

## G-2 After Action Report

September - 1944

### SECTION I - Advance to Moselle River

On 1 September 1944, the 80th Infantry Division moved East from Chalons towards the Meuse River. No enemy defensive line was established, but organized resistance in the form of delaying actions by strong enemy motorized patrols reinforced with some self-propelled artillery were encountered. The bridgehead across the Meuse River was established at Commercy without difficulty. At St Mihiel, the enemy opposed our approach to the town and the banks of the Meuse River but was driven back across the river by nightfall and the next morning our bridgehead was established across the Meuse River opposite St Mihiel against light enemy resistance. During the operation "battlegroups" from the 8th and 29th Regiments of the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division, the 2d Panzer Division, the 48th Infantry Division and the 49th SS Brigade, were encountered. PWs were captured from remnants of many other German formations fleeing Eastward. In his retreat the enemy destroyed all bridges across the Meuse River and abandoned large supply stores intact in COMMERCEY and BAR LE DUC. It was also during this advance that the first evidences of German vandalism were encountered; towns of NETTANCOURT, LAHAYECOURT and other farms and villages were burned by the enemy for no military purpose.

Cavalry patrols of the 80th Ren Troop and Second Cavalry Squadron on the 2d and 3d of September reached the high ground West of the MOSELIE River; establishing that the main body of the enemy had withdrawn across the river. Further reconnaissance revealed enemy strong points remaining in the Forêt de L'AVANT GARDE and in the vicinity of ARNAVILLE. It was further reported on the 3d of September that the enemy had withdrawn the main body of his troops from TOUL and was digging in the high ground opposite the city on the E bank of the MOSELIE River.

During this reconnaissance, the 80th Ren Troop secured the towns of MAMEY and MARTINCOURT which had been burned to the ground and in which fifteen civilians had been murdered by the fleeing Nazis. Other civilians were treated for wounds inflicted by German machine gun fire and grenades.

On the 4th of September, the 319th Infantry Regiment successfully forced the first bridgehead across the MOSELIE River against fierce resistance by the 3d Paratroop Training Regiment. This regiment was composed of young and almost fanatical soldiers. The bridgehead across the river did not receive any counter attacks but the enemy occupied the towns and fortresses of VILLEY-LE-SEC and GRONDRE VILLE and attempted to contain our advance from these advantageous positions.

On 4 September, attempts to cross the MOSELIE River at PONT A MOUSSON and North of PONT A MOUSSON met with fierce enemy resistance determined to be elements of the 3d Panzer Grenadier and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, and our units withdrew to make further preparations. These divisions brought from ITALY to establish a line at the MARNE River had finally managed to get into position at the MOSELIE River.

From the 5th to the 11th of September, mopping up operations continued on the West bank of the MOSELIE River. An enemy task force, composed of paratroops

and GAF personnel and known as CT HILMER, doggedly held the Forêt de L'AVANT GARDE and the towns of POMPEY, MARRACHE and BELLEVILLE against our attacks suffering heavy casualties in so doing. On the 10th of September, the paratroopers were driven from FORT VILLEY-LE-SEC and FORT GONDREVILLE, but the enemy continued to oppose our advance toward NANCY from the Forêt de la HAYE. Also on the 10th of September, with the exception of a small pocket of resistance of POMPEY, the enemy was cleared from the West bank of the MOSELLE River in the entire division sector.

On 9 September, the Division captured PWs from the 1119th and 1121st Regiments of the 553d Division. This was the first identification of this division and also the first positive identification of any of the "GOTTERDAEMERUNG" Divisions formed by HIMMLER early in August through his total mobilization plan.

On the 12th of September a bridgehead was pushed across the MOSELLE River at DIEULOUARD. The enemy was unable to hold our push and had to withdraw and attempt to regroup for a counterattack. The counterattack was launched about 0300 the morning of the 13th by 2 Battalions of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 3d PGR Division supported by tanks and assault guns. The enemy attack was repulsed with heavy casualties to the enemy (including over 200 PWs), but only after his advance units had almost reached the bridges themselves. The enemy also had observation of the bridgehead and heavy artillery was received on the bridge during the entire period.

