

History of the 3rd Infantry Division



"ROCK OF THE MARNE!"

by John C. Silva

© Copyright 2001 <http://www.grunts.net>

Contents

[World War One](#)

[World War Two](#)

[Korean War](#)

[Cold War](#)

[Desert Storm](#)

[3rd Infantry Division Today](#)

World War One

The 3rd Division is formed

The 3d Infantry Division was activated at Camp Greene, North Carolina, in November 1917. For six months, the Division filled its ranks and conducted numerous training operations the Division set sail for Europe arriving in

France in February of 1918. After more training in trench and chemical warfare, the 3rd Division, under the command of General Joseph Dickman, was ordered to a quiet section of the line in the Vosges sector on May 30, 1918. Those orders were changed that night and the Division was loaded onto trains and sent north to Conde-en-Brie. The 7th Machine Gun Battalion was detached and rushed by trucks to Conde. Upon arrival the next morning, the Battalion was ordered by the local French commander to continue on to Chateau Thierry. Their mission was to cover the withdrawal of French forces as they crossed the Marne River.

Baptism of fire

Later that day, the 7th arrived at the village of Nesle, one mile south of Chateau Thierry. Here the battalion offloaded from the trucks and established a defensive line along the south bank of the Marne river. 2 Machine Gun teams were ordered to cross the river. Under the command of Lt. John Bissel, the teams set up their positions at the first intersection across the bridge. Throughout the evening and into the next morning, hundreds of French troops filtered through the 7th's lines. At 10:00 AM on June 1, the Germans entered Chateau Thierry and approached the bridge. Before they

could get to it, the bridge was destroyed and Lt Bissel's men were stranded. The positions on the south bank opened up on the advancing German's and exacted a heavy toll. The German's retreated from the bridge approaches. That night, Lt Bissel and his men crossed a railway bridge and rejoined their Battalion.

In their first combat, the men of the 3rd Division's 7th Machine Gun Battalion performed well. Unfortunately, they received none of the credit. When written about in newspapers back home the headlines read "Germans stopped at Chateau Thierry with Help of God and Few Marines" when all of the fighting was done by the 7th Machine Gun

Battalion.

"Rock of the Marne"

A few days later, the 3rd Division was ordered into the line at Chateau Thierry. They were ordered to hold the line right at the Marne River with, as the French Commander put it, "One foot in the water". The Division held a 7 mile stretch of the line along the river. The 4th Regiment held a sector of the line east of Chateau Thierry and the Division spread out east along the south bank. At the other end, the 38th Regiment tied in with the French 125th Infantry Division.

On July 15, the Germans launched their

offensive at Chateau Thierry. Their objective was to widen their salient that they had achieved from their May offensive. The men of the 3rd Division endured a 3 hour artillery barrage while waiting for the German attack. That night, the Germans began crossing the Marne in small boats and on precarious footbridges. The 3rd Division machine guns opened fire and quickly capsized most of the boats and destroyed several of the footbridges. The advancing Germans were forced to swim across the Marne.

After the artillery lifted, the German assault began. On the right flank, the French 125th Division was quickly

overwhelmed and the French troops panicked and retreated. 4 Rifle Companies from the US28th Infantry Division that had been assigned to the 125th, were left alone to face the Germans. The Keystone soldiers fought tenaciously but could not hold out against the Germans. Most were killed or captured. Now the 3rd Division's flank was completely exposed and the 38th Regiment was forced to reform their lines in order to hold the line. Lt. Col McAlexander, the commander of the 38th, ordered his Regiment into a horseshoe formation so that an attack from any direction could be dealt with. The Germans hit the 38th's lines with everything the had, but the men of the

38th held fast. Lt.Col. McAlexander continued to shift his forces to reinforce his lines and soon the German attack was stopped. They had held.

Meanwhile, the 4th and 7th Regiments were being attacked by 3 German Divisions. Like the 38th, the 4th and the 7th continually shifted troops to ensure that the areas where they were being attacked were reinforced. In one instance, the Germans attacked a section of the line thinly held by three platoons. The commander sent a runner for reinforcements and ordered his men to hold steady. When the reinforcements arrived, the attack had been repulsed but all three platoons were reduced to just a

handful of survivors. All along the 3rd Division's lines, the Germans were being soundly defeated. Their assault slowed and then finally stopped. By nightfall, 800 Germans had been captured. Some units had lost over 40% of their men either killed or wounded but nowhere on the 3rd Division's lines did the German forces break through. The 3rd Division stopped the Germans cold, rightly earning the nickname "Rock of the Marne".

