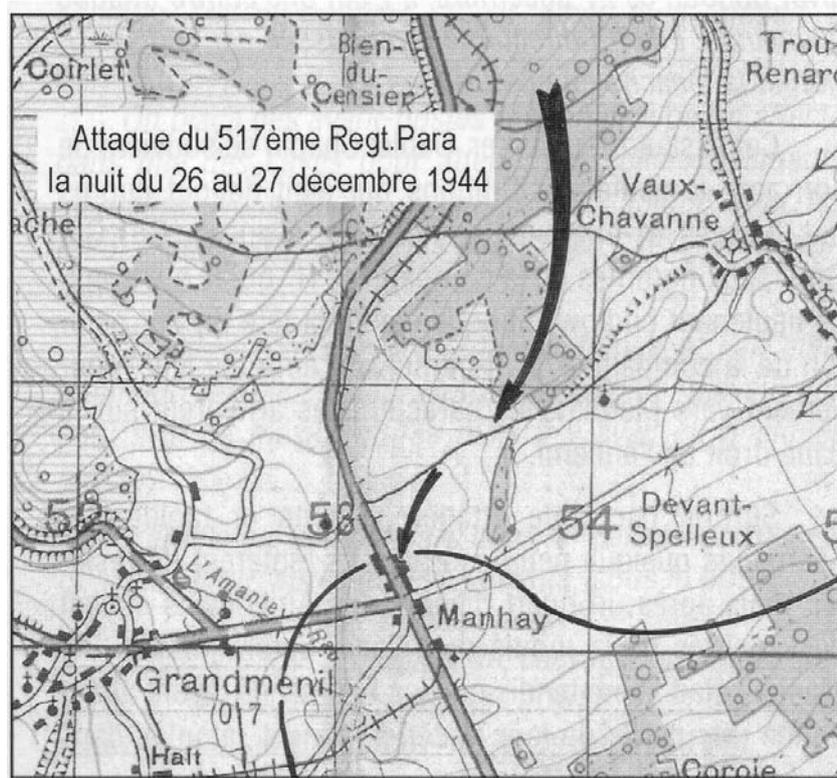


The battle of the crossroads

The veterans tell the story by Eddy Monfort

Wednesday, 27 December 1944: A night attack is launched on Manhay.

It is 2 o'clock in the morning when the paratroopers of the 517th regiment are on the line of departure, at the edge of the woods located a few hundred meters northeast of the perimeter of Manhay. In 15 minutes the men from the companies "I" under command of Captain James P. Birder and "H" under command of Lt. Richard C. Jackson will launch the assault. They will be followed by company HQ and men belonging to the 596th airborne engineering company.



At 2 hours, the artillery s for ten minutes, spilling on and around Manhay nearly 5,000 shells. After 5 minutes pause, a second barrage will be sent to the locality. That's when the paratroopers started moving from their line of departure.



Lt. Howard E. Hensleigh was an S-2 officer (intelligence) at the HQ company of the 3rd Battalion, 517 PIR. In December 1944, he was 24 years old:

On 25 December, we moved by truck into a small village where the combat group and it's HQ had a good night's sleep. This was our Christmas. The next day, Captain Hooper and myself did a reconnaissance to the south in case we need to move over there, what we have done in the evening.

That day, December 26, I remember that we arrived at an isolated building in the woods. The family had apparently left the house in the precipitation. A large Christmas cake still stood on the table in the dining room. We cut it with our bayonets and ate it with pleasure and continued our journey in the hope that this family would be healthy and safe.

The 3rd Battalion had to be ready for an attack on Manhay. We had all the equipment, ammunition, necessary weapons and winter clothing. Joe Calder, our supply officer was always what we need. Despite everything, nothing and nobody could protect us effectively from cold.

