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THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY C, 104TH INFANTRY
(26TH INFANTRY DIVISION) FROM VIC-SUR-SEILLE
TO ALBESTROFF, EASTERN FRANCE, 8-21 NOV 1944.
(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Company Commander)

Type of operation described: COMPANY IN THE ATTACK

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INTRODUCTION

On 15 September 1944, the rapid advance of the Third United States Army across France came to a sudden halt, because of an acute supply situation. The tanks were out of gas. During the next seven weeks this shortage, not only of gasoline but of all other types of supplies as well, was remedied. Combat along the army front was limited to local actions and patrolling and can be characterized by the phrase: "an aggressive defensive".

The build-up of supplies was completed by 8 November 1944, and on that day the Third Army resumed the offensive, opening the battle of Germany.

The weather at that time was cold and rainy. Unprecedented flood conditions prevailed in the area, so that the enemy considered it impossible for the Third Army to launch an offensive under such unfavorable conditions and tactical surprise was achieved.

The tactical situation at the start of the offensive is shown on MAP A. XX Corps in the northern sector of the army zone was given the mission of enveloping the city of METZ, and then in conjunction with XII Corps on the South continuing the attack to the northeast to establish bridge-heads over the Rhine in the FRANKFURT-MAINZ area.

XII Corps was composed of the 26th, 35th and 80th Infantry Divisions, 4th and 6th Armored Divisions and supporting troops disposed as shown on MAP A. (1)

The 26th Infantry Division was on the right or southern flank of XII Corps. The division had arrived in France in September 1944, and

(1) A-1.

was ordered to the Third Army front in Lorraine during the first week in October, relieving the 4th Armored Division. In the remainder of the month the division received its baptism of fire. The enemy was active, sending out frequent combat and reconnaissance patrols and maintaining harassing artillery fires. The 26th Division was equally aggressive. The enemy position was thoroughly reconnoit-ered by patrols and the division artillery was constantly in action. On 22 October the 104th Infantry Regiment launched a limited objective attack, with the purpose of eliminating a salient in the left sector of the Division zone. The objective was attained, although casualties were heavy.

This period served as an introduction to combat and gave the men of the division the battle experience vitally necessary for the following offensive. (2)

On 3 November, General Patton, the army commander, spoke to the assembled regimental, battalion and company commanders of the 26th Division, and announced the impending attack. He believed that the German positions were only a shell that could be smashed and that the German army could be destroyed west of the Rhine. He then elaborated on small unit battle tactics. "The keynote of any attack is speed and aggressiveness. Most casualties are caused by enemy artillery while crossing the last four or five hundred yards -- cross that area in a hurry. Don't stay there and let him shoot at you. I wish you could get rid of your entrenching tools during an attack. Use marching Fire. You can't see the enemy but you can shoot into the area where he is, make him keep his head down and he won't be shooting back. Keep shooting, close in and kill him." The army commander left no doubt in the minds of his listeners as to what he wanted. (3)

(2) A-2; (3) Personal memory. The quotation is a summary of General Patton's speech.

PLAN OF ATTACK

The 26th Division planned to attack with three regiments abreast, 104th, 101st and 328th from left to right in that order. The Division Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop was given the mission of screening and maintaining contact on the left flank of the division, and the 2d Cavalry Group had the same mission on the right flank, between Third and Seventh Armies. The 761st Tank Battalion, the 691st and 602d Tank Destroyer Battalions were to attack with the infantry.

The 104th Infantry planned to attack with the 1st and 2d Battalions, 1st on the right, each battalion having one tank platoon from the 761st Tank Battalion attached.

For four days prior to the attack the 1st Battalion had been holding the sector in which it was going to attack. MAP B. Companies B and C were on the Main Line, A in reserve, and in the afternoon of 7 November, when the battalion commander issued his attack order his plan was to use the companies in that order, Company C on the left with the mission of seizing the town of VIC-SUR-SEILLE, Company B to seize the right section of the town and the open area to the right, both companies to be prepared to continue the attack to the high ground northeast of town. The platoon of tanks from the 761st Tank Battalion was to support the attack initially from the vicinity of the MLR until crossing over the Seille River could be secured. (4)

Since the Division considered VIC-SUR-SEILLE a key point in the enemy's defenses the Battalion Commander directed that Company C employ three platoons in the assault. Accordingly Company C planned to attack with the three rifle platoons, 2d, 3d and 1st, from left to right, the machine gun section to attack in the zone of the 2d platoon and protect the left flank of the company. The mortar section was to support the attack from positions in the vicinity of the LD.

