

Action of the 2nd Bn, 318th Regt, 80th Div, in the Bastogne Salient 24-28 December. Interview conducted at the 318th Regt in Wiltz, Luxembourg, on 25 January 1945, By Capt. Dello G. Dayton. The following were interviewed: Lt Col Glenn H Gardner, now Regt Ex O then CO of 2nd Bn, Capt. Prentis W Foreman, Bn S-3 2nd Bn, 318th, and 2nd Lt John A Shuford, Bn S-2 2nd Bn, 318th. Col Gardner did most of the talking after the other two officers had started the action. Interview as conducted with a map
Map 1/50000

On Dec 24th the 318th Regt was ordered by the 80th Div to leave the 3rd Bn in its present position near Ettelbruck, Luxembourg, with the mission of taking and holding the town, while the other two Bns were to move via truck to Fauvillers, Belgium, and on reaching there assist the 4th Arm Div in getting through to Bastogne. When the 2d Bn, 318th, got orders to move it was in position on Lopert Hill west of Ettelbruck. The Bn was told to move to Neiderfulen and wait there for trucks. Because of artillery fire in Neiderfulen, however, the Bn moved to Merzig and entrucked there. They moved via Merzig-Grosbous-Bettborn-Redange-Ell. At the later place a guide from the 4th Arm Div picked up the column and directed it by way of Arlon, Attert-Martelange and Fauvillers. From Fauvillers the Bn moved up to Burnon where it detrucked. Here it spent the night of 24-25th December.

On reaching Fauvillers Lt Col Gardner, CO 2nd Bn, had contacted Gen. Dager, CO of CCB, 4th Arm Div, for instructions. (The Bn was attached to CCB). He was informed that the Bn was to assist the Combat Command to break through to the surrounded forces in Bastogne. Intermediate objectives on the way were the towns between Burnon and Bastogne. An attack to the north was planned for 0930 on the 25th. The attack jumped off as planned from an LD just south of the Lambay Chenet woods. The Bn attacked with two Co's abreast--F on the right G on the left--E Co was in reserve. Assisting the Bn in the attack were 8 tanks from the 8th Tank Bn. To the left of the Bn was the 10th Arm Inf Bn, dismounted, supported by 7 tanks from the 8th Tk Bn. The right flank of the Bn was exposed because, though CCA of the 4th Armored was attacking north on that flank, they were not moving parallel to CCB. The first real opposition hit by the Bn was in the Lambay Chenet woods.

Here the Germans, elements of the 8th Para Div, were well dug in positions which they defended with automatic weapons. It was difficult to oust the paratroopers out of their foxholes and many were bayoneted while still in them. The inf advance was assisted by the tank fire which was placed indiscriminately within the woods. When the woods had been cleared (About 40 prisoners were taken therefrom) the Bn moved north toward Chaumont from which CCB had been driven out on the 23rd. In their original respective positions companies F and G swung to the east of the town and occupied the high ground which dominated Chaumont. When this had been accomplished and during which artillery had been placed on the town, Co E moved into the town first with about a platoon of twenty men. The remainder of the company then went into the town and assisted in clearing it out. The town was clear of the enemy by 1800 25th Dec. In the town eleven tanks of the 4th Arm Div were recovered and after only minor repairs, five of the eleven tanks could be used. After Co E had entered Chaumont G Co swung around to the north of the town. F Company remained on the high ground to the east where it outposted the tanks. The Bn remained in Chaumont during the night of the 25th. G Co outposted it from the north. It was reenforced with 2-60mm mortars from the weapons platoon, a light machine gun and ten men from Co E, and 16 men and 3 MG's from the heavy weapons company. Company E remained in the town proper and with greatly depleted platoons outposted the roadnets entering Chaumont. During the night of 25th Dec G Co had 49 men and F 29. During the afternoon Co E's strength had been augmented by the addition of 24 men from the Regt I and R Platoon. The company CO, Capt Rex O Kirkman, had also been replaced by 1st Lt (now Capt) Edmund A Willinghoff, who had been Plat Leader of the I and R Platoon. The Bn had begun the action with 350 men but after a day's fighting was considerable reduced.

