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THE BATTLE FOR MOUSSON HILL.

11th - 17th September, 1944.

American Fighter Bombers of the XIX Tactical Air Command bombed MOUSSON HILL at 1715 hours on 11th September 1944.

To prevent disclosure of the crossing, all movement of troops and equipment to position for the attack was made after darkness. A minimum essential reconnaissance of the river front and approaches to DIEULOUARD was carried out. .

12th September 1944. The 317th Inf. Regt. attacked the river line at 0400 hours. At 0433 was across the canal and at 0555 hours was across the river to establish the bridgehead. One footbridge and one infantry support bridge were completed and one heavy pontoon bridge and another infantry support bridge were in the process of construction.

By 1230 hours 318th Inf Regt. ( 2nd and 3rd Bn. ) were across in the vicinity of BEZAUMONT. The 2nd platoon were digging in behind a dirt bank by the river. Pvt. Sam Warren and my self were sent to a cross road to set up the bazooka, when we arrived another team set up on the other side of the road. We heard firing all during the night. About 0400 hours a tank approached our position, we did not know what kind it was until we heard German voices. I fired and knocked the tread off. The tank opened fire with his machine gun, Sam Warren was slightly wounded. The other team fired and finished the tank off. I sent Sam to the aid station to get his wound dressed. I was relieved at 0650 hours and returned to L Co. When I got back I was told that the 2nd platoon was over run when the Germans took the position.

With heavy casualties K.I.A W.I.A. and a number missing and captured. As the Germans marched them back to the rear a small number escaped in the darkness and returned to the company and the Bn. among them the Regt. Chaplain who was captured earlier.

13th September, 1944. The company and 2nd platoon had replacements to bring up our numbers to combat strength in anticipation for the attack on MOUSSON HILL the next day. The Division maintained its bridgehead east of the MOSELLE RIVER and opposite DIEULOUARD, against strong enemy counterattacks. The estimated strength of the enemy counterattack was two battalions of the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment with artillery and tanks.

14th September, 1944. 0130 hours, the 3rd Bn. 318th Infantry attacked north, with MOUSSON HILL as its objective. One company of the 702 Tank Bn. of medium tanks in support of the infantry. The attack progressed rapidly, ATTON was captured, and its objective was taken at 1350 hours. The enemy immediately

launched a counterattack, but was successfully repulsed. We were charging up the hill it was very steep. The Germans were firing at us with machineguns and smallarms, also using handgranades. Withering fields of crossfire, men falling all around, then hand to hand with bayonets. We finally secured the hill as night fell. Again at 2130 hours the enemy launched a counterattack. But this was successfully repulsed. During the charge up the hill we lost our company commander, Captain .I Wilkerson W.I.A. Brigadier General Edmund Searby, Division Artillery Commander, was K.I.A on MOUSSON HILL while assisting in the repulse of a German counterattack.

Hostile enemy armour was active during the day. They employed approximately 40 tanks. 22 of these tanks were reported destroyed. Pvt Sam Warren, my self and two replacements (who were drinking wine all day\*and were drunk) Formed the bazooka team and set it up.

The position we were in as far as I could see was in front of a ruined two story building with steps leading down to a cellar from the outside A brick wall about 6 foot high with an opening approximately 12 foot long 6 foot away from the side of the cellar steps on which there were sandbags facing the opening in the wall. We placed our rations and some of our gear on top of the sandbags. The two replacements were put down in the cellar to sleep it off.

Pvt. Sam Warren and myself split the watch of 1 hour on and one off, the one off watch stayed two to three steps down.

15th September, 1944. To dark, to see anything. The Germans were shelling the top of the hill from 0130 hours.

THE 3rd Bn. THE DEFENCE OF MOUSSON HILL, DURING THE NIGHT THEY USED MORTARS, ARTILLERY EVEN HORSE DRAWN FIELD GUNS. IN THE EARLY MORNING WHEN SOUND CARRIED YOU COULD HEAR THE HORSES HOOVES ON THE COBBLESTONES THE PIECES STOPPED AND UNLIMBERD, LOADED AND THE ORDER GIVEN TO FIRE.

0430 hours ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE. PVT. SAM WARREN WAS ON WATCH, I WAS 2 STEPS BELOW HIM. THEY BRACKETED OUR POSITION. PVT. WARREN CAUGHT THE FULL FORCE OF THE BLAST WHEN A SHELL LANDED ON THE EDGE OF THE STEPS. I WAS WOUNDED, SHRAPNEL IN MY LEFT HAND, I WAS TEMPORARILY BLINDED FROM THE BLAST. I CALLED FOR THE MEDIC, HE SAID THAT PVT. SAM WARREN WAS DEAD. THE MEDIC HAD THE REPLACEMENTS CARRY HIS BODY INTO THE CELLAR AS THEY WERE SOBER BY NOW.e

My sight was returning it was still very misty. The 3rd Bn. on 15th Sept. was fired at by enemy troops and tanks located at the base of the hill. Hostile artillery barrages were received on the hill at 0650, employing two tanks and infantry. This attack and other enemy counterattacks were successfully repelled. However the enemy succeeded in forcing its way into ATTON. thereby cutting off the supply route of the 3rd Bn.

AS DAWN CAME ENEMY FIRE STOPPED. A GERMAN CALLED OUT IN ENGLISH " YOU ARE SURROUNDED SURRENDER! PUT DOWN YOUR ARMS". At that moment a Sgt. opened fire and we followed suit. I believe if he had not opened fire at that time the Germans would have overrun

\* wine they had somehow found ....

