

70TH INFANTRY DIVISION HISTORY -- MAY

For the first week of May the 70th Infantry Division continued under Third Army for administration and operations. The Division was in Third Army Reserve with the mission of protecting lines of communication, security, counter-intelligence, and military government.

On 1 May the Division CP was in Frankfurt. The locations of component units were unchanged. The 274th Infantry CP was at Schierstein with its 1st Battalion CP in Biebrich, the 2nd Battalion in Darmstadt, and the 3rd Battalion in Dueschlag. The 275th Infantry CP as well as the battalion command posts remained in Frankfurt. The 276th Infantry CP was in Lehr with its 1st Battalion in Goldbach, the 2nd Battalion CP in Wurgberg, and the 3rd Battalion CP in Karlstadt. The 70th Division Artillery CP was in Bad Nauheim; the 882nd FA Battalion CP in Usingen, the 883rd FA Battalion CP in Butzbach, the 884th FA Battalion CP in Krenberg, and the 725th FA Battalion CP in Assenheim. The 270th Engineer (G) Battalion CP was in Bad Schwalbach. The 370th Medical Battalion remained in Hochst. The 70th ESN Troop continued to occupy Hanau.

On 3 May, in compliance with Third Army order, OI # 44 was issued. It directed one battalion of the 275th Infantry to relieve Division Artillery

which was to assume responsibility for a new area. The movement was effected by 5 May. The 3rd Battalion, 275th Infantry closed in Frankfurt and moved to Bad Nauheim. Division Artillery CP opened in Bruchmann; the 882nd FA Battalion CP in Gedern, the 883rd FA Battalion CP in Gersfeld, the 884th FA Battalion CP in Salmuster, and the 725th FA Battalion CP in Munderstadt. During the same period the 438rd AAA AW Battalion moved into a new area. The Battalion CP opened in Erlangen.

On 7 May OI # 45 was issued to the units. It directed the 274th Infantry to relieve Division Artillery and the 276th Infantry; the 275th Infantry to relieve the 274th Infantry; the 276th Infantry to relieve the 270th Engineer (C) Battalion and the 275th Infantry; Division Artillery to relieve elements of the 275th Infantry; the 270th Engineer (C) Battalion to relieve the 274th Infantry; and the 70th Recon Troop to relieve the 275th Infantry. The boundaries of the new areas were changed to conform to Landkreis boundaries, and command posts were to be opened in county seats wherever possible. The reliefs were effective 13 May.

News of the unconditional surrender of Germany on 8 May was received with joy but also with the realization that only half of the job had been accomplished. Impromptu celebrations were held by units, tempered by an awareness of the difficult struggle being waged against Japan.

On 9 May the 70th Infantry Division passed to control of the Ninth Army and XIX Corps.

During the period 9-11 May elements of the 276th Infantry were relieved by the 99th Infantry Division, and began movement northward into the

new area. The 276th Infantry CP closed at Lohr and opened at Nastatten. Components of Division Artillery were moved. Division Artillery CP opened in Bad Orb while the 882nd FA Battalion and the 785th FA Battalion moved to Hamm and Bad Soden respectively. The 70th Recon Troop, upon relief by the 882nd FA Battalion, moved to Wirges.

OI # 46 of 11 May rescinded OI # 45. The entire division area was redefined in accordance with the new plans of higher headquarters in which security areas were to conform to existing political structures. The designation of Nassau province as 70th Division area of responsibility necessitated several movements within a few days to close the divisional units into the province. The complex nature of this operation is reflected in OI # 46. It directed the 274th Infantry initially to relieve elements of the 276th and 275th Infantry and, when relieved in turn by the 3rd Armored Division, to relieve elements of the 270th Engineer (C) Battalion, the 275th and 311th Infantry in new area. The 275th Infantry was directed to relieve the 274th Infantry and, after relief by XIX Corps Artillery, move to new area. The 276th Infantry was directed to relieve elements of the 270th Engineer (C) Battalion and the 311th Infantry in the new area. The 70th Division Artillery was directed to relieve the 70th Recon Troop and elements of the 275th and 276th Infantry and, upon relief in area by the 99th Infantry Division and XIX Corps Artillery, move to the new area. The 49th AAA Brigade was ordered to relieve elements of the 311th Infantry and, upon relief, move to its new area.

