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Authority MWD 725017

By AT NARA Date 10-1-96

TO: REPRODUCED AT THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

ACTION REPORT

ADJUTANT of the
97TH INFANTRY DIVISION

William D. [unclear]
J.C. COMMITTEE 11 Dec 46

(RESTRICTED)

The 97TH INFANTRY DIVISION (Thermite) moved by motor convoy and train from CAMP LUCKY STRIKE, FRANCE, to the west bank of the RHINE RIVER opposite DUSSELDORF, GERMANY, during the last week of March, 1945. From this area, following an "indoctrination" phase of patrol activity and defensive tactics, the Division moved south to cross the RHINE in the vicinity of BONN, GERMANY, on the 3rd, 4th and 5th of April. Under the XVIII (A/B) CORPS of the FIRST ARMY, the 97TH DIVISION was given the mission of assisting in the destruction of enemy strength in the RUHR (ROGE) POCKET.

CT 303 (TEAKETTLE) was the first element of the Division to move south. On 3 April, from an assembly area at KUCKHOVEN, the CT moved under control of the 78TH INF DIV to an area on the S bank of the SIEG RIVER extending on a line E from the RHINE approximately ten thousand yards. On 4 April, CT 386 (Teamster), last of the Div elms to be rel, was attached to the 101st A/B Div at NEUSS, while CT 387 (Teapot), moved from an assembly area at ROMBERSKIRCHEN to the vicinity of UCKERATH, where on 5 April it was also attached to the 78th Inf Div. As of 6 April, all elements of the 97TH DIV had been relieved from their positions on the RHINE and had moved to the new area, reverting upon arrival to control of the 78TH DIV. It was also on 6 April that CT 341 of the 86TH INF DIV was attached to the 97TH, and closed into a concentration area where it made preparations to repel any enemy counterattack that might be launched in the vicinity of the bridges across the RHINE.

With the move south completed, and the last elements of the 78TH DIV relieved from positions within the 97TH DIV Z, Brig. Gen. M.B. Halsey, CG of the 97TH, assumed command of the Div sector at 0700, 6 April 45, and immediately issued orders for all elements of the Div to complete and improve defensive positions along the 50,000 yard front, and to carry out active patrolling north of the SIEG RIVER. These orders were carried out aggressively, with particular stress in the vic of HENNEP and HANGELAR. The Div CP had opened at OBERPLEIS on 5 April, with the 97th Recon Tr (Thermite Blue) holding the Div left boundary along the RHINE, and the 303rd, 387th and 386th Infancies, in that order, extending from left to right along the south bank of the SIEG. Adjacent units included the 82 A/B Div across the RHINE on our left, and the 78 Inf Div which had been holding the area we now occupied, on our right.

G-2 information revealed that the 3rd Para Div was the principal enemy strength in the area opposite the Div sector. It was this unit which put up some of the most spirited and fanatical resistance to be encountered by the Div in the RUHR POCKET.

Following extensive patrolling of the area north of the SIEG RIVER, the 386 Inf attacked at 1200 on 7 April. A thirty-minute artillery preparation fired by elements of DIVISION ARTILLERY (Teacup) prepared the way for a successful crossing of the river in engineer assault boats, with the result that casualties were light, and rapid advancements were made after the attacking elements were able to organize after crossing in small groups. Only light, disorganized enemy resistance was met, and contact with the advancing 78th Div on the right was successfully maintained.

A "swinging door" strategy was taking shape, pivoting at the junction of the SIEG and RHINE RIVERS and swinging northwestward toward DUSSELDORF. Thus, with the advancement of the 78th Div, then the 386th Inf, it was time for the next wave in line, the 387th Inf, to attack across the SIEG. The 1st Bn of the 387th made the initial crossing in the right of the regimental zone, ~~and was covering mortar~~ and small-arms fire, but establishing a bridgehead with a slight loss of personnel. Meanwhile the 322nd ENGINEER (Medium), supported by the 262nd Engr C Bn, built a footbridge ~~two support rafts and a treadway~~ across the SIEG ~~behind advanced elements of the 386th Inf,~~ heavy troop reinforcements to cross rapidly and bolster the attack.

Division Covered Area 31 March 45

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At dawn on 9 April the 387th continued its attack, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions crossing the SIEG at WELDERGOVEN. Moderate opposition was encountered. Later in the day the 386th Inf was forced to consolidate its positions in order to stave off enemy counterattacks from the rear. Numerous small groups of enemy had been bypassed in the heavily wooded areas during the advancement of the night before, but after a half day of mopping up these pockets of resistance were eliminated and the CT was able to continue its advance by late evening.

The "swinging door" by this time described an arc that called for commitment of the 303rd Inf, and following a forty-minute barrage of artillery laid down by one medium and three light artillery battalions, the 303rd crossed the SIEG at 1800 hours on 9 April. The CT zone of attack included the city of SIEGBURG, on the north bank of the SIEG RIVER in plain view of the infantrymen crossing the river. The city was known to be heavily defended by 88mm AA guns and other artillery, capable of firing direct fire at advancing troops, and was also believed to contain rather heavy enemy troop concentrations. However, due to the rapid advancement of the units to the right of the 303rd, Major General Ridgway, CG of the XVIII (A/B) Corps, decided that the SIEGBURG area must be taken to prevent a gap in depth and the subsequent exposure of the 387th left flank. At 1400 hours the decision was made to attack at 1800 the same day.

With only four hours in which to prepare for the coming attack, rapid shifting of troops to the LD, briefing, assembly of river-crossing equipment and artillery preparation were necessary. Yet in spite of this handicap the crossing and the entire operation proved to be a model of military efficiency and timing. By 2300 hours, only five hours after the attack jumped off, both the 1st and 2nd Bns had pushed through two-thirds of the city and had reorganized for the continuation of the attack. In the early hours of the following morning CT 303 reached its initial objective - a phase line running north and west of SIEGBURG. Again, only moderate resistance had been met. The heavy artillery preparation, followed by the aggressive, surprise action of the infantry, had made the attack highly successful, and the front lines of the 97th were north of the SIEG with all combat elements of the Div in position to continue the push into the heart of the RUHR.

On 10 April the 386th Inf continued its attack to the northwest, but again was forced to proceed slowly due to the numerous pockets of resistance in wooded areas. Also on the 10th, the 387th Inf had reached its initial phase-line objective and had consolidated. Co "C" of the 322nd Engineers repaired a bridge in the 387th area, making it possible for the first heavy traffic, including armor, to cross the SIEG and move up in direct support of the line companies. Meanwhile, the 13th Armored Division moved in on the left and center of the Div front, preparing to pass through the infantry regiments and spearhead the attack.

Intelligence reports and prisoner interrogations had revealed that the enemy was organizing and regrouping his forces with considerable movement to the northwest. General Halsey called on his CT Commanders to push forward with all possible speed, exploiting every possible weakness of the Wehrmacht, and taking full advantage of its apparent inability to make a stand against our advancing elements.