Colonel Paxton went ahead for a reconnaissance. I was leading the convoy when we arrived at the assembly area. I met Captain Albin Dearing, the officer "intelligence" of the combat group, that was to recognize the land around Manhay. We discussed briefly the situation of the enemy. We know each other very well because since I was the S-2 of the battalion, the captain and myself had made many patrols together. In the meantime, Colonel Paxton was ordered to attack, which came directly from General Ridgeway. Our orders were to take and hold Manhay at all costs. When moving toward the front, I met Colonel Paxton who ended one of its recognition in the company of Kelly, his driver. Their investigation had been halted by artillery and gunfire from Manhay and its surroundings. Then our group was marched to a village occupied by elements of the 7th Armored. Manhay was our goal! Previously, the two assault battalions had been rejected. We have two companies of riflemen. The company "G" remained with the HQ of the XVIII corps at Harzé.

It is approximately 18 hours 30, when the paratroopers are moving Chêne-al-Pierre to Manhay. After conducting its reconnaissance, Colonel Paxton decides to surprise the enemy from the flank. He probably realized that the Germans have

concentrated their forces to counter any attack from the north, the route taken in the morning and the day before by soldiers of the 424th Infantry Regiment.

In a report interrogation of prisoners of war, it is said that 13 enemy tanks, accompanied by infantry were seen at 11 hours 05 in the village of Manhay. In the report, is written: "Seven pieces of artillery fired by American 6x6 trucks were spotted in a position 2400 meters south of Manhay. Under fire of artillery, 2 were reported destroyed ."

Lieutenant Hensleigh continues:

As the company "I" moved forward in the snowy field towards Manhay another salvo came after the artillery barrage which prepared the movement. This "friendly fire" was not only late but it was also too short. This killed Lieutenant Stott and 11 men of his platoon which led the attack. Nearly 20 other soldiers of the platoon were seriously injured by the salvo. Without discouragement, we continued the attack with speed, passing through the carnage and leaving the medics who took care of the wounded.

Since the Germans used heavy armor in and around Manhay, two sections of platoon of machine guns and bazookas (HQ Co) were attachments to the rifle companies. These bazooka teams destroyed several tanks and armored vehicles, including the one of the German commander. They also fired on the buildings where the Germans were taking cover. The detonation of firs bazookas misled many German soldiers who found cover in the cellars and thought that the artillery was still in action. Phosphorus grenades where throw in the cellars. The fears attack continued, house to house, officers and riflemen took the initiative. Once the village was cleared of the enemy, Colonel Paxton who participated in the attack, gave the commanders of companies, "H" and "I" an area to set their line of defense. Although the sector was covering 360 °, the cleanup was concentrated south of the village where German activity was allegedly still present. Before dawn, on 27 December, there was a German counter-attack. This was immediately rejected by the presence and tenacity of our troops. "

This attack was a nightmare. Daniel Chapin remembers his friend, Lieutenant Gibbons who was standing next to the wounded and shouted: "Don't stop, Go, Go, Go! To the men of "H" Company. Lieutenant Ludlow Gibbons led the 2nd platoon of "I". Continuing strength in their movement Manhay to the paratroopers arrived on left flank of the enemy.

Surprised by this fast and violent attack, the disrupt Germans somewhat tried to resist, but after a quarter of an hour, the Americans were already master of the village. 3h30, Manhay was retaken, while the Germans had abandoned a large part of their equipment when they retreated to the woods south of the village.

The supply officer, Joseph H. CALDER, 22 years, "HQ" of the 517th, also remembers:

"It was approximately 2 hours 10. Our own artillery fire fell so close to the battalion that it killed the platoon leader and wounded 33 officers and men from the platoon. In the middle of the barrage, the officers and NCOs reorganized their units and gave the first care for wounded and dying. As soon as the shooting ceased, the battalion was moving with such speed it completely surprised the German units. The enemy tried to change direction to meet the flank of the attack, but in doing so, it became completely disorganized. Those who were not kill or captured, fled and abandoned their tanks, armored vehicles and weapons in the streets. Many vehicles still had their engine running. During the battle, there were 66 soldiers German killed, 46 prisoners taken and 17 tanks or vehicles blinds captured. A large number of American soldiers who had been captured in the village were released. "



"At the time of the attack, I was 19 years of age, I had my anniversary on December 10." Michael A. SPANO was part of the 3rd squad of 3rd Platoon of "I" company:

"The Company" I " was to lead the attack. We walked toward our position on icy roads. Friends slid and fell. They all laughed when someone fell but laugh stopped when we approached our goal. I was among those who fell and my friend, Shannon Smith, helped me get up. I told him in jokingly: "If this continues, our losses will very high before the assault begins. It was the last time when I had heard Smith laughing because he was killed in combat early in the morning.

