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By Y.S.W. NARA, Date 5/17/89



194th Glider Inf. Regt. C-L-472

Interviewed: (4)

Major Carl A. Peterson. Regt. S-3.

Interviewer: Major J.^F. O'Sullivan. Place: Mulheim, Germany.

Time: 14th April, 1945.

The 194th Glider Infantry Regiment took off from three fields on March 24th, 1945. The first serial took off from A48 near Bretigny south of Paris with 41 gliders. The second serial took off from A55 near Melun with 160 gliders. The third took off from A58 near Coulemers between Chalons and Paris in 160 gliders. The troops emplaned at 0700, were airborne at 0745 and the leading serial reached the DZ area at 1025. Each glider carried 13 men and two pilots. In those loads containing jeeps there were four men and two pilots; in loads containing jeep trailers, 7 men and two pilots; in loads containing 57 anti-tank guns, three men and two pilots. Loads containing none of these would normally carry 13 replacements and equipment, plus rations, extra ammunition, and two pilots. Each glider carried a litter and blankets, ammunition of various kinds and water rations. The attachments to the Regiment were the 681 Field Artillery Battalion, Batteries B and E of the 155th antiaircraft battalion. Battery B of this latter outfit was anti-tank, Battery E antiaircraft. The first gliders began to land at approximately 1030 and ^{elements} ~~rements~~ were still coming in at approximately 1150. By 1200 the 194th Glider RCT was on the ground.

On the way there were approximately 10 abortions. Major Peterson and the Regiment had not had time to request adequate glider information from the Battalions. Consequently any data that



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of abortions would probably inaccurate. However he did state that the major cause of abortions were faulty wings, that is where the wing dropped off and in such cases all personnel were generally killed; ~~No. 2~~ Faulty Tail. ~~No. 3~~ Tow-rope breakage. He is of the opinion that 90% of malfunctions occurred west of the Rhine. He does know of one case, but does not know whether the personnel belonged to the 194th Glider Infantry or the 681 Field Artillery Battalion, in which the wing came off and all the personnel were killed. There were cases in which the gliders landed west of the Rhine in open fields and in these instances the men came across the Rhine and joined their outfit either on the 25th or 26th. In one case a Lt. Rhodes McCutcheon landed near Brussels but joined the Regiment on the night of the 24th-25th.

When about 10 miles distant west of the Rhine Major Peterson could see what was happening up ahead. He saw a four motor 'plane ablaze and three 'chutes coming out. He thinks but is not sure ^{that} it was a B-17. Several time-bursts were visible as as also was flak, tracers and smoke. He saw six C-47's flying west and several C-46's flying in the same direction. One of the latter was ablaze. As he said "It looked like we were going into something." As he approached the Rhine he could see the river below him and he could see that the LZ area was covered with smoke. The ground echelon and service elements of the Regiment had been waiting on the west side of the Rhine for three days and Major Peterson asserts that one officer from the Service Unit counted over 7 C-47's and C-46's being shot down. This same officer told Major Peterson that there was a tremendous reduction in the volume of anti-aircraft fire from the time of the English



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barrage to the landing of the gliders. The LZ was covered with haze and smoke which ~~made~~ Major Peterson assert^{ed} was of decided help because the anti-aircraft installations did not have a proper opportunity of getting in aimed fire. It hindered the gliders to a certain extent and in his opinion probably accounts for the fact that a few gliders did not get to the exact spot. The men of these gliders cleaned out the machine guns when they landed too far to the east and then worked forward west to the proper LZ.

The proposed LZ was a goose egg 256438 on the east, 236453 on the north, 218451 on the west and 231429 on the south. The area covered was approximately 4 square miles and all ^{of these} ~~of these~~ was not available because of scattered bunches of trees, canals, rivers, streams, ditches, houses, railroads and embankments. ~~There~~ The 2nd Bn. was the first serial to land and it landed in the south-eastern portion of the LZ with the mission of capturing the bridge at 236415 (near Wesel), at 239419, at 242422 and at 247425. The objective in securing these bridges was to hold them for the passage for the Regiment itself or any other troops in the drive towards the east and also to seal off the bridge-head. The 1st Bn. landed right on the heels of the 2nd Bn. and was to land on the north east part of the LZ with the mission of clearing bridges over the Issel canal, the main highway bridge at 254439, the secondary highway bridge at 241446, 239448, 238452, 236458, with the same purpose as the 2nd Bn. and establish a defensive line just short of the autoban. The anti-tank Company ^{and}

