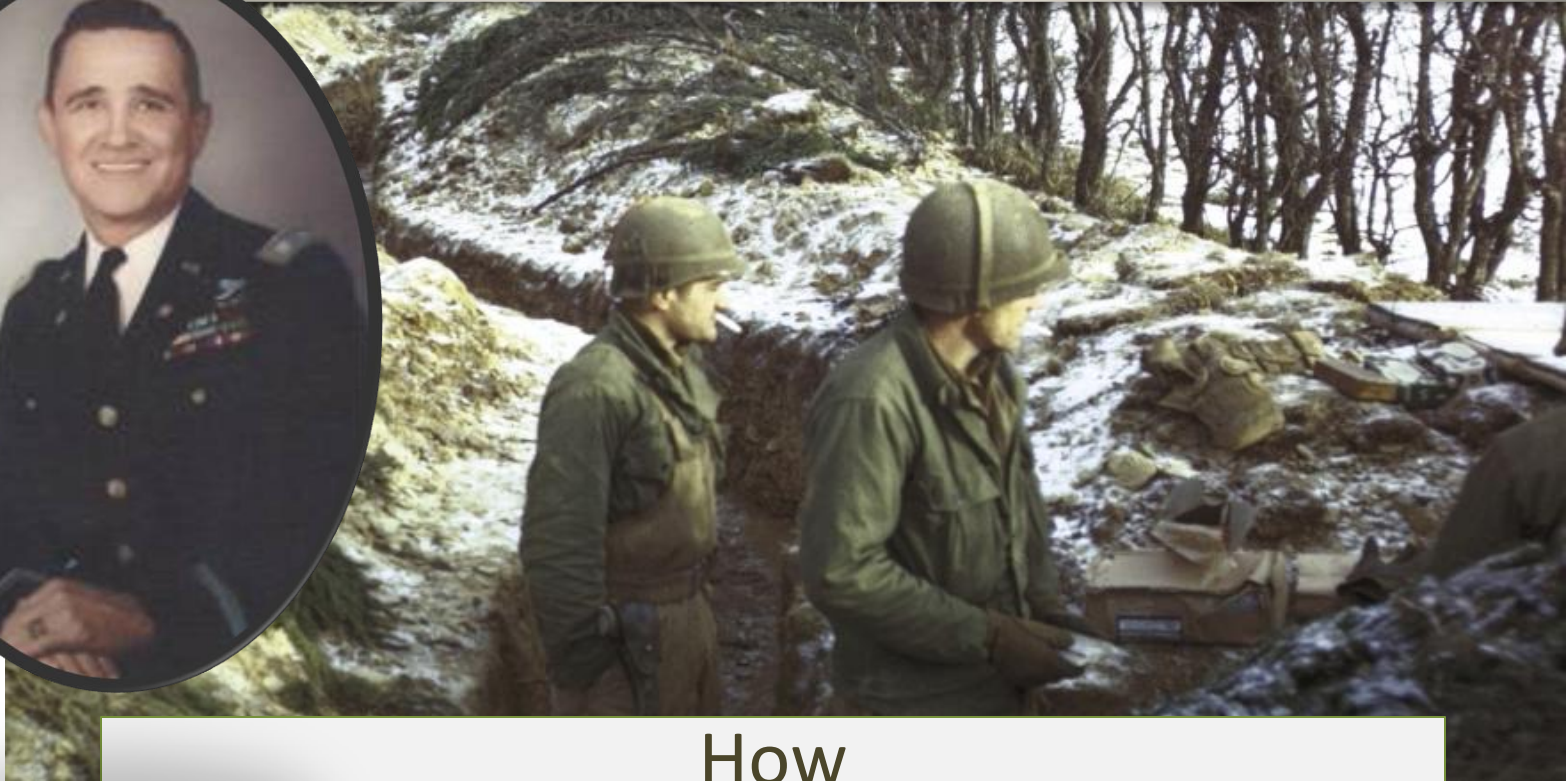


Battle for Hill La Roumiere Hotton, Belgium



How
Major John Sewanee Baskin, Jr.
Spent Christmas 1944

Jack's Life

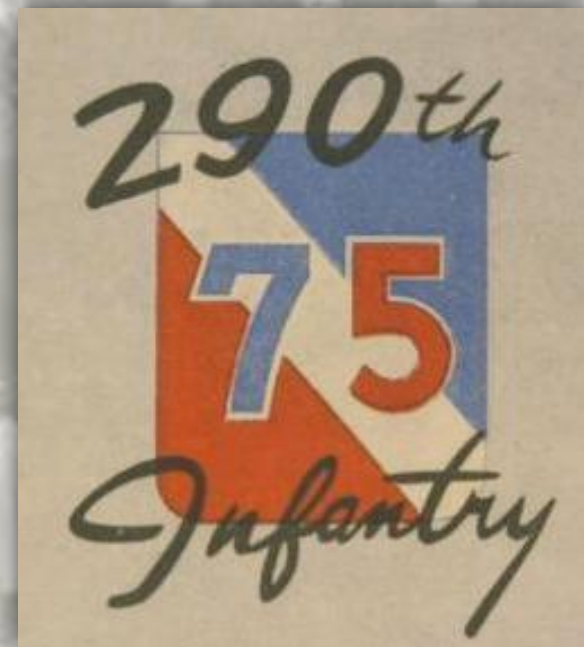
- 30 Years Old
- Military since 1931 (USN)
- 1939
 - Feb: Clemson Grad