The 3rd Division advances

After a brief rest and resupply, the 3rd Division crossed the Marne and advanced on Chateau Thierry with the

28th and 42nd Infantry Divisions on their flanks. Seeing that they were being attacked from three sides, the Germans began a hasty retreat out of Chateau Thierry. After quickly securing the town, the advancing Americans began to chase the fleeing Germans. The Germans did fight back however, often savagely. At each river and road junction they would turn and fight. These bloody delaying actions did not stop the 3rd Division but they did allow the Germans to get some of their heavy equipment back to their own lines. Each time the Germans stopped, they were quickly overrun and defeated. The chase of the retreating Germans lasted over a week with several battles occurring each day. After

a viscous fight at the Ourq river, the 3rd Division was relived by the fresh 32nd Infantry Division.

The 3rd Division returned to their previous lines at the Marne for a much needed rest. Here they consolidated their units and brought in replacements. On August 4, 1918, the 3rd Division was transferred to the US III Corps but remained on the Marne. A few weeks later, III Corps was assigned to the 1st US Army and ordered to prepare for the 1st American-led offensive of the war.

Saint-Mihiel

The Saint-Mihiel offensive called for 16

Divisions to advance and eliminate the German Salient in and around the city of Saint-Mihiel. The 3rd Division was assigned to IV Corps and placed in Corps Reserve. On September 12, 1918 the Americans began their assault. Fortunately the Germans, realizing their vulnerability in Saint-Mihiel, had begun withdrawing their troops two days earlier. When the first units entered the city, they met only token resistance. The 3rd Division was called forward to occupy the town while the remaining forces continued the advance. IV Corps quickly captured Bois de Ramieres and several small towns. By September 16, the Germans had been driven to the Woerve plains, just a few miles from the

French/German border. The 3rd Division was then ordered forward to occupy the previously German-owned trenches.

The 3rd Division was ordered to clear the trenches of booby traps and mines and to conduct patrols to eliminate resistance in the area. During the Saint-Mihiel advance, some 15,000 Germans had been captured and 200 square miles of French soil was liberated. The 3rd Division got little rest and they soon received orders for another large offensive.

Meuse-Argonne

On September 26, the Americans launched their final offensive of the war, the assault on the Argonne forest near the Meuse river. 600,000 Infantrymen advanced on the forest after a three hour artillery bombardment. The Germans were caught completely by surprise with only 4 divisions in the line. After clearing the first lines, the American's hit three more German lines, each heavily fortified. General Pershing, the American commander, had decided to hold his experienced Divisions in Reserve and sent to fresh Divisions in the first attacks. The 3rd Division was again in reserve

In the Argonne forest, advancing was

difficult, The terrain was very rough and most of the ground was deep mud. By the end of September, the advance had slowed and was finally stopped so the Americans could reorganize. On October 4, the 3rd Division, along with other veteran divisions, was called forward to take over the advance. All along the front, the advance was slow but steady. The Americans were destroying the German positions one at a time. On October 10, the Argonne forest was cleared. While most of the American army rested, the 3rd Division was ordered into the hills between the forest and the Meuse River to eliminate the German resistance there.

The fighting in the hills was brutal. The Germans fought for each foot of ground the 3rd Division captured. For three weeks, the 3rd Division was in almost constant combat with the Germans but finally on November 1, the last of the German units surrendered to the 3rd Division.

Armistice

On November 11, 1918, World War One ended. The 3rd Division remained in France for several months supervising the disarming of the defeated German Army. Finally in March of 1919, the 3rd Division returned home to the United States. The Division remained active,

but was demobilized to peacetime levels. During World War One, two members of the 3rd Division were awarded the Medal of Honor for their heroism under fire.

- John L. Barkley
- George P. Hays

In addition, 451 soldiers of the 3rd Division were awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

World War Two

A new war

After enjoying a peaceful break after

World War One, the 3rd Infantry Division was mobilized in early 1941 after the President declared a state of emergency. The 3rd Division began the process of filling its ranks and prepared for war. In July 1942, the Division received its orders, prepare for the invasion of North Africa.

Operation Torch

The mission of Operation Torch was to secure French North Africa for the Allied forces in order to conduct operations on the European continent. One significant problem was that most of the landing areas were defended by French troops who had declared loyalty

to Germany after France fell. This meant that the Americans, British, and Free-French forces would have to fight their former allies. The invasion was scheduled for November 1942 and would take place in three places, 1st would be Casablanca, an Atlantic port city on Morocco, followed by the capture of the Algerian port cities of Oran and Algiers.

The 3rd Division, under the command of Maj. Gen. Lucian Truscott, was given the task of capturing Casablanca. The 3rd Division embarked aboard transport ships and sailed directly from America to Morocco in what would become the longest sea voyage preceding an

amphibious landing.

On November 8, 1942, the 3rd Infantry Division stormed ashore at Casablanca supported by 400 ships and 1,000 aircraft. The invasion was a complete surprise and the 3rd Division quickly established their beachhead but the French forces fought back bitterly. For three days, the American fought the French forces until finally, the French agreed to a cease fire and joined the Allied forces. With Casablanca secured, the Allies could now move men and materiel into the Mediterranean Sea without fear of the Straights of Gibraltar being sealed off.