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Regimental Headquarters, were to land in the center of the LZ. One platoon of the Anti-tank Company was to give depth to each battalion and form a center of resistance against any intended breakthrough. The Anti-tank ^{mine} ~~gun~~ platoon was to move to bridge 236415 to near Wesel and man the approaches to the bridge, and ~~searching~~ further to mine the bridges going in a counter clockwise direction until they reached the bridge at 236458. The mine platoon sergeant and two men made a reconnaissance of the Wesel bridge, 236415 and returned to Company Headquarters. When he got to the bridge again the 2nd Bn. was fighting on the bridge approaches and in consequence the mining platoon did not mine this approach. This platoon did mine the other approaches until reaching 236458. The 3rd Battalion was to land on the south-west portion of the LZ and assemble in the woods at 215040 (center of position) and were not to be committed except on Division authority. In other words the 3rd Bn. was ^{a part of Division} ~~Regimental~~ Reserve. The 681 Field Artillery Battalion, B and E Battalion of the anti aircraft Bn. were to land in the center of the LZ and take up positions supporting the Regiment. ^P This operation was different from the Holland operation in one very important measure - the use of the Glider Pilots which was foreseen and solved. The 437 TCC Group were to assemble at 239429, dig in and repulse any breakthrough in the 2nd Bn. Sector. There were to give depth to the 2nd Battalion. The 435 TCC Group was to cover the area on approximately 600 yards frontage, passing southward and centering on 232431 with the mission of digging in and repulsing attacks from the south-west. The 436 TCC Group was to occupy an equal frontage of approximately 600 yards, facing generally south and centering on 224438 with the mission of digging in and repulsing



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attacks from the south, south-west and west. The 439th TCC group was to set up a perimeter defence around the 681 Field Artillery Battalion with the center at 234438. B and E Batteries of the Anti-Aircraft Battalion were to set up their weapons immediately, prepare to defend the LZ from any direction. When the Glider Pilots of the 4 groups were in position B and E batteries were to move in and support them. Battery B had eight 57 anti-tank guns and one 75 mm rocket propulsion anti-tank gun; Battery E had three platoons of 50 calibre machine guns on ground mounts.

The 2nd Bn. landed generally in the assigned area, but portions landed as much as two miles to the north. However the Battalion was 75% assembled within a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after landing. That is by approximately 11.10. The faulty landings were due to the ground haze and smoke because several of the glider pilots told Major Peterson that they could not see where they were going. The glider containing Captain Gordon G Gatch, C.O., Co. G landed in a small field at approximately 246454 where he was wounded, but ⁱⁿ ~~no~~ less than $\frac{1}{2}$ hour ~~passed~~ when he was under treatment in the Regimental Aid Station then located at 233438. In the meantime he had assembled more than 80% of his company and started them on their objective. ^{at the time} When he had actually landed $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles away he was back with the 1st Bn. within $\frac{1}{2}$ hour. Company G's objective was to seize and hold the right half of the 2nd Bn's area. They fought their way from the landing about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the north and reached the LZ proper. On setting out for their proper objective they were engaged in house to house fighting at approximately 600 yards from their objective. Their objective was to seize the bridge just outside Wesel and set up a defensive



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line about 400 yards south of the canal. They were also to contact the British on this bridge. ~~Because of the haze~~ Company G had heavy fighting all afternoon and this continued into the darkness. By approximately 19⁰⁰ to 2000^{hours}, 400 yards to the south and west of the bridge, separated Company G from the British Commandos. Our men could hear the British accent on the other side of the railroad track and they could see occasionally green berets. There was no doubt about it that the British could hear our men because our men shouted at them and were answered. But this 400 yards separating the two groups were bitterly contested by a group of approximately 300 youngsters (Major Peterson estimates that none of them were over 20 years old). Finally about 275 prisoners were taken out of the area after the most generous use of Corps Artillery and White Phosphorous. Several Germans were killed. The Company objective was to seize and hold the ground about 400 yards south of the canal, but in Company G's area the canal was under street level and was covered over by the road. In consequence the Company did not know that it had crossed the canal and accordingly fought out to 236412, more than 300 yards beyond its original objective. To do this they had fought all night and did not realize they had gone beyond their objective until they oriented themselves at day-light and had made contact with Company F.

