

HEADQUARTERS 80TH INFANTRY DIVISION

AFTER ACTION REPORT

G-3 SECTION

MARCH 1945

KYLL RIVER SECTOR

1 March to 9 March

During the period 1 March to 9 March, the 80th Infantry Division occupied and mopped up the area W of the KYLL R and N of BITBURG, protecting the N flank of XII Corps. The 4th Armored Division passing thru the 80th Division crossed the KYLL R and dashed Eastward to reach the RHINE R N of KOBLENZ. To the S other Elms of the XII Corps mopped up the area from BITBURG to the MOELLE R in the Vic of TREVES. At no time, during this period, was the 80th Infantry Division heavily engaged and the opportunity was seized by the organizations to conduct training of replacements and rehabilitation of personnel and equipment, whenever the tactical situation permitted.

1st March

317th Inf: 1st and 2d Bns attacked to the N capturing the towns of NIEDER-EILER, OBER-EILER and SCHLID and occupied the surrounding high-ground.

The 318th Inf and 319th Regts remained in assembly areas W of the PRUM R.

The 80th Cav Rcn Tr reconnoitered to the N from the positions of the 317th Inf.

2d March

There was no change in the disposition of the 317th and 319th Inf Regts. The 80th Cav Rcn Tr continued to press to the N and captured the town of HEILNBACH.

The 318th Inf was attached to the 76th Inf Div and moved to an assembly area S of BITBURG.

3d March

317th and 319th Inf Regts occupied their same positions.

The 318th Inf was relieved from attachment to the 76th Inf Div and prepared to return to the 80th Inf Div area. The 80th Cav Rcn Tr established and maintained contact with Elms of the VIII Corps E of the PRUM R advancing towards the KYLL R.

4th March

There was no change in the positions of the 317th and 319th Inf Regts.

The 318th Inf moved N from the zone of the 76th Inf Div and relieved CCB of the 4th Armd Div between the NIMS and KYLL Rivers and instituted reconnaissance to the N prepared to reduce enemy resistance between the NIMS and KYLL Rivers N to the VIII - XII Corps Bdry.

The 80th Cav Rcn Tr reconnoitered to the N between the NIMS and KYLL Rivers and at the end of the day was attached to the 318th Inf.

5th March

No change in disposition of 317th and 319th Inf Regts.

The 318th Inf attacked to the N with the 2d and 3d Bns abreast. The towns of HALBERG and NEIDENBACH were captured and the high-ground on the W bank of the KYLL R was occupied as far N as the Corps (Div) Bdry and contact made with Elms of the VIII Corps.

6th March

No change in dispositions of 317th and 319th Inf Regts.

The 318th Inf mopped up the W bank of the KYLL R and captured the towns of USCH and ST. THOMAS.

7th March

All units of the 80th Inf Div remained in positions previously occupied. Contact was maintained with Elms of the VIII Corps, and with the 4th arm'd Div advancing to the E. The Div Arty moved in to assembly areas. This was the first time since the 80th Div was committed in the early part of August. that none of the Division Artillery was committed.

8th March

The 317th and 318th Inf Regts remained on the same positions as previously occupied.

The 319th Inf moved S to be attached to the 76th Inf Div upon arrival in the 76th Inf Div zone.

9th March

There was no change in the dispositions of the 317th and 318th Inf Regts.

The 319th Inf was relieved from attachment to the 76th Inf Div and prepared to move N to the 80th Inf zone.

During this period, the 80th Inf Div mopped up the area between the PRUM and KYLL Rivers, protected the N (L) flank of the XII Corps and established and maintained contact with the VIII Corps. Much needed maintenance and training was conducted. The 80th Inf Div Arty fired two hundred and twenty-four (224) missions. Four hundred and seven (407) prisoners were taken.

MOVEMENT TO ATTACK POSITION in

XX CORPS ZONE 10 March to 12 March

On 10 March the 80th Inf Div was released from the control of the XII Corps and attached to XX Corps. Movement to the E bank of the SAAR R opposite SAAR-

BURG was initiated early the morning of 11 March. The movement was completed and the Div was prepared to attack by 122400 to pass through elements of the XX Corps and attack to the N and E.

10th March

80th Inf Div (Reinf) closed into assembly areas in the vicinity of RITTERS-DORF, prepared for movement to the S.

