



INTERVIEW NUMBER _____

Unit: 2d Battalion, 320th Infantry Regiment, 35th Infantry Division.

Action: 8 November 1944 to 18 January 1945.

Source: Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Warren T. Hannum, Jr., Battalion Commander.

Interviewer: Capt Jacob Goldman

Place and Date of Interview: Battalion CP at Everswinkle, Germany, on
23 May 1945.

Maps: Series 4040, Sheets: 106, 121, 122, 137 and 152. Series 4471, Sheets:
XXXV-13 and 14; XXXVII-12 and 13; XXXVI-12, 13, 14 and 15; XXXIII-13; XXXIV-14.
Journals: After Action Report

Comments: The Houffalize Map was not available.

The person interviewed expressed difficulty in remembering detailed events because of the lapse of time. The after action reports were used as a guide and to refresh his recollection.

2d Battalion 320th Regiment

Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Warren T. Hannum Jr.,
Battalion Commander, at Evers^{winkel}~~wille~~, Germany on 23 May 1945

PERIOD 8 JANUARY^{To} 18 JANUARY

On 8 January the battalion was in the assembly area in the town of Baschleiden, Luxembourg (6246), where it received orders attaching it to CCA, 6th Armored Division, and directing it to move by truck to an assembly area just south of ~~Bastogne-Arlon~~ ^{Bastogne}. *The battalion moved by truck west from Baschleiden to the Bastogne-Arlon highway and then north to Bastogne.* The entire trip was made in a severe blizzard and its arrival at Bastogne was delayed ^{until} ~~to~~ 1900, when it was already dark. The assembly area assigned ^{the battalion} to the battalion was in the vicinity of 5456, and encountered difficulty in getting into the assembly area due to the drifting snow which completely obliterated the side roads and made driving even on the main highway difficult. Since it was impractical to release the trucks at that time, they remained with the battalion, and the troops used them to sleep in during night. Although a hot supper meal had been arranged, it could not be fed until practically mid-night because ^{of the} difficulty of getting up the supply trucks in the storm.

I had preceded the battalion to ~~the~~ Bastogne and had received orders from the CO of CCA for my battalion ^{to attack} from the woods at (568551), in a south-easterly direction and advance to the regiment line at approximately {5854}. The time of attack was to be daylight on the morning of 9 January and was to be in conjunction with an attack by the 3d Battalion, 134th ^{Infantry}, and 1st Battalion of the 320th ^{Infantry}, which was attached to the 134th, both on our right. Our left flank was open. We were to maintain contact ^{with} of the

reconnaissance elements of CCA in the town of Marvie, (5755). Attached to my battalion at the time ~~were~~ a company of tanks from tank battalion of CCA and a platoon of TD's from the TD company of CCA. Daylight reconnaissance was very limited and amounted to no more than a hasty ~~reconnaissance~~ ^{our} reconnaissance for ~~and~~ movement to the line of departure. That reconnaissance was accomplished by myself and my S-3, who were the only two members of the battalion available before darkness fell.

The movement of the troops was originally scheduled to be done at dawn, 9 January. However, due to causes unknown to me, the time of the attack was delayed until approximately 2 hours after dawn. This allowed us to make the movement to the line of departure in daylight. That actually was the only way we could have accomplished the mission. The movement was slow and very difficult because of the deep snow and drifts caused by the storm of the previous night. ~~The snow had stopped by morning and visibility was still poor. By morning the snow was fairly clear.~~ The wind had appreciably died down and snowing had stopped. The attack jumped off on time. The battalion attacked with Company F on the left, Company E on the right and Company G in reserve. The tanks, initially supported the advance by firing from the edge of the woods which was the line of departure for the battalion, and then followed the rifle companies as they reached the woods on the far slope. A smoke screen which had been laid down as planned for the attack was very effective and screened our advance across the open ground to the woods. The rifle companies gained the edge of the woods and moved rapidly towards their objective. The nature of the woods and the enemy defenses was such, however, that ^{much of} ~~very few~~ the enemy was by-passed, only to appear later,

in the rear of our own troops. However, the reserve company, which was following the left assault company rounded up these *The objective was reached successfully. HP Although the by-passed elements* by-passed elements, *created* confusion in the rear and among the troops, good contact was maintained with the unit on our right. However, the reserve company which was ~~to~~ eventually taken over and tied ⁱⁿ on the left flank with the reconnaissance elements at Marvie, became so engaged with cleaning up the by-passed enemy that it lost contact with the leading elements and moved beyond the objective cleaning out a section of woods beyond and slightly to the left of the ^{left} assault company. The area which they cleaned out was apparently the reserve area of the enemy troops defending in our sector, because we identified heavy mortar units and some CP personnel among the PW's captured. The loss of direction by the reserve company and the advance beyond the objective caused our left flank to be entirely exposed. By dark, the reserve company was successfully pulled on line with the other two companies. The rifle companies had each been reduced by the fighting to approximately the strength of one platoon ~~each~~. and were all in position along the ridge facing to the southeast.

