

INTERVIEW NUMBER _____

Unit: 3d Battalion, 137th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division.

Action: 8 November to 17 December 1944.

Source: Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Albert M. Butler, Battalion Commander.

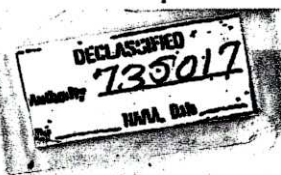
Interviewer: Capt Jacob Goldman.

Place and Date of Interview: Battalion CP, Waltrop, Germany, on 30 May 1945.

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

Journals: Battalion Journal.

Comments: Person interviewed expressed difficulty in remembering the events because of the lapse of time. The battalion journal and after action reports were used to refresh his recollection.



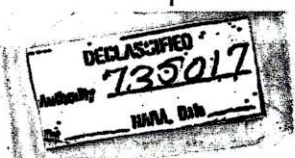
137th Infantry Regiment
3d Battalion

Interview with Colonel Albert M. Butler, Battalion Commander, at the Battalion CP at Waltrop, Germany, on 30 May 1945.

On the morning of 8 November at 0600, the 137th Infantry Regiment attacked to the northeast in the regimental zone. The 1st Battalion on the right was to seize Jallaucourt (01-27) initially, and continue the advance. The 2d Battalion on the left was to seize Malaucourt initially, and continue the advance. The 320th Infantry was on the right of the 137th Infantry and the 80th Infantry Division on the left. The 3d Battalion, 137th Infantry, was held in reserve at Manhoue (97-26) with orders to be prepared to follow the 1st Battalion. The 1st and 2d Battalions successfully secured the towns after hard fighting. At 1400 I was ordered to the regimental CP and told to be prepared to assist the 1st and 2d Battalions in holding the towns. I sent Company I to Jallaucourt and Company K to Malaucourt. At 1830, I was ordered by the regimental commander to move the balance of the battalion into Jallaucourt, then occupied by the 1st Battalion and my Company I. Between the hours of 1900 and 2000, Companies I and K were occupied in reducing enemy machine gun positions north of their towns which had been harrasing their positions.

At 0430, 9 November, the balance of the battalion left Manhoue for Jallaucourt. The 1st Battalion, still in Jallaucourt, moved out ^{AT} approximately 0800 behind elements of the 4th Armored Division, attacking in their zone. At 0930 the regimental commander ordered me to furnish security for the regiment during the bridging of the Rau d'Osson. Company L was assigned the mission. The battalion, still in reserve, followed the regimental attack and established a forward CP at Oriocourt (03-30).

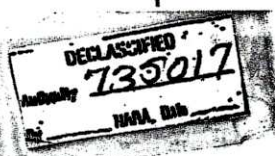
At 1945, the same day, this battalion was ordered to cut the cable line which was part of the Maginot communication system held by the Germans along



the Metz-Chateau-Salins highway. ~~This~~ highway was under enemy fire. A detail from the battalion ammunition and pioneer platoon, led by Lt Jansen, the platoon leader, moved out to accomplish the mission. In the hours of darkness and in a driving rain, the detail located the cable on the northeast side of the highway at 039-309. With the use of demolitions and after two hours of digging in the mud, the cable was successfully blown at 2345.

The 1st and 2d Battalions continued the advance the following morning, 10 November, against slight resistance. This battalion, following the right battalion, moved to the vicinity of Laneuveville (04-30) and at 1210 was ordered to clear the town of Donjeux (02-31). That mission was assigned to Company I, and the town was cleared by 1400 without incident. Casualties were slight up to now. At 1520 this battalion was ordered to clear and defend Delme (01-32) in order to protect the left flank of the regiment. There was a gap between the 80th Infantry Division and the left ^{flank} of the regiment which the enemy might attempt to exploit during the night. At 1615 one platoon of Company L, reinforced with the anti-tank platoon, secured the town without incident.

