

Counter March and Left About-To The Bulge!

The 314th left Dehlingen at 1655 on Dec. 19, and made a cold 101 miles night march to Luxembourg. Starting out in complete blackout, the Battalion moved through Sarre-Union, Puttelange, St. Avoird and Bambiderstroff to Metz. Just beyond Metz, came the order to turn on headlights. For the first time since leaving the US the Battalion drove with lights on, proceeded through Serrecourt, Maizierres-Les-Metz and Fontoy, crossed the Luxembourg border at Rumelange, then went on to Esch and the assembly area at Mondercange, arriving at 0555 on the morning of the 20th.

"For me (Chet Rutkowski), the move to Luxembourg is best remembered because of the extra men we carried. We had five extra men from the infantry in our truck. With our ammo, gas, food, and own possessions, we were well overloaded. One of the infantrymen started giving lessons on the grenade. He unscrewed the handle and cap and dumped the charge out. After reassembling it, he dropped the grenade and laughed like hell. Needless to say he only did it once."

Says Hubert Kenyon: "When the Division was sent up towards the Bulge, I had my bedroll in the back of the Cub and flew up the morning after the Battalion left. The sky was overcast with low clouds, and I was not able to fly at more than 400 to 500 feet altitude. On all roads the traffic was bumper to bumper with mounted troops, tanks, and artillery. I landed on a small field on the outskirts of Luxembourg City and tried sleeping in a house on the edge of the field. Light snow drifted in on me through holes in the roof and German artillery shells whistled overhead off and on all night, hitting approximately a quarter of a mile from where I was.

"An Anti-Aircraft unit moved in next to me during the night. I crawled out of my 'sack' just before daylight and went to my plane. German artillery shells were still whistling overhead. I didn't have radio contact with Battalion Headquarters but took off anyway. The minute I got in the air the German artillery stopped firing. Later that day the Air Section and I got together again."

When the Battalion arrived at its bivouac area, the people of Mondercange tendered it the most hospitable welcome it received anywhere in Europe. The inhabitants of this little town offered the troops beds with linen sheets, and breakfasts. They literally dragged the men in off the cold streets to eat breakfast in warm kitchens. One citizen of the town slaughtered a young hog to prepare a feast for some of the men, but, before the meal was ready, orders were received to move out.

Francis Neighly recalls: "When we arrived in Luxembourg after that long ride, I was cold and very tired. The people in the little town where we stopped were most gracious. A lady there said she had a good bed if I would like to lie down. She didn't have to offer twice, but I had no sooner accepted than we got an immediate march order, and away I went."

The Division closed in its Reserve Battle Position on Dec. 20, and received orders to prepare for an attack to the north to repel hostile forces advancing on Luxembourg City.

The 314th departed Mondercange late in the morning and passing through Leuelange, Luxembourg City, Eich and Beggen, closed into the firing positions at Weyer at 1330. The next day it displaced some seven miles to the vicinity of Schoenfels, where the CP was set up in a big chateau. That night the Division was relieved of its mission of defending Luxembourg City and ordered to attack north.

At 0600 on Dec. 22, the Division advanced northward with the 318th and 319th abreast. The 319th contacted the enemy in Merzig, and captured Merzig along with Niederfeulen. The 318th made contact with the enemy south of Ettelbruck, where heavy fighting developed. A large enemy force attempting to advance to the southwest was stopped with heavy losses of men and materiel.

To support the advancing infantry, the 314th left Schoenfels at 1020 on Dec. 22 for positions at Prettingen, and the first rounds in Luxembourg were fired from this site. Chet Rutkowski recalls: "We fired high angle fire with the proximity fuse for the first time. Unloading the ammo, carrying it to the guns, changing the fuse, all in the snow, dampness and cold with no let up in sight, was exhausting. I don't know how many rounds we fired but we sure had a pile of shell cases."

Late that afternoon, the Battalion march ordered again. While enroute to the new position an enemy TOT landed in the areas that had been selected for the batteries, so alternative sites were hastily selected a mile or so northeast of Bissen.

The Battalion After Action Report notes that in the attack towards Ettelbruck, Pfc. Eldon Crawford was killed and Lt. Arthur Lindberg, Pvt. Lewis Stallings and Pvt. Walter Mickiewicz were wounded by enemy artillery fire. All were members of "A" Btry's FO Crew.

Arthur Lindberg clearly recalls that attack. "Our attacking unit on Dec. 22, consisted of a platoon of tanks and a small group of infantrymen -- less than a platoon I would estimate. At any rate, we were stopped near Ettelbruck when the lead tank was knocked out. Because of the road system, the others could not extricate themselves. It was a clear moonlight night and around 1930, as reinforcements came up, we received heavy mortar fire. About this time Eldon Crawford was killed and I was wounded. Subsequently I learned that Louis Stallings and Walter Mickiewicz were also slightly wounded and that they each received the Bronze Star for getting me out of that situation. The last person I saw from the Battalion was John Ruyan at the Infantry Battalion CP where Louis and Walter had taken me. From then on I became the property of the Medical Corps." Art also mentioned that he was returned to the States in March 1945, and from then until August 1948, when he was discharged for disability, he was in four different Army hospitals.

The attack continued on the 23rd and some four miles of ground were gained. The 319th seized Heiderscheid and Tadlep. The 318th was given the mission of containing Ettelbruck and protecting the Division's right flank. The 317th passed through the 318th and advanced on Bourscheid.

Casualties on Dec. 23 were the highest in any one day for the 314th. Lt. Darroll Knudson was killed. Cpl. Leland Treap (for the second time) and Pfc. Sylvester Strzepek were wounded while serving in "C" Btry's FO Crew; Lt. Campbell McRae (for the second time), Pvt. Merle Heyd and T/4 Alvin Rice (A Btry) of "B" Btry's FO Crew were wounded by enemy artillery fire; Lt. John Sweeny (C Btry) who assumed Lt. Knudson's duties was wounded. Also, T/4 John Kroah (Hq Btry Ln Crew) was killed by enemy sniper fire on the outskirts of Ettelbruck when he and Pvt. John Smith (Hq Btry) were enroute with a new vehicle and radio for Capt. Nelson Curtiss, Ln O with the 3rd Bn. 318th. Pvt. Smith was reported missing in action.

