

HEADQUARTERS 318TH INFANTRY
APO 80, FRANCE

S-4 L-282

2 November 1944

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Month of August Phase 1. Landing in France — Ste Suzanne.

Upon debarkation we were short the following vital equipment:

1 ea Gun, 57-MM, AT

Sets, spare parts and accessories for all machine guns. Subsequently we made our initial contacts and underwent light actions up to the Battle of Argentan without such accessories as Steam condensing devices and tubes for the machine guns. It would have been impossible to fire sustained fire with our heavy machine guns. This initial shortage of major items was increased by the loss of two 1/4 ton trailers upon debarkation. Immediate requisitions were executed but, the replacement of these trailers and their basic loads was not completed until about 20 September 1944.

Due to the hasty last minute issue of equipment prior to leaving the marshaling areas in England, it was necessary to erect the ring mounts on our big trucks during blackout and while we made the channel crossing.

The trains went into bivouac in the vicinity of Vaiges, France and all excess baggage, impedimenta, duffle bags, etc. were stored under Division control in MONTSURS.

Phase 2. Ste Suzanne — Sille-le-Guillaume.

During this entire phase the regimental trains supported the combat echelons closely, and were never farther distant than four miles in rear of the Regimental CP. All classes of supply were normal excepting the initial shortages mentioned in the previous phase. Class I was accomplished by feeding operational rations to combat elements. These rations were supplemented by issues of B components such as occasional issues of meat, bread and coffee. Class 2 was in good condition because we came over completely combat serviceable.

Phase 3. The Battle of Argentan.

This action was characterized by staggering losses in equipment, for which rapid replacement was immediately sought. We had received one complete set of spare parts for cal. .30 machine gun, water cooled, and these we issued to one of the heavy weapons companies. Actually desperate for the equipment which the combat troops demanded, we resorted to an attempt to use copper tubing for steam condensing tubes for the machine guns, but the attempt was unsuccessful. We by-passed our own supply agency for ordnance and foraged the country. By so do-

ing we talked ourselves into spare parts for the other two heavy weapons companies. Rifle companies had no spare parts for their weapons, and we could not get them. Midway in the battle action the 780th Ordnance Company completely stripped itself of its organic weapons to make resupply possible. It would have been of inestimable value had the Division Ordnance company been authorized to carry a quantity of spare weapons. Lacking this they worked like beavers to resupply us. At one stage of the action we were hard put to replace machine guns, and finally located an ordnance battalion which had three fifty cal. machine guns on hand, which they obligingly loaned us.

There was no change in Class 1 or 3. In these things, we had no problems, excepting the normal Class 3 problem for Infantry Regiments. That is the lack of a gasoline truck to adequately gas the 226 vehicles organic with an Infantry Regiment. The supply line to class 3 dumps began increasing and at times we had to travel as much as 45 miles to obtain gasoline. According to operation under current T/O's & E's gasoline is to be resupplied by loading empty cans on supply vehicles and vehicles going to the rear. These cans when refilled are swapped for empty cans throughout the organization. This theory is unsound and the practice is impossible.

Our Class V problem was also one of distance. At times we had to travel as much as 74 miles to resupply ammunition.

Higher echelons of Class 3 and V failed to closely support us throughout this entire operation.

At this time our Medics discovered that coffee used as a stimulant increased the response of wounded men to treatment. We had great difficulty in obtaining coffee for this purpose. We believe that a special issue of coffee and liquor should be made available to the medical aid stations for the purposes of stimulants.

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S-4