At 0755, 11 November, we were ordered to move into the woods north of Laneuveville (04-32) preparatory to moving in between the 1st and 2d Battalions, in position at Viviers (04-33) and along the ridge (06-31). The 1st Battalion was receiving heavy artillery and mortar fire and suffered heavy casualties. By 1100 the battalion was in position. At 1945 the battalion was ordered by regiment to relieve the 1st Battalion prior to 0700 the following morning and to attack, with the mission of seizing Fonteny (07-32) and Faxe (06-32) and continuing the advance to the east in its zone. Company K was assigned the mission of seizing Faxe. Company ^L was to seize Fonteny. Company I was to follow Company L. Initially, the following boundaries were established by regiment: the north edge of Faxe was to be

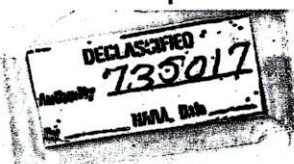


the 3d Battalion's left boundary, and the horizontal grid line 31 its right boundary. After a 20-minute artillery preparation, the battalion jumped off at 0600, 12 November, and seized both towns by 0920 against some mortar fire and scattered small arms fire. In reaching these towns, the battalion had moved ^{across} ~~over~~ 3,000 yards of open, hilly terrain. It had been raining, and the ground was very soft, and mud made walking difficult. Approximately 15 PWs were taken. In Faxe two enemy tanks and an infantry howitzer were captured. In Fonteny one Mark IV was captured. The battalion CP was established in Fonteny at 0930.

At 0145 the battalion again moved out with the objective, Chateau Brehain (11-34) and Brehain (12-35). The advance was made over open, muddy and hilly terrain. About 1200 the battalion crossed the north edge of the Chateau Salins forest and attacked Chateau Brehain from the southwest. Company K, leading, entered the town at 1230, followed by Company L and Company I. The town was secured without opposition by 1315, and five PWs were taken.

Company I was then dispatched to secure Brehain. As the column reached the creek at 1235, enemy mortar fire started to fall. Forward elements of the assault platoons approaching the southern outskirts of the town were taken under small arms fire. After a 15-minute 81mm mortar barrage on the town, Company I advanced with marching fire and entered Brehain against scattered small arms fire, securing the town by 1450. Seven PWs, including one officer, were captured. From 1450 until dark Chateau Brehain and Brehain came under enemy mortar and artillery fire and direct fire from tanks along the road in the vicinity of 120-365. At 2345 the battalion CP was established at Chateau Brehain.

The move of this day was completed over 6,000 yards of rolling, open terrain with just the battalion infantry hand-carrying its 81mm mortars and heavy machine guns. There were no available road nets, and the entire



advance was made across country. The battalion moved so rapidly that they were out of communication with regiment from 1230 until 2300. We had to communicate through runners who had traveled from the forward CP at Chateau Brehain to a wire located in the vicinity of 097-346, which was the point where battalion 110 wire ran out. This wire had been hand-carried on reels by the wire crew. Later, we used the 130 wire from our mortar section to bring the wire communication closer to our CP.

During this advance we also moved out of the range of artillery support. Although there was direct fire from enemy tanks coming into the town, we had no TDs or tanks available to use to overcome this. It was not until 2400 that artillery support, tank destroyers and our anti-tank guns arrived. Because of the lack of proper road net, our vehicles were forced to move through the 320th Infantry, on our right, and were unable to reach us until 2400 hours.

The 2d Battalion on our left had not been able to advance any closer than Oron (08-35) and the 320th Infantry to the vicinity of 11-32. Both of our flanks were exposed. By vigorous use of our machine guns and mortar fire, we attempted to make a display of force in order to deceive the enemy as to our strength. We thought if they knew our lack of fire power and inability to hold these towns, they might attempt a counterattack.

Because of this lack of communication, our order for the continuation of the attack did not arrive until 0300 the following morning on 13 November. The vagueness of the enemy situation and darkness prevented a proper reconnaissance for the attack. After daylight, a reconnaissance of the ground was made from an OP atop a building, and the attack order was given at 0715.

The plan was for the battalion to attack at 0800 to seize Baronville (17-37). The terrain in the zone of our advance contained two ridges running northeast and southwest. One ridge, ^{which} centered at 135-358 was called the Cote de Vie ridge. The other ridge centered at 127-354 and was called the



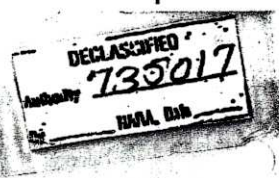
Rougemont le Chapeau. It was known at that time that the enemy was dug in along the road from Marthille (14-37) extending southeast to crossroad 15-36 and along the left ridge. It was estimated that there was a battalion of infantry supported by mortars, artillery, SP guns and tanks. From these positions which were on commanding ground, they had perfect observation of our movements along these ridges. Knowing the situation, I decided that if I could secure the crossroad at 15-36, which was on the ground commanding the ridges, I would then be able to continue the attack from there toward Baronville. With this in mind, I ordered Company L to attack on the left ridge and Company K to advance generally northeast along the Rougemont le Chapeau ridge. Both companies were to secure the main highway toward Baronville. Company I, in reserve, was to follow Company L at an interval of 500 yards, clearing any enemy resistance and outposts by-passed by Company L's advance. The 320th Infantry during the night reverted to division reserve and the 134th Infantry was moved in on our right.

