

HEADQUARTERS 80TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO #80, U. S. Army

G-2 After Action Report

1 December 1944 - 31 December 1944

December 1st found the 80th Division on the North flank of the XII Corps drive across the SAAR and towards the SIEGFRIED Line. On the Division North flank, the remnants of the 36th German Infantry Division had established themselves on the high ground and heavy woods North of ST AVOLD, holding CITS D'HOSPITAL, FREYMIND and MERLEBACH as strongpoints. To the East, the enemy held the high ground along the East bank of the MAUDERBACH River with the Reconnaissance Battalion of the 17th SS Division reinforced with battle groups from the 38th SS and 37th SS Regiments of the 17th SS Division. On the South flank of the Division, South of the NIED ALLEMANDE River, the towns of LIXING and LANING were held by combat groups of the 17th SS Division reinforced with stragglers from the 48th Division and 559th Division. Outflanked by the attack of the US 6th Armored Division towards PUTTELANGE and the 80th Division drive along their North flank, these isolated units withdrew to join the rest of the 17th SS along the line of the MAUDERBACH River.

On 4 December, the 80th Division launched a limited objective attack in conjunction with the attack to the East of the remainder of the XII Corps. The 17th SS defending along the high ground East of MAUDERBACH River was quickly driven back in the 80th Division Sector and by afternoon the towns of PFARRREBERSWEILER, TIEDINGEN AND ROCHERS had been cleared of enemy, and over two hundred PWs taken. The following day the 2d Cavalry Group, (Attached to the 80th Div for the operation), cleared FREYMING, MERLEBACH and ROSBRUCKEN of remnants of the 36th German Division. Withdrawing to the East the remnants of the 36th Division went into prepared positions around FORBACH and outposted the highground to the South of FORBACH. While containing this position the 80th Division was relieved and went into a rest area.

When the 80th Division occupied ST AVOLD, an enemy agent surrendered himself to our front line units. Upon interrogation, the agent, an Alsatian, declared he had been sent to ST AVOLD to secure a hidden radio and report the effects of time bombs which had been left in ST AVOLD. Search revealed the radio and two time bombs, one concealed in the city gas works and one in the Artillery barracks. Extensive search failed to uncover any further bombs, however, during the period the 80th Division remained in ST AVOLD, a total of four time bombs detonated totally destroying three buildings formerly occupied by Nazi Party Organizations, and a section of the Artillery Barracks.

During the rest period lasting from 8 December to 17 December, the G-2 Section was employed in making detailed studies of the SIEGFRIED Line just East of ZWEIBRUCKEN. Overprinted maps and terrain and photo studies were

prepared for the assault of the line in this sector and the material gathered was disseminated to the Organizations. On 17 December, the Division began its movement to the ZWEIBRUCKEN area. Simultaneously the German offensive in the ARDENNES began and on the 19th of December the 80th Division began its movement North to LUXEMBOURG to counterattack the German offensive.

The advance elements of the 80th Division arriving in the city of LUXEMBOURG late the night of 19 December were ordered to take up positions around the city against a German attack from the North. The enemy drive was closing in on BASTOGNE to the Northeast of LUXEMBOURG and continuing to the West toward LIEGE and ST HUBERT. To the immediate North and East of LUXEMBOURG, the enemy had a well-established bridgehead across the SAUER River extending from ETTTELBRUCK to East of ECHTENBACH. Enemy efforts to expand this bridgehead were being contained by our forces with difficulty. The units in contact in this sector were the 352d, 276th and 212th Volksgrenadier Division with the 5th Paratroop Division attacking Westward along the SAUER and SURE Rivers toward BASTOGNE. The 276th and 212th Divisions had taken heavy casualties establishing the bridgehead.

On the morning of 22 December, the 80th Division was ordered to attack to the North along the axis of the LUXEMBOURG - ETTTELBRUCK Highway. Contact was made South of ETTTELBRUCK early in the afternoon with elements of the 916th Regiment of the 352d Division. The ensuing action disclosed that our attack had caught the enemy completely by surprise. The 352d Division was moving along the DIEKIRCH - ETTTELBRUCK - MERZIG Highway with the ultimate mission of enveloping LUXEMBOURG from the Southwest; their immediate mission was to seize the high ground West and South of ETTTELBRUCK. The enemy advance was being made with two regiments abreast; the 916th moving along the high ground South of the highway and the 915th moving along the highway itself. The 914th was following and had reached ETTTELBRUCK when our attack struck. The Divisional Artillery on the road from DIEKIRCH to ETTTELBRUCK was caught by our artillery preparation and turned back toward DIEKIRCH.

