



INTERVIEW NUMBER _____

Unit: 2d Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division.

Action: 1 November 1944 to 22 December 1944.

Source: Interview with Lieutenant Colonel George T. O'Connell, Battalion Commander.

Interviewer: Capt Jacob Goldman

Place and Date of Interview: Battalion CP at Buer, Germany, on 29 May 1945.

Maps: Series 4471, Sheets: XXXV-13 and 14; XXVII-12 and 13; XXVI-12, 13, 14 and 15; XXXIII-13; XXXIV-14.

Journals: After Action Report

Comments: Person interviewed expressed difficulty in remembering events because of the lapse of time. Reference was made to the After Action Reports to refresh his recollection and as a guide.



137th Infantry Regiment
2d Battalion

Interview with Lieutenant Colonel George T. O'Connell, Battalion Commander, at the Battalion CP at Buer, Germany, on 29 May 1945.

From 1 to 9 November the 2d Battalion had been occupying and defending the left half of the regimental sector on the Rau d'Osson and the Main Line of Resistance southwest of the grid coordinates 993-267. The left boundary was at coordinates 947-290.

On the afternoon of 7 November we received the regimental attack order. The time of attack was 0600, 8 November. The boundaries were to be the same as they had been in the defensive positions. The 319th Infantry of the 80th Infantry Division was on our left and the 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry, on our right.

Our plan of attack^{was} to jump from the defensive positions then occupied, with two companies abreast, Company E on the right and Company G on the left. Company F, which had been on the left sector of the battalion, was to move at midnight by way of Armaucourt (94-25) and Manhoue (97-26) to a reserve assembly area in the vicinity of coordinates 980-274 as battalion reserve. One section of heavy machine guns from Company H was attached to Company G, while the remainder of^{the} Company was to support the attack from their defensive positions, the heavy machine guns delivering overhead fire along the ridge northeast of Malaucourt (99-27). When this fire was masked, one platoon was to displace to that ridge, while the remaining section raised its fire to the Bois d'Aulnois (99-29).

After a two-hour artillery preparation from 0400 to 0600, the attack jumped off. Company E on the right received heavy small arms fire immediately from the southwest edge of Malaucourt. The Rau d'Osson, a small stream south of the town, had swelled during the night from heavy rains to a stream 150 feet wide. By 0750 Company E, after wading in water neck deep, succeeded



in getting two platoons into the edge of Malaucourt. Company G, on the left, encountered much more difficulty in crossing the swollen stream. By 1000 all of Company G had succeeded in crossing the river and reaching its first objective on the ridge in the vicinity of 985-293. Two men from Company E were swept away and drowned by the swift current.

Because of the poor road net and mud it was necessary to split the aid station, One half under the Medical Administration officer, going to Fossieux (96-29). All evacuation of wounded was done by hand across the swollen stream.

Company G reorganized and jumped off for the forward edge of the Bois d'Aulnois and immediately received mortar, heavy machine gun and rifle fire and direct fire from an anti-tank gun. In an attempt to out-maneuver the enemy, one platoon of Company G was sent up the small stream running northeast from coordinates 980-283, but it encountered a heavy anti-personnel mine field. Company E, in fierce house to house fighting during the remainder of the day, succeeded in clearing most of the town of Malaucourt.

A bridge over the Rau d'Osson was completed by 1610 and Company F, the battalion reserve company, was mounted on the tanks of Company B of the 737th Tank Battalion and was committed through the zone of Company E with the mission of securing the high ground in the vicinity of 605-290. It crossed the bridge at 1630 after losing a tank from enemy direct fire. After reaching coordinates 993-297, the lead tank was disabled by the fire of an anti-tank gun, in position behind the wall of the cemetery at 994-297. The tanks were then dispatched into Malaucourt where Company F dismounted and aided Company E in clearing the town. At 1750 the regimental commander ordered us to cease the attack at 1800, consolidate our positions and prepare to continue the attack at 0600 the following morning. At 1830 a call was received from the regimental commander stating that it was necessary for



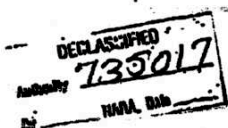
the town of Malaucourt to be cleared by 0600 the following morning, 9 November, so that CCB of the 4th Armored Division could move through our lines to the northeast. Due to the wide frontage given the battalion for the attack, it was necessary to establish two OPs to control the action. This was accomplished by placing the heavy weapons commander with the 300 radio in an OP at Fossieux (96-29) and the S-2 in an OP in the vicinity of 984-273. I used the latter OP. The OPs were then to displace behind the attacking unit in its zone. Fighting continued throughout the night in Malaucourt, and the town was cleared by 0600.

