

Dieulouard Bridge Crossing

The area is a rolling plain dominated by frequent outcroppings of mountains with scattered small clumps of woods and a few tight, deep forests of from one mile or more in depth. One of the officers compared it to West Virginia. The land manifests itself in steep descents, in cuts and draws, each seemingly turned to face Mousson Hill across the river, as it drops off abruptly to the flood plain of the Moselle.

In the vicinity of Dieulouard the Moselle meanders northward through a flat flood plain. To the east looms a series of dominating heights--the Mousson, Ste. Geneviève (Hill 382), and the Falaise hills--reached a mean elevation of 370 to 380 feet, from where the enemy could look down onto the flood plain of the river, and up the roads running to the west to observe the approaching American columns.

The terrain in the region is generally unfavorable for tank warfare, the steep heights and numerous wooded areas channel tank movement along well defined avenues; the roads frequently bounded on one side by deeply ditched streams, on the other side by rises too steep for tanks.

The Moselle in this area has a varying depth from six to eight feet and flows at approximately six to seven miles per hour. The bottom of the river, for the most part, is muddy, making fording perilous for vehicles. The average width is about one hundred and fifty feet.

Along the western bank of the river there is a canal, forty to fifty feet in width, six feet in depth. Between the river and the canal is an eight foot dike, similar in appearance to the hedgerows of Normandy. This dike rises abruptly from the canal and river bottom.

Opposite the town of Dieulouard the river and the Obrion Canal form two arms which wind around a flat island a little less than 2,000 yards across at its widest point. There was practically no cover and but was one hard surfaced road crossed the island.

The heights on the east bank of the Moselle were crowned by remains from prior historical campaigns. On Mousson Hill lay the vestiges of a medieval church-fortress, near Ste. Geneviève Celtic earthworks could be found on the crest, and at Mt. Toulon the ruins of a Roman fort were still evident.

The 305th Engr Cmbt Bn, was responsible for crossing division foot elements, the 1117th Engr Group for the vehicular traffic. Co B, 305th, was to expedite construction of a foot-bridge over the canal, guide the assault waves of the 2d Bn, 317th Infantry, across the ford north of the island, then follow up by constructing a foot-bridge over the Moselle. Co A, 305th (minus one platoon armed with rope, picks, explosives, pins, in short, prepared to hunt mines and booby traps and acted as infantry with the 2n Bn), was to guide the 3d Bn over the canal and both arms of the river. Co C (less one platoon which was attached to Co B), 305th, was not present, having been attached to the 319th Infantry, which was operating in the vicinity of Toul.

After the assault, Co B, 305th, was to construct foot-bridges over the canal and river. Co A, 167th Engr Bn was to bridge the canal and river with infantry support or portable trestle bridges, to carry Class 9 loads--sufficient for half-tracks and heavy trucks. These were to be pre-fabricated in bivouac, carried to the sites in trucks, and put in as soon as the area was clear of small arms fire. Co B, 167th Engr Bn (commanded by Capt Paul Cote), was to construct a pneumatic float bridge (pontoon) across the canal. It was planned to throw the heavy pontoons across late on the 12th, after the area was out of range of enemy artillery or German artillery observers had been pushed off the surrounding hills.

The Crossing

The battalions of the 317th moved out at dusk on the 11th to the regimental assembly area in the Bois de Cuite. After dark they moved up to their jump-off points. Road markers had been placed and guides positioned along the route of march to the river.

There was a drizzling rain reducing visibility as the attack jumped off at 0400. The engineers were able to put foot-bridges over the canal prior to H-hour. The 3d Bn traversed the island and was at the Obrion Canal. On the left, at a crossing site about 500 yards north of the island, the 2d Bn was hit by mortar fire and briefly disorganized while

crossing the barge canal, but at H-hour the first wave was at the Moselle. The fifty machine guns emplaced on the Bois de Cutie and manned by engineers put a curtain of fire over the heads of the assault waves.

At 0430 (12 September), the artillery battalions laid down their 15 minute preparation, firing two rounds per gun per minute. The use of time fire, which had been originally planned, was found to be impractical, the distance being beyond the maximum 25-second fuze range; impact fire was employed using delay fuze settings. The target was the north-south road in the area south of Loisy, opposite Dieulouard, where the road parallels the river.

At the same time 30 rounds of white phosphorous (WP) were placed on the town of Bezaumont, setting the town on fire, in order to act as a guide for the troops. As the infantry advanced across the river and up to the road the barrage was to be raised. After the initial barrage was lifted then 19 concentrations were fired at various, pre-selected points. For each concentration, each artillery battalion fired three full battalion volleys. Concentrations were fired by the 314th, 315th, 775th, and 176th Bns. The 313th and 512th fired close-in support missions called up from the infantry.

At 0755, the 2d Bn, 317th, had seized its objective, Ste. Geneviève hill. The 3d Bn forded the Oubron Canal and by 0530 had possession of its first objective, la Côte Pelée, south of Bezaumont.

The order of crossing of the 1st Bn, 317th Infantry: Co B, Co A, and Co C. Co D, the battalion weapons company, was distributed with one platoon each attached to Cos A and B and its mortar platoon attached to Co C. The first wave crossed the canal using the foot-bridge until it collapsed as a result of enemy artillery fire. While some troops continued to cross on the wreckage of the bridge, seven assault boats were pressed into service ferrying the rest of Co B and all of Co A over. By then the foot-bridge was repaired and the remainder of the battalion crossed. By 0830, the 1st Bn was on its objective, Hill 382. Cos A and B took up positions on the forward slope of the hill while Co C covered the right flank echeloned to the right rear.

It was considered essential to cross the armor and heavy anti-tank weapons as soon as possible after the initial assault by the infantry. On the morning of the 12th, Co A, 702d, was in a forward assembly area in the Bois de Brule. Original planning called for each tank company to cross with its combat team; however, the tanks had to wait for the 1117th Cmbt Engr Gp to complete three heavy pontoon bridges.

By 0900 the foot-bridge over the river was completed. Capt James J. Mullen, Co E CO, 317th Infantry, relates the activities of the 2d Battalion's crossing of the Moselle:

On the 8th of September the battalion was in an assembly area in the Forêt de Puvénelle, making a foot march on the 10th to Fey en Haye.

In the plan which evolved it was decided to cross the canal on a foot-bridge and use seventeen assault boats furnished to the battalion to cross the river.

Once across Co G would attack through Loisy, up the hill to the east and take Ste. Geneviève, Co E would advance on the right of G and would occupy the crest of the hill, with Co F prepared to be committed on either flank.

The battalion moved from the Fey en Haye to the rear of the Bois de Cuite into its assembly area at 2300 on the 11th. The routes from the assembly area down to the boats had been marked by the engineers. These markers were supplemented by men who were to lead the column to the exact spot where they would enter the boats.