As we were raided the village, our Artillery was too short. The smell of cordite was intense, the earth and stone debris was raining on our helmets. There were many cries and calls for nurses. Three of us jumped in a shell crater to find cover from our own artillery fire. The men shouted and swore.

Sergeant Joe Della Fave, of Hoboken, New Jersey, shouted: "Let's Go !" we got up and ran in Manhay with artillery always focusing on the village. Fortunately, the shooting finally stopped when "I" Company ran into the streets and was throwing grenades into the houses. The first thing I saw was a Panzer with a German body, less than a body out of the turret. He was frozen and had an arm in the air as if he was calling for help. These frozen bodies would never leave my memory.

I never knew how many Germans were able to survive our tremendous artillery barrage, but there were those who did. It's why we went from house to house to get those who were hiding. There was only light resistance. Manhay, the village general Ridgway DESIRED at all costs, was again in the hands of Americans. "



Private Floyd P. ZIOLKOWSKI of "HQ" company was in a bazooka team. A few years after the events, he wrote an autobiography including chapters of the second world war, to publish a book entitled "A letter from Dad":

"Finally the time of attack arrived and we moved and crawled up to the entrance of a village we waited nervously. The companies, "H" and "I" of our battalion had to conduct the attack, followed by our "HQ" company. The "HQ" company of our Regimental Combat Team were riflemen and bazooka teams. It was also equipped with a machine guns and 60mm mortars. I was member of a bazooka team.

After ten minutes, the artillery started shooting. Each shell on the village of the Manhay and the sky light. Many houses caught fire. It was a real spectacle. We hoped that the Germans resistance would be destroyed, but we were sure to a fears fight was on hands as soon as they the artillery fire stopped. We had to follow the companies "H" and "I" in the village, they were so close near the perimeter where the shells fell, and without that we knew, salves too short killed and wounded some of our men.

After we attacked, I knew what war was really like. We passed some of our soldiers killed and others wounded, screaming "for help". We were told not take this into account and entered the village. We could hear guns firing and we expected to be nailed to the ground at any time. We passed a soldier laying in the dirt and badly wounded; he would not stop begging for a sip of water but our officers told us to continue forward because we were targets in this field.

When we reached the village, it was occupied by companies "H" and "I". Some sporadic gunfire was still hearable, but it was just about everything. The Germans retreated, at least what was left. We captured a lot of them in the cellars where they shielded from the artillery. They were almost buried under the buildings, three-quarters destroyed by shells. We were pleased to have taken the village, but sadly we lost some good men. Although the village was still burning, we were asked not to smoke because it would have made us ideal targets for snipers. We had just started to relax a just when a German tank on the edge of the village, with its engine running quickly moved towards the closest hills. We thought that the tank was out of order, and we had ignored it when gathering the prisoners. That is why they managed to escape.

Advanced positions were placed on the front lines and my group waited for in a cellar for developments. We were assembled all the isolated riflemen who were in the streets of the village.

I survived the first attack and I was really grateful for that. Our company didn't suffered too much casualties but we had some wounded."



Peu après la reprise de Manhay, quelques parachutistes de la compagnie "H" du 517^{ème} régiment sont photographiés dans la grand-rue principale. De gauche à droite: Le T/5 Joseph W. Tylka, le T/4 Edward P. Winship & le Pvt. Maurice P. Masich. (Ph. D. Chapin & J.F. Dahin)

The following article appeared in "STARS AND STRIPES" few days after the events, it is titled: "**A testament to the village of indomitable courage G.I.'s** ", by Russell Jones reporter of the American forces in Belgium - 28 December 1944.

"The small village of Manhay a vital crossroad of the roads Liege - Bastogne and Malmedy - Dinant, which is now in the hands of Americans and is a silent witness the ferocity of the German attacks and the stubborn courage deployed by the United States to push them back.