Fred Reitler says: "I will always remember Lt. Knudson because he was usually the officer when I was in the forward observer crew. He often spoke about going back to his small ranch in Montana. After dark we would usually bed down in a deserted house and he would have us turn off the radio saying 'higher echelon can give us hell tomorrow but not tonight.'"

The attack on Ettelbruck is also well remembered by Leland Treap. "The weather was unseasonably cold and continued to grow colder. The frozen ground and the snow made it very difficult to dig a fox hole. On Dec. 23, we were subjected to frequent shellings by the enemy. I was in my foxhole when an airburst hit a nearby tree. I was lying on my right side with my leg bent up towards my stomach, and knew I had been hit in two places. The shell pieces went through the blankets, overcoat, across through the front of my jacket and the corner of my change purse. One piece hit my right thigh, almost at the groin, making a hole four inches long where it went in and three and a half inches where it came out. The other piece, a smaller one, entered my left side and didn't come out.

"Despite my two wounds and a shoe full of blood, I could walk so I took off down a hill for about a half a mile to an infantry First Aid Station. A jeep driver, who was scared and wanted to get out of there, took me and several others that had been wounded in the same shelling, back to a Field Hospital.

"I walked into the receiving tent and sat on a bench. As time passed many others came in, some walking, some on stretchers. Finally, I asked when they were going to get around to me and they said they didn't know anything was wrong. When I stood up after all that time I couldn't walk any more. They carried me into a room where they tended to the wounded and, when they saw what was wrong with me, cut off my clothes and dressed my leg and side. Then I was put on a stretcher and carried into a tent where I was placed on the frozen ground along side of many others on stretchers. We spent many hours there and it was cold. Very cold.

"Four days later in a Paris hospital, the field dressing was removed and they worked on my leg and side. I spent three months in the hospital and another in physical therapy, returning to the 314th about April 2, just in time to go into Austria and 'sweat out' being sent to Japan."

"Near Ettelbruck", says Mike Zizaro, "we had our planes tied down in a field and the defilade was excellent. Our quarters were in a nearby stone

building. Suddenly we were being shelled. Not too far away we could see a tall tower from which, we believed, someone was directing artillery fire on our planes. One shell almost hit our planes and one exploded on the roof of our building causing the ceiling to come down on us. Rebensdorf, Robinson, Zellner and I were showered with ceiling fragments but none of us were seriously injured. Then the shelling stopped as suddenly as it began. Someone must have gotten to the person directing the artillery fire. We relocated our planes and everything was normal again."

On the morning of Dec. 24, the Germans launched a counterattack on Heiderscheid, which was repulsed by the 319th. The 3rd Bn. 318th continued to contain the enemy forces in Ettelbruck when the 1st and 2nd Bns were withdrawn and given the mission of proceeding with the 4th Armored Division to relieve the US troops cut off in Bastogne. Although the 314th remained in position to support the 3rd Bn., Capt. Frederick Maxted, Liaison Officer with Regimental Headquarters, stayed with the liaison section which accompanied the 1st and 2nd Bns.

Late that afternoon, the 314th displaced from Bissen to an area called Carlshof, about two miles northwest of Berg, where it remained until Jan. 20. The CP was located in a farm house which belonged to the Grand Duchess of Luxembourg. Before leaving Bissen, the Battalion witnessed an "aerial dog fight" that took place immediately over its area. One German FW-190 was shot down. The pilot bailed out only to land in the waiting arms of the Division's MPs.

Also on this Christman Eve, T/5 Gilbert Farnell (C Btry), serving as a radio operator with a forward observer crew, had a miraculous escape when a sniper's bullet struck his helmet, ripping a large gash in it but inflicting only a slight wound in Gilbert's head.

The white Christmas of '44 wasn't exactly what Irving Berlin had in mind when he wrote the song made famous by Bing Crosby. The 317th and 319th, continuing the attack towards Kehmen, Bourscheid and Ringel met heavy resistance in deep snow and extremely rugged terrain. The 314th participated in a number of heavy artillery concentrations on Ettelbruck, which finally forced enemy troops to vacate the town. Otherwise there was little activity throughout the Battalion except for the enjoyment of the excellent meals prepared for the day. The traditional turkey dinner was served, and a period was devoted to religious services.

The day after Christmas, the 317th continued to attack Kehmen, the 319th held the ground previously gained and outposted the Sure River, and the 3rd Bn 318th maintained its defensive positions in the vicinity of Ettelbruck. The 314th was delighted to see Pvt. John Smith (Hq Btry), who returned to the Battalion after having hidden for three days in the town of Ettelbruck while it was occupied by German forces.

Also on this day a patrol from the 2nd Bn 318th, which was attached to the 4th Armored, made contact with troops in Bastogne and brought back to the 4th Armored, an overlay of the positions of the 101st Airborne Division and other troops within the city.



Only good thing about winter is things don't stink like in the Summertime

The area around Berg is well remembered. Francis Neighly says: "One night in the snow while making a run from the CP to the gun batteries, Harry Tylicki (Sv Btry) and I ran into what we thought was an infantry patrol. They wanted to know the password and Harry gave it to them. They started talking and Harry said: 'Get this blankety blank jeep the hell out of here and get going fast. They're going to knife us.' When I asked how he knew, he said: 'They're speaking Polish. They're Germans.' Needless to say we tore out of there in a hurry."

An incident Bill Wilkinson says he hasn't forgotten "was at that farm house CP. The Motor Section was using the second floor for sleeping quarters and underneath us the portable generator of the CP was running. The fumes from the gasoline engine came up the steps and almost eliminated us one night.