11th March

At 0200 the motor movement to an assembly area in the vicinity of MONDORF was started. The Division closed into the MONDORF assembly area at 2100.

12th March

At 0630 the movement to forward assembly areas was initiated. At 1945, the movement forward was completed, and the assault units moved up to their jump off positions.

ATTACK FROM SAARBURG BRIDGEHEAD TO PRIMS R

13 March to 17 March

On 13 March at 0300 the 80th Infantry Division, making the main effort of XX Corps, attacked the East out of the SAARBURG bridgehead, passing through elements of the 94th and 26th Infantry Divisions. The 94th and 26th Infantry Divisions attacked to the East in conjunction with the 80th Infantry Division on 13 March. The attack was pressed to the East until enemy positions had been sufficiently disrupted to allow the 10th Armored Division to pass through the Infantry. The 80th Infantry Division attacked initially with two regiments abreast.

13th March

317th Inf: 1st and 3d Bns attacked across the ZELF R, passing through the Elms of the 26th Inf Div holding the river line. The initial objective of the attack was the high ground overlooking ZELF from the E and SE. Both Bns gained the initial objective early in the morning and proceeded to mop up the woods covering this high ground. The 3d Bn continued the attack and by late the night of 13 March had captured the town of OBLERATH. The 2d Bn followed the attacking Bns to an advanced assembly area prepared to press the attack E. Heavy nebelwerfer and artillery fire was placed on the town of ZELF by the enemy. This fire on the town and key road junction considerably hampered the operation. Direct fire from M-51 Mounts, employed in the ground role by the 633d AAA AB Battalion, succeeded in forcing the enemy to move his OPs.

318th Inf: 1st Bn attacked initially, passing through Elms of the 94th Inf Div at OBERZELF, and seized the high ground E of OBLERATH. This high ground extending several miles Eastward was entirely covered by dense woods, which extended the width of the 318th Inf zone. Only one road suitable for traffic passed through these woods. The attack to the E through these woods by the 1st Bn met strong resistance from HILL 521. The 2d Bn attacked this enemy strong point from the N in conjunction with the 1st Bn and the resistance was broken by 1930.

The 3d Bn attacked along the N boundary of the Regt (Div) and quickly pierced the enemy's main line. The 3d Bn, taking advantage of its breakthrough, advanced rapidly to the E, reached the center of the forest and established a roadblock, cutting off the German retreat route along the single good road through the forest.

319th Inf moved to a forward assembly area on the high ground W of ZERF and remained in this assembly area in Division Reserve.

14th March

317th Inf: All three Bns of the Regt were employed to mop up the woods on the high ground surrounding GERIMMATH. Many pockets of enemy had been by-passed and others had infiltrated through the woods during the night. Several pillboxes were discovered in the woods S of GERIMMATH and had to be reduced.

318th Inf: 1st Bn completed mopping up the area captured in the previous day's fighting, and then moved eastward in Regimental Reserve. The 2d Bn attacked to the E; penetrated the forest and entered the town of WEISSKIRCHEN where stubborn resistance and house to house fighting was encountered. The enemy infiltrated back, cut the main road through the forest at its eastern outlet, and isolated the 2d Bn in WEISSKIRCHEN. The 3d Bn continued to mop up the forest in the vicinity of the roadblock they had established the previous day.

319th Inf: The 1st Bn moved out during the afternoon to pass through a Task Force of the 26th Inf Div SW of GERIMMATH and attack E towards BERGEN.

80th Cav Bn Tr, screening the N flank of the Div, captured the town of MANDERN and patrolled the N edge of the forest in which the 318th Inf was advancing.

Five hundred forty-three (543) prisoners were taken during the day and much equipment was captured including several artillery pieces and nebelwerfers.

15th March

317th Inf: 1st Bn continued to mop up the woods N of MANDERNOLZBACH and during the early evening, attacked the town. MANDERNOLZBACH was cleared of enemy by 2100. The 2d Bn attacked to the E and had reached a position to assault MITLOSHEIM when they halted at dark. The 3d Bn attacked to the E from the forest, seized SCHIEDEN and mopped up the surrounding high ground.