Co. F landed ⁱⁿ at its assigned area with center at 239437, right in the middle of the Regimental Headquarters of the 1052 Infantry Regiment where they captured the C.O. and his entire staff within five minutes after landing. The C.O. of the Artillery Regiment Elbe and his Staff as well as the C.O's of supporting troops in the area were captured within 10 minutes after landing.



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per Our prisoners were in the ~~Regiment's~~ ^{our} hands within 15 minutes after landing and the consequent disorganisation amongst the Germans was tremendous. Nobody seemed to know what to do once the Commanding Officers and Staffs had been captured. Within a $\frac{1}{2}$ hour after landing Company F moved out generally south-east clearing the area as they went and reached the Issel canal which they crossed at the bridge, 247425. They continued generally east and cleared a line with the purpose of holding the bridges which were being captured. The bridge at 247245 was a primary bridge over the highway and the ^a canal, and in consequence Company F lost no time in reaching it. The bridge was captured intact. Also they contacted A Company on the left and G Company on the right. Company E assembled and went into Battalion Reserve with ~~the~~ center at 236424. The heavy machine guns and mortars went into position to support the attack along with the rifle men. One complete squad of heavy machine guns belonging to Company H was burned and lost when the glider was struck by an 88. Lt. Bernard Brunfield of the Heavy Machine Gun Platoon Section was in this Glider.

During the night G Company received repeated counter attacks through their area, all of which were repulsed although some enemy did infiltrate and cut communications between the company and the platoons. These wires were mended and communications restarted at day-light. The Company Commander was unable to contact his platoon leaders between 2400 and daylight, and was also out of communication with the Battalion and Regimental Hq. Patrols of Company E, on Regimental order, were sent out to determine the exact situation of Company G. They went through



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the area which G Company was to occupy but were unable to locate them. Actually G was out further than it was supposed to be because of the mistake at the canal. E Company reported its findings to Regiment and G Company was presumed lost. The platoon of Company E was sent, on Regimental orders, to block the area north of the bridge along the railroad tracks. This block was to extend about 500 yards because there were enemy in there and the Regimental Commander did not want them to get out and infiltrate within our lines. This platoon guarded approaches mainly from the south because the enemy's ^{could} ~~intentions were to~~ outflank G Company and come north along the railroad tracks. This was their presumed objective; actually they seemed to be milling around within their area because they were pinned on the south by G Company and on the west by the British and at the north by the 2nd Battalion. Without overmuch resistance E Company's patrol rounded up about 50 PWs and then went south to look for remnants of Company G. About 0700 Company E contacted Company G which was then sitting in positions about 400 yards further ^{at} than their original objective. Company F at daylight noticed a large body of troops forming for a counterattack generally along the road and woods in front of their position. This formation was broken up when Company F called for and received Corps Artillery on the position. On investigation it was found that there were more than 100 ^a dead, besides wounded lying in the woods and roads. In general the bulk of the fighting took place during the night on the 2nd Bn. front and mostly in Company G's area.

The 1st Bn. was on the left of the 2nd Bn. that is to the east and north east. 'A' Company landed in its proper area and had



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bridges or road junctions at 257431, 259436, 260442 and 251449. The initial fighting was moderately violent but at 1200 this had settled down to sporadic rifle and sniper fire. The result was that the battalion got fully organised before 1300. Company C landed generally in this area and was to move out and mop up the woods to the north-west at 231462. The opposition on landing was fairly intense but good progress was made until reaching the north-east line at 242453 and 242458. From this point on the fighting was heavy all during the afternoon and night. The enemy was using well dug in emplacements, having plenty of machine guns and many automatic weapons. By daylight on the 25th, Patrols of C Company had gone ^{out} there and mopped up the woods at 231462. The experiences of the Battalion ~~in this~~ was true of the Regiment ~~that~~ after the initial surprise during which the enemy was completely dis-organised, the opposition ~~became~~ stiffened with organisation. Company B landed generally in its area and moved into support ^{behind} ~~beyond~~ Company C along the Issel Canal, where it faced west, north west and north.

