

May James H. H. (1945) G Company

SECTION II

BRIDGEHEAD ON THE SEILLE RIVER

The 317th Infantry launched its attack at 0600, with the mission of establishing a bridgehead east of the SEILLE RIVER in the vicinity of EPLY and continuing the attack to the northeast. With two Battalions abreast, the 1st Bn on the right and the 3d Bn on the left, the 317th seized the high ground (HILL 207) south of EPLY at 0700 and the high ground north of EPLY (HILL 237) at 0720. Enemy fire was relatively light and ineffective. However, enemy fire from the north flank slowed the advance of the 3d Bn.

After seizing the bridgehead across the SEILLE RIVER, the attack was continued with the 1st Bn (south of EPLY) and the 3d Bn (north of EPLY) moving to the east. "I" Company led the advance and crossed the EPLY-LOUVIGNY Highway at 0950, moving toward RAUCOURT. "A" Company, with "B" Company on the right, advanced to take HILL 234 (east of EPLY) at 1030.

Infantry support bridges were constructed at CLEMERY and MANONCOURT (318th Infantry area) by 1100. Initial crossings were made by the use of assault boats and fords.

The 2d Bn 317th Infantry, which was in reserve in the vicinity of MORVILLE-SUR-SEILLE, began crossing the SEILLE RIVER at 1108, to take up a reserve position northwest of EPLY (HILL 237). At 1200, 8 November 1944, the 2d Bn was ordered to seize EPLY which had been by-passed by both assault Battalions. "F" Company received this mission, and by 1530 had fought its way into the center of the town against scattered small arms fire. The town was cleared of the enemy by 1615.

The tank bridge in the vicinity of CLEMERY was finished at 1300 and "A" Company 702d Tank Bn began crossing the SEILLE RIVER at 1445 to join the 3d Bn 317th Infantry. At 1655 the tanks made contact with the 3d Bn just north of RAUCOURT, the extreme point of advance by this Battalion.

The advance of the 317th was halted at darkness, with the 1st Bn digging in near RAUCOURT and the 3d Bn digging in on the high ground west of ST JURE.

The 318th Infantry, employing the 1st and 2d Bns, at-

tacked at 0600. The Battalions crossed in assault boats, the 1st Bn crossing the SEILLE RIVER west of NOMENY and the 2d Bn crossing in the vicinity of ROUVES. The 3d Bn, in reserve, was to follow the 2d Bn.

By 0616 elements of both Battalions were across the river and construction of a foot bridge was begun immediately in the 2d Bn area. Light enemy artillery and mortar fire was falling in both areas.

Elements of the 2d Bn 318th Infantry had advanced over 300 yards from the river, north of ROUVES and the entire Battalion had crossed the river by 0637. "E" Company, with "F" Company on its left, moved forward against light enemy resistance to within 100 yards northwest of ROUVES at 0648. "E" Company entered ROUVES shortly thereafter and the enemy was cleared from the town by 0712, 8 November 1944.

The footbridge under construction in the 2d Bn area was completed at 0650. The footbridge in the 1st Bn area was finished at 0725, with the remaining elements of "A" Company crossing shortly thereafter.

The 3d Bn, in Regimental Reserve, began crossing the SEILLE RIVER in the zone of the 2d Bn at 0725.

Bridging operations along the SEILLE RIVER were made difficult by flood conditions. Heavy rains caused the river to overflow its banks in many places. The streets of CLEMENY were inundated on the morning of 8 November 1944.

Meanwhile the 2d Bn 318th Infantry had advanced 500 yards beyond the ROUVES-EPLY road against stiffening enemy resistance. Progress became slower.

The 1st Bn, advancing between ROUVES and NOMENY, also met more determined resistance. This Battalion advanced towards the high ground south of MAILLY-SUR-SEILLE (HILL 217), but was pinned down at 1010 by enemy machine gun fire from that area. Bitter fighting took place for possession of HILL 217 and after beating off an enemy counterattack at 1500, the Battalion took its objective (HILL 217) shortly after dark.