On the following morning, 9 November, Company I was moved into Malaucourt prior to 0600 to secure the town. The battalion resumed the attack at 0600 with Company F on the right, Company G on the left and Company E in reserve, with the initial objective of clearing the Bois d'Aulnois. In the meantime Company E, in battalion reserve, was ordered to be prepared to move a platoon on tanks up the road running northeast from Malaucourt to Lemoncourt as soon as the Bois d'Aulnois was cleared of anti-tank guns.

At 0755 Company G called for the lifting of all supporting fires on the Bois d'Aulnois, and Companies F and G launched a coordinated assault on the German positions in the southwest edge of the woods. Moderate resistance was encountered throughout the entire woods, and the two companies, advancing steadily, cleared the woods by 1400.

Meanwhile the advance guard of CCB, 4th Armored Division, left Malaucourt at 0930, advanced through Lemoncourt at 1330 and continued on to the east. Company E, mounted on tanks and following CCB, finished mopping up Lemoncourt by 1415, taking 50 PWs.

The battalion reorganized in Lemoncourt and at 1700 moved out in column, the order of march: Companies G, F, Headquarters, H and E respectively, with the mission of seizing the town of Delme (01-32). Only scattered resistance



was met, and the town was cleared by 1915. The battalion took up positions for the night.

At 2000 the Germans began shelling the town heavily with mortar and artillery fire from their positions along the Delme River northwest of the town. This heavy fire necessitated the removal of the troops from the town prior to daylight the following morning, so that the attack could continue at 0700.

CCB, of the 4th Armored Division, had reached a point near Hannocourt (05-35) where they met heavy anti-tank fire from the Bois de Serres (05-34). Because of the soft ground caused by the heavy rains during the preceding week, they were unable to maneuver and were compelled to hold up at this point until such time that the Bois de Serres could be cleared.

This battalion continued the attack at 0700, 10 November, in column of companies, with the order of march: Companies G, F, and E, respectively, with the mission of seizing Viviers (04-33). The route of march was south-east along the highway, running southeast from Delme to a road junction at 033-315, then northeast to Viviers. Company G had the specific mission of clearing the woods Taxannier (05-34) and allowing the other companies to continue forward. As soon as the column reached the vicinity of coordinates 035-316, small arms fire was received from the woods. Company G moved off the road, deployed and attacked the woods, clearing it by 1100.

The remainder of the column continued northeast along the road to the vicinity of coordinates 040-326 where they were taken under withering machine gun fire and heavy mortar fire from the town of Viviers. An attack, launched immediately with Company F on the right and Company E on the left, succeeded in advancing only 100 yards.

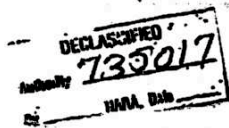
At this time a captain from CCB, 4th Armored Division, in charge of the train, contacted me at my OP in the vicinity of coordinates 040-326 and



told me that: (1) his supply line had been cut by the enemy, who had moved into the town of Viviers; (2) elements of CCB which had passed through the town were cut off, and two ambulances carrying American wounded had been captured; and (3) that the 22d Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which was in position just northeast of the town was receiving heavy small arms fire from the town, making it impossible for them to move from their gun carriages.

An attempt was made to flank the town by moving Company G due east from the Taxannier~~le~~ woods to the stream approximately 400 yards to the east and then up the stream into the town. However, as soon as the forward elements of Company G moved out of the woods, they received heavy fire from direct fire weapons and were stopped. Two German tanks then appeared in the vicinity of the woods at 067-324 and began firing across the battalion front.