(4) A-2.

The Line of Departure was a road running parallel to the Seille River approximately 300 yards in front of the town. There was no assurance that this road would be taken without a fight, since the S-2 situation map showed several enemy tactical installations there.

COMPANY C ATTACK ON VIC-SUR-SEILLE (5)

During the evening of 7 November preparations were made for the attack. One "K" ration, one bandoleer of rifle ammunition and 4 hand grenades were issued to each man. Large-scale drawings of VIC-SUR-SEILLE were available and platoon and squad leaders were oriented.

By 0400 the company, 154 men, had assembled near the Company Command Post. The night was completely black and it was raining. The company moved in two columns across 2500 yards of marshy fields to the Line of Departure. The move was made slowly and quietly, the silence broken only occasionally when someone stumbled or fell. The company arrived at the LD at 0500, just as a one hour artillery preparation began. Platoons and squads were disposed in the attack formation, and awaited the attack hour.

At 0600, at the first grey sign of dawn the company crossed the LD and advanced toward the town. The enemy was not prepared. Unoccupied gun emplacements and foxholes were observed at the edge of town. The first platoon on the right was challenged by a German sentry, who was instantly eliminated with rifle fire. The third platoon entered the town unobserved, while the second platoon encountered heavy small arms fire from the railroad station.

Next the first and third platoons also received small arms fire from within the town and the company attack disintegrated into squad actions. Squads and half squads advanced individually through the town, firing and throwing hand grenades into buildings ahead of them. The company command group including an artillery forward observer, followed the

(5) A-3; Personal memory.

first platoon, along the town's main street. Communication was accomplished by means of runners.

Because of the narrow crooked streets it was difficult for the squads to stay within their sectors. At one point in the action a squad of the first platoon got in front of the third platoon, and to add to the confusion a group of enemy riflemen that had been by-passed, started firing and at the same time some of them shouted in good English: "Don't shoot, we're Americans." Members of the first and third platoons approached each other cautiously and mutual identification was established through asking the names of squad leaders and company officers. The Germans failed that test and so friend and foe were finally sorted out.

The second platoon in the meantime had overcome the opposition at the railroad station and had advanced along the left edge of town.

On approaching the Seille River the forward observer noticed enemy movement across the river and called for a planned concentration in that area. Enemy artillery had begun to fall within fifteen minutes after the start of the attack, but fell ineffectively south of the town.

There were originally three bridges across the Seille River within VIC-SUR-SEILLE. Two of these had been demolished prior to the attack and at 0800 the enemy destroyed the remaining bridge. By 0830 the entire company had reached the river to find it a barrier to further advance. Through the town the river was a deep stream about 100 feet wide with vertical stone and concrete banks. A reorganization was held in the vicinity of the right bridge. B Company had also reached this point.

One half of this bridge was still intact, while the other half lay in the river with the tops of the steel superstructure protruding above the surface of the water. By placing some timbers from an artillery-damaged building from the bank to the steel girders and from there to the solid half of the bridge, a means of crossing was established. Two

squads were then stationed on the upper floors of the buildings nearest the bridge and took up fire at the windows of buildings across the river and at any other likely enemy positions to cover the advance of the remainder of the company. The company crossed, one man at a time, without casualties, although the leading squad captured and killed several enemy stationed in foxholes along the street within 100 yards of the crossing point. The first two blocks were taken without further resistance.

Before the last platoon of the company had crossed, a platoon from the Division Engineer Battalion started building a foot bridge, about the same time that the enemy started shelling the bridge site. The battalion commander was also at the bridge. He and his command group had followed closely in rear of the attack, and had received small arms fire from the railroad station although that area had previously been reported clear by the second platoon.

Some time during the morning the Battalion Commander had ordered the reserve company forward to the town, and at approximately 1100 he ordered Companies A and B to continue the attack. The two companies crossed the Seille River over the Engineer foot bridge, moved east along the river for about 1000 yards to avoid enemy fire from the northwest corner of VIC-SUR-SEILLE, and then north to the crest of NOIR MONTAGNES. The two companies encountered only light resistance and captured an enemy artillery observation post.

