



In memory of
A. J. Hollingsworth
January 27, 1926 – January 4, 1945
New Lexington, Alabama, USA
Company C, 274th Infantry Regiment
70th U.S. Infantry Division "Trailblazers"



Following the violent German attacks of January 3, 1945, against positions held by the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 275th Infantry Regiment (70th Infantry Division), the situation in Philippsbourg became critical. Despite fierce resistance, the enemy succeeded in capturing much of the village as well as the heights overlooking it to the east and west. Isolated at several points, sometimes surrounded and severely tested by the fighting, the men of the 275th were in urgent need of reinforcements.

It was in this context that, early on the morning of January 4, the 1st Battalion, 274th Infantry Regiment, was ordered to move from Niederbronn toward Philippsbourg. Its companies were then assigned separate objectives: Company A was to seize Hill 306, the height overlooking the church in Philippsbourg, before continuing toward the Weiherköpfel (Hill 303), with the objective of relieving the isolation of Company I, 275th Infantry Regiment; in the center, Company B, accompanied by a platoon of tanks from the 47th Tank Battalion of the U.S. 14th Armored Division, was to clear the Bitche road ; to the west of the village, Company C was ordered to advance along the railroad, clear the houses lining it, and then seize Hill 307, the height overlooking this bunker. A section of heavy machine guns from Company D was attached in support.

After long hours spent advancing under fire and enduring barrage after barrage, Company C reached the approaches to its objective. Only this casemate remained to be neutralized. This mission was entrusted to a squad of nine men under the command of Sergeant William Martin.

Sergeant Andy Martinez later reported the facts as follows:

"Under intense fire, a squad led by Sergeant William Martin — composed of Privates Lloyd Owens, Mathias DeWald, William Jones, Ross Kious, Paul Ayo, Pierre Bowman, A. J. Hollingsworth, and Thomas Kirk — moved around the position, protected by the rest of the platoon. After a difficult advance, the men managed to approach the bunker. As one of them was preparing to throw a grenade into it, a German soldier suddenly appeared, waving a white flag. Eighteen others then came out of the position to surrender."

But at the very moment the prisoners came out of the bunker, the position was suddenly taken under German fire from the surrounding area, spreading death and confusion among Americans and Germans alike.



During this action, two American soldiers were mortally wounded: Ross Kious 28 years old and A. J. Hollingsworth, who was only 18 years old.

Seriously wounded, Hollingsworth is cared for by Myron Meehan, a medic with Company C, who will remain by his side until his final breath :

"I kept looking at him while I held him against my chest. I had pulled him behind a tree so we would be safe. I do not know how long I sat there with him. He was unconscious. I held him until he stopped breathing. Hollingsworth is a name I will never forget."

By the evening of January 4, Hill 307 had been reached. That day cost Company C two killed and five wounded.

Today, this bunker remains the silent witness to the sacrifice of the soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 274th Infantry Regiment, who, alongside the men of the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 275th Infantry Regiment, gave their youth and their lives in the snow and freezing cold of January 1945 for the defense of Philippsbourg during Operation Nordwind.