It was on the 11th, in line with these orders, that the 303rd Inf continued its attack and reached the AGGER RIVER northwest of SIEGBURG. A crossing was made almost at once, and gains were made against heavy enemy fire including artillery, mortar and small arms. A factory site on the SIEG west of the city of SIEGBURG proved to be a difficult objective to take, but after a sustained fight of almost six hours in which artillery and flame-throwers played an important part, the position was secured and the entire CT formed and reorganized on the north bank of the AGGER. During this time both the 386th and 387th had advanced against light enemy opposition, and on the evening of the 11th all units were ordered to consolidate their front-line positions and close existing

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On 11 April, the 13th Armd Div passed through our lines, and the Div Medium Artillery Bn, the 389th FA Bn (Tender) also crossed the SIEG and moved up in line with the policy of closest possible support of the foot elements. That morning the Div Ron Troop had been given the mission of cleaning up the Div left flank along the east bank of the RHINE. It was a job that needed aggressive, speedy action in order to eliminate the exposed flank, covered prior to this time only by artillery fire. Less than six hours after the attack was initiated the objective had been taken - a small town on the east bank of the RHINE parallel to the forward elements of the 303rd. Again enemy resistance was light, and the first offensive mission of the Div Ron had been an outstanding success. Casualties throughout the entire campaign to that time had been surprisingly light, and the operation was proceeding according to plan.

On the morning of 12 April, in the zone of advance of the 386th Inf, elements of the 1st Bn on the right flank encountered heavy opposition at DRABENDERHÖE, a town situated in perhaps the most ideal spot for the enemy to make a defensive stand, in the entire Div zone. Situated on the highest terrain feature in the area; a center of communications and road-net hub, DRABENDERHÖE appeared to be the greatest single threat to the organized advance of the 97th. Yet, in order to prevent a wide gap from developing on the flank of the 2nd Bn which was not effected by the resistance at DRABENDERHÖE, only one company - "Charlie" Company - was at first given the mission of taking the town. The rest of the CT continued its advance with the plan of bypassing the difficult position, leaving it to be cleaned up by the single company of rifleman supported by a platoon of heavy machine guns and a section of 81mm mortars. "C" Company attacked, but after a short, fierce battle was thrown back without success and with heavy casualties. "Baker" Company was ordered to pull back slightly to assist in the next attempt to take DRABENDERHÖE, and at 1750, following an artillery barrage, another attack was launched, this time with complete success. "C" Company was given full credit for taking the objective and was commended for its aggressiveness, which, after only a few hours' delay had resulted in the continuance of the coordinated advance of the entire CT.

Operations continued against light opposition along the Div front until 14 April when the 303rd Inf, now in the vicinity of LEVERKUSEN, ran into heavy AW fire. At the same time road priority was given to elements of the 13th Armd Div in the zone of the 387th Inf, and progress was necessarily slowed, but only temporarily. By nightfall, gains of from six to eight thousand yards had been made along the entire front and occupation of LEVERKUSEN was effected. The following day, elements of the 303rd advanced to the nearby I.G. FARBEN INDUSTRIE, one of the world's largest chemical works. Only a few hours were required to overcome all resistance at the big industrial center, and as the foot troops moved on, the place was described as a complete wreck. Earlier air operations followed by artillery bombardment and finally the work of the Infantry, supported by armor, had reduced the one-time powerful industrial organization to a pile of smoldering rubble.

Continuing the advance northward, the DHUNN RIVER was reached and crossed, and by late afternoon on 15 April, the 303rd had reached the WUPPER RIVER, running east and west through the approximate center of the pocket. CT 386 had also continued its attack, but with only two battalions abreast instead of the usual three, due to a narrowing of the regimental zone. The 387th had gained another 6,000 yards, reaching the LEVERKUSEN-WIRME-SKIRCHEN AUTOBAHN. Prisoners taken during this period reported that the enemy's fuel supply in the pocket was almost non-existent. 580 PW's were taken during the day, bringing the Div total to 5,784. The 322nd Engr Bn reconnoitered the WUPPER for bridge sites and all batteries of Div Arty laid down barrages across the river in preparation for the attack which would close the RUHR POCKET.

On 16 April, all three CT's crossed the WUPPER RIVER. By this

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time enemy resistance was greatly disorganized and large masses of prisoners were being taken in all areas. CT 386 reached the outskirts of SOLINGEN, while CT 387 advanced three to four thousand yards north of the WUPPER and CT 303 advanced through HILDEN. It was at HILDEN that the 2nd Bn of the 303rd passed through the 1st Bn and entered BEURATH. In close support of these rapid advancements, Div Artillery, reinforced by the 762nd FA Bn, fired 97 missions and a total of 2,768 rounds.

The 326th Inf occupied SOLINGEN on the morning of 17 April, one hour after its new attack jumped off. The outskirts of DUSSELDORF were reached and a new order from Corps advanced the Div stop-line to a line north of the big city on the RHINE. Thousands of PW's were by this time clogging communications lines in rear of the advancing troops, and by order of the Commanding General, Div Arty was given the primary mission of collecting and disposing of them. It was an inglorious climax to ten days of close support missions, but was of vital importance. The roads had to be kept open to keep supplies and equipment coming to the front.

Taking of the city of DUSSELDORF by the 303rd Inf proved to be an anticlimax. Within an hour after the attack at 1400 hours, 18 April 45, two battalions of infantry had advanced completely through the city to the banks of the RHINE. All elements of the 97th had reached the new stop-line, and had consolidated positions. Plans for occupation were set up, and until 21 April all units reorganized, established military government, processed PW's and rested. A total of 21,791 prisoners had been taken. Total casualties for the 97th Inf Division, as the result of its part in the closing of the RUHR POCKET included:

	<u>Officers</u>	<u>Enlisted Men</u>
KIA	8	76
WIA	21	404
MIA	1	33
TOTAL	30	513

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 Executive Order 10501

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AFTER ACTION REPORT
of the
97TH INFANTRY DIVISION

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On 23 April 45, the 97th INFANTRY DIVISION (THERMITE) completed its movement by motor convoy, from the vicinity of SOLINGEN, GERMANY, and closed in its new area on the western CZECHOSLOVAKIAN frontier where it was to relieve elements of the 2nd CAVALRY GROUP and the 90th INFANTRY DIVISION. The Div CP was opened in a large city building at WUNSEIDEL, GERMANY, the same day, and became operational under XII CORPS, 3rd ARMY. Attachments to the Division included the 1135 ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION; 782 TANK BATTALION; 820 TANK DESTROYER BATTALION; and 444 AAA BATTALION.