North Africa

After the success at Casablanca, the 3rd Division was ordered to move East in support of the British forces attacking Tunisia. The British had launched their attacks from two directions; westward from Egypt, and eastward from Algeria. The German and Italian forces occupied abandoned French fortifications along the southern border of Tunisia called the Mareth line. Realizing they did not have enough forces to drive the Germans and Italians from their positions, the Allies established defensive positions in the Tunisian mountains until reinforcements could be brought in to renew the attack. In February, 1943 the Germans fought

back and defeated an American armored force at the Kasserine Pass and broke through the Allied lines. The German drive quickly stalled after reinforcements could not be brought forward and the Axis forces turned for a shallower envelopment than they planned.

The Allies were prepared for this and the Germans quickly encountered a British blocking force which stopped the German drive. After a brutal force march, American Artillery was brought forward and began to pound the German forces. Fearing that a large attack was imminent on the Mareth line, the Germans withdrew to their positions. On

March 17, the 3rd Division, now part of the US II Corps, launched a diversionary attack to the rear of the Mareth line while the British Eighth Army assaulted the line in force. Two weeks later, the American and British forces linked up and by the end of April had captured the port cities of Bizerte and Tunis. On May 10, the last of the German and Italian forces surrendered and the Allies controlled all of North Africa. The 3rd Division got little rest as they were ordered to prepare for another amphibious assault.

Sicily

The 3rd Infantry Division, reinforced by

a Ranger Battalion and Combat Command A of the 2nd Armored Division, was tasked with landing at Licata on the left flank of the Allied invasion. On the night of July 9, 1943 the invasion force set sail. Sea conditions were horrible and the 45 mph gale force winds were dubbed "Mussolini Wind" by the seasick soldiers. Early on the morning of the 10th, the Allies hit the beach.

The landing was complicated by soft sand and shifting sandbars. Numerous landing craft became stranded and the soldiers were forced to wade ashore. The 3rd Division met only light resistance on their beaches which was

quickly defeated. With their beachhead secure, the 3rd Division moved inland and captured their first objectives within hours. After the American 7th Army had captured its objectives, they were ordered to stop at a key highway and relinquish it to the British 8th Army who was given priority for capturing the city of Messina. The commander of the 7th Army, Lt. Gen. George Patton, did not like being relegated to protecting the British flanks, convinced the operation commander to authorize a "Reconnaissance in force" to the west and the city of Agrigento. By July 15, Agrigento had been captured by the 3rd Division and Patton was authorized to continue west and capture Palermo.

Patton organized the 2nd Armored, 82nd Airborne and the 3rd Infantry Division into a provisional Corps and sent them on a 100 mile drive to Palermo, the capital of Sicily. After three days of house-to-house fighting, Palermo fell to the Americans and 53,000 Italian soldiers were captured. With this stunning victory, the Allies controlled half of Sicily.

The 7th Army now received orders to advance on Messina. They would attack from the West along the north of Sicily while the British attacked north along the east coast. Messina was heavily defended by 4 German Divisions and was surrounded by rugged terrain and

the Caronie mountains. The 7th Army advanced along Highway 113 with the 1st Infantry and the 45th Infantry Divisions in the lead and the 3rd Division in support. After the 45th Division captured "Bloody Ridge" outside of Santo Stefano, the 3rd Division was brought forward and took over the advance. The Americans continued to attack the German positions and each objective was taken only after fierce battles. The 3rd Division faced its greatest opposition when it attacked San Fratello. The German forces, the 29th Panzer Grenadier Division, was deeply entrenched along a steep ridgeline and could not be driven out. On August 3, the 3rd Division began a series of attacks

against San Fratello but none were successful. Gen. Patton ordered an amphibious landing to flank the German position.

On August 8, the 2nd Battalion 30th Infantry, reinforced with two batteries of artillery and a platoon of tanks, landed at Saint Agata, 3 miles behind San Fratello. The landing caught the Germans by surprise and they were completely cut off from escape. Unfortunately the bulk of the German forces had already withdrawn the previous night but the 3rd Division captured over 1,000 POWs. Gen Patton desperately wanted to trap and destroy the 29th Panzer Division and on August

11th, he sent the 30th Infantry on another Amphibious end-around. The second landing worked and the 29th was completely surrounded. The 30th Infantry was too light a force however to keep them bottled up and by the time the rest of the 3rd Division lined up, the 29th had escaped again. The 7th Army continued its advance on Messina and encountered dozens of blown bridges and heavy minefields. The Army Engineers worked feverishly to clear the way but the Americans could not catch the evacuating German forces. On August 17, the 7th Infantry of the 3rd Division entered Messina just 2 hours after the last German transport ships had left for Italy. Sicily was secured, in

large part due to the 3 amphibious landings of the 3rd Division.

The 3rd Division was given a brief rest and resupply while they prepared for the next invasion. Sicily was always meant to be a stepping stone to Italy so it was no surprise when the 3rd Division received its orders. They were going to take Naples.