At 1245, after smoking the town of Viviers and the high ground southeast, a coordinated attack was launched by this battalion with Company E on the left, Company F on the right, and with one platoon from each company mounted on tanks from Company B, 737th Tank Battalion. When the tanks came within reach of the vicinity of the road junction at 044-327, heavy fire from enemy tanks opened and one tank was disabled. A TD of the 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion, supporting the attack, received a direct hit on the turret. In the confusion our tanks withdrew, and in order to avoid heavy casualties, the remainder of Companies E and F were ordered back to the positions they had occupied before the jump-off. The TDs attached to the battalion were then maneuvered around into the woods at La Taxannier~~le~~^{le} in an attempt to knock out the German tanks which had been joined by three more Mark Vs. Artillery and mortar fire was also placed on them, and all available high explosives used. At 1600 another coordinated attack was launched. This time it was successful, and at 1700 all of Companies E and F were in the town and fighting heavily in the streets. Most of the town was on fire. The two ambulances

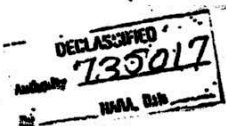


and the wounded Americans were retaken, and the wounded evacuated through the battalion aid station. Fifty PWs were taken and over 100 Germans were killed and wounded in the fighting that continued throughout the night. Meanwhile, Company G was still in the east and southeast edge of the La Taxannier woods. The use of artillery on Viviers was limited because the Armored Artillery Battalion was too close to the town, and therefore the bulk of our mortar fire was used in the town. The casualties for three day's operations were four killed, two drowned and 32 wounded.

On 11 November the attack was resumed at 0800, and at 0830 the remaining Germans in Viviers were cleared. Companies E and G, supported by a company of tanks, then jumped off for the Bois de Serres and by 1200 had cleared it to a north-south line through the road junction at 061-345, where they ran into a German armored task force and were held up. TDs were sent to support Companies E and G, and at 1815 two tanks of the German task force which were holding these companies up were knocked out and the remainder of the force was driven out of the woods.

At 1530 Company F, mounted on the tanks of Company B, 737th Tank Battalion, moved as a task force to seize Faxe (06-32). Approximately 300 yards northwest of the town, they ran into a large anti-tank ditch which the tanks were unable to cross. Heavy enemy machine gun and anti-tank fire opened up and forced the task force to withdraw. During the action two tanks were disabled, and the Company F men mounted on them were casualties. It was getting dark and orders were received from regiment to hold up the attack for the night. Positions on line with the road junction (061-345) were secured, and the infantry and tanks buttoned up for the night.

During the night the 3d Battalion commander and I formulated the plan to seize the town of Faxe with a task force under the command of the company commander of Company F, consisting of Company K, Company F and one platoon of



heavy machine guns of Company H. This task force was to jump off at 0600, 12 November. All mortars of Company H and Company M were to support the attack. Companies E and G were to clear the Serres woods after which they were to continue to Oron. Company F, on the completion of its mission of seizing Faxe, was to turn north and assist Companies E and G in clearing the Serres woods and then follow them into Oron.

At 0600, 12 December, the attack jumped off. Only scattered resistance was met by Companies E and G, and they reached the east edge of the Serres woods by noon. At 1300 Companies E and G shattered the enemy defenses on the west edge of Oron (08-34) and overran the town. After Faxe was taken, Company F moved on and followed Companies G and E into Oron. (In the rapid dash into the town of Oron on 12 November, the Germans were unable to carry out planned demolitions of the bridge across the Nied Francaise, and this important bridge was captured undamaged, thus making it possible for GCB of the 4th Armored Division to move across that river and continue their route to the east. 150 PWs were taken in the town of Oron.) The battalion quickly reorganized, took up march formation with Company G as the advance guard and moved northeast on the road running from Oron to Villers-Sur Nied (12-36). No resistance was met until they reached the high ground at 110-358, where they were taken under withering machine gun fire and tank fire from the town of Villers. Company E was committed on the left of Company G, and the two companies succeeded in pushing forward to the road junction at 117-359 where they were unable to advance any further because of enemy fire from their left rear in the woods of the 80th Infantry Division sector. Company F then moved up to the left rear of Company E to protect this flank, and at 1800 the battalion tied in for the night. During this two day operation, casualties were: one killed and 17 wounded.