Before the end of the day, featured by light snow-flurries and cold rain, CT 303 (TEAKETTLE) had relieved elms of the 2nd Cav Gp in its Regt 2; CT 386 (TEAMSTER) had closed in the vic of ARZBERG; CT 387 (TEAPOT) had closed in the vic of MARKTREDWITZ; 97th DIV ARTILLERY (TEACUP), with FA Bns under CT control and with the 389th FA Bn still on the highway, opened its CP at HOF and prepared fire plans to include the Div front, which proved to be an unusually wide front similar to that along the SIEG RIVER prior to the attack into what had been the RUHR POCKET. G-2 information revealed that along the new front, enemy activity had been confined to the building of road blocks, the preparation of minefields and demolition of bridges. Elements of the German 2nd Panzer Div, 508 AA Brig, 827 Landesschutzen Bn and other small, disorganized groups faced our troops, and within the first hours of contact demonstrated fighting ability and aggressiveness superior to that demonstrated by the average enemy troops in the RUHR. Ambushing activities and guerilla tactics were common practice, and the heavily wooded areas all along the front afforded ideal surroundings for such tactics.

On 24 April, Field Order number 3 was issued, and gave the Div mission as follows: 97th Inf Div (rein) will protect XII CORPS N flank to Phase Line "B" (overlay), will maintain contact with elms VIII Corps; will seize CHEB (EGAR), CZECHOSLOVAKIA; thereafter will rel 2 Cav Gp to Phase Line "C" (overlay) and will rel 90 Inf Div of security in Z to Phase Line "C". In line with this mission, CT 386 completed the rel of elms of 2 Cav Gp, then sent out patrols to determine enemy strength, and to establish a Line of Departure forward of their positions at that time. CT 303 improved and consolidated defensive psns in its Z while CT 387 reld elms of 2 Cav Gp and prepared to attack and seize ground which would prevent relief, or assistance of the CHEB garrison, followed by the attack on the city on order from Div. Thus, the 97th INF DIV was in a position to secure the L flank of 3rd Army and was prepared to attack and seize the city of CHEB, on order.

On the following day, 25 April, orders were received to extend the Div R boundary by the rel of the remaining elms of 2 Cav Gp which was on the Div R flank. CT 303 was ordered to move south to occupy this additional area, and was to be rel by the 97 Rcn Tr and elms of CT 386. The 1st Bn of the 303rd was relieved and moved S, while the 2nd Bn moved into a reserve psn at FRIEDENSREUTH. The 3rd Bn held line positions until rel by CT 386 could be completed. In the meantime, the 3rd Bn of CT 386 was detached to the 17 Armd

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Gp, Authority WNO 115017 n. the attack ~~of the CT~~ the Czech border.
 The By AT NARA Date 10-1-94 of the CT fanned out to include the area former
 mer and at the same time advanced against considerable
 resistance to take the towns of HALBEGRAU, EICHELBERG, and LIB-
 STEIN, and before midnight had made contact with CT 387, on its R,
 at the town of SCHIRNDING. Also during this time, the 2nd Bn of CT
 387 had assisted in the rel of the 2nd Cav Gp by moving into the
 positions which had been held by the 42nd Cav Sqd, adjacent to the
 CT's right flank, and simultaneously the 3rd Bn attacked to take
 CHEB, crossing the LD at 0900. The attack was launched in the face of
 heavy AW, mortar and 20mm fire, but supported by the 2nd Bn of CT
 386, progress was made, until by 2000 hours on 26 April, CHEB was
 taken and all routes into the city were secured. Enemy troops had
 been entrenched in the center of the town, but after heavy, close-in
 fighting were routed, and only small pockets of resistance remained
 to be cleaned out the following morning.

CT 30A (~3rd Bn), had completed the rel of 2 Cav Gp on the 26th,
 and had opened a CP at TIRSCHENREUTH. CT 386 had continued its ad-
 vance with two battalions abreast against heavy MG and SA fire, had
 cut Hwy 90 and occupied FRANT LAZNE before dark. The 2nd Bn had
 reached its objective considerable before dark and had successfully
 established contact with CT 387 on its R, near the recently captured
 city of CHEB. DIV ARTY had ably supported the attack of the two
 CT's with a 30-min artillery preparation early in the afternoon,
 softening up the city for the entry of the foot-troops, while the
 322nd ENGRS continued road reconnaissance, cleared mine fields and
 road blocks in the forward areas. On the Div L flank, the 97 RCN
 TR patrolled actively, maintaining contact with the 6th Cav Gp, and
 cleaning out small enemy positions in the wooded areas. Consider-
 able material was captured during the day, incl two 88mm Guns with
 ammunition taken by CT 386, and one 88mm with ammo and two prime
 movers captured by the 365 FA Bn. By the offensive action, the 97th
 was able to improve its front line positions which were now on
 higher ground and ahead of wooded areas which had previously hidden
 enemy movements and made possible, extensive guerilla action.

During 27 April, the Div continued to defend and patrol the L
 flank of XII Corps, cleaning up scattered pockets of enemy. Shifts
 in regimental boundaries were made to complete the relief of CT 303
 in the N part of the Div sector. By this time a new mission had been
 received from higher headquarters, and OI no. 14 ordered the 97th,
 less CT 303, to move S again, and upon rel by the famous 1st Infantry
 Division, to rel the 2 Cav Gp as the attack into Austria by 3rd Army
 extended its lines and necessitated bringing in another division to
 fill the gap. It was also on this date that BRIG GEN M. B. HALSEY,
 CG of the 97th, called a meeting of all unit commanders and warned
 them of the necessity for taking strong measures to clear up the am-
 bush tactics and civilian activity that had been harrassing Div troops
 in the rear areas and disrupting communication lines. All units were
 ordered to fight a tougher war against an apparently tougher enemy
 than we had contacted prior to this time.

Bad weather continued to hamper operations from the standpoint
 of bad roads and visibility, slowing the planned relief of the Div
 by the 1st Inf Div on 28 April. Meanwhile, 3rd Bn, CT 387, had made
 plans to attack dug-in enemy positions defending the CHEB airfield,
 and at 1500 hours, preceeded by a 30-minute artillery concentration,
 supported by 13 tanks from the 782nd Tk Bn and by two pls of the
 820th TD Bn, the attack jumped off. Results: Objective secured...
 towns of REICHERSDORF and DOL-SCHON taken...PW's in excess of 600..
 losses extremely light. The support of Div Arty, 322nd Engrs and
 high morale had helped to take an objective that was the first to
 receive publicity in the press for the 97th Inf Div in ETO. Troops

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of informed that they could write to the folks at home about their experiences in the RUHR up to and incl 16 April, and could head their letters - "Somewhere in Czechoslovakia". During this period all other units continued to defend and patrol in their areas. Movement instructions called for Div Trs of the 97th (-Rr Ech), atchd 444 AAA AW Bn Mbl (-); 782 Tk Bn (-); 820 TD Bn (-) to move to Weiden by mtr commencing 29 Apr 45.

