

MOSELLE CROSSING 702nd Tank Bn

Interview with Lt William B. Miller, CO of Co B, assisted by Lts Rees and Nelson. During the crossing Lt Ford (later killed) was CO, Co B.

Prior to the crossing Co B was in assembly in BOIS DE LA COTE EN HAYE. (706-234) One platoon moved up with the 2nd Bn, 318th Inf, into DIEULOUARD to secure that town. Late in the afternoon on the 12th the co moved closer to the river and by 2000 the heavy pontons were completed. B Co followed A Co across directly after the completion of the bridges. Co B on arriving on the far side proceeded northward on the road to LOISY. Along this road just beyond the turn to BEZAUMONT B Co halted, set up a perimeter defense, and prepared to pass the night. (797-295)

The feature of the early part of the night was the constant arty fire believed to be heavy calibre, from the en-held heights.

At 0400 the morning of the 13th the en counterattacked from N, E, and S from LOISY and BEZAUMONT. The counterattack was preceded by mortar fire and flares. Shortly thereafter the American infantry passed through Co B and said that the tanks were almost completely surrounded and that Co B better pullout. Several infantrymen took off their clothes and swam the river, leaving their equipment behind.

About that time Co B began to receive small arms fire. Then the 10 tanks of Co B opened up. At the same time that Co B's tanks fired several Jerry self-propelled assault guns opened fire. The tanks answered and succeeded in knocking out two assault guns. The first assault gun was destroyed by a single well aimed shot from Lt Miller's tank. One of Co B's tanks was damaged. Its gun was split in two by a direct hit from an en SP gun.

At daylight one of the men discovered Col McHugh, CO 318th Inf, who badly wounded had come back into Co B's area. He was assisted to an Aid Station.

The morning passed quietly after the counterattacked had been repulsed. At 0900 Lt Ford sent the 2nd Platoon commanded by Lt Nelson to attack with the infantry and seize BEZAUMONT. At 1100 Lt Miller received the mission of attacking Loisy with an infantry company and of holding the high ground in the vicinity.

In the attack on BEZAUMONT it was difficult to get the infantry to follow the tanks. Three times the tanks by sections on line moved up toward BEZAUMONT. On the third attempt the infantry followed.

The attack on LOISY was successful and about fifty PWs were taken. The tanks proceeded through the town blasting all likely en locations. The infantrymen followed cleaning out house by house.

A The following morning, the 14th, Lt Miller's platoon together with the rest of Co B cooperating with the 3rd Bn of the 318th was ordered to attack ATTON, PONT A MOUSSON, and MOUSSON HILL. The attack was launched at 0900. From LOISY the tanks proceeded along the Eastern side of the ATTON-LOISY road. Just South of ATTON the tanks swung across the road and deployed in a field between the road and a curve in the river. The formation was 2 platoons in front on line, one bringing up the rear, followed by the light tank co on the left flank. At the bottom of MOUSSON HILL the tanks stopped and the infantry went ahead to reconnoitre the route up the steep incline. It was determined that the tanks would have to ascend the eastern side. The hill was taken. The tanks had been under constant arty fire from heights to the East. One platoon, Lt Miller's, was ordered to remain on the Hill with the 3rd Bn.

The next morning the en counterattacked and took PONT A MOUSSON and ATTON cutting off the men on the hill. (15th). For 3 days the bn and tks remained on the hill. Constantly the tks and inf would launch attacks into PONT A MOUSSON (4 times) and bring back 10 or 12 pws.

On the third day the 318th Inf launched an attack from LOISY to regain ATTON and PONT A MOUSSON. At the same time a co of tks 4th Armd attacked ST GENEVIEVE with 1st Bn, 318th. On the evening of the third day the bn on hill relieved by a co 319th. Tks to ass area. ~~Stated there examining~~