"When Coy Burton came off guard duty, he woke me up. From the heavy fumes I knew right away we had to get out into the fresh air quick and told him to get everyone up. I was so overcome I never remembered going down the last few steps. I stayed at the CP all the next day with a splitting headache."

Beginning with the Division's attack on Dec. 22, some 16 miles of ground were gained, 20 tanks destroyed, and 1,682 prisoners captured. The threat to Luxembourg City was eliminated.

On Dec. 27, the Division reverted to XII Corps and was ordered to take up defensive positions. Except for local attacks by the respective regiments to extend the MLR to the south of the Sure and west of the Sauer Rivers and repulsing some counterattacks, there were no major engagements until Jan. 20.

The Bn. After Action Report notes that Pfc. Alex Long (D Btry) was wounded on Dec. 29.

During the month of December, the 314th fired a total of 13,845 rounds, most of which were in Luxembourg. This brought the grand total for the five months since landing in France to 45,815.

On New Year's Day, 1945, the Division was maintaining defensive positions south of the Sure and west of the Sauer Rivers. From its position at Carlshof, the 314th continued in direct support of the 318th, which defended Ettelbruck and high ground in the vicinity. There was little activity during the day and the traditional turkey dinner was served.

Russell Litchfield remembers: "I felt guilty during the Bulge knowing that the infantry and our FO Crews were sleeping in the snow and, for the first time, we were in warm houses. Sometimes we even slept in feather beds at the insistence of the grateful Luxembourg people, who often fed us as well. I remember especially a venison banquet on New Years evening at Prettingen, at a house across the street from the Church."

Tom Haynie recalls: "During the Battle of the Bulge, our gun section was sent out from the other guns on a direct fire mission. Early in the evening we were returning to the battery position when we were stopped by an MP at a

checkpoint. T/5 John Hix was the driver and Sgt. Carl Luckenbill was in the cab with him. When we were stopped, Luckenbill opened the door on his side of the cab and in his 'Dutch' accent started asking if anyone in the back knew the password. The MP came to port arms. Then someone in the truck shouted: 'Hell, Lucky, you are the kind of people he is looking for. You had better shut up and let one of us talk to him!' The MP sure had a strange look on his face."

On Jan. 7, 1st Lt. Carl Moore, Pfc. Thomas Nagle, Pfc. Alex Long and Pfc. Ernest Heath, all of "D" Btry, were awarded the Purple Heart for wounds previously received.

Jan. 9 began quietly, but ended dramatically for "Hq" Btry. In the CP farm house, about 1930, fire broke out in the right wing above the Message Center. The fire was of such intensity that it obviously would take time to extinguish. March order seemed prudent. In ten minutes everyone was ready to leave. However, no enemy artillery fire had been received. The enemy either had no observation on that point or was not concerned with the fire. It was decided to remain in position. Efforts to extinguish the flames were successful and by midnight they had been brought under control. The trucks were unloaded and the CP set up again.

"It was a quiet, cold night sometime after Christmas in Luxembourg," says Col. Minahan, "when in the barn which housed the Hq Message Center someone accidentally knocked over a Coleman lantern. In no time the hayloft above was on fire. Then some hand grenades that former occupying Germans had left behind, unbeknown to us, started exploding. Several people were injured.

"As the fire spread and lit up the night, I ordered that the CP be moved outside into tents in case the whole farm house caught fire. Also, the situation could attract German artillery fire.

"Fortunately, a bucket brigade, using the courtyard pump, and ably assisted by our host, the Luxembourg tenant farmer who rented from the Grand Duchess, put the fire out. By daybreak we had moved the CP back inside, but it sure smelled terrible around there for several days."

This incident is also recalled by Francis Neighly who says: "One night Sgt. (Eugene) Killen and I went to the infantry CP to deliver some messages. Coming back the snow was so deep I couldn't see the road. The windshield was down and all I could go by to keep the jeep on the road was to watch the tree line along the side. When we got back to the CP, I went into the barn to sit down. I was so cold I could hardly talk. Killen went into the Message Center and someone opened the door on my side and yelled: 'Turn those damned lights out!' When I said there were no lights on he barked: 'There's a damned bright light on!' Then I looked up and saw that the haypile in the loft above was on fire. I grabbed everything within reach. I guess everyone at the Message Center grabbed what they could and carried it out of the barn. By then the barn was burningly intensely. Fortunately, the barn was constructed mostly of stone and cement and that part didn't burn. It was just the hay loft in the one shed that was destroyed."

Ray Porreca tells us: "One evening when we were near Berg I caught a ride up to one of the batteries to do some personnel work and play a little blackjack. The game lasted longer than expected and I found myself stranded with no transportation back to the CP. It was a very cold night and too far to walk in the pitch black. Looking around the only place I could find to sack out was in a nearby barn on some straw between two cows.

"Sometime later I was rudely awakened by an inebriated member of the battery with 'Ray, Ray, get up, you have to help me.' Naturally I jumped up and followed him to a nearby three quarter ton truck. Aboard the truck was a huge bottle about three feet high (believe it would be called a demijohn) of white liquid. The emergency -- tilt the bottle so that he could drink from the mouth. When he was through I politely refused my turn and returned sober to my cows."

During this relatively inactive interlude the Battalion devoted time to the improvement of the gun positions and enjoyed a daily schedule of motion pictures. On the 14th, a prize of a quart of Scotch Whiskey, donated and awarded by Col. Minahan for the best gun section in the Battalion, was won by the 2nd Section of "C" Btry. The next day another prize, this time a quart of Cognac, was awarded for the best kitchen within the Battalion and, again, "C" Btry was the winner.

On Jan. 15, the 314th fired its 50,000th round against the enemy without fanfare or flourishes to mark the occasion.