Co G got off at 0315, started across the foot-bridge at the canal at 0345 [0445]. Co E left at 0315 to cross behind Co G; the lead platoon reaching the bridge on schedule and crossing in the proper order. Co G made it to the boats about 0400. Now, the rest of the column of Co E became separated from the leading platoon. Meanwhile, Co F came in ahead and crossed instead of the rest of Co E. This placed Co G, one platoon of E, and all of Co F across the river. The rest of E then came across in the boats by 0545. Enemy mortar fire had picked up the forward slope of the hill across the river, at 0300. Co F lost men as a result of mortar fire during their crossing of the canal. The river was now being shelled with mortar and scattered artillery fire. The first boats in the water were met by fire from about eight machine guns along the road Loisy-south and from the high ground to the east.

The weather was not too bad, a rainy mist or drizzle, and visibility was good, for this country. We tore up Hill 382, and by 0650, fired a flare, signifying that we were on our objective. While we re-organized our companies, we received sporadic artillery and mortar fire. By 0800 we had Co G and one platoon of Co E on the hill. The Co E platoon was positioned to protect the left flank of the battalion.

The 2d Bn (minus Co G), 318th (LtCol John C. Golden), crossed the river between 1000 and 1100, and moved to a position on the reverse slope of Hill 382, 1,000 yards northwest of Bezaumont. The 3d Bn, 318th (Maj Karl S. Nuessner), crossed the river and by 1500 had taken up positions 500 yards west of Bezaumont.

Roadblocks were set up: one 500 yards south of le Pont de Mons, one north of Loisy held by Co F (Capt Frank A. Williams), 2d Bn, another outside of Bezaumont on the road to Landremont held by Co E (Capt Charles C. Matlick), and a fourth at Ville-au-Val. The 2d Bn was left with a reserve of only 30 men, along with the CP group and the mortar platoon of the heavy weapons company.

All during the day the engineers had worked furiously to throw heavy bridging across the river and the canals. Bridging operations proceeded according to plan until 0930. The speed and ease of the infantry advance during the morning led Gen McBride to issue orders at 0935 for the heavy pontoon companies to bridge the canal and both river arms with heavy pontoons as soon as possible.

Co A, 557th Heavy Pontoon Bn (Maj Brooks), 1117th Engr Group, commenced work on a canal bridge at 1000 and completed it at 1300. It was necessary to bulldoze through the dike and steep banks. At the same time work was proceeding with an infantry support bridge. Also the canal level had dropped two feet overnight. The soft banks forced the idea of using a trestle bridges to be abandon. No work could be done on bridging the near arm until the canal was crossed.

On completion of the canal bridge Co B, 557th, along with Co B, 248th (commanded by Capt E.H. Cockrell), crossed the canal, forded the near arm and commenced work, on bridging the far arm at 1600. Co A, 557th, worked on the heavy pontoon across the near arm, commencing at 1300, completing it at 1800. The bridge over the far arm was completed in four hours time. An attempt was made to ford the far arm with an armored dozer during the afternoon, but failed. By 2000 hours the canal and both arms had been bridged with heavy pontoons and tank forces commenced crossing.

By 1500 that afternoon the 167th had completed its infantry support bridge over the near arm, putting TDs and ammo trucks across. Because of the losses in assault boats there were insufficient boats to complete the bridge to the far bank; however, it was found possible to ford the wheeled vehicles the remaining short distance.

About 1500, the 313th FA Bn, commanded by LtCol Fred Ellery, crossed the river into the bridgehead, the other artillery battalions not crossing until after 15 September. During fighting in the bridgehead the 313th FA Bn knocked out three tanks near its position on the southern slope of Hill 382.

From about 1500, the Germans began to lay artillery barrages, increasing in intensity during the afternoon, on the positions at Ste. Geneviève, le Pont de Mons, and Loisy. By 2230 the barrage reached a point of terrific intensity, the reverse slope of Geneviève Hill receiving terrific mortar preparation.

The 318th Regimental CP moved over the river at approximately 2000.

Deployment of the 610th TD Bn

When Co C, 610th TD Bn, reached the east bank the 2d Plat (Lt ? Atkinson) occupied the hill south of Ville-au-Val in order to cover the ground to the east in the direction of Landremont, the 3d Plat (Lt ? Merrill) ascended Hill 382 (Merrill was eventually wounded and replaced by Lt Juers), and 1st Plat (Lt ? Hearn) proceeded to a patch of woods southeast of Loisy.

Co A, 610th, was directed to support road blocks at Loisy (2d Plat; Lt ? Kennedy) and toward Autreville (1st Plat; Lt ? Enich). The 3d Plat, Lt Staib, was in reserve west of Bezaumont, on the reverse slope of Hill 382, near the 318th's CP.

The 702d Crosses into the Bridgehead

At 2230, the tanks of the 702d Tk Bn commenced crossing. By the time the tanks had crossed the river it was dark, so guides from the infantry battalions met each tank platoon at the bridge and lead them to their positions. The 1st and 2d Plats, Co A, were put on outpost without infantry support.

Co A, 702d Tk Bn (Capt Francis McDermott) was parceled out to the battalions of the 317th: 1st Plat (Lt Atkins) was attached to the 1st Bn, 2d Plat to the 2d Bn; and 3d Plat to the 3d Bn.

The 1st Plat met its guide at the road and was directed up the slopes of the hill south of Ville-au-Val (to the right or south of Hill 382). On these slopes, in an open space at the bottom of a patch of woods, the 1st Plat spending a comparatively uneventful night in their tanks. The platoon's tanks were paired up about 75 yards apart on the slope of the hill, one pair above and the other below. The next morning the platoon moved to join the rest of the company along the river just north of Le Pont de Mons.

The 3d Plat (1st Sgt Murray), with Capt McDermott, met its guide and proceeded up Hill 382 until it reached the dirt road between Bezaumont and Ste. Geneviève. Outside of Bezaumont this road followed a deep cut bordered by hedgerows well over the height of a man. West of the road the ground sloped gently down to the valley floor. Just off the road are some ruins in a patch of vegetation. The 3d Plat tanks were positioned west of the Ste. Geneviève-Bezaumont road and south of the ruins, behind an embankment with their guns pointing in the direction of Bezaumont. The tanks were close together to maintain contact in the dark. Between the road and the river was an infantry mortar platoon.

Meanwhile the 2d Plat under Lt John Croxton took up a position in a patch of woods southwest of Ste. Geneviève, off to the west of the Bezaumont-Ste. Geneviève road north of Sgt Murray's position. This platoon occupied ground which sloped away in the general direction of Loisy. In several small clusters of trees the tanks took up position so as to cover the town of Bezaumont and northward in the direction of Loisy. In fact, Lt Croxton stated that he was unaware of the road to Ste. Geneviève, and for that reason he had not placed his tanks more advantageously.

Co B, 702d Tk Bn, on arriving on the east bank proceeded northward on the road to Loisy. Placed in reserve just beyond the curve to Bezaumont, the company halted in an orchard near the river and set up a perimeter defense for the night.

As darkness settled, German artillery began a sustained fire on the bridgehead, while their mortars methodically worked over the reverse slopes.