The 3rd Bn. was completely split up on landing. This is partially accounted for because it was the last in and gliders were all over the place from the other two Battalions. Elements of Companies I, K and N landed in the 1st and 2nd Bn areas but oriented ^{Hemselas} ~~this~~ quickly, due largely to the assistance given by the other two battalions. They moved west quickly. At this point Major Peterson is emphatic in stressing the services done by Regiment in directing the battalions and element thereof to ^{eu} ~~there~~ own gliders and organizations. Some elements



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of the 3rd Battalion which landed in the 1st and 2nd Battalion areas had more than two miles to reach their objectives but they did clear the area as they went and had joined their battalion by 1230. The main function of the 3rd Bn. was to mop up the area, but found next morning there were some SPs in the woods to their rear. In Company G's case Colonel James R. Perce, Regimental C.O. sent Company K along the rail-road track to the south-east to assist in blocking up the gap along ^{with} ~~the side of~~ Company E. On reaching the cross roads 226427 Company K had become so disorganised by small arms fire from all directions and numerous small unit actions in which two or three men were injured that the Company Commander, Captain Ballard, had completely lost control of his company. The Regimental Commander was advised and the Company brought back and re-assembled in the Battalion area. The disadvantages of Company K were augmented by the fact that it was a night move, made without prior reconnaissance. Captain Ballard estimates that they had run into several enemy units one of which consisted of at least 180 infantry, 1 tank, 1 SP gun and 1 armored car trying to breakout of the area. While all this was going on the 3rd Battalion was ^{engaged} ~~centered~~ in mopping-up activities throughout the Regimental area. ^P The Regimental Anti-tank Company was able to assemble and set up all its nine 57 anti-tank guns by approximately 1400. On landing they were immediately engaged in ground fighting but managed to fire several rounds ~~over~~ at tanks, SPs or armored vehicles as these vehicles were seen. All in all six vehicles and five tanks were knocked out in the area, but Major Peterson asserts



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that the credit for definitely knocking out these vehicles could not be given solely to the Anti-Tank Companies because some were hit by Bazookas, and White Phosphorous grenades played their part. B and E Batteries set up positions in the LZ immediately on landing. B Battery engaged a light tank and an SP within 20 to 30 minutes after landing, knocked out the tank and forced the SP to withdraw. By 1700 when the Glider Pilots were in position batteries B and E moved to their pre-determined areas in the south and south west of the LZ in support of the Glider Pilots. The 437 TCC Group of Glider Pilots assembled quickly by 1700, the bulk of its personnel were in their assigned area and disposed for defence. The organisation of the Glider Pilot groups was as follows: three captains from the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment acted as Liaison officers, one with each group. Each Glider Pilot group was commanded by the senior Glider pilot. Major James M. Wilson was the senior Regimental Liaison officer; Major Evans was the Wing C.O. and in command of the Glider Pilots. Beneath them came the three regimental liaison officers and the senior glider pilot responsible. Major Wilson was also the main adviser to all Glider Pilots and to Major Evans. The Glider Pilot CP was in the same building as the Regimental C.P. One of the three Regimental Captains was wounded, and the group (436) to which this wounded officer was assigned, never did get to its proposed area. The other two groups organised quickly and just as quickly reached their objective where they took up position. Credit for working out much of this Glider Pilot problem - and it was a problem