Frank Budjoso says he almost left the 314th twice overseas. "The first time was right after the Battle of the Bulge had quieted down somewhat. I had a bad cold so I went to the Medics to get something for it. It was supposed to be an elixer of Terpent-hydrate and codine. All of the medicine bottles were brown and the same size, but each one was labeled. The Medics were listening to the radio and we were all 'kidding around.' Someone reached up and got a bottle and poured the contents into a paper cup, to about one-third full, and I drank it down. All of a sudden, I began to feel funny and the last thing I heard was someone saying 'Hey, he's not kidding.' It was an ether linament they had given me by mistake and I just conked out.

"The next thing I knew I was being packed, not into an ambulance, but onto a litter and strapped on the top of a jeep which then went slipping and sliding down the road. When I came to again I was at an Aid Station at the bottom of the hill. They were supposed to evacuate me further back. I was in and out of consciousness.

"Finally, after several other stops, I ended up in a hospital in Luxembourg City. That ether linament was a stiff jolt. I was there a week. At the end of my recouperation they gave me new clothes and told me to wait in the lobby for transportation. When I asked if I was going back to my outfit, they said they didn't think so but I would be going to an outfit. That didn't sit too well with me for I loved the 314th and besides all my stuff was back there. So I waited for an opportunity to sneak out the door, ran as fast as I could out to the road, and went into Luxembourg City.

"After visiting the market, hitting a couple of beer joints, stopping in a bakery for coffee and pastry, and having dinner with a nice young lady, I went into a CP and asked if they knew where the 80th was. Upon learning that it was about 30 or 40 miles up the road, I started to hitch hike. Fortunately, I caught a ride in an ambulance and the driver said he was going right by the 80th. When we got there the first place I headed was the 314th CP so I could tell Maj. Roark how and why I had gone AWOL from the hospital. I remember so well, he said 'Good boy, Budjoso, we need more soldiers like you.'"

"It was some time in January of '45," recalls Col. Minahan, "that the same CP farm house was bombed by our own Air Force. A B-17, hit by anti-aircraft fire while over Germany dumped its load while limping back to England. The bombs coming down made a noise like a red hot poker being shoved into cold water. Ops. Sgt. Bill Cooper and I almost knocked ourselves out when we banged heads while diving under the same kitchen table for cover. Fortunately, the bomb fuzes had not been armed, probably because the pilot knew he was flying over friendly territory. As I recall we suffered no casualties, but two Hq vehicles were destroyed."

After holding defensive positions for some three weeks, the 318th launched an attack at 1600 on Jan. 20 and took the town of Burden. The 314th then displaced from Carlshof, near Berg, to Niederfeulen to support an attack on an area south of the Sure River between Ringelerhof and Bourscheid.

The next day the 318th seized Welschied and Bourscheid and the 317th took Kehmen. That day Division Artillery fired 105 concentrations.

Two days later (the 23rd) the 317th attacked to the east of Wiltz toward the Clerf River. The 319th advanced to the north, crossed the Wiltz River and captured several villages. The 318th held defensive positions between Kehmen and Bourscheid.

The 314th displaced (some 16 miles) from Niederfeulen to Erpaldange on Jan. 24, to provide general support and reinforce the fires of the 313th FA for the 317th's continued attack east of Wiltz. The 24th was a day of celebration for the Air Section for S/Sgt. Gerry Rebensdorf received his commission as a Second Lieutenant. As the advance continued, the Battalion moved on the 26th to Lellingen.

On Jan. 27, the attacking regiment was expanded into Task Force Summers to press the attack to the east. The TF was composed of the 317th Inf., the 1st Bn. 318th, the 313th and 314th FA Bns, the 80th Recon Troop and the 702 Tank Bn. Jumping off at 0130 the TF seized Neidhausen, Marburg, Dorscheid and Bockholz, as well as the high ground west of Hosingen. In the days action Sgt. Claude Salmon, Pfc. Ira Blake and Pvt. Omer Matheny were wounded. All were members of "A" Btry's FO Crew.

"It was just after we had left the Ettelbruck area," Hubert Kenyon recalls, "that the engineers plowed a runway for the Cubs in a big snow covered field. Near the tree lines and out in the field were many small snow covered mounds. We were warned not to venture too far out as the area was

probably mined. One venturesome person walked over to several of these little mounds and kicked the snow off. They were dead German soldiers."

The next day, the 23th, Task Force Summers was dissolved and all 80th Division elements in the Wiltz area were relieved and began moving to the 4th Infantry Division sector between Diekirch and Echternach. The 314th left Lellingen at 0800 and proceeded in a southeasterly direction some 36 miles to an area about one-half mile north of Haller. The positions the Battalion occupied were those vacated by the 44th FA Bn of the 4th Infantry Division and were already prepared and complete with wire communications and OP's. (Once in a while even the old blind sow gets an acorn).

The Battalion After Action Report notes that on Jan. 29, Pvt. Fred Conatser and George Schwaeble, both of "A" Btry and Harold Van Steenburgh ("D" Btry), were wounded.

Also on the 29th passes to Luxembourg City were authorized and a quota of four to take a four day rest period in Nancy, France was received.

From Jan. 29 through Feb. 6, the 80th Div. held the line from the highground northwest of Diekirch to Haller. During this period active patrolling probed the Siegfried Line defenses across the Our and Sauer Rivers. These patrols were hampered by the swift current in the two swollen rivers and by enemy mine fields on the far bank. Division Artillery fired some 174 missions, principally harassing and interdiction.

Jim Trestik recalls: "In Luxembourg, we moved to a new position in a valley and I believe it was near Haller. There were a few buildings and a barn. Manure in the barn was about a foot and a half deep and very dry. Tired and cold, it was here that I spread out my bedroll for the night.

"In the yard there was a large rock, about three feet long, two feet wide and a foot and a half high. Some of us used it for our chow table. One morning about 10 o'clock a shell came in and hit the rock right in the center. At the time I was working on a jeep about 75 yards away. Knowing there were a couple of foxholes close by, I took off on the run for them. When close enough I jumped and as I did I saw someone was already in the hole."