German Counter-Attack, 13 September

At 2300 on the 12th, small arms fire was received on the American positions on Hill 382. During the night sporadic fighting took place within the defensive positions. The battalion motor pool of the 1st Bn, 317th, situated on the reverse slope of Hill 382 (northwest of Landremont) about 500 yards behind the MLR, was attacked by a force of Germans--the exact size of this force was not known. The attack was repulsed by the action of jeep drivers. No vehicles were lost.

At 0130, Capt Williams, Co F, 318th, manning the road block north of Loisy, reported enemy infiltration into his positions and on the right flank. At 0200 Capt Williams reported that he had spotted eight tanks coming toward his position with an estimated battalion of infantry, some mounted on the tanks. This road block held until 0330, knocking out one tank with a bazooka and disabling a second. Williams notified headquarters at 0330 that his position was untenable. He was ordered to withdraw to Loisy and conduct a delaying action.

About 0300, 2d Bn, 317th, received artillery and mortar fire followed by a force of German infantry that moved through the 2d Bn, and enveloped the left platoon of Co B, 1st Bn. At about the same time the 1st Bn, on the high ground northwest of Landremont, repelled an German counter-attack from the southeast.

The main German assaults, striking through Loisy and Ste. Geneviève, was estimated to include two battalions of the *29th Pz Gren Regt* reinforced with 15 tanks--one column striking from the north/northeast through Ste. Geneviève and moving southwesterly, others coming down the ridge, south toward Bezaumont. The 2d Bn, 317th Infantry, along with two companies of the 1st, were forced from their positions, falling back on the area of the 318th Infantry.

The German thrust which Capt Williams had encountered worked through Loisy and proceeded down the road paralleling the river to the south, cutting behind the 1st and 3d Platoons, Co C, 610th TD Bn. The German tanks

proceeded past Lt Hearn's (1st Plat) position and then swung back to the east, going up hill. The infantry taking off without notifying the TD crews. The CP of the 2d Bn, 318th, was reportedly over-run at 0345.

Apparently the enemy was unaware that the TDs occupied the slope, the Germans moving to out-flank the American infantry on top of Hill 382 from the west. Two German tanks swung around Loisy and advanced up the hill to the east, three more moved from the Loisy-Ste. Geneviève road to the south in a small scale pincer movement. Some of the crews of the 1st Plat became separated from their guns, but succeeded in getting to Loisy.

At 0430, elements of the 317th Infantry passed through the positions of the 2d Bn, 318th. Some of the retiring troops stated that they had been attacked by tanks (Mark IVs) and infantry and that the enemy had overrun their positions. At about that time a report was received that tanks were coming down the road from Loisy. The battalion had no defense left except the CP group. It was decided to withdraw to the area of Co L (Capt Woodard Wilkenson), 3d Bn, 318th Infantry, in the vicinity of le Pont de Mons. On the way to le Pont de Mons the battalion was stopped by the 318th Regimental Exec Officer (LtCol Roy J. Herte), who had decided to build up a firing line along the road. Capt Charles F. Gaking (S-3, 2d Bn, 318th Infantry) approached the XO to discuss plans. Just then a German Mark IV came around a bend in the road from Loisy. It opened up with canister causing the troops, who were in an open field with no cover, to break and run, some of them taking cover in a ditch. Armed only with carbines and pistols, there was little they could do against the tank. The panzer came on, approaching within five yards of the ditch--a few men surrendering. A second enemy tank, accompanied by infantry, was fifty yards behind the first. At 0500, the rest of the Americans in the vicinity gave up, Capt Gaking among them.

Lt Hearn, platoon leader, 1st Plat, Co C, 610th TD Bn, reported that at 0400, enemy small arms fire was received from the hill above the TDs. The firing continued for about 45 minutes, most of it passing overhead. Tanks were heard in the vicinity of Loisy, appearing at a distance of 400 yards from 1st Plat's position. Hearn believed that the tanks came down from Ste. Geneviève, some taking the approach to Bezaumont, others heading toward the river and Loisy. The flash of tank-gun fire could be seen coming from Loisy. The German tanks would advance about 20 yards, stop and fire, or fire while on the move, thus making it extremely hard to draw a bead on them. Right behind the tanks came foot soldiers providing small arms covering fire.

Co C reported that the German attack consisted of a platoon of five tanks accompanied by a company of infantry. The attackers came on in small groups. The infantry used mortars to pin-down the American infantry, then overran their positions with tanks. Apparently the Germans intended for their infantry to take out the TDs while their tanks took care of the infantry, using the morning fog as cover. The German infantry moved forward lighting their way with flares--blinding the American gun crews and infantry. As soon as anti-tank gun positions were sighted the infantry would move around it in order to assault them from the flanks and thus clear a path for the tanks. The tanks in turn would spray any suspicious looking clump of bushes with weapons' fire. After neutralizing each AT position the attack would advance another hundred yards.

At approximately 0430, Capt Stitt, Co A, 610th TD Bn, received a call from Lt Kennedy (2 Plat, north of Loisy) informing him that the Germans had infiltrated through the lines and that their infantry had taken off leaving the TDs without support. German tanks were moving in their direction and the enemy infantry had run the TD crews off their guns. Lt Kennedy's platoon had been forced to retreat, leaving their guns. (These guns were recovered the following day, 14 September.)

Surrounded by German infantry and tanks, receiving heavy artillery fire, at 0530, Lt Staib's platoon (3d Plat, Co A, 610th), in reserve, set up a perimeter defense. Staib's men leveled their machine guns on the Germans and opened fire.

Two bazooka teams of the TD battalion's CP group went up the hill (one under the first sergeant and the other under the Executive Officer). Bringing the Germans under fire the tanks swung away to the left to avoid the bazooka fire, but in so doing ran into the field of fire of the TD guns of the 1st Section, 3d Plat, Co C. Five enemy tanks were destroyed - bazooka fire accounting for one of the tanks. When the crews jumped out of their tanks they were dispatched with rifle fire.

The 702d Tk Bn reported three major thrusts coming from the Foret de Facq directed at the bridgehead, each consisting of a platoon of tanks or assault guns supported by a company of infantry. One thrust was directed through

Ste. Geneviève, across the ridge to the town of Bezaumont, and westward to the bridge area. Another was aimed through Ste. Geneviève, downhill to Loisy, then southward to the bridge site. The third came through Atton heading south. The bulk of the American infantry were virtually unsupported as they occupied the forward slopes of Geneviève Hill (Hill 382), were cut off, and separated from their tanks and TDs positioned on the reverse slope.

At 0330, Sgt Murray, 3d Plat, Co A, sent [privates?] Polin, Szymansky, and Reidenbach forward to an embankment to observe and provide forward security. For an hour the German artillery passed over the tanks. It seemed that a mortar position further to the rear was attracting their fire. Between 0500 and 0600, red, green, and white flares were seen. German tanks approached the embankment, the crews talking loud enough to be heard. The men on the embankment flattened. One of the Americans headed back to give Capt McDermott the alarm.

