

Joe C. Patzner, T/5
589/SVC
Stalags IX-B (9-B) & IX-A (9-A)

Joe Patzner's Account of Battle of the Bulge

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I Was in the Service Battery. I went to Ft. Jackson at activation and I was there from start to finish until captured.

We went to St Vith to pick up some supplies on probably December 14, 1944. We then took supplies to "B" Battery and nothing happened that night.

The next day, we were taking supplies to Battalion Headquarters and saw an MP at the intersection and told him I wanted to head for Battalion headquarters and he told me to go straight ahead. I came to Bleialf, Germany and noticed it looked deserted, but kept going and started observing things and thought I could see something going on in the woods up ahead that didn't look right to me, so I went back to Bleialf and to where that MP was supposed to be and there wasn't anyone there, so I took the other road to where I thought headquarters was, got there and unloaded my supplies. I then went back to the bivouac area.

I think the MP that was supposed to be at that crossroad that sent me to Bleialf was killed by the Germans and they used his uniform and impersonated the MP and directed me in the wrong direction. I later found out that the MP had been killed.

"A" Battery called for ammunition for the howitzer and my truck was available, so they loaded the ammunition onto my truck and I got there, they were taking it right off the truck and putting it into the gun and started firing at some tanks. As soon as I was unloaded, they sent me out of there. I went back to the bivouac area. This was on December 16, 1944.

The German forwarding party came through the morning of the 17th of December and we had some casualties, so they loaded them into my truck and sent me to St Vith or Schoenberg to get medical aid wherever I could.

What happened to the Service Battery after that, I don't know except from what I have read. Apparently the main attack came through and they were getting circled by tanks, etc. and I had no communication with them after I left our Service Company.

I just got to Schoenberg where I ran into resistance. The roads were blocked with trucks and someone took the casualties and we were told to take our truck to the farmhouse on the west side of the road and stay there to see what happened. There were stragglers coming through and stayed with us at the farmhouse.

It was late that night when the Germans came, kicked in the doors and took us prisoners. We were taken to **Stalag IX-B at Bad Orb** on Christmas Eve by train and was strafed by American planes which I assume were returning from a mission and didn't know there were American soldiers aboard the train. I was there about a month and then we moved to **Ziegenhain, Stalag IX-A**.



Stalag IX-A Ziegenhain

Medical care was nonexistent. We were fed thin soup at noon and a slice of bread in the evening. Sleeping quarters consisted of beds made of boards 18 to 20 inches wide. One of these was assigned to each two prisoners. The men spent most of their time in these since their lack of food kept them so weak they were barely able to get up to walk to meals.

Some Red Cross packages that had been sent to prisoners in the camp never found their way into camp. The packages were later found in German homes by the prisoners after their liberation on March 28 or 29, 1945.

When the American tanks came through, they were throwing their "K" rations and whatever they had in their tanks to the prisoners. I lost down to about 110 pounds.

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<http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/stories26/us-army25/889-joe-patzner-s-account-of-battle-of-the-bulge.html>

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