 - 1 Sep: 2d Lt Army
 - 11 Dec: marries Frances Hart
- 4th Anniversary 12/11
 - While Jack's in Wales
- Fran's 4th birthday in Feb



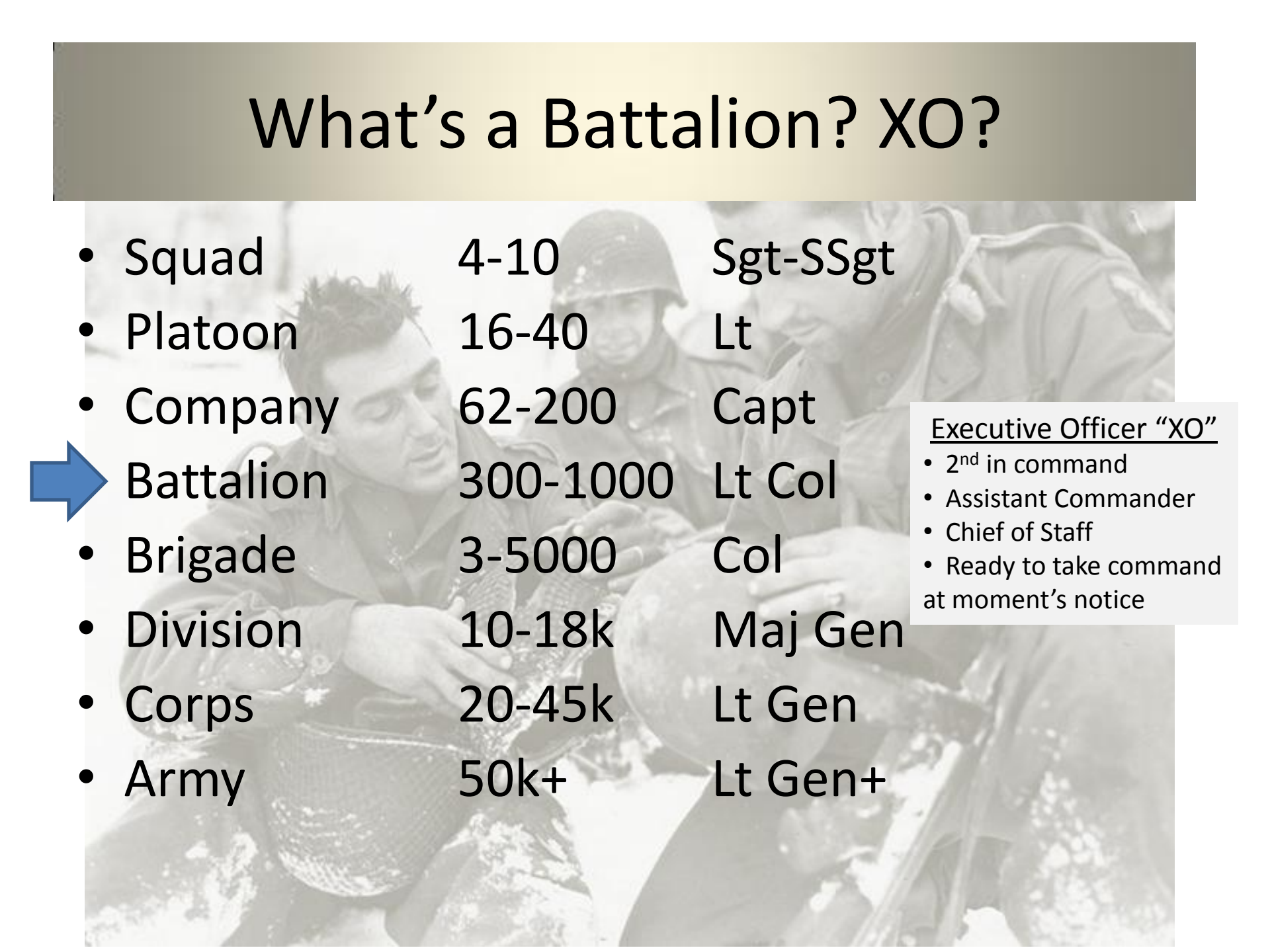
Bushkin, John S (X)	Head	0	M	W	26	M	NO	C4
— Frances H	Wife	1	F	W	22	M	NO	C4

