

Koehler, Gerald L.

Area Soldiers With Famed Kraut Killers

JUN 13 1945

6TH ARMY GROUP, Germany.—
The City of Wurzburg, in southwestern Germany, lay in ruins after receiving terrible pastings from the air. The rubble-strewn streets and gutted buildings were deceptively quiet. But hidden in doorways and behind walls, the enemy was waiting with machine guns trained on advancing American doughboys of an infantry division.

On the outskirts of the city, Combat Command "A" of the 12th Armored "Hellcat" Division stood poised, ready to act as trouble shooters in case the Krauts proved difficult to rout. A short time later the quiet was shattered as the well-entrenched Germans poured round after round of fire into the American infantry.

Combat Command "A" moved in swiftly, its advanced tank elements led by 1st Lt. Thomas F. Johnson, of Brooklyn, N. Y. The tanks moved from one infantry sector to another, blasting out the stubborn enemy in one of the last actions in crushing Germany.

"I don't know how many Krauts we killed or captured in Wurzburg,

but we didn't take many prisoners," Lt. Johnson said the next day. "We just kept driving through the town, shooting at everything we saw."

Among the members of Combat Command "A" were the following doughboys from this area: Sgt. Gerald L. Koehler, Butztown; Pfc. Carl R. Deremer, Route 3, Bangor; Pfc. Harold H. Silfies, Route 2, Bath; Pfc. Donald R. Carr, Pvt. Vincent S. Christman, Cpl. Thomas J. William and Pvt. James E. Boyle, all of Allentown; Cpl. Frederick O. Nagle, 456 Berwick Street, Easton; Pfc. Russell F. Lorrach, 234 Main Street, Freemansburg; Pfc. Warren W. Hefner, 19 Depot Street, Hellertown; Cpl. Lester L. Beck, 229 South Whitfield Street, Nazareth, and Sgt. Louis J. Knopf, 1346 Vienna Street, Northampton.

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