

DECLASSIFIED

*Major Elogar - 22 Dec 1944
what 6002 6102
scale 1/25,000*

INTERVIEWEE: Major James Hayes, S-3 317th Inf, at CP 317th Inf, HERDERSCHIED,
LUXEMBOURG, 16 January 1945

INTERVIEWER: Lt S. J. Tobin

On 17th December 1944, the 317th CT less 313th FA Bn with Co C 808th TD Bn and Btry D 633d AAA left at 0700 and moved by motor to the area east of SARDUNION. The 317th CT was established at ALTWILLER (445370). There they established road blocks and divided their sector into Bn areas for patrolling. 1st Bn was given the northeast, 2d Bn the northwest, and the 3d Bn was given the southeast and east sector.

The 18th Dec 1944 was spent continuing the training of units in assault of fortified position preparatory to attacking the SIEGFRIED Line. That night the CP moved to RAHLING (620437). At 2230 Col Fischer (?) returned from division headquarters and said that all units must be prepared to move northward a distance of approximately 30 miles.

On 19th Dec, Col Elogar, 80th Div G-3, advised that they must move out by 0930; the IP would be SARDUNION (40) and their final destination would be in the vicinity of LUXEMBOURG (10) and the march tables arrived and the first elements of the march column reached the IP at 1030. The orders were to march to BASCHARAGE (P615225) where a representative of III Corps would meet them. At 1930 on 19 Dec, Capt Zukerman, who was in charge of the quartering party had arrived in BASCHARAGE and had gone on to arrange for quarters in the vicinity of ARLON (P615225). The 1st Bn reached BASCHARAGE in the lead of the march column, followed by the 2d and 3d Bns respectively. Meanwhile the CG, 80th Div, had received orders to remain at BASCHARAGE. The 1st Bn was then ordered into position southwest of the town. 1st Bn had just pulled off the highway when the Asst Div Comdr received information that the orders were rescinded and that the Div was to

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move along highway N5 to LUXEMBOURG where a guide from III Corps would be at the west edge of the city. They were able to stop the leading element of the 2d Bn in time to keep the Div moving on route to LUXEMBOURG. The 1st Bn was given instructions to join the end of the Div column. The CT move on in the following orders: 2d Bn, 3d Bn, special units, 313th FA Bn and finally 1st Bn. At about 2150, as

the Div was continuing toward LUXEMBOURG, five German fighter planes swooped down to strafe the part of the column containing 313th FA. The night visibility was good owing to a full moon. The portion of the 313th they strafed was one platoon of Co A. 653d AAA ^{which} opened up on the planes with all weapons. Their volume of fire limited the Jerries to one strafing run and they flew on towards the east without further molesting the Div column. After meeting the III Corps guide, they found heavy and congested traffic in the city of LUXEMBOURG. Vehicles were constantly breaking in and out of their column. They moved through without undue delay or trouble. Maj Hayes said they used 75 guides along the route through the city to facilitate their movement.

On the morning of 20 Dec, the 80th Div closed on the area in rear of the 5th Inf Div in the vicinity of GONDERANGE (U927227) at 0530. There they received orders to prepare reserve defense positions and to be prepared to counterattack in any direction. The regimental areas were as follows: 317th on the right, 318th on the left, and the 319th in reserve. The 317th put the 1st Bn in reserve with the 2d and 3d Bns in defensive position. At 0830, orders came to the 317th that they would be responsible for the defense of Radio LUXEMBOURG northeast of JUEGLINSTER (U930150) which was about 8 kilometers from the front lines. Maj Hayes ordered that one Platoon be sent to relieve the engineers who were guarding it at the time. During the afternoon, the 317th received orders to prepare to attack to the north, northeast, or southeast with Co A 702d Tk Bn in support. The Div mission at the time was to protect the right flank of the III Corps.

On the morning of 21 Dec they moved out from GONDERANGE to the vicinity of STEINSEL (U836210). They moved out at about 1000 by motor and marching, arriving in position about 1700. (Reckange ?). UCKM...

The regimental mission was still unchanged and they moved out in attack formation at 0600 following the 318th Inf on the morning of the 23d. At 1030 Div G-3 visited the 317th CP and told Maj Hayes to concentrate his troops north and west of BERG (U805362) and that they would be committed in between the 318th and 319th Regts. As the 317th was already underway, Maj Hayes issued orders to attack northward immediately going through MERZIG (U735410) on to WELSCHIED (U300445) to proceed to the river and take over the sector of the 318th. ~~While~~ Col Elegar, Div G-3, was there, Gen McBride, CG, called from the 318th rescinding the order, saying that the 318th could do it. ^{LT} Col Elegar said for them to be prepared to execute the plan. The CP then moved up to BERG (U815362).

At 1400 ~~Col Elegar~~ ^{called} Major Hayes and told him to execute the plan as before being rescinded. Maj Hayes went to BERG and contacted Col Fischer (4) giving him the mission. The Bns started at 1500 with 2d Bn in the lead followed by the 1st with the 3d in reserve. They had no artillery at the time, however Co A 700d TL Bn was in support. Col Fischer gave instructions to move the CP to MELDERTHEIM (U736410). The roads were jammed with traffic near MELDERTHEIM and it was about a half hour after dark when the CP opened. The 2d and 1st Bns passed through with the 3d following. The 2d Bn advanced through the night to WELSCHIED (U300445). Resistance was met at WELSCHIED and E and F Cos were sent around the right to bypass WELSCHIED and take BOURSCHIED (U300470).

On the morning of 23d Dec, 0900, the 317th completed relief of the 318th. The 3d Bn was ordered to take ~~KEHMEN~~ ^U (780460) and then BOURSCHIED. The 3d Bn started off but met heavy MG and small arms fire from the vicinity of WELSCHIED in addition to heavy artillery and nobelwerfer fire estimated to be about 1000 rds.

The 3d withdrew with 24 casualties including 2 killed. At 1500 a message was received from the 319th to expect a counterattack in their area (KELMEN-HEIDESCHIED). Lt Col Roberts, 317th Ex O, withdrew the unit to a defensive position on the high ground south east of KELMEN in vicinity of (780450). However, the expected counterattack did not come. During the night, the 2d Bn was relieved in the line by the 1st Bn. On the morning of 24 Dec, the 1st Bn attacked KELMEN on the left, but was unsuccessful; they withdrew to the original position about 1000 yds from KELMEN after having 197 casualties including dead. The units of the 317th continued to maintain their positions at the same places as on the 23d. Heavy fighting took place all day in the sector of the 317th.

On the morning of 25 Dec, the 317th attacked with the 1st and 3d Bns abreast and took the high ground south and east of SCHEIDEL (U780451). The 1st Bn took SCHEIDEL and the 3d Bn took about a quarter of KELMEN (U780460). They were ordered to withdraw to their original positions by the CG, 80th Div. During the attack they suffered 161 casualties including dead. The regiment spent the next three weeks maintaining its defensive positions in the vicinity of HEIDESCHIED. The period being spent in training and rehabilitation.