Company C in the meantime continued the attack against the last resistance in the town. A determined group of enemy riflemen and machine gunners was still holding out in the northwest corner of the town.

The second platoon attacked west from the bridgehead and almost reached the far edge of town, when it was driven back by heavy fire from the front and right rear. The first platoon then attacked around the north edge of the town and succeeded in killing several of the enemy and driv-

ing off the rest. By 1400 all organized resistance in VIC-SUR-SEILLE ceased. Prisoners stated that the garrison had consisted of two infantry companies of approximately 60 men each. There were no civilians.

Although resistance had ceased there were still many of the enemy in the town. They had gone into hiding and came out to surrender during the next two days.

At 1500 Company C moved to a Battalion reserve position on NOIR MONTAGNES.

Shortly after dark the division Engineers had completed a Bailey bridge at MOYENVIC in the 101st Infantry zone, 2500 yards to the right of the 104th Infantry. In order to bring up rations, water and ammunition to the 1st Battalion, 104th Infantry, the battalion supply officer led a convoy of four jeeps across this bridge and back to his own battalion zone. In the darkness he was not too sure of his route and hearing a column of troops he dismounted, walked quickly over to this column and naturally asked: "What outfit is this?". He received a startled exclamation in German in reply. The lieutenant left the scene at a dead run and the German column scattered with equal speed in the opposite direction. Later in the evening the supply officer succeeded in reaching the battalion. (5)

COMPANY C IN RESERVE (6)

Early the following morning, 9 November, Companies A and B, supported by the mortar and machine gun platoons of Company D, continued the attack, encountering heavy resistance 3000 yards north of NOIR MONTAGNES. MAP C.

Company C remained in reserve, following the attack by bounds, its only mission to keep contact with the 101st Infantry which was about 2000 yards to the east. This assignment was carried out by one officer and

(5) Personal memory; Statement by Lt Frye, Bn S-4; (6) A-3; Personal memory.

four men who patrolled between the two units.

Companies A and B made no progress against the enemy. The attached tank platoon reached the position about 1000 and joined the attack. During the remainder of the day it lost two tanks.

Late in the afternoon Company C was committed around the right flank of the attacking companies. The plan was to make a wide enveloping movement. The company moved in a column led by the second platoon followed by company headquarters, the machine gun section, the first platoon, the third platoon and the mortar section in that order. On reaching the woods southeast of the enemy position the company lost its direction, and instead of making a wide envelopment merely succeeded in extending the right flank of the two attacking companies. It was almost dark and after a brief exchange of rifle fire between the leading platoon and the enemy the attack was stopped.

The morning of 10 November it was discovered that the enemy had withdrawn. Again Companies A and B moved forward in the attack followed by the machine gun platoons of Company D. A column of the 4th Armored Division was attacking in a parallel zone, through the towns of HAMPONT and OBRECK.

The two companies met only slight resistance but suffered heavy casualties from enemy machine gun and 20-mm fire from BOIS MATELOT. In order to remain within the battalion zone the two companies were forced to wade through the stream RAU-DE-LA-FLOTTE, which was waist deep at its shallowest.

By nightfall Company C, with one Company D machine gun platoon attached, was ordered to take up the position reached by the other two companies. The remaining men of these two companies were all suffering from exposure to the ice-cold waters of the RAU -DE-LA-FLOTTE, and were evacuated to the Battalion CP in the town of OBRECK to avoid more serious consequences.

CONTINUATION OF THE ATTACK AND BATTALION IN RESERVE (7)

During the night Company C received an order from the Battalion Commander to attack at 1700, 11 November and seize the area BOIS d'HABOUDANGE. Also Company C was ordered to coordinate the attack with a Tank Battalion of the 4th Armored Division, located north of OBRECK. The CO of Company C located the Tank Battalion Commander and informed him of the plan of attack, zone, time and objective. The tank commander in return cheerfully stated: "We're jumping off at 0700 down this main road toward CONTHIL. How far? Nobody knows. Five miles maybe. Forty, I hope. I like to shoot the hell out of their rear echelon and watch 'em run."

At 0650 next morning, under cover of an artillery barrage Company C moved up the long slope toward the line of trees marking the objective. It was a tense moment but no enemy fire was received. On reaching the edge of the forest a prepared but unoccupied defensive position was found. Six prisoners, deserters, were taken and the company proceeded to the northeast edge of the woods without further incident. The entire move lasted about an hour and the remainder of the day was spent in preparing a defensive position around the objective.

