

*The Trail . . .
of the Timberwolves*



104th INFANTRY DIVISION

Camp San Luis Obispo

California



MAJOR GENERAL TERRY ALLEN

The Trail . . . of the Timberwolves

I.—ACTIVATION, TRAINING AND MOVEMENT OVERSEAS, 15 SEPTEMBER 1942 TO 7 SEPTEMBER 1944.

The 104th (Timberwolf) Infantry Division was activated at Camp Adair, Oregon, 15 September 1942. The sound basic training received under the able leadership of Major General Gilbert Cook, who commanded the division during its initial training period in Oregon, was reflected in the later battle accomplishments of the Timberwolves.

In November 1943, the division moved to the California-Arizona Maneuver Area, and in March 1944 moved to Camp Carson, Colorado for continued combat training. Night operation, weapon proficiency, reconnaissance, rapid maneuver, combat exercises, and battle teamwork were specially emphasized. "GET SMART and GET TOUGH" was the motto of our training, and the Timberwolves soon acquired an intensive belief in themselves and in their units. The principles of "FIND 'EM, FIX 'EM, FIGHT 'EM" were firmly inculcated

in all combat units. By August, the division was fully prepared and eager for combat.

The division sailed overseas and landed in Cherbourg, France, on 7 September 1944, the first American division to go directly from the States to France. Its first task was to organize and operate twelve motor truck companies, to transport sorely needed supplies to the front. In operating truck companies in the "Red Ball Express," the division was credited with having transported 40 per cent more cargo than any other division so engaged.

II.—CAMPAIGN IN HOLLAND, 15 OCTOBER TO 8 NOVEMBER 1944.

The 104th Division joined the First Canadian Army in Belgium on 15 October and was attached to the I British Corps, in the critical operation to free the port of Antwerp, so essential to the continuing invasion of Germany.

From its first baptism in battle on 23 October 1944, the division demonstrated its combat effectiveness by its rapid maneuver and bold night operations, and skillful use of artillery and air support. On 2 November the Timberwolf Division spearheaded the I

British Corps in forcing a difficult crossing of the Mark River at Standaarbuiten in Holland, and during the subsequent drive to the Maas River, which involved an advance of twenty-three miles over difficult, partially flooded ground, against bitter opposition.

The esteem in which the Timberwolves were held by our British Allies was indicated by the following extract from a commendation received from Lieutenant General G. G. Simonds, commanding the First Canadian Army:

"Once the 'Timberwolves' got their teeth into the Boche they showed great dash, and British and Canadian troops on their flanks expressed the greatest admiration for their courage and enthusiasm. When they again meet the Boche 'all hell cannot stop the Timberwolves.' "

III.—DRIVE FROM THE SIEGFRIED LINE EAST OF AACHEN TO THE ROER RIVER IN GERMANY, 16 NOVEMBER TO 14 DECEMBER 1944.

With its mission in Holland completed, the division moved on 7-8 November to relieve the 1st U. S. Infantry Division in the Aachen

sector in Germany, while our 414th Infantry was still engaged in Holland. Thus, without break, the division continued in close contact with the enemy.

The division was then assigned to the VII Corps of the First U. S. Army, in the impending drive to the Roer River. The VII Corps also included the 1st and 4th Infantry Divisions, 3rd Armored Division and elements of the 9th Infantry Division, all veteran and battle-ried units. The initial assigned mission of the Timberwolf Division was restricted to the seizure of the vital enemy area of Stolberg, Eschweiler and Weisweiler. This involved the reduction of vastly difficult terrain, including pill boxes, highly organized defensive works and a succession of fortified industrial areas and factories, all stubbornly defended.

The division "jumped off" in this operation, regiments abreast, early on 16 November and after ten days of continuous day and night attacks attained all assigned objectives. Lieutenant General J. Lawton Collins, commanding the VII Corps, stated in a commendatory message to the division that the great industrial area of Stolberg, Eschweiler and Weisweiler was cleared in a much shorter

time than had been expected, and with a surprising minimum of losses.

The division was then given the additional mission of driving clear through to the Roer River. This involved the most bitter fighting yet encountered by the 104th Division. The attack of the 413th Infantry against Inden, of the 414th against Pier and Schophoven and particularly the night attacks of the 415th against Lucherberg and Merken, all featured this operation. Success was attained only by unrelenting pressure and the continuing skillful use of night maneuver and stubborn assaults.

