

L-28v

PHASES

- I. Mopping-up Operations in STE SUZANNE and SILLIE-LE-GUILLAUME.
- II. Battle of ARGENTAN.
- III. Move from ARGENTAN to BAR-LE-DUC.

Phase I (9-12 Aug, Incl)

"Mopping-up Operations in STE SUZANNE and SILLIE-LE-GUILLAUME."

On 5 August 1944 CT 318 landed in FRANCE, debarking on UTAH BEACH and from there travelled, by various stages, to a final assembly point one mile West of VAIGES, arriving there 1030 9 August.

From 5-9 August CT 318 had made no contact with the enemy. On 9 August the CT was given its first mission - that of taking STE SUZANNE, 10½ miles to the Northeast, reconnaissance parties having reported it occupied by an undetermined number of enemy forces.

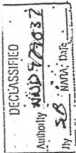
At 2000 9 August CT 318 moved forward preparatory to taking its objective the following day. At 1018 10 August the 1st Bn, 318th, occupied STE SUZANNE, having encountered only light resistance.

Immediately on occupying STE SUZANNE, CT 318 was ordered to take SILLIE-LE-GUILLAUME, 11 miles to the North, also reported held by small enemy forces.

During these mopping-up operations the enemy relied chiefly on rearguard actions, sniper fire, booby traps and mined road blocks to harass and delay our advance. Only scattered and disorganized enemy forces were encountered. French civilians were most helpful in providing valuable enemy information.

PW's taken during this period were from the 9th Pz Div, 266th, 352d and 908th Inf Divs. While these Divisions did not oppose in full strength, nor parts thereof, the advance of CT 318, these PW's gave indication of the state of disorganization and scattering of forces of the enemy brought about as a result of recent American victories in NORMANDY. Enemy documents concerning activities of this period, captured at a later date, showed that the German Army High Command in FRANCE had strict orders not to withdraw but, due to a lack of the necessary forces, they had no clear idea of how to prevent the necessity of withdrawals.

SILLIE-LE-GUILLAUME was occupied at 1200 11 August by our forces against only light resistance, thus completing the CT's mission in this sector.



Phase II (13-20 Aug, Incl)
"Battle of ARGENTAN"

On 13 August 1944 CT 318 was ordered to advance in the direction of ARGENTAN, about 35 miles North of SILLÉ-LE-GUILLAUME. While enroute to ARGENTAN orders for the CT were changed, resulting in being halted 3 miles North of ALENÇON the 13th, moving from there the following day to an area one mile North of EVRON and there, on 17 August, CT 318 was ordered to take the town of ARGENTAN and occupy the high ground North of same.

This would complete the encirclement of German forces in the FALAISE-ARGENTAN area.

CT 318 made its initial attack on ARGENTAN 18 August and the strength as well as effectiveness of the enemy's defenses became immediately apparent. Results of PW interrogation credited the enemy strength in our sector at 2000-2500 men; at least 35 tanks (most of them Mark V Panthers, armed with 75mm long barrel gun); at least 11 105mm Field Howitzers; and 19 AA guns.

20-25 of the enemy's tanks covered all main roads leading into the town, the others being in position just East and Northeast of the town. Enemy troops were well dug in on the high ground Northeast of ARGENTAN; 20mm guns mounted on half-tracks were used for ground defenses. Barbed wire entanglements and mines indicated the state of preparedness of this position.

The enemy units contacted in this engagement were identified as remnants of the following: 33d Pz Regt, 116th Pz Div; 10th Pz Regt, 2d Pz Div; 10th SS Pz Regt, 10th SS Pz Div; 228th Sig Bn and 60th Pz Gr Regt, 116th Pz Div; 987th and 988th Inf and 276th Arty Regts, 276th Inf Div; 80th It AAA Assault Bn (Air Force); 98th It AAA Assault Bn (CAF); 16th Bicycle Bn (Air Force).