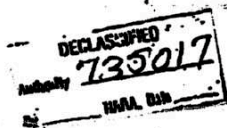
At 0800 on 13 November the attack was resumed with Companies E and G



again as the assault echelon and Company F in reserve in the vicinity of the road junction at 110-357. A platoon of TDs from the 654th TD Battalion moved up into position, disabled a Mark VI tank prior to 0800, aiding Companies E and G in jumping off on time and to succeed in getting into the town of Villiers and clearing it by 1000.

At 1015 the battalion moved out in column of companies, Company E leading the column, followed respectively by Companies F, H and G. By 1200 Company E was fighting in the town of Marthille, meeting heavy opposition. Company F had reached the point north of the town of Marthille in the vicinity of coordinates 140-384 where they came under direct fire from dual purpose 88s. At 1330 Company E reported that most of the town of Marthille had been cleared and that 50 PWs from the 15th SS Panzer Division had been taken and that they were continuing heavy house to house fighting. At 1500 Companies F and G launched a coordinated attack with elements of CCB of the 4th Armored Division on the ridge southeast of Destry. This attack was successful. Nine dual purpose 88s were either knocked out or captured, 40 PWs were taken, large amounts of ammunition and supplies captured and nine prime movers for the dual purpose 88s were destroyed. At 1800 Companies F and G had reached the ridge 400 yards southwest of Destry but were unable to advance beyond the crest because of heavy enemy tank and machine gun fire which completely covered the ridge. Companies F and G buttoned up for the night on the ridge. Company E completely cleared the town of Marthille and secured the town for the night. Casualties for the day were 12 wounded.

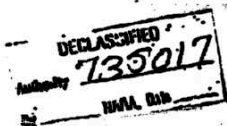
At 0900, 14 November, the battalion resumed the attack in conjunction with a tank battalion of the 4th Armored Division. The tanks were immediately held up by the enemy tank fire coming from the vicinity of the railroad and woods at 168-404. By noon Companies E and G had fought their way



into Destry, and house to house fighting was going on. By 1400 the town was cleared and secured, and the battalion was ordered to hold up in the town and to send patrols to the front as far as the railroad, the division's ultimate objective, approximately two kilometers to the east. Meanwhile, fierce tank battles between the 4th Armored tanks and enemy tanks raged all afternoon in the vicinity of the woods northeast of Destry. The 2d Battalion buttoned up for the night and patrols during the night succeeded in reaching the railroad without opposition.

At 0900 on 15 November the battalion moved out with Companies F and G abreast, Company F ^{ON THE LEFT} with the mission of seizing the railroad at 177-402. By 1035 the objective was reached without opposition. We were then ordered by regiment to organize this line, dig in and secure the area, tying in with the 80th Infantry Division on the left. This was completed by 1600 without any further incident. During these eight days of continuous fighting the battalion had advanced 25 kilometers and had taken over 500 PWs.

On 16 and 17 November the battalion continued to occupy these positions, awaiting further orders. The only enemy activity during this period was scattered artillery fire. On 18 November the regiment attacked with the 1st and 3d Battalions. The 2d Battalion reorganized in the town of Destry and moved initially to Baronville (17-37) as regimental reserve. As soon as the 1st and 3d Battalions cleared Harprich (20-40), the 2d Battalion moved into the town. By 1800 the 1st Battalion was fighting in Berig-Vintrange and orders were received for the 2d Battalion to move into that town and help secure it for the night. On 19 November the 1st and 3d Battalions continued the attack and by 1900 had seized Bistroff (25-44) and Gros-Tenquin (27-42). At 1700 the 2d Battalion was ordered to Bertring (26-42) and to secure the town for the night. During the night the 2d Battalion moved to Gros-Tenquin, relieved the 1st Battalion and prepared



to continue the attack in the zone of the 1st Battalion on 20 November.