As the panic spread among the American units, the 702d reported that the infantry outposts came "barrel-assing" over the hill toward the river. Men on security from the 3d Plat, Co A, pulled back. One of them, Wishnefsky, gave the alarm to the company CO (Capt McDermott), jumped on the commander's tank as it start to pull out, but was carried away by some barbed wire. Leaping on another tank, he made his get-away. The tanks high-balled down the hill to the river.

At the time [rank and first name?] Dunsavage was on turret guard of one of the tanks. He heard an enemy tank approaching. All the men agreed later that the tank's engine could not be heard (approaching with its motor off). They could hear the steel tracks and its breaks when the vehicle stopped to fire. But it was still too dark to see much. The German infantry suddenly discovered the presence of the American tanks and started to shout. Dunsavage grabbed the .30-caliber machine gun and swung it in the direction of the voices. The German tank let go and put a couple of rounds into Sgt[?] Polin's tank, which was guarding the rear of the platoon in the direction of Ste. Geneviève. Dunsavage then hopped in the gunner's seat of his tank, flipped the power traverse trying to bring the main gun around to the left. The tank was facing in the direction of Bezaumont, however, the turret started sparking due to a short circuit. He then tried the manual traverse and hollered to the driver to take off. The engine coughed, but would not turn-over. Meanwhile, Dunsavage thought that his tank had been hit because of the fire and smoke which were actually coming from Polin's burning tank. Finally, the driver got the tank going down the road to Bezaumont. The dust caused by Dunsavage's tank helped screen the other tanks and enabled them to make a safe get-away. The tanks "high-balled" down the road through Bezaumont, then down the hill to where a defensive line was being organized near the river.

Lt Croxton's platoon (2d, Co A), located a few hundred yards northwest of Murray's tanks failed to hear the German voices, but Croxton stated that they did hear vehicles, but thought them to be friendly. During the early morning infantrymen from Co G (1Lt George F. McDonnell), 317th, which had been forced to withdraw out of Ste. Geneviève to the south, falling back on Cos E and F, and then passing through Croxton's platoon as they moved toward the bridge site. The infantrymen looked badly beaten up and claimed that they were trying to form a line. However, they showed little inclination to remain with the tanks. Later Lt Croxton heard sounds which seemed like tanks closing up to his position. The noise came from the area where he had placed two of his tanks. Not daring to use the radio, he called out several times, but received no answer. Croxton's platoon would rejoin the rest of the company later that morning when the division launched its counter-attack.

At 0515, the 1st Bn, 317th, CP, 300 yards from the MLR was attacked by an enemy patrol of 12 men. Inside of ten minutes the patrol was neutralized, all its members dead or captured.

At 0600, a German assault gun moved on the Co C, 317th, position, crushing a 57-mm gun of the AT Co, but was itself knocked out by a 3-inch TD gun of the 610th TD Bn. Survivors of the assault gun crew were killed trying to escape from the wrecked vehicle.

Capt Mullen, 2d Bn, 317th Infantry:

On the morning of the 13th, the enemy started an artillery and mortar preparation from the vicinity of the Forêt de Facq; and jumped off an attack, by 0430, with infantry and an estimated 35 tanks. As a result, Co G, which was holding Ste. Geneviève, was shot up, and driven out of the town by 0530. Then the tanks came down along the road to the south, cutting into the battalion CP, dispersed the troops in Bezaumont and driving them from the town. Some of the troops withdrew to the river, while part of Co G withdrew to Hill 382. At the same time, the enemy tanks roared through Loisy and overran the CP of the 318th, inflicting about 120 casualties.

During the pre-dawn darkness of the 13th, the enemy was able to infiltrate through the battalion sector, up Hill 382, and engage Co E. However, after daylight, they were driven off. Co G was able to retaken Ste. Geneviève by noon.

The 3d Plat, Co A, 610th TD Bn, in position 2,000 yards west of Bezaumont and southwest of Co C's 1st and 3d Plats, became surrounded by enemy tanks and infantry. It was daylight now and the river mist was beginning to clear.

Maj Hayes, the 317th's S-2, and Col Cameron went to Dieulouard at about 0600. The engineers, deployed along the river (three companies of the 248th and 176th Engr Cmbt Bns armed with rifles and machine guns), informed Hayes that everything had been wiped out across the river and that they were prepared to defend to the last man. Artillery fire was coming from the direction of Loisy, impacting near the bridge site. American artillery was firing on the rear slope of the hill near Ste. Geneviève. Germans seemed to be everywhere. Enemy tanks had struck at the CP of the 2d Bn and the 318th HQ was reported as wiped out. No one knew the exact location of the 2d Bn, 317th. While in the Bezaumont, Hayes and Cameron came under direct fire from the Germans, and so decided to get out of the town, but ended up running into their own artillery fire. Hayes reported:

We started up the hill toward Ste. Geneviève and ran into one of our tanks roaring down the hillside out of control. It was on fire and was one of the most shocking sights we had seen. It almost ran into us as we went up the draw. We pulled up a little onto the hillside and watched it pass, the dead crew hanging out of the turret. It exploded far below. In Bezaumont we found what was reported to be all that was left of a tank platoon, one American tank. Nevertheless we tried to find the 2d Bn, and in so doing contacted elements of the 1st Bn. Finally we found Capt J.E. Mullen, CO of Co E of our battalion (Capt Mullen was later evacuated from the bridgehead). We found also that was reported that we were fighting elements of the 8th Regt, 15th Pz [Gren] Div.

At daybreak, defensive lines were in the process of being formed at the base of Hill 382. A colonel of the 317th (possibly the Executive Officer) threatened to shoot any infantrymen who continued to fall back. The colonel and Capt McDermott (Co A, 702d) attempted to organize a group of infantry to support tank elements preparing to counter-attack, but their efforts seemed of little avail.

As a result of the confusion caused by the attack, American units became mixed--engineers, TDs, tanks and troops of both regiments were thrown together. Communications were disrupted. At this point, officers, regardless of unit or branch, jumped into the fray in an effort to meet the emergency, taking command of groups of men, marshalling them into lines to meet the enemy attack. Majors commanded platoons and captains were leading battalions.

The headquarters staff of the 318th Infantry Regt was captured when the CP was overrun. The Germans herded all the prisoners captured along the road from Loisy together and forced them to follow the tanks in the direction of the attack. Some tanks from Co B, 702d Tank Bn, opened up and knocked out one of the German Mark IVs. An infantryman with a bazooka knocked out the lead tank. There had been a German assault gun (probably from the 1553d *Sturmgeschütz Bn* (Assault Gun)) between the tanks, when they were hit, it turned and headed north.

In the confusion Gaking, along with five others, made their escape. Reporting to LtCol Golden, Gaking was placed in charge of the 2d Bn, 318th.

LtCol Golden's story (CO, 2d Bn, 318th Inf):

At 0400 on 13 September, we had only 30 men left at Loisy, and these could hold no longer. The order was given for the 2d Bn CP group, to withdraw to the 3d Bn area and form a line to defend against the on-coming counter-attack. Upon arrival at the 3d Bn area at 0430, I found that German infantry had already infiltrated that position and had dispersed Co L at 0400 to 0430. We then moved back to the position where I thought the Regimental CP to be located.