The Bn. After Action Report notes that on Feb. 5, Cpl. William Goertzen and Pfc. Manford Mankomyer were killed and Pfc. Norman Cole and Pfc. Edward Tur were wounded by a mine explosion. All were members of "D" Btry.

The attack to cross the Our and Sauer Rivers and breach the Siegfried Line began on Feb. 7. At 0300, following a forty minutes artillery preparation, the 318th began crossing the Sauer in assault boats some 500 yards north of Dillingen. Lt. William Martin and the "B" Btry FO Crew, with the forward infantry elements, were the first members of the 314th to cross the river into Germany.

Elements of the 319th crossed the Our River north of Wallendorf and also succeeded in establishing a bridgehead. Additional crossings there had to be postponed due to heavy mortar fire and the loss of assault boats in the swift current. Moreover, the village of Hoesdorf, through which supplies and equipment had to pass, was under continuous artillery and mortar bombardment so that it was not possible to bring additional materiel forward. All attempts to place foot bridges across the Our and Sauer had to be abandoned.

In support of the attack, Div Arty fired 269 missions. These fires were reinforced by the 410th FA Group. For this operation the 314th had under its control a total of 71 artillery pieces.

The next day the 318th continued to cross the Sauer in assault boats. The greater part of the 3rd Bn was successful in reaching the east bank and assisted the 2nd in clearing the woods and high ground overlooking the crossing site. As they expanded the bridgehead more fortified positions were encountered and reduced.

Meanwhile, the 319th continued to improve its position on the highground northeast of Walldendorf and additional troops managed to cross the Our under cover of darkness and capture the town. Bridging operations at both crossing sites continued to be held up by heavy enemy fire and the swift currents which precluded anything lighter than a Class 40 bridge being constructed.

The Bn. After Action Report notes that on Feb. 8, Cpl. Kyle Noe, T/4 Rudolph Kudlacek and Pfc. Herschel Lashbrook, all of "Hq" Btry, were wounded when a shell hit their truck while they were laying wire to the infantry.

On Feb. 9, the 2nd and 3rd Bns 318th continued to expand and mop up the Dillingen bridgehead. By early afternoon the 1st Bn completed the crossing and immediately attacked north gaining nearly a mile through thick woods. In the action T/5 Elmer Simmons was wounded (for the second time) while serving with "B" Btrys FO Crew, and "Hq" Btry's Wire Crew members, T/4 Harold Hogan and Pfc. Orville Harvey, were wounded when a shell hit near their truck.

In the evening at approximately dinner time, the CP area was shelled by enemy guns and a total of 85 rounds were received in an hour.

As the attack continued the next day (Feb. 10) Lt. John Simonson, "C" Btry FO, was killed by shell fragments and Pvt. Edward Daley of "A" Btry's FO Crew was wounded.

That afternoon an unfamiliar kind of crisis precipitated much excitement in the CP area, which had been located alongside a small stream, when a dam upstream broke sending a flood of water cascading down hill toward the CP.

The situation was brought under control, however, and no serious damage was caused.

John Beard recalls: "The crossing of the Our and Sauer Rivers was preceded by several days of torrential rain which, coupled with the melting snow, created flooding and knee deep mud. At the time I was serving as liaison with the 6th Cavalry Group, on the 80th's left flank. The 6th was to cross at Vianden, just north of the 80th's sector.

"Because of the raging waters and unrelenting rain, to say nothing of the persistent heavy shelling by the Germans, the work of the engineers in constructing a bridge was not progressing as rapidly as was desired. To help speed up the construction by giving the engineers more 'working time' after dark, several giant searchlights of the type used in AA defense were set up several miles to the rear. The beam of these lights directed on the low hanging clouds created an eerie twilight effect along the river area and provided enough light for the engineers to continue their task after daylight hours."

Following an artillery preparation on the morning of Feb. 11, the 318th attacked and captured Biesdorf, and having completely penetrated the fortified zone, turned south to mop up those Siegfried Line defenses that had been by-passed in the attack to the north. In the days action 1st Sgt. Thomas Pullin (Hq Btry), while serving as an FO, was seriously injured by an enemy shell burst.

In the afternoon, the 314th displaced from north of Haller to about a mile north of Beaufort.

Attacking northward on Feb. 12, the 318th secured the high ground south of Cruchten and contacted the 319th at Wallendorf, to join the two bridgeheads. A Class 40 Treadway bridge was completed at Wallendorf strengthening the bridgehead in the 319th's sector.

By Feb. 13 a firm bridgehead had been established across both rivers. Completion of a Class 40 Treadway bridge at Dillingen on this day put two bridges in operation. All organized resistance from the defenses of the Siegfried Line in the 80th's zone had been smashed, and the Division prepared to push on to the east. It is interesting to note that the 80th's successful attack through the Siegfried Line was accomplished by the infantry without the support of tanks or tank destroyers operating in their primary role. Artillery served as an effective substitute and in this operation Division Artillery fired some 1075 missions. The 702nd TX Bn, the 811th TD Bn and the 633rd AAA Bn, under Division Artillery control, provided additional direct and indirect fire.

During the expansion and mopping up actions, Lt. Curtis Andrews (C Btry FO) was wounded by machine gun fire and captured by the enemy. He was recaptured later when the infantry overran the enemy's position. At the same time Pvt. Leon Brainard, of "C" Btry's FO Crew, was wounded by rifle fire.

For the next few days, the Division continued to expand and improve positions and eliminate resistance in isolated pillboxes. On Feb. 15, Pfc. Orville Harvey (for the second time) and Pfc. Paul McAndrew, both of "Hq" Btry, and Pfc. Clarence Sheriff (D Btry) were wounded by enemy shell fire. The 314th remained in position near Beaufort in support of infantry attacks in the vicinity of Cruchten.