With the mission of completing the move S and rel of 2 Cav Gp; maintaining contact with 1st Inf Div on L and 90th Inf Div on R; and patrolling Corps L flank, clensing up enemy activity in the Div Z, a new CP was opened at Weiden, which was centrally located for the new Div front, and proved to be the most convenient, and desirable location the 97th Hq had yet established in Germany. Also on this date - 29 April - elms of the 1st Inf Div completed its rel of CT 386, and by 1000 this date, the CT had completed its rel of 2 Cav Sqd. The 2nd Bn of CT 303 had adv 4,000 yds without opposition to consolidate the CT's front line positions in line with an order that had been issued extending the regimental boundaries 3,000 yds N.

The Div continued to defend in its Z, protecting the R flank of 3rd Army throughout period 30 April. CT 303 made a limited attack to close the gap between them and CT 386 on the R flank. The town of BARNAU was taken without resistance, and the 387th Inf closed into its new area, completing rel of 2 Cav Gp at 1000 hours. Active patrolling was maintained from two to four miles E. At 1130 hours, the 97th Div passed under control of V CORPS by VCGG after a period of one week under XII Corps.

Div mission 1 May 45 - to cont def of Z and push ahead to more favorable posns. In line with this mission, CI no. 15 was published with overlay prescribing new front-line posns to be seized, and with a plan for rel of CT 387 by elms of 2nd Inf Div which was to join V Corps on arrival from its former area. 3rd Bn, 387 Inf, reld elms of the 90th Inf Div on the R to the new boundary prescribed by Corps, while the remainder of the CT, and CT 386 made limited atks E to improve their positions. CT 303 moved its R flank fwd to maintain contact with CT 386. ROZVADOV, ST SEDLISTE, BEZDEKOV and 59 other villages were taken during the period. By order of the CG, and operations memo was published prescribing CT compositions for the Div.

On 2 May 45, another rainy day, the Div cont to consolidate and secure more favorable positions. Advances up to 9,000 yards were made on the L flank by CT 303 against local strong points, while "A" Co of the 386th, supported by tanks and TD's, took TACHAU, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, and CT 387 made plans to move to an assembly area in the vic of NEUSTADT. 97 Ron Tr closed at STORKNSTEIN. The following day a mobile task force was organized from the 387th Inf, and was given the mission of cleaning out rear areas within the Div Z. Roads and communications lines were being molested by active groups of enemy well behind our lines, and the CG had ordered the area to be cleared without delay. Rel of the 387th Inf was completed and the Regt reverted to Div Reserve in the vic of NEUSTADT by 1555. Advances up to 8500 yards were made by L flank elms of CT 303, and four 88's were captured after the gun-crews had been dug out of their positions with bayonets. 36 villages were taken, including MAHRING. Small, isolated groups of enemy were beginning to surrender without a fight, and the Divisions's PW total swelled to 25,986.

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ins were made on the Div R flank, up to 9,000 yards, resulting in the capture of ZD OHODOV and HAIMHAUSER. The remainder of the Div maintained def of their areas, actively patrolling, and prepared to attack E at 051000B May, to seize PILZEN, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. OI no. 17 prescribed the attack by V Corps, with the 97th and 2nd Divisions making the attack, but with a limited objective so that contact with the 1st Inf Div on the L could be maintained even though the 1st was not ordered to attack this date. CT 386 and 303 were to maintain contact through patrol activities of 97 Ron Tr, while the 387th Inf moved by motor to an assembly area in the vic of ST SEDLISTE, as Div reserve. DIV ARTY was ordered to give close fire support to the advancing CT's.

Attacking at 1000 hours, 5 May, CT's 303 and 386 made gains up to 24,000 yards against local strong points consisting of defended road blocks and pillboxes camouflaged as haystacks. Road blocks were reduced with the aid of the 322nd Engrs, supported by the 1135 Engr C Bn, and the assault guns of the 782 Tk Bn knocked out fortified positions, enabling the infantry to advance in spite of heavy mud and limited observation. OI no. 18 called for continuation of the attack at 060700B May to seize the final objective, a line running generally north and slightly west of PILZEN, while two Combat Commands of the 16 ARMD DIV passed through the 97TH to take the city itself.

It was on 6 May that the 97th Inf Div, advancing in its 2, reached its final objective after capturing MARIANSKE LAZNE, considered one of the finest spas in CZECHOSLOVAKIA, and liberated approx 120 communities, included in which were the towns of MESTO TEPLA, LESTKOV, MESTO TOUCKOV and KLADRUBY. CT 303 included in its PW bag, 6,000 German hospital patients in 30 hospitals, an engineer brigade of 1500 PW's and numerous smaller groups. The 2nd Bn of CT 386, the day before had seized intact the bridge at MITIKOV, which, reinforced by the 322nd Engrs, enabled the 16 ARMD Div to proceed without delay. A total of 10,696 PW's were taken during the 24-hour period, including Brig Gen SCHULZE, comdr of KG SCHULZE. OI's 19 and 20 were published with instructions for the limit of advancement and patrol activity. All patrols were to be officer-led and were to include a Russian interpreter. The procedure for accepting the surrender of large groups of Germans was outlined.

7 May 45...the 97TH INF DIV, at 0816 hours, received secret orders from V Corps, 3rd U.S. Army, to immediately cease offensive operations. All units were at once ordered to cease offensive operations and to prepare defensive positions while awaiting further orders. Large quantities of supplies and equipment were taken during the early hours of the morning, and the mass surrender of German troops necessitated the allotment of all available transportation to evacuation of PW's. It was on this date that the most notable prisoner taken by the 97th Inf Div in CZECHOSLOVAKIA, surrendered at the town of PERNAREC, to CT 387. General of Infantry KARL WEISENBERGER, Commanding General of the XIII Corps and Wehrkreis 13 with a party of 38 officers in which there were two General Staff officers and 11 Special Staff officers; 128 enlisted men and 5 female secretaries, formally surrendered themselves after previous arrangements had been made for the meeting with officers of the 387th. Enemy resistance had completely disintegrated in the Div 2. 5,153 more PW's were counted as the Div opened a new CP at KONSTANTINOVY LAZNE, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, its most advanced CP in ETO.

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OI no. 21, published 8 May, gave details for the securing of the Div area and the guarding of all enemy installations within the sector. This was closely followed by OI no. 22, prescribing the relief of the 97th by the 16th Arm'd Div upon announcement, after which all elms of the Div would assemble in areas outlined on an attached overlay. The Div CP was to move back to TACHAU, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, and as elms of the 97TH INFANTRY DIVISION were relieved by elms of the 16th Arm'd Gp, the movement to respective assembly areas began. In these areas men and equipment were to be made ready for the next assignment of the TRIDEKT DIVISION.

