

Maj. J. H. Quello and Small Patrol Capture 68 Krauts Surround Sleeping Germans and Give Complete Surprise

THE SEVENTH ARMY, France—"It was a long night's work," remarked Major James H. Quello, 1913 W. McNichols Road, Detroit, Mich., after returning from a motorized patrol through twelve villages where he captured sixty-eight Krauts.

Upon approaching a village the patrol would dismount and then enter on foot. In one village the patrol was walking down the main street when suddenly they heard the sound of hobnail boots coming toward them. Quickly the major and the few men with him "ducked behind a wall and waited for the approaching Heinies."

As the footsteps passed by, they jumped out and forced the surrender of the surprised Jerries. Learning that there were sixty odd Heinies still in town, the major led his patrol to where they were sleeping. Quietly they entered the house with drawn weapons and completely astonished the sleeping Krauts by forcing their surrender.

"I believe those Germans were just waiting for an opportunity to surrender," explained the major, "for they offered no resistance and seemed rather pleased by it all."

The major is married to Mrs. Mary Butler Quello who is now living with their two sons, James and Richard, at Southern Pines, N. C.; he landed with the 9th Division in North Africa, served with the fifth Army in Italy, and is now a battalion executive officer with the 45th Division.

World War II

Last Big Fight Pitted 180th Inf. Against SS Men

When most of the rest of Munich had been occupied and other troops were beginning to take it easy, 1st Bn., 180th Inf., was starting the toughest fighting it had seen since the Siegfried Line.

G-2 reports told them there were two battalions of SS men holed up in the old SS college and the only way to approach it was over 1,000 yards of open ground. To make the first battalion bitter was their recollection they had passed through the 3rd Bn. the day before, and the 3rd had rounded up a thousand prisoners with practically no trouble.

The SSers were prepared to fight for their old alma mater. They had dug nice dugouts in the open field, where they could sweat out the shelling, then come out into trenches to fire on the advancing Americans. Their defense consisted of rifle, burp gun, machine gun and 88 fire at close range.

To assist A and B Companies in the assault, the 20th Armored Division contributed about a dozen tanks - - and the men in them were in their third day of combat.

The morning's attack got under way with fire from our artillery, our 60 and 81 mm mortars and chemical mortars from 2nd Chemical Bn. The fire was not precisely adjusted, and the attack got nowhere. Observation hadn't been good.

First Bn. tried it again that afternoon.

"We showed them a powerhouse", reports Maj. James H. Quello, Detroit. "Company's A and B were behind and between the tanks. Two hundred yards behind came the armored infantry and half-tracks. Co. C trailed the armored infantry."

"Then we got the best artillery support I've ever seen", continued the major. "They were dropping smoke and HE just 100 yards in front of the tanks. The mortars, as usual, were right on the money."

Tanks and infantry went forward, firing to beat hell. The SS men lay in their holes until the tanks had passed, then got up to fire at the backs of the infantrymen.

Co. B went into the barracks and started mopping up, and Co. A outflanked its opposition, going through to B's right, where it belonged.

Some of the stalwart SS men had taken off when they saw what was coming, but many stayed. Seventy-five were taken prisoner and 80 killed.

One of the prisoners had been run over by a tank, covered with dirt, and just his mouth and nose were showing. He walked away with his captors, which might indicate how tough the 1st's opponents were.

The fight was filled with incident. Pfc's Homer Bearden and William Trimmer, Co. D heavy .30 MG men with Co. A, set up their gun to find they were directly across from a German 88 not far away. A duel ensued between 88 and MG. The 30 obviously couldn't hurt the gun, but Bearden and Trimmer kept the lead running for an hour, all through the fighting, and kept the 88's crew flat on their bellies, their gun out of the fight.

First Lt. William F. Jennings, New York City, took over one of the companies after four of its officers had been shot, reorganized it on the spot, and led it in the attack.

Capt. Edward L. Kerker, Shawnee, Okla., jumped into a hole to get out of sniper fire, found five SS men there, and took them prisoner.

The CO of Co. B led his men after he had been hit in the hip, and didn't quit until he was shot a second time.

Apparently, this was the last tough battle the 45th was to fight in the European war.

- Not true. We were completely surprised!

- I was the Battalion Commander

- Lt. Healy was shot in the hip and shoulder, but lived. I still have the letter he wrote me from the army hospital.

Selected by European Theater official historian, General S.L.A. Marshall, as best Infantry Division in Europe. (amphibious)