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in Holland - is given to Lt. Col. David T. Schorr, 194th Glider Infantry Regimental Executive officer. Colonel Schorr was instrumental in setting up in England a training school ^{with} ~~for~~ a training schedule for Glider Pilots. It was here they were instructed in the use of small arms, Tommy guns, Pistol, grenades, light machine guns, Bazookas and rifle grenades. Major Peterson thinks they were ^{not} instructed in the use of BARs because he does not think BARs were available. The senior Glider Pilot of the 436 group was killed in landing and the Regimental Liaison Captain was wounded with the result that the pilots became disorganised and nobody really took charge. Finally they almost got into their positions but there was a great time lag and if there had been enemy infiltration there would not have been anyone there to hold it. ^P Batteries B and E of the 155th Anti-aircraft Battalion moved into ^{H.I.} ~~its~~ previously determined positions in support of the Glider Pilots. During the night of the 24th/25th a group ~~to~~ ^{of} about 150 enemy infantry supported by a tank, SP and an armored car moving generally east and trying to get out of the pocket ^{to the 2nd line area} came up against the 435th Group. They approached within challenging distance, and on being challenged the column tried to break through. The pilots and the batteries ~~joined~~ ^{fire} and next morning it was found that there were over 50 dead in front of the position. This column of the enemy was later intercepted by elements of Companies E and G and further reduced. The last contact established with them showed, according to PW's, that only 30 infantry were left and all their vehicles had been destroyed.



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Major ^{Peterson} ~~Smith~~ landed outside ^{LZ} of the ~~LZ~~, to the north-east. About 10 minutes after landing ^a the Glider carrying anti-tank guns landed nearby along the road running north from the house at 248450. This glider knocked down the telephone wires, several fence posts and ran over fox holes occupied by Germans. The telephone poles and wires fell over two foxholes and ~~helplessly~~ emmeshed and entangled the occupants. Gliders came from all directions and in the confusion of gliders landing on top of them, gliders coming from everywhere the German became ~~helplessly~~ confused, and ~~couldn't fight~~. The occupants of the anti-tank glider had more than 30 prisoner within ^{30 seconds} ~~1 hour~~ after landing. Elements of G landed immediately to the west of Major Peterson, and the I and R Platoon glider, a medical detachment glider and three other gliders came into the area in no particular pattern, making a picture of extreme confusion. Once on the ground the men took off in the general direction of their objectives. Fire was coming from all round from 360° but it was mostly small arms and was not heavy in volume. On landing 95% of the men seemed to know what to do where-as the enemy seemed surprised and confused. The men moved towards their CPs, very quickly clearing the areas as they went. Major Peterson ^{lc} estimates that the ~~hottest~~ action took place in the center of the LZ rather than ^{on} the fringes, because it was the center of enemy reserve and Regimental CPs. Major Peterson also noted that ^{although} ~~when~~ gliders hit trees, ran into ditches and fences, ~~the~~ the men got out and took off.

Major Peterson saw two gliders being hit and ~~burning~~



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from anti-aircraft fire, one as it hit ground, the other caught fire in the air, but all the occupants got out of one and most of them out of the other. The enemy fire came from outside the area ^{and} ^{ed} consisting of occasional 88's and mortars with a preponderance of 20 mm fire. ~~from outside the area.~~ Occasionally they ^{contin-} would just sweep the area with machine gun fire. The enemy's most effective weapon was to mow down the load as it debouched from the glider. Major Peterson knows that two Glider Loads were treated in this way. That is, the entire loads were mostly killed. Casualties for the entire D day were 105 killed, 134 wounded and 66 missing. He is of the opinion that it is impossible to number exactly how many were killed in the landing ~~itself~~ because no statistics could be kept on that particular point.

Major Peterson estimates that there were more than 50 small unit actions taking place all at the same time in the area. The LZ was cut into several small fields, ^{smaller} ~~smaller~~ ^{1/2 c.} than anticipated and as shown on the maps. Due to good pilots he thinks that fatalities from crashes were held to a minimum; because of the terrain he estimates that approximately 35% of the gliders either hit trees, ditches, houses or some solid obstruction; most of the gliders ran through wire fences but the momentum carried them forward without much damage. The impression at the time was that about 1/3 of the Regiment was killed in crash landings but actually the fatalities were very few.

The general opinion of the soldiers themselves is "D day was very successful and a cheese cake compared with the Bulge." On the morning of the 25th of March the Regiment



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had by actual count captured 1153 prisoners.