The 3d Battalion of the regiment attacked beyond BOIS d'HABOUDANGE that day to the town of CONTHIL and then to ROADALBE.

The First Battalion moved to CONTHIL the next day. During the morning of that day the Third Battalion, which was still in ROADALBE was hit by a strong counter-attack and withdrew to CONTHIL. Then both battalions left the area on orders from Regiment and marched to LIDREZING, where the badly depleted Third Battalion took up a reserve position and the First Battalion organized a defensive position in BOIS RENARDVIGNES. Company C which was reduced to 70 men occupied the center and right section of the line, with Company B consisting of about 20 men on the

(7) A-2; A-3; Personal memory.

left. Company A, 6 men commanded by a sergeant, was in reserve. This position remained unchanged for five days.

Enemy activity was limited to intermittent shelling and patrolling. During the morning of 15 November an enemy patrol of 10 to 15 men attacked the company. The third platoon, which was in a support position quickly outflanked this patrol, killing three and capturing three others.

An enemy minefield was discovered in front of the defense line.

Company C spent this period in reorganizing. One-half of each platoon at a time was sent back to the town of LIDREZING giving all the men in the company a chance to clean up, dry their clothes and get some hot food. Several night patrols were sent out. These patrols reported contacting the enemy in the vicinity of the railroad track which ran in front of the company position.

Companies A, B, and D received replacements.

CONTINUATION OF THE ATTACK (8)

In the afternoon of 17 November, the battalion commander issued the order to attack the following morning at 0700. The battalion objective was the high ground in BOIS DE BENESTROFF. The plan was to attack the enemy position with Company C leading, Company A echeloned 500 yards to the right rear, and Company B in reserve. MAP D.

The remainder of the day was spent in preparing for the attack. Ammunition and rations were issued. The company attack order was given to the platoon leaders, who in turn issued their orders for the attack. No reconnaissance was necessary since all personnel were familiar with the terrain confronting the company.

Shortly after dark a group of 50 replacements arrived for the company. They were assigned equally to the platoons, and somehow the platoon leaders managed to get them assigned to squads.

(8) A-2; A-3; Personal memory.

The following morning at 0500 a squad of engineers arrived and cleared two paths through the remaining hundred yards of woods in front of the company position.

At 0645 an artillery preparation began, the shells falling in the vicinity of the railroad track and in the western section of BOIS DE BENESTROFF. At 0655 the attack started under cover of the remaining five minutes of the artillery preparation.

The first platoon followed by the light machine gun section moved single file down the white line of the engineer tape marking its path to the edge of the woods. The second platoon similarly followed its path about two hundred yards to the right of the first platoon. On emerging from the woods the squads deployed, forming skirmish lines, the men double-timing to their positions to reduce the congestion at the points of exit from the woods.

For two or three minutes there was no enemy action. Then machine guns at the two farms north and south of the company commenced firing. Immediately the company's light machine gun section returned the fire from the farm to the north. The mortar section, which was in position in the edge of the woods also began to fire on the same farm. The two machine gun platoons of Company D were in position, one on the northern and one on the southern edge of BOIS RENARDVIGNES and both platoons began firing almost as soon as the enemy guns opened up.

At the same time enemy riflemen, from well-camouflaged positions near the railroad track started firing. Instantly every man in the two attacking platoons returned the fire. No enemy was visible, but the men fired straight to the front toward the railroad track, and they kept moving rapidly. There was no other alternative. The ground between the company and the enemy was almost as smooth as a billiard table; there was no cover or concealment available.

Marching fire proved highly effective. The enemy fire slackened and

then ceased. The company reached the railroad track having had only three casualties. Of the enemy a number were killed or wounded, eight were taken prisoner and another unknown number escaped along the railroad track, which was about ten feet below the level of the ground on both sides.

The enemy machine gun at SUZANNE FARM had been silenced in the first few minutes of the attack. The one at DORDAL FARM had shifted its fire to meet the attack of the 2d Battalion. (9)

The leading two platoons continued to the edge of the woods, where an artillery observer was captured.

In the meantime the third platoon in support had been in dug-in positions in rear of the LD, near a battalion CP. This platoon and the mortar section suffered more casualties than either of the other two platoons, from enemy artillery which began to fall within five minutes after the start of the attack. This platoon was under command of the company executive officer, with orders to keep contact with the company by means of the SCR 300 at the battalion OP.