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97TH INFANTRY DIVISION

VITAL STATISTICS

PW's - total captured to 092400B May 45; 48,796

CASUALTIES

	<u>OFFICERS</u>	<u>ENLISTED MEN</u>
Last report 7 May 45		
KIA	14	161
DOW	2	9
DOI	--	---
SWA	10	236
SIA	--	15
LWA	27	327
LIA	1	83
MIA	<u>5</u>	<u>79</u>
TOTAL	59	910

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Quotes from ETOUSA Hq Memo, dated 6 March, 1945: The After Action Report "should be written for the period concerned as a single account of the operations from the unit commander's standpoint. * * * Concise narrative of execution. * * * Give the straight facts bluntly, briefly, and unmistakably."

These After Action Reports, therefore, are not intended to be more than a narrative of the actions of the Regiment except where a battalion action is a key or critical one for the progress of the Regiment.

For more details of battalions and companies, the discussion leader should contact battalion and company commanders.

AFTER ACTION REPORT

12 May 1945.

On 20 April, CT 386 was ordered to move from its positions in the REMSCHIED & SOLLINGEN - WUPPERTAL area, upon relief by the 121st Infantry, to occupy positions in the vicinity of ARZBACH generally along the CZECH BORDER to the vicinity of 1982.

Initially the entire frontage was to be occupied by the 2d Bn releasing elements of the 2d Recon Squadron. By 1800, 23 April, the relief was completed, 3d Bn was detached to Corps as Corps Reserve, 1st Bn remained in its assembly area.

Contact was established by Ln O's with the 303d Infantry on the left and 307th Infantry on the right. One company 782d Tk Bn, one company 444 AAA Bn, and one company plus one platoon 820 TD Bn were attached, and Ln O's reported.

2d Bn pushed forward patrols to establish enemy positions and was given a mission of establishing a line of departure forward of the line then held for an attack to the high ground N of CHAB, CZECHOSLOVAKIA. In order to do this elements of the Bn occupied the towns of HALLEBAD (212815), NICHLAND (205770), ALBACH (211795), and the west side of SCHIRNDING (211741).

The order to initiate an attack at 0600, 25 April, had been received at 2200, 23 April. The formation for the attack was decided by the width of the Regimental front and the G-2 Report on anticipated enemy opposition. The frontage being approximately 11 kilometers and the G-2 Estimate indicating light opposition, it was decided also to pass the 1st Bn through the lines of the II sector of the 2d Bn which were the positions held by Co "F" and a portion of Co "G". The Regimental attachments were broken down so that one platoon of medium tanks and two platoons of TD's were attached to each Bn and attached platoon of Engrs given to the 2d Bn in whose area mines and road blocks were anticipated. The balance of the tank company was held for maintenance due to the poor condition of their equipment which has caused by a protracted road march from the vicinity of ROUN, FRAN to its present position.

The attack was initiated against considerable small arms and automatic weapons fire but moved forward steadily. During this operation, in both Bns the theory of reconnaissance by fire was practiced by both Bn Comdrs, and highly satisfactory results were obtained. Instead of trying to push infantry against concealed sniper and machine gun positions, TD's, Arty, Tanks, and cannon gave direct and indirect support and eliminated much of the opposition. The infantry (Co "A") operating in the zone of the 1st Bn with the objective of FRIED LAZNE, moved forward riding tanks and TD's. Co "C" moved on foot behind Co "A" mopping up in the rear. Co "B" moved on foot and took the town of HALLAU (240829), and consolidated along Hwy No. 90.

Cos "E" and "G" in the zone of the 2d Bn, using the same method of advance, rapidly broke down opposition in the vicinity of MARKHAUSEN (240768) and PIRK (250758), and reached its objective - the high ground N of CHEB, before dark. Co "F", which had been passed through by the 1st Bn early in the morning, followed in the zone of the 2d Bn as Bn Reserve - not to be committed except on Regimental Order. By dark the night of the 25th, all assigned positions on the Div Objective were held, contact had been established and maintained with the 303d Infantry on the left and the 387th Infantry on the right. This contact point however was considerably to the W of CHEB and contact was lost during the following morning.

On the morning of the 26th, orders were received to shift to the N and relieve elements of the 303d Infantry in the vicinity of SEIB (1484) and AS (17907), when CT 386 was relieved by elements of the 387th. Relief was to be effective on the 27th April. The 387th CT apparently was delayed in taking its objective, the airport NE of CHEB and the town of CHEB, and contact had been lost along our forward line although it was still maintained to the rear. In order to properly establish contact and prevent infiltration behind our lines on the S which was being caused by the forward movement of the left flank of the 387th in its attack on the CHEB position, 2d Bn Commander order his right company (Co "G") to push patrols to the S and try and establish contact. This was done during the afternoon of the 26th, patrols going into the metropolitan area without encountering any personnel of the 387th CT. Late in the afternoon however, contact was established when the 387th succeeded in breaking into town from the S and contacted our troops who had encountered no resistance in their movement into town from the N. Due to Div Order, CT 386 was unable to occupy the town of CHEB in force from the N, thus only strong reconnaissance patrols for the purpose of making contact with the 387th were sent into the town. When division was notified that contact had been made, patrols were ordered to withdraw and positions along the assigned CT objective were consolidated and rear elements of the CT were moved to the new positions at AS and SEIB.

On the afternoon of the 27th, the Regiment was relieved by CT 387 and the entire CT shifted N to its new positions carrying out the assigned mission of active patrolling in zone and the breaking up of any enemy resistance within the area, and the combing of the area for bypassed groups.

Orders were issued at 0600 on the 28th for movement to the S to begin at 1400 upon relief by the 16th Infantry. The mission of the CT 386 was to relieve the 2d Cav Sq in the vicinity of PIENSTEIN (370269) (Sheet U7, 1:100,000 - GERMANY). The 2d Cav Sq was relieved as of 1000, 29 April, and CT 386 occupied positions, having made contact with CT 3E7 on its right, and by means of the 97th Ron Tr with the 303d Infantry on the left.

Tracked vehicles of the CT closed in the early afternoon of the 29th, and the original attachments continued. It should be noted at this point that the positions occupied were not entirely favorable due to the dense woods and the sharply rolling terrain. The Cav had occupied positions somewhat more favorable forward of the assigned line. It was therefore determined by CT Comdr to occupy the forward positions of the Cav rather than the assigned line, and the 1st and 2d Bns were ordered to move forward without deployment from their movement to the

new positions. Due to the fact that the CT arrived at night and it was not considered sound to attempt to relieve the Cav positions during the night, the 1st Bn who had held up on their assigned line having arrived later than the 2d Bn, simply occupied assembly positions during the night, and, as noted above, at 1000 the morning of the 29th, completed the relief of the Cav.