The Timberwolf Division led the way in the drive of the VII Corps to the Roer River. By 14 December, all assigned objectives were captured and "buttoned up." In a subsequent message, General Collins stated that he regarded this operation, involving the seizure of Lamersdorf-Inden-Lucherberg-Pier-Merken Schophoven, as one of the finest pieces of work accomplished by any unit of the VII Corps since D-Day. The importance of this accomplishment is apparent, since it was attained just two days before the German break-through, thirty miles to the south.

**IV.—ACTIVE DEFENSE ON ROER RIVER,
14 DECEMBER 1944 TO 22 FEBRU-
ARY 1945.**

The division was then transferred to the XIX Corps of the Ninth U. S. Army, and occupied a defensive sector on the Roer River, opposite Duren, from 16 December 1944 until 3 February 1945. An aggressive defense blocked this critical German highway to Aachen. Timberwolf patrols completely dominated the Roer. During this period 63 Timberwolf patrols crossed the Roer under adverse weather and terrain conditions and attained valuable information.

**V.—THE DRIVE TO COLOGNE, 23 FEB-
RUARY TO 7 MARCH 1945.**

On 3 February, the 104th Division reverted to the VII Corps, in the First U. S. Army in preparation for the drive to Cologne, on the Rhine River, the last barrier defending the heart of Germany. The Timberwolves were directed to force crossings at Duren, Birkesdorf and Huchem-Stammeln, to seize the commanding terrain five miles east of the Roer, so as to provide a running start for the 3rd Armored Division in the breakthrough to Cologne, and thereafter to follow the armored units in close support.

Under cover of darkness, at 0330 on 23 February, elements of the 413th & 415th Infantry, with skillful engineer assistance and closely supported by artillery, anti-aircraft, tanks, TD's and 4.2 mortars, forced a crossing of the flooded Roer River, seizing Huchem-Stammeln, Birkesdorf and North Duren in their stride. This brilliant night operation was characterized by the highest degree of determination, combat discipline and team work. By the next night, all infantry regiments and supporting units had crossed. Four effective night attacks were launched later that same night by battalions of the 413th, 414th, and 415th Infantry against the sorely pressed enemy. Again the Air Corps in close teamwork blasted gaps in German positions and communications. Final objectives were thus attained well ahead of schedule. On the night of 25-26 February, two battalions of the 413th and 414th Infantry by bold night attacks seized Morzenich and Golzheim, five miles in advance of the assigned objectives. This assured a quick exploitation by the 3rd Armored Division.

The 3rd Armored Division passed through our advancing infantry on 26 February. The Timberwolves, following in close support

reached the Erft Canal, 25 miles northwest of Cologne, on 28 February. In conjunction with the 3rd Armored Division, the Timberwolves then stormed over the Vorgebirge Hills and seized the southern half of Cologne on 7 March 1945. This teamwork established a lasting comradeship with the 3rd Armored Division. This conspicuous victory was only made possible by the continuing day and night pressure of unremitting previous combat.

VI.—DRIVE TO PADERBORN AND ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE RUHR VALLEY, 22 MARCH TO 1 APRIL 1945.

The 104th Division moved to the Remagen Bridgehead and crossed the Rhine at Honnef 22 March, resuming operations under the VII Corps, with the 3rd Armored Division and the 1st Infantry Division. The immediate mission of the VII Corps included a break-through in the Remagen Bridgehead, followed by an encirclement of the Rhur Basin on the west flank, then occupied by the enemy in great strength. This mission of the 104th Division, in conjunction with the 1st Infantry Division, was to break the crust of German defenses just beyond the Remagen Bridgehead, and

thereafter to follow in close support of the 3rd Armored Division. The activity of enemy armored units and the grouping of hastily reorganized infantry units indicated enemy intentions for a close defense in our sector.

Initial enemy resistance encircling the bridgehead was overcome in a series of night attacks by the 413th and 415th Infantry on 23 and 24 March, in conjunction with the 1st Infantry Division on our left. The 3rd Armored Division passed through our infantry elements on 25 March, with the Timberwolves following in close support. The by-passing tactics employed by the armored units against enemy centers of resistance necessitated our infantry following in close support, in order to profit by the rapid advance of the armored units. The rapid advance of the 413th Infantry on the right created a deep penetration, necessitating close coordination with the 415th Infantry on the left, which encountered stiffer enemy resistance.

