

In the dark on 21 February, we trudged along the road toward Taben on the river. Traffic was heavy; we heard motors everywhere. We were constantly stopped by all types of vehicles jockeying for position, and some trucks were off-loading at supply dumps. The off-the-road activity—heard, but mostly unseen—was impressive. River crossings caused bottlenecks, and German artillery from east of the river continually searched the few roads that led to the crossing sites.

During various stops, we questioned anyone nearby who might add details of what was happening across the Saar. Several MPs were wrapped up inside sleeping bags and sitting in a jeep next to the road. I joined Sanders and some of the 1st Squad who were gathered there. From snatches of conversations, we learned that 1st Battalion, 302d, had passed through there the night before.

C Company had crossed the river first, right before dawn on 22 February, in thick fog. They surprised the enemy and cleared several pillboxes, killing and capturing a good number of the soldiers. Farther on, a signal corps wire team told us the river was high with melting snow and a seven-mile-per-hour current running to the north. The three regiments had their own crossing sites, each one roughly two and one-half miles from the other.

We did not hear much news about the other regiments yet. But in this sector, the twelve-man assault boats had arrived