During the night of the 25th Germans were seen infiltrating into houses on the extreme southeast edge of Grandrue, the town immediately north of

Chaumont. With this information the next day's attack was planned accordingly. On the morning of the 26th F Co jumped off first with the tanks in support and headed directly north. After the tanks had fired into the Bois de Hargeal the infantry moved in and cleaned the southern edge out. There the Co checked its advance. After F Co had jumped off E Co came out of the town, moved to the northeast and took up a position to the left of Co about 500 yards east of Grandrue. When companies E and F had attained the positions indicated, G Co moved out of Chaumont north toward Grandrue. Before approaching the town the company ventilated the buildings with 57mm fire, both HE and AP. The company moved west of the town as if they were going to bypass it, then did a right flank and moved in on the town. They were in the town by 0915 on the 26th. The company made a very good haul in the town. They took about 40 prisoners, a US 11/2T truck, US rations, US clothing, M-1 rifles, binoculars, a 57 AT gun and ammunition for the same. Meantime companies F and E were meeting heavy resistance in the woods northeast of Grandrue. Despite the opposition, Col Gardner said he was anxious to get out of the woods and into the open ground to the north. Since F Co was so depleted, now down to only 25 men, it was instructed to hold and the other two Cos were ordered to push forward. G Co moved north out of Grandrue, was temporarily checked by some heavy enemy machine gun fire, but continued to push forward toward the cross road to the north (), the company's objective. When about 500 yards from the crossroad, the company Commander reported he had so many prisoners that he did not know what to do with them. Col Gardner took some men from the mortar platoon and sent them forward to bring back the prisoners. (There was only 1 guard allotted to approximately every 30 ~~XX~~ prisoners) By 1500 the company had reached the crossroad. The 2 ^{taken 150 prisoners in their move} officers and 49 men of the company had ~~reached the crossroad. The 2~~ forward. At the crossroad they took 2 German 88's, one of which was loaded and also picked up another US 57mm. In the German CP located in a house near the CR three officers were taken prisoner and some mortars captured.

While Co C was moving north toward the crossroad, Co E was having a terrific fire fight in the woods to the east. "The new CO Lt Willinghoff was really getting a work out", said Col Gardner. He was doing a good job but was having heavy casualties. Col Gardner ordered the company to cease its fire, sideslip east out of the woods, and then move into the southern edge of the small patch of woods () a little to the north. Most of the German troops had meanwhile made their way into the northern corner of the patch. About dark Col Gardner ordered Co A to clear out the Germans in the woods and move on to the road between Hompre and the CR occupied by Co G. At E Co advanced the Jerries moved out of the woods and went into the houses along the road west of Hompre. The company followed and cleaned out the houses. From the houses more than 40 prisoners were taken and in the general area a loaded 88, a halftrack, a truck load of ammunition and a German staff car were taken. An enemy Mark IV tank was knocked out by bazooka fire. Then E Co dug in along the road. Since it had been impractical to employ the ~~xx~~ tanks in the woods with the two leading Cos they had moved forward with Co F the reserve element. ~~on the road~~ Co F outposted the tanks at a position about 300 yards southeast of the CR occupied by Co G.

As the Bn advanced on the 26th, C-47s were seen flying overhead taking supplies into Bastogne. One of the planes crashed in front of Co E and a Capt, 1st Lt, and some crew members came into the company.

During the night of December 26 1st Lt Walter Carr led a small patrol, consisting of a T/Sgt, Pfc and Pvt, into Bastogne. About 1500 yards south of Bastogne the patrol contacted the outpost line of the 326 AB, 26th Engrs and was directed to the CR of the 101st A/B in the town. Lt Carr obtained an overlay with the disposition of the friendly troops about Bastogne and then returned with his patrol to his Bn. The same night Col Gardner met with the commander of the 10th Arm Inf Bn, Major Cohen, on his left and made plans for the 27th. The 10th had seven tanks with it and had considerable more infantry troops than the 2nd Bn, 31st, so it was decided to have the 10th

move forward on the morning of the 27th while the 2nd Bn, 318th, followed slightly to the right and rean to clean up any enemy that were missed.