It had been intended that the left company bend back to the north and form a block facing east. It was decided, however, to leave the companies in that position during darkness for fear of complete loss of control by trying to move in the darkness. We attempted to protect the left flank by constant heavy artillery barrages throughout the night in that area and increasing ^{them} heavily during the ^{two} ~~few~~ hours prior to daylight.

The tank company which ^{was} attached at the beginning of the attack, experienced difficulty in moving from the area of departure

across the stream to the woods in the direction of our advance. It was, several hours, ~~at least~~, before they joined the rifle troops in the woods. However, once they had joined the rifle troops, we split the tank company up as previously arranged, with one tank platoon going to each rifle company. Maneuverability of the tanks was extremely restricted, because of the thickness of the woods. However, they followed ^{the trails,} each tank ~~was~~ protected with at least a squad of infantry, and did assist materially in knocking out any resistance which appeared.

P We expected an enemy counterattack the following morning.

^ To prepare for this eventuality, a section of the tanks were placed on the extreme left flank, covering the trail along which we were deployed. As ^a further precautions, the trail was mined. The rifle companies always carried 4 or 5 mines right with them, which ~~always~~ served such a purpose. ~~All the~~ All the companies outposted to the front, and the left company outposted the left flank.

At one hour before dawn, 10 January, I received a report that our left flank had been hit by an enemy patrol, but that ^{the enemy} ~~it~~ had been completely repulsed. It was later learned from PW reports that this patrol had started out at approximately 0200 in the morning with a strength of 80 men with the mission of attacking and recapturing the ground which had been lost by the enemy the previous day. Apparently, due to artillery fire and morale reasons, the force which finally hit our left flank we ^{later} estimated to be approximately 20 men. Our outpost gave warning of the approach of this force and it was ~~taken prisoner~~ ^{ambushed on the trail. Only two survivors were taken prisoner.}

After daylight I shifted the left flank company to the north and spread out the other two companies, forming an approximate semi-

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circle from 577537 to 578546. The line was thin and there was no reserve unit other than the tanks. However, we felt reasonably secure with the artillery preparations which could be brought to bear on the areas to our front. After dark, I received orders from the regiment attaching my battalion to the 134th Infantry, of our parent division, and relieving us from attachment to the CCA, 6th Armored Division, effective ~~effectively~~ immediately. I reported to the 134th Regiment CP for instructions and at 2200 was ordered by the CO of the 134th Infantry to attack the following morning, 11 January, in conjunction with the 3d Battalion, 134th ^{Infantry} and 1st Battalion, 320th ^{Infantry} also ~~was~~ attached to the 134th. The attack was to be made northeast along the ridge which we then occupied. Our battalion was to be the left assault battalion and the 3d battalion of the 134th ^{Infantry} was the right assault battalion. The boundary between battalions was the trail which ran northeast along the ridge. Our objective was the high ground just west of the town of ^{Bras} ~~Bras~~ (6355). The attack entailed moving the 3d Battalion, 134th Infantry, on our right, at the time facing southeast, around into position facing to the northeast. This turning movement was accomplished and the jump off began at approximately 2 hours after daylight. The attack moved forward approximately 1000 yards, when heavy fire was encountered from an apparent enemy defense line extending from approximately {588549} to {592537}. The enemy positions covered a clearing in the woods ^{which} ~~and~~ afforded the enemy good observation and fields of fire. The night before, I had requested from CCA, 6th Armored Division, that the tank company which was working with me be allowed to remain attached to this battalion. This request was granted.

With the aid of ⁶these tanks and by maneuver to the left flank, which was possible due to woods and cover on the left flank, we succeeded in breaking through the enemy defense line just before dark and seized the road along which this defense line had been set up. The battalion on our right had been less successful, mainly due to the fact ³ that they did not have supporting tanks. However, during the hour preceding complete darkness, and after we had gained the road, we were able to bring some tank fire to bear against the flank of the enemy units holding up this battalion, and by dusk ^{the right battalion} ~~they~~ had been able to come up on line with us.

We held this position during the night and patrolled aggressively to our front. It was evident from the information returned by our ^{patrols} ~~forces~~ ^{force} that the enemy, to our front was withdrawing.

Prior to the attack on 12 January, slight difficulties were encountered in the resupply of the supporting tanks. Troops were in a very poor physical state, and it was necessary that they be allowed daylight to heat their rations and eat them. For the three meals prior thereto they had been forced to eat their rations cold. There were no trench foot cases during this period but ^{there} ~~there~~ were a few ~~cases~~ of frozen feet.

Although the attack was to jump off at dawn, it was delayed for one hour ~~for~~ for the above reasons and moved out at 0900. The advance towards the objective was uneventful except for difficulty experienced in moving through the heavy woods and in locating its positions therein, from time to time. No enemy resistance was encountered. A few enemy stragglers were picked ^{up} ~~in~~ in some enemy abandoned positions. The objective was reached at approximately 1300, at which time ~~we~~ we were relieved from attachment to the 134th

^{INF} ~~and~~ reverted to ~~regimental~~ control. ~~We were relieved in the~~
~~the 320th Infantry~~ and were directed to assemble ~~the~~
~~battalion~~ in the town of Marvie (5755). By use of all our
organic transportation, we were able to move the troops in ^{two} ~~ten~~
shuttles to the town of Marvie, completing the movement by dark
of the 12th.