Jack's Job

- Major (January '43)
- Executive Officer or "XO"
- 3rd Battalion
- 290th Infantry Regiment
- 75th Infantry Division



What's a Battalion? XO?



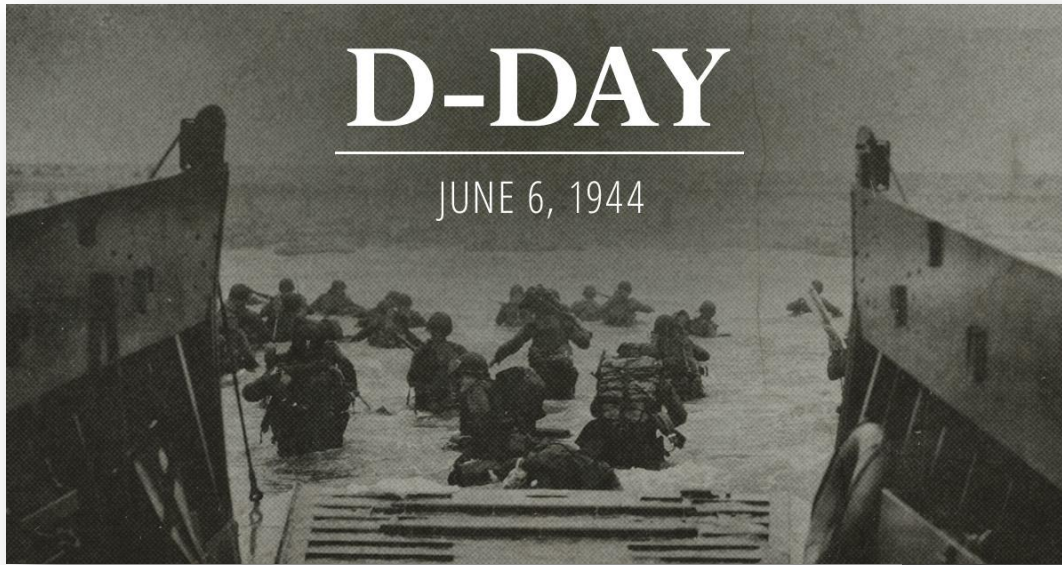
• Squad	4-10	Sgt-SSgt
• Platoon	16-40	Lt
• Company	62-200	Capt
➔ Battalion	300-1000	Lt Col
• Brigade	3-5000	Col
• Division	10-18k	Maj Gen
• Corps	20-45k	Lt Gen
• Army	50k+	Lt Gen+

Executive Officer "XO"