"It was in this area," Bill Wilkinson recalls, "that Joe Donovan asked me if I would go up front and get a jeep that was pretty well beaten up. This was Paul McAndrew's liaison jeep. So Jim Trestik and I took our maintenance truck and found it sitting, all four tires flat, in a very hot spot with rockets and shells bursting all around at close range. I told Trestik to throw a tow rope around the bumper and it didn't take very long for us to get away from there. Back in the Battery area we couldn't find a hole in any of the four flat tires. Apparently, the air had been knocked out of them by shell concussion."

Paul McAndrew observes that: "We had good times and bad. Thank heavens we can sit back now and get a laugh out of all of them."

"One of the highlights of my time in Europe was right after I had been wounded near Cruchten and was given a three day pass to Paris. I packed my bag with candy and cigarettes and had \$165.00 in cash. I went to Paris, slept in the best places I could find, ate the best food available, and drank the best booze around."

"The third night I ended up in a bar in 'Pig Alley' (Rue de Pigalle) and was sitting on one of those stools that spin around, having a drink, and minding my own business. There were three or four Frenchmen in the place and one of them picked my pocket. I spun around and hit one of them along side the ear and figured, 'Oh God, now I'm going to have to have it out with all four of them. All of a sudden the door opened and in walked two big paratroopers. One of them said: 'It looks like you need help' and I replied 'I sure do.' We won the fight but landed in jail. I mean the big one, the Bastille, where we were given overnight accommodations. There was a GI there who had been there before and he advised everyone to plead guilty and 'The Major' would just fine us 'ten bucks' and order us to get out of town by midnight."

"The next morning I was called in to the court, or whatever they called it, but instead of 'The Major' there sat a Captain. I pleaded 'guilty' and he looked up and said 'How come everybody pleads guilty.' I told him that was the advice we had been given. He then started asking me questions after reading my chart. The charges were" Drunk and Disorderly, Speech Incoherent, Staggered When He Walked, Inciting a Riot and Resisting Arrest. The Captain remarked that I was 'a nasty little guy when I had a few.' He then asked about 'Resisting Arrest' and the MP Sergeant that had arrested me was there at court. I told the Captain that I was about five feet, four inches tall and weighted 116 pounds and I guessed that the arresting Sergeant would be at least six feet tall and weigh close to 200 lbs. The Captain asked the MP for verification, and he said I was close but he was a little taller and weighed a

few pounds more. The Captain ruled 'Not Guilty' but told me to be out of Paris by midnight.

"I arrived back at Headquarters Battery the next morning with my \$165.00 and 8 bottles of Hennessy Cognac. It was a good three day pass. I enjoyed every minute of it, even in jail."

On Feb. 18, following an artillery preparation, the 317th attacked and reached the high ground south of Nussbaum and the 318th seized Cruchten and the high ground to the west. In the attack 1st Lt. Llewellyn Farden (C Btry FO) was wounded by shell fragments.

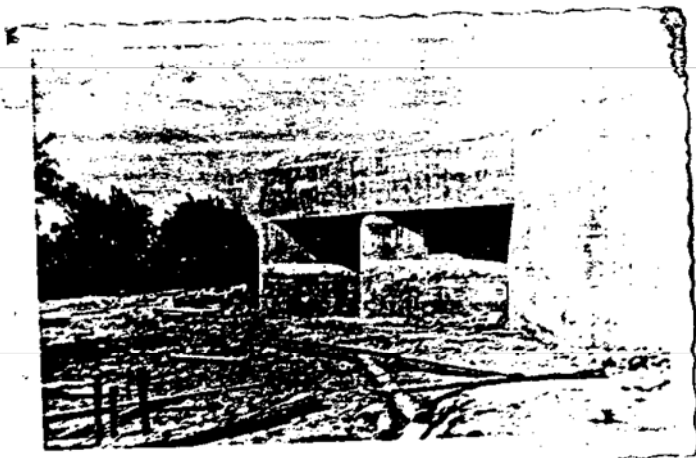
"A curious thing happened to me (John Beard) in the vicinity of Cruchten. The infantry I was with had just taken a wooded ridge, which I believe ran east and west, just northeast of the town. The hill was 'L' shaped and made a sharp 90 degree turn to the right rear so it was east as well as northeast of Cruchten. This eastern part of the hill was treeless. It was raining and I walked out on this bare section to see if I could find a suitable spot for an OP. Some distance out I crept up to the crest and immediately dropped to the ground. Not more than a hundred yards in front of me below the slope was a German gun battery. It must not have been aware of our rapid advance. Neither was whoever was supposed to be covering our flank. As I crawled back over the crest, the rain which had been moderate up to that time suddenly started coming down in torrents. I tried in vain to contact my Liaison Crew with the 'walkie-talkie'. There weren't any infantrymen around, although there should have been a squad or two outposting that flank. As I laid there pondering what I should do and cursing the 'walkie-talkie', a soaking wet fox ran right up to me, stopped, looked, then ran on. I could have touched it. I guess he just wanted to see another creature as wet, miserable and frustrated as he was. Anyhow, the deluge soon let up and I crawled back up to the crest to get another look at the battery. It was gone. It must have been in the process of march order when I first spotted it and departed during the four or five minute deluge. Over the years I have often wondered whatever happened to the poor wet fox."

The attack north and east in the direction of Bitburg continued until the 23rd. The Division seized the towns of Nussbaum, Hommerdingen, Mettendorf, Huttingen and numerous others within its zone. During the attack on Feb. 19, 1st Lt. Harold Marsh, T/5 Edward Baratta and Pfc. Merle Heyd, all members of "B" Btry's FO Crew, were killed by enemy artillery fire. Elbert Custer was a part of that FO Crew and recalls: "I was with Lt. Marsh's crew and except for a stroke of fate would have been in the foxhole with them. As it was, I had gone to the jeep for something and was almost back when the Germans opened up on us. I hit the ground. When the shelling was over I got up and could not believe what I saw."

