

SECTION V

CONSOLIDATION OF THE BRIDGEHEAD

An enemy force of about 200 men, preceded by heavy artillery and mortar fire, attacked HILL 340 from the direction of SERRIERES at 0100, 27 September 1944. The 1st Bn 317th Infantry, occupying this hill, inflicted heavy casualties on the Germans. By 0530, the enemy had withdrawn. The 1st Bn continued to organize its position for defense.

The 2d and 3d Bns continued to organize their positions for defense, the 2d Bn in position on HILL 418, southwest of VILLERS-LES-MOIVRON and the 3d Bn occupying LA HAIE RIDGE west of MOIVRON. Active patrolling by all units was conducted to develop enemy positions.

The 2d Bn 318th Infantry, which was protecting the rear of the 3d Bn 317th Infantry against possible counterattack, moved at 1235 from BOIS DE LA TREMBLOUSE, south of BRATTE, to the vicinity of LOISY. Movement was completed by 1720, 27 September 1944, with "F" Company in the vicinity of LANDREMONT, "G" Company in the vicinity of STE GENEVIEVE and "E" and "H" Companies in LOISY. This Battalion and the 3d Bn, which occupied an area in the vicinity of VILLE-AU-VAL, then reverted to Division Reserve.

The 1st Bn, which had been in Division Reserve in the vicinity of LOISY, moved east to relieve elements of the 2d Bn 319th Infantry in the BOIS DE BAUZARD, BOIS DE ST CLEMENT, and BOIS DE MANCHE-SEILLE. This relief was accomplished by 2215, 27 September 1944.

The 319th Infantry continued to improve and organize defensive positions. A platoon from "K" Company was sent to reconnoiter PORT-SUR-SEILLE on the afternoon of 27 September 1944. The platoon became involved in a fire-fight with the enemy and withdrew to the western edge of the town. The remainder of "K" Company advanced from the vicinity north of BOIS DE BAUZARD in support of this platoon and while the artillery concentrated fire on the enemy, the entire company withdrew to Battalion Reserve positions in the BOIS DE BAUZARD.

The 1st Bn continued to outpost LESMENILS and defend the eastern edge of FORET DE FACQ, sending reconnaissance

patrols to MORVILLE-SUR-SEILLE which was still occupied by the enemy. The 3d Bn continued to occupy defensive positions in the vicinity of BOIS DE BAUZARD, BOIS DE ST CLEMENT, and BOIS DE MANCHE-SEILLE. The 2d Bn occupied reserve battle positions in the vicinity of STE GENEVIEVE - LANDREMONT.

On 28 September 1944, the 317th Infantry organized and defended the southern sector of the Division Zone on the high ground south of MOREY, BELLEAU, BRATTE, and VILLERS-LES-MOIVRON.

On the morning of 28 September 1944 the Germans launched an attack against HILL 340. At 0545 a heavy concentration of artillery fell in the 1st Bn 317th Infantry area, vicinity of HILL 340. At 0615 the enemy began to advance towards HILL 340 from SIVRY. Artillery fire brought down on these German troops demoralized them and by 0735 the enemy was withdrawing. "B" Company remained in position on the hill.

The 314th Field Artillery Battalion rendered direct support to the 1st Bn 317th Infantry in repelling this counterattack. Some missions of the Field Artillery Battalion were fired only 25 yards in front of our dug-in troops. After the Germans withdrew, there were 125 German dead left behind.

The 2d Bn 317th Infantry in position on HILL 413, southwest of VILLERS-LES-MOIVRON, continued organization of defensive positions.

The 3d Bn 317th Infantry in position on LA HAIE RIDGE, continued to organize defensive positions on the ridge and the ground to the west. "K" Company occupied the BOIS DE LA TREMBLOUSE, thereby filling in the gap between the 2d and 3d Bns. This position protected BRATTE from any German threat from the east.

The 1st Bn 318th Infantry remained in position in BOIS DE BAUZARD, BOIS DE ST CLEMENT, and BOIS DE MANCHE-SEILLE, defending the center sector of the Division Zone.

The 2d and 3d Bns, in Division Reserve, made preparations to occupy and defend the Reserve Battle Positions (STE GENEVIEVE - LANDREMONT-FALAISE RIDGES).

The 319th Infantry organized and defended the northern sector of the Division Zone and prepared reserve positions in the vicinity of PONT-A-MOUSSON on 28 September 1944.

