

Paris

UNIT: 2d Bn 318th Inf Regt, 80th Inf Div

PERIOD: 8 Nov - 4 Dec 1944.

ACTION: LORRAINE Campaign (SEILLE & NIED River Crossings)

SOURCE: Maj Matthew L. Dwyer, CO 2d Bn, then S-1, 2d Bn 318th Inf

PLACE AND DATE OF INTERVIEW: KEMPTEN, GERMANY, 2d Bn CP,
23 June 1945.

INTERVIEWER: Lt S. J. Tobin

MAPS: 1/50,000 - Title	Sheet No	GSGS No
METZ	34-13	4471
NOMENY	34-14	4471
ST AVOLD	35-13	4471
CHATEAU SALINS	35-14	4471
SAARGUEMINES	36-13	4471
SARRE UNION	36-14	4471

Note: The Bn Unit Journal was used as a reference during the interview. As Lt Col Gardner, 318th Inf, was 2d Bn CO at the time, therefore only additional information about the Bn action was sought from Major Dwyer.

Prior to the SEILLE River crossing, the 2d Bn had been in the area about a month. During this time, reconnaissance and observation had provided accurate information as to the enemy, his strength and positions on the east side of the river.

On 7 Nov 1944, the day before the attack, it began to rain heavily. During the night and the next day the river raised several feet flooding to a width of some 200 to 300 yards.

During the night of 7 Nov, the 305th Engrs carried assault boats down to the river edge and anchored them at the bank. When the infantry came down to get the boats, they had to wade through waist deep water about 100 yards to reach them. One man tried to wade the river but went in over his head before being pulled out.

The assault crossing was completed by 0630 and the attack got under way. At the time, the enemy resistance consisted of light mortar, some artillery and small arms fire. E Co was given the mission to take ROUVES (879344). By 0830, F and G companies having by-passed the town, reached cross roads 212 (892355) where they consolidated and reformed.

At 0900, F and G companies received a counterattack consisting

of some 100 enemy supported by MGs and some direct fire. Fortunately, the companies had set up defensive positions and they were able to beat off the attack and inflict heavy casualties on the enemy. The attack came straight down the road from ^{RAUCOURT} MAILLY. Meanwhile E Co was pulled up from ROUVES to assist in turning back the counterattack. Later, E Co went back into ROUVES and finished mopping up. After repelling the counterattack the Bn held in its positions for the night.

Weather constituted the greatest difficulty. The flooded condition of the river made supply and evacuation extremely difficult. Approaches to crossings had to be constantly maintained and men had to walk through waist deep mud and water to bring supplies and evacuate the wounded. During the day some 25 vehicles got stuck and had to be pulled out. At CLEMERY the Bn Aid Station had water 6" deep in the rooms. A ferry which was operated by the A & P platoon used 250 yards of rope on either bank to pull the raft back and forth.

Shortly after noon a tank bridge was built at CLEMERY. The Germans made several attempts to bomb the bridge, but were unsuccessful. During the night 8-9 Nov the bridge went. Major Dwyer said that he wasn't sure but he thought there was a tank on the bridge when it collapsed.

On the morning of 9 Nov the attack was continued. The Bn moved out along to the NE reaching the MAILLY-SECOURT road at about 0830. Moderate small arms fire was met along the way. At 0930 they met resistance from the edge of the BOIS de SEIGNEUR woods (913367). The enemy line was thinly held and the defenders were driven back through the woods after they had fired a few rounds. This area was mopped up by 1400 and about 75 PWs taken. The advance was continued through the BOIS de PHLIN woods to the east which were cleared in short order by about 1530. There they set up defensive positions for the night. Extreme difficulties were encountered in bringing up supplies due to weather and road conditions.

The next day 10 Nov, the attack was continued at 0900 with the objective of taking DELME RIDGE. The towns of SAILLY (949389) and ACHATEL (949392) were cleared by slight resistance by 1100. Then they turned south and, after clearing scattered resistance, took

MONCHEUX (976385) by 1645. Contact was made with TF Forrest, 6th Armd Div, in MONCHEUX later in the day. The Bn consolidated defensive positions along DELME RIDGE northwest of the town for the night.