The Invasion of Italy

On September 9, the Allies launched the invasion of Italy by sending their forces ashore at Salerno. After securing the initial beachheads, the remaining forces were brought ashore. The 3rd Division

disembarked from their transports in the port and began their advance on Naples with the 82nd Airborne and the British 7th Armoured Divisions. Naples fell to the Allies in early October. When they entered the city, they found it almost completely destroyed by the retreating Germans. Almost every building had been destroyed and ships in the harbor had been sunk. The Engineers went to work and within 2 weeks, the port was reopened and supplies began flowing in. The 3rd Division was transferred to VI Corps and pulled out for their next, their fifth, Amphibious landing of the war.

Anzio

On the morning of January 22, 1944, the US 5th Army assaulted the beaches at Anzio. The landings were so successful, the invading Americans had captured their initial objectives by noon and had begun to push inland. The 3rd Division, on the southern flank, met only a single company of German infantry on their beach and made significant advances inland. The Division moved towards Cisterna but encountered stiff resistance and was forced to halt and consolidate their forces. The next day, Maj. Gen. Truscott ordered his Division forward and came within 3 miles of Cisterna when he was ordered by 5th Army command to hold in place as part of a general reorganization and consolidation

of the beachhead forces.

For the next week, the Allies brought in supplies and troops but made no advances. This delay allowed the Germans to transfer thousands of troops to the Anzio area. The Americans, under the command of Maj. Gen John Lucas, did not know that the roads from Anzio to Rome were virtually undefended and a bold strike inland might have allowed the capture of Rome with few casualties. Gen Lucas erred on the side of caution and held his forces back while the Germans reinforced their units with 8 Divisions with 5 more on the way and waited.

On January 30 the 3rd Division,

reinforced by 3 Battalions of Rangers, launched their assault on Cisterna. The Rangers were within 800 yards of Cisterna when they were ambushed by an entire German Motorized Infantry Division. The 15th Infantry Regiment was sent to try and rescue the Rangers. They were not in time as the Rangers were driven out into the open by a German Armored Division. The Rangers had no anti-tank weapons and were quickly cut down. Out of 767 men, only 6 Rangers survived. The 7th and 15th Infantry continued the assault on Cisterna against heavy opposition. The Germans were deeply entrenched and after 16 hours of fighting, the 3rd Division was still a mile away. After learning that

more reinforcements were on the way, the 3rd Division was again ordered to hold in place and dig in.

On February 23, Maj. Gen Truscott replaced Maj. Gen Lucas as the VI Corps commander. On February 29, the Germans launched an offensive against the 3rd Division in the Citerna sector of the beachhead with 2 infantry and 2 armored divisions. Truscott had prepared for this by reinforcing the 3rd Division's positions with massed artillery. The German attacks were quickly stopped by the artillery and mortar raining down on them and the entrenched 3rd Division troops. Despite repeated attacks, the Germans could not

penetrate the American line. The German attacks continued along the 3rd Division's lines and the 7th and 15th Infantry suffered heavy casualties but by March 4, the Germans could not mass enough forces to attack. In the final assault on March 4, the Germans lost over 3,500 men and several dozen tanks.

Breakout

For the next three months, a lull settled over Anzio. Both sides were exhausted and could not conduct major operations. On May 5, Gen Truscott ordered VI Corps to prepare for their breakout offensive and on May 23, the 1st Armored Division with the 3rd Division

in support, broke through the main German line. VI Corps quickly encircled Cisterna and attacked the trapped German forces. Fighting was heavy in the town but on May 25, German resistance ended and the Allies controlled Cisterna.

The price for Cisterna was heavy. The 1st Armored Division lost 100 tanks in the first day. VI Corps suffered over 4,000 casualties. With Cisterna secured, the 3rd Division was ordered to link up with the 1st Special Service Force and advance on Valmontone where they would attempt to destroy the German 10th Army. Valmontone was captured by the 3rd Division but the 10th Army

escaped north. VI Corps rejoined the 5th Army and was ordered to advance on Rome. The 3rd Division, along with the 85th and 88th Infantry Divisions, reached the outskirts of Rome on June 4, 1944 encountering only light resistance. On June 5, the 5th Army entered Rome and was met by throngs of jubilant Italians. The 5th Army remained in Rome only a few days, then continued north after the retreating Germans.

Southern France

In August of 1944, the 3rd Division was ordered to execute an amphibious landing in Southern France. On August 15, the 3rd Division, with an Airborne

task force and French Commandoes and two additional Infantry Divisions, stormed ashore and quickly eliminated the German defenses. The next day, the port cities of Toulon and Marseilles were captured. The 3rd Division, under the command of the 7th Army, began their drive north into France. The Germans were in full retreat and on September 11, the 7th Army linked up with Gen. Patton's 3rd Army.