The battalion jumped off at 0800, 13 November. As the assault units left the town of Brehain, enemy mortar fire was falling, and when Company L reached the left ridge, they were taken under intense enemy small arms and mortar fire. As a result, the attack bogged down. We were unable at this time to get any prepared artillery fire, because the artillery units were still in the process of going into position. We had to resort solely to the use of our 81mm ^{mortars} for the support of our advance. The assault companies were moving very slowly. The German positions on the left ridge and to the front interfered with any rapid advance because of their excellent observation and fields of fire on our troops. During this advance, coordination with the 2d Battalion was made in order to try to reduce the effectiveness of the enemy fire on our troops, by utilizing the fire power of the 2d Battalion on the north side of the left ridge, to neutralize the enemy's observations of our



advance. I sent my S-3, Capt Quentin A. Donnellan, to contact the 134th Infantry Regiment on our right to get them to support us with their fire on the enemy facing us. However, when he reached them, he found that they were in positions unable to give us support. Meanwhile, CCA of the 4th Armored Division was lined up on the road from Chateau Salins to a point (136-340) awaiting a break-through by us, so that they could move through our troops and exploit it. Meanwhile, Company K was able to get around behind the enemy positions that were holding up the advance, and by 1420 both assault companies had been able to reach a line generally west of the road between coordinates 145-365 and 149-360, where they were held up by heavy enemy small arms and SP fire. Company K had taken 25 PWs. The 134th Infantry on our right was then generally abreast of us. The 2d Battalion on our left was attempting to enter Marthille. During this morning we suffered two KIA and about 14 wounded, including one company commander. During the remainder of the day continued attempts by us to seize and secure the high ground around the cross-road, 149-361, were frustrated because of the intense enemy small arms, SP and artillery fire from the east and north.

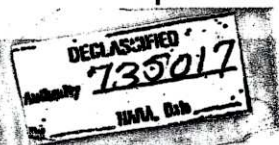
I then developed the plan of having two companies skirt the south side of the high ground and get in the rear of the enemy during darkness, so that we could have the high ground for the attack on Baronville in the morning. This plan was passed back to regiment and approved. At 1730 during darkness, the battalion moved out in a column of companies with Company L leading, followed by Companies K and I, respectively. No supporting units were used. The battalion advanced 2,000 yards by 2300 hours, dug in on the defiladed side of the hill and prepared for an attack on Baronville at 0900 the following morning. The plan evidently worked, as there were small groups of enemy infiltrating through our lines to their own lines all during the night. We captured 13 of them. Apparently, the balance of the enemy by



this move were forced back to positions on the high ground immediately west of Baronville. Our scouts and patrols ran into enemy outposts of this new position early in the morning before the attack. During the night we heard the enemy armor moving along the road northeast to Berenville, indicating withdrawal to their new position.

At 0900, 14 November, the battalion attacked with Company I on the left, Company K on the right and Company L in reserve. The boundary between the two companies was the main road leading northeast into the town. Contact was made with the 4th Armored Division, which was to support our attack into Baronville by combatting any mechanized units that might be in our zone of advance. *along the high ground west and south of Baronville,* The enemy defended the town stubbornly from dug-in positions, supported by an estimated battalion of infantry and at least six tanks and three SPs. Three assaults were made on these positions, and it was not until approximately 1600 that the battalion broke through and entered the southeast ^{portion} position of the town. Bitter house to house fighting developed. But the town was cleared by 1710. Twenty PWs were taken, and we suffered 18 casualties.