"In the fighting to take Bitburg," recalls Col. Minahan, "the 314th FA Bn. suffered many casualties, including the loss of one complete FO Team from 'B' Btry. I never did appreciate all the ruckus raised in the news media about President Regan's going to the joint U.S.-German services at Bitburg cemetery. It was due to the 80th Div., that, after very tough but fair fighting, most of those Germans ended up there."

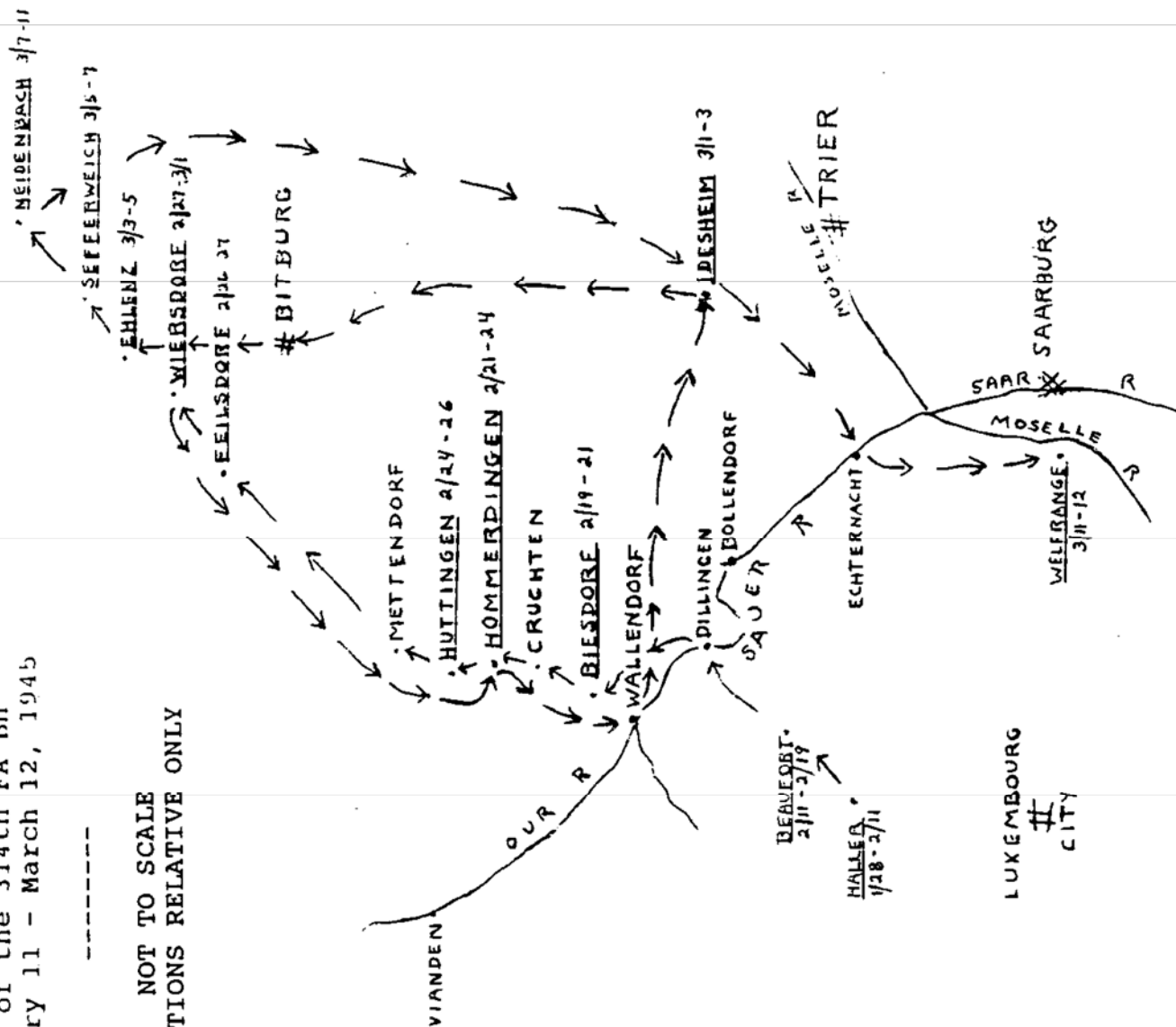
On Feb. 17, "D" Btry displaced across the Our River to be the first 314th Battery on German soil. The rest of the Battalion left Beaufort on Feb. 19, crossed the Our River, and displaced 7 miles to positions in the vicinity of Biesdorf. On Feb. 21, the 314th moved 3 miles to the vicinity of Hommerdingen.

On Feb. 16, Clarence Castetter was wounded while serving with "D" Btry's FO Crew. The next day, Warren Manning (D Btry) was seriously wounded by shell fragments.



Path of the 314th FA Bn
February 11 - March 12, 1945

NOT TO SCALE
LOCATIONS RELATIVE ONLY



"While we were at Hommerdingen," remembers Col. Minahan, "each 80th Div Arty Battalion was issued a British 24 pounder, directed to train a gun crew to man it, then rotate it among the batteries. In the 314th, I assigned the project to "B" Btry. For awhile the gun was a novelty and provided a change of pace. Then it became a darn nuisance. It complicated the ammo supply problem. It was a real chore to lay with an aiming circle, because the traversing and elevating drums were graduated in degrees rather than mils, so the Btry Exec and the gunner had to constantly refer to conversion tables. It could only be used for interdictory fires, because the powder charges did not match the 105's powder charges in range. I never did learn why we got it. Maybe it was to confuse the Germans into thinking Montgomery had managed to cut through from the north to the south side of the Bulge. I can't remember how we got rid of it. Maybe some battery just left it behind when displacing."