An estimated dozen enemy divisions were trapped in the huge pocket formed by the approaching juncture of the First and Ninth Armies near Lippstadt. Commencing on 28 March, enemy pressure increased on our exposed left flank in the sector of the 415th

Infantry. The 415th Infantry with strong supporting attachments, quickly deployed to defend the Medebach area to meet these enemy threats.

Strong enemy counter-attacks, to release the trapped divisions in the Ruhr Pocket, continued against the 415th Infantry on our left flank from 31 March to 3 April. Finally on 4-5 April the 415th Infantry, reinforced, in a series of day and night attacks drove back the enemy spearhead and destroyed the enemy attacking elements in the hard-fought battle of Kustelberg. Protection of the left flank of the VII Corps was taken over by the 9th Division and the 415th Infantry continued its forward advance to the Paderborn area.

VII.—FINAL DRIVE TO THE MULDE RIVER — 7 APRIL TO 21 APRIL, 1945.

From the Paderborn area, the drive was resumed to the east on 7 April, wherein the division continued to operate with the VII Corps. This drive included an uninterrupted advance of 175 miles in fifteen days through the heart of Germany. Particularly outstanding during the last phase was the capture of Halle by the 414th Infantry after a rapid

night maneuver and a series of day and night attacks through that defended area, the capture of Delitzsch by the 413th Infantry and finally the seizure of Bitterfeld by the 415th Infantry in a series of vigorous day and night attacks.

The continuing unrelenting pressure of the Timberwolf Division during this last drive resulted in an early contact being established with the Russian 118th Division east of the Mulde River on 26 April. This culminated our combat operations during World War II.

VIII.—READJUSTMENT AND RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES.

During the weeks following the cessation of hostilities the division was occupied with urgent and extensive duties in the handling of many thousand released allied prisoners of war and displaced civilians. Further duties included the temporary occupation of numerous German towns, in which all Timberwolf personnel displayed a highly disciplined attitude.

Following a quick movement to Camp Lucky Strike near Le Harve, France, the division embarked for the United States on two ships, the S. S. Monterey sailing 26 June

and the S. S. Ericsson on 2 July. Reassembling at Camp San Luis Obispo, California, the division on 15 September observed the third anniversary of its activation.

IX.—ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 104th DIVISION.

The battle accomplishments of the Timberwolf Division are a matter of official record of which you and your friends and relatives may well be proud. Your combat operations have been characterized by the tenacity, skill, teamwork and devotion to duty of all combat and service elements and by the efficient functioning of all staff sections. The devotion to duty of the service and administrative sections of the division have contributed materially to the success of the combat units.

In building up the combat efficiency of the division through many months of arduous training, you have adhered to the four primary objectives of our training: **DISCIPLINE**, which involves alertness, cheerful response to orders and directives and unselfish teamwork by all concerned; **TRAINING**, which involves the close application of the most painstaking effort to be experts in the technique of modern battle; **PHYSICAL**

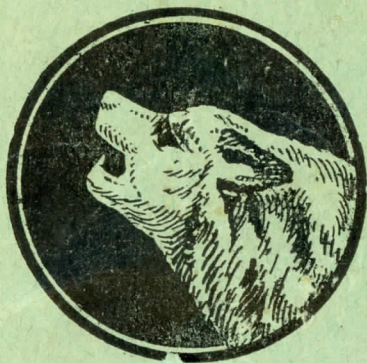
FITNESS; and, above all, an intensive **BELIEF IN YOUR UNITS**. In this last item, particularly, our division has been most outstanding as we all feel completely assured that we are second to none as an American combat unit. The same application of these principles will be equally effective to all of you when the division is demobilized and you return to civilian pursuits.

We should pay tribute to our gallant dead, whose sacrifices made on the battlefield have contributed so materially to our eventual success.

In closing, I wish to express my personal thanks and gratitude to all of you for your unflinching loyal support at all times and particularly during six and a half months of arduous combat. You have lived up to our battle slogan, "**NOTHING IN HELL CAN STOP THE TIMBERWOLVES**," and . . . **NOTHING IN HELL DID STOP THE TIMBERWOLVES**.

TERRY ALLEN

"Chief Timberwolf"



**"Nothing in Hell
Can Stop the
Timberwolves"**