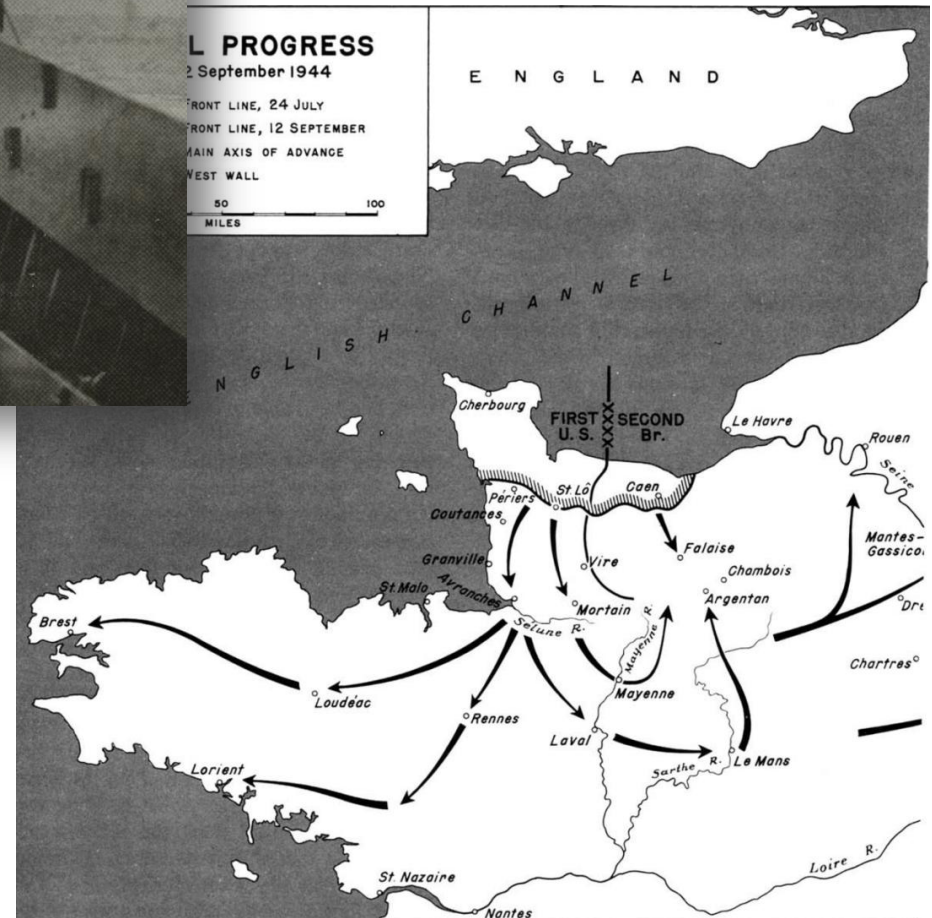
- 2nd in command
- Assistant Commander
- Chief of Staff
- Ready to take command at moment's notice

The War

D-Day to Battle of the Bulge



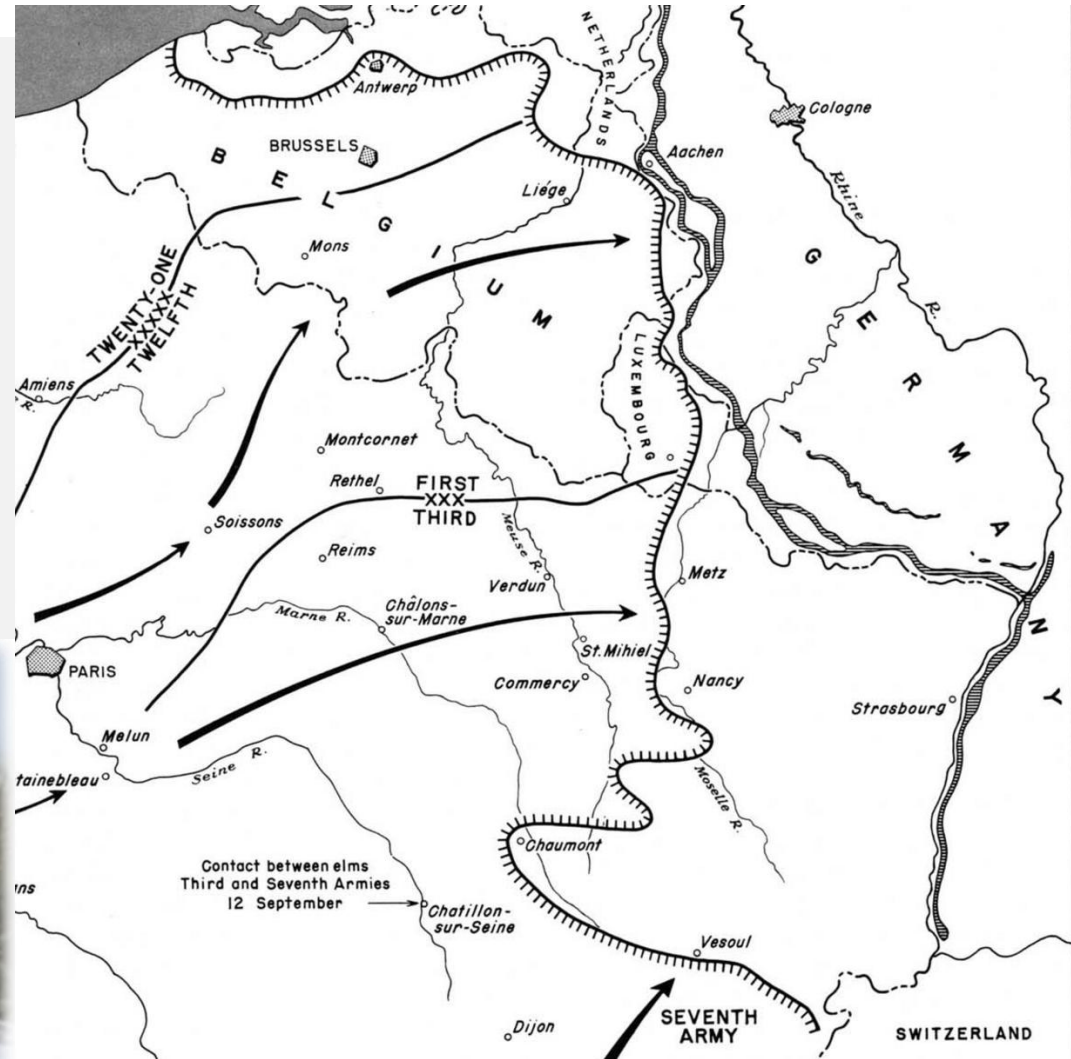
- 75th ID Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky
- 22 Oct 1944: Camp Shanks, New York
- 2 Nov: Arrives England
- Training Porthcawl, Wales