During the 29th and the 30th reconnaissance patrols were pushed forward in the Reg'l zone to determine enemy positions, and, at 0730 the morning of the 1st, a limited objective attack which had been coordinated by the CT Comdr, CT 386 and CT 387, was initiated to secure more favorable ground for a general assault the following day. This attack was necessitated by the fact that the unit on the right (2d Bn) found itself on low ground and the unit on the left (1st Bn) found itself behind a dense woods. The purpose of the attack therefore was to secure the forward edge of the woods line running generally S by E from 5040 to 5631. The Div objective having not been yet assigned by Corps, the CT 386 found itself in the position of being practically on its assigned objective for the general atk of the 2d of May by the time it had concluded its limited objective attack on the 1st. The chief opposition encountered during this limited attack was from automatic weapons and small arms fire in the dense woods. All roads running E and W through the woods and many lateral roads had been road-blocked by fallen trees and in one or two cases by mines. Practically all of these road-blocks were covered by automatic weapons fire. The theory of reconnaissance by fire was again employed with the usual success.

At 1515, 1 May, the left Bn was notified to hold its position pending further advance by CT 303d on the left. In the zone of the 2d Bn, the companies were generally along the N - S grid line 56, with Co "F" heading for VSL DVORGE. At 1935, the left Bn had consolidated its positions with Co "B" in ST. SADDLESTE (565390) and the balance of its position refused, with Co "A" on the high ground about SCHORNBELER (521125), and Co "C" supported by a reinforced platoon of light tanks extending E and W along its N flank, generally along E - W grid line 44. During the 1st of May, the 782d Tank Bn (-) had been attached on Regimental request as it was planned to mass the medium company and the light company with TD's and Engrs and make two encircling attacks, one in the zone of each Bn, to permit more rapid advance. Close reconnaissance by the Tank Bn Comdr determined the road-net would be the only method of advance due to the indifferent footing caused by recent rains and many lakes and small streams that interspersed the area, particularly in the zone of the 2d Bn. Therefore, one platoon of light tanks reinforced by the 105 How of the Tank Bn was sent to the 1st Bn as noted above.

During the night 1 - 2 May, the 3d Bn, which had been released by Corps, returned to Regimental control and went into assembly areas in the rear as Regimental Reserve.

Early the morning of the 2d, one company (Co "K") was moved to the N to relieve Co "C" of the 1st Bn in its mission of flank security. The light tanks reinforced were attached to Co "K", upon the relief of Co "C", and Co "C" was reverted to 1st Bn.

Although an attack had been planned for the 2d, the advance position of CT 386 made a coordinated attack unnecessary. The 2d Bn moved forward easily to its positions along the right flank with negligible opposition, occupied JUBOV (0734), generally N. to N. SADDLE (55372), and at 1500, the 303d having made contact with Co "A" the flank company of the 386th, the 1st Bn moved forward to attack the town of TACHOV (525442). This attack was completed with little trouble, a strong artillery preparation having been placed on the position prior to the attack.

The 3d Bn in reserve was given the mission of flushing out all woods to the rear, securing PW's and generally controlling the rear area.

By the evening of the 2d, CT 386 had secured the division objective in zone, and was consolidating on the position. Outpost patrols were pushed forward in both zones, road-blocks were reduced, and the CT CP moved forward to the town of St. SADDLE which was occupied by Co "B" of the 1st Bn as well as Co "D" of the reserve Bn which had been moved forward to garrison the town.

Snow, sleet, and light rains were frequent during the first three days of May, with quite cold temperatures registered during this period.

At 2030, 4 May, CT was alerted by phone to prepare for further operations against the enemy by 1000, 5 May. Mission - attack direction of PILEK with no left boundary given. The right boundary was to be covered by the forward movement of the 23d Infantry of the 2d Div, but the CT 386 was apparently to make the main attack, and it was evident that it was intended to be a rapid thrust. To reinforce the CT, the following units were attached - 782 Tk Bn (- 1 medium company), 120 TD (- 1 Btry), 322d Engrs (- 1 company), 389 PA (155).

CT Comdr's plan of maneuver based on the road-net and the terrain was decided as follows: - 2d Bn on the right, 1st Bn on the left, 3d Bn in Res. Attachments: - 1 company medium tanks, one company Engrs, one company TD's, each Bn. 2d Bn to thrust directly down Hwy 14. Initial objective - STRIBRO (789410). 1st Bn to attack from TACHOV initially cross-country to the ridge line E of the PIANA-STRIBRO road, thence SE on the high ground to positions overlooking STRIBRO from the rear. Due to last minute rearrangements caused by the written order received from Corps through Div, the attack was delayed until 1030 when the 2d Bn, Co "E" on the left, Co "F" on the right astride Hwy 14, followed by Co "G", moved against BOR (642355) and the 1st Bn attacked eastward in the direction of DAMNOY (640441). Initially the attack of both Bns was made on a broad front, BOR having been thoroughly covered by arty preparation prior to the advance with call fire being delivered all along the line with the attached artillery of the 922d FA in general support. The attack moved slowly at first due to this form of tactics. However, when BOR was taken at about 1300, the CT Comdr directed that a spearhead attack be made directly down Hwy 14 by the 2d Bn. Co "F" at once mounted on tanks and against minor opposition of automatic weapons

and small-arms proceeded towards STRIBKO. Co "D", the reserve, was mounted on TD's and followed Co "F". Co "E" which had been delayed in the northern part of the Bn boundary by persistent sniping and small arms fire from the woods, finally cleared the area and fell into column just W of KOMARNEVY (675375). By 2000, STRIBKO had been reached and invested by the leading company and the high ground N of STRIBKO was occupied by G and F Cos. The 1st Bn proceeded rapidly until they reached the river line of the MZE RIVER in their zone. In this area the banks of the river are extremely steep and wooded, and the level ground provided poor footing for the armor. The 1st Bn therefore had not proceeded much further than the eastern side of the MZE RIVER when night fell. The right Bn consolidated in the vicinity of STRIBKO and prepared to continue the attack at 0600 the morning of the 5th.

