

AFTER ACTION REPORT
318TH INFANTRY REGIMENT
DECEMBER 1944

On 1 December the Regiment was occupying a defensive position in the vicinity of SENGBUSCH, FRANCE. The Regiment occupied the right half of the Division Sector. The 2d Battalion on the right was in the vicinity of HENRI-VILLE. The 1st Battalion on the left held the high ground just west of PFARREBERSWEILER. The 3d Battalion in Reserve was in SENGBUSCH with the Command Post and Antitank Company in GENWEILER and the Cannon Company in MACHERN. On the 1st and 2d of December both assault Battalions sent both daylight and night patrols to probe the enemy's outpost line, to determine possible tank crossings over the railroad and creeks which provided natural barriers in front of the enemy's lines. The 3d of December was spent in compressing the 1st and 2d Battalion Sectors together, preparatory to the jump-off on the 4th. Regimental Field Order Number 15 was issued to all Battalions, Special Units, and Attachments. Preparations were made to move out 040730A with the 1st Battalion on the left, the 2d on the right, and the 3d in reserve.

The attack was preceded by both Corps and Division Artillery preparation, by concentrations from the mortars of the reserve Battalion of the 319th Infantry, mortars from all three (3) organic heavy weapons Companies, by direct fire from Company B, 808 Tank Destroyer Battalion, and fifteen (15) 50 caliber machine guns which came from the 319th Infantry. Also, all the above fires were kept on the Hill Objectives until just before the troops took them with the result that casualties were exceptionally low - approximately sixty (60) for the entire Regiment.

The 1st Battalion attacked through PFARREBERSWEILER and had captured Hills 326, 316, and 342 in addition to the town of COCHERN by 1325. The 2d Battalion captured THEDINGEN and was on its Objective, Hill 373, by 1220. The supporting fires of Company C, 610 Tank Destroyer Battalion and Companies A and B of the 702d Tank Battalion made the job much easier. Company B of the tanks was attached to the 1st Battalion, Company A and Company C, 610 Tank Destroyer Battalion were attached to the 2d Battalion. The 3d Battalion in reserve, was not committed and moved into THEDINGEN at 1815. Before night-fall road blocks were set-up covering all likely tank approaches.

The 5th of December was spent organizing the defense of the newly taken area. During the night a patrol from the 1st Battalion had the distinction of being the first Infantry Unit of the 80th Division to operate on German soil.

Upon the 80th Division going into rest area, the 318th Infantry moved into FREYTHAM on the 7th of December for rest, training, and recreational diversion.

The training that took place during the eight (8) days spent there included tank-infantry, fighting in woods, attack on a fortified position (MAGNOT LINE vicinity BAMBIDESTROFF), and use of demolitions (training conducted by Engineers). Each Battalion took this training with the aid of 702d Tank Battalion and Company B, 305th Engineers. Also, during this period 1st and 3d Battalions had Retreat Parades. This training, together with recreational activities, showers, and regular hours for the troops proved to be an invaluable aid in raising morale.

On the 15th of December billeting parties from 318th Infantry and attached units moved out to designate forward billets for units upon movement. Regimental Field Order Number 16 was written on the 16th and distributed on the 17th of December. On the 18th the 318th Infantry and Attached Units moved out by motor convoy. Command Post of 318th closed at BETTVILLER at 1000. The 1st

Battalion moved into STTING, 2d Battalion SCHMIDTVILL, 3d Battalion BETTVILLER, Service Company at RAHLING. Attached Engineers, medics, Tank Destroyers, and Artillery also moved into RAHLING.

At 2100 Division notified Colonel McVICKAR that the planned relief of elements of the 4th Armored Division would not take place in the morning. Eighty-two (82) quartermaster trucks were attached to the Regiment for motor movement the following day.

