

(Moselle Operation -317 th Infantry- 12-15 September- Major Hayes)

Major Hayes) " The battalions had moved out at dusk on the 11th to the regimental assembly area. (sketch) After darkness had fallen, they moved up by infiltration to their new locations. Road markers had been placed, and guides to the river had been put along the route. We used some of the engineer blinker lights, at the ford. The crossing was met by mortar and MG fire, but the 3rd Bn got across at a run, and were on their objective by daylight, and organizing the ground. (Capt. Ford says 0530). The 2d Bn crossed under fire and charged up the hill toward their objective (sketch) near Genevieve. When the 1st Bn started, the footbridge collapsed, but they crossed on the wreckage, and took their objective. (6)

" The priority for vehicles was : organic, Engineers, Tank Destroyers, Anti-tank weapons, and others. (See accounts of 702 Tk Bn and 610, TD Bn) The bridge was not finished by 1100 because of a shortage of pontoons . Therefore, the 318th Infantry crossed before our vehicles could make it. THE rest of the day was spent in trying to get the vehicles across. The battalion CP's were moved over on the 13th. On this same date, the enemy launched a severe counter-attack, at about 0500, and communications were severed. Colonel Cameron and I went to Dieulouard at about 0600. The engineers were deployed there along the river, and told us that everything had been wiped out across the river, and that they were prepared to defend to the last man. Five was coming from Loisy, and was having effect on the reconstructed bridge. Our artillery was firing on the rear slope of the hill near St. Genevieve. Our 2d Bn was on the forward slope of this hill. Germans were in Bezaumont, Loisy and everywhere. Enemy tanks had run into the CP of the 2d Bn, and the 318th Infantry was reported as wiped out.

" We found a platoon of Tank Destroyers, and went into Bezaumont. No one there knew the exact location of the 2d Bn. Germans who were placing direct fire in the town, fired upon us ; so we started another way and ran into our own artillery fire. We started up the hill toward St. Genevieve till another way and ran into one of our tanks roaring down the hillside, out of control. It was on fire, and was one of the most shocking sights we had seen. It almost ran into us as we went up the draw. We pulled up a little onto the hillside and saw it pass, the dead crew hanging out of the turret. It exploded far below. In Bezaumont we found what was reported to be all that was left of a tank platoon, one American tank. Nevertheless, we tried to find the 2d Bn, and in so doing contacted elements of the 1st Bn. Finally, we found Captain Mullen, commanding officer of Company E of our battalion., and contact was established. We found, also, that it was reported that we were fighting elements of the 8th Regiment, of the 15th Pz Div.

" By 1100, on the 13th, things had quieted down, and we had St. Genevieve. Germans were still in Loisy and Bezaumont. The Regimental CP came across the river at 1500, and was put in as shown on the sketch.

" On the morning of the 14th, at 1000, General McBride, gave the verbal order to the 1st Bn to procede to Serrieres. The 2d Bn was to take over the present sector of the 1st, and the 3rd Bn was to stay in its position.

" On the night of the 13th, enemy patrols had been located, dug in on the slopes west of Morey about a thousand yards.

" On the 14th, at 1300, the 1st Bn got off toward Serrieres. When they had reached Landremont, marching east, they ran into trouble. They were marching in the order, C, A, B; and as Company C came through Landremont, they received enemy artillery fire. The battalion commander decided to go across country, and took the path (sketch) around Landremont. They arrived in their new location by 1800. "

6/10
3rd
A

9/13

14

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At 1800, Major Hayes was sent out to Serrieres to establish contact with the battalion. He found them, instead, located on Mt. Toulon. This he came back and reported to the regiment. Then word was sent to the division that the 1st Bn was on Toulon. A verbal message had been given to Major Burnette, at 1930, to hold there on Toulon, and to patrol to the east, southeast and south. The lines were now set up so that we had Company G on Genevieve Hill, E in reserve on the same hill, with Company F on the right flank of G.

On the 13th, the artillery was in position as shown, the 313th field. They had come over on the 12th, and had been used in direct fire against tanks. Lt. Col. Fisher, executive of the 317th had accomplished an unusual feat during the early hours of the crossing. From an observation point near the bridge at Scarpone, he had directed fire for the artillery, using a line to the switching central to the CP. At the CP two phones had been used. One was in touch with the observer, and commands were relayed to the other phone, which was connected with the artillery.

