

UNIT: Division Artillery, 80th Inf Div.

PERIOD: 8 Nov 1944.

ACTION: LORRAINE Campaign (Crossing of the SEILLE River).

SOURCE: Lt Col Jay W. Fredrickson, S-3 Div Arty, 80th Inf Div.

PLACE AND DATE OF INTERVIEW: MEMMINGEN, GERMANY, Div Arty CP,
Lt. Sam Tobin 26 June 1945.

MAP: 1/50,000 NOMENY - Sheet No 34-14, GSGS No 4471.

Note: Division artillery records were used to obtain the statistical information.

The artillery supporting the crossing of the SEILLE River consisted of 19 artillery battalions, 1 AA Bn, 1 TD Bn and 3 Cn companies. The following organizations participated in the support of the 80th Division attack on 8 Nov 1944:

80th Div Arty

313th FA Bn (105mm Howitzer)
314th FA Bn (" ")
905th FA Bn (" ")
315th FA Bn (155mm ")

404th FA Group

512th FA Bn (105mm Howitzer)
974th FA Bn (155mm ")
775th FA Bn (4.5" Guns)
731st FA Bn (8" Howitzer)

6th Armd Div Arty

128th AFA Bn (105mm Howitzer SP)
212th " " (" " ")
231st " " (" " ")

183d FA Group

276th AFA Bn (105mm Howitzer SP)
696th " " (" " ")
752d " " (155mm Howitzer)

XII Corps Arty

741st FA Bn (8" Howitzer)
267th FA Bn (240mm Howitzer)

411th AA Gun Bn (90mm Guns)

808th TD Bn (3" Guns Towed)

Cannon Companies

317th Inf Regt
318th Inf Regt
319th Inf Regt

The tactical missions of the Artillery Bns for the attack were as follows:

Div Arty, 80th Inf Div

313th FA Bn (105mm Howitzer)

1. Direct support 317th Inf.
2. Ln with 6th Armd Div Arty and elements of the 702d Tk Bn supporting the 317th Inf.

314th FA Bn (105mm Howitzer)

1. Direct support 318th Inf.
2. Ln with elements of the 702d Tk Bn supporting the 318th Inf.

905th FA Bn (105mm Howitzer)

1. Direct support 319th Inf.
2. Reinforce the fires of 314th FA Bn.
3. General support when 319th Inf passes to Division Reserve.

315th FA Bn (155mm Howitzer)

1. Reinforce fires of 314th FA Bn.
2. Direct support 318th Inf during displacement of 314th FA Bn.
3. Be prepared to answer missions from the 905th FA Bn.

404th FA Group

1. General support 80th Inf Div.

512th FA Bn (105mm Howitzer)

1. Reinforce the fires of the 313th FA Bn.
2. Direct support of 317th Inf during displacement of 313th FA Bn.

974th FA Bn (155mm Howitzer)

1. Reinforce the fires of 313th FA Bn.

775th FA Bn (4.5" Guns)

1. General Support
2. Reinforce the fires of the 314th FA Bn.

731st FA Bn (8" Howitzer)

1. General support.

Div Arty, 6th Armd Div

1. Reinforce the fires of 313th FA Bn until 6th Armd Div crosses the SEILLE River.
2. Ln with Div Arty, 80th Div, 313th and 512th FA Bns.

183d FA Group

1. Reinforce fires of 6th Armd Div.

Prior to the attack on the SEILLE River, the artillery Bns had been in the area for several weeks. Ample time was had for planning

the support missions and setting up the necessary communications and survey. All units were tied in to the main Fire Direction Center at VILLE AU VAL (818288) which was operated by the 80th Div Arty. The weather was good and there was plenty of time for reconnaissance. Vertical photos of the enemy area were obtained from the Air Corps and oblique photos were taken by the artillery observation planes. Photos taken by the artillery were issued to infantry and used in their plan of crossing. The main artillery positions were located approximately 3,000 yards west of the SEILLE River throughout the Division Zone.

Accurate information as to enemy troop locations, and gun positions was obtained from reconnaissance by the infantry, photo interpretation, observation, and PW statements. Concentrations were planned and numbered for all known enemy installations. Registrations for the fires were completed by D -3, 5 Nov 1944. From that time on registrations were limited to one gun per Bn for security reasons.

The heavy rains just prior to the attack did not effect the efficiency of the artillery because all preparations were completed by that time. Sufficient ammunition was on hand, survey was complete, wire communications were in, and registration was complete for all targets. The changing weather did not constitute a problem for a four hour periodic metro message was received throughout the period.

The flooding rivers swamped an air field belonging to one of the artillery groups in the valley near the MOSELLE. Several planes were submerged until only the wings showed above the water.

Beginning at H -60 minutes to H -30 minutes enemy artillery and mortar positions were given counter-battery fire under XII Corps control. From H -30 minutes to H -15 minutes the artillery fired in direct support at enemy positions on the east bank of the SEILLE River. After H -15 minute fire missions were on call from supported units.

During the preparation and the remainder of the day time fire was used whenever possible because of the soggy, wet, and muddy terrain. Contact fuze had little effect in the mud. In spite of adverse weather radio reception was good and wire communications were uninterrupted. Air OPs were maintained all day. Visibility

was fair to good. One plane was in the air in each regimental sector at all times. Supporting FA Bns rotated their planes to provide constant observation. Several enemy batteries were picked up by the planes during the day and taken under fire.

There was no enemy counter-battery fire, and although German planes straffed along the river during the day, battery positions were not molested.

A maximum of 9 Bns of artillery could be massed on any one target within the Division Zone. In addition, Division artillery, 80th Inf Div, coordinated the fire of the 808th TD Bn (3" Guns) which fired 313 rounds. Also, two interdiction targets were given to the 411th AA Gun Bn (90mm Guns). This unit fired 40 rounds.

80th Div statistics for the day's activities were the following:

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>CONC FIRED</u>	<u>C/B</u>	<u>MORTARS</u>	<u>INF</u>	<u>BARRAGE</u>	<u>HARASSING</u>	<u>REG</u>	<u>INTER</u>	<u>MG</u>	<u>PREP</u>
313th	45	1	2	7	3		3			29
314th	71	3		14		6		4	6	28
905th	136	10		10		4	6			104
315th	41	5		2				5	2	27

Total rounds fired:

313th FA Bn - 1361 rounds
 314th FA Bn - 1570 "
 905th FA Bn - 1549 "
 315th FA Bn - 657 "
 411th AA Gun Bn - 40 rounds
 808th TD Bn - 313 rounds

Losses - men and material:

313th FA Bn - 2 officers - 3 Ems
 314th FA Bn - 3 "
 315th FA Bn - 1 " - 2 Ems - 1 (609) radio.