

Summary of Interviews
Moselle Operation
80th Infantry Division

Interviews by Lt. T.E. Burts, Jr

318th Infantry Regt.

Operation 12-15 Sept 44

Source: Lt. Col. John C. Golden - Former CO 2d Bn, Regt. CO for period 13th - 15th Sept., now Regt. Executive Officer.
Captain Charles Gaking - S-3 2d Bn, former member of S-3 section, regiment.

Regimental Staff for Operation:

Regt. CO-Col. Harry D. McHugh-(Evacuated) Col. M.C.Shattuck, rld .
Exec. Lt. Col. Roy J.Herte(Missing), Lt. Col. John Golden
S-3 Major Howard Johnson(Evacuated) Capt. Roger Bone
S-2 Capt. Martin J. Wegman
S-1 Capt. Louis R. Pickering(Missing), CWO Joseph Savoy
S-4 Major Edward LeBlanc

Preliminary Phase: Reconnaissance in Force West of Moselle River.

On the 4th of September, 1944, the Regimental CP was located just south of Minorville, west of the Moselle River. The 2d Bn was located in The Bois de la Cote en Haye. The 3rd Bn was located near Marbache. The 1st Bn was a part of a task force with CCA of the 4th Amd Div, in the vicinity of Commergy.

The Division Field Order was received at about 2100, 4th Sept. This order provided for an attempted crossing of the Moselle to be made by the 317th Infantry. The mission of the 318th Infantry was to make a reconnaissance in force of the area west of the Moselle, to seize the area Belleville-Marbache-Liverdun, with the two remaining battalions. Neither battalion was to attempt a river crossing.

On the morning of the 5th, well supported by artillery fire, the 3rd Bn launched an attack on the Belleville - Marbache sector, seizing the ground to the north of Marbache by 1600 of that day. They had run into an enemy well emplaced in the woods to the east and north of the town but had successfully dislodged them, suffering few casualties. According to plan, the 2d Bn attacked at 0600, the morning of the 6th, making a reconnaissance in force of the woods Foret de Lavan Garde. This was well supported by artillery fire, a ten minute preparation. The battalion ran into enemy emplaced, supported by 20mm Flak, mortars and artillery. The 2d Bn was on its objective by 0830 6 September.

The 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th were spent by both battalions in improving their positions clearing the area of enemy and occupying Marbache, Liverdun and Belleville, clearing the line to the river. On the 10th and 11th both battalions moved to positions southwest of Dieulouard to support the crossing of the Moselle by the 317th on the 12th.

Planning Phase Prior to Moselle Crossing:

During the days 8th through 11th of September, reconnaissance was made of the routes to be followed by the regiment in the support of the 317th Infantry on the 12th.

Plans were made for the Regiment to cross after the 317th, to occupy positions

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occupy positions 500 yards west of Bezaumont , the reverse slope of the hill , South of St. Genevieve . The crossing would be made as soon as the 317th was clear of the crossing site.

Action Phase: Defending the Bridgehead

12 - 15th Sept.

The 3rd Bn crossed the river and by 1500 occupied a position 500 yards west of Bezaumont. The 2d Bn had crossed the river at 1100 on the morning of the 12th, and had taken up positions on the reverse slope of the hill at St. Genevieve. The 2d Bn later in the day set up road blocks near Autreville and Loisy and sent one company to Ville-au-Val . This left but 30 men with the battalion.

From about 1500 , the enemy began to lay artillery barrages , increasing in intensity during the afternoon, on the positions held by the regiment. St. Genevieve , Le Pont de Mons , and Loisy were covered by fire. The first warning of a counter- attack came at 0130 13 Sept, when Captain Frank Williams , who was at the Loisy road block, reported enemy infiltrating into his positions and our on the right. At 0200 Captain Williams reported that he had spotted 8 tanks coming toward his area. This road block held ,but until 0330, when the unit was forced to withdraw to Loisy. Now the attack developed across the nose of Genevieve Hill , and tanks came down the top of the ridge and down south from Genevieve to Bezaumont, forcing the 2d Bn of the 317th Infantry off the hill into the area of the 318th Infantry.

Units were now mixed , Engineers , TD's , Tanks and troops of both regiments were thrown together and communications were disrupted. At this point, officers, regardless of arm, took control of groups of men and organized resistance to the infiltrating enemy . By 0430 13th, Lt. Col. Golden found that German Infantry had infiltrated the position of the 3rd Bn, that there were only 30 men left in Loisy. At this time he ordered his Bn CP group to withdraw to this area, finding it occupied, proceeded to the area of the Regimental CP. There he found that the Regimental Cp had been over-run ,that he was the senior officer present. All the remaining officer personnel were prisoner, evacuated or dead. Lt. Col. Golden took command of the regiment, organized the CP group, gathered together all the men he could find and deployed them under different officers along a ditch beside the road near the CP. Golden stopped two of our tanks on the road and faced them about to meet a target approaching the group. This determinedly stopped the threat between 0430-0500 13th September.

An enemy column coming from Bezaumont threatened to drive a wedge between this group from both regiments and the 313th FA., and pin our men against the river. On this Lt. Col. Golden acted , withdrawing his forces to the vicinity of Le-Pont-De Mons . Here he prevented demoralized troops from crossing the river, organized a defense to the north and east. He cleared the town of tanks and Tank Destroyers which were jammed beyond traffic control. An attack was organized , enemy tanks were driven off, the 317th and 318th troops with the 702 Tk troops of a tank company, retook Bezaumont and Loisy , starting the drive at 0900 13 Sept. The 2d Bn 318th took Bezaumont and established contact with the 1st Bn 317th, which held Landremont.

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The remainder of the 13th was spent in consolidating positions and the troops of the 317th Infantry were returned to their proper units. On the 14th the 317th caught a counter-attack near Landeremont and Lt. Co. Golden threw in a platoon of division engineers at Loisy. The positions now held placed the 3rd Bn 318th at Loisy and the 2d Bn at Bezaumont, with the regimental CP at Le Pont De Mons. The 3rd Bn with one platoon of tanks attacked and took Loisy on the afternoon of the 14th, continued on taking Atton and proceeded to attack Mousson Hill. Tanks and Infantry split here, and Mousson Hill was taken by 1900.

On the morning of the 15th, the enemy retook Loisy and Atton and the 3rd Bn was cut off on Mousson Hill. At noon a heavy counter-attack again developed at Loisy. Meanwhile supplies had to be dropped from an artillery plane to the troops on Mousson. Here also Brigadier General Searby, Division Artillery Commander, had been killed.

At approximately 1415, the 1st Bn 318th Infantry, returning from its attachment to CCA 4th Amd Div, attacked and took St. Genevieve, went on to Loisy and broke up the enemy attack. The battalion followed up the retreating enemy and took the town of Morville. The 1st Bn of the 319th Infantry, which had crossed the river on the morning of the 15th, followed up the assault and captured Les Menils. The remainder of the day was spent in consolidating positions and making plans for the expansion of the defended bridgehead.