When the first and second platoons, and the machine gun section reached BOIS DE BENESTROFF the third platoon and the mortar section was ordered to move forward. The objective was reached by all platoons without further enemy resistance, and the company organized a complete perimeter defense around the high ground of the objective.

Company A arrived there shortly thereafter, followed by the Battalion Commander, his command group and the reserve company.

While the defensive position was being organized a group of about 20 Germans in a column of twos came marching from the south along a trail leading right through the position. An alert BAR man began firing, killing two, wounding one. Four were captured and the remainder

(9) A-4

scattered and escaped. This column was evidently withdrawing from the second battalion zone, and obviously had not been informed of the penetration in this area.

The battalion remained in this position until 1300 of the following day, 19 November when the attack continued, to the next objective, Hill 296. The battalion attacked in a column of companies, Company B leading, followed by Company C and finally Company A, and the Company D machine gun platoons.

The terrain between BOIS DE BENESTROFF and Hill 296 was decidedly unfavorable to the attack. Low rolling hills without any forests or other concealment forced the battalion to move the entire distance under enemy observation, mortar and artillery fire.

Company C moved in a column of platoons and was deployed 400 yards in width and 500 yards in depth. The other companies were similarly deployed. Despite this great dispersion among personnel, losses during the move were considerable.

On reaching the road between VAHL-LES-BENESTROFF and NEBING the battalion was subjected to machine gun fire from these two towns in addition to rifle and machine gun fire from enemy positions on HILL 296. Company B halted on the reverse slope of HILL 274 and Company C closed up to the left. The men crossed the last 600 yards by running from one covered position to the next.

There seemed to be no immediate way of attacking the objective. Any movement on HILL 274 drew heavy fire immediately from both flanks and the front, and the Battalion Commander decided to hold that position until the enemy flanking fire was eliminated by units attacking those enemy positions.

Darkness found the battalion's position unchanged. By that time both VAHL-LES-BENESTROFF and NEBING had been captured by adjacent battalions.

Next morning, 0700 20 November, the attack continued, Company C leading, followed by Company A. The enemy had withdrawn during the night and no resistance was met until Company C reached the woods east of ALBESTROFF. From there enemy activity was observed in the town: two tanks and a machine gun position at the edge of town, and an observer in the church steeple. It seemed inadvisable to continue and the Company Commander called a halt. The Battalion Commander was notified by runner and arrived at the position in a few minutes. The time was approximately 1200. The Battalion Commander decided to attack the town with two companies, C on the right, A on the left, but first he planned to secure sufficient artillery support for the attack. The artillery liaison officer with the battalion adjusted fire on the church in the town and by 1300 several battalions of artillery began firing a ten-minute preparation.

Under cover of the artillery fire Company C left the woods, first and third platoons leading, the machine gun section on the right flank of the company. The second platoon followed at a distance of 200 yards. ALBESTROFF was 700 yards away. Three hundred yards were crossed without incident and then enemy small arms fire began from the edge of town. Several men were hit but the company kept moving, returning the enemy fire. Two machine guns were directly in the path of the company. The two-man crew of one attempted to run back to the town and was shot down. The crew of the other was found dead at its gun when the company reached it.

The entire company reached the edge of town and the shelter of the buildings. The enemy had been driven in towards the center of the town, and the company occupied the first row of buildings.

Attempts at further advance from this row of buildings failed. The enemy had the street covered with two tanks, and more tanks were deeper in the town. Anti-tank weapons in the company were practically non-ex-

istent. One sergeant had one tank grenade, and after advancing through several buildings to within twenty yards of the tank, he fired and knocked this one tank out. That one tank, however was the only one put out of action by Company C.

The enemy began to counter-attack. Civilians pointed out buildings held by Company C and in one case even set fire to one such building. Enemy tanks approached these buildings and fired directly into them. After several hours of this fighting both Company A and Company C withdrew from the town. The tanks, the enemy infantry, plus the civilian resistance, proved too great.

The operator of the SCR 300 became separated from the company command group so that contact with battalion was lost. By dark most of the company had retreated from the town. The command group and part of the first platoon remained in the town and attempted to contact the remainder of the company after dark. That was unsuccessful since there were no others in the town, and in the middle of the night the remaining group withdrew from the town, to find the other platoons back in NEBING.

