

VI - PONT-A-MOUSSON and ST.GENEVIEVE

"Several years ago Bill Whiteside and I were reminiscing about some of our experiences overseas. Bill reminded me about the night after the 2nd Bn crossed the Moselle and it's CP was set up temporarily in the cellar of a partially destroyed house at a 'T' shaped intersection. If we remembered correctly, the top of the 'T' was the road that paralleled the river. The house (CP) was right in the center of the top of the 'T' and faced the road that went uphill to the east. The cellar door, which was in the front of the house, was missing and the opening had been covered with a blanket.

"The intersection immediately in front of the CP was under steady interdictory fire making normal activity around the CP very dangerous. We tried to stay as far away as we could and only ventured into the cellar when we had to deliver a radio message. We took turns doing this and would time our swift entrances and exits to be immediately after the two or three interdictory rounds landed.

"Fortunately, there was little or no dispersion for if a round had been 25 yards over it would have gone right through the blanket door and wiped out the entire CP. The CP didn't stay there very long and we were sure glad when we left.

"We passed the same place a couple of days later. At that time it looked like more than just a few rounds had finally gone through the cellar door. The house was just a pile of rubble."

--- Anthony DiPangrazio

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"When the 3rd Bn, 318th, attacked Mousson Hill, I was with 'I' Co. We went up the side of the hill next to the village of Atton. Fred Ellis, the radio operator, went with me and James McGuire, the driver, remained with the jeep in some woods adjacent to Atton. Fred and I carried the 610 radio up that steep slope and it was pretty rough going.

"On the way up enemy fire was very heavy at times. Once I rolled into a shell crater for protection. When I looked up two Germans were standing over me. You can imagine what went through my mind. Fortunately for me they were already prisoners and a GI had them covered.

"Farther up the hill we were to dig in. The ground was so hard I never got deeper than four or five inches, but even that helped. I tried to put the 610 radio in dead space and that was a good idea because the Germans tried to get it. A shell hit within six feet and a fragment went through the antenna. Since they knew

where the radio was, I moved it to another spot. The same shell blew a hole in a hedge that was in front of an infantryman who was next to me. He said: 'Good, now that gives me a better field of fire.'

"Shortly afterwards I received a call from Lt. (John) Simonson. He said he was with Gen. Searby and that his walkie-talkie would send but not receive. The General's would receive but not send. He asked if I would relay their fire missions. I told him to let me have them and I relayed their missions when the Germans counter-attacked.

"The next day the Germans had reoccupied Atton and at times you could see them standing in the street. The Air Force straffed the town with four or five planes. As they were pulling up from their dive- we were about as high as they were - the canopy of one of the planes peeled back and blew off.

"The following morning, before the 319th retook Atton, I could see what looked like the front of a camouflaged vehicle. I called for a fire mission. When I was about to split 100, the vehicle took off. Then we could see it was a half-track painted white with a red cross on it. Reportedly, the Germans brought up ammo and other supplies in that type vehicle.

"When the Germans seized Atton and cut off our supply line, our Air Section did a great job in dropping much needed supplies to the 3rd Bn. Fred Ellis, who was a darn good radio operator, had advised Bn that the battery in our 610 radio was getting weak and that we needed one. In one of their supply runs, the Air Section dropped a battery for us. We greatly appreciated this and the other supplies they dropped.

"I had wondered what had happened to McGuire. After the 3rd Bn was relieved on Mousson Hill and Fred Ellis and I returned to 'C' Btry, we were delighted to see him and learn that he had successfully evaded the Germans and returned to the Btry with the jeep." --- Richard Lee

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" One time I flew Major (James) Roark to a meeting somewhere. After the meeting a group stood around outside 'shooting the bull.' I reminded the Major several times that we had better leave so that we could get back to our air field before darkness set in.

"It was getting pretty dark when we finally arrived back at our area. Whether you know it or not, at dusk, when you are on the ground looking up it appears to be rather light, but from up above looking down its darker than hell. I requested, by radio, for our Air Section to mark both ends of the field with flashlights and brought the plane in under a slow power approach and cut the motor as soon as the wheels hit the ground." --- Hubert Kenyon

" Before 'Sv' Btry crossed the Moselle, there was an outfit on the opposite side of the river from us. One night, about midnight one of their ammunition trucks caught fire and began to explode. About a dozen rounds would go off, it would let up for a minute, then it would start all over again. This went on for most of the night.

" About a year after I came home, I was talking to a policeman who said he had been in the 16th Cavalry. When he mentioned the Moselle River, I told him about the burning ammo truck that kept me awake one night. He said it was theirs. They were unable to get near it to put out the fire because of the exploding shells." --- Frank Lankford

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