At 0900, 15 November, the battalion attacked to seize Hill 264 (19-41) and clear out Le Grand Bois (1939). Company K, on the left, was to secure Hill 264 and dig in. Company L, on the right, was to clear the woods. A platoon of TDs and a company of tanks were attached to the battalion. Companies K and I each had one platoon mounted on tanks. A 15-minute artillery concentration preceded the attack. The 81mm mortars from positions in a draw in the east part of the town supported the attack by firing on prearranged targets. The purpose of securing the high ground (Hill 264) and the woods was to secure the area for the meeting of north and south columns of CCB. Company I ran into some difficulty in occupying Hill 264, and Company K was committed on the right of I to help secure it. By 1700 both battalion objectives were secured and 26 PWs taken. The battalion remained in this position during



16 and 17 November.

At 0800, 18 November, the battalion attacked with Company I on the right and Company K on the left, with the mission of seizing the high ground in the zone of advance. A platoon of TDs, attached to the battalion, was unable to outpost the battalion, because of ~~the~~^a crater in the road and the lack of road nets. The move was made on foot and cross country. Artillery was the only heavy general support. By 0915 Benning (21-42) was reached without incident.

At 1015 the battalion continued the attack towards Bistroff (25-44) in column of companies, with Company I leading, followed by Company L. Company K was in reserve. The plan was for Company I to secure the town of Bistroff and Company L the high ground, Cote de Bistroff (25-43), south of the town. The zone of advance of the battalion from Benning to Bistroff covered a distance of 4,000 yards and was over open flat terrain with the Cote de Bistroff and the high ground in the vicinity commanding the approach. The enemy had unobstructed observation from the high ground to the north and east. There was little cover and concealment for the advancing units. To the north and east of Bistroff was the Et. Periodique du Bischwald (24-45), a large lake. The 80th Infantry Division on our left was not to advance east beyond the vertical grid line 23. The 1st Battalion on our right was to advance along the main highway, Harpich (21-41) to Bertring (26-42). A task force from CCB, 6th Armored Division, was to follow the 1st Battalion. The enemy was entrenched on the high ground, Cote de Bistroff, and was occupying the town of Bistroff in our zone of advance. There was an estimated battalion of enemy infantry supported by artillery and tanks in the vicinity of Bistroff. This area was the outpost of the Maginot line. The hills were covered with an elaborate trench system and gun positions prepared by slave labor. All entrances to the towns were barricaded with either steel rails, concrete blocks or logs. Stream beds were developed into tank barriers by widening them. Actual tank

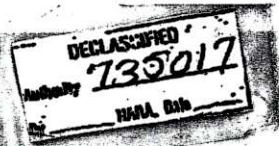


ditches were dug every few kilometers in avenues of approach for tanks. Enemy planes were over us continually. As Company I approached the town, they came under heavy mortar fire and were pinned down.

Company L was ordered to move around to the right of Company I, taking advantage of old German dug-in positions on the north side of the Cote de Bistroff, and move into the town from the south while Company I set up a base of fire on the town. After Company L entered the town, Company I was to assault the town from the west. In carrying out this plan both companies received intense fire from the Cote de Bistroff ^{hill} ~~ridge~~ to the south and from the town. By 1400 Company L infiltrated into the buildings in the south part of the town, and Company I moved rapidly across 400 yards of open ground, securing the buildings on the west edge of the town. Together, both companies then proceeded to clear the town house by house. However, they were only able to clean out half of the town before dark. Company K still had not been committed.

During this same day the 1st Battalion ran into heavy enemy resistance in the vicinity of Berig Vintrange (24-41), consisting of enemy tanks, SP guns and dug-in enemy infantry. They had fought all day suffering heavy casualties and had not been able to advance beyond this town. The strategic location of the Cote de Bistroff ^{hill} ~~ridge~~, giving the enemy complete observation of this town (Berig Vintrange), was a factor in holding up their advance.

During the night, 18 ^{November} ~~December~~, the regimental commander ordered this battalion to secure the Hill Cote de Bistroff in order to deny the enemy further observation, and thus relieve the intense artillery fire which had been falling on the 1st Battalion, and to enable the 1st and 2d Battalions and COB of the 6th Armored Division to continue the advance the following morning, 19 ^{November} ~~December~~, toward Bertring (26-42). To accomplish this mission, I ordered Company K to attack on ~~19~~ November at 0600 with the mission of



securing the Hill Cote de Bistroff. A platoon of machine guns and a platoon of 81mm mortars were attached to the company to support it in this mission. A 30-minute artillery preparation on the hill was to precede the attack. A platoon from Company I and a platoon from Company L were to assist the attack from Bistroff by attacking simultaneously with Company K. The two platoons were to advance from the town of Bistroff, while Company K advanced from the northwest. Company K moved into position, so as to be able to cross the line of departure, the road at 248-438, before daylight. We were unable to get our armor up to us because of the lack of road nets. During the night because of our lack of armor, we called for mines to help secure the town of Bistroff from any armor counterattack. The mines were planted under enemy fire at the two road approaches to the town from the east.