The following day the second battalion of the 104th Infantry successfully attacked and captured ALBESTROFF. (10)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISMS

In the attack of VIC-SUR-SEILLE the enemy were definitely caught unprepared. The company was able to reach the town itself before the enemy was aware of the attack. If the German garrison had posted security outside the town, it would have had ample warning and time to man its prepared defensive positions, instead of having to conduct a scattered, unorganized defense within the town.

The men of Company C and particularly the junior leaders distinguished themselves in their conduct of the attack. Their confident behavior

(10) A-4.

and rapid movement through the town accompanied by loud shouting was a definite factor in breaking down the enemy's will to resist.

Once the momentum of the attack was lost because of the delay in crossing the Seille River, it was difficult to regain that initial speed.

In general the attack on the town was eminently successful, because of careful coordination and planning followed by aggressive and rapid execution of the plan.

The attack on 9 November was not as successful. The leading two companies deployed and attacked in the direction of the enemy, without knowing the location of the enemy position and without supporting artillery fires. A reconnaissance patrol the preceding night would have revealed the enemy's location, which knowledge would have dictated the choice of a covered and consequently far better route of approach for the attacking companies. The attack could then also have been coordinated with supporting artillery and mortar fires, and the tank platoon.

The attack on 18 November against BOIS DE BENESTROFF again proved that careful and detailed preparations are a definite factor in the outcome of any engagement. The men were oriented prior to the attack, the required quantities of ammunition were issued, engineers cleared paths through the minefield and supporting fires were coordinated. The attack was successful. Further the attack proved or at least indicated the desirability of using marching fire over a distance as great as 500 yards, in order to maintain speed, reduce the effectiveness of the enemy's fire and minimize the time spent in crossing the area generally covered by the enemy's defensive barrages.

The attack on ALBESTROFF, on 20 November failed because of lack of sufficient preparation. The battalion attacked without adequate anti-tank weapons and consequently was unable to attack the tanks defending the town.

In general, operations throughout the fourteen-day period were against an enemy fighting a delaying action. To reduce the effectiveness of the enemy's tactics speed was essential. This speed of movement resulted in lowering the time available for planning and preparing for an attack. The battalion soon discovered, however, that increased efforts on the part of all concerned in preparing for attacks paid dividends in preserving the effectiveness of the unit.

Troops throughout this area were suffering many casualties from trench foot. Considerable effort and energy was required by all leaders to institute and enforce preventive measures and thereby reduce the casualty rate.

One other outstanding factor was noted. Information moved constantly up the chain of command, but the reverse flow was negligible. Yet information was a vital morale factor within the front-line companies. Lack of information led to unease and doubt, while positive information, particularly about adjacent units made for confidence and aggressiveness.

LESSONS

Some of the lessons emphasized by this operation are:

1. The training the company had received was essential and had adequately prepared the men for combat. Field exercises and maneuvers in particular had taught the men what to expect in combat, including confusion and had taught them how to live in the field.
2. The importance of training subordinate leaders cannot be over-emphasized. The progress of any engagement depends primarily on all those who exercise command throughout the company.
3. Information is an important factor, and should flow freely along the chain of command in both directions.
4. The resupply of rifle companies as accomplished in the 104th Infantry leaves room for improvement. Ordinarily the company $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton

vehicles were kept at the Battalion Command Post under control of the Battalion Supply Officer. When the company needed supplies, other than routine, the situation required that the request be relayed to the Battalion Supply Officer, and then the drivers had to find the company. That was a difficult task, since normally the company had moved forward of its last position. An improvement would be to have the vehicles operate directly in rear of the company. Supplies could be transported on the vehicles, and in case of necessity the vehicles could return to the Battalion Supply Point and forward again over familiar routes.

5. Marching Fire can be used effectively over distances up to 500 yards.

6. Some of the factors which increase the chance of success of any attack are:

- a. Detailed planning.
- b. Coordination between the infantry, tank and artillery elements of the attacking team.
- c. Surprise.
- d. Adequate communications.
- e. Aggressive action.

7. The support platoon of a rifle company should be close to the attacking platoons, in order to be readily available and to avoid remaining in the area of the enemy's defensive fires.

8. Morale cannot be judged by the appearance of troops in combat. The appearance of the men of Company C during the operations described, was considerably below the standard maintained during the training period. Nevertheless morale in the company was high and all missions were accomplished.