We went about 300 yards up to the Regimental CP, where I found most of the CP personnel dead. The ditches were full of wounded. I found there Major Howard (Medical), Major Edward Le Blanc (S-4), 1st Lt Roger F. Bone (assistant S-3), and Capt Conaway (CO of Headquarters Company). The enemy had charged down the road to the CP with machine guns, self-propelled guns, and tanks.

Col Harry D. McHugh, regimental commander of the 318th, had been wounded;¹ LtCol Roy J. Herte (Regimental Executive Officer) along with Capt Lewis R. Picketing (S-1) were missing, Capt Howard C. Johnson (S-3) and Mr Dodd, our Warrant Officer, had been wounded, and Lt Harry E. Sadler had been killed. I seemed to be the senior officer in the regiment, so I took command.

¹ At daylight a badly wounded Col McHugh, the CO of the 318th Infantry, was discovered in the area of Co B and assisted to an aid station.

I deployed all of the men I could get together along the ditch beside the road. I stopped two of the tanks from Co A, 702d Tk Bn, as they came down the road, and directed that one fire at an enemy tank approaching from Bezaumont. The other was to fire along the road at a tank coming south from Loisy.

A column coming down the road from Bezaumont threatening to drive a wedge between this group and the 313th FA Bn, approximately 500 yards east of le Pont de Mons, cutting off our men along the road to the west and pinning them against the river.

I moved with Major Le Blanc to the vicinity of le Pont de Mons, where I found Major Neussner (3d Bn CO) with Co I (1Lt Claude R. Fountaine) and the reserve platoon of Co K. I immediately placed them in position. The road was blocked to the south and north and the men were deployed in a defensive position along the road and slope of the hill to the east. We stopped all personnel of our units from crossing the foot-bridge to the west or swimming the river, and placed them in position to make a stand in and around the civil building of le Pont de Mons. The roads were jammed with traffic crossing over into the bridgehead from the west, and with others attempting to withdrawing down the valleys in the face of enemy tanks.

At 0500, tanks and tank destroyers were jammed into le Pont de Mons. I ran all the vehicles down into a field along the river. I directed the tanks into position down the ridge to a point behind a wall near le Pont de Mons by 0600. A barrage from the tanks of Co B, 702d Tank Bn broke up the enemy attack.

The presence of Co B came as a complete surprise to the Germans, breaking the back of their attack. German prisoners taken were from the *8th and 9th Kompanies, 29th Regt; 5th Co, 1121st Grenadier Regt; and the 1553d Sturmgeschütz Bn*. Morale of the German troops was generally poor, some without combat experience, having only arrived from training centers.

The German counter-attack had carried to within 200 yards of 702d Tk Bn, Co B's position. American infantry passed through Co B and said that the tanks were almost completely surrounded and that Co B had better pullout. Several infantrymen took off their clothes and swam the river, leaving their equipment behind. About the time Co B began to receive small arms fire. The company's eleven tanks of Co B, in set positions, apparently having gone unnoticed by the Germans (having crossed the river and gone into position after dark). At the same time that Co B's tanks fired several "Jerry" self-propelled assault guns opened fire. The tanks answered and succeeded in knocking out two of the assault guns. The first assault gun was destroyed by a single well aimed shot from Lt Miller's tank. One of Co B's tanks was damaged, its gun-barrel split in two by a direct hit from an enemy SP gun.

Maj Nordstrom, Co B, 702d Tk Bn:

Co B had crossed the Moselle very late at night and set up a semi-circle defense near the bridge with the tanks placed 20 to 30 feet apart. The company was to move into the line the next morning.

The Germans came very close to wiping out the bridgehead, until they ran into Co B. They (the Germans) did not know that Co B was there (near the crossing site). Co B shot them to pieces. The company really saved the division on this day. The American troops were all over the place--mostly "running like hell." Company B was also aided by some anti-aircraft guns near the bridge.

By 0835 the German counter-attack against the 80th ID was halted with heavy casualties inflicted on the Germans (including over 200 prisoners taken). Later, captured German artillery observers attributed the failure of their counter-attack to the direct fire from the American tanks, coupled with the fact that a lucky hit damaged the antenna on their vehicle, putting them out of contact with their artillery.

American Counter-stroke

LtCol Golden's story continued:

I ordered a tank company forward, with our infantry behind them driving the enemy back up Hill 382, [and] to the south edge of Loisy. At 0900 the order was given by me for an attack to retake Bezaumont. This was made by a mixture of troops: one company of the 2d Bn, 318th Infantry with the reserve platoon of Co E, 318th (Capt Gaking), one reserve platoon of Co K, 318th, one machine gun platoon of Co M (1Lt Billie L. Kessler), 318th, Co I, 318th under Major Neussner, one company (possibly E) of the 317th under Capt Mullen.

The 2d Bn and the tanks of Co A, 702d Tank Bn, were ordered to attack. Five American tanks were lost, seven for the Germans. The 2d Bn, 318th took Bezaumont and established contact with a company of the 1st Bn, 317th, which held near Landremont during the German attack.

The story of the 702d's tankers differs sharply. Forming the company at the bottom of Hill 382, Capt McDermott (Co A) decided to bring the company up the hill to the Bezaumont-Ste. Geneviève road, wheel to the right across the road, and effect a turning movement on the town of Bezaumont.

The 3d and 1st Platoons, Co A, started up the hill in a staggered line formation, slowly negotiating the incline. The tanks proceeded up the hill to the road and stopped--their infantry support had not followed. The tanks continued on alone. On the way up the hill contact was made with the 2d Plat, Co A. As the tanks advanced up the hill fire was received from the left and front.

Sgt Murray's platoon (3d Plat, Co A) swung to the right of some ruins when the Bezaumont-Ste. Geneviève road was reached. At the ruins Sgt Murray bumped into two Germans, killing both. The rest of the company proceeded up hill, swung sharply to the right, and moved in a staggered line southward along the gradual reverse slope of Hill 382 east of the Bezaumont-Ste. Geneviève road. The ground east of the road, where the line turned, was open with a gradual slope. In addition, there were eight foot hedgerows bordering both sides of the road. To some extent the hedgerows masked the tanks from observation and fire from the direction of Bezaumont.

Lt Croxton (2d Plat, Co A) took his platoon across the road and commenced to swing sharply to the right in the direction of Bezaumont. Murray's platoon was to take the right of the road but instead went to the left, staggered behind Croxton's platoon. While German fire seemed to come from a high wall of a graveyard to the left of the town, another enemy tank appeared in position beside a barn in Bezaumont. Croxton's tank was the nearest the road, hugging the hedgerow. The tanks of Talin, Deem, and Grattup were to Croxton's left, in that order. A shell passed over his head and hit Reidenbach's tank further up the hill, the muzzle blast of the German tank kicking up some dust and giving away its position in the town. The whole company began pouring stuff into the town; Lt Croxton reported seeing smoke from the stationary tank after his crew had fired off an AP and two HE rounds in its direction.