On 14 May the Division assumed responsibility for security and

maintenance of law and order throughout the province of Nassau. The units were occupying the following landkreise: the 274th Infantry in Limburg, Usingen, Untertaunuskreis, Rheingaukreis, Weisbaden; the 275th Infantry in Obertaunuskreis, Maintaunuskreis, Frankfurt; the 276th Infantry in Unterlahnkreis, Sankt Goarhausen; the Division Artillery in Hanau, Schluchtern, Gelshausen; the 70th Recon Troop in Unterwesterwaldkreis; the 49th AAA Brigade in Oberlahnkreis, Wetglar, Dillkreis, Beidenkopf; and the 433rd AAA AW Battalion in Oberwesterwaldkreis. Effective this date, the 49th AAA Brigade, under command of Brigadier General E. W. Timberlake, passed to control of the 70th Infantry Division.

Training Memorandum # 8, issued 15 May, provided a training program for the troops within the scope of security responsibilities, pending the Division's redeployment status. The thirty day program consisted of military training, athletics and recreating, and orientation. Concurrently, an educational program was in the process of organization in accordance with directives from higher headquarters.

On 16 May, OI # 47, pursuant to instructions from XIX Corps, established the policy for the security of the Division area. The Area Security Plan integrated the existing divisional procedures within the Corps Policy. A greater, more detailed burden of responsibility was placed upon the lower echelons. Installations to be guarded were defined and closer coordination between adjacent units was insured.

On 18 May the 70th Division CP closed in Frankfurt and opened in Oranienstein, near Diez. On this date the 274th Infantry CP was in Schierstein;

the 275th Infantry CP in Frankfurt; the 276th Infantry CP in Nastatten; the 70th Division Artillery CP in Bad Orb; the 70th Recon Troop CP in Wirges; the 370th Engineer (C) Battalion CP in Bad Schwalbach; the 370th Medical Battalion CP in Höchst; the 433rd AAA AW Battalion CP in Westerburg; the 49th AAA Brigade CP in Weilburg.

Upon request from higher headquarters, the 276th and 275th Infantry were ordered to furnish guards on trains transporting Russian and French Prisoners of War and Displaced Persons from Frankfurt and Fulda.

OI # 49, issued on 23 May, in accordance with Letter of Instruction 155 from XIX Corps, designated the area comprising Hannau, Friedburg, Maintanus and Obertanus Landkreis, and Frankfurt and Offenbach Stadtkreis as the SMAEF Enclave. The area in the vicinity of SMAEF Headquarters was defined as SMAEF Security Area. The 275th Infantry was directed to relinquish its responsibilities in Frankfurt and to relieve the 274th Infantry. Upon the completion of relief, the 274th Infantry moved into a new area.

The relief was effected by 25 May. The 275th Infantry CP opened in Kamberg, the 1st Battalion CP in Usingen, and the 2nd Battalion CP in Limburg. The 2nd Battalion, 274th Infantry opened in Niederwallut.

At the close of the month elements of Division Artillery effected changes in locations. On 26 May the 555th AAA AW Battalion and the 422nd FA Group came under control of the 70th Division. The 555th AAA AW Battalion, attached to the 49th AAA Brigade, opened in Herborn. The 422nd FA Group, attached to Division Artillery, opened its CP in Bad Soden. The components of the Group, the 2nd FA Battalion and the 252nd FA Battalion, opened in Sterbfritz and Steisau respectively.

During the month, coincident with the normal security functions of the Division, the G-2 Section maintained its work of counter-intelligence, investigation of intelligence targets for higher headquarters, screening of German prisoners prior to release from the Division German Prisoner of War Discharge Center, and reconnaissance of towns in the Division area. At the request of the SHAEF Countersabotage officer, Lt Col Lord Rothschild of the British Army, two agents of the 70th CIC Detachment were made available to pursue undeveloped leads in the sabotage Sonderkommando W-12 "Werewolf" ring, uncovered by the Division Detachment in April.