By early morning of the 25th the bridge-head was fully consolidated, being in contact with the British on the west, the 513th on the north, but with an open flank to the south and east and north east. The 507 Parachute Regiment moved up ^{on the 25th} to the south, ~~having attacked to the east~~. During the day of the 25th the positions were further consolidated, with the enemy, who infiltrated further into the ^{with the} area in which the gliders ~~were established in the north east where Major Smith had landed~~, were mpped up. Companies B and C of the 1st Bn. warded off a continuous series of small scale counter attacks during the night of the 25th and 26th. By that time three out of five companies of the ^{enemy} 1221st Infantry Regiment were destroyed and only remnants of the other two companies left, as well as heavy casualties inflicted on the 1223 infantry Regiment, both of the 180th Infantry Division. The total of 1633 prisoners were taken in the bridge head area in the first few days. When the Division attacked towards the east the 194th Glider Infantry pushed on with the 513th in the north and the 507th in the south.

On the morning of the 26th the Regiment jumped off on Division order and reached the New York ^{place} line. This meant a push to the east, while the 507 came from positions to the left rear in the woods and fell in on the south flank of the 194th. Their objective was the autoban which was reached without over-much resistance by 1400. During these attacks the 1st Bn. was ^{on the} ~~to our~~ left, the 3rd Bn. on the right. The 2nd Bn. was in reserve following the 3rd Bn.



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Again on the morning of the 27th the Regiment ~~again~~ attacked to the east with an objective 5 miles distant, the high ground north east on grid line 36. By this time the 513 had been relieved on their left and its place taken by the 6th Airborne Division (British). The 6th Airborne attack simultaneously with the 507 on the right ^{the 194th} was given a wide front ^{with the 194th} to clear up to Wulfen - Lambeck. The 507 attacked, by-passed a lot of personnel and guns on the road which included an artillery battery which fired on them and on the 194th. ~~both regiments attacked on a wide front up to Wulfen-Lambeck.~~ The attack was pressed on quickly and a lot of enemy personnel and guns including an artillery battery fired on the 507 and 194th from the rear. The British 6th Airborne Division also attack with them on the 194th left. The Wulfen-Lambeck line was reached about 2030 hours that day, 27th March.

During the 28th the 3rd Bn. 194th Glider Infantry extended the line to the east and cleared the woods to Grid line 51. Meanwhile the Guards Armored Brigade ^(British) and the 513th British ^{Parachute} Regiment had pushed to the south and east and then to the north east on to Haltern, and ^{Dulmen} ~~Dulman~~. The 1st Bn. and two artillery Battalions were loaded on trucks near Wulfen and proceeded to ^{Dulmen} ~~Dulman~~, where it took up positions and at the bridge at Hausdölm. During the night of the 28th-29th the remainder of the Regiment moved into ^{Dulmen} ~~Dulman~~ where they were engaged in mopping up activities. On the 30th March, on Division orders, the 2nd Bn. moved to Nottain, 730700, where they were given the mission of clearing out the town and vicinity. The 513th was

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~~round right~~ ^{main highway} to the south on the ~~way~~ to Munster and the 6th Airborne Division (British) were several thousand yards to the north. Late in the evening of the 30th the 2nd Bn. was ordered again from Nottain to Nienberge, 880780, where they were ordered into the assembly area in the woods south of the town.

On the 31st the 3rd Bn. reached Appelhulsen, 780660, while the rest of the Regiment remained at Schepdetten, 780710. On the 1st April the 1st and 3rd Bn. joined the 2nd Bn. at Nienberge, from which point they proceeded towards Munster, with the 1st Bn. on the right, the 2nd Bn. on the left, the 3rd Bn. in reserve. At 1630 that evening, the 3rd Bn. was committed to take the road due east, to capture the bridges 948777 and 949766 over the Dortmund-Ems Canal. Both of these bridges are north east of Munster and they were to be captured and held for the purpose of facilitating movement towards the east. The progress of the 1st and 2nd Battalions was rapid and practically no resistance was encountered. The same was true for the 3rd Bn. The northern Ems canal bridge was blown when the Battalion was approximately one mile away, and the southern as the leading patrols got there. On the next day the Regiment proceeded in the attack on Munster, which was captured practically without resistance.