In the meantime Starner and Williams, on the right of the road near the ruins, fired fourteen rounds apiece into Bezaumont. At the same time that Reidenbach received his hit, Capt McDermott and Talin were also hit. Reidenbach's crew bailed out. Lt Croxton backed his tank up in an attempt to get the men on the back of his Sherman, but was waved aside. The dismounted crewmen apparently saw the source of the enemy fire and did not wish becoming exposed to its fire. Croxton then tried to maneuver so as to protect the dismounted crewmen of the disabled tanks. As a result of the attack Co A lost three tanks, seven German tanks were spotted with six reportedly destroyed.

Meanwhile, Capt Gaking, 2d Bn, 318th, had picked up 18 men from various companies and put them under Capt Frank Williams, ordering them to regain Bezaumont. In the process of doing so they took 87 Germans prisoner. Later, the remainder of Co F, Headquarters Company, and part of Co H (Capt John P. Woods) took over Bezaumont.

Lt Ford, Co B, 702d Tank Bn, reported that at 0900, he sent the 2d Plat, commanded by Lt Nelson, to support an infantry attack to seize Bezaumont and that it had been difficult to get the infantry to follow the tanks. Three times the tanks, by sections on line, moved up toward Bezaumont. On the third attempt the infantry finally followed.

At 1100 Lt Miller, Co B, received orders to attack Loisy along with an infantry company and to take and hold the high ground in the vicinity. The attack on Loisy was successful with about fifty POWs taken. The tanks proceeded through the town blasting all likely enemy locations. The infantry followed, clearing out the houses.

The TD gun crews reported a case of deadly friendly fire. Apparently the American tankers were unaware that the 3d Plat, Co A, 610th, and some elements of the 1st and 3d Plats of Co C, 610th, had held their positions throughout the German counter-attack. As the Shermans advanced they threw several rounds in the direction of the TD crews--killing one man from Co A and two from Co C, and wounding another 14.

The positions of G Co, 2d Bn, 317th Inf, on the high ground on Ste. Geneviève Ridge were restored at 1450; with the aid of tank support. At 1510, 3d Bn, 318th Infantry (Cos K and L) had retaken Loisy and reestablished the road block north of the town; Co E maintained its roadblock at Ville-au-Val and Co G maintained its east of Bezaumont against light counter-attacks.

At about 0900, the first tanks of the 4th Armd Div crossed the bridges over the Moselle, passed through Loisy, but were temporarily held up at Ste. Geneviève by enemy shelling late in the afternoon, then preceded to the east.

The 317th's regimental CP came across the river at 1500.

At 1500 and 1700, P-47s carried out air-strikes in the bridgehead with at least two shot-down by German ground fire.

Cpl Loughlin, 318th Cannon Co:

P-47's came over and started to rocket, bomb and strafe the dominate hills on the Moselle's east bank. One P-47 never pulled out of a dive and crashed into the wooded hills. Another crashed out of view.

The P-47's were awesome. They had eight .50-caliber machine guns, bombs and rockets. Each [strafing] run was devastating to the Germans whether entrenched, in the open, or in vehicles. I have never seen such intepidness by fighter pilots as displayed in the Dieulouard-Ste. Geneviene area on that September day. The German flak was concentrated, augmented by small arms fire. The P-47's dove right into the teeth of it at very low levels seemingly clearing sections of Ste. Geneviene plateau by ten or twenty feet.

On the evening of the 13th, at 1800, orders were received from regiment (318th) to move out from Bezaumont. The 317th Infantry had succeeded in regaining the high ground north of Bezaumont. Capt Gaking (2d Bn, 318th) was ordered to return and relieve the 3d Bn at the road block south of le Pont de Mons. The CP was setup just south of the village. Capt Gaking was ordered to take Co F, some 70 men, and relieve the road block outside of Ville-au-Val. Co E was pulled back and one platoon of Co F took over the road block south of le Pont de Mons.

That evening the TDs (1st Plat) remained in position firing HE rounds into the Loisy, blasting buildings where Germans were seen. They also fired into the woods between Loisy and Ste. Geneviève. Two Germans emerged from the town and surrendered.

14 September

On the morning of the 14th, the 317th Infantry were caught by German counter-attacks at Landremont and Ste. Geneviève.

About 1000, Gen McBride ordered the 317th Infantry to begin moving to the east in an attempt to seize the chain of hills barring the eastern exit from the bridgehead.

The 1st Bn began the attack with orders to seize the village of Serrières and the commanding hills east of the village, Mount Toulon and Mount St. Jean. At the same time the 2d, to the left of the 1st, recovered the village of Ste. Geneviève and heavily out-posted the town.

On the right the 3d Bn extended the bridgehead to the southeast, capturing the high ground in the vicinity of the Falaise. The battalion, supported by a terrific artillery "time fire" concentration, met and drove back two companies of the 1119th Regt (553d VGD) just arriving from Nancy. The Germans in turn counter-attacked from the east and southeast at 1155, forcing Co K (Capt Elmer E. Flickinger) from the high ground in that vicinity.

The 1st Bn, 317th, got off toward Serrières at 1300 with Co C in the lead, followed by Co A, and Co B bringing up the rear. When Co C came up to Landremont they ran into enemy artillery fire, the battalion commander, deciding to move cross-country, directed the unit to take a path around Landremont. As the battalion advanced in column, the lead company came under German artillery fire. Disorganized by the enemy fire and shelled by a platoon of American tanks, which had been rushed forward and, in the confusion, fired on their own infantry, the battalion fell back and reformed east of Landremont. It then circled north of a small group of German forces barring their eastward advance and succeeded in putting one company on Mt. Toulon. However, late in the evening, Gen McBride withdraw this company from its exposed position and the 1st Bn dug in between Mount Toulon and Hill 340.

The Germans also struck at Loisy again. About noon, LtCol Golden (318th) threw in a platoon of division engineers and Co B (minus one platoon), 702d Tk Bn, to help the 3d Bn, 318th. Cannon Co (1Lt James R. Crawford), 318th, with six 105-mm howitzers firing at point blank range, shot up the attacking German infantry.

These small-scale German sorties failed to make any decisive headway.

The 2d Bn, 318th, remained at Bezaumont, the Regimental CP reconstituted at le Pont de Mons. The 2d Bn consolidated and relieved Co K (1Lt Herman C. Park) on the road block. The regiment's assault guns were also

placed in reserve at le Pont de Mons. Co G, 318th, which had remained as flank security south of the bridgehead, on the west bank of the Moselle, arrived at Marbach at 1300.

With Loisy retaken, the 3d Bn, 318th pushed out to the north in an advance calculated to widen the base of the bridgehead. The main objective was Mousson Hill, which overlooked the 80th ID's bridges and which had never been successfully masked, though constantly subjected to concentrations of smoke by the American guns. Driving north, the troops of 3d Bn riding on tanks, seized Atton. At Atton the column split. Light tanks carried the first wave of infantry straight up the hill while medium tanks of the 702d Tank Bn maneuvered to the east and up the more gradual slope there, coming under fierce enfilading fire from the Forêt de Facq as they moved forward. By 1900 the old castle atop Mousson Hill was taken and the battalion dug in on the heights. At 2130 the Germans launched a counter-attack, but were repulsed.

