

from the diary of Harry Kelly - Co. A 319 Inf. WW 2.

Walendorf, Germany, a small agricultural town, located on the Luxembourg German Frontier. Walendorf is situated at the base of a great height, to its front flows the Auer River.

To the men of the 80th, this river and the hill which dominates the surrounding area, was the cause of a bitter contested battle. (Feb. 4th to Feb. 10th) The river usually slow was a raging torrent of water overflowing its banks. The height was fortified as the flat fields at the base. In this area was one of the deepest in depth of pillboxes in the Siegfried line with ground entrenchment running from pillbox to pillbox.

The first Battalion of 319th Infantry was assigned the task of taking Walendorf and the height beyond. B, C, and A Companies crossed the river in same order, with a great artillery, 50 cal. quad. mounts, light and heavy 30's and small-arm fire, the 80th moved forward.

It was 2 oclock in the morning, rain was falling, shells were flashing and screaming in the skies. B and C Companies went over under darkness. In the early morning mist, a voice came loud and clear, "let's go boys", up the hill a little further each time. "A" company was down at the water's edge digging in. The Germans shelled this position as it was daylight and the Germans having excellent observation, were shelling the boats and men on the water's edge.

"A" Company had one commissioned officer, his leg was broken by concussion and he was evacuated. Men started to drop as the artillery rained on the company. At this time came the order for "A" Company to get across the river, things were tough on the other side. The platoon sergeants took over. A squad of men would try to reach a boat, some arrived at the boats, others never did.

The Engineers whoever they were can never be given enough credit for their courageous work on the river. Wet and barefooted, they were an inspiration. Boats crossing the river were shelled with artillery and machine gun fire. A boat or two were hit directly.

Company "A" looked like a platoon as it formed for its assault on Walendorf. We watched the artillery fall on Walendorf as the rain fell on us. The taking of Walendorf was not difficult. The Germans had mined the streets and houses. A few men lost their legs because of these mines. Digging in was a problem because of the strength of the company. Daylight came and some of the boys were in such a position that literally the Germans were looking down their throats.

By this time the ridge on the right of Walendorf was clear of enemy troops. In the rear of Walendorf, the enemy held their positions. "A" company was ordered to take the height by frontal assault. The Germans let the

Under a smoke screen, the wounded were taken from the field and the troops rested in foxholes. The Germans shelled the house where the wounded were placed, setting it afire. The wounded were removed to a pillbox across the street. On the following morning, the company scaled the heights in the rear of their own held half. Crawling in communication trenches, three feet high, over dead and wounded, the boys moved closer and closer to the pillbox. Hand grenades were being readied. Finally a grenade hit the right spot and Germans began to run for the box. Men of the 80th took advantage of the position - out of the trenches and on down the ridge, cleaning out box after box.

The men of the 80th had moved forward. The heights of Walendorf, the river, this piece of ground on German soil was ours. Behind us were the dead, the wounded, the missing. They were our's too. There were many towns like Walendorf before us.

"The 80th Only Moves Forward".