The work of the two agents, in cooperation with other agents, in the period 18 to 31 May, culminated in the apprehension of 69 individuals and leads on 98 others. All of these individuals either attended or were connected with the SS School for sabotage training at Tiefenthal, Germany. Thirty one cell units were also uncovered.

The 70th CIC Detachment meanwhile apprehended and arrested 127 persons on the SHAEF automatic arrest list. In addition, 11 others were detained as potential security menaces.

During the first eight days of May to the date of cessation of hostilities, the Division processed 1011 prisoners of war. The 70th Division had captured 8302 prisoners in the period of 26 December to 8 May in the operations in France and Germany.

The administrative work of the Division, attendant upon the changes in the general military situation, increased greatly during the month. The numerous tasks confronting the administrative sections, most of

which demanded urgent attention, consisted of redeployment and readjustment of personnel, the evacuation of Allied prisoners of war and displaced persons, the organization and administration of a German prisoner of war discharge center, and military government.

The complex nature of redeployment and readjustment of personnel necessitated an enlargement of the staff. The careful inspection and supervision of personnel details was successfully accomplished. A token shipment of high point enlisted men was effected.

The increased tempo in the evacuation of the many thousands of Allied prisoners of war and displaced persons from camps in Limburg, Weisbaden, Wetzlar, Burg, Hanau, Schluchtern, and Gelnhausen was facilitated by use of air, railroad and motor transportation. Eight thousand Russian prisoners of war were evacuated by train from Fulda.

The Division German prisoner of war discharge center was created and administered by G-1 and the Adjutant General. The Center was established on 27 May in Diez under command of Major A. L. Tucker, the Assistant Adjutant General. An American staff of 5 officers and 11 enlisted men supervised the German cadre of clerks, typists and interpreters. A military intelligence team was placed at the Center to screen the German prisoners processed and to weed out those on the automatic arrest lists, SS troopers, important party members and security menaces. The Center expedited the return to civilian life of many critical agricultural, mining and transportation workers from among the German prisoners.

At the end of May the 70th Division, augmented by a considerable

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body of attached units, occupied the Province of Nassau, less the SAAR Euclyve area. The Division CP continued in Orenienstein. The locations of command posts of units were as follows: the 274th Infantry in Schierstein; with its 1st Battalion in Riebrich, the 2nd Battalion in Niederwallut, and the 3rd Battalion in Bad Schwalbach; the 275th Infantry in Kamberg; with its 1st Battalion in Usingen, the 2nd Battalion in Limburg, and the 3rd Battalion in Hofheim; the 276th Infantry in Nastatten; with its 1st Battalion in Hahnstatten, the 2nd Battalion in St. Goarshausen, and the 3rd Battalion in Diez; the 70th Division Artillery in Bad Orb; with its 883rd FA Battalion in Hanau, the 883rd FA Battalion in Meerholz, the 884th FA Battalion in Gelshausen, and the 725th FA Battalion in Bad Orb; the 70th Esm Troop in Wirges; the 270th Engineer (G) Battalion in Bad Schwalbach; the 370th Medical Battalion in Montabaur; the 433rd AAA AW Battalion in Westerburg; the 49th AAA Brigade in Weilburg; the 11th AAA Group in Asslar, the 110th AAA Gun Battalion in Weilburg, the 134th AAA Gun Battalion in Wetlar, the 116th AAA Gun Battalion in Wetlar, the 689th AAA AW Battalion in Braunfels, the 863rd AAA AW Battalion in Weilburg; 103rd AAA Group in Dillenburg, the 361st AAA AW Battalion in Weidenhausen, the 109th AAA Gun Battalion in Breidenbach, the 142nd AAA Gun Battalion in Herborn, the 413th AAA Gun Battalion in Dillenburg; the 585th AAA AW Battalion (M) in Herborn; the 422nd FA Group in Bad Soden; the 2nd FA Battalion in Starb Fritz, the 252nd PE Battalion in Steinau; and Company B, 509th MP Battalion in Idstein.