Col Milton C. Shattuck, former Assistant Chief of Staff G-3 of XII Corps, assumed command of the 318th Regiment from LtCol Golden.

The village of Ste. Geneviève, a tactical focal point during the fighting in the bridgehead, was lost to the enemy by a confusion in orders when, on the night of 14/15 September, the troops holding the town were withdrawn to the south on word that a battalion was coming to relieve them. Next morning the Germans marched in without a fight.

During the night 14/15 September the 3d PzGren Div received considerable reinforcement as Gen Hecker prepared a coordinated counter-attack for the next day. On the south flank of the 80th ID a battalion of the 1119th Regt, 553d VGD was in place, with four or five companies of the 92d Luftwaffe Field Regt and a replacement battalion to its right. In the Forêt de Facq, on the north flank of the bridgehead, were gathered elements of the 3d PzGren Div and the 49th SS PzGren Brigade, 17th SS-PzGren Div, a total of four or five battalions. These troops were supported by thirty or forty tanks and assault guns. However, there was no large German force in position to seal off the eastern most section of the 80th ID's penetration.

The 15th

Just before dawn, the Germans, covered by an intense concentration of artillery and mortar fire, attacked and drove the 3d Bn, 317th back about 1,000 yards on the Falaise. On the rear slope the battalion dug in and held while four artillery battalions laid time fire on the enemy infantry, lining the hill with corpses. In the afternoon the 3d Bn counter-attacked and drove the surviving infantry off the Falaise. On the right flank of the German southern attack force, the enemy made good progress toward the north, since there was only a few American outposts to bar the way. Here the Germans formed a tenuous connection with other units moving down from the Forêt de Facq.

Gen Hecker's northern force struck the American positions about 0500--a battalion driving west from the Forêt de Facq recapturing Atton. Near Atton three American 57-mm antitank guns were brought to bear on the German column, knocking out the leading armored vehicles. However, the American gunners only had armor-piercing ammunition, ineffective against the German infantry--as a result the guns and the position were lost. The German advance continued south along the river road toward Loisy, where sharp fighting continued all through the morning. Loisy, however, was still in American hands when a battalion of the 319th Infantry crossed into the bridgehead and moved up to reinforce the left flank of the 318th.

German tanks and infantry around Ste. Geneviève forced the 2d Bn, 317th, to give ground on Ste. Geneviève Ridge [hill] about 0900, in the face of heavy enemy fire supported by two Mk VI tanks. In an effort to stem the advance American assault guns and tanks of Co B (minus a platoon on Mousson) were committed--the tanks suffering heavy casualties.

With Ste. Geneviève and Atton again in their hands the Germans succeeded in isolating American forces on Mousson Hill--the 3d Bn, 318th. This was followed by a number of local and generally uncoordinated attempts by the Germans to retake Mousson Hill, to drive through Loisy and seize the American bridges.

An assault, aided by heavy and accurate mortar fire, drove the Americans off Landremont Hill at the southeastern end of the Ste. Geneviève Ridge. The fight for Hill 382, in the center of Ste. Geneviève Ridge, was extremely bitter, the Germans massing their heaviest counter-attacks against this position. Here the slopes were gradual but gave the

Sept 15
attacker no cover except for some small garden patches--American fire sweeping this glaciis stopped the German assault waves. {Co E, 317th held the center of the ridge for several days and repulsed a number of counter-attacks. For its actions Co E received the Distinguished Unit Citation.}

Meanwhile, the 1st Bn, 317th, and its attached tanks and tank destroyers, had received orders at 0430 from Gen McBride to relinquish the advanced positions just north of Hill 340 and east of Serrières, and turn back to the west, move to Landremont and render support to the 2d Bn. While this force was en route, new orders reached the 1st Bn re-directing it to aid the 2d Bn, now at Hill 382. The 1st Bn arrived about 0925, just in time to strike a German counter-attack forming at the base of the hill; caught in a cross fire the enemy broke and by noon the 1st Bn was redeployed atop the center of Ste. Geneviève Ridge. {Pfc Charles F. Simcox, Co A, 317th, was given the DSC for gallantry in this engagement.}

The tank destroyers attached to the 1st Bn (1st Platoon, Co C, 610th TD Bn) reached the heights about 1300 and were ready to unlimber when they observed some fifteen German tanks rolling out of the Forêt de Facq toward Hill 382. An anti-tank gun on the hill opened fire prematurely, but the tank destroyers were able to "sneak" over the ridge line and knock out at least nine of the attacking panzers. {Pfc Lester J. Lynch, Co C, 610th TD Bn, received the DSC for rescuing two wounded tank crewmen while under heavy fire.}

The Germans continued the battle at Loisy during the afternoon. Here the German assault was made with a very strong force. The American defenders--1st Bn, 319th, engineers of the 1st Plat, Co B, 305th Engr Cmbt Bn, supported by 105-mm howitzers of the Cannon Co and HQ Co, 3d Bn, 318th--held stubbornly, despite many casualties.

The Germans formed one last counter-attack in the middle of the afternoon to take Ste. Geneviève Ridge, but before it could be launched it was broken up by fire from the 155-mm gun battalions west of the river and the prompt intervention of aircraft from the 373d and 406th Fighter-Bomber Groups of the XIX TAC.

The 3d Bn, 319th, was transported to the river crossing site at Dieulouard, detrucked, and then moved to the east side of the river on the evening of 15 September. The battalion occupied positions to the south of Landremont, acting as division reserve.

Although the main German attack was directed against the bridgehead defenses on 15 September, the Americans isolated on the top of Mousson Hill also were subjected to considerable pressure. Small parties of German infantry and tanks circled the hill, probing to find a way up the slopes. A few American tank destroyers were lost because their prime movers could not tow them up the steep grade. However, fire from the machine guns and mortars on the hill, reinforced by a protective barrage laid down by the 314th FA Bn in position at le Pont de Mons, held the enemy in check. Artillery spotter aircraft kept the isolated battalion supplied with air-drops of blood plasma and ammunition. American casualties on the 15th included BrigGen Edmund W. Searby, division artillery commander of the 80th ID, killed during the fighting for Mousson Hill; LtCol J.E. Shaw, Executive Officer, taking over until the 21st.

During the 15th the Germans employed approximately 40 tanks in their attacks--22 of which were reportedly destroyed.