Our attack drove the 916th from the high ground Southwest of ETTTELBRUCK. Further to the West the 13th and 14th Companies and trains of the 915th Regt were caught on the road leading through WERTIG and destroyed. The order was issued by the German commander for all troops to face South and take up defensive positions. The 914th using the town of ETTTELBRUCK as a strong point was successful in temporarily holding our attack.

A night attack the night of 22-23 December by the 80th Division reached the high ground and town of WEIDERSCHIED overlooking the SURE River and early that morning scattered groups of enemy were driven from the houses in WERTIG. Our attack had reached WEIDERSCHIED against light resistance but the enemy reacted quickly and counterattacked at noon with a strong force of tanks and armored infantry. The unit making this attack was determined to be the Fuehrer Brigade "GROSDEUTSCHLAND". Twelve of the seventeen tanks attacking were knocked out and the bulk of the enemy half-tracks were destroyed. The 914th Regiment continued to resist fiercely in ETTTELBRUCK while the 916 Regt developed the very favorable defensive terrain around KEBMAN and BOUBSCHEID countering our advances in that direction with extremely heavy mortar and small arms fire. Heavy Nebelwerfer concentrations received during our attack

were determined to be coming from the 18th Bebelwerfer or Heavy Projector Brigade supporting the enemy attack in this sector. The 406th Volks Artillery Corps was also identified in support of the enemy attack in the ETTTELBRUCK Sector.

On the 24th of December, the 318th Infantry Regiment (less 1 Battalion) was detached to effect the relief of BASTOGNE. (The account of the BASTOGNE action is appended as Annex #1). Heavy artillery concentrations and serial bombing drove the bulk of the remnants of the 914th Regiment out of ETTTELBRUCK and during the afternoon of the 24th, combat patrols from the 3d Battalion of the 318th and the 80th Division Reconnaissance Troop cleared ETTTELBRUCK of enemy.

On the 80th Division's Northern front the attack towards BOURSCHEID was continued and during the day elements of the 79th Volksgrenadier Division were identified. It was determined from interrogation that this Division was being rushed to this front from TRIER in an attempt to halt our drive into the base of the enemy penetration. Captured documents showed that the attack of the 80th Division had cut one of the principal enemy WSR of ETTTELBRUCK forcing any supply or reinforcement from TRIER to use secondary routes to the North of our penetration.

As the units of the 79th Division appeared on our front, they were immediately committed in local counterattacks but despite this aggressive defense, RINGEL and the high ground overlooking the SURE River were captured on 25 December. The enemy continued to hold the KEHMEN - BOURSCHEID highway ground, the 79th Division taking over from the 352d Division which withdrew to the East taking up a defensive position North of the SAUER River and Northeast of ETTTELBRUCK.

On the 27th, 28th and 29th the enemy attacked our position at RINGEL. PI statements revealed that the 79th Division had orders to retake this ground at all costs. The cost was nevertheless, too heavy, and all the enemy attempts were repulsed. On the last day of the month the enemy relinquished his suicidal attacks and changed over to an entirely defensive attitude, leaving the 80th Division in control of the high ground South of the SURE River with the exception of the BOURSCHEID - KEHMEN bridgehead and astride one of his vital supply routes to the BASTOGNE Area.

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MII Team #444-G

O/C - 2d Lt Erich Denzer

In accordance with Special Order No F 84, Hq Mil Int Service (Fwd), ETOUSA, APO #887, dated 7 Nov 44, MII Team #444-G reported at that date for duty with the 80th Infantry Division, of the Third U. S. Army. The team consisted of the following officer and enlisted men:

1st Lt Denzer, Erich, R	01326078
Sgt Rothschild, Walter	31052413
Tec 5 Pollsk, Hans	35553327
Pfc Selling, Fred, M.	32981135
Pfc Kern, Phillip, C.	38110468

The officer in charge was accompanied from Mil Int Service, Hq ETOUSA by Sgt Rothschild and Pfc Kern. The other two members of the team, Hans Pollsk and Fred Selling, were already attached to Hq 80th Infantry Division, G-2 Section. Immediately upon arrival of Lt Denzer, these two enlisted men were released from G-2 to begin their new duties with the MII Team in compliance with above mentioned orders.

#### Mission of Team:

a. The first major mission given to the team consisted of securing all possible information on a position of the Siegfried Line, namely the sector from Saarrhucen to Firmasens. The team was successful in contacting some civilians which had been instrumental in the building of certain fortifications of this line. Due to the technical knowledge of these civilians heretofore unknown data could be collected and location of numerous strong points verified.

b. While the team was still continuing on this assignment, the Division moved to Luxembourg. Due to the difficult terrain encountered and the seriousness of the situation, it became necessary to gather immediately the latest information on all highways, roads, bridges, railroads and rivers within the Division sector. It was the team's mission to supply as much of this information as possible and the team was successful in obtaining complete data on all roads, such as condition of roads, latest improvements and trafficabilities, also exact engineering data on the Government RR line from Luxembourg City North to Ulfingen and from Kautenbach West to Wiltz; this included detailed plans and blueprints of all RR bridges, tunnels and road crossings. All this information gathered was of tremendous importance to the G-2 and G-3 in planning future operations.

#### IPW Teams Nos 75 and 76

O/C Team #75 - Captain Paul Loesser, Jr.  
O/C Team #76 - 1st Lt Theodore Cutman

Total prisoners taken during the month was 2246. The attitude of prisoners passing through the Division cage underwent a noticeable change during the month of December. The morals of the German troops in the Loeraine Sector was low, however, on moving North to the area of the German drive into the Ardennes, fresh troops with high morale and a degree of security consciousness never before experienced were encountered. By the end of the month, however, the morale of the prisoners passing through our cages had decreased considerably and with the lowering of morale, security consciousness disappeared.

During the month the first PWs were taken from the Volkssturm and PWs from the Brandenburg Division were processed.

#### PI Team Number 69

##### O/C Team - Captain Michael E. Derbin

When the Division went into rest, the PI Team received its specific mission to prepare a large scale defense overlay of the sector of the Siegfried Line just SE of Zweibruecken. Approximately six different sorties were interpreted in connection with this project. In the meanwhile all other sorties flown over the entire Corps Area were also interpreted and plotted on 1/25,000 maps in order to have all available information in any zone of advance.

Vaestographs and extra sorties were secured and distributed. The interpretation on the project was first plotted on a 1/7,500 map prepared by our engineers, later on a 1/10,000 map furnished by Corps. On both overlays the installations were pin-pointed to such accuracy that even the field of fire of the respective pillboxes were shown, an effort that was the result of careful scrutiny of all available information (IFW, MII). But as plans changed we were ordered to turn our entire work over to Corps who was to give all the material to another Division taking over our sector. The remaining work done during the month both in Lorraine and Luxembourg, was routine.

#### OB Team #34

##### O/C Team - 1st Lt Armand V. Paeline

During the month of December the Order of Battle Team prepared special reports, annexes to G-2 Periodic Reports, and translations of enemy documents. In addition, the O B Team made special interrogation of selected PWs to determine the Order of Battle of their units; in this connection, the composition and history of the Fuehrer Brigade Grossdeutschland, previously unknown, was determined when this unit was contacted by the 80th Infantry Division in LUXEMBOURG.

#### CID Detachment

##### O/C Det - Capt Thomas N. McMillen

During December, the 80th OIC Detachment operated offices in 19 towns in LORRAINE, Lower SAAR, and LUXEMBOURG. Coverage and security guards were likewise provided in an additional 28 towns. One enemy sabotage agent who was to be parachuted into FRANCE was arrested, and three additional suspects were sent to higher headquarters. Eleven Nazi Party Leaders and officials were similarly evacuated, along with approximately 250 German Army deserters and 250 persons deemed unsafe for security reasons. One case of booby-trapping and one case of wire sabotage were investigated.

