

# OUR PART IN THE WAR

THIRD BATTALION



330TH INF

To Those Who Gave Their Lives . . .

## FOREWORD

To all members of the 3d Battalion, 330th Infantry — this booklet is a brief account of your activities in the European phase of World War II. It is not a resumé of what I or the preceeding commanders did, but it is a history of what you did. Your deeds were numerous and great were your accomplishments. You have made history and will continue to make history in any theatre to which we are assigned until peace once more prevails throughout the world. It has been a privilege and an honor to command a unit such as yours, and I feel sure that I am voicing the sentiments of all the preceeding commanders of this battalion when I make that statement.

Let us not forget our comrades who fell to make our endeavors successful. It is to them that this booklet is dedicated; our thoughts of them will live with us forever.

GEORGE M. SHUSTER

Lt. Col. 330th Inf

Commanding

## HISTORY OF THE THIRD BATTALION 330TH INFANTRY

### NORMANDY

This battalion landed on the continent at Omaha Beach, near Bayeux, on the 22nd of June 1944, after a short but intensive period of training in England and Wales. The next few days saw the battalion in bivouac near Grandcamp, and on the 27th it relieved elements of the 101st Airborne Division, southwest of Carentan. Later in the evening of that same day, we encountered our first enemy artillery fire and suffered our first casualties.

The 30th saw us in Regimental reserve, and on the 3rd of July we moved up for the attack. On the evening of the 4th, with "I" Company leading, "K" Company echeloned to the right, and "L" Company echeloned to the left, we jumped off in our first offensive action, attacking down the highway in the direction of Periers. Though meeting extremely heavy resistance from the fanatical, famed 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, the battalion reached its initial objective. This day and the following one will always be remembered by those of us who were with the battalion at the time. In this and the several days to follow the battalion encountered some of the fiercest resistance it was to face at any time. This served to prepare us for later action.

Then came the swamps, near Remilly Sur Lozon, crossed after a dirty, bloody struggle, where we left many of our buddies

The following account in no way pretends to tell the details of how you have made this story true. Surely we know, and many others know, the cost and heartbreak of our arriving where we are today.

This merely tells the facts, and each of you must fill in your own details; for it is your story, and you have made it possible.

behind. Our jump-off at noon on the 14th found us moving ahead quickly, but by night we were stopped in the middle of the morass, where we remained for three days. Finally, after bitter fighting and with many casualties, we came out on the high ground on the opposite side — again our objective was taken. Moving over to the left, we spent about a week in defensive positions around Le Barre, from which we jumped off down the St. Lo-Coutances highway on the 25th.

The 25th of July saw the beginning of the end for the Germans in Normandy and spelled disaster for them in all of France. The battalion attacked at 1100 the morning of the 25th, against crumbling German resistance, after a gigantic air bombardment had been laid down on the ground through which our attack would take us. Although for two days the fighting continued to be hard, on the 27th we broke through. The Germans fled before the terrific onslaught that was hurled at them along the entire length of the American front, and the race began. In many instances contact with the routed enemy was lost completely. Within three days after the initial attack on the 25th, American troops had broken out of Normandy and into Brittany at Avranches.

## BRITTANY

After the now famous breakthrough, we spent a short rest period in the vicinity of Marigny, and on the 3rd of August we moved by motor into Brittany, through Granville and Avranches, seeing towns for the first time that had escaped the total destruction of the villages around the beachhead.

We arrived at Dol after a quick motor move; advances which took weeks to make in Normandy were made now in a few hours. Then, while the remainder of the Division commenced its history-making attack on St. Malo, came our feint with the river crossing at Vicomte Sur Rence; we were recalled and set out motorized, to cross the Brittany peninsula, heading in the direction of Brest as part of Task Force "A". Our mission was to clear up the pockets of German resistance that remained in the scattered towns of the peninsula. Among these, Morlaix will perhaps be longest remembered, as here it was we learned something of the gratitude of the French people, who had been living four years under harsh German rule.

Our drive down the Daoulas Peninsula, extending south of Brest, started with the jumpoff at 1300 on August 25th. There followed a steady, methodical pounding of the German forces trying to maintain their hold on the peninsula, and we met up with our first strong opposition since Normandy. The Germans possessed all types of artillery, those we had known and suffered from in Normandy, and naval guns from the coastal defenses at Brest itself. Regardless of type, they took their toll.

By August 30th the battalion had cleared the Daoulas Peninsula to complete the encirclement of the port, and had started what was later to become a three weeks stay holding the peninsula, assisting in the reduction of the German "fortress Brest" by the VIII Corps.

## LUXEMBOURG

With Brest reduced on the 20th of September, and our mission completed, the battalion entrained at Landerneau on the 22nd for the Western Front. After completing a six-hundred mile move by train and motor, we arrived at Hettange Grande, in France, for a four-day period of extensive training on the Maginot Line, in preparation for the later offensives against the German Siegfried Line.

Following this training, we enjoyed a period of comparative relaxation in Luxembourg, as the battalion assisted in holding the Line along the Moselle River, patrolling into Germany in order to determine the enemy defenses for a soon-to-follow attack by another unit. During this time we had our first opportunity to think of things other than what the next day might bring forth. Bous, Flaxweiler, Luxembourg City, Mondorf — everyone who was there during the three months spent along the Moselle line will recall these towns with a certain degree of pleasure.

During the last few weeks spent there, we had been watching and waiting events along the Siegfried Line beyond Aachen — soon our call came. On December 2nd, we said goodbye to Luxembourg and the days we had known there, and entrucked for Germany. Then followed our relief of elements of the Fourth Division in the Hurtgen Forest on December 3rd.

## HURTGEN FOREST

The days that followed were a drastic change from those spent along the Moselle line. On December 10th at 0530 the battalion jumped off with "L" and "K" Companies to attack Strass. By 0730 the town had been taken, only to find itself cut off from the outside. The days that followed will not be easily forgotten. Time and again patrols with supplies and orders were sent out to contact the hard-pressed troops in Strass, only to return to report that it was impossible to reach them. The woods and hills surrounding the town held enemy troops who had infiltrated and others who had been by-passed in the dark hours of the early morning. They threatened the town from all sides, and for three days any measure of relief was impossible. Counter-attack after counter-attack with infantry and tanks was thrown back by the battle-weary, half-depleted companies.

On the 12th, a patrol succeeded in getting in medical supplies, and in the evening of the same day a 50-man patrol from "I" Company reached the town. Slowly the way was cleared, the town reinforced, the wounded evacuated, and by the 14th the town and surrounding ground were secure. Relief was accomplished, and on the next day the companies pulled back into a bivouac area west of Grosshau. Christmas day and the several days previous were spent clearing along the shores of the west bank of the Roer River against still determined but flagging German opposition. We had made the furthest penetration of any division thus far into Germany.

### THE ARDENNES

About this time the Germans had launched their winter counter-offensive and broken into Belgium and Luxembourg. Again our call came, and December 27th found the battalion in Belgium preparing to launch an attack as part of a plan aimed at cutting the Germans off in the western tip of the "Bulge" and forcing them to retreat.

On the 3rd of January, the battalion, attached for this action to a unit of the 3rd Armored Division, moved out at 0630 in a column of companies with "L" Company leading, riding tanks. Our mission was to cut the St. Vith-Houffalize highway, the last escape route of Runstedt's once mighty offensive. By 1530 the battalion had siezed Malempre, the first of a long and bitterly contested string of towns that marked our attack. From here on it was constant, bitter fighting in snow and freezing cold, pushing the enemy back step by step, yard by yard, town by town — through Fraiture — Regne — Langlir — Lomre. When we at last came off line on the morning of January 16th, after the fiercest fight of the entire campaign in our repeated attacks on Cherain, the battalion had suffered its heaviest losses of the war. But again, the mission was accomplished and Von Runstedt's boast that he would drive us to the sea was now merely an idle threat and no longer a possibility.

### THE RHINELAND

After a three-week rest and refitting period at Filot, Belgium, the battalion moved to Moulain for more intensive training preparatory to again entering Germany. With this training completed, the battalion returned to Germany on the 23rd of February, to cross the Roer River at Julich, at the newly won bridgehead of the 29th Division, and relieve elements of that division just outside of Julich on the evening of the 24th.

At 0515 on the 25th of February, the battalion jumped off with "L" Company in the attacking echelon to capture the town of Pattern some 3000 yards inland from the river, and by 0930 the town was taken against moderate enemy resistance. The battalion played an important part in securing the XIX Corps bridgehead in this action and enabled the armor to break through and exploit our penetrations.

After a brief holdup, there followed a motor march of twenty-four hours in our race northeast to the Rhine. We passed through towns taken sometimes only an hour before our entry — towns hastily bedecked with white flags. On the streets stood groups of men, women and children; now all eager to please — all curious — none openly belligerent. It was a new sight to us. Here we saw our first evidence that the Germans would not defend "every inch — every tree" as Hitler boasted. The morning of the 2nd of March brought us to the outskirts of the large industrial center of Neuss.

At 1230 of the same day the battalion moved out through the city with two companies abreast, "T" on the right and "K" on the left, to complete the clearing of the town. Then followed the night thrust into Oberkassel in our reach to the Rhine. The stillness of the silent, eerie ride through the dark, deserted streets of the city was broken by sporadic panzerfaust and machine-gun fire from the small groups of surprised defenders. When dawn came on the 3rd, we were a thousand yards from the Rhine, and by noon we had reached the river opposite Dusseldorf. We were among the first troops on the entire Western Front to reach the Rhine.

After holding defensive positions along the Rhine at Oberkassel, the battalion moved back to Holland on March 21st for extensive river-crossing training. In the mean time the Rhine was crossed in several places north of the Ruhr, and we again moved back into Germany, this time across the Rhine and deep into the country, in the wake of the 2nd Armored, with the mission of clearing out any by-passed pockets of resistance. On April 1st the battalion established defensive positions along the northeastern corner of the Ruhr pocket, which at that time was containing some 200,000 crack German troops who had been cut off in the great industrial region.

#### CENTRAL GERMANY

The 7th found the battalion again on the move, this time crossing the Weser River and pushing deeper into the heart of Germany. At 0125 on April 8th, the battalion started out on foot to make contact with the enemy and pushed some twenty miles to cross the Liene River. The battalion resumed its move on the 16th, as tanks, tank destroyers, trucks, jeeps, trailers, and foot-work rolled us up to the northern edge of the Harz Mountains, clearing out pockets of still resisting Germans as we went along.

The battalion started in on the reduction of the Harz pocket on the 13th of April and in the following days ran up against the long looked-for guerrilla resistance. Groups of SS, Wehrmacht, Volkssturm and large numbers of Hitler Youth, some looking not even in their teens, were met, armed with pistols, rifles, machine-guns and panzerfaust. Road blocks of fallen trees stretched across the mountain trails sometimes to a depth of 300 yards and had to be cut away time and again. The huge castle perched atop famous Brocken Mountain, legendary seat of the old Teutonic gods, was a nucleus of this resistance.

The Harz was the last futile stand, made by a cross section of all the German forces. Mile after mile of the mountain pocket was cleared out in our systematic sweeping to the south and east, and hundreds of prisoners taken from it by slow, consistent reduction of the enemy forces.



In the interim, elements of the division had seized a bridgehead across the Elbe River, and on 20th April the battalion moved from the Harz to take up positions along the bridgehead east of the river. We maintained these positions for the next two weeks, taking well over 2000 prisoners in a few days and making contact with the Russians.

At last on May 7th, after we had recrossed to the west of the Elbe, the long awaited news came that the war in Europe was over. Germany had surrendered unconditionally to the United States, Britain and Russia!

This was the part one infantry battalion played in the war — we are proud of our accomplishments. Multiplied many times over by like organizations fighting the war, it has spelled VICTORY!