On the morning of 11 Nov the 2d Bn attacked eastward from MONCHEUX and took TRAGNY (006409) against practically no resistance by 1000. They were joined by Co B 702d Tk Bn and with the tanks they pushed out and took THIMONVILLE (019403) with the infantry following the armor. The town was cleared by 1300 against slight resistance. After taking the town the elements of the Bn had been whittled down to approximately 150 men total strength. These were formed into one company by Col Gardner and the town of FLOCOURT (030422) was attacked and taken by about 1500. At FLOCOURT the 2d Bn reverted to Regimental Reserve and the 3d Bn 318th Inf took over its sector.

The 2d Bn remained in reserve at FLOCOURT during 12 and 13 Nov and on the 14th moved up to HOLACOURT (105422). The Bn remained in HOLACOURT in reserve during 15 to 19 Nov during which time they received replacements to bring them up to strength.

On the 20th of Nov the 2d Bn, still in reserve, moved to CREHANGE (148503).

The next day 21 Nov, the Bn moved by truck to FAULQUEMONT (1750) and then by foot to the vicinity of DORVILLER (142536) going by way of ELVANGE (132518) and FLETRANGE (1452).

On 22 Nov the 2d Bn relieved the 1st Bn and moved out to a position on the high ground south of HAUTE VIGNEULLE (167567). The Bn remained in position during the 23d of Nov and made preparations to attack toward the north on the morning of the 25th and take the town of ZIMMING (160592), the BAMBESCH woods and the MAGINOT LINE forts in their sector.

During the 24th of Nov, the 2d Bn pushed forward several hundred yards to obtain a more favorable LD for the next day's attack.

On the morning of 25 Nov, after a 30-minute artillery barrage, the 2d Bn, on the left of the Regimental sector, jumped off in the attack with Co B 702d Tk Bn in support. The high ground northwest of BAMBIDERSTROFF (167567) was taken by 0830. The BAMBESCH woods were reached about 1030, however heavier resistance was met in the

woods and the tanks were held up a tremendous anti-tank ditch which ran in a northwest-southeast direction from the woods to the EIN-SELINGERBERG ridge. This ditch was approximately 10 feet deep and 15 to 20 feet wide. The Engrs completed a bridge over the ditch at about 1200 and the tanks crossed over and joined the infantry in the BAMBESCH woods at about 1330. G Co supported by tanks went into the town of ZIMMING and mopped up the town by 1800. Other elements cleared the BOIS KERFENT woods during the afternoon. Several of the MAGINOT LINE pillboxes were taken during the day. These forts did not have any heavy guns in them and were defended by MGs only. Several of the pillboxes surrendered when tank and TD fire was placed on them and they found attacking forces on three sides. Several of the forts had large caliber French guns in them but ammunition for these was not available. The tank fire (75mm) only chipped the concrete on the pillboxes, however AP shells from the new 90mm TD penetrated right through, approximately six feet of reinforced concrete.

The 2d Bn held in position roughly from ZIMMING a line east and west along the north edge of BOIS KERFENT woods during the 26th of Nov and the next day 27 Nov they were relieved at ZIMMING by the 3d Bn 10th Inf, 5th Div at 0900. Positions were maintained on the high ground north of the KERFENT woods. During the afternoon the Bn moved into LONGEVILLE (2058) closing at 1700.

On the 28th of Nov the Bn moved into ST AVOLD and outposted the town which had been taken previously by other elements of the division.

The next day 29 Nov, they relieved the 1st Bn 317th Inf in the vicinity of HENRIVILLE (356556) where they held in position until the 4th of Dec 1944.

On the morning of 4 Dec the 2d Bn on the right of the 1st Bn attacked to the north and took THEDING (385591). The 1st Bn took the high ground west of the town. A 30-minute artillery preparation by 7 Bns was fired prior to the attack and the objective was taken against slight resistance.