

AFTER ACTION REPORT - NOVEMBER 1944

31ST INFANTRY REGIMENT

S-3 SECTION

L-300

On 1 November the 2d and 3d Battalions were on line with the 1st in reserve. The 2d occupied the left half of the Regimental Sector and was dug in vicinity MANON-COURT and HILL 208. The 3d Battalion occupied positions Southeast of NOMENY on fairly flat ground vicinity FARM LABORD. The 1st Battalion was in Regimental Reserve in LIXIERES. The Regimental Command Post was in SERRIERES. Regimental Trains were in LOISY. During the period 1-5 November the units remained in these positions. The forward units continued to patrol aggressively at night. The reserve units received instruction in woods fighting, village fighting and bazooka firing. Men of the Regiment were given a chance to get better acquainted with Company B, 702d Tank Battalion. They studied tank-infantry coordination and learned much about how the tanks could support them. Capt ROY, S-3 1st Battalion and Capt NORDSTROM of the 702d Tank Battalion were responsible for the special success that that program had with 1st Battalion. On the night of 4-5 November the 1st and 3d Battalions changed positions, the 3d coming back to LIXIERES in reserve and the 1st going back to the line Southeast of NOMENY. At 051600A November the Regimental Attack Order (Field Order Number 12) was distributed. On the night of 6-7 November the Regimental Command Post moved to MANONCOURT.

The plan of attack for the jump-off at 080530A Nov was for the 1st Battalion to cross in rubber assault boats and to land on the South tip of the MONTIGNY PENINSULA Southeast of NOMENY. The 2d Battalion was to cross the river in a similar fashion in the vicinity of ROUVES. The 3d Battalion was to follow the 2d at 1,000 yards.

At 080500A November the artillery preparation (including Cannon Company) began. At 0530 the assault Battalions jumped-off and by 0635 both were across the river, but running into heavy mortar fire. By 0900, Capt SCHMAR had been seriously wounded but his E Company had captured ROUVES. The 2d Battalion continued to Northeast.

With heavy mortar fire still falling along the SEINE RIVER, the 3d Battalion crossed behind the 2d and was across by 0915. These crossings were made during one of the worst floods in the history of the area and the precision with which they went off is all the more remarkable as a result. Not until one counterattack had been beaten off during darkness did the 1st Battalion take its objective for the day - the high ground SW of MAILLY - the 2d Battalion reached the NOMENY - RAUCOURT ROAD in its zone of action, its objective for the day by 1600. Company I had been given the mission of sweeping in from the North accompanied by Company B of the 702d Tank Battalion. It was impossible to get the tanks across the river until late in the afternoon when they joined Company I in the dark. As a result it was not until the next day that NOMENY was taken.

Capt FONTAINE was wounded in this attack. The 3d Battalion cleaned NOMENY out by 1000 giving engineers a chance to build the bridge at NOMENY the 6th Armored Division used to cross the river.

On the morning of the 9th the two assault Battalions jumped-off at 0630 and kept on rolling. The 1st Battalion captured in short order MAILLY, PHLIN, and THEZEY ST MARTIN. Prisoners kept coming in in droves. By the end of the 2d day over 400 were in the Regimental enclosure. This was more than the number taken by the other two Regiments combined during the period. The 2d Battalion kept pace with the 1st Battalion. The advance of the 1st was accelerated by use of the tanks of Company B, 702d Tank Battalion. The Command Post moved to NOMENY. On the 10th the 1st and 2d Battalions, with the 3d in reserve moved on to take DEIME RIDGE the Division Objective. During the day the towns of MONCHEUX and JUVILLE were captured. 150 prisoners were taken. The Regimental Command Post moved to PHLIN.

On 11 November the attack moved off at 0800. The 2d Battalion ran into heavy small arms fire in TRAGNY, but had taken the town by 1000. The 1st Battalion ran into small arms fire in BOIS DE JUVILLE, but had cleared it by 1015. Company B, 702d Tank Battalion, attached to 1st Battalion then went on

to take THIMONVILLE at 10⁰⁰. 2d Battalion completed the occupation by 1300
reorganized as one company and then moved on to FLOCOURT which was taken without a
delay. The 2d Battalion became Regimental Reserve and the 3d Battalion passed
through it to capture ST EPVRE. The 1st Battalion captured MORVILLE SUR NIED
before nightfall and was the first unit of the division to reach the bank of the
NIED FRANCAISE RIVER. The 3d secured a railroad bridge over the River. 300

On 12 November the 1st Battalion moved across the NIED RIVER at BAUDRECOURT,
then south to capture the town of LUCY and the woods to the Southwest in the 319th
Infantry Sector. This action relieved pressure on that Regiment and permitted
them to cross the River unopposed at that point.

