

G-2 After Action Report

Month of October - 1944

The beginning of October found the Germans attempting to contain the 80th Infantry Division bridgehead across the Moselle River. The German lines extended along the East bank of the Seille River to Clemery where they crossed the river to link up with the high ground of Mt Toulon and Mt St Jean. The 17th SS Division controlling the line on the E bank of the Seille held the line with the 38th SS Regiment (which had replaced the 49th SS Brigade, which had born the brunt of our attack in that sector in September). The remainder of the line was held by the 553d Division, which had bolstered its strength with miscellaneous combat groups such as Aok I Bn and the remnants of the 92d GAF Regiment and 3d parachute Training Regiment. In immediate reserve and occasionally available to the 553d Division through the LXIII Corps which controlled the sector for local counterattacks was the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division.

From the 1st of October to the 4th of October fierce local action was fought for control of the town of Sivry. The Germans finally committed the 2d Bn of the 8th Pz Gr Regiment of the 15th Pz Gr Division to retake this town and then turned it over to the 553d Division to be held.

On 8 October the 80th Division attacked to clear the enemy from the West of the Seille River in the Division zone of action (with the exception of Abaucourt and Letricourt, and the intervening ground formed by the bend of the Seille River to the North). The enemy was caught completely off balance, by our attack - by noon, all organized enemy resistance was ended; 1264 PWs, almost all from the 553d Division, were captured in this operation. The enemy was badly disorganized and the remnants of the 553d Division withdrew from the front of the 80th Division. To reestablish a line the German LXIII Corps rushed all available troops into the area. The 17th SS Rcn Bn appeared on our left flank, as did the AT Co of the 48th Division, while the Fusilier Bn of the 559th Division withdrew into our right flank. Local counterattacks launched on our troops who had advanced to the E edge of the Bois De La Haute De Trappe were repulsed, and by the 11th all aggressive action by the enemy in the Division area had ceased. In the area from Nomeny to Clemery and the 38th SS Regiment moved over to temporarily fill the gap left by the decimated 553d Division.

The remainder of the month of October was spent by the enemy in reconstituting his forces facing the 80th Division. The 1431st Fortress Bn replaced the elements of the 38th SS that had moved down to the Nomeny sector allowing these units to withdraw to their former sector North of Eply. Two regiments of the 48th Division, the 126th and 127th, appeared to fill the gap left by the 553d Division. The 48th Division still unrecovered from rough handling it received on the retreat from Paris, had been holding a quiet sector of the Moselle North of Thionville while refitting. The 128th Regiment of the 48th Division did not appear in the Division zone during the defensive phase of the Seille River action.

On the 20th of October the 1431st Fortress MG Battalion was identified by PWs and it was determined that this Bn had relieved the elements of the 38th SS which had moved South to fill the gap on 9 October. The 38th SS moved back to its original positions North of EPLY.

The remainder of the month the enemy was content to limit his action to harassing our positions with mortar and artillery fire. Shelling from an enemy 280mm gun hit PONT A MOUSSO several times during this period, but did no damage to any military installations.

During this period the Division patrolled actively through the enemy lines. As this was the first time the 80th Division had been in a static situation for long enough to permit extensive patrolling this period was valuable to the units of the Division in developing SOP for patrols.

ATTACHED UNITS

Order of Battle: Documents captured in the CP and on personnel of the German 553d Division enabled the Order of Battle Team to write the history of the 553d Division, the first of the "GOTTERDAMMERUNG DIVISIONS" to enter combat on the West Front.

Prisoner of War Interrogation Teams: Large numbers of foreigners now included in German units were found to be not only willing but anxious to give information of the enemy positions.

Military Intelligence Teams: The MII Team had previously established contacts with agents in NANCY before the occupation of that city and was able to get daily information from agents sent out of the city. These contacts proved valuable during the entire period the Division remained along the MOSELIE River.

CIC Detachment: With a static situation existing tactically, the CIC Det established, in conjunction with Civil Affairs, authorities, a "No Passage Line" to control civilian movement within the Division zone. In screening civilians within the Division zone, the 80th Division CIC Det, besides capturing many German soldiers in civilian clothes, were successful in apprehending a German spy going under the name of "MICHEL" for whose arrest general notice had been sent out by higher headquarters. The arrest of this man provided much valuable information both of enemy agents and their operations.

Photograph Interpretation Team: For the first time since becoming operational, the Division was able, during the month of October, to secure aerial photo coverage of the Division zone of advance. The PI Team was able to furnish the Division and all organizations of the Division with much valuable information.