The War

D-Day to Battle of the Bulge

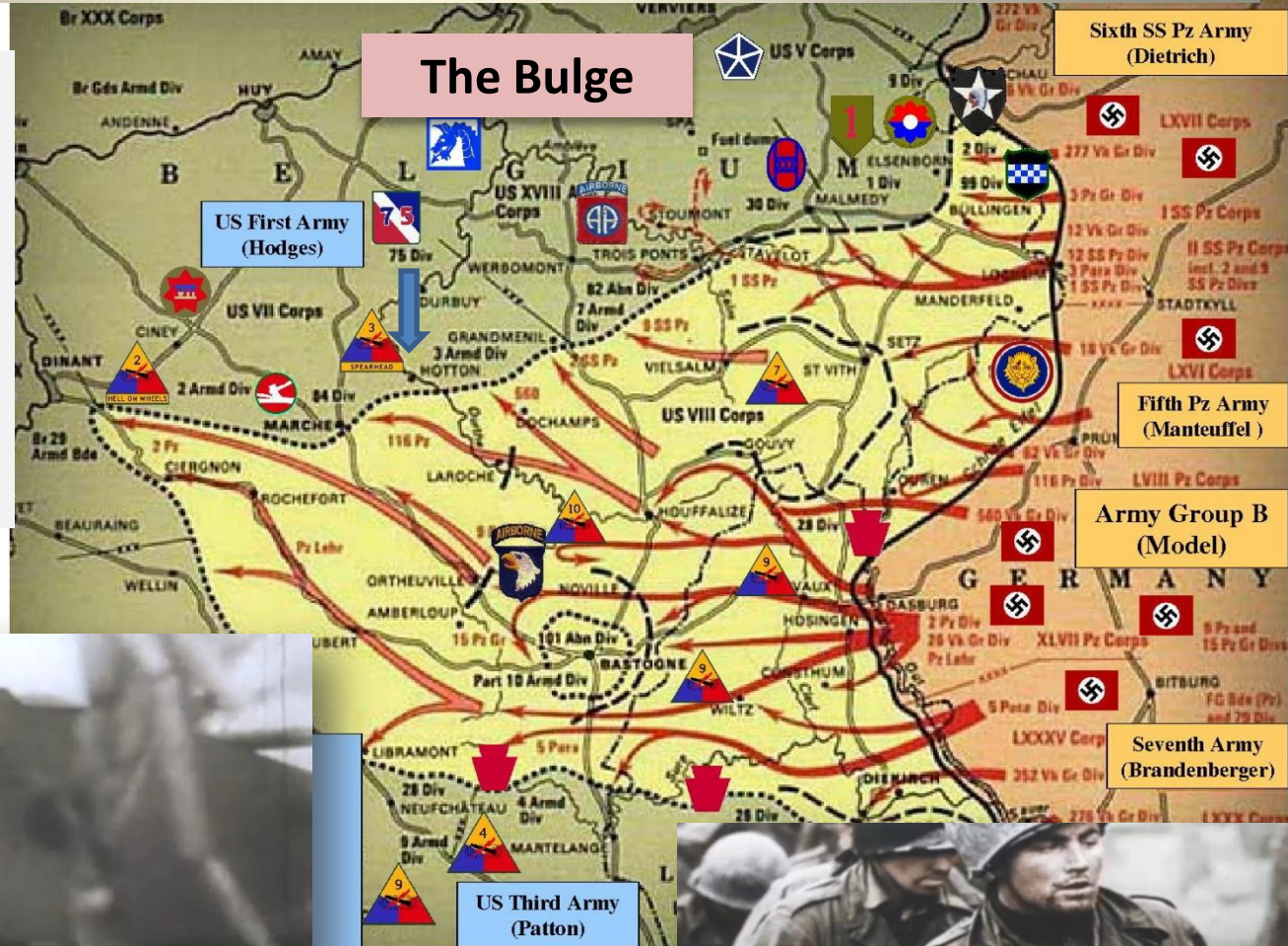
- Steady progress during summer
- By November Allied front extends from Belgian coast, through Luxembourg, Holland to France.
- The tide of war seems to be turning
 - Parts of Germany occupied
 - Siegfried Line breached
- Conquest of Germany is in sight, but...