After a T.O.T. fire mission (Time on target: simultaneous concentration and synchronized) of American artillery, a tank battle in the streets, two infantry battles, shooting and bombing by low flying P-38s, Manhay is now a heap of ruins inhabited by soldiers.[...]

Companies "H" and "I" of the battalion, conducted by Lieutenant-Colonel Forest Paxton of San Francisco, quickly moved into the village and secured it, this after both tanks and two infantry battalions have tried and failed. The company "I", commanded by Captain James Bird, South Bend, Indiana, led the attack although a platoon leader and ten men had been killed and 33 others injured by U.S. artillery fired too short. Together with "H" company, commanded by 1st Lt. Richard Jackson of St. Paul, Minnesota.

In the hills to the south, the Germans, are being shelled by continuous artillery fire in preparation of a crushing attack. But the U.S. troops simply started dug in, trusting in the word of a staff officer who had said: "This is a case against the power and talent ...,and man, we have the talent, "end of quote.

We tried to put us at ease in basement in our new temporary home. We tried to sleep, but sleep did not want to come, if it came, it was only short drowsiness by a-beating. We were afraid of a German counter-attack. We kept the bands of ammunition on our shoulder and hand grenades on our belts.

Finally it became dawn and the excitement and emotion caused by the attack were somewhat fled away. Later in the morning, I went to inspect the battlefield where we had entered the village. There were no more snipers now, and I imagined myself I could do it without any risk. Before reaching the field, I passed some German corpses in the village: some were very young boys which appeared to be only 16 years old. I was moved by their youth. On the path leading to a school, I discovered the body of a old woman and I think she was the only civilian in the village, I have not

seen another one, neither living nor dead. She had paid with his life for not having left her house.

Finally, discovered in a field, I saw the bodies of my paratrooper buddies of my own battalion. Some of them I could recognize, but, somewhere in this field, lying Sergeant Tinger. There were also wounded men of the battle, Lucarro, my buddy, I guess he realized his wish of shooting on the enemy. I did not know what was the extent of his injuries, but I think he recovered.

There is one thing I saw and I will never forget. I saw one of our men in a shell crater in the field, still in crouching position with one arm positioned forward as if he encouraged the men forward. Half of his head was blown away and his brain hung up his jaw, I'm sure he never knew he was hit. This gave me a unpleasant feeling in my stomach.

Everywhere, dead cows lay in the field they already had started to inflate. I saw what I wanted to see, I turned around and went back to the village emotionally empty.

I think it must have been the longest day of my life. When I came back to my platoon, intelligence sent a report that German tanks were gathering in the hills to launch an attack against the village. I believed that our troops in hands of the village were less than hundred men and I thought we had no chance against an attack, especially with tanks.

During this after-noon, no thought crossed my mind that I thought it was my last day on earth. I was just nineteen and I did not think it was really not fair that my life would come to an end. I think I was pity on myself. I put myself at peace with God as best I could, I was determined to be brave until the end.

My friends looked to the hills, just outside the village and we could see the German tanks move through the dense woods. How can we repel an attack these monstrous tanks with simply rifles, some machine guns and bazookas? We thought that our chances were really slim, but the artillery on the opposite side to the village pounded these hills methodically, shooting its guns, from front to back and from back to front. This was perhaps just enough to prevent the Germans to organize; of hands, we had hoped.

When it became dark, we believed that the attack could occur at any time. My guard was scheduled around 5 am tomorrow, but I did not care for that because I imagined the attack would take place long before that. Everything what we could do was sit in layers in this tiny cave and wait. We commit irrelevant conversations[...]. We continually checked our ammunition and

our hand grenades and we wondered if we had enough. Sleep was impossible so we just stayed there and waited, again and again. Towards one o'clock in the morning (28 December), we heard a shot. We said: "It has begun." We once again checked our rifles and our ammunition and we waited to leave the cellar and occupy our combat positions.



