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HEADQUARTERS 317TH INFANTRY
APO #30, U. S. Army

5 December 1944

Subject: After Action Report (S-4), 1 November 1944 to 30 November 1944.

To : The Adjutant General, Washington D. C., through Commanding General,
80th Infantry Division.

1. The month of November 1944 from a supply viewpoint began in an uneventful manner, but passage of time established it as a period of many difficult supply problems. At the beginning of the month the organization was still in the static situation which it had entered early in October. Steady progress had been made in bringing the equipment to a very satisfactory status.
2. By the 8th of November 1944 when the Regiment resumed the advance, crossing the Seille River, only one major shortage of ordnance existed, nine 60mm Mortars. This shortage had been partially remedied by the issue of additional 81mm Mortars to the heavy weapons companies. However, this was not a satisfactory solution. The mortars were not capable of being maintained in close support of rifle platoons in the attack. Their only value is as a reserve to be used in the event the situation stabilizes enough to allow the heavy weapons company to put them in action in addition to the normal complement of mortars. The crossing of the Seille River, while quickly effected by the foot troops presented a major difficulty for transportation because of the flood stage of the river and the unstable condition of its banks. It was not until twenty-eight hours had passed that a satisfactory supply route to the troops was established. The first of two ponton bridges established (Clamery) had to be closed because after the passage of one third of the Regiment's organic transportation the approaches became impassable. When the second ponton bridge (Pert-Sur-Seille) was completed at 0300 9 Nov 1944 it was still necessary to clear the roads on the eastern side, of mines which had been extensively employed by the enemy. Resupply and the evacuation of wounded during this period was exceedingly difficult and could be accomplished only on foot.
3. Operations during the month featured frequent cross country movements by the Battalions not readily accessible to satisfactory vehicular routes. On several occasions it was necessary to effect the daily resupply of Battalions by packing supplies to the troops. Extensive demolitions of roads and bridges aggravated this situation. On the night of 26 November when the 1st Battalion was in the vicinity of Altiviller, vehicular traffic could not reach it until the construction of a Bailey Bridge at Pölschviller. To insure the Battalions resupply prior to continuing the advance the morning of 27 November 1944 it was necessary to organize carrying parties. This was accomplished by Lt. Clark, Battalion Supply Officer and adequate Class I and V supplies arrived at the Battalion by 0200 27 November 1944. Somewhat similar difficulties had been experienced by Lt Jennings, Supply Officer of the 2nd Battalion, on the night of 25 November 1944. The Battalion had advanced across country and was located NE of PAULQUERONT at (G203523) Map: France 1:100,000 SAARBRUCKEN sheet. The engineers were unable to repair the roads in time to be of use. Attempts to reach Battalions using Jeeps across country failed. The Jeeps could not negotiate the mucky terrain.

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The Battalion Supply Officer finally solved the problem by loading the supplies on a two and a half ton truck which successfully traversed the boggy ground. Upon reaching the Battalion with the supplies, the truck was utilized to evacuate ten wounded men who required immediate attention.

4. November was characterized throughout by extremely inclement weather. Immersion Foot (Trench Foot) presented a very serious problem and resulted in the evacuation of many otherwise combat effectives. A Division sponsored program of a daily change of socks was initiated. Clean socks were issued daily with the rations. Soiled socks were collected at the same time and forwarded through channels to be laundered and returned to the organization for reuse. The principle obstacle encountered was the collection of the soiled socks. Toward the end of the month substantial returns were achieved but at no time did the turn in equal the quantity issued. Overshoes, Artics were used in conjunction with the sock program. Extreme difficulty was experienced in educating the troops of the necessity of wearing the Artics. Their opinion was that it was impossible to wear the overshoes and make the long difficult marches that the tactical situation demanded.

5. The vigorous and extended operations of the Regiment since committed to action has led to a considerable traffic in all classes of supplies. It has been necessary to handle large amounts of salvage material, and replacement items drawn to replace combat losses and that rendered unserviceable in combat.

6. It was during November that the Regiment received its first complete issue of combat boots. Early in the month the new sleeping bags were received and issued. This bag is well liked by the men but they express the opinion that they prefer not to use it in a frontline foxhole while subject to enemy action.

7. A recapitulation reveals that there is hardly any type article of issue that has not been salvaged and replaced since 5 August 1944. For example, 655, Five gallon water cans have been replaced. 1028 intrenching shovels have been required to replace those lost or salvaged. One article that runs into formidable numbers is gloves. 4149 pair have been received and still present requirements cannot be met. Activity in ordnance has been even more impressive; 83 automatic rifles, 25 heavy machine guns, 23 light machine guns, 28-60mm Mortars, 16-81mm Mortars have been replaced. Salvage operations have been vigorously pushed. To mention a few; 18,948 socks, 4123 shoes, 4475 canteens, 10 heavy machine guns 14 light machine guns, 2654 M-1 rifles have been returned to the appropriate branch. Much of this material was capable of being returned to service with few if any repairs.

8. During the month higher headquarters authorized and made available six additional two and a half ton trucks per regiment to facilitate the movement of bedding rolls of the troops. Two trucks were assigned to each Battalion and materially improved the handling of the rolls. These vehicles filled a long felt want and should be permanently incorporated in the T O & E of the Infantry Regiment.

Archie C. Jamison, Jr.
ARCHIE C. JAMISON, JR.
Major, 31st Infantry;
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