On 20 November the battalion jumped off at 0900 with Company G on the right and F on the left, with the right boundary the highway between Gros-Tenquin and Hellimer (33-44) and advanced in the zone of the 1st Battalion. Heavy artillery fire was encountered immediately after the jump off. The battalion advanced steadily and entered the Bois de Freyhouse where they encountered stubborn resistance from enemy infantry. By noon they had been able to clear the woods and reach the east edge thereof, but they were immediately stopped at that point by terrific fire from tanks and artillery from the high ground to the north and east. The enemy had perfect observation of the entire battalion zone, and it was necessary to pull the troops back 150 yards into the woods to cut down the casualties. During this action six officers including the company commander of Company G and 22 EM were wounded. By darkness neither company had been able to advance. Patrols were sent out into the open, but they were immediately plastered with artillery and mortar fire.

During the night Company E was committed and moved along the main road northeast to the high ground in the vicinity of 315-442 where they dug in and secured it as a line of departure for an attack to be launched before daylight the morning of the 21st. Companies F and G, which were pulled back to the west edge of the woods, occupied it all afternoon, reorganized and during the night moved to the vicinity of the road junction at 307-439 where they prepared to pass through Company E and continued the attack on Hellimer (33-44).

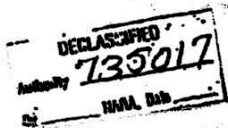
The attack jumped off at 0700, 21 November. Companies E and G had moved approximately 500 yards when they were stopped by heavy small arms and tank fire streaming generally from the vicinity of Hellimer. Tanks of CCB of the 6th Armored Division moved up into position at 0900 to support



the attack. At 1000 Companies E and G, supported by two platoons of medium tanks of the 6th Armored Division, jumped off for Hellimer and the high ground in the vicinity thereof. The movement was made under cover of a smoke screen prepared by the mortars of Company H. By 1200 the companies had reached positions 500 yards from the town. The first assault on Hellimer was thrown back by heavy enemy machine gun and tank fire. The two companies reorganized and at 1300 began another assault. By this time five Mark V tanks had moved to the northwest corner of the town where they could cover all approaches to the town, and for the next two hours a heavy battle between the enemy tanks and our tanks and TDs raged. At 1500 one platoon of Company F made the dash for the town and secured two buildings in the edge of town. When the company commander of Company F moved to the top floor of one of the buildings for observation, he discovered a Mark V tank under the window he was looking out of. The motor was still running. He opened fire with a rifle grenade and knocked out the crew. Another Mark V tank, hearing the fighting, came around the corner with the tank commander standing in the turret. An anti-tank grenade fired by the company commander of Company F instantly killed the tank commander and drove this tank and the remaining German tanks immediately from the town.

By 1600 the remainder of Companies F and G had worked their way into the town and were engaged in bitter street fighting until darkness fell. The enemy were cleared from the town house-by-house. By 1900 the town was cleared. Company E was moved into the town, and a perimeter defense was set up around the town for the night.

At 0700, 22 November, the 2d Battalion attacked with the initial mission of securing the town of Diefenbach, where the German infantry and the tanks had withdrawn from Hellimer. Company E succeeded in getting into the town immediately, and by 1200 the town was cleared. The remainder of the battalion moved into the town and reorganized.



At 1400 Companies F and G jumped off for Hilsprich (39-46). The initial mission of Company G, on the left, was to clear the La Nachtveid woods (370-458). Company F was to slip to the south of these woods and to clear the Grossbreich woods (375-447). Both companies would then launch a coordinated attack on the town of Hilsprich. By 1540 these woods had been cleared, and the order was issued to attack Hilsprich. As soon as they emerged from the eastern edge of the woods, both companies came under heavy tank and machine gun fire from the vicinity of the town and were stopped. At the same time, the Germans counterattacked toward the left flank of Company G from the Bois Habét (355-470). This counterattack was stopped by Company E and the heavy machine guns and mortars of Company H with severe losses to the enemy. At 1800 the order was issued to button up for the night and the companies held the line they had reached earlier in the afternoon. In the action in Diffembach, during the morning, two German heavy assault guns were destroyed by the bazooka and anti-tank grenade fire of Company E.

At 0800, 23 November, the 2d Battalion jumped off from the positions they had occupied during the night with the mission of seizing the high ground south and west of Hilsprich in the vicinity of coordinates 390-457. The attack progressed slowly because of heavy enemy machine gun and anti-tank fire streaming from the vicinity of Hilsprich and the high ground to the south. The high ground was secured by 1600, but it could only be occupied with a small force, since the area was continuously under heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire. Therefore, a security detail was left there during the night, and the remainder of the battalion moved back to Diffembach.

