Co advance began to stiffen considerably. Upon reaching the Untergruppenbach-Talheim road, "C" Co hit a strongly defended road-block. Enemy artillery fire was added to the fierce small arms opposition. Despite our valiant efforts to disperse the Jerries they continued to hold up the "C" Co men.

While this fight was raging, a reinforced AT platoon from our 1st Bn took up positions southwest of Donnbronn to block any attempt by the enemy to withdraw from the by-passed town.

After three and one half hours of indecisive battling, however, "C" Co was still stymied short of their objective. It was now 1800 hours and we were forced to send "B" Co to aid the hard pressed "C" Co. Reinforced, our men finally smashed enemy resistance at 2240 hours after which "C" Co, less one platoon which was left in positions south of the Untergruppenbach-Talheim road, withdrew to reserve positions in Flein. "B" Co also left a platoon at that point, the remainder of the "B" Co men joining "A" Co on the southern edge of the woods. The 1st Bn now paused in their drive southward for the night.

One hundred and forty-four PW's were taken during the day's furious fighting, increasing our Regimental total to 2415.

Our Regimental CP moved from Heilbronn to Sontheim, opening at 1900 hours.

At 0135 hours of April 15th, MG and AT Plats from our 1st Bn relieved "A" Co, holding positions at a cross-roads between the Talheim-Untergruppenbach and Flein-Ilsfeld roads. "A" Co, thereupon, moved southward to the southern edge of the woods northwest of Wüstenhausen, reaching the objective line without opposition. Co "B", who had taken up positions on an extension of "A" Co's left flank the previous night, also pushed south to the objective line east of "A" Co. Following this move, the "B" Co platoon which had been attached to "C" Co reverted to "B" Co control.

At 1620 hours, "A" Co, motorized, moved northeast to Untergrup-

penbach to relieve elements of the 397th Infantry who had occupied the town earlier in the day. Relief was completed at 1730 hours, after which "A" Co dispatched a patrol to Wüstenhausen, one mile to the southeast. The patrol found the town occupied by the Jerries who opened up with machine-gun fire.

"C" Co, reinforced by the 1st Bn AT Plat, held their reserve positions in Flein.

Relentlessly probing enemy defensive positions in an attempt to find their weak spots, the 2nd Bn at 1445 hours dispatched a task force consisting of two rifle squads from "E" Co and two squads from "G" Co supported by two tanks and two TD's with the mission of clearing the two patches of woods southeast of Talheim. If contact could not be made, the task force was to procede to Schozach and then continue southeast to Ilsfeld. In the most northerly patch of woods, the task force discovered fifty enemy dead from the previous day's heavy fighting. Crossing the open field between the two woods, the task force discovered 12 enemy in houses. The twelve Jerries were taken prisoners and the advance continued into the patch of woods due north of Schozach.

These woods proved deserted, but upon reaching the southern line of trees at 1615 hours, the enemy began pouring 50mm and 80mm mortar and 75mm artillery and machine-gun fire on our troops from emplacements within Schozach. With their mission of clearing the woods accomplished, however, the task force returned to Talheim.

At 1500 hours, "F" Co moved from Flein to Talheim, closing at 1550 hours without incident.

"E" Co joined their platoon holding positions on the southern edge of the woods northeast of Schozach at 1855 hours.

"G" Co shifted southeast from Talheim to the patch of woods due north of Schozach at 2045 hours. Shortly after arriving on their new positions, "G" Co heard sounds of enemy movement in Schozach and dispatched a patrol to the outskirts of town to investigate. No sign of the enemy could be found, however, an the patrol returned at 0520 hours of April 16th.