Devant le grand hôtel de Manhay: les soldats du 517^{ème} sont photographiés. Le sergent John Mallick du 2^{ème} peloton de la compagnie "H". (Ph. D. Chapin & J.F. Dahin)



Le T/4 Edward P. Winship âgé de 27 ans et le sergent Daniel M. Chapin appartiennent à la compagnie "H" du 517^{ème} régiment parachutiste. (Ph. D. Chapin & J.F. Dahin)



Le Pfc. James R. Crute et le T/5 Joseph W. Tylka. En arrière-plan, l'arrière du bâtiment de la gendarmerie situé au carrefour de Manhay. (Ph. D. Chapin & J.F. Dahin)



Le Private Maurice P. Masich pose devant ce carrefour stratégique qui devait être repris coûte que coûte. (Ph. D. Chapin & J.F. Dahin)

We waited and after half an hour, we I have got information that a guard of an advanced post on the other side of the village had accidental discharged his gun. The Germans didn't not arrived. Five am, it was to man watch post. I went on my position in the remains of a bombed house. I found there, all alone with a .50 caliber machine gun. I was directly opposite the side the hill where we saw the tanks in the after-noon. The artillery still fired sporadically toward the trees.

The moon was clear, and the visibility excellent I kept scanning the bleak landscape in the attempt of spotting any movement. Your imagination can play tricks a moment like these. Is this what happened to the guard that had arrived earlier in the evening? After what seemed a eternity, I was relieved. The Germans did not came this night.

Soon I saw the sunrise that I thought believed to never see again. The things began to get better. The worst was over. Clearly, the Germans had enough of the constant bombardment, which prevented them to organize a counter attack. They moved out of the reach of our artillery.

We had to stay an entire week in this village and we could not see through the trees, and German tanks were moving hastily on this Hill. We could sit to try to relax during the day, but we had to stand guard during the night. Things remained normal throughout the rest of the time that we spent in Manhay if this it is normal to be first on the front line! Two days after that we moved into the village, trucks of the HQ arrived with the sleeping bags and collected the corpses laying in and around the village. Not a pleasant job for those men... "

Included in the Morning Report, here are the names of the men of 3rd Battalion 517th parachute infantry regiment killed, wounded or still missing in this battle of Manhay:

11 men and 1 officer of the company "I"
- 1st Lt. Floyd A. Stott - Iowa died 27-12-44.
Henri-Chapelle (D -11 -1)
- Private Frank O. Scott Jr. - New York.
Henri-Chapelle (E - 5 - 20)
- Private 1st Class Fred H. Iserman - Iowa.
Henri-Chapelle (H - 4 - 54)
- Sergeant J. Wendell the Tingi and Corporal B. Courville
Tarpley. Privates William J. Eckart Jr. - Merle A. Kaminsky -
Paul A. Rzonca - Albert J. Vasquez - Edward G. Walsh - Edward
W. Weimer - Robert L. Williams and John S. Penn.

2 men of Company "H"

- Private Arthur W. Sessum Jr. of Tennessee 29-12-44 - Henri-Chapelle (E - 8 - 76) and Clyde C. Whittington.

13 men of Company "I" are or MIA:

Sergeants Grover C. Prater - John Jr and Rupozvck Charles C. Scherer. Corporal Horace E. Melton. Privates Charles S. Williamson - James C. Whitehead -- Marvin D. Moles - Charles A. Zamorski - Frederick T. Beyer - John L. Jarina - Richard Henry - Joseph E. Cornett and Shannon F. Smith "I" of Michigan, buried in Military Cemetery Henri-Chapelle (0 - 8 - 61).