The 1st and 3d Bns continued to organize defensive positions along the eastern edge of FORET DE FACQ.

"K" Company (minus one Platoon) 319th Infantry at 0545, attacked from the BOIS DE BAUZARD to seize PORT-SUR-SEILLE. Despite heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire, the town was taken at 0720. The enemy, leaving only a rear guard, had withdrawn most of his forces eastward across the SEILLE RIVER. The town was cleared of the remaining enemy by 0920.

Meanwhile, one platoon of "K" Company 319th Infantry was attacking the CHATEAU DE DOMBASLE, south of PORT-SUR-SEILLE. This objective was cleared of the enemy by 1105, 28 September 1944.

The 2d Bn remained in its reserve battle position STE GENEVIEVE-LANDREMONT RIDGES.

The Division continued to strengthen and defend its bridgehead east of the MOSELLE RIVER from 29 to 30 September 1944.

The 317th Infantry continued to occupy and improve defensive positions with the Main Line of Resistance extending from a point just north of LEYR to HILL 418-BOIS DE LA TREMBLOUSE-BRATTE-BELLEAU and along the highway just west of HILL 340. About 1000 yards separated the Main Line of Resistance from the Outpost Line of Resistance.

The 1st Bn took up the defense of the northern sector of the Regimental Zone, primarily the BOIS DE LA RUMONT.

The 3d Bn, occupying BRATTE, BOIS DE LA TREMBLOUSE, and HILL 418, defended the right sector of the Regimental Zone. VILLERS-LES-MOIVRON was outposted. The 3d Platoon 80th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop maintained contact with elements of the 35th Infantry Division to the south of LEYR.

The 1st Bn, 318th Infantry occupying positions in the BOIS DE BAUZARD, BOIS DE ST CLEMENT, and BOIS DE MANCHE-SEILLE, continued to defend the center sector of the Division Zone. The 2d and 3d Bns remained in Division Reserve.

The 319th Infantry continued to occupy and improve defensive positions in the northern sector of the Division Zone.

Two platoons of "B" Company moved at 0530, 29 September 1944 from FORME DE PACQ to attack MORVILLE-SUR-SEILLE. There was little enemy opposition and the town was cleared by 0740. One platoon was left to occupy the town that night. PORT-SUR-SEILLE was occupied by one platoon from "C" Company.

The 2d Bn occupying reserve battle positions STE GENEVIEVE RIDGE and LANDREMONT RIDGE, was relieved by elements of the 2d Bn 318th Infantry and then moved into Regimental Reserve north of ANTON, closing in at 1450, 29 September 1944.

The 1st and 3d Bns continued to occupy defensive positions from LESMEHILS to BOIS DE BAUBARD.

On 30 September 1944, the 317th Infantry continued to strengthen its defensive positions.

The 1st Bn, in position in the vicinity of HILL 351, HILL 340, and the BOIS DU CHAPIERE, was relieved by elements of the 2d Bn 317th Infantry and the 3d Bn 318th Infantry.

The 3d Bn 318th Infantry, from the vicinity of VILLE-AU-VAL, was ordered to take up defensive positions on HILL 351, Hill 340, and in the vicinity of MOREY and BELLEAU. This Battalion closed into its new position by 0200, 1 October 1944.

The 2d Bn 317th Infantry, in order to relieve elements of the 1st Bn, merely extended its zone on the left flank. This relief was accomplished late in the evening 30 September 1944. The 1st Bn, reverting to Regimental Reserve, then moved to the vicinity north of MONTENOY. The 3d Bn continued to strengthen its defensive position between BRATTE and HILL 418.

There was no change in the positions of the 1st and 2d Bns 318th Infantry on 30 September 1944. The 3d Bn, which had been in Division Reserve in the vicinity of VILLE-AU-VAL, relieved elements of the 1st Bn 317th Infantry late in the evening 30 September 1944 in the vicinity of MOREY, BELLEAU, and HILL 340. The Regimental Zone now extended from the southern edge of FORME DE PACQ just west of BENI-COURT, to a point south of BELLEAU and east of MOREY.

The 319th Infantry continued to maintain its defensive position on the left sector of the Division Zone. The 1st and 3d Bns remained on the line, the 2d Bn remained in

Regimental Reserve, north of ATTON.

And so the month ended, with many fierce and successful engagements behind the Division. The MOSELLE RIVER bridgehead, running from LESMILS on the north to VILLERS-LES-CIVRON on the south, was firmly established.