The War

D-Day to Battle of the Bulge

- 16 Dec 1944--Last major German Offensive
 - Split Allies in half
 - Channel/Antwerp
- US VIII Corps overrun
- Entire Regiments surrender
- “NUTS!”



75th ID Goes to War

- No combat experience
- Not well equipped
 - WW1 ammo—5 -> 48 rounds
 - Winter gear... rubber boots
- Confusing series of organizational changes
 - Allies struggle to meet German attack
 - 2 Rgmts assigned to 3rd AD
- Weather
 - One of the coldest winters in history: 14 degrees



3rd Btn 290th Inf Rgmt Goes to War

21 Dec

- Hasselt, Belgium
- Plan: Join 75ID, attack Wilje, Holland

22 Dec

- Plans changed
- Belgium and the Ardennes

13 Dec

- Land at La Havre, France
- Bivouac near Yvetot several days

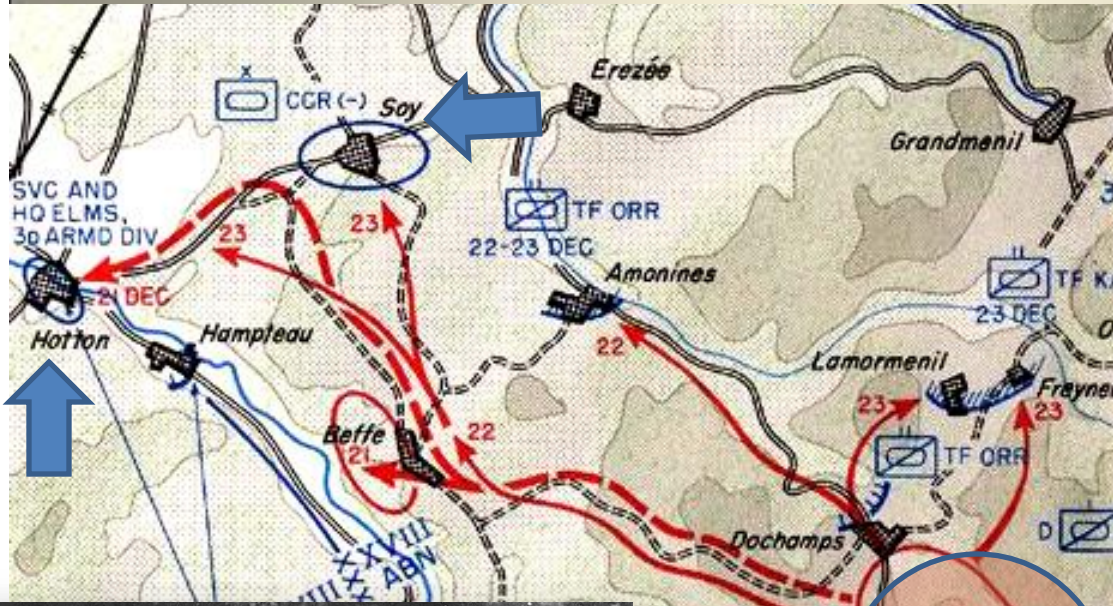


Route of
The FIGHTING 75th DIVISION
DECEMBER 1944 • MAY 1945

0 25 50 100 125 150 175 200 MILES



22-24 December



- 2 German Divisions (560 VG & 116 Panzer) attack Hotton and Soy areas
- **22 Dec** (night): 3 Bn leaves Hasselt for Petit Han
 - 60-70 miles/8 hours
 - Open 2.5 trucks, freezing rain
- **23 Dec**: Protect bridge over Ourthe River. German positions and intentions unclear (rumors German para landings)
 - Little-No sleep/food, 2" snowfall
- **24 Dec** (morn): Move Petit Han to 1.5 miles north Hotton (~4 miles)
 - 10am Bn digs in
 - no breakfast
 - no sleep since night of 21st
 - rapid movement > lack of ammo
 - 4pm Jack is in command (Btn CO @ Div HQ) ordered to Rgmt HQ in Soy