15 men of Company "I" were wounded:

Sergeants Albert L. Beasley and Daniel W. Seib. Privates John Watola - Jim Bacaloff - Alva J. Baca - Marco Teodo - Walter J. Witt - Antonio Esparza - Melvin Weichselbraun - Arno F. Witt - Frank H. MIÑANO - Alford E. Richards - Julian Halvorson - Norman L. Ross Jr. and Charles R. Zinszer

William T. WEBB communication technician. He was 19 years old in a 1944 and was in the "HQ" company of the 517th regiment:

"When man unit attacked the village of Manhay, I was with the rear troops, laying telephone lines. With the snow covering the soil and weight of my rolls of wire, I increasingly lost touch with the companies "I" and "H" that came from turning on the right, entering the city of Manhay. I decided to take a direct path and lay my wire in a cave located near the junction. Shortly after, I got a phone call from the Colonel, I told him the lines were in place. When I had finished my job, I got the order to guard 6 prisoners which I put against a wall for a search. Finally, I returned and took them to the rear posts. Back in Manhay, I continued my work next to colonel Paxton but also on the frontline with my friends of my section, Nathan H. Rosalie and Jasper Sergeant K. Horne. "

Manhay liberated! The enemy lost all hope! Americans are strongly holding the sector.

"On 27 December, as the troops of 517th PIR occupied the village of Manhay and the engineering elements of the 596th Company of Captain Robert Dalrymphe removed the mines placed across the main road north of the village.

The 17th tank battalion of the 7th Armored Division got the order to send a platoon of tanks to Manhay. Under the leadership of Lieutenant Hoffmans of "B" company, this small group has arrived in the morning at Manhay with the mission of reinforcing the Paratroopers with the protection of the village. Previously, the unit had left Izier since Christmas to be in the vicinity of Saint-Antoine and Champ de Harre.

They were in a state of alert, ready to be committed if that became necessary. Reconnaissance had been made by the company commanders in the vicinity of Manhay. Each officer had plans of the sector including positions of minefields."

The S-2 officer, Lieutenant Howard E. HENSLEIGH tells us the following events. It was the post command at the crossroads in the house the family Henrotin-Meunier:

"It was evident that the German forces occupied the hills south of Manhay. One of their anti-tank guns had a firing range covering the main street. On numerous occasions it shot on everything that moved. Often its shots ricochet and made damage before exploding.

After taking the village until our departure, the 1st of January, only one American tank had arrived in the main street with a sergeant standing in his turret. One of our men shouted to him: "What the hell, go back where you came from or you'll be hit." The Tank was reluctant to follow the directions of someone, especially a paratrooper. The tank paid for it. One shell hit the tanker in the chest but it did not explode until a few hundred meters further down the street. These shells exploded when they were hit something hard, like a tank or a wall. The sergeant was killed on the spot and projected violently on the cobblestones of the street. Our section (S-2) had a squad of riflemen south of the German lines and they destroyed an observation post. This reduced the precision of the German artillery. "

Shortly before noon, the 27 of December, three P-38 aircrafts were conducting a mission in the sector. Once again, American troops were the target of their own aircraft because the pilots apparently did not know that the village was liberated. Three soldiers were victims of this mistake! The commander of 17th tank battalion, the Lieutenant Colonel John P. Wemple who was at that moment on the heights of Manhay, near Mont-Derrieux. Witnessing this accident, he directly contacted his staff to relay this information to the Airforce HQ to stop the bombing.

Michael "Mike" of 517om SPANO, never forget this sad episode:

"After having taken the village of Manhay, we took position in our foxholes, already dug for wait a counter-attack. The next morning, an infantryman of another foxhole called me and asked me if I wanted to change of foxhole with it him. He wanted to be with his friend.

I agreed, but over the years, I've never been able to remember the name of the soldier who asked me to change of foxhole

with. But when I discovered that the 517th regiment had a site on the Internet, I wrote about the incident and Frederick Beyer came to surface. I think I remember that the friend of Fred Beyer was a gunner of a Browning Automatic Rifle, and the name his friend was Browning.

A few hours after changing the Foxhole, I saw a P-38 Lightning. It was probably the only aircraft the American that I could recognize because of its double fuselage. So I decided to quit my Foxhole to perform a natural need. Suddenly, I saw the P-38 dive and a dump 250 kg bomb. I returned to my Foxhole and fell on my buddy. He yelled at me and I served him some swear words in return. Immediately, we heard cries that gave us goose bumps. I stuck my head out of the foxhole and saw on Fred Beyer's right arm till his shoulder. He was running and screaming.