At 2115 all elements of the Regiment were notified of an impending move. At 0100 on the 19th, Liaison Officers of the Battalions and Lt YOUNG, Div Liaison Officer of the 318th went out to pick up the necessary trucks. Col McVICKAR and Capt SESSONS (S-3) had the Regimental movement order ready and issued before the Division Order arrived. Consequently, the Regiment started moving by 1400, 19 December and crossed the Division I.P. at SAARALBE at 1715. The route included SAAR UNION, ST AVOLD, METZ and ESH. Leading elements arrived at BASCHARAGE at 200600A. The Regiment stopped along the road for a two (2) hour rest and then moved into a battle reserve position 1500 meters North of the city of LUXEMBOURG. In the Regimental Sector, the 2d Battalion was on the left, the 1st on the right and the 3d was in reserve. Within the Division Zone, the 317th was on our right and the 319th was in Division reserve near LUXEMBOURG. The Division was given the mission of defending the city of LUXEMBOURG at all costs. Normal attachments remained.

At 0430, 21 December the Regiment received Division Field Order Number 23 which required the Regiment to move 1000 meters North of MERSH into an assembly area in preparation for an attack to the North before daylight 22 December. At 0830 Col McVICKAR called the Battalion Commanders together to make plans for the movement and for the attack. The short move to the assembly area was completed by 1600. Companies E and F were posted to guard the bridges at MOESDORF and UDINGEN along the route of march. At 1900 Col McVICKAR had all Battalion and Special Unit Commanding Officers for final briefing and for the formal Attack Order. The Command Post was at MERSH. Company C, 610 Tank Destroyer Battalion replaced Company B, 808 Tank Destroyer Battalion.

220600A the 1st Battalion crossed the I.P. at MERSH. 2d and 3d Battalions followed in column of Battalions. All units had cleared the I.P. at 0815. At 1033, the leading elements of 1st Battalion met their first opposition as they were entering ETTELBRUCK. Nearly a Battalion of enemy artillery was trapped. Other large enemy elements made it impossible for the 1st Battalion to clear the town. At nightfall Company B was in the houses on the Western edge of town.

Meanwhile the 2d Battalion took and held the high ground West of and slightly South of ETTELBRUCK in face of heavy machine gun, mortar, and small arms fire.

At 1210 the Regimental Command Post moved forward from MERSH to COIMAR. At 1800 Battalions were notified to consolidate positions for night. Contact was lost temporarily with Company B.

On 23 December all three (3) Battalions continued attack on original objectives. Lt SCANLON, Commanding Officer of Company B was wounded late in the afternoon of the 22d. His Company was still fighting in ETTELBRUCK together with all of Company A which was committed in ETTELBRUCK on the 23d. Although by 1700 the town was mostly in our hands, the Commanding General ordered the attack to cease on ETTELBRUCK. At 1730 the 1st Battalion was ordered to come out of the town after dark under the protection of a box-barrage. Later in the evening Lt SCANLON was taken from the town and evacuated in good condition for his wounds. Col TOSI, Commanding Officer 1st Battalion was wounded in the afternoon of the 23d. Maj CONNAUGHTON took command of the 1st Battalion.

On the morning of the 24th the 3d Battalion was ordered to relieve the 1st Battalion in its mission of containing ETTLEBRUCK from the Southwest, with Company I on the high ground Northwest of town. The relief was affected by noon. Col GARDNER'S 2d Battalion was to move to position vicinity East of FEULEN in case 319th Infantry needed help to stem a counterattack from the rear. 1st Battalion was to move into billets in Regimental Zone for rest. At 1300, however, orders were received from Division that Regiment, minus (1 Bn (3d)), was to move without delay to the West for attachment with the 4th Armored Division.

The 1st and 2d Battalions disengaged themselves from enemy contact and were on trucks by 1700. The 3d Battalion took a firm hold on positions Northwest of ETTLEBRUCK. At 2230, Christmas Eve, the 1st Bn detrucked in CCA's Zone of the 4th Armored Division, 2d Bn, in CCB's Sector, took up position for attack on Xmas Day with these units. At 0030, Christmas morning the Regimental CP closed at FAUVILLERS. The night of the 24th, enemy movement was apparent in ETTLEBRUCK, getting back to the 3d Bn, so they fired approximately 1000 rounds of mortar into the town, including white phosphorus. Most of the town was ablaze.