On 25 November the 2d Battalion moved to Hilsprich, which had been taken the afternoon of 23 November by the 1st Battalion, 134th Infantry, and occupied and secured the town to prevent reoccupation by the Germans. During the action around Hillmer and Hilsprich elements of the 38th Regiment of the 17th SS Panzer Division and of the 15th SS Panzer Division were identified.



On 26 and 27 November we remained in Hilsprich and on 28 November moved to Bistroff (25-44) where the regiment went into Corps reserve. We remained there on 28, 29 and 30 November and 1 and 2 December. On 3 December we moved to Erstoff (29-42) where we remained through 6 December, after which we moved to Richeling (43-48). During this time we were still in Corps reserve. On 8 December the battalion moved to Siltzheim (52-54), still in reserve. On 9 December we received orders from regiment that the 2d and 3d Battalions would cross the Sarre River beginning at 0500 the following morning, clear the town of Sarreguemines on the east bank of the river and continue east to seize a bridgehead over the Blies River. During a reconnaissance on the night of 9 December, a blown railroad bridge was found at 543-557. Although blown, the bridge was able to be repaired so that foot troops could cross it. The battalion moved to an assembly area near Remel-fing (52-55) during the night and prepared to cross the bridge at 0500. At 0500, 10 December, we crossed on the improvised foot bridge and moved into an assembly area in a group of buildings at 526-557 and reorganized. At 0730 the battalion jumped off to the north with Companies F and E abreast, Company F on the left and E on the right. Company G remained in the buildings in battalion reserve. The line of departure was the railroad track running east from the bridge at 523-557. Company H supported the attack with one platoon of heavy machine guns in position on the railroad embankment on the line of departure. One section of heavy machine guns was attached to each of Companies E and F. ^{THE MORTARS SUPPORTED THE ATTACK FROM THE WEST BANK OF THE SARRE IN THE VICINITY OF 515-563} The mortars were left on the west bank of the stream because they could support the attack as well from there and because ammunition supply was simplified. A mortar observer accompanied each of the assault companies. The platoon leader of the 1st platoon of Company H, in making reconnaissance for positions prior to daylight captured one German heavy machine gun and its sleeping crew.

A large pottery plant at 517-566 commanded the southern approaches to



the town and was occupied by troops from the 17th SS Panzer Division. The leading elements of Company F with the company commander dashed into the first building and engaged the occupants of the building with grenades and rifle fire. Only four men from the leading platoon succeeded in getting into the building with the company commander. After a grenade battle and hand to hand fight, the four men and the company commander succeeded in clearing the building and the remainder of the platoon worked their way in. The next building was occupied by SS troops and the platoon was unable to get into the building. Capt Giacobello, Company Commander of Company F, then ordered another platoon to work their way around to the north end of the pottery plant while he and the platoon he had in the building laid down a base of fire to cover their movement. The two buildings were so close together that the men from Company F were throwing the German hand grenades back at them. The maneuver was successful. The defending SS troops were either killed or captured in the battle that followed. The fighting in the factory moved from one kiln to another which the Germans were using as pill boxes.

In the meantime, Company E had moved into the first building of Sarreguemines and started clearing the town, house by house. As soon as the pottery plant was cleared, which was about noon, Company F turned north with its left flank on the Sarre River and after four more hours of fierce street fighting from house to house succeeded in reaching the Blies River on the north edge of the town. By using designated phase lines, Companies E and F were able to remain abreast and coordinate their movements so that the entire town east of the river was cleared by dark with only three casualties, one man wounded and two killed. Fifty PWs were taken and over 100 SS troopers killed or wounded. At 1800 the order was issued to cease operations for the night and secure the town. There was a systematic clearing of each building from the basement to the attic. No sniper fire was received during the night or following day.