At 0900 next morning 1st Bn left LUCY. With it was Company B, 702d Tank
Battalion, 1 platoon Antitank Company, 3d Platoon Company B, 808 Tank Destroyer
Battalion. The Battalion captured the towns of CHENOIS and HOLACOURT without
difficulty and secured bridges Southwest and North of the latter town.

The 3d Battalion crossed the River in rear of the 1st and turned North to
assist elements of 6th Armored in taking VATIMONT where they remained for the
night. Company K moved out to outpost the main road between HOLACOURT and VATI-
MONT. The 2d Battalion, in reserve, moved from ST EPVRE to BAUDRECOURT.

During the morning of the 13th Gen McBRIDE came to the Command Post at ST
EPVRE to award Bronze Stars to Col McVICKAR and Capt GAKING, CO and Ex O of the
Regiment in recognition of the splendid work the Regiment had done in the attack.

On the 14th in compliance with Division Field Order Number 15, 1st Battalion
moved from HOLACOURT to BROULANGE. Company C was given the mission of outposting
the high ground 500 yards East of THONVILLE. Company A outposted high ground North
of BRULANGE. Battalion Command Post and Company B moved into BRULANGE. 2d Battal-
ion went into Division Reserve with Company F at ARRONCOURT and balance of Battalion
at HOLACOURT. 3d Battalion moved at 1400 to positions on the high ground immediately
Northwest of THICOURT. Division received an order to defend the Corps left flank,

with three Regiments abreast. The 318th was in the center.

The Regimental Command Post moved to HELLACOURT. All Battalions were in position by 2400, 14 November.

The Regiment continued to improve its position on the 15th in compliance with Division Field Order Number 15. Plans were made with 319th Infantry and Task Force F of the 6th Armored Division to attack to the North to take defensive ground vicinity CHEMERY. Regimental Trains moved to vicinity LESSE. Cannon Company moved into positions just North of ARRONCOURT. Antitank Platoons continued to be attached to each of the two assault Battalions. One Platoon Company B, 808 Tank Destroyer Battalion moved into position in 3d Battalion Sector. Two Platoons moved into defensive positions in the 1st Battalion Sector.

At 0900 on the 16th the 3d Battalion attacked to the North from its positions just to the North of THONVILLE. They moved in conjunction with Task Force F of the 6th Armored Division. Company I was on the right, K and the left and Company L in reserve. Enemy threw heavy mortar and artillery concentrations particularly at Company I. By 1325 Company I had taken CHEMERY and Company K had taken HILL 325. The 3d Battalion took over 100 prisoners.

At 1400 the 1st Battalion moved to occupy the left half of the Regimental Defensive Sector. It received only light fire in moving onto the high ground assigned it. Company B remained in Regimental Reserve. 2d Battalion remained in Division Reserve vicinity HALOCOURT.

For the next two days, the Battalions continued to maintain and improve their defensive positions. Antitank Company reported capture of 21 prisoners in previous day's operations.

The afternoon of the 20th an attack order came down from Division. This was later postponed for 23 hours.

On the 20th, because patrol activity showed that the enemy had retreated toward the East, our troops began moving up to new positions. By 1700, 3d Battalion occupied FAULQUEMONT. Company K took up positions on the left, Company L on the right,

and Company I in Battalion Reserve. No opposition was encountered during the move. Reports show enemy in vicinity of ST AVOLD. Regimental Command Post in THICOURT. Engineers filled in tank ditch in two places. Five Prisoners of War were taken in FAULQUEMONT. L-300

At noon the next day the 1st Battalion moved from its location 2000 yds South of FAULQUEMONT into the town.

Company A set-up an outpost outside of town on the road to TETTERING. Company B moved out to TETTERING to outpost to the Northeast. Company I outposted REDLOCH to the Northwest. Company B became trapped in the town of LAUDREFANG by enemy who moved between it and the rest of the Battalion. Plans for relief were drawn up during the night whereby the rest of the 1st Battalion plus Company B 702d Tank Battalion would relieve Company B by an attack at 0730 from vicinity HILL 331. 3d Battalion remained in FAULQUEMONT.

The attack began at 0730, by 1030 the relief attack had been completely successful. Twenty-nine prisoners had been taken. Only two platoons from Company C remained out. They were back by 1600.

During the day the 2d and 3d Battalions in accordance with Division Order moved to outpost the high ground between BASSE-VIGNEULLES and REDLOCH. The 2d Bn moved by truck from HOLACOURT to FAULQUEMONT, then detrucked and moved on foot to occupy the left half of the Regimental defense sector. Company F outposted the high ground 2000 yds east from BASSE-VIGNEULLES. The rest of the Bn went into an assembly area vicinity DORVILLER. Company I outposted the ground 3000 yds Northeast from REDLOCH. The rest of the Battalion remained at CITES DES CHARBONNAGE. The 1st Battalion moved into FAULQUEMONT in Regimental Reserve. Plans were made to serve all units a turkey dinner on Thanksgiving Day and to provide appropriate church services. Patrols during the night found the towns of BASSE-VIGNEULLES, HAUTE-VIGNEULLES and BAMBERSTROFF unoccupied by the enemy.