At 0800 on the morning of the 27th Col Gardner contacted Lt Cass at the position Co E had occupied the previous night and received from him the overlay he had got in Bastogne. After taking the information from the overlay that he wanted, the Col sent the overlay to Gen Dager, the CCB commander. The Bn then moved north, following the 10th Arm Inf Bn as planned. Co E moved east and took Hompre then occupied the high ground north of the town. Co G pushed north and moved up alongside E on the left. F Co followed with the tanks. As the Bn advanced they were fired on by 88's located near L'Ardoisiere in the woods to the east. The tanks answered the fire with WP ammunition and called for air on the woods. (Col Gardner said that our air got 12 88's in the woods). The Bn moved north without much resistance until Co G hit some enemy in the woods to the east of La Lune which the 10th had missed. By nightfall of the 27th the Bn had moved to positions southeast of Assenois. Co F outposted the tanks; the Bn CP was in Assenois. The night of the 27th Col Gardner received a G-2 report that there were estimated to be 4000 enemy troops in the woods to the east supported by from 25 to 40 tanks. He said there wasn't much he could have done about it had the enemy offered any threat because of his very much depleted Bn but he warned his Bn to be especially alert and sweat the night-out. (The effective strength of the Bn at this time was about 187 men).

On the morning of the 28th the attack jumped off at 0800 with the 10th Arm Inf Bn still leading. Cos G and E attacked abreast to the northeast through the woods with G on the left and E on the right. Col Gardner gave the two Cos a hours to reach the outpost line of the Engineers, which was the objective. Co F proceeded without the tanks because the tanks had frozen up during the night and were not able to push off until 0830; F Co followed in the wake of the other two companies. At exactly 1000 the Company

commander of G Co reported to Col Gardner that the mission was complete, the company had reached the outpost line around Bastogne. Cos E and G then moved on and occupied the buildings along the main road in the southeast corner of Bastogne. F Co, which during the past two day had been in reserve because of its low combat strength was put on outpost for the Bn. Besides the companies 25 men there was the Bn AT Plat of 3- 57mm guns and 2 HMG's. During the afternoon the men of companies E and G got warmed up and into some dry clothing. In the evening the Bn enjoyed a belated Christmas dinner with turkey and all the trimmings. Since the rations had been drawn for 350 men, there was ample food for all. Col Gardner said the Bn fed troops from miscellaneous units in Bastogne with the excess food. The night of the 28th Co E relieved Co F at the outpost, thus affording the latter an opportunity

to get warm and dry and to partake of the Christmas dinner.

(Supplemental Notes:) The 2nd Bn 318th was attached to CCB, Col Gardner said there was little communication or orders which traveled from the rear forward. He said the accomplishment of the mission was left largely to the Bn Commander. Therefore communication was mostly laterally. He said further that he received excellent cooperation from the 10th Arm Inf Bn, commanded by Major Cohen, that was on his left and that the tanks from the 8th Bn in direct support of his Bn worked well with his troops and were very helpful. He said the use he made of the tanks depended on the terrain and the enemy resistance. Sometimes the tanks moved abreast of the infantry. At other time they followed until feasible routes for their movements could be reconnoitered. They were used to fire into the woods but were generally not put in the woods. ~~They~~ He said their fire kept the enemy resistance down in good many instances and contributed markedly to the moral of the infantrymen. Each night the tanks were outposted by infantrymen. Col Gardner said that he was always worried about his right flank because CCA did not advance abreast CCB. He said, however, he knew that CCA was advancing because firing could be heard continually to the right rear of the Bn. During the operation there was little artillery fire but there was plenty of fire from automatic weapons and Nebelweurfer. The 22nd FA Bn was in direct support of the 2nd Bn 318th and did a good job said Lt. Col Gardner, he said that the reinforcements received had generally not been qualified as infantrymen. One example he gave was that of one group of 79 replacements received only four were infantrymen and ~~xxx~~ of the four 3 were returned to duty men.

Following officers were in the Bn: Lt Col Glenn H Gardner- Co Bn, Major John P Woods- Ex O Bn, Capt Prentiss Foreman- Bn S-3, 2nd Lt. John Shuford- Bn S-2, Lt Mathew Dwyer- Bn S-1, Capt Rex O Kirkman- CO of Co E, 1st Lt Edmund A Willinghoff- CO of Co E (Main CO), 1st Lt John R Singleton- CO of Co F, Capt Ernest M Stallings- CO of Co G, Capt Tandy E Jackson- CO of Co H.

When the 2nd Bn 318th reached Bastogne G Co had 2 officers, F Co 1 officer and E Co 1 officer.

During the 1st day's action at Chaumont, 4 aid men carried back over 100 casualties--most of which were injured by small arms fire.