At 0800, 11 December, we continued the attack to the east with Companies G and E abreast, Company E on the left, and cleared these suburbs of Sarreguemines. By 1200 Company G had reached the air field at 540-595. Company E on the left was bending back to the Blies River with their left flank at 530-595. Both companies were receiving heavy fire from the woods in the vicinity of coordinates 535-600 and 520-589. Company F was again committed with instructions to tie in their right flank with the left flank of Company E and to outpost the Blies River from that point back to the southwest to the city of Sarreguemines. At 1500 orders were received from regiment to dig in the position we were occupying and to await further orders. This was accomplished prior to dark. During this day's operation 995 Allied PWs were liberated from PW camps in the eastern suburbs of Sarreguemines.

On 12, 13 and 14 December we vigorously patrolled the left flank of the division sector. On 15 December Company G was attached to the 3d Battalion, who had succeeded in getting a small bridgehead across the Blies River near Frauenberg (55-59) but were receiving continuous counterattacks on their left flank. Company G crossed the Blies on a foot bridge immediately after dark the same day and took up positions on the east bank to protect the left flank of the 3d Battalion. Company E remained in position near the airport (540-595) to protect the left flank of the regiment. Company F remained in Frauenberg. On the night of 15 December the 3d Battalion was pushed out of a portion of Breiterwald woods (56-61).

During daylight of 16 December the 3d Battalion and Company G received numerous counterattacks but were able to improve their positions somewhat and by nightfall were holding the same positions they had at daylight. During the night Companies E and F were relieved by elements of the 2d Cavalry Group and the 2d Battalion was ordered to cross the Blies River prior to daylight on the 17th of December with the mission of capturing



Bliesmengen (54-61) and Bliesbolchen (54-61). The battalion would pass through Company G, after which Company G would return to 2d Battalion control.

At 0600 17 December Companies E and F crossed the Blies river on a foot bridge and passed through Company G's position. By 0630 Company F had succeeded in getting into buildings on the ridge at 553-608, capturing 15 SS troopers asleep in the buildings. Then, with Company E, it secured the ridge which had been giving the enemy observation on the foot bridge over the river. Company G, on reverting to battalion control, reorganized in the vicinity of coordinates 548-605 and was given the mission of protecting the left flank of the battalion.

During the remainder of the day Companies E and F launched several attacks on Bliesmengen but were driven back by withering enemy machine gun and heavy tank fire from the town and from the woods at 535-607. An attempt was made to move tanks up to them, but because of the observation offered to the enemy by the high ground in the vicinity of 534-608, it was not possible during daylight. After dark one platoon of TDs and one platoon of tanks moved into their zones. At 1800 orders were issued to tie in for the night and secure their positions. During the period 13 to 17 December, mortar platoons of Company H had fired 4500 rounds of mortar ammunition into the town of Bliesmengen. Throughout the day the battalion CP was located in Frauenberg and over 1000 rounds of enemy artillery landed in the town. At 0700 18 December Companies E and F again launched an attack against Bliesmengen and were again unsuccessful. The remainder of the day was spent in beating off determined German counterattacks and in additionally attempted but unsuccessful attacks on the town by the two companies. At 1530 a determined enemy counterattack was launched against the left flank of the 3d Battalion and the right flank of the 2d Battalion from the vicinity of Buchholz woods. This was stopped by our machine gun and mortar fire with heavy losses to the enemy.



During a 20 minute period of this counterattack the mortars of Company H fired 720 rounds to assist in stemming the enemy advance. At 1830 the regiment was ordered to halt its advance, consolidate positions on the most favorable ground and organize a defensive position.

19 December was spent in improving positions, constructing road blocks and laying mine fields. In the organization of the defensive positions, one platoon of heavy machine guns ^{WAS} ~~were~~ placed in defiladed positions in the vicinity of 548-592 to be used in the interdiction of German rear areas and to neutralize the terrific enemy mortar and artillery barrages that were being received both on the front line companies and the reserve company areas. Four 50 cal machine guns with ground mounts were used for this purpose. During the next three days these four guns fired 350,000 rounds of interdicting fire. The amount of mortar fire received from the enemy was negligible. Several PWs who came in to our lines and surrendered stated that it was impossible to get the German soldiers out of the buildings into their fox holes in the rear areas because of the machine gun fire. The battalion remained in this defensive position until 21 December when they were relieved prior to 2400 by the 324th Infantry of the 44th Infantry Division. On the morning of 22 December the battalion moved to Remering (41-48) and prepared for motor movement to Metz.