(Major Hayes) " On the morning of the 15th, the Germans threw a counter-attack at daybreak. Company G was driven out of St. Genevieve; Loisy was retaken (318th pushed out). These Germans came from the Foret de Facq, and from the north and the east, with the attack on Genevieve being made by tanks. By 0900, all battalions were reporting 30 enemy tanks approaching. On call, the Tank Destroyers were rushed up."

(Captain Ford) "Tanks captured Loisy, St. Genevieve, and Atton, and a battalion of the 318th Infantry, was cut off on Mousson Hill."

(Major Hayes) " The 1st Bn was called back immediately from their location on Mt. Toulon. (0700)"

(Captain Ford) "The 1st Bn had returned before the tanks attacked, at 1100. "

(Major Hayes) "The 1st Bn, returning, confused the enemy tanks. Armored vehicles were reported in back of them. By 1100, on the 15th, the 2d Bn was shouting for help, the 3rd Bn had been untouched, and the regimental CP had been attacked, at 0700. This attack on the CP was made by two squads of Germans. Clerks and typists moved up to take positions 400 yards east of Bezaumont. This group drove off the enemy. However, during this action, the executive of the Regimental Headquarters Company, Lt. Fred T. Lecher, who was sent to contact the 2d Bn, was ~~missing~~ lost. One platoon of Company E was on the knob at LaVierge. The Headquarters Company had gone into position at the rear of the knob by 1000. Everything had been quiet on the south. By 1000, heavy action had started on the north. It was then, at 1030, that the 1st Bn came back through Landremont into the face of the defending Headquarters Company.

" We learned that the 319th Infantry was on the way from Belleville; and, at 1230, we got a call from the 2d Bn, reporting a column of troops crossing the river. At 1500, Company G -318th Inf. retook Loisy; and Major Tossy, 1st Bn 318th, was on the way back from the 4th Amd. Div. to attack St. Genevieve. The 1st Bn of the 319th Inf. went in at Loisy by 1600; and the left flank of the 317th tied in with a company of the 319th Inf. in the vicinity of Loisy, 1800, on the 15th of September."

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(Major Hayes) " Meanwhile , the 3rd Bn, whom the General had ordered to move out to an objective (at 81.5-27.5 1:50000) on the 14th , had occupied positions to the east of their objective, on the forward slope of the hill known as the Falaise. At daylight, on ythe 14th, they had received a counter-attack, preceded by artillery and mortar barrage, and had been driven back to the rear of the hill , by 1000, about 1000 yards . At this time , the 3rd Bn got four battalions of artillery support. Driving the enemy back to positions on the forward slope, they called for support when enemy troops started streaming off the north slope of the hill. The artillery brought four battalions of time fire on this point, and the slaughter of German troops was terrific. The dead lay on the hill like flies. The Cannon Company of the 317th Infantry, and the 313th FA Bn , under Lt. Col. Fred Ellery , participated in this."

(Captain Ford) " The enemy was moving east off the hill , La Falaise, at (83.0-27.0 1:50000) . The time was between 1600 and 1700, 15th September."

(Major Hayes)" Hill 351, was called 'The Volcano', because it looks like one.

" We suffered about 98% casualties on this operation , together with the others.

" The next day , the Germans counter-attacked the Falaise. The weather was bad , but we were able to get in an air strike by 1730. The planes took care of them this time."

Charles Fisher

Here an interesting statement is made by Lt. Col. Fisher, executive officer of the 317th Infantry Regiment.

" Colonel Cameron and I made extensive reconnaissance before ever selecting the position for the crossing. He made me defend every reason I could give for making the crossing at this point. Most of the talking and planning was done on the basis that we could gain tactical surprise with key terrain.

As a result of our crossing at the point selected, the division did gain tactical surprse. Now we took two objectives: the first, Bezaumont-St. Genevieve; the other, La Falaise. Also , an island protected our troops in the crossing. (See river -canal line). The enemy was forced to counter-attack down the ridge line, the river blocking them from getting around to the Bois de la Cuite.

The key to the situation was the Falaise. It overlooked Genevieve and Landremont , and they could not be held without this high ground. "

(See report of 2dBn operation by Captain Mullen/ See operations maps and sketches, pictures of the terrain, troops in action and the verticals of the river line.)