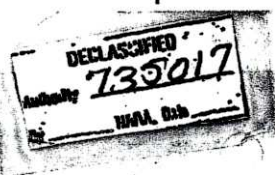
At 0600, 19 ^{November} ~~December~~, Company K jumped off after the artillery preparation, and Company K, supported by heavy machine gun fire, advanced slowly up the hill. At 0705 two Mark V tanks and an estimated company of enemy infantry attacked Bistroff from the east. Artillery was immediately directed on the attacking enemy force. As the tanks approached the town, the lead tank hit our mine field and was disabled. The second tank attempted to pass the tank that was knocked out, and it, too, was disabled by a mine. The German infantry accompanying the tanks appeared to be decimated by our artillery, machine gun and small arms fire directed on them by Company L and Company I in the town. The counterattack was routed. It is estimated that the enemy suffered at least 40 casualties in this action. The enemy tanks were evidently attempting to find a way to pass through Bistroff and flank the armored task force which was moving up on the highway in the vicinity of Berig Vintrange.

Meanwhile, Company K continued the attack on the hill, and after rough duels with enemy small arms, automatic and artillery fire, secured the hill



by 0915. Forty PWs, including one officer, were taken, and we suffered 19 casualties. An inspection of the hill showed it to be well organized with gun positions, tunnels and concealed artillery OPs. At 1500 we received our armor. The taking of this hill enabled CCB of the 6th Armored Division to move up the road, Bertring to Gros Tenquin (27-42). They moved into the town by approximately 1530. ~~PP~~ We remained in position, prepared to move out to continue the attack, and the following morning, 20 ^{November} ~~December~~, at 0725 moved out towards Freyhouse (30-42) and Fremstroff (30-47). Our left flank was exposed, as the 80th Infantry Division had moved north. The 2d Battalion on our right was in the vicinity of Gros Tenquin. The terrain in the zone of advance was flat and open and peppered with a number of farm houses. The ground ^{consisted of} ~~was~~ soft and muddy plowed fields. The only cover available was the farm buildings, and the Germans were using ~~the~~ ^{them} ~~as~~ as strong points. These farm buildings were well constructed, in most cases with thick walls of stone and concrete. Each farm had to be considered a German strong point and cleared individually. Company L on the left was assigned a number of farms in its zone of advance, with Fremstroff as its final objective. Company K on the right was similarly assigned definite farm buildings with its final objective, Freyhouse. Company I, in reserve, was to follow on battalion order. The advance was supported by our artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. Here again, because of the absence of road nets, our armor could not follow us. The advance was by foot and cross country. This whole area was heavily mined.

By 1300 Company K had cleared the farms in its area against slight resistance and was ready and poised for the attack on Freyhouse. At that time the platoon of TDs was still not able to join us. Company L, whose left flank was exposed, moved much slower and at 1300 were at St. Marie Farm (266-465). Several attempts on the part of Company L to secure the woods,

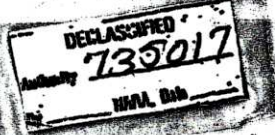


Strunkenheltz (28-46), were frustrated by the heavy small arms and mortar fire coming from the east.

At 1350 Company K was able to get one platoon and a section of heavy machine guns into the first four buildings of Freyhouse. The enemy fought back with heavy small arms and mortar fire, and when the rest of the company attempted to reinforce the platoon already in the town, they were taken under the same fire. Almost all of the buildings in the town had either been destroyed or burned by the enemy. What was left of them offered cover to the platoon of Company K. By dark a second platoon of Company K successfully entered the town and with the other platoon occupied the first few buildings at the edge of the town. The enemy was still defending very stubbornly. Company L, unable to attack Eremstroff because of the heavy fire coming from the vicinity of the town, was ordered to assist Company K in securing the town of Freyhouse. An attack by Company L just before dark was attempted but failed because of the intense small arms and mortar fire coming from the north part of Freyhouse. Company L dug in outside of Freyhouse for the night. Approximately 25 casualties were suffered by the battalion in the day's advance. Twenty PWs were taken.