The 7th Army continued its drive into France and then turned for its next objective, the Rhine river. The 7th Army and the 1st French Army drove east and reached the Rhine at Alsace. Because of logistical problems, the 7th Army was

ordered to hold their positions and dig in. The next month, the Germans launched their Ardennes Offensive. The 7th Army was ordered to remain in place to ensure that the German units facing them at the Rhine could not be pulled out to reinforce the German offensive. For four months, the 3rd Division and the rest of the 7th Army conducted patrols and numerous raids along their front at the Rhine river.

The 3rd Division enters Germany

Finally, at the end of March 1945, the 3rd Division crossed the Rhine and broke through the German lines. After the breakthrough, the 7th Army was

assigned to the 6th Army Group and ordered into the southeast areas of Germany. Retreating Germans were planning on staging a final defense in the Alps of Southern Germany and Austria. The 3rd Division got there first and the retreating German forces were eliminated. By the end of April, the 3rd Division was capturing town after town after German units surrendered wholesale. Finally on May 8, 1945, Germany surrendered.

The 3rd Division remained in Germany for several months serving occupation duty. They were relieved at the end of 1945 and in early 1946, returned to the United States. During World War Two,

36 soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division were awarded the Medal of Honor and 71 the Distinguished Service Cross. The following soldiers received the Medal of Honor for their heroism.

Lucian Adams

- Sylvester Antolak
- Stanley Bender
- Maurice Britt
- Frank Burke
- Herbert Christian
- James Connor
- Robert Craig
- Michael Daly
- Rudolph B. Davila
- Russell Dunham
- John Dutko

- Eric Gibson
- Lloyd Hawks
- Elden Johnson
- Victor Kandle
- Gus Kefurt
- Patrick Kessler
- Alton Knappenberger
- Floyd Lindstrom
- Robert D. Maxwell
- Joseph Merrell
- Harold Messerschmidt
- James Mills
- Audie Murphy
- Charles Murray, Jr.
- Arlo Olson
- Truman Olson
- Forrest Peden
- Wilburn Ross

- Henry Schauer
- John Squires
- John Tominac
- Jose Valdez
- Keith Ware
- David Waybur
- Eli Whitely

Korea

Back in action

After distinguishing themselves in two World Wars, it came as no surprise when the 3rd Infantry Division received orders to ship out for the Korean Peninsula. Since they had been demobilized after World War Two, the

Division could not ship out right away. Transports were a premium and priority was given to full strength units. The 65th Regiment boarded transports on August 25 in Puerto Rico. From there the Regiment sailed through the Panama Canal and headed straight for Korea.

The 7th and 15th Regiments sailed from San Francisco from August 30 to September 2 bound for Moji Japan. The Division, minus the 65th Regiment, was severely short of men and was given 8,500 South Korean draftees to integrate into their units. Most Squads of the 3rd Division contained 2 Americans and 8 Koreans. By the first week of November, the 3rd Division had sailed

from Japan and linked up with the 65th Regiment in Wonsan Korea. The 3rd Division was ordered to relieve the 1st Marine Division, block the main roads in the southern part of the corps zone against guerrillas and bypassed North Koreans, and to protect the Wonsan-Hungnam coastal strip. To do this, the 3rd Division commander created 4 Regimental Combat Teams from his 3 Regiments and the 26th Korean Regiment assigned to him.

Throughout November, the 3rd Division engaged North Korean Forces who were launching diversionary attacks to draw UN forces away from the Chosin Reservoir where the Chinese forces were

entering the war. In addition, the 3rd Division continued to mop up pockets of resistance where North Koreans had either infiltrated or been left behind when their units withdrew from Wonsan. Some of these engagements were heavy and several units took hundreds of casualties but all of the North Korean attacks were defeated.

The War Changes

The advance of the Eighth Army and X Corps came to an abrupt halt on the night of November 27th when 200,000 Chinese troops attacked the Eighth Army's lines. On the 28th, the UN Forces and the Eighth Army could not hold back

the Chinese and they began a general withdrawal back to the 38th parallel. X Corps, withdrew from Eight Army's sector and pulled back into a beachhead sector in the port city of Hungnam. The 3rd Division moved all available forces north to cover the withdrawal of X Corps and the Eight Army.

On December 11, X Corps began their evacuation of Hungnam and boarded transports for Pusan. By December 24, all elements of X Corps, including the 3rd Division, had left Hungnam. Upon arrival in Pusan, the 3rd Division was assigned to Eight Army's I Corps and took up positions on the western flank of the UN line near Seoul. On January 25th,

Eighth Army went back on the offensive and the 3rd Division was tasked with securing bridgeheads across the Han River.

By late February, the 3rd Division had reached the Han river and after several days of brutal fighting, had secured a crossing over the river. A week later, the 3rd had moved further north and established positions along the Imjin River north of Uijongbu.

On April 22, the Chinese launched a major offensive against the 3rd Division, forcing them to pull back to a point just north of Seoul. A week later, the 3rd Division was placed in Corps reserve south of Seoul.

