

Kenneth Reiter, SSgt
413th AAA Battalion

Created on Friday, 09 November 2012 09:06 | Last Updated on Friday, 09 November 2012 10:30 | Written by S/Sgt Kenneth REITER

We were Surrounded



The 413th Anti-Aircraft Artillery 90mm Battery "B" gun number two was stationed approximately 3 miles east of Bullingen, Belgium, in an area known as "Buzz Bomb Alley." At that time it was like a powder keg and we knew it. On December 10 we moved into this area being attached to the 106th Infantry Division. We were told it was a static area and our first rest area. With Christmas coming up our spare supply of trucks and drivers were loaned out to haul up supplies to the First Army.

So in this condition at the time we were caught with our pants down. However we did wipe out the Germans on December 12. They fired a buzz bomb in the alley about 20 feet from my gun crew and went the motor shut off we hit the dirt and slid some 100 yards and a cloud of dust, probably a dud. On the 14th of December it was about zero degrees and we got hit with snow, which no thanks to with the wind blowing came halfway up to the peak of our tents.



A 90mm AAA Gun near Malmedy, Belgium.

Then on December 16 at 5:30 a.m. all hell broke loose. Searchlights lit up the sky and the artillery began to fire with shells coming into the trees overhead. Now about this time the battalion commander arrived from headquarters and ordered us to march to Monchau. Our gun crew was given orders to fire until all our ammunition was used and then blow up the gun, if we were surrounded.

The spearhead attack by the Germans came between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. So help me, only God saved us from being massacred. During our retreat I could see off to our right many Germans with white uniforms moving across the snow-covered field about 400 yards away and about five yards apart. Germans headed for the rear of the road where our convoy had just left. I expected to encounter tanks followed by infantry. Our machine gun crew would protect us if the enemy would come around by my left flank. Sure enough we were surrounded!

On the other side of road German tanks began to appear and I gave the order to open fire. The third armored shell scored a direct hit resulting in a fireball and black smoke. We could not see much; therefore we immediately went to firing bursts parallel with the ground in hopes of stopping the German infantry. We fired numerous rounds and when the smoke cleared our machine gun crew had captured some Germans, one of them was an SS officer. All were taken to be interrogated. We were able to take all our equipment with the exception of 50 duffel bags and some personal belongings to our next destination.

Source: Bulge Bugle, August 2010

<http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/stories26/us-army25/741-we-were-surrounded.html>

Henri ROGISTER, webmaster