Except for a few short tank sorties the enemy made no counter attacks during the operation, in spite of the fact that for the first two days CT 318 was unable to make any progress. During the night 19-20 August the enemy withdrew its main forces from the town of ARGENTAN. Tanks left the town, AA guns in running condition were pulled out, the others demolished; and large parts of the Infantry troops received the order to retreat by 0600 20 August. All troops and tanks withdrew to the Northeast in the direction of CRENNES. As a result on the third day, at 1000 20 August our 2d Bn, assisted by a part of CT 317, entered ARGENTAN and by 1500 had cleared it of all resistance.

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After the fall of ARGENTAN the last enemy resistance in the FALAISE area ended, all remaining forces retreating headlong to the East and Northeast.

CT 318 Regtl CP moved into ARGENTAN 1800 20 August, making occupation of the town complete.

Phase III (21-31 Aug, incl)
"Move From ARGENTAN to BAR-LE-DUC"

During the period 21-31 August CT 318 moved through FRANCE with but few contacts with the enemy.

The enemy, after suffering the defeat of the ARGENTAN-FALAISE trap, where his losses in both men and equipment were appalling, withdrew in haste to the East without being able to organize more than perfunctory rear guard resistance.

After a rest of a few days at MEDAWI, at 0500 25 August CT 318 began its move to the Eastern part of FRANCE with a trip of 280 miles in one day, and went into a concentration area at COLLEMIERES, 5 miles Southwest of SENS at 0130 26 August. Although reconnoitering parties were kept continually in advance of the convoy on the lookout for signs of the enemy, none were contacted. From COLLEMIERES the CT moved 26 August to a point one-half mile Northeast of ORVILLIERS, a distance of 55 miles, and from there to a point one mile West of VALLANT (on the left bank of the SEINE RIVER) 27 August, a move of 3 miles. From VALLANT the CT crossed in comparatively quick succession the SEINE RIVER, AUBE RIVER and Canal and the MARNE RIVER and canal, on 27th and 28th of August. Light enemy opposition was encountered in crossing the MARNE RIVER and canal where, for the first time since leaving Western FRANCE, we had managed to catch up with straggling elements of the fleeing Germans.

At 2320 28 August CT 318 arrived one mile North of LES GRANDE LOGES where they remained until 0915 30 August. At 0830 29 August two enemy planes flew over, bombing and strafing friendly installations adjacent to the Regtl CP.

While in this location reconnaissance parties of the CT discovered, and captured without resistance, huge quantities of enemy materiel and equipment, including gasoline, large numbers of German guns, food train, etc.

From LES GRANDE LOGES CT 318 moved Southeast 42 miles to REVIGNY and later that day to BAR LE DUC, where it arrived before midnight 31 August. Resistance during this latter operation again was very slight, FFI having in many towns cleared our path of stragglers and snipers.

At REVIGNY for the first time CT 318 received word through civilians that elements of the 3rd Pz Gr Div, recently arrived from ITALY, had occupied that town and had withdrawn shortly before our arrival.

Roads were mined, bridges blown between REVIGNY and BAR LE DUC, a clear sign of a battle tired and retreat wise outfit. This same Division would later on again and again be encountered by CT 318.

From the SEINE through to the MEUSE RIVER, in territory in which CT 318 was the first unit in the American Third Army's advance through FRANCE to liberate that section of the country, the civilian population was most helpful in giving information of the enemy.

Only at the crossing of the AUBE and MARNE RIVERS did the enemy try to fight an organized delaying action, employing, at the AUBE the 1016th Homeguard Bn and elements of the 301st GAF Signal School Regt. Caliber of personnel of these units was very poor, being either too young or too old, and with insufficient training. In the MARNE RIVER and Canal crossing, the opposition was formed by the CT Chalons; elements of the 126th Inf Regt, 48th Inf Div; elements of the 769th Homeguard Inf Bn and of the 301st Signal School Regt. This rear guard action was the more determined of the two, but was comparatively weak and without adequate support of artillery or other heavy weapons. No tanks or planes were seen, except in one instance when four ME 109's were sighted but were chased away by the AA gunners of the attached 633d AAA Bn.