318th Inf: 1st and 3d Bns mopped up the forest in their zone of advance and reduced all enemy resistance except occasional sniper fire. These two Bns then reorganized preparatory to moving on WEISSKIRCHEN to relieve the 2d Bn. The 2d Bn was still heavily engaged during the entire day in WEISSKIRCHEN and repulsed one strong counterattack of tanks and infantry with heavy losses to the enemy.

319th Inf: The 1st Bn seized the town of BERGEN early in the morning and at 1000 attacked S from BERGEN cutting the BERGEN-LOSHIM road and seizing the high ground NE of HAUSBACH. The 2d Bn attacked S from BERGEN towards LOSHEIM and the 3d Bn attacked S against strong resistance towards BRITTEN. Both Bns met stubborn resistance.

Large amounts of enemy supplies and equipment were again captured or destroyed and two hundred sixty-eight (268) prisoners were taken making a total of over one thousand (1000) prisoners captured in three (3) days.

16th March

Task Forces of the 10th Armd Div passed through the positions of the 318th and 317th Inf Regts and pressed the attack to the E in conjunction with the 80th Inf Div.

317th Inf: The 1st Bn moved rapidly to the E and captured the towns of ZWALBACH and RAFFELER. The 2d Bn attacked to the E and captured MITLOSHEIM and LIEBILDER. The 3d Bn completed mopping up the area around SCHEIDEN and moved by motor to an assembly area at RAFFELER.

318th Inf: The 1st and 3d Bns moved towards WEISSKIRCHEN and mopped up scattered enemy resistance as they advanced. The road was opened to relieve the 2d Bn which was still engaged in house to house fighting in WEISSKIRCHEN. The 3d Bn joined the 2d Bn in the assault of WEISSKIRCHEN and the Southern section of the town was cleared.

319th Inf: The 1st Bn captured HALLSBACH in the early morning and then attacked to the E; cleared the high ground S of LOSHEIM and continued on to capture and occupy WÄHLEN. The 2d Bn assaulted and seized LOSHEIM against stiff resistance. The town of LOSHEIM having been mopped up, Company G was advanced to the E to occupy NIEDERLOSHEIM. The 3d Bn captured and occupied BRITTEN.

17 March

317th Inf: The 2d Bn closely followed the advancing armor and in conjunction with the armor seized crossing of the PRIMS R. The 3d Bn followed the advance of the 2d Bn and the 1st Bn moved to NUSLUND in Regtl Res.

The 318th Inf was attached to the 10th Armd Div.

319th Inf: The 2d Bn continued the attack to the E from LOSHEIM and captured WUNKIRCHEN. During the first hours of darkness the 2d Bn forced a crossing of the PRIMS R at NUNIKIRCHEN and during the night expanded the bridgehead reaching the outskirts of LIEBACH. The 3d Bn attacked to the L clearing the Northern part of the Regtl zone to the PRIMS R and captured the town of NIEHLBACH.

The attack of the 80th Inf Div, was supported by the 204th FA Group and the 1139th Engr C Group.

The 702d Tk Bn, 811th TD Bn and 633d AAA Av (Mbl) Bn were attached to the 80th Inf Div. These organizations beside filling their normal roles the initial phases of the attack with direct and indirect fire under control of 80th Inf Div Arty. The 80th Inf Div Arty fired six hundred ninety-one (691) missions in support of the attack.

During the five days of the attack, recounted above, the 80th Inf Div shattered the enemy's defensive line opening a way for the armor to break through to the E. The area between the ZERF R and the PRIMS R was cleared of enemy and large quantities of enemy stores and weapons were captured or destroyed. Two thousand five hundred and five (2505) prisoners of war were taken during the five days. This being accomplished, the 80th Div went over to the pursuit.

PURSUIT FROM PRIMS R TO THE RHINE VALLEY

18 March to 21 March

Early morning of 18 March the 80th Inf Div attacked E from the PRIMS R following the 10th Armd Div and mopped up enemy resistance by-passed by the armor. During this four-day period the cities of KAISERSLAUTERN and ST VENDEL were captured by the 80th Inf Div. The rapid advance carried the 80th Inf Div into the RHINE VALLEY at BAD DÜRKHEIM and out into the lowlands W of LUDWIGSHAFEN.

18th March

317th Inf moved E in the Northern part of the Div zone by motor and by marching, cleaned up pockets of enemy resistance and by midnight the 1st Bn had reached RAMMELSBACH. The Regt less the 1st Bn remained in NAMBORN:

The 318th Inf remained attached to the 10th Armd Div.