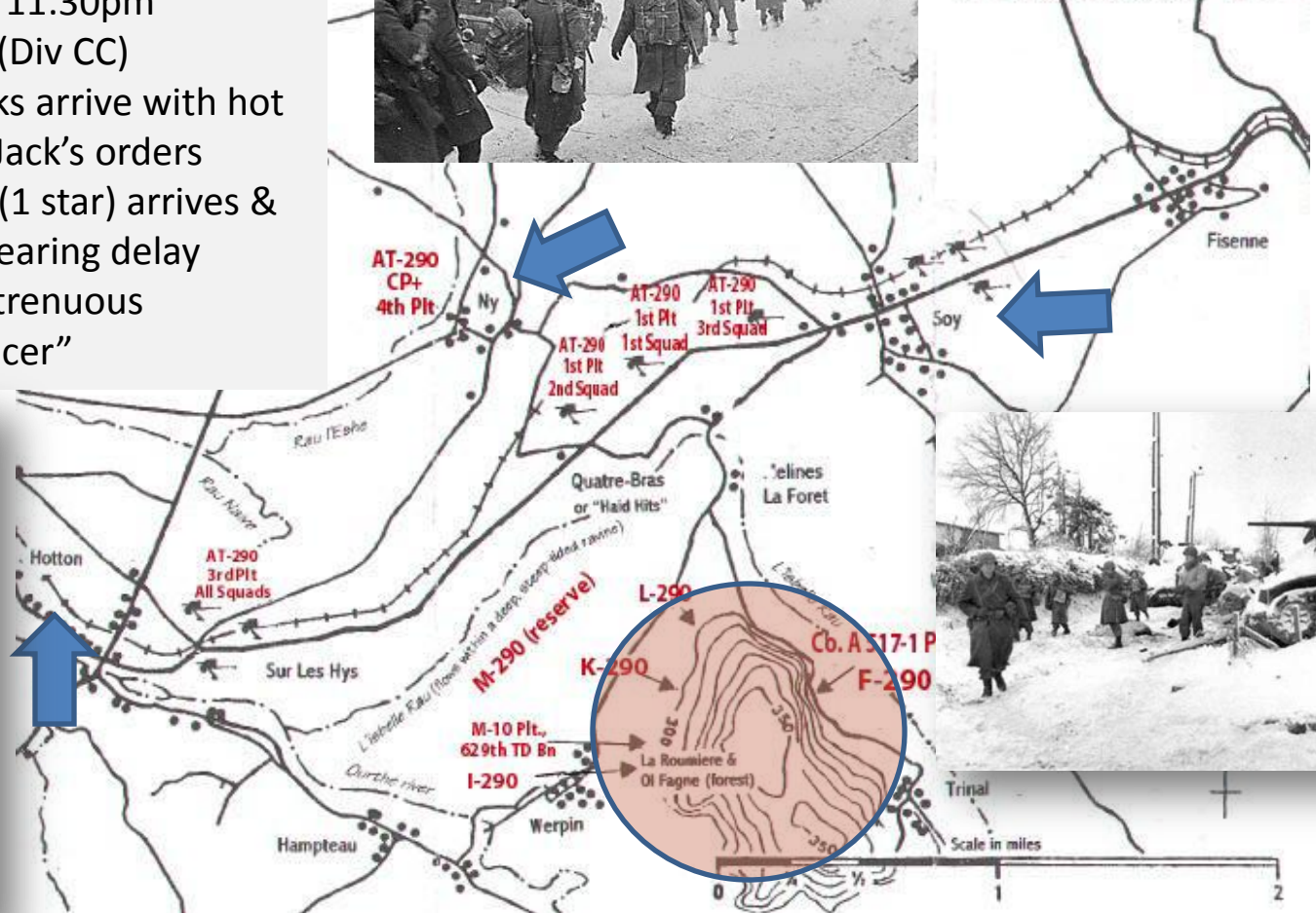


24 Dec: Objective Hill La Roumiere!

- **4PM:** Rgmt CO orders attack @ 6pm
 - Jack convinces CO it's not possible
 - Attack postponed until 11:30pm
- **7PM:** Foot march LOD (Div CC)
- **11PM:** Bn kitchen trucks arrive with hot meals (1st meal of day). Jack's orders
 - As troops line up, ADC (1 star) arrives & orders trucks to leave—fearing delay
 - Trucks leave “despite strenuous objection by Bn Exec Officer”

