

# Battle of Hürtgen Forest

February 10, 1945

This year's winter vintage sniper match commemorates the actions of the 505<sup>th</sup> and 508<sup>th</sup> Regiments of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division in February of 1945.

On February 6, 1945, General Gavin, Commanding General of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division, was tasked with securing the high grounds overlooking the Roer River. The attack involved assaulting fortified positions in Kall River valley and capturing the village of Schmidt which was occupied by German forces.

The allies had been trying to break through the Hürtgen Forest to the Roer River for the prior six months but had been unable to overcome the fortifications, interlocking fire and artillery and armor of the German defenders. Four separate attacks had failed. The US 28<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had been decimated trying to attack the fortified positions in the Kall River gorge. As the snow melted, it revealed a battlefield covered with the unburied bodies of both American and German soldiers. The remains of four tank destroyers and five tanks lay on the bottom of the canyon.

The US 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was tasked with taking the Schwammenauel Dam to prevent the Germans from destroying the dam and flooding the Roer River Valley. Due in large part due to the meddling of the V Corp commander, General Huebner, the 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division had also been unable to dislodge the German Forces to take the village of Schmidt and then the Schwammenauel Dam. Therefore, the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division was tasked with the mission of breaking through the German defenses.

On February 10, 1945, the 505<sup>th</sup> attacked up the Kall River Valley while at General Gavin's insistence the 508<sup>th</sup> took an alternate route. Maneuvering in this manner the 82<sup>nd</sup> was able to accomplish in one day what had eluded the Allies for six months.

The objective, the high ground on the west bank of the Rohr River, was achieved by the morning of February 10, 1945. Later that day the US 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry secured the Schwammenauel Dam.

**Battle of Hürtgen Forest Vintage Sniper Match:** This is a 40 shot two-man team vintage sniper match. The targets will include three head and shoulder brown cardboard silhouettes at 200 meters, one head and shoulder and two half body silhouettes at 300 meters, two half body and one full body silhouettes at 385 meters, and three full body silhouettes at 500 meters. Teams will be allowed 25 minutes for forty shots, 10 shots at each range. Each excessive shot at any range will result in a two-point penalty. Teams not scoring a hit on each silhouette will be disqualified. Sniper teams will have to carry their equipment from the clubhouse to the 500 meter firing line. No sandbags are provided, but teams may use backpacks, etc. for improvised supports. Slings are also permitted in conjunction with the improvised supports. If there is snow on the ground, be prepared to wear some form of white camouflage. Teams will be assessed five points if they fail to do so. Course of fire is set up for as-issued vintage sniper rifles, but competitors may use any rifle which meets CMP as-issued vintage military rifle rules. See attached operations order. Registration starts at 8:00 am and firing will start at 9:00 am on December 2, 2017 at the Forks Rifle Club W.G. Coulter Range. For more information contact Tom Reiten at <info@forksrifleclub> or 701-739-1988.

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MEMORANDUM

TO: All Vintage Sniper Rifle Teams in Theater

FROM: Match Director, FRC

DATE: 17 OCT 17

SUBJECT: Operations Order

1. Situation:
  - a. Enemy Forces.
    - 1) German infantry, artillery and armor in the Kall River Valley, the village of Schmidt and the area of the Schwommeneal Dam.
    - 2) Enemy is occupying fortified positions in the area of the village of Schmidt and is capable of strong resistance. The area is known to be mined but the snow cover may have diminished the effectiveness of many of the mines.
  - b. Friendly Forces.
    - 1) Sniper teams will be in support of attacking 505th Airborne Infantry Regiment. However, the regiment is currently at about 33% of authorized strength.
    - 2) The 508<sup>th</sup> Airborne Infantry Regiment will be attacking on the north.
    - 3) The US 78<sup>th</sup> Infantry will secure the Schwommeneal Dam once heights above the Roer River are secured.
    - 4) Due to the terrain there will be no armor or antitank support.
  - c. Attachments and Detachments.
    - 1) Guides will be provided by the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.
2. Mission: From positions behind the advancing troops sniper teams will locate and neutralize any enemy forces observed.
3. Execution
  - a. Concept of Operation.
    - 1) Scheme of maneuver. Two man sniper teams will assemble at the forward command post of the 505<sup>th</sup> a structure referred to as the "Clubhouse" at 0800 hrs on 2 DEC 17 where guides will direct sniper teams to firing positions. One team will be deployed at a time. Snipers can expect to engage targets at 200, 300, 385 and 500 meters.
    - 2) Formation. Two man teams.
    - 3) Route. As directed by guide.
4. Service Support: None. Individuals will have to carry in all items required to complete the mission. Individuals should have snow camouflage available if needed. Each sniper will need a minimum of 20 rounds of ammunition.
5. Command and Signal
  - a. Signal: Contact Tom Reiten at 701-795-1988 or [info@forksrifleclub.org](mailto:info@forksrifleclub.org)
  - b. Command: Sniper Teams will follow directions of ROs and Match Director.
  - c. Challenge and Password: STILL – COLD

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