Conclusion

Sept 16
The Germans returned to the assault on the morning of 16 September, this time throwing in the bulk of the 115th Pz Gren Regt, 15th Pz Gren Div, which had arrived in the Forêt de Facq the previous afternoon and evening. But Gen McBride also had received reinforcements. On the afternoon of 15 September the 4th Armored Division had received orders to return the 1st Bn, 318th, then with CCA in the Arracourt area, to reinforce the 80th ID. The CCA commander immediately dispatched the infantry battalion using the supply trucks of the combat command along with Co C, 35th Tank Bn, as an escort. Just before dark the column was brought to a halt by tanks and anti-tank guns of the 106th Panzer Brigade blocking the highway near Nomeny. Maj C.L. Kimsey, commanding the task force, led the medium tanks forward to clear the road, and through the night the column of tanks and infantry fought its way toward the west. Early on the morning of 16 September radio contact was made with the 80th ID headquarters; the 1st Bn, 318th, was given orders to seize Ste. Geneviève.

The direction from which the attack struck (from the east) surprised the Germans such that the 1st Bn, 318th, was not only successful in re-taking Ste. Geneviève (along with 150 prisoners), but they continued on toward Loisy, dealt with a

German counter-attack forming there, and tied in with the left flank of the 317th. This battalion was then ordered to follow up the enemy, clear the Foret de Facq, and seize the town of Morville. This task was accomplished by 1700.

Gen McBride ordered the 1st Bn, 319th and the 1st Bn, 318th, to relieve the battalion on Mousson Hill and disperse the enemy on the north flank of the bridgehead. While the 1st Bn, 318th was being resupplied, the infantry from the 319th drove toward the hill, taking Atton en route, and at dark reached the isolated battalion. {As a result of this attack, and the earlier defense of Loisy, 1st Bn, 319th, was given the Distinguished Unit Citation.}

The German troops in this sector began retiring to the northeast--the Americans pursuing as far as Les Menils, north of the Foret de Facq. The 1st Bn, 318th moved into the Foret de Facq and started to flush out the rear guard remnants of Gen Hecker's command. While the German penetration in the north was being erased, the 317th Infantry, holding the center and right, sustained three counter-attacks but refused to be driven from its positions. Late in the day heavy German artillery shelling of the Falaise was conducted in preparation for a twilight counter-attack from the valley to the east, but the enemy infantry broke and fled when eleven P-51s came over, bombing and strafing. The 80th ID artillery finished the job with time fire falling on the survivors.

The hard fought battles in the bridgehead left their mark on both the combatants. German POWs told of mounting casualties and demoralization. The battalions of the 80th ID showed evidence of decreasing combat effectiveness and lessening morale. The 317th Infantry, which had assumed the main burden in the fighting since 5 September, was seriously reduced in strength. Casualties among officers and experienced NCOs had been high throughout the division. Few reinforcements were reaching the firing line, and, as losses mounted, the available infantry, already over extended, was disposed along a rapidly thinning front. The broken terrain necessitated an isolation of companies and platoons, another factor lowering morale, and an increased sense of fighting alone, furthered by the Germans successful shelling of American communications. Throughout the bridgehead the troops were fatigued by constant fighting and sleepless nights.

80th ID Components:

Infantry Regts: 317th, 318th, 319th
FA Bns (Division Arty): 313th, 314th, 905th (105-mm how); 315th (155-mm how)
80th Cavalry Rcn Troop (Mecz)
305th Engr Combat Bn

reinforcing artillery battalions:
512th Bn (105-mm howitzers)
974th Bn (155-mm howitzers)
775th Bn (4.5-inch)
176th Bn (4.5-inch)

Attached:
702d Tank Bn
610th Tank Destroyer Bn

317th (CO? Col Cameron)

XO LtCol Fisher
S-2 Maj J.D. Hayes
S-3 Capt S.A. Ford

1st Bn, 317th Infantry (LtCol Sterling S. Burnett)

Co A (1Lt Emmett H. McCrary) +1 plat Co D
Co B (rank? Robert W. Mudge) +1 plat Co D
Co C (Capt Grant E. Hoover) +Co D mortar plat

2n Bn

Co E (Capt James J. Mullen)

610th Tank Destroyer Bn (towed)

Co A, Capt ? Stitt [attached to the 318th Infantry]
1st Plat, Lt ? Enich
2d Plat, Lt ? Kennedy
3d Plat, Lt Staib
Co B, [attached to the 319th]
Co C, [attached to the 317th]
1st Plat, Lt ? Hearn
2d Plat, Lt ? Atkinson
3d Plat, Lt ? Merrill

702d Tank Bn (LtCol Ralph Talbot)

Co A, Capt Francis McDermott [attached to the 317th]
1st Plat, Lt Atkins
2d Plat, Lt John Croxton
3d Plat, 1st Sgt Murray
Co B, Lt Ford [attached to 318th]
Co C [attached to 319th]
Co D [attached to 80th Cavalry Rcn Troop]

167th Engr Cmbt Bn

Co B, 167th Engr Bn (Capt Paul Cote)

248th Engr Cmbt Bn

Co B, 248th (Capt E.H. Cockrell)

305th Engr Cmbt Bn (Major Charles G. Cocker? or LtCol A.E. McCollam?)

1117th Engr Cmbt Group (Col R.G. Lovett)

557th Heavy Pontoon Bn
Co A (Maj Brooks)

313th FA Bn (LtCol Fred Ellery)

318th Infantry; Sept 5-7 and 11-15

Regt (Col Harry D. McHugh, wounded 13 Sep; replaced by LtCol John C. Golden)

XO LtCol Roy J. Herte (missing in action 13 Sep)
S-1 Capt Louis R. Picketing (missing 13 Sep?)
S-2 1st Lt Martin J. Wegman
S-3 Capt Howard C. Johnson (seriously wounded and evacuated 13 Sep; replaced by 1st Lt Roger F. Bane)

1st Bn (Major Albert S. Tosi)

XO Major W.? Henderson
S-2 2nd Lt Edward E. Hueske
S-3 Capt Glenn H. Gardner
Co A Capt Billy P. Lamb
Co B Capt Zeddie M. Perry Jr.
Co C 1st Lt Cornelius E. Gallagher
Co D 1st Lt Raymond G. Roy

2d Bn (LtCol John C. Golden; Replaced Col McHugh, 13 Sep; replaced by Major Connaughton)

XO Major George W. Connaughton
S-2 1st Lt Prentiss W. Forman
S-3 Capt Charles F. Gaking (captured 13 Sep)
Co E Capt Robert (or Charles?) C. Matlick
Co F Capt Frank A. Williams
Co G Capt John B. Kelly
Co H Capt John P. Woods

3d Bn (Major Karl S. Nuessner)

XO Capt Burke Johnson
S-2 1st Lt John W. BierForman
S-3 Capt Marion C. Chitwood
Co I 1st Lt Claude R. Fountaine
Co K 1st Lt Herman C. Park
Co L Capt Woodard Wilkenson (wounded 11-14?; replaced by 1st Lt Leonard F. Stephan)
Co M 1st Lt Billie L. Kessler

HQ Co Capt George E. Caraway
Scout[?] Co Capt Gerald D. Pitman
AT Co Capt Samuel I. Reseigne
Cannon Co 1st Lt James R. Crawford (Exec - 1st Lt Coody)

319th Infantry (Col O.L. Davidson)