319th Inf: The 2d Bn having established a bridgehead across the PRIMS R in the vicinity of LIMBACH during the night of the 17-18 March attacked early the morning of the 18th and captured LIMBACH. The 1st Bn and 3d Bn advanced by motor and marching thru the bridgehead of the 2d Bn and at the close of the period had cleared all enemy resistance in their zone W of ST VENDEL. The 1st Bn occupied ALSWEILER and the 3d Bn occupied BLIESSEN. During the early part of the night the 2d Bn moved by motor from LIMBACH to ALSWEILER.

19th March

317th Inf: 2d Bn moved by motor to THALGIESEN where the Bn detrucked. A stubborn pocket of enemy resistance remained in KUSEL to the E and the 2d Bn immediately attacked the enemy positions and by early afternoon had destroyed all opposition and cleared the town of KUSEL.

318th Inf: less the 1st and 3d Bn which remained attached to the 10th Armd Div, reverted to control of the 80th Inf Div and remained in Div Reserve at OBERTHAL.

319th Inf: The 3d Bn attacked S from BLIESSEN into ST VENDEL in conjunction with elements of the 10th Armd Div and outposted the city after enemy resistance had been overcome within the city. The 2d Bn attacked E from INTERBACH and seized a crossing of the BLIES R at OBERLINWEILER S of ST VENDEL. The crossing secured, the Bn immediately moved eastward and reached KROTTENBACH.

20th March

317th Inf moved rapidly to the E reaching ENKENBACH and NEUKIRCHEN NE of KAISERSLAUTERN by the end of the period. The I & I Plat of the 317th Inf entered KAISERSLAUTERN from the N and captured the garrison commander.

318th Inf: 1st and 3d Bns remained attached to the 10th Armd Div. The 2d Bn maintained law and order in ST VENDEL and that night the 2d Bn moved by motor to KAISERSLAUTERN to occupy the city.

319th Inf: The 1st Bn advanced rapidly to the E and entered KAISERSLAUTERN

20th March

from the " and by 1230 had reduced all enemy resistance. The 1st Bn then outposted the city. The 2d and 3d Bns moved by motor to the NE of KAISERLAUTERN to HOCHSPIYER where they took up positions for the night.

The 80th Cav Rcn Tr moved to the S of KAISERLAUTERN and blocked the southern approaches to the city.

21st March

The 317th Inf moved by motor and by marching to an assembly area at HOCHSPIYER during the morning. In the late afternoon the 317th Inf began to move to an assembly area in the vicinity of DIDESHEIM.

318th Inf: 1st and 3d Bns remained attached to the 10th Armd Div. The 2d Bn occupied and outposted KAISERLAUTERN.

The 319th Inf moved from HOCHSPIYER to an assembly area in the vicinity of MAXDORF and prepared to attack to the SE.

During the four days, 18 March to 21 March the 80th Inf Div moved by motor and by marching approximately one hundred and fifteen (115) air-line miles to the E. Seized the key cities and road centers of KAISERLAUTERN and ST VENDEL and reduced all enemy resistance in the zone of advance of the Div. Five thousand and eighty-four (5,084) prisoners were taken during the period

MOVEMENT FROM BAD DUKHEIM TO MAINZ

22 March to 27 March

Early in the morning of the 22 March the 80th Inf Div was relieved of the mission of attacking to the E and ordered to move into assembly areas prepared for further movement. The 1st and 3d Bns of the 318th Inf were relieved from attachment to the 10th Armd Div.

An assembly area N and W of WORMS was designated and the 319th Inf initiated movement to this area at 222130. Early the morning of the 23 March the movement to the assembly area in vicinity of WORMS was halted. A new assembly area was designated in the vicinity of ROCKENHAUSEN and movement to the new assembly area over several routes began at 231330. The entire 80th Inf Div closed into the assembly area surrounding ROCKENHAUSEN at 251315.

At 1230 on the 26 March the order was issued for the Div to move to concentration areas in the vicinity of MAINZ prepared to effect a crossing of the RHINE R. Movement was immediately initiated and during the 27 March the Div closed into the designated assembly areas and the assault units moved up to jump off positions. In order to go into the position for the assault crossing of the MAIN R, the 319th Inf crossed the RHINE R on the XII Corps bridge in the vicinity of OPPENHEIM and closed into a forward assembly area at BISCHOFHEIM.