The enemy position was further weakened on the 13th of September when CCA of the 4th Armored Division passed through the 80th Division bridgehead and penetrated the enemy rear areas as far as CHATEAU SAILINS. On the 80th Division front, however, the enemy was quick to recuperate and reorganize his lines sealing the gap caused by the armor. The 49th SS Brigade came down from the METZ area and consolidated a position in the Forêt de FACQ NE of the bridgehead while the 1121st Regiment of the 553d Division consolidated the high ground of MOREY, TOULON and MT ST JEAN to the SE of the bridgehead. The center of the bridgehead line continued to be held by the badly mauled 3d Panzer Grenadier Division.

The enemy launched counterattacks on the 15th, 16th, and 17th of September, all of which were repulsed with heavy casualties to the enemy. Due to these losses and the strong point type of defense, PWs identified several enemy combat teams which were committed to the defense of key terrain and which, although part of a larger organization, operated almost as independent units. The replacement system used to reform these combat teams reflected the disorder into which the enemy organization had been thrown. PWs were identified from many varied types of organizations. Often replacements were committed as a unit and when the unit was decimated the remnants were absorbed by the largest formation remaining.

By the 19th of September the enemy was forced to abandon his counterattacks. Driven from PONT A MOUSSON, CUSTINES and MILLERY, the enemy established a line running along the East bank of the SEILLE River to CLEMERY then along the high ground of MT TOULON AND MT ST JEAN to MOIVRON where his line turned and ran East to face the 35th US Division advancing from the South. The 553d Division held the highground while the 49th SS Brigade controlled by the 17th SS Division occupied the East bank of the SEILLE River.

The Military Intelligence Interpreter Team operated in two groups moving with the advancing combat teams and reporting periodically to the Division CP and by spot reports through the regimental S-2's.

During this period, the 80th CIC Detachment maintained offices in 17 towns and provided coverage of an equal number of additional towns. Considerable quantities of enemy material were located including a map depot of approximately 10,000 maps and equipment. Operations in ARGENTAN were coordinated with the British 57th Field Security Section. Total security cases investigated - 76; suspects arrested - 7; civilians screened - approximately 300.

The Military Intelligence Interpreter Team operated with the forward elements interviewing civilians as they moved. During this situation, where movement was continuous, the team did not establish itself in any one location. Valuable information was gained in this manner.

GENERAL LIST OF CAPTURED ENEMY MATERIELTaken at CHALONS SUR MARNE

<u>QUANTITY</u>	<u>ITEMS</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
32 carloads (estimated 90 tons)	Foodstuffs: Butter, lard, cheese, jam, meats, flour, sugar, etc.	Bouy
42 carloads	Ammunition (4 cars), 88mm, 88mm Long rifles, 105mm How, 105mm Long Rifles 50mm AT Gun	Bouy
4 carloads	Lumber	
3 boxcars empty		
3 flatcars empty		
15 carloads	Parachutes	St Hilaire
100	Airplane motors and airplane parts	Chalons
4 1/2 carloads	Miscellaneous Signal Equipment	Chalons
258	Airplane engines, all types	Chalons
79 boxes	Miscellaneous spare parts for airplane engines	Chalons
27 cartons	Spark plugs	Chalons
1 carload	Miscellaneous medical supplies	Chalons
34 carloads	Parachutes	St Hilaire
2 boxcars	Musical equipment	St Hilaire
6	Switch engines	St Hilaire
1	Locomotive	St Hilaire
55 carloads	Assorted equipment	St Hilaire
1 Warehouse	Communications material	St Hilaire
3 boxcars	Artillery ammunition	St Hilaire
4 field guns	Long Tom type	Mourmelon Le Gra
2	105's	Mourmelon Le Gra
2	40mm Hows	Mourmelon Le Gra

Miscellaneous China and Kitchenware,  
Bldgs filled with bombs, maps, etc.

Mourmelon Le Gra

7 carloads

Flour

Athis

11

ME 109's

Army Camp  
(T675645)

1 L

Liaison Plane, some ammunition

"

2

Cannons

Bouy

80,000 Gals

Gasoline

Coolus

Capturing units were responsible initially for guarding captured stores until relieved by higher headquarters or guards furnished by Civil Affairs.