On 13 January the battalion remained in Marvie as regimental
^{of the 320th Infantry,} reserve, attached to CCR, 6th Armored Division. At about noon
of January 14, the battalion was ordered to move to an assembly
area in the vicinity north of Bizery (5959) ^{where it} ~~and~~ was ⁱⁿ committed to the
attack on the morning of 15 January with the mission of seizing the
high ground at approximately 605624. It moved out in a column of
companies with the left flank of the leading company on the rail-
road which was ^{the} ~~the~~ boundary between the regiment and ^{the} 101st Airborne Di-
vision. The leading company reached a position at approximately
6599619 where it was taken under concentrated small arms fire
from the area of our objective and was pinned down. With the
assistance of a section of tanks of the 6th Armored Division,
attached to the battalion, and by a maneuver along the railroad,
this company made an assault in conjunction with a second company
which had been brought up on its right, gained the objective and
also cleaned out and secured the woods southwest of the town of
Michamps. ^{HP} During the night, ~~the~~ patrols reconnoitered the town
of Michamps and after an artillery preparation on the town, the
battalion moved into Michamps in conjunction with the 1st Battalion
on our right. [↑]

✓ Prior to this attack, our units which were on the railroad
track on ~~the~~ ^{our} left flank were relieved by elements of the 3d Battalion.

which secured the high ground north of the town of Michamps, while our ~~Rica~~ company entered the town of Michamps.

At about noon on 16 January we attacked the woods northeast of Michamps in conjunction with the 1st Battalion on the right. The attack progressed some 300 to 400 yards into the woods before it was stopped by ^{darkness.} Only scattered resistance was encountered and a few PW's were taken immediately after dark. The left company captured ^{APPROXIMATELY} ~~some~~ 20 PW's and it was later learned that they were ^{TRYING} ~~going~~ to reinforce the ^{ENEMY} line which we had eliminated during the afternoon. The 1st Battalion, on our right, however, apparently met stiffer resistance, and we lost physical contact with them in the woods. However, we knew their approximate location and relied on that for our contact.

At dawn on 17 January we pushed on through the same woods to the main highway running southeast out of Bourcy. As we approached this road, the companies started to receive heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire which resulted in some confusion and stopped the advance. However, at dusk another attempt was made to push on across the road. The left unit successfully crossed the road and advanced approximately 100 yards beyond it. Physical contact with the 1st Battalion still had not been gained, and the reserve unit was placed on that flank.

During the early hours of 18 January, the battalion was relieved by units of the 134th Infantry. Due to the difficulty of movement, the actual relief had to be accomplished with daylight. Just as the right flank unit was being relieved, the machine gun section went on the right flank and caught an enemy column with

approximately 15-20 men, apparently ~~were~~ attacking down the road against our right flank. However, due to the cool timing of the machine gunner the column was caught in enfilade fire and completely annihilated, thus preventing confusion, which might have resulted from an attack at the time of our relief. The battalion assembled in Michamps on the 18th of January and moved by marching and truck to an assembly area in the vicinity of Hette (5144).

PERIOD 7 NOVEMBER TO 23 DECEMBER

On the evening of 7 November at about 2200, the battalion moved from ^{an} assembly area in the vicinity ^{of} Brin (9821) to an area of departure on the northeast edge of the Forêt de Gremercy with the mission of attacking to the northeast and seizing the edge of the woods of the Bois d'Ameleceurte. The attack was scheduled for daylight, 8 June, and was to be preceded by a 2 hour artillery preparation. Smoke was ^{to be} laid down on the edge of the Bois d'Ameleceurte ^{during} the last 10 minutes before daylight. The battalion was to pass through the 134th Infantry which was holding a defense line on the northeast edge of the Gremercy forest. Our battalion was the right assault battalion of the regiment. The 3d Battalion was on our left. The 26th Division was to our right, south of the Seille River. Our right flank was screened by the 35th Recon troop. However, they afforded no protection to our flank, as ^{the} ~~these~~ mission was merely contact.

The battalion moved out the following morning, 8 June, on time with Company G on the left and Company F on the right. Departure was made in complete darkness and in an exceedingly heavy rain. The trails and roads within the woods were actually knee deep with mud,

making travel of vehicles practically impossible and slowing foot movement to the very minimum. Both companies were late in crossing the line of departure because of the necessity for reorganization after moving through the woods and the distance traveled. As a result, the smoke screen, which had been laid down, had completely dissipated by the time the troops crossed the line of departure. Furthermore the attack was so timed that our advance across the 2000 yards in open terrain between the two forests had to be made in daylight. However, Company G on the left crossed the railroad track where they surprised and captured approximately 40 enemy soldiers in their fox holes, and moved to a position on a small rise of ