

Barney Alford

589th Field Artillery/ A Battery
106th Infantry Division

On my request, Barney Alford writes the following account of his experience at Baraque de Fraiture as he remembers it after almost 60 years. Sgt. Alford was the section chief for one of the "A" Battery 105mm howitzers. After the battle Barney was appointed 2nd Lt (John Shaffner)

Written 31 May 1994

As we (the few men and guns of what was left of the 589th FABn) traveled down this road we came to a crossroad where we were told to halt. There was some other American soldiers in jeeps with some high ranking officers. All of our officers went forward and had a conference with the other officers. Someone in the jeep had a radio that enabled them to speak with a high ranking officer in some headquarters that seemed to know what was going on, and told us what we had to do to help slow down the German advance where we were.

After that conference was over Captain Brown came to us and told us to prepare to dismount as this was where we were going to be until driven off by superior forces. Captain Brown then told me to wait until he could find a suitable place to put my gun to best defend this crossroad. Soon he returned and had me place my gun in a fencerow where some young evergreen trees helped conceal it. My gun was pointing up the road that led to a village called Houffalize. Captain Brown told us a Panzer Division was assembling there and would be coming through at any time. He ordered me to keep my gun manned and ready to fire as soon as the enemy appeared. We should keep alert and observant at all times as snipers were in the area, and to never leave the gun un-manned. He also told us that we were supposed to get some additional manpower to help defend this position. This help did arrive later on.

One night we were told that a large German patrol was coming down the road from Houffalize. When they got quite near our positions we opened fire on them, killing and wounding many of these soldiers.

After this skirmish we came under more and more enemy fire. I had fortified my gun position quite well, and it gave us very good protection from artillery and mortar fire as well as small arms fire.

The final day of resistance came on a foggy day. The barrage that the Germans fired caused some smoke shells to explode, and this smoke mixed with the fog to make visibility in some areas very, very limited. As the battle continued it became evident that we would be over-run by superior numbers of men and machines. One of our officers shouted out that it was every man for himself. I told my gun crew that they could follow me, as I was going to try to get out of there. For a while some of the men did follow, but not very far. I worked my way through fog and smoke and some much needed cover to a thick forested area. Since I knew the general directions to our lines I kept walking and eventually came upon some of our men that had also managed to get out.

We finally came to the first outpost of the 82nd Airborne Division late that afternoon. They took us in and fed us since we had not eaten or slept for several days and then we got some much needed sleep.

Barney M. Alford, 106th Infantry Division, 589 FA, A Battery

***approximately 100 men and three 105mm howitzers at this time

source: *Barney Alford & John Schaffner*



Page last revised

James D. West

www.IndianaMilitary.org

jimdwest@centurylink.net