On the day of the 23d, Division Field Order #14 was received for an attack on the 25th. The Regimental Command Post moved to CITES DES CHARBONNAGE. Company B, 808 Tank Destroyer Battalion was relieved from attachment to the 318th Infantry and Company G of the 610 (SP) Tank Destroyer Battalion took its place.

At 0800, 25 November, the attack jumped-off from the high ground South of BAMBIDERSTROFF. The 2d Battalion on the left had attached to it Company B, 702d Tank Battalion. The 3d Battalion on the right had attached Company C, 610 Tank Destroyer Battalion - a company of Self-propelled Tank Destroyers. The attack moved to the Northeast, the Regimental objective being the high ground North of FORT KERSTEN, plus three main MAGINOT LINE Forts - FORT BAMBIDERSTROFF, FORT BAMMESCH, and FORT KERSTEN. The attack was preceded by a heavy artillery concentration which included fires of Cannon Company and 314th Field Artillery. The town of BAMBIDERSTROFF was captured by 0900. The whole attack was halted on the hills before the forts at 1000 by heavy fire, but soon continued on. By 1100 the 3d Battalion had captured its half of the Regimental objective as well as neutralizing two MAGINOT LINE Forts.

The 2d Battalion ran into heavier resistance and not until the tanks were able to sweep around an Anti-tank ditch were the two able to get the 2d Battalion objective, at 1500. The Command Post moved to BAMBIDERSTOFF at 1700.

On the morning of the 26th the 3d Battalion jumped-off with the mission of capturing HILL 340. The objective was secured in 45 minutes, against light resistance. Between 0830 and 1730 Company L on the 3d Battalion left flank received four counterattacks, the last of which was stopped when a TOT fired by all nine Battalions of the Corps Artillery landed squarely on an enemy concentration. Company A, from the reserve Battalion, moved up to fill a gap between the 2d Battalion and the 3d Battalion. The rest of the Battalion remained at ST DOMINIQUE FARM prepared to move up for the attack on the 27th.

At 0900 on the morning of the 27th the Commanding Officer 3d Battalion, 10th Infantry, 5th Division arrived at Command Post. His Battalion relieved our 2d Battalion on left flank of Regimental Sector. L-300

At 1000 1st Battalion crossed Line of Departure in attack to clear woods to North of 3d Battalion Sector. By 1730 it had cleared objective and had closed in at ST AVOLD. Late in afternoon, 1600 and 1700, respectively, 3d and 2d Battalions closed in at LONGEVILLE, following 319th movement into ST AVOLD.

Early in evening we were notified that Regiment would be motorized for movement forward to pinch out 319th Infantry.

On the morning of the 28th the hour for entrucking was officially set at 1100. Just after this order was received, G-3 sent word down that enemy had been contacted in PFARREBERSWEILER by the 317th Infantry. Motor movement behind the 317th was impossible for any great distance.. 2d and 3d Battalions detrucked in ST AVOLD and 1st Battalion moved forward from ST AVOLD to GENWEILER.

At 2000 Colonel McVICKAR called meeting of Battalion and Special Unit Commanders, Staff Officers, and Commanding Officers of Combat Team attachments and briefed them on plan of attack for 29th. These plans were interrupted at 2100 by notification that 3d Battalion, 317th Infantry, was being counterattacked by a determined force of enemy at PFARREBERSWEILER. 1st Battalion was ordered to move East of SENGBUSCH on high ground and 2d Battalion to GENWEILER immediately to form a defense in depth in case of a breakthrough.

At 0830 we received orders from Commanding General that until situation cleared up attack orders for 318th Infantry would be delayed. At 0930 our 3d Battalion moving closer to front, closed in at MACHERN.

An order from G-3 came down at noon to move 2d Battalion to high ground vicinity HENRIVILLE with mission to protect Division right flank from attacks from South and Southeast and to coordinate with 1st Battalion whose mission was to move to high ground Northwest of PFARREBERSWEILER and tie in on flanks with 319th Infantry

and our 2d Battalion.

Meanwhile the Regimental Command Post moved forward to GENWEILER, closing at 1645.

3d Battalion moved forward again to SEINGBUSCH and closed at 1830.

At 1815 1st Battalion had taken new positions and approximately two hours later was in contact with 319th Infantry on left and our 2d Battalion on right.

The last day of the month front line units improved their defensive positions.

Both our own and enemy artillery spent a busy day firing harassing missions.