The Iron Triangle

In mid-May, the Chinese and North Koreans launched another offensive in the central areas of Korea. The 3rd Division was sent to assist in the defense. The attacking forces made a crucial mistake in concentrating their forces; they had weakened their lines to the left of the UN line. This allowed the 3rd Division to launch a counter-attack on the towns of Ch'orwon, Kumhwa, and P'yonggang, the so-called "Iron triangle". After a fierce battle, the 3rd Division captured Ch'orwon on June 12. On the 13th, the Division sent Armored patrols into the other two towns.

P'yonggang and Kumhwa were lightly defended and by the end of June, the 3rd Division had captured the last two towns of the Iron triangle. Once secure, the 3rd Division consolidated their positions and settled into the defense. For the next three months, the 3rd Division conducted patrols and limited objective attacks in the Iron Triangle region. On October 21, the 3rd Division was relieved and sent to the rear area for resupply and equipment maintenance.

Back to the front

On November 20, the 3rd Division relieved the 1st Cavalry Division near the junction of the Imjin and Yokkok

rivers. From November 1951 through April 1952, the 3rd Division conducted daily patrolling and improved their defensive positions. 1 regiment was always held in Reserve so the units could rotate through front line duty. On April 26, the 3rd Division returned to the Eighth Army area for a training rotation.

On July 1, the 3rd Division returned once again to the front for patrolling operations. On July 6th, one of the 3rd Division's outposts was attacked by Chinese forces but the attack was repulsed. For the rest of July, the 3rd Division engaged the enemy on a regular basis. One 3rd Division outpost was

overrun by the Chinese but was retaken the next day. Things quieted down during the rains of August and September but at the end of September, the Chinese struck again. After brutal hand-to-hand fighting, the Chinese succeeded in capturing two 3rd Division outposts. Despite numerous counter-attacks, the outposts could not be retaken. On September 30, the 3rd Division was relieved by a Korean Division and moved into Army reserve.

For the rest of 1952, the 3rd Division sent units out on regular combat patrols and reinforced other units under attack. In January of 1953, the 3rd Division returned to the Iron Triangle to take over patrolling operations in the area. The

3rd Division remained in the Iron Triangle for several months until June of 1953. The Chinese were stepping up their operations and the 3rd Division was pulled back to reinforce the Eighth Army lines. Throughout June, the 3rd Division turned back several major attacks by Chinese forces. During one 9 day period, the 3rd Division killed over 4,000 enemy soldiers.

In mid-July, the 3rd Division was shifted to relieve the Korean Capital Division which was being heavily attacked. Within days the Chinese offensive had been stopped and the 3rd Division had stabilized the UN lines. The 3rd Division continued to improve their

defensive positions when the peace treaty went into effect on July 27, 1953. The 3rd Division pulled back to positions south of the South Korean capital of Seoul where they remained as a ready reserve force and continued to train the South Korean Army. In December of 1954, the 3rd Division was relieved and returned home to Fort Benning where they began the process of demobilization.

During the Korean War, 11 soldiers of the 3rd Infantry Division were awarded the Medal of Honor for heroism:

- Emory Bennett
- Jerry Crump
- John Essebagger

- Charles Gilliland
- Clair Goodblood
- Noah Knight
- Darwin Kyle
- Leroy Mendonca
- Hiroshi Miyamura
- Ola Mize
- Charles Pendleton

Cold War

The Rock Returns

In April of 1958, the 3rd Infantry Division was ordered to Germany as part of the NATO defenses of Western Europe. The Division was organized

into a Mechanized Infantry Division, adding armored units to their ranks. Their primary mission was to deter aggression along the borders between NATO and Warsaw Pact nations.

While in Germany, the 3rd Division continued to train. The Division conducted large scale exercises with units from other NATO nations in addition to Reserve and National Guard forces from the States. As part of America's commitment to the defense of Western Europe, the Army initiated Operation Gyroscope. This Operation was designed to rotate units in and out of Germany so as many combat units as possible could train on the potential

battlefields of the Cold War.

Tensions in Europe rose when in 1961 the Berlin Wall was built, sealing East Berlin from West. In response, 120,000 Reserves were called to duty, including 2 National Guard Infantry Divisions. Seeing that the West had the resolve to meet any threat, the Warsaw Pact nations eased back and demobilized some of their forces. This period of tensions highlighted the need to ensure that massive amounts of men and materiel could be moved from the United States to Germany. The Army took steps to make sure that could happen.

Reforger

During the early 60's. the Army conducted several small exercises designed to test their readiness to send units and supplies to Germany in response to a threat. Soon they realized that they needed to conduct these exercises on a much larger scale. Operation Reforger was born.

Reforger (Reinforcement of Germany) was the largest exercise the Army had conducted since the Louisiana Maneuvers of World War Two. For added realism, Reforger exercises were scheduled to coincide with Reserve and National Guard activation dates. Entire Divisions were activated and shipped to Germany on board Air Force transport

aircraft and Navy transport ships. Once in Germany, the Divisions would link up with pre-positioned supplies of tanks, vehicles, ammunition, etc. From there they would bring their equipment up to readiness and head out for maneuver exercises.