At about 2000, the CT was notified that the 16th Armored Div would probably pass through their lines in the morning to make the attack on PILSEN and that our objective was shifted from PILSEN to the high ground N and about 9 kilometers W of PILSEN. In view of the fact that these were not orders but only probabilities, the CT Comdr determined to continue the attack unless ordered otherwise. About 2000, four representatives, of the Czech Nationalistic Government, penetrated through the lines from PRAGUE and reported to the CT Comdr, and informed him that the way to PRAGUE was open and that we could continue that far as there had been a revolution in PRAGUE on the part of former CZECH Army Officers which had been successful. It was on this report and the S-2's belief that enemy opposition would continue to be negligible that the Comdr's decision to press the attack by daylight was made and the light tank company was ordered forward to be in position by 0600 to screen the advance and carry infantry. At 0500 however an order was received through the rear CP which stated that the 16th Armored could go through our lines, definitely setting our objective as noted above, and giving priority on the roads to the 16th Armored. The light tanks arrived at the required time fully gassed but had been preceded by the Recon elements of the 16th Armored. At approximately the same time, sufficient gas was brought forward to enable the attached armor of the CT to move forward. This delay was caused apparently by the fact that priority on high-test gas had gone to the Armored Div. By 0700 the CT was prepared to move but the main body of the 16th Armored was then passing through the reserve positions. The infantry was therefore ordered to wait further orders. At about 0900, there was a cessation of movement on the part of the 16th Armored on Hwy 14, apparently due to the fact that one March Serial had lost the way. When notified of this, the CT Comdr at once ordered his column to move and at 1000 the leading elements (light tanks with infantry) had cleared the town of STRIBKO and by 1100 were in the town of KOCOLUZY (983439) which was the limit of the advance to the east. Co "G", who had led the advance, was immediately pushed to the Div Objective in the vicinity of VESKRUZY (944524) and Co "F" was moved to the S of Hwy 14 in an attempt to secure a reported German General in that vicinity. This person escaped however and was afterwards captured in the zone of the 23d Infantry on the right flank of the 386th. Sharp fire fights were engaged in by both "F" and "G" Cos with non-descript elements of the German

Army and although "C" Co was in its position by 1230, the area was not secured until the 1st Bn had moved forward and cleared its sector of the zone at about 1500.

More than 2000 German prisoners were taken on this day and the 3d Bn, which had been following the movement by shuttling with its organic motor, was held at SIKISHU to police the rear area and collect the large numbers of PW's who by then were surrendering without resistance. It is worthy to note that 600 mixed Germans generally of the QM Dept surrendered themselves and their train to a Sergeant and two enlisted men of the Recon Co of the B20 TD Bn, and another group of 250 surrendered themselves to G Co in the N.

A "No advance line" was laid down by Gorp's and the CT continued to patrol up to this line until the termination of hostilities 8 May.

[Handwritten signature]
H. B. R.
R-3.

HEADQUARTERS 386TH INFANTRY

AFTER ACTION REPORT

22 May 1945.

The 386th Infantry moved as part of the 97th Division (Thermit) by motor convoy and train from CAMP HICKY STRIKE, FRANCE to REUSS, GERMANY, during the period 27 March 1945 to 2 April 1945. Forward CP opened at REUSS at 1600, 1 April 1945, with the main body of the Regiment closing at 2135, 2 April 1945. Regt was ordered to relieve the 378th Infantry WEST of the RHINE RIVER to be effected the night of 1 April 1945.

Due to the fact that the main body of the 386th Inf had not as yet closed in, the 322d Combat Engineer Battalion of the 97th Div was attached to the 386th Inf, and this unit completed the relief required by higher headquarters prior to midnight, 1 April 1945. The foot troops of the Regt arrived on the 2d of April, the 1st and 2d Bns occupied the line relieving the 322d Engrs, while the 3rd Bn, 386th Inf, went into reserve. The width of the Regt front dictated this disposition.

Patrolling was ordered and reconnaissance missions were given patrols from the Bns and to the Regt I & R Platoon. These recon patrols had great difficulty in accomplishing the job because of the swiftness of the river, the high seawalls that lined 90% of the EAST bank at DUSSELDORF, and the fact that it was the patrols' first missions against the enemy. However, most of the patrols were successful and brought back valuable information with regard to enemy installations.

One patrol, led by the I & R Platoon leader, was to cross the river on the wrecked bridge at night to find out what opposition might be encountered on the hostile bank of the river. This patrol was led to the middle of the bridge before it was discovered that a night crossing was impossible due to the condition of the bridge at that point. Machine guns opened up on the bridge and the patrol withdrew without losses.

Orders were received from Thermit to send Combat Patrols across on the night of 4 April, but these orders were rescinded when it was noted that there was not sufficient time for recon patrols to get information as to enemy strength and dispositions prior to the time set for the combat patrols to move out on the assigned mission.

During the period from 1 April to 4 April 1945, enemy activity consisted of harassing fire from light and heavy artillery, machine guns, flak guns, with some sniping. The enemy had good observation of the WEST bank and were able to cover river roads by fire when our vehicles or personnel appeared.

Relieving units should not occupy the same buildings or areas used by the relieved units as CPs, as these installations have been located and reported by

enemy agents still in the vicinity. Due to the accuracy of enemy artillery fire in the Regt CP area, it is believed that there was a forward observer located close at hand -- possibly using the spire of a nearby church for signals and as a reference point. There was little hostile action during daylight hours.

The 365th FA (Teaser), as direct support artillery, was prepared to fire pre-plotted missions on the call of our battalions. Several of these missions were executed satisfactorily, particularly in effecting the withdrawal of the I & R Patrol on the night 4 April when it was trapped on the bridge to DUSSELDORF. It was reported by civilian informers that the heavy artillery firing into NEUSS was located out of range of the 105s of Teaser. This information was verified and relayed to Division Artillery.

On 4 April the CT moved from its position opposite DUSSELDORF, being relieved by elements of the 101st Airborne Division.

The CT went into temporary assembly areas SE of NEUSS.

The main body of the 386th CT moved by truck at 0600, 5 April from NEUSS to positions SOUTH of the SIEG RIVER near OBERPLAIS via the ponton bridge across the RUINE at BAD GODESBERG. The new CP was opened at OBEREIPER at 060700 April, and relief of the 311st Infantry started at once with forward positions being occupied under cover of darkness.

The Regt thus came under the control of the XVIII Corps of the First Army, and prepared for operations in the MURK Pocket.

The Regt was originally disposed with two Bns on the line, 2d on the right, 3rd on the left. 1st Bn was in reserve. One company 820 TDs attached.

The Regt (-3rd Bn) attacked at 1200, 7 April, movement of the 3rd Bn being controlled by Div C until a later time. The scheme of maneuver called for the movement of the 2d Bn across the river at two points. Co F being already across the river in position which it assumed from the 311th Inf, with 1st Bn crossing in the rear under the protection of the 2d Bn, into the zone of Co F, then, as the 2d Bn moved forward, covering in the right flank of the 2d Bn, and, as the zone of advance enlarged, gradually taking positions generally abreast of the 2d Bn on its right. At 1543, the 3rd Bn was ordered to cross the river by Div, moving in its zone to the Regt and Div objective, displaced three Bns abreast from left to right - 3rd, 2d, 1st (-). Co A of the 1st Bn was held in reserve. This disposition was indicated by Div C, due to the width of the Div front. The Regt moved generally abreast during the 8th and 9th of April, with enemy strong points at RUPALCHTEROTH and FALDENHOFF on the right in the zone of the 1st and 3rd Bns respectively, offering stronger resistance than other positions. The objective was reached at approximately 1400, and at 1440 the CT was ordered to cease its advance, consolidate its position, and clear out rear areas.

The prisoners taken were miscellaneous Volkstrum troops who fought only as long as they could do so in safety, for when the Nazi SS at their backs withdrew, and the pressure in front became great, they would fire a few more rounds and surrender. This was typical of the enemy on many occasions throughout the action.