"Sometime in February," says Frank Lankford, "I was told to go back to the Corps Depot and pick up a British howitzer. Enroute, while riding down one of the main roadways on the outskirts of Luxembourg City, we were stopped by an MP who asked for the password for that day. Back in our area we went from battery to battery without thinking about the password. Everyone knew everyone else by sight, so why bother. I don't remember ever having had to give one. Anyway, I told the MP we had left our battery area before the password came down. He was too wise for that one and asked what it was yesterday. I was really stumped. I wanted to show him my dog tags, but he insisted upon seeing my Identification Card which had my picture and fingerprints on it."

"I was dressed in a tankers outfit over my regular OD's with a trenchcoat over all that, with my ID in my wallet in the back pocket of my 'OD's.' I had to do a lot of unzipping. Darned near stripped trying to get it and show it. Finally, he let me pass."

On Feb. 22, the 4th Armored Division crossed the Our River using the 80th's bridgehead and attacked to the east.

From Hommerdingen, the 314th displaced to Huttingen on Feb. 24, in support of the 318th's attack to seize Mettendorf and secure a crossing over the Enz River.

Hubert Kenyon recalls: "We were told that the German artillery did most of their firing just before darkness and after the Cubs went home for the night. A 'Search Light' unit was brought in to light up a field for us. The first night we were able to pick up more targets than we could fire on in the last ten to fifteen minutes of daylight. The second and third nights we would register on each target as fast as we could and the artillery would fire for effect after the Cubs left the sky. The 'Search Light' unit would turn on their lights just long enough for our wheels to touch the ground and then would cut the light."

Francis Neighly recollects: "About the third or fourth position after we crossed the Our River, I was able to do all of the things required to fire a 105 by myself. When we went into position that afternoon, I fired the base registration and marked the data on the shield. Late that night when Lt.

(John) Goll (Btry. Exec.) called for the harassing mission, I told him it wasn't necessary to awaken the others, I would handle it myself. At the time I did not know that several other registrations had been fired and the data also recorded on the shield and that I should have used the settings for one of them. Anyway, a few minutes after the mission was fired, the skyline out in front of us looked like the fourth of July. In seconds, Lt. Goll was beside me and looked at the instrument readings and said 'Oh, Oh! You used the wrong data. You used the data for the first registration. Wow!' We must have hit something big! Under the circumstances we decided to keep 'mum' on what happened."

"At breakfast he told me Div Arty was interested in what was hit last night and that the infantry had sent out a patrol to check. It was a German convoy carrying ammunition that was moving through the cross roads which had been our first registration point. Since we were supposed to have been shooting somewhere else, no one knew who had fired."

Francis also recalls that it was somewhere in the same area that: "I was on my way to the 318th CP when a large fleet of airplanes came overhead. More planes than I had ever seen at one time. Then they started bombing a town up ahead. I got off the road to watch. At first, all I could see was black smoke, then I could see fire coming up through the smoke. In a little while the whole area was engulfed in black smoke and you couldn't see anything."

"When I returned to the 314th, I told the people in the Message Center that I had seen something unbelievable. Then Col. Minahan came out and got a map of the area and said the town was probably Bitburg. It must have been the one because when we went through Bitburg days later the town was just one big pile of rubble."

A change of sectors was made on Feb. 26 and the Battalion displaced some 12 miles through Mettendorf and Baustart to a position one-half mile south of Feilsdorf. The next day it displaced 10 miles to the vicinity of Wiersdorf. After occupation it was discovered that this area had not been entirely cleared of the enemy as reported by the 4th Armored. In fact, the 314th actually constituted the front lines at this point. In spite of the precarious unorthodox situation, it was decided to remain in position and to "shoot it out" should the enemy attack. Accordingly, the Battalion drew up a set of defensive fires in defense of its own positions in which the rear battery would fire on call of the most forward battery. Local security and cannoneers awaited the chance to employ carbines and machine guns, but the enemy failed to attack. A few interdicting rounds did fall in the area but no damage was caused. The Battalion remained in this position reinforcing the fires of the 313th until Mar. 1.

During February the Battalion fired a total of 759 missions using some 21,192 rounds.

From Mar. 1 to 9, the Division protecting the north flank of XII Corps, occupied and mopped up the area west of the Kyll River and north of Bitburg. The 4th Armored Division, passed through the 80th, crossed the Kyll River and dashed eastward to reach the Rhine north of Koblenz. At no time during this period was the 80th heavily engaged.

On Mar. 1, the 314th's mission changed from general support of the Division to direct support of the 318th Inf when CT 318 was attached to the 76th Infantry Division. The Battalion displaced from Wiersdorf to an assembly area in the vicinity of Hommerdingen, and later moved to Idesheim. The next day the 318th was on the line with the 76th Division, and the 314th fired a few missions.

On Mar. 3, CT 318 was relieved from attachment to the 76th Div. and returned to 80th control, at which time the 314th moved some 21 miles north to Ehlenz. From there on Mar. 5, it displaced to Sefferweich, then to Neidenbach on the 7th where it remained until Mar. 11.

X

Bracketing the Palatinate, Luxembourg to the Rhine

On Mar. 10, the Division was released from the XII Corps and attached to XX Corps. Movement in a southerly direction to the east bank of the Saar River opposite Saarburg was completed the next day and on Mar. 12 assault units moved up to their jump off positions.

With the transfer of the Division to XX Corps, the 314th left Neidenbach on Mar. 11 and proceeded some 65 miles to an assembly area at Welfrange, Luxembourg, and on Mar. 12, crossed the Saar River back into Germany. The 314th took up firing positions at Irsch, to support the 318th's attack on the Stats Forest and the Zefer Forest southeast of Irsch.

Making the major effort of the XX Corps, the 80th attacked to the east out of the Saarburg bridgehead at 0300 on Mar. 13. In support of the advance the 314th displaced some five miles from Irsch to Zerf on the 14th. On Mar. 15, when the 2nd Bn 318th reached Weiskirchen it was cut off by the enemy. Once