At 0800, 21 ^{November} ~~December~~, elements of the 6th Armored Division joined the battalion at St. Charles Farm (281-450), and the attack on Freyhouse was resumed at about 0700. Company I was committed with the remaining platoon of Company K to reinforce the two platoons of Company K that were already in the town. House to house fighting ensued, with the Germans using bazookas, machine guns and hand grenades. At 1000 elements of CCB of the 6th Armored Division assisted these two companies in clearing the town, ^{and} after hard fighting on the part of both companies and the elements of CCB, the town was cleared by approximately 1200.

At 1300 Company I moved out with elements of CCB in a coordinated attack



against Fremstroff. The advance was held up, however, by a blown bridge and a crater in the road at coordinates 299-458. Engineers were called immediately, but the attack bogged down for the day. Heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire and sniper fire from the vicinity of the high ground north of Fremstroff made the work of the engineers very difficult. However, with the aid of bulldozers and bridging equipment, ^{the engineers} finished the repairs by 2400, and the attack was continued the following morning, 22 November, at 0830. By 1030 the armored task force of CCB and Company I entered and secured the town against scattered sniper small arms and mortar fire.

At 1800, 22 November, the battalion moved to Leyviller (34-48) where it reverted to regimental reserve. ~~xxxx~~ During the first three days of this period while at Leyviller, we were actually in contact with the enemy on the left flank of the division sector, holding a line of approximately five miles, extending from Fremstroff east to Altrippe (33-48) to Leyviller. Heavy concentrations of enemy artillery fell constantly in our sector. Strong concentrations of enemy were known to be entrenched in the general vicinity of the south edge of the wooded area, Le Grossenbusch (35-50), the southern edge of ^{On 5 December we moved from an assembly area at Grenning (35-42) to one in Ballering (44-4)} the Vieux Bois (33-50) and the high ground to the north of Fremstroff. On 8 December we moved from Ballering to an assembly area in Neufgrange (51-53), still in regimental reserve.

On the morning of 10 December the battalion was ordered by regiment to cross the Sarre River at 0730 and seize a bridge across the Blies River in its zone of action. The 134th Infantry had already established a bridgehead in the vicinity of 527-557. The regiment's mission was to cross through this bridgehead and turn north to seize the town of Sarreguemines (51-57), then proceed northeast, seize Frauenberg (55-60) and establish a bridgehead across the Blies River. The regiment was to attack with the 2d Battalion on the left and the 3d Battalion on the right. The Sarre River-Blies River confluence



was established as the left boundary of the 2d Battalion. The left flank of the regiment was open. The 134th Infantry would be on the right flank. No bridges were intact across the river. The engineers were attempting to construct a bridge. The crossing was to be made before daylight by using a damaged railroad bridge south of Sarreguemines in the vicinity of 521-557.

The 3d Battalion moved out from Neufgrange at 0500 hours on 10 December in a column of companies with Company L leading, followed by Companies I and K, respectively. When it crossed the Sarre River at the broken bridge (521-557), it made contact with the 2d Battalion, 134th Infantry, and arranged with them to pass through their sector and attack to the north, using the railroad track in the vicinity of 525-560 as a line of departure. After coordinating the attack with the 2d Battalion, 137th Infantry, this battalion jumped off at 0730 with two companies abreast, Company L on the right and Company I on the left, with the mission of seizing an intermediate objective, the old German barracks in the town. The 2d Battalion on our left jumped off simultaneously. Our right flank was open. Very little enemy resistance was encountered until the battalion approached the southern outskirts of Sarreguemines (51-57) where the enemy opened up on the advance elements with intense small arms, 20mm, mortar and artillery fire from the direction of the town and the vicinity north and east of the town.

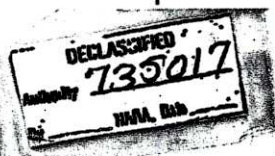
Company L, working its way around an abandoned barracks, succeeded in making its way to the road at 520-576. Company I, using the houses for protection, proceeded to ^{clean out} clear several snipers and a machine gun that had slowed its advance, and after securing these strong points, worked its way to the right and made contact with Company L, coming up abreast with it on its left. The advance continued slowly because of the considerable house to house fighting. By 1300 Companies L and I had secured their immediate objective, the old German barracks.



