



**Intro:**With the construction of a Bailey bridge over the Aller River at Rethem, and the unsuccessful counter-attacks against the British forces on the east bank of the Aller, the capacity for the German 2nd Marine Division to prevent further expansion of the Aller bridgeheads was almost at an end. The Marine units that were left were prepared to fight it out from the villages that lay along the axes of British advance. During the night of the 13th, the Carrier Platoon of the 4 Royal Welsh Fusiliers(53rd Welsh Division) was sent forward to scout the village of Kirchwahlingen for Germans still holding the village as well as an alternate axis of advance if the main road(Route 209) could not be used. Just after midnight(on the 14th) the 4RWF Carrier Platoon reached Kirchwahlingen; they were met by heavy fire from Marine Kompanie 5./6, the remaining company of marine Bataillon II./6, commanded by Oberleutnant zur See Herbst. The Welsh were forced to dismount and begin a bitter hand-to-hand fight to clear the village.

**Aftermath:**The fighting for Kirchwahlingen went on throughout the remainder of the night and into the early afternoon of the 14th. While the Marines of Kompanie 5./6 battled the troops of the 4 RWF carrier Platoon, "A" Squadron of the 44 Royal Tank regiment along with "C" Company of 2 KRRC(King's Royal Rifle Corps) had moved up to Kirchwahlingen to relieve 4 RWF Carrier Platoon. Oberleutnant zur See Herbst's Marines didn't spot the tanks of the 44 RTR until they attacked. As the 4 RWF Carrier Platoon disengaged, the troops of the 2 KRRC, with the aid of the 44 RTR, began to clear the village. The Marines now turned to engage the British tanks with Panzerfausts. The close-quarter fighting amongst the farms and houses of the village was not a healthy environment for the British armor; WASPs from the 2 KRRC were called up to help clear out the Marines. The WASPs immediately burned down several farm complexes. Fortunately, the WASPs ran out of fuel before being able to completely destroy the entire village. Herbst was killed while fighting from the garden of the mayor's house. Although the fighting spirit of the Marines and their dedication to duty was of an extremely high order, the reason why these men remained to take on such overwhelming odds will never be known.