The 2d Bn, advancing towards MAILLY-SUR-SEILLE north of ROUVES, crossed the NOMENY-RAUCOURT highway at 1600 and consolidated the ground between the highway and the objective for the night.

The tank bridge at CLEMERY was finished at 1300 and "A" and "B" Companies 702d Tank Bn began crossing the SEILLE RIVER, "A" Company to support the 317th Infantry and "B" Company to support the 318th Infantry.

The 3d Bn 318th Infantry, across the river about 1000 yards north of NOMENY, was directed to clear the enemy from NOMENY. Infantry and tanks were fighting in the outskirts of NOMENY at 1745, but darkness fell quickly and the tanks were forced to withdraw. "I" Company then halted its attack until the next morning.

The 319th, employing the 1st Bn with the mission of seizing AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE and CRAINCOURT, attacked at 0600, 8 November 1944.

The 1st Bn, using a fixed bridge that had not been blown up by the enemy, crossed the SEILLE RIVER in the vicinity of CHENICOURT and then attacked northward with "B" Company on the left, "A" Company on the right, and "C" Company in reserve. "D" Company 702d Tank Bn remained in the vicinity of AJONCOURT until a treadway bridge could be constructed across the small stream south of AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE.

The 2d Bn remained in positions in the vicinity of ABAUCOURT-LETRICOURT and supported the attack by fire. The 3d Bn remained in Regimental Reserve in the vicinity of JEANDELINCOURT.

"B" Company fought its way into AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE at 0725 and began mopping-up operations. "A" Company was abreast of "B" Company and 500 yards to the east of AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE at 0830, but the attack was halted by enemy machine gun and mortar fire from the high ground northeast of the town. By 1145, "B" Company had completed mopping-up operations and began consolidating its position. "A" Company held its position east of AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE despite heavy enemy fire.

The treadway bridge crossing the stream on the AJONCOURT-AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE highway (954295) was completed at 1430 and tanks from "D" Company 702d Tank Bn advanced to aid the 1st Bn in its attack on CRAINCOURT.

"A" and "B" Companies, reinforced by "D" Company 702d Tank Bn, launched a coordinated attack on CRAINCOURT at 1545. Determined enemy resistance made progress slow. "C" Company in reserve, ordered up to reinforce "A" and "B" Companies, took a position in the center of the line.

G Company

"C" Company 702d Tank Bn relieved "D" Company at 1700, 8 November 1944, and "D" Company returned to JEANDELINCOURT.

The 1st Bn (reinforced) renewed the attack on CRAINCOURT, advancing to the southern edge of town. The enemy launched a counterattack on "C" Company at 1940 and delayed the attack on the town. "F" Company, in reserve on the west side of the SEILLE RIVER, was ordered to reinforce the 1st Bn and at 2000, moved up. The 1st Bn succeeded in beating off the enemy counterattack by 2000 and "F" Company occupied AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE. The Battalion then organized and consolidated its position south of CRAINCOURT for the night.

Field Message Number 1, issued 1700, 8 November 1944, ordered the three Infantry Regiments to consolidate and organize for defense, the ground gained during the day's attack. All three Regiments were to resume the attack on the following morning at 0630, 9 November 1944.

The 6th Armored Division was given priority on roads in the 80th Division Zone between the hours 0200 - 1200, 9 November 1944. The armor was also to have priority on the treadway bridges crossing the SEILLE RIVER between the hours of 0500 - 1200, 9 November 1944.

The armor was to pass through the 317th and 318th Infantry Division to attack at 0600, 9 November 1944 (on the 80th Division left flank) and cut off the fortress city of METZ from the southeast and east.

Preceded by a 5-minute artillery preparation fire, the 317th Infantry renewed its attack to the east on 9 November 1944. The attack jumped off at 0630 with the 1st Bn, in the vicinity south of RAUCOURT, moving eastward to seize the high ground between RAUCOURT and RESSAINCOURT at 0720. After the 1st Bn gained control of the high ground east of RAUCOURT, "C" Company attacked the town from the west and seized it at 1000.