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our position.

The Germans carried the attack from ATTON to the vicinity of LOISY, but were stopped there with the aid of Cannon and Headquarters Companies of the 3rd Bn. 318th Infantry, the latter not having reached MOUSSON HILL. The 1st Platoon of "B" Company 305th Engineer Combat Bn. also assisted in repelling this counterattack.

By 0900 the mist had lifted and I could see in front and side of our position the opening in the brick wall coved with chicken wire, which we cut and removed to give us a clear field of fire. Our bombed out house, no roof or first floor, just aburnt out shell were Sams body lay coved with a ground sheet. 9 foot behind the cellar steps were a pile of live mortar shells.

All our rations were ruined by the blast of the a.m. shelling. What we had was the following.:- 1 bazooka, 4 rounds bazooka ammo., 1 carbine, 3 M1 30 cal. rifles, approximately 200 rounds 30 cal. ammo., 4 bayonets and 16 handgrenades. Canteens and cups.

1040 hours a squad of Germans ran across the road to building on the other side of the opening in the brick wall about 28 foot from our position. I opened fire with the carbine, I used 2 clips, I did not hit one of them. I was deadly on target, mad and not scared, just furious at missing at that close range. Reported to the commanding officer, He sent a combat patrol with one of the tanks in support. The enemy squad were in a house to the left front of our position on the other side of the wall. Ordered them out, no reply the tank fired its 50 cal. machine gun, they came out with there hands up.

Back at our position I fired my carbine at window ledge about 30 yards away, it was 5 foot out. The sight was damaged during the shelling.

I took Sams M1 Rifle and used it until I left the company in November 1944.

Mousson Hill was effectively cut off

Hostile armour was active during the day. The enemy employed approximately 40 tanks 22 of these tanks were reported destroyed.

We were getting low on 30 cal. ammo. we used some from the tanks, included were incendiary bullets. There was an air drop of ammo and plasma by the Division spotter plane, the medics supplied sheets that were made into parachutes. No rations were dropped, very hungry and feeling very low.

16th September, 1944. a.m. I left the 2 replacements on guard, during a lull in the shelling and crossed to a house opposite where six men of K company had a fire. I found some potato peelings in a rubbish heap, borrowed a bullion powder, boiled it in my canteen cup, helped with the hunger.

Artillery again, a shell hit the house next the one we were in, a dud, we ran to the ruin. The next round they fired hit the house we had just left. The third round was a big one, a dud it hit our ruin part of the wall collapsed, I was bruised, one of the replacements had the finger of his left hand broken. We dug

him out. Took him to the Bn. aid station, had to go along a wall that was 2 foot 9 inches high about 60 foot long. There was slit trenches about every 15 feet. The wall was facing ATTON. I heard artillery and slammed him into the nearest slit trench and flopped on top of him he passed out, a shell hit the wall about 3 foot away, showered us with rock splinters and dirt. I left him at the aid station, and headed back to the ruin. more shelling. No let up, we were very tired.

1400 hours a noise in the house on the other side of the opening in the wall. Opened fire with the M1, emptied a full clip into the room it had no door, bullets ricocheted around the room. A white Flag followed by a Sgt. with his hands up. He had apparently just came into action that morning. For spoils of war, he had a pair of night glasses, also rations with him. The replacement and I finished it no time at all. As I was checking his papers we heard moaning and a German voice cry "Comrade". The Sgt. who spoke some English said the man was wounded. We told him to bring the man out to get first aid. We never saw him again, or heard the wounded German, after two hours had passed we put it down to poor communication.

The 1st Bn. 319th Infantry, was in position in the vicinity of ST. GENEVIEVE at 0550 hours, 16th September, 1944. By 0730 hours, a counterattack was repulsed. Again at 0830 hours, the enemy attacked the left flank of the Battalion from a northeasterly direction. This attack was repulsed, and patrols were sent out to engage the enemy. At 1415 hours, this Battalion began to seize ATTON and the ultimate objective of ATTON was entered at 1725 hours, cleaned out by 1750 hours. Seizure of ATTON opened a supply route to MOUSSON HILL. The 3rd Bn 318th Infantry was under heavy enemy artillery fire at 0510 hours and at 0700 hours was repelling enemy counterattacks. The Battalion held its position on the hill. The supply route was opened by 1945 hours and supplies reached the Battalion. Ambulances, loaded with food, medical supplies, and water were rushed to solve the critical shortage in supply.

17th September, 1944. a.m. I was on my way to the Bn C.P. I passed one of the men from K Company standing in a doorway he looked ill I asked him if he was all right. No answer. On the way back I stopped to talk to him and noticed his eyes had a glazed Look, he did not seem to be breathing. Called the medics. He was dead a bit of shrapnel in the side of his head. It seemed as he was falling forward his jacket caught on a hook that was in the wall (must of happened during some of the shelling) I was very tired, sick at heart about Sam Warren's death It was a matter of fate that Sam was on watch when the shell hit and I was below him at that time Off the hill in the vicinity of LOISY.

18th September 1944. 3rd Bn. occupied ST GENEVIEVE RIDGE and LANDREMONT RIDGE. I WAS SENT TO THE 305th Medical Bn. stayed with them for three days. My wound stitched up and I was treated for dysentery.

While there a Major gave me the Purple Heart.