In addition to American units, combat units from other NATO nations would participate in Reforger. The 3rd Infantry Division (MECH) played a key role in training the units that participated in Reforger exercises. Units coming in to Germany would link up with the 3rd Division, and other units already stationed there, to conduct their exercises.

Reforger was a vital training tool for the US Army from the late 60's into the late 80's. It gave the Army forces a great opportunity to work with their NATO allies and their own reserve forces.

When not actively engaged in exercises, the 3rd Division maintained a routine of patrols and outpost duty along the German border. Units rotated from ready alert status, to line duty and to garrison duty where they would participate in classroom training, equipment maintenance and personnel transfer.

Life in Germany was routine, but never dull. The US Army ensured that the Soldiers in Germany would have enough resources when off duty to keep them

entertained and tensions were usually high enough to ensure constant vigilance on the German border. Many Soldiers considered duty in Germany to be the best part of the Army service. After years of peaceful duty in Germany, the 3rd Division was called upon to stop the aggression of a country who had invaded their neighbor. The Rock was heading for the desert.

Desert Shield/Storm

Desert Warfare

In 1990, when Iraq invaded and captured Kuwait, the 3rd Infantry Division (MECH) was still forward deployed in

Germany. After several other units were transferred to the growing coalition forces in Saudi Arabia, the 3rd Division was assigned to V Corps in December of 1990. V Corps was placed on a high state of readiness and began supplying equipment from pre-positioned stocks to the forces in the Gulf. V Corps was also now responsible for the defense and protection of all of Southern Germany. Prior to this, there had been 6 Divisions, 2 of which were Armored, now there were only 3 Divisions for the same amount of real estate.

In November, 1990 elements of the 3rd Division's 3rd "Phantom" Brigade began to deploy to Saudi Arabia and were

attached to the 1st Armored Division. The 3rd brigade was comprised of the 4th BN 66th Armor with their M-1A1 tanks, 1st and 4th BN 7th Infantry equipped with Bradley Fighting Vehicles, 2nd BN 41st Field Artillery, and the 26th Support Battalion. In addition to these forces, the 1st Squadron, 1st Cavalry of the 1st Armored Division was attached to their Brigade adding the awesome firepower of the AH-64 Apache helicopter to their arsenal. These units, along with the 11th Aviation Brigade composed the VII "Jayhawk" Corps with 142,000 Soldiers, 1,500 tanks, 1,500 APCs, 670 artillery pieces, and 225 attack helicopters. Their mission was simple;

find, attack and destroy the Iraqi Republican Guard Divisions

By December 12, 1990, the Phantom Brigade had completed the deployment from Germany. They were now part of "The Shield" of Desert Shield. The troops and light equipment were ferried using 115 flights of Air Force transports. The Brigade's heavy equipment and vehicles were shipped on board 45 Maritime Prepositioning Ships and arrived in theater by December 24. The Brigade was then trucked to Initial Staging Area (ISA) North, more commonly referred to as "The Scud Bowl". There the Brigade conducted training exercises and equipment

maintenance.

Desert Storm

When the Air campaign of Desert Storm began, the Phantom Brigade was ordered to link up with the rest of VII Corps at Staging Area Ike. By February 14, all units of VII Corps were in place and they began to move to their forward staging areas. The road march took two days and the Corps took advantage of the time to practice maneuver tactics and grow accustomed to each other. Once VII Corps arrived at their forward assembly area, they began to build their defensive positions and prepare for combat.

On February 21, 1990, VII Corps made its presence known. The field artillery units opened fire using Multiple Launch Rocket Systems and 155mm artillery to harass the Iraqi forces at Wadi al Batin. Three days later, VII Corps was turned loose to accomplish their mission.

The 100 Hour War

At 2:30 pm, on February 24, 1990, VII crossed the line of departure into Kuwait. With the Cavalry and Phantom Brigade in the lead, VII Corps advanced on the Iraqi forces. On that first day, VII Corps had three soldiers wounded from shrapnel but there were no direct enemy engagements. The battle for Kuwait was

still an artillery duel. After reaching their first two objectives, VII Corps stopped to refuel and set up their positions for the night.

The next morning, VII Corps made contact with the Iraqi 26th Infantry Division. 4th BN 7th Infantry was the first to engage the enemy and they destroyed several enemy vehicles before handing off to the 1st Armored's 3rd brigade. The Phantom Brigade continued north and made contact with another element of the Iraqi 26th Division. The entire brigade attacked the enemy and destroyed several APCs, trucks, and artillery pieces. 275 Iraqi soldiers were also captured and sent to the rear area.

