

## Chapter 14: Aachen

The terrain in the approaches to the city of Aachen were small rolling hills, patches of woods, and open fields. The Germans are dug in well for their defensive positions, with secondary positions in the rear when they are forced to withdraw. Artillery and tanks play an important part in this kind of an attack. The enemy however, is not idle, for they will counter with the same weapons. The assault on Aachen will be by the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment<sup>1</sup> on three separate roads leading into the city from Belgium. The fighting and strategy for this city will be bitter. Our Air Force<sup>2</sup> has been unable to help because of the overcast bad weather. A plane hasn't been seen for days at the front, although allied heavy bombers were bombing the targets in the Fatherland. The U.S. Ninth Army to the North were holding, while the Third Army under General Patton was launching an attack to the Saar Basin near Luxemburg.

*See material on pp. 256-262*

*In memory of Lt. Eagan:*

Venturing back to the company, I thought of a poem appropriate enough to pay a tribute to my lost Irish friend.

May the road rise to meet you,  
May the wind be always at your back,  
May the sunshine be warm upon your fields,  
and until we meet again.  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

*See material on pp. 262-265*

*In memory of Nanny:*

When love is ours to share each day, it takes on a richer glow. Tears later will be lost in laughter at the funny things she did to amuse us. Nanny will live in the meadows of time eating the tender grass on the hill. Cotton-white clouds will dot the sky overhead with an occasional patch of blue. Long shadows follow the countryside as the sun's rays burst through to hit the green of earth. The warm wind of summer will kiss the wild flowers, making them sway in the breeze. Her abounding deeds of affection will live with us. She has earned a place in our hearts and will be missed by all. Yes, I say to all, we all loved a smelly goat. Piccone was stunned, said nothing, but just stared as we slipped Nanny into the hole and covered her up. When this act was completed, we all slipped away to mourn our great loss. Tragedy again strikes to cause us grief as the world is moving in the deadly tide of time. Things that we allow for will not blot out our confidence in God as another day will pass on touching our life. From the day we are born the

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<sup>1</sup> The battle for Aachen took place over a month, from mid-September until Oct. 21, and involved an assortment of American units, notably the 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry and 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Divisions, not just the 26<sup>th</sup> Regiment and the 1<sup>st</sup> Division. It would, however, be the 26<sup>th</sup>'s job to secure the city itself in the final stages of the battle.

<sup>2</sup> Olexa uses the terms Air Corps and Air Force interchangeably. Ground support in this area was provided by the 9<sup>th</sup> Air Force.

struggle of life goes on to achieve the goals set forth to success. The circumstances that bear down upon us will reflect the hope of our tomorrow like a glowing candle in the night.

*See material on pp. 265-296*