

"ROOSEVELT'S BUTCHERS"

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS, ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCES
(SHAPE)

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of all Allied Forces in Europe, ordered General George S. Patton, Jr., Commander of the Third Army to attack and take the key German town of Trier, the gateway to Berlin.

Under Patton's command were five Armored Tank Divisions and nine Infantry Divisions with the 94th Inf. Div. being one of them. Most of this strength was concentrated in the VIII Corps and the XII Corps, which were engaged in closing the Battle of the Bulge. The 12th Armored Division was on its way to the Third Army but would not arrive in time to assist in reducing the Saar-Mosel Triangle (Saar-Mosel rivers). Only three Armored Divisions remained with the Third Army and the other two were transferred to the U.S. First Army. General Eisenhower ordered Patton not to use the armor unless a clear breakthrough had been made. That restriction placed the burden of the breakthrough right on the shoulders of the 94th Infantrymen.

General Walker (Commander of the XII Corps, to which the 94th Div. was attached) however had managed to come up with a Tank Battalion (20 light tanks) to be attached permanently to the 94th Inf. Div. This unit, the 778th Tank Battalion, was of great assistance to the 94th in breaking through the remaining pillboxes and bunkers of the Siegfried Switch Line. By February 19th it was clear to the Corps and Div. Generals that the 94th, fighting as ever in snow, cold, sleet, rain and against fierce German opposition, had penetrated the Siegfried Switch Line.

It was in the fighting in and around the town of Nennig that the 94th won its nickname of "Roosevelt's Butchers". As one after another German counter-attack was repulsed by the 376th Regiment (I Company was part of this 376th), the bodies of the German dead became a problem. Fortunately, the winter cold kept them refrigerated but there was no way to evacuate them. Finally we all piled them neatly in rows and in abandoned houses.