The Iraqi 26th Division broke contact and the Phantom brigade gave chase. With the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored in support, the Phantom Brigade continued to attack the Iraqi forces and by the morning of the 26th, the Iraqi Division was completely surrounded. By noon, VII Corps had completely destroyed the 26th Division. Four hours later, VII Corps received a report of enemy tanks and APCs in the open. VII Corps shifted their formation and headed for the area of the report. The Phantom Brigade was put in the center of the formation with the 1st Armored forces on either flank. Scout units soon reported 2 Iraqi divisions in the area. VII Corps attacked with everything they had.

The Iraqi units were identified as the Tawaklana Republican Guard Division and the Iraqi 52nd Mechanized Division. VII Corps' Apaches attacked first and quickly destroyed 13 tanks. The Cavalry forces engaged the 52nd Mechanized and in the battle destroyed 30 Iraqi tanks and dozens of APCs. All of VII Corps was engaged and by midnight the score was severely lopsided. The enemy lost 112 tanks, 85 APCs, several artillery pieces, 94 trucks, and 550 POWs. 4 VII Corps tanks were hit butb received only minor damage. None were destroyed.

Early in the morning of the 27th, 2 more Republican Guard Divisions were identified. VII Corps split its forces. The

Phantom Brigade and the 2nd Brigade engaged the Madinah Division. Brigade artillery began pounding the Iraqi positions and several enemy tanks were destroyed. Soon, enemy soldiers began to surrender en masse. Several units attempted to escape but the Phantom Brigade and 2nd Brigade caught them in the open and attacked. Some Iraqis attempted to turn and fight but they could not stop the advancing Americans. Soon the 1st Armored's 3rd Brigade joined the fight. The devastation was total. 187 enemy tanks were destroyed along with 125 APCs, 40 artillery pieces and 5 air defense systems. Hundreds of Iraqi soldiers had surrendered. At 5:00 pm, VII Corps was ordered to hold in place

pending a cease fire order.

The 28th started with VII Corps artillery and Apache helicopters continuing the destruction of the fleeing Iraqi forces. At 7:00 am, the Phantom brigade launched another attack on the Madinah Division and several more tanks were destroyed. The attack was halted an hour later when the cease fire order came in. In those last hours, 40 more tanks, 60 APCs, 15 artillery pieces, 244 trucks, and 11 air defense systems were destroyed and 300 more Iraqi soldiers were captured.

Aftermath

VII Corps had won one of the most lopsided victories in history. In 90 hours of combat they had destroyed;

- 418 tanks
- 447 Armored Personnel Carriers
- 116 Artillery Pieces
- 110 Air Defense Systems
- 1,200 trucks

VII Corps losses were extremely light. 1 M-1A1 tank was destroyed and 4 damaged slightly. 2 APCs were damaged and 1 was destroyed. 2 Apaches helicopters were damaged. 5 trucks were damaged and 1 fuel truck was destroyed. 4 Soldiers from VII Corps were killed. 1 from C co. 54th Engineer BN, 1 from the 19th Engineer

BN, and 1 from 6th BN 3rd Air Defense Artillery. Only 1 Soldier from the 3rd Infantry Division was killed from the 4th BN 66th Armor.

The Rock Today

After the success of Desert Storm. The Phatom Brigade returned to Germany. In 1992, the 3rd Infantry Division (MECH) returned to the United States. The 1st and 2nd Brigades of the 3rd Division are staioned at Fort Stewart Georgia while the 3rd Brigade is stationed at Fort Benning Georgia.

In October of 2000, the 3rd Infantry Division took over as headquarters for

Stabilisation Force (SFOR) 8 and 9 in Bosnia. The 3rd Battalion of the famous 15th Infantry (2nd "Spartan" Brigade) is currently serving in Bosnia and is due to return to states in October of 2001. At that point, another 3rd ID unit will rotate to the Balkans for SFOR 9 for a 1 year rotation.

In addition, the 3rd Division rotates units to Kuwait as part of the ongoing commitment to train the armed forces of Kuwait and to maintain a constant vigil against any further Iraqi aggression. In addition, the 3rd Division assists in training Reserve and National Guard units as well as young future infantrymen at the Army Infantry School in Fort

Benning.

The 3rd Infantry Division (MECH) is comprised of the following units:

- 7th, 15th and 30th Mechanized Infantry Regiments
- 64th Armored Regiment (1st, 4th BNs)
- 69th Armored Regiment (2nd, 3rd BNs)
- 1st, 2nd BN 3rd Aviation Regiment
- 10th, 11th and 317th Engineer BNs
- 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry

In Addition, there is a whole host of support units including artillery, air defense, military intelligence, supply and logistics, signal and the 3rd Military

Police BN.

The Rock of the Marne is a strong today as it was in 1917 and the Soldiers of the 3rd Division stand ready to answer their Nation's call to defeat aggression with cold steel and rock solid determination.

If you would like to read more about the history of the United States Military, visit Grunts.net - Home of the US Military on the web at <http://www.grunts.net>.