Almost immediately, someone threw a smoke grenade, indicating the pilot that we were Americans, I was stunned. I sat in my Foxhole believing that it could have been me who lost an arm. I never believed that Fred Beyer survive his bleeding and as I said, I only learned a year after that he had survived, when he read my story of the incident he contacted me. Fred told me that his friend Browning, who shared his Foxhole, had not survived.

I always think this about this Foxhole, like a hundreds of times per year. This is the reason why I think having a guardian angel and I think my guardian angel was my brother who died at age of 19 years old, my age at the time of the attack. I was injured by Grand-Halleux while I drove an attack as a scout.

Some of us ate as kings once in Manhay, one of the men knew how to slaughter a cow. He put his bayonet into the throat of the cow and its blood fled away. The meat was placed well shielded to avoid animals taking our supplementary providential. We threw away our K rations and ate two big steaks - thick 2 "Inches" cooked in butter with honey.

I had never eaten or heard of butter honey until I discovered a pot in a cellar in Manhay. Years after the war, the butter Honey came in our supermarkets. I still like it today as it always reminds me of Manhay. When the 517th regiment was in Manhay, few men had their M-1 rifle in one hand and a big slice of meat in the other one. It was quite a show.

" Among the many witnesses of the fight for Manhay, Bannet Barrett, Robert Barnes, Carlos Ward, Daniel Chapin and others, have all the memory marquee under attack by violent bombardments. Artillery Batteries of the 7th Armored Division,

in support of 517th "by their harassment firing, send that day 9780 shells into the region! Shortly after the battle, "Time" magazine released a Manhay article entitled: "The town of running men "-" The village where the men ran. "For the soldiers, it was necessary to run across the road, south of main street, the Germans were shooting at anything that moved.

The amazing story of private Edward R. SNYDER member of "H" Company 517th PIR:

"On 27 December, after the "H" and "I" company took Manhay, the private first class Edward Snyder returned from an aid station in Vaux-Chavanne he was approached from the south-east by what he believed to be an American patrol. Not their equipment nor their weapons, could generate a slightest suspicion. When they were near him, the only wearing an insignia of sergeant asked him: "Where are you going to?" Snyder answered that he was going to Manhay. During this time, two other surrounded him, and began pointing the barrel of their guns in his back and demanded to drop his weapons. Four of the seven soldiers spoke perfect English."

Snyder was taken to Malempré where he was questioned by an SS officer, who asked his name, rank, its number and regiment. He refused to give his unit on which the officer gave him the answer. By different questions like "Are you from the armored forces ", the German officer was trying to learn what were the units to the left and right of the 517th parachute regiment. He was very persistent in its efforts and spent a long time to ask similar questions but all in vain.

Once the questioning ends, Snyder was taken near other prisoners that belonged to the 7th armored division. The Germans took a part of his clothes of which the prisoners wore, a jacket, two blouses, a pair of socks and other things Snyder wore. His dog tags were also taken. Each prisoner got a blanket and was forced to sleep outside, under guard, along a house while the American artillery was coming in. With the exception of the guard, all Germans were in the cellar.

During the day, Snyder was forced to clean the kitchen equipment of the Germans when they had finished their meals, cleaning the rooms of the officers and quarters of the troops. Each time a German soldier was killed or injured by American fire, prisoners were kicked, and the Germans spit in their face. That their treatment was inflicted as well by SS as well by the Volksgrenadiers.

When Snyder was a taken in Malempré the 27 December, the village was occupied by SS troops. He remembers the number 12 (It was probably the 12th Volksgrenadier division which was

in the vicinity of Manhay on December 27). On the night of 29 on 30 December, the SS troops were replaced by a Volksgrenadiers unit. All prisoners were handed over to this unit and got the same treatment.

In the after-noon of January 3rd, just before our tanks entered the village of Malempré, Snyder and other prisoners escaped. When he joined his unit, Snyder stated that many American patrols in uniform, had been sent by the two units are the SS troops and Volksgrenadiers. A patrol was in operation for 4 days behind our lines.

