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AFTER ACTION REPORT - OCTOBER 1944

318TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

S-2 SECTION

Phase I - Patrol Activity and Action to Improve our Positions After the Bridgehead Across the MOSELLE had been Secured.

By the first of October 1944 CT 8 had a firmly established bridgehead East of the MOSELLE, the largest and best that any American unit had been able to make, extending in length from PONT A MOUSSON South to CUSTINES. In depth the line ran from North to South just West of LES QUATRE FERS, Hill 212, Hill 220, SERRIERES and, at the point of our deepest penetration, in include BRATTE.

The task of establishing, maintaining and continually enlarging this bridgehead had been the toughest that CT 8 had yet been given, and was one of prime tactical importance, as attested to by the number of other American units utilizing it in their movement to the East.

From the S-2 point of view the enemy situation had been one of constantly changing conditions, with the enemy shifting his forces from one point to another, bringing up new forces and very frequently changing unit designations of some of his old ones.

The situation confronting 318th at the beginning of October offered considerable contrast to the one faced in the first two weeks of the operation. At that time the daily question had been, not "Would the enemy counterattack today?", but, instead "How many counterattacks would the enemy make?"

Even though the Regiment had done a superb job in gaining and holding against such bitter resistance the ground it now occupied, the task was not yet completed. The enemy still held MT TOULON, MT ST JEAN, the most commanding ground to our front between the MOSELLE and SEILLE RIVERS, as well as several towns in the vicinity. These vantage points afforded him

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excellent observation of our activities during the day..

During this period the Regiment did not launch any full scale attacks against the enemy nor receive any counterattacks.

As ascertained through interrogation of PWs, 125 men of 1st Bn, 1119th Gr Regt, 553d Gr Div were dug in on the North slope of Hill 340; the remaining elements of 1119th Gr Regt held defensive positions on MT TOULON, while remaining elements of 1121st Gr Regt, 553d Gr Div held MT ST JEAN. These troops were indoctrinated with Nazi ideas and their morale was good. Remnants of 1st Bn (approximately 80 men), 115th Pz Gr Regt, 15th Pa Gr Div held defensive positions from FME LA RENAISSANCE to MANONCOURT; these were armed with 12 LMGs, 3 80mm mortars. Due to having suffered heavy losses in recent weeks, the morale of these troops was low. Holding defensive positions to the left of 1st Bn was 2d Co, 115th Replacement Bn, and to their right were elements of 29th Pz Gr Regt, 3d Pz Gr Div. Also in 318th sector at this time was the 438th Replacement March Bn (also known as CT Glatz), operating under the tactical command of 3d Pz Gr Div. The combined strength of 1st & 2d Cos this unit was 125 men. 1st Co had 2 platoons of 25 men each, 6 LMGs; 2d Co with 3 platoons, 25 men each, armed with 8-9 LMGs, 3 HMGs and 2-3 80mm mortars.

During night 1-2 October combat patrols were sent out by 318th with missions of taking SERRIERES, LES QUATRE FERS, RENAISSANCE FARM, FME DE MANCHE SEILLE, and driving enemy from top of woods Southwest of Hill 212. All missions were completed except two - the taking of SERRIERES and LES QUATRE FERS, where enemy resistance was greater than had been anticipated.

From 2-7 October enemy activity in 318th sector consisted of harassing artillery and mortar fire and patrol activity.

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Phase II - Attack to Secure West Bank of SEILLE RIVER.

Following the patrolling and small scale activity from 1-7 October 1944 during which time the enemy had been pushed back to his main defensive positions, a full scale, coordinated attack was launched at 0815, 8 October to drive the enemy from West of the SEILLE RIVER. Partaking in this attack were the 80th and 35th Infantry Divisions, and elements of the U.S. 6th Armored Division, together with the aid of a force of U.S. fighter planes. The 80th Infantry Division was on the left flank of this attack, with CT 318 occupying the Division left sector.

1st Bn, 318th on Regimental left flank, attacked to the Northeast with mission of taking LES QUATRE FERS, BENICOURT and CLEMERY. 2d Bn, on right flank, attacked toward MANONCOURT and Hill 208. 3d Bn, in reserve, held positions in the BOIS DE MANCHE SEILLE. The Regimental CP was located in the BOIS DE BUZARD, approximately one-half mile East of FME ST LOUIS.

The Division attack continued on through 9 October, but all 318th objectives were occupied 8 October.

The Regiment suffered a total of 170 casualties during the operation.

In this one day's operation the 318th took 337 PWs, 12 of which were officers (including 2 evacuated through medical channels). These PWs were from 1553d Arty Regt; 1120th Gr Regt, 553d Gr Div; 6th Para Arty Regt; Assault Bn AOK I. 10 of the officers and a majority of the EM captured were from the 1120th Gr Regt. This was our first contact with the 1120th since crossing the MOSELLE RIVER and, judging from the results of the day's action, it very probably was the 1120th's last action as a unit for some time to come.

Phase III - Patrol Activity East of the SEILLE to determine enemy strength and dispositions.

The period 9-31 October 1944 was a static situation during which we made no attacks nor receive any counterattacks. It was characterized chiefly by

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intensive patrol activity and by intermittent enemy artillery fire. L-284

The 2d Bn maintained positions vicinity MANONCOURT, and the 1st and 3d Bns periodically exchanged places at LIXIERES and an area South of NOMENY vicinity FERME DE LABORDE.

The Regimental CP moved from the woods into LIXIERES 13 October.

During the night 10-11 October remnants of 1120th Gr Regt, in position from NOMENY to RUE DE LE POMPEY, were taken out and replaced by the 38th SS Pz Regt, 17th SS Pz Div. 2d Bn, 38th SS Pz Regt occupied positions from ROUVES to EPLY; 3d Bn from ROUVES to NOMENY, thereby putting the South boundary of 17th SS Pz Div in our sector. 11th Co of this unit had a strength of 120 men - 3 platoons, 2 rifle and 1 com - 3 squads per platoon, 12 men per squad. Of 2 LMGs in company, one was used for instructional purposes.

For purposes of guarding their side of the SEILLE, it was observed that the enemy maintained small outposts well back from River during the day, but at night would push comparatively strong forces up near the River in positions from which they could fire on our patrols attempting to cross.

On 16 October the 1431st Fortress Bn was identified as being in our sector, with 1st Co located vicinity EPLY, 3d Co vicinity ROUVES, and 2d Co in between 1st and 3d Cos; only three Cos in Bn. The morale of these troops was low and PWs (deserters) claimed most of them were waiting only for our attack in order to give up. This unit replaced elements of 38th SS Pz Regt, 17th SS Pz Div to our immediate front, but it was believed they were withdrawn only a short distance to the rear.

In the meantime our patrols were active along the SEILLE RIVER line and beyond, determining fordability of the stream at all points to our front, and keeping the enemy under constant surveillance.

The period closed with the same static situation existing.

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