#### Public Relations Officer

##### O/C - 1st Lt Bernard Didnsky, Inf.

In addition to routine releases the Division Public Relations Office prepared 4 tactical news stories, 3 radio recordings, (2 for Combat Diary, 1 for Army Hour), 1 cartoon for "Yand" and 20 CI recordings for home consumption. Routine duties included the release of 61 human interest stories, 2455 releases on decorations, 489 on citations and 7 on promotions submitted to appropriate agencies.

RICHARD R. FLEISMER, Lt. Colonel, G.S.C.  
AC of S, G-2.

HEADQUARTERS 80TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO #80, U. S. Army

Annex #1 to G-2 After Action  
Rpt for December 1944.

15 January 1945

Subject: Extracts of S-2 After Action Rpt,  
24 December - 29 December 1944.

To: Commanding General, 80th Inf Div, APO #80, U. S. Army  
Att: G-2

On 24 December 2 Battalions of the 318th Infantry Regiment were ordered to leave one Bn (3d) in its present positions, with mission to take and then hold ETTELBRUCK, and move with the other two Bns to MAUVILLERS, BELGIUM.

Arriving night 24-25 December in US 4th Armd Division Sector, 1st Bn, 318th was attached to CCA, 2d Bn, 318th attached to CCB, US 4th Armd Division with mission to drive a wedge into German lines to relieve our troops encircled at BASTOGNE. Attacking daily for next five days against heavy opposition from 5th Para Division, reinforced with tanks and assault guns, 1st Bn, 318th took towns of WARNACH, TINTANOE, HOLLANGE, HONVILLE, LIVARCHAMPS, SAINLEZ: while 2d Bn, 318th, after extremely heavy resistance, captured CHAUMONT, GRANDRIVE, REMICHAMPAGNE, HONTRE and SALVACOURT. The 2d Bn, 318th, through a combat patrol led by 1st Lt Walter P. Carr, established first contact with the encircled US 101st Airborne Division, obtained their dispositions and subsequently drove a wedge connecting with the beleaguered garrison.

While armored resistance from tanks, half-tracks and 88mm guns was continuous during the operation, none of these units could be identified. Infantry opposition stemmed mainly from the 5th Para Div, the following units of which were identified: 13th, 14th, and 15th Para Inf Regts, with three Bns each, plus 13th, 14th and 15th Cos: the 5th AT Bn, with two Cos armed with AT Grenades only; 5th Engr Bn, with three Cos, all committed as Inf; 12th Para Arty Regt with a 5th Bn apparently composed of AA Btrys. The 408th Arty Corps was attached to 5th Para Div. This Corps was composed of six Bns - four light Bns, with three firing Btrys per Bn and 6 75mm guns per Btry (guns similar to AT Guns, but equipped with sights for indirect firing also); two heavy Bns with two firing Btrys each, equipped with 6 150mm Gun Hows per Btry.

On 27 December the 2d Bn, 104th Pz Gr Regt, 15th Pz Gr Div was encountered in defense of HONVILLE. No other elements of this Div were contacted. This Bn had not been reorganized, nor received replacements, before commitment in this sector from the COLOGNE area.



The 18th Nebelwerfer Brigade (rocket projectors), composed of 21st and 22d Nebelwerfer Regiments, was encountered along entire south flank of German wedge and also in zone of our Ballalions. Each regiment composed of three Bns, with the Hq and three firing Btrys each. In 1st Bn were 6 150mm projectors per Btry; 2d Bn with 6 210mm. projectors per Btry; 3d Bn with 6 300mm projectors per Btry. Number of barrels per projector unknown. Exact disposition of elements of this Brigade could not be established.

As a result of sections 25 through 28 December, the 5th Para Div was largely disorganized and 1st and 2d Bns, 318th, together with US 4th Armored Division, took 769 PWs, all of which were handled through 4th Armored Division cages.

On 29 December, their mission having been successfully completed, 1st and 2d Bns, 318th were relieved from attachment to US 4th Armd Div. The two Bns, with Regal Hq, moved immediately back to Ciomar.

For the Commanding Officer:

/s/ Martin J. Wegman  
/t/ MARTIN J. WEGMAN  
Capt, 318th Inf.  
S-2