Lt. Howard E. HENSLEIGH has some memories of Manhay which are still engraved in his memory:

"Two days after the capture of the village of Manhay a U.S. soldier from another unit out of ruin of a house. He had been a prisoner of the Germans but in the confusion of the attack, he had been hiding in the fireplace of a home. He finally heard English, but he was aware that the Germans were using this language during the battle. Then he got in mind that no German in the world could speak English like the men of the 517th spoke. Reassured he got out and shortly after he learned he had a cousin in 3rd the battalion. Colonel Paxton sent the two cousins to Paris for ten days on leave. After all this, it was nice to have a little relaxation.

All the civilians had to leave Manhay before the attack, all but one person. An old stubborn woman that would not leave her home to be evacuated. She refused all the offers of the soldiers trying to have her out knowing that she would be in great need of food. She was still there when the battalion was relieved. "



Le photographe Hugh Mc Hugh du 165^{ème} Signal compagnie a fixé sur la pellicule cette vieille dame de Manhay réconfortée par trois paras du 517^{ème}. (Ph. US Army du 30 décembre 1944 - 198398)

Lieutenant Joe CALDER also relate us some memories of Manhay:

"I remember an incident far from amusing that happened on December 28. Shortly after that the battalion has taken Manhay, the under cover of darkness, an armored unit movement was held with 2 or 3 tanks. The command post of the battalion was in the cellar of a house that had been bombed. An communication officer, which I think he was a captain, joined in the cellar to talk to the sergeant who was in charge of one of the tanks. He gave him advice on what he had to do where he need to go with his tanks during the night. If I remember well, the first sergeant should use a flare.

The colonel Paxton looked at the communication officer and said: "Captain, my paratroopers should be here in the morning, your tanks will stay here even if I have to put a bazooka behind each and one of them to be sure they would not leave".

I think this was one of the largest blessing which have been made to 3rd battalion. An officer of an armored division said to us: "You have done with companies what we would not have done with an armored division!"

Since retaking Manhay, the village was subjected to the fire of mortars and small arms. At 23 hours, it was told to the Americans that there would be an attack held by the enemy tonight or tomorrow morning. Troops in reserve near Champ de Harre were put on alert.

In the sector, of "B" company of the 814th Tank Destroyer battalion got in support the elements of "C" Company of the 820th Tank Destroyer battalion composed of tracked 105mm cannons. They were subject during this of 27 day December, to a few mortar shots but maintained their positions in the region of Manhay, Vaux-Chavanne and northern localities Grandmenil Manhay and accompanied by the infantry of the 2nd battalion of the 424th Regiment and elements of the 32nd reconnaissance cavalry squadron.

In the journal of operations, there is a report about the inspection of the roadblocks. This document was made for the HQ service of the 7th Armored Division. Here is what was written on December 27 1944 by assistant G-3 McBRIDE:

"An inspection was performed on the North-South road, running from the command post of the division located in Saint-Antoine to the troops on the front line beyond Chêne-al-Pierre.

The roadblock was made by a platoon of tanks consisting of 3 76mm guns and 2 90mm Tank Destroyer. All vehicles were

completely dug in and had a good range including a reserve, a Sherman tank, operant in all directions.

Other roadblocks, further south, had been prepared by the felling of trees which were laying on the road, forming barriers. They were probably installed by an engineering unit of the HQ because nobody in the neighborhood seemed to know who was responsible. The Chief of Staff contacted the supporting engineers of the division that it should be investigated and reported back. This information was given to Captain Flood at 19 hours."

The 2nd battalion of the 325th glider regiment, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Charles W. Major, which is the unite in reserve of the 82nd Airborne Division, was sent to Chene-al-Pierre on December 27, 900 meters south of the hamlet of Monchenoule. The battalion which participated in the defense of Fraiture and "Parker" crossroads before Christmas left this sector the 30th December to take a position east, around Trou de Bra on the Hill "Bois of Mierdeux".

In the Grandmenil sector still shelled by German artillery, the elements of 3rd Armored Division, Task Force McGeorge retreated from the village in the early morning. The 1st Battalion of the 33rd Armored Regiment was then sent to the region of Soy where it will reorganized and benefit from a period of rest.