The 2d Bn 317th Infantry, in Regimental Reserve northwest of EPLY (HILL 237), moved to a position about 800 yards east of EPLY on the morning 9 November 1944.

The 3d Bn, attacking at 0630 from positions just west of ST JURE, skirted the town of ST JURE on the south and fought it's way against moderate resistance towards the BOIS DE RESSAINCOURT. At 1150 this Battalion held a position just north of RESSAINCOURT. Later in the day it ad-

vanced into the northern sector of BOIS DE RESSAINCOURT.

The 1st Bn, fighting its way northeast towards SECOURT, entered BOIS DE RESSAINCOURT at 1355. "C" Company remained in RAUCOURT. "A" Company 702d Tank Bn, which had been in an assembly area in the vicinity of EPLY, began movement at 1455 to support the advance of the 1st Bn.

Meanwhile, the 2d Bn 317th, in reserve east of EPLY, was ordered to move at 1400 to an area just south of ST JURE. At 1524, elements of the 2d Bn and "A" Company 702d Tank Bn were engaged in clearing the enemy from ST JURE. "A" Company 702d Tank Bn passed through ST JURE to a point about 500 yards northeast of the town where it swung to the east to join the 1st Bn on the northern edge of BOIS DE RESSAINCOURT at 1615.

The 1st Bn 317th Infantry cleared the BOIS DE RESSAINCOURT and at 1655 was approaching SECOURT. The town was taken before dark and the Battalion moved to the high ground northeast of the town where the position was consolidated for the night.

The 3d Bn continued its advance on the left of the 1st Bn and by evening, occupied positions southwest of SOIGNE where the advance was halted for the day.

On the morning of 9 November 1944 the two assault Battalions of the 318th Infantry jumped off at 0630. The attack was preceded by a 5-minute artillery preparation. The 1st Bn attacked the town of MAILLY-SUR-SEILLE from the south (HILL 217). By 0818, "A" Company, with "B" Company following, was fighting at the southern approaches to the town. "C" Company was in reserve. The town was cleared by 1010 and leading elements of the 1st Bn had advanced eastwards to a point about midway between MAILLY-SUR-SEILLE and PHLIN. In this advance on PHLIN, "A" and "B" Companies advanced abreast of each other. "B" Company was given the mission of seizing PHLIN, while "A" Company advanced on its left (north) flank. "C" Company, in Battalion Reserve, was approximately 1200 meters west of the town. "B" Company was fighting in PHLIN at 1250 and the town was cleared of the enemy shortly thereafter.

At 1322 the 1st Bn was ordered to clear the enemy from THEZEY-ST MARTIN (southeast of PHLIN). "C" Company, in Battalion Reserve, was given the mission. "A" and "B" Companies consolidated and organized the high ground east of the town

for the night.

Meanwhile, the 2d Bn 318th Infantry, on the left (north) flank of the 1st Battalion, advanced northeast from its position between MAILLY-SUR-SEILLE and the RAUCOURT-NOMENY highway towards BOIS DE SEIGNEUR. At 0835, forward elements of this Battalion were on the road north of MAILLY-SUR-SEILLE, moving northeast against moderate enemy resistance. The western edge of the BOIS DE SEIGNEUR was entered at 0922 by the 2d Bn and the woods were cleared by 1339. This Battalion continued its drive to the north to advance through BOIS DE PHLIN, clearing the woods by 1515. Here the advance was halted for the day, with positions being consolidated for the night.

The attack on NOMENY was resumed on the morning of 9 November 1944 by the 3d Bn 318th Infantry with "B" Company 702d Tank Bn in support. This Tank Company, meeting only slight opposition, was in NOMENY along the SEILLE RIVER at 0900. Two-thirds of NOMENY was reported clear of the enemy at 1010, and by 1120 all clear was reported. The Battalion then moved to MAILLY-SUR-SEILLE, closing in at 1726.

"B" Company 702d Tank Bn then moved northeast from NOMENY through MAILLY-SUR-SEILLE towards PHLIN and thence southeast to support "C" Company 318th Infantry in the attack on THEZEY-ST MARTIN. Fighting in the streets at 1730, "C" Company (reinforced) quickly cleared the enemy from the town. The tanks then returned to PHLIN at 1825.

