

In the late afternoon of 29 November, the 3rd Battalion was advancing to the east just outside of the town of Hohwarth. Company L was in the lead when a roadblock and scattered artillery fire stopped the advance. Company I was then directed to go around the roadblock on a cart trail on the right.

The 3rd Platoon of Company I was in the lead on this march. We were moving through a heavily wooded area in double file down this crooked cart trail with our rifles "at the ready" and taking all precautions not to step on any land mines. Leading this advance were the four riflemen on the "point." The two scouts in the lead were Murray Bloom and Frank Dominianni, followed at about 20 yards by John Porter and myself (Harold Brock).

Having traversed about a quarter mile of heavily wooded terrain, the cart trail entered a large open meadow with about 400 yards visible ahead and about 100 yards of clearing on each side. Immediately, Bloom and Dominianni advanced across the center of this meadow with Porter and myself not advancing until the first two scouts were about 50 yards ahead. Porter and I then followed the lead of our first two scouts. When Porter and I were out in the meadow about 50 yards from the woods, the rest of the 3rd Platoon and I Company were following at a 5 to 10 yard distance between men.

Suddenly a whoosh from artillery fire passed within inches of my head, and exploded behind me in the woods. Immediately, I hit the dirt and rolled over twice to my right. I noticed that Bloom, Dominianni and Porter were also trying to take cover. The Krauts were firing 88 artillery at us point blank from the far end of the meadow! About half a minute would elapse before the next shell screeched overhead to explode behind me in the woods and beyond.

I pulled out my entrenching tool and started to shovel dirt while in the prone position. After about 10 minutes, when the shelling suddenly stopped, I had a slit trench deep and long enough to protect my head and body. I kept on the lookout expecting to see a German tank coming out of the woods on the far side of the meadow, but everything was quiet except for faint cries of "medic" coming from the woods behind me.

All four of us scouts were O.K. and we held our ground in the middle of the meadow. Finally, after about 10 minutes, I heard Lt. John Neely who was crouched down at the edge of the woods. He yelled at us to "pull back." I relayed his command to Bloom and Dominianni and they jumped up and

who was crumpled up next to a tree. Schwenden was unconscious and gasping for breath. I laid him down and started to remove his cartridge belt and backpack when he gave his last gasp. A few yards away, our squad leader, Sgt. Carl Minnear, lay dead. I then heard a yell for help. It was Aley Milburn our new medic that had just replaced Darrel Elliot who was shot the previous day before we took the town of Hohwarth.

Milburn, our medic, was badly wounded. His left arm was almost severed at the elbow and his left leg was profusely bleeding. I yelled and got John Porter to help me apply a tourniquet to Milburn's arm and a compression over his leg wound. Thankfully, Milburn had already given himself a morphine injection, and he helped direct his own first aid. We then jammed our rifles through the armholes of a raincoat and made enough of a litter so that we could carry our wounded medic on our retreat through the woods.

Still on the cart trail and with our medic on the litter, two German soldiers suddenly jumped out from the bushes right in front of us. They yelled "comrade-comrade" with their hands held high overhead. Quickly we motioned for them to march ahead of us toward the main road to Hohwarth. Porter and I were lucky that our rifles were hidden under the litter and that the big red crosses on the medic's helmet and chest prompted the enemy to surrender to an unarmed American medical team.

It was getting dark when we got to the main road and met some help from our own outfit so we could get a jeep for the wounded Milburn and have someone else handle the two Kraut prisoners. Porter and I finally found our platoon taking defensive positions at the houses at the edge of town facing the enemy. We were informed that Raymond Voss from the 4th heavy weapons platoon was killed and Joseph Jeffries and Frank Stingely were wounded. Also, our 3rd platoon had three wounded: Arthur Crossan, Jewel Stingely, and Walter Schneider. Later that evening, John Porter was injured when enemy mortar fire blew him off of his lookout position in the loft above the house.

A couple of tanks from the 10th Armored Division pulled up in the road outside of our house to cover us and provide defense for the night. We pulled our usual two hours of guard shifts with four hours off for sleep. We were all thankful for an end to a tragic day, and that we had survived.