The enemy seemed to defend in small groups at key terrain features and in towns -- where the howitzers of the 365th FA did an excellent job with their HE, WP and time fire. Road blocks of all descriptions were encountered, felled trees, log barricade of uniform construction, road craters, blown bridges, etc. Some of these road blocks were mined and protected by sniper fire, but comparatively few mines were found, while some of these were dummy mines made of cross sections of logs. One 1/4 ton truck from I Company was torn to pieces and three occupants killed and one seriously wounded when the vehicle struck a Teller mine at the BITURF bridge. With regard to the road blocks, it was interesting to note that many were passed by our companies before they could be completed, and in some cases, before they could be assembled -- even though the material was ready to be dropped into place. Rapid forward movement, even when the men were practically dead on their feet from weariness and lack of sleep, undoubtedly prevented many casualties.

Enemy tanks were reported at HELLE, a small village in the zone of operations. An air strike was requested in order to remove this threat to our advancing troops. The danger was removed by several P 49s in spite of some opposition from flak guns.

A new order was received from Div which changed the zone of adv somewhat to the NW, and when the attack was ordered resumed at 0800, 10 April, due to the fact that a turning movement was involved, it was decided by the Regt Comdr to echelon the advance from right to left starting at 0800 for the 1st Bn, 1000 for the 2d Bn, and 1200 for the 3rd Bn. Due to a delay in transmission of orders to the 1st Bn, initiation of the attack was delayed until 0950. Co A had reverted to Bn control on the 10th of April, and Co S, which had been actively engaged at FELDERHOFT and SCHONENBERG, had been ordered to reserve. At 1215, the 2d and 3rd Bns were ordered to advance simultaneously, the 1st Bn having moved up almost abreast of the 2d Bn. The advance continued without outstanding opposition until 0700, 12 April, when the right flank of the 1st Bn encountered heavy resistance at DRABENDERHOHE. Operations against this town delayed the right flank until approximately 1750, when a coordinated attack by B and C Cos, after artillery preparation, was ordered by the Bn Comdr. In the meantime, the 2d and 3rd Bns were ordered to delay their advance in order to prevent too wide a gap from occurring on the right flank of the 2d Bn.

The attack of the 1st Bn against DRABENDERHOHE being successful, the balance of the 1st Bn moved forward but was unable to cover enough distance to regain contact properly with Co A on the left flank of the Bn, therefore the Regt Reserve Co (Co K) was ordered to move temporarily into the gap between A and B Cos until

the attack could be resumed. The attack was continued with the Bns generally abreast until the 14th when the Regt zone narrowed down due to contraction of the RUHR pocket. The 1st Bn on the right was withdrawn to Regt Reserve and Co K was released to the 3rd Bn. During the 13th, the 3rd Bn ran into heavy opposition N of BERG GLADBACH which held them up the best part of the day. When the 1st Bn was pinched out on the 14th by the narrowing of the Regt front it was decided by the Regt Comdr that after they had reorganized themselves, they would be moved to the left behind the 2d Bn and pushed in front of the 3rd Bn who had been delayed at BERG GLADBACH, to make the attack on the town of BURSCHIED where heavy opposition was expected. This maneuver was completed and the attack was made. It was repulsed however by heavy automatic weapons fire from the town and by 82mm fire from the N of the town.

On the afternoon of the 16th, the Regt Comdr decided that rather than permit the advance to be delayed by BURSCHIED, he would by-pass the 1st Bn in its attack on BURSCHIED by moving the 3rd Bn around the right flank of the 1st Bn and pushing it against the town of WITZELHEIDEN. In the meantime, the 1st Bn mounted Co C on TDs and rushed the town of BURSCHIED after a fifteen minute artillery preparation which included the use of WP. While Co C and the TDs attacked the town of BURSCHIED, Cos A and B were motorized on the antitank vehicles of the 1st and 3rd Bns and one platoon of the Antitank Company and moved through the zone of the 387th Inf (on the Regt left) across the WUPFER RIVER and occupied the towns of HONISCHIED and WIDDERT. The attack of Co C on BURSCHIED was highly successful as the troops moved through firing from the decks of the TDs behind the firing of the TDs .50 calibers and cannon (all being fired simultaneously). The 2d Bn on the right encountered some enemy resistance in the vicinity of HILGEN but moved rapidly forward and during the early part of the afternoon Co G crossed the river on foot, and, by 1800 on the 16th, the 1st and 2d Bns were prepared to assault the town of SOLINGEN.

Due to the vast numbers of prisoners being taken, the 3rd Bn was pinched out of the line between the 1st and 2d Bns, and established a PW cage at WITZELHEIDEN, and undertook the police and security of the rear areas.

The Engineers of B Co, 322d Eng Bn (Technician) were called upon frequently to repair roads and bridges, remove road blocks, and install trestle or ponton bridges. Most of the reported mines and mine fields proved to be false alarms, but it took time to check the given locations. Often the Engineers were harassed by snipers while moving forward and while making repairs. (On one such occasion, the Engineers located a Nazi staff group composed of a Lt. General and a dozen other officers and men. The machine gunner, a Colonel, was killed and the remainder captured). At night, they would have to furnish their own security which took just so many men from the job and thus delayed their assignment. Due to the pressing need for Engineers in such a fast moving action, it is believed that an entire Engr Co should be attached to the Regt; a platoon is not sufficient to do the job when speed is the key word.

On the 16th, instructions were received from the CG to complete the drive to the Div objective without delay and it was decided that since opposition was very light, that this objective which was simply a problem of logistics, could best be achieved by motorizing one rifle company, preceding it with the M-20's of the TD Co and the Regt I & R Platoon. It was realized that this was an unorthodox use of the M-20's, but in view of the fact that the bridges across the WUPPER RIVER would not at that time carry the TDs but would carry the M-20's, and since the TDs did not need additional security in their position on the S of the river, that these vehicles might be used. It developed however that the Bn Commanders of the 1st and 2d Bns had, on their own initiative, motorized units of their Bns and had pushed through to the Regt objective, and, by 1300, on the 17th, the vicinity of SOLINGEN and the Regt objective were thoroughly invested, and all units were engaged in collecting and evacuating prisoners, securing strategic public installations, warehouses, distilleries, arms, and displaced person centers.

During the day of 18 April, the CT was ordered to occupy the general area comprising the towns of SOLINGEN, REMSCHIED, and WUPPERTHAL. This move was completed by 1640, and preparations were completed for the military government of the new area and the CT was prepared for further orders and instructions.

The Battle of the RUHR ended, in so far as this Regt was concerned, when battle conditions ceased at 181640B April. Prisoners of War continued to move toward the rear, but the weary men of the 386th Inf knew that their first battle had been most successfully completed, and that they had earned their star.