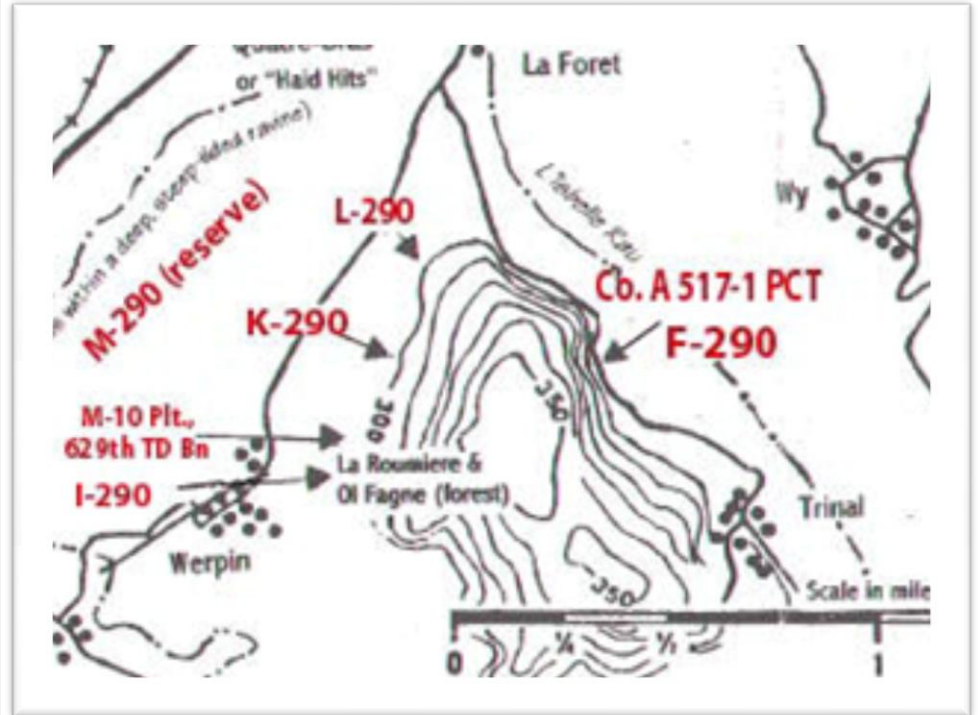


BELGIUM
Hotton - Soy Area
25-26 December 1944



24-25 December

- **11PM** (24 Dec): Attack begins
 - Difficult night attack with maneuver
 - 3 platoons Co K & 1 Platoon of Co L attacked up hill despite “withering defensive machine gun fire”
- **4AM (25 Dec)**
 - Reached summit, forced Germans off hill
 - One by one, they ran out of ammo
 - Germans noticed and counter-attacked
 - Remnants of Co K retreat down hill
 - Several attempted charges up hill until dawn
- **4PM**: Subsequent attack with artillery support, more ammunition and troops from other units drives Germans from area



As for the 290th, I take great exception with anyone who would make negative comments about their attack. The fact that they had the guts to move across the open field against the commanding position of the Germans on the hill tells me that they had great courage.

Aftermath

- The casualties of the battalions in this section were extremely high.
- K Co—40 KIA, 1 officer
- L Co—18 KIA, 4/6 officers (incl CO)
- 250 casualties
- Many of the wounded froze to death
 - Wounds not ordinarily fatal
- Lack of food & sleep



Battle of the Bulge

12/16/44 – 1/16-28/45

Allies

80k > 655k+ (55UK)

90k Casualties

(8,607 US KIA)

Germany

200k > 500k

100k Cas, 12k KIA



Jack eventually served as Assistant Secretary of the General Staff of the European Theater—under General Eisenhower.

Serendipity & Salute



- Cousins Jack & Eleanor sent these two photos
- In addition to the two beautiful children, my attention was drawn to my uncle's **CIB** and the **combat patch** on his "Ike jacket's" right sleeve
- That got me started on my quest to learn more about my uncle, the 75th ID and the battle at La Roumiere
- The Internet is a start... but there's a lot more to learn!

**You're our...
Dad, Grandpa, Brother-
in-law, Uncle, Cousin...
*HERO!***

**We love you
and
salute you,
Jack Baskin!**