The purpose of attaching 1st and 2d Battalions to the Combat Commands was to help the armor in breaking through to the isolated 101st Airborne Division in the vital communication center of BASTOGNE.

At 250800A December 1944 the 1st Bn jumped-off from a woods west of WARNACH with the objective of TINTANGE. The 2d Bn jumped-off at the same time from a position just North of BURDON. Both Battalions reached their objectives on the 1st day of the attack as scheduled. The 2d Battalion captured the town of CHAMONT as their 1st Objective.

260800A December the 1st Battalion jumped-off from a position just Northwest of TINTANGE and advanced approximately 3,000 yards against heavy opposition through thickly wooded and extremely mountainous country.

The 2d Bn attacking with 10th Infantry Battalion jumped-off at 260900A, captured the town of GRANDRUE and cleared the woods 1,000 yards to the North. On the 26th, back in the 3d Bn, 318th sector with the 80th Division, patrolling in ETTLEBRUCK produced a few prisoners, but organized resistance there had ended.

Early in the evening of the 26th, tank elements of the 4th Armored Division were able to get into the besieged city of BASTOGNE, but were unable to get back out. Lt CARR of Company E led a four (4) man patrol through nearly 4,000 yards of enemy held territory and made contact with elements of the 26th Engineer Bn within the city on 270430A and was escorted to the 101st AB CP. Lt CARR brought back an overlay of the positions of the 101st within the city and the situation report of that unit. He arrived at 2d Battalion in time to attack with his unit at 0800.

On the 27th the 1st Battalion took LIVARCHAMP and NONVILLE. The troops of the 2d Battalion cleared the woods South and East of ASSENOIS and advanced up to ASSENOIS. Meanwhile, our 3d Bn sent one (1) platoon of Company I into town at dawn on the 27th cleared it and captured 56 Prisoners of War. The Battalion then took up defensive positions around the town (ETTLEBRUCK) on the high ground.

The casualties suffered by our Battalions were quite heavy, but every job given our Bns was carried out successfully. The limited amount of front line personnel available from the 26th of December on through the 28th makes the job done by the 318th a fine one.

Defense was set-up on the East and North of ASSENOIS for the night. On the morning of the 28th the 2d Battalion jumped-off and reached its objective close to BASTOGNE in the evening.

The evening of the 28th, the 1st Battalion was relieved by the 134th Infantry. The morning of the 29th, the 2d Battalion was relieved by the 10th Infantry.

In the 80th Division Sector on the 28th of December, a Company K Patrol, 318th Infantry reconnoitered the high ground 500 yards Southwest of BURDEN, which is North of ETTLEBRUCK. The patrol was fired upon by small arms and mortars. Two (2) members failed to return.

The Regiment was released from the control of the 4th Armored Division on the 29th and returned to the control of the 80th on the same ^{evening}. The Regimental CP closed at COLMAR at 1900.

The 1st Bn had closed in COLMAR at 0100 on the 29th. The 2d Bn closed in SCHIEREN at 1730. When the Regiment returned to Division control, it came also under the control of the XII Corps again. At 1730 Regiment received Division Field Order Number 24 which assigned the Regiment the right third of the Division Sector for Defense. Prior to the closing of 1st and 2d Bns the 80th Division Reconnaissance Troop had assumed responsibility for the right half of the Regimental Sector and 3d Bn the left half.

At 0600, 30 December Company G, reinforced, moved to WIMESHOF Farm in the Recon Troop Sector because of an erroneous report that the enemy was building a bridge in that zone. During the day 1st Platoon, Company G, 166th Engineers assumed responsibility for guarding three (3) bridges in the vicinity of COLMAR.

At 310800A December, 1st Battalion moved by marching from COLMAR to SCHIEREN. At 0830, Company F relieved the Reconnaissance Troop and assumed responsibility for Col GARDNER'S right half of the Regimental Sector. Company G moved back to SCHIEREN with the rest of the 2d Battalion. 1st Battalion closed in SCHIEREN at 0945A.

Dudman J. Mantel Jr.
Capt 318 Inf
5-3