

After a short rapid advance from the Commercy - St Mihiel Bridgehead, the 80th Division on the night of Sept 4-5 began its river crossing operation of the Moselle R. Upon the repulse of its initial two limited bridgeheads, one made during daylight Sept 5-6, a period of reconnaissance, preparation, clearing the W side of the Moselle R of hostile forces and softening up the hostile positions in general began to prepare the way for a deliberate thoroughly co-ordinated attack across the river.

Plans for the river crossing, pending the receipt of the final Corps order, were completed without delay.

The advance of the XX corps on the left flank and the 35th Division on the right flank, reduced the extended front of the Division and caused some relaxation of hostile pressure that was noticeable by Sept 10.

The following discussion under the requested headings should provide a brief analysis of the operation.

1. Time received mission.

a. FO #6 of XII Corps was received at 1950, 4 Sept 44.

2. a. Mission (As quoted from FO #6 of XII Corps).

(1) "Protect bridgehead Commercy - St Mihiel. Secure bridgehead across Moselle and Meurthe Rs vic Nancy, employing not to exceed one (1) CT, clearing Foret De Haye and seizing Nancy, and one (1) CT preceding 4th Armd Div".

(2) Plan of Division to carry out mission.

(a) After a short movement forward in compliance with Corps order, CT 317 was to establish the main bridgehead across the Moselle R. This would permit CCA of the 4th Armd Div to cross, serving south and attack Nancy for the NE. CT 319 was to attack east from vic of Toul and seize Nancy in conjunction with CCA. CT 318 (less one (1) Bn) was to make a limited bridgehead in the center of the Division sector.

3. Orders to Regts (As taken from Div Field Message #5 issued at 2200, 4 Sept 44).

- a. "CT 317 crosses Moselle R under cover of darkness 4 and 5 Sept, secure bridgehead (Overlay)". (Division directive later postponed time of crossing and ordered reconnaissance and continued preparation).
- b. "CT 319 continue adv on Toul, secure bridgehead thereat with one (1) Inf Bn, be prepared to advance on and capture Nancy in conjunction with CCA (4th Armd Div) on order this Hq. (Overlay)".
- c. "CT 318 (Div Res) (less 1st Bn atchd to CCA) secure high ground W Moselle R (Overlay)".

4. Time orders executed in Regts.

- a. One (1) plat of Co G, CT 317, crossed river in its sector 5 Sept, 1700. (Bridgehead later pushed back across R by counterattack).
- b. By 0425 6 Sept, CT 317 employing a night attack, had elms of L and K Cos across river. (This bridgehead was thrown back across the river prior to 1200 on that day).
- c. CT 319 occupied Toul and the high ground E of Toul, but were unable to capture Ft de Gondreville and Ft de Villey le Sec in its push to the E until 10 Sept.
- d. No other units succeeded in crossing the Moselle R prior to 10 Sept at 2400.

5. Reports of approach.

- a. CT 317 advanced in the left sector with CT 319 on the right. CT 318 in Div Res advanced in the center.

6. Concentration of the Division for attack across the river was not completed prior to the night of 4-5 Sept.

7. Location RCT CPs, Div Arty CP and Div CP.

- a. Div CP 637318
- b. Div Arty CP 682332
- c. 317 CP 672337.

d. 318 CP 645237

e. 319 CP 649140

8. Pertinent orders during action.

a. Changes in RCT missions.

- (1) After the repulse of the second bridgehead 6 Sept, further river crossing operations were postponed on Corps order. Reconnaissance and further preparation for the river crossing were ordered and executed.
- (2) CT 318 (Less 1st Bn with CCA) with additional help from 1st Bn CT 319 was given the assignment on 5 Sept to clear the area vic of Foret Dite Entre-Deux Voles and the woods in vic of Ft de L'Arant Garde to the river. This was completed on 10 Sept at 1015.
- (3) CT 319 was directed to seize Ft de Gondreville and Ft de Villey le Sec and patrol to the east, toward the Foret de Haye. This was completed 10 Sept.

b. RCT boundaries and objectives.

- (1) Objectives of CT 317 on the Division's left was to seize a bridgehead in the vic of Belleville, to permit the passage of CCA.
- (2) CT 318, enter of Division sector, was to make a crossing in the vic of Pont-A-Mousson and seize a limited bridgehead.
- (3) CT 319, on the right, was to advance E of Toul and seize Nancy in conjunction with the attack of CCA.

c. Upon Corps order on 5 Sept, further attempts to cross the river were postponed. Clearing of hostile forces from the W side of the river, reconnaissance, and further preparation for river crossing were carried out.

9. Efforts were made daily from the beginning of the operation 4 Sept to 10 Sept to secure air support. Weather and mechanical difficulties prevented this except for 8 and 10 Sept.

a. The following air missions were flown in support of the 80th Division.

(1) Air Missions 8 Sept 44.

(2) Air Missions 10 Sept 44.

10. Bomb Line. No bombs were to be dropped W of the Moselle R with the exception of the area occupied by the 3d Bn, CT 319, where the bomb line was placed 1000 yds E of their positions.