The TM platoon joined the battalion at 1520 and at 1600 moved with Company L to seize and secure the town of Neunkirch (53-58). This was accomplished at approximately 1700 hours without incident. The rest of the battalion and the battalion CP closed in the German barracks at Sarreguemines at 1825.

The battalion continued the attack toward Frauenberg at 0800, 11 December, with two companies abreast, Company K on the right and Company I on the left. After crossing the line of departure at Neunkirch, only light resistance was encountered, and by 1000 Company I had reached the airport at coordinates 54-59, and Company K, the high ground along the road at coordinates 540-588. I then ordered the companies to hold these positions and to each send a patrol forward to reconnoiter for crossing sites of the Blies River in the battalion zone of action, Company K in the vicinity of Frauenberg and Company I in the vicinity of the woods at 538-600. The Company I patrol had been fired on from the woods on the east side of the river that they were to control. The daylight patrol of Company K encountered no enemy. I then decided that Frauenberg could be entered with little difficulty and asked permission of the regimental commander to attack immediately. Consent was received and Company K, reinforced by a section of heavy machine guns, was ordered to attack the town at 1630. Moving swiftly, with marching fire and the use of bazooka and grenade fire, the company entered the town against light resistance, clearing it by 1930. Ten PWs were taken.

The town of Frauenberg was intended as a base for the crossing of the Blies River, and on 12 December the balance of the battalion closed into the town and prepared to cross the river on the following day, 13 December. Heavy enemy artillery fire fell into the town throughout the period. Plans were made for a coordinated crossing of the battalion with the 1st Battalion, 137th Infantry, on the left, and the 134th Infantry on our right. The 1st Battalion of the 137th Infantry was to protect the regimental left flank.



The regimental mission was to seize the high ground on the east bank of the Blies River and set up a bridgehead. This battalion had no armored attachments.

Company K and Company L were organized into assault boat groups and at 0430, 13 December, started the crossing of the Blies River. Six of the eight boats of the first wave crossed successfully. The remaining ^{two} overturned, causing a noisy disturbance. This alerted the enemy, and they opened up on Companies K and L with mortar and grazing machine gun fire. The elements of Companies K and L which had successfully crossed (approximately 60 men) proceeded to clear and occupy the buildings on the east bank of the river. No further attempt was made to cross the river during daylight. Enemy fire increased in intensity during the day.

The attempt to cross was continued after dark, and by 2300 Companies K and L had completed it. We suffered approximately nine casualties and 14 MIA. The balance of the battalion completed the crossing by 0200, ~~14~~ December.

At 0630, 14 December, the battalion jumped off with the mission of establishing a bridgehead on the high ground north and east of the river in the vicinity of Hill 330 at coordinates 568-608. The entire battalion was committed with three companies abreast, from left to right, Companies I, L and K, respectively. The 2d Battalion followed us, prepared to assist in the development of the left flank of the bridgehead. The action was supported by prearranged artillery preparations and the fire of the machine guns and mortars of the battalion from positions on the west bank of the river. Two bridges were constructed behind us, and three times were destroyed by enemy artillery. By 1200, 14 December, the high ground immediately across the river in the vicinity of coordinates 568-608 was secured. In one action, Company L captured 54 Germans out of the basement of a house.

Between this period and the morning of 17 December, eight attacks were made by this battalion to secure the north edge of the woods at 565-615, but each time the enemy counterattacked with armor and infantry and forced the attacking elements back to their original positions in the vicinity of coordinates 568-608. The enemy was superior in armor, infantry and observation. An enemy OP at 530-603 had excellent observation of the entire left flank of the division for a distance of 6,000 yards.

By the morning of 17 December the strength of our companies had been depleted to a strength of approximately 60 men each.

At 0830 the 2d Battalion, on our left, joined us in a coordinated attack to establish a line along the Kreuzberg Ridge at 550-605, the north edge of the Allenberg Woods at 560-620 and the Breiterwald Woods at 570-620. A company of tanks and a platoon of TDs supported us. An air strike the afternoon before prepared the attack. The 2d Battalion, on our left, was able to move forward and secure the ridge. The 3d Battalion, however, because of its depleted strength, was only able to clear the woods at 570-613 and retain its original positions.

On the night of 17 December we were relieved by the 1st Battalion and moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Newkereht. During these last four days it is estimated that 100 casualties were suffered, which included two company commanders.