CROSSING OF THE RHINE AND MAIN RIVERS

28 March to 31 March

At 0100 on the 28th of March the 80th Inf Div (Reinf) jumped off to force crossings of the RHINE and MAIN Rivers and seize bridgeheads for the passage of

the XX Corps, this being accomplished, to continue the attack to the N and NE.

28th March

317th Inf: The 2d Bn crossed the RHINE R in assault boats from MAINZ and reached the far shore in the vicinity of KASTEL and KUSTHEIM. Strong resistance met the assaulting troops when they reached the far shore; this resistance consisted principally of small arms fire and direct fire from high velocity AA weapons. This resistance was reduced during the morning and KASTEL and KOSTHEIM captured. Later in the period the 2d Bn moved to BIEBRICH. The 1st Bn followed the 2d Bn across the RHINE R and immediately attacked to seize BIEBRICH. Having cleared BIEBRICH, the 1st Bn continued the attack to the NE and captured WEISBADEN. The 3d Bn initially in Regt Reserve, crossed the RHINE R, and attacked to the N and seized ERBENHEIM and BIERSTADT.

318th Inf: Initially the 318th Inf remained in Division Reserve. During the late morning the 318th Inf crossed the RHINE R in LCVPs and LCVs into the bridgehead established by the 317th Inf. The 1st and 3d Bns immediately attacked to the N and seized IGSTADT and AUBINGEN. The attack was continued during the night and made good progress. The 1st Bn followed the 3d Bn in Regt Reserve.

The 80th Cav Ren Tr crossed the RHINE and moved to the N establishing contact with elements of the 9th Armd Div, of the First U. S. Army.

319th Inf: The 319th Inf crossed the RHINE R on the XII Corps bridge in the vicinity of OPPENHEIM and closed into an assembly area in the vicinity of BISCHOPHEIM on the 27th of March. At 280100 March the 2d and 3d Bns attacked and forced crossings of the MAIN R. The 2d Bn crossed in the vicinity of BISCHOPHEIM and seized HOCHHEIM and DELKINHEIM. The 3d Bn forced a crossing at RUSSELSHEIM and captured VICKER, MASSENHEIM and FLORSHEIM. The 1st Bn, in Regt Reserve, crossed the MAIN and closed into an assembly area at HOCHHEIM.

29th March

The 317th Inf, in Division Reserve, mopped up in the bridgehead and then moved into assembly areas. The 1st Bn assembled in WEISBADEN, the 2d Bn in BIEBRICH, and the 3d Bn in BIERSTADT.

The 318th Inf mopped up their zone of advance and went into an assembly area in the vicinity of NAURUD prepared to be motorized and follow the advance of the 6th Armd Div.

319th Inf: The 1st Bn moved by motor to KOWICSTEN and captured the town. The 2d Bn continued the attack to the NE and captured the towns of DIEDENBERGER, MARSHEIM and HOPHEIM. The 3d Bn advanced rapidly to the NE against scattered resistance and captured BAD SODEN.

The 16th Cav Gp crossed the RHINE R and was attached to the 80th Inf Div. The 19th Squadron of the 16th Cav carried out the group mission of screening the left flank of the advance of the 80th Inf Div.

30th March

The 317th Inf remained in an assembly area in the vicinity of BIEBRICH. The 318th Combat Team was attached to the 6th Armd Div.

The 319th Inf moved by motor to GROSSEN BUSECH and went into an assembly area prepared for further movement to the NE.

The 80th Cav Ren Tr reconnoitered the left flank of the zone of advance of the 80th Div. The 1st Plat captured over two thousand five hundred (2500) prisoners during the day.

31st March

The 317th and 319th Inf Regts continued to advance rapidly to the N towards the key city of KASSEL following and mopping up in the zone of advance of the 6th Arm Div. The 318th Inf remained attached to the 6th Arm Div.

During the four days, 28 March to 31 March, the 80th Inf Div established a bridgehead across the RHINE and MAIN Rivers for the XX Corps and advanced rapidly to the NE to the vicinity of KASSEL. Seven thousand six hundred and fifty-six (7556) prisoners were captured during the four days of the operation.

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