Flood waters of the SEILLE RIVER hampered the supply and evacuation traffic in the 318th Infantry area on 9 November 1944. All bridges in the area were unserviceable at 0705, with water flooding the approaches to all bridges.

The 319th Infantry resumed the attack at 0630, 9 November 1944. The 905th Field Artillery Bn, reinforced by the Cannon Company 319th Infantry and "A" Company 808th Tank Destroyer Bn, fired preparatory barrages between 0600-0630 and then fired in support of the attack.

The 1st Bn, having halted its attack just south of CRAINCOURT on the evening 8 November 1944, renewed its assault on the town. Enemy resistance in CRAINCOURT was quickly mopped-up and by 0815, the 1st Bn completed the organization and consolidation of its bridgehead across the SEILLE RIVER. "B" Company occupied the left sector, from the river eastward to CRAINCOURT, "C" Company occupied the center,

from the east side of CRAINCOURT to a point about 1000 yards southeast of the town and "A" Company occupied the right sector, east of AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE and south to the AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE-LEMONCOURT road.

"F" Company 2d Bn, remained in AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE.

At 0950, the 3d Bn 319th Infantry was released from Division Reserve. This Battalion was then directed to proceed east of the SEILLE RIVER to take the right sector of the Regimental Zone.

With the clearance of CRAINCOURT, "C" Company 305th Engineer Combat Bn began to construct a support raft bridge at AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE.

It was planned that the 2d Bn (minus "F" Company), with "E" Company in ABAUCOURT and "G" Company in LETRICOURT, would assemble and cross to AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE as soon as the bridge was completed.

The 319th Infantry, on Division order attacked with the mission of seizing DELME RIDGE, three miles northeast of the 319th Infantry bridgehead.

The 1st and 3d Bns advanced abreast, with the 1st Bn on the left. At 1430, the 1st Bn captured intact the bridge crossing a stream on the CRAINCOURT-LIOCOURT highway (965328). The bridge was heavily mined and after removal of the mines by the mine platoon Anti-Tank Company 319th Infantry, the advance was continued to the northeast.

Meanwhile the 3d Bn, advancing on the 1st Bn right flank, had moved about 2500 yards along the CRAINCOURT-PUZIEUX road. At 1545 this Battalion was in the vicinity of the railroad tracks (993335) southwest of PUZIEUX. By 1630, "L" Company was fighting in the town of PUZIEUX and "K" Company, supported by tanks from "C" Company 702d Tank Bn, had advanced to the base of DELME RIDGE. Before the fleeing enemy could properly occupy DELME RIDGE, "K" Company stormed and took the objective at 1730. The position on the southern nose of DELME RIDGE was then consolidated for the night. The town of PUZIEUX, south of DELME RIDGE, was cleared of the enemy by 1730 and at dark, the 3d Bn held a line running southward from the southern nose of DELME RIDGE to the east edge of PUZIEUX.

The 1st Bn, in the meantime, attacked ALAINCOURT and

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May James H. Hayes & Company

LIOCCOURT. At 1545 "B" Company was fighting on the west edge of LIOCCOURT and "A" Company had assaulted ALAINCOURT. Both Companies were supported by tanks of "C" Company 702d Tank Bn. "B" Company fought its way through LIOCCOURT at 1715 to take the high ground about 500 yards northeast of the town on a line running from northwest to southeast. ALAINCOURT was captured late in the afternoon of 9 November 1944, while LIOCCOURT was cleared of the enemy at 1820.

The support raft bridge was completed at 1500 and the 2d Bn (minus "F" Company) crossed shortly thereafter, assembling as Regimental Reserve in the vicinity of AULNOIS-SUR-SEILLE at 1835.

At 2310, elements of the 137th Infantry (35th Infantry Division) were reported in DELME. Thus the front between the 80th and 35th Divisions was joined.

The 313th Field Artillery Bn, in direct support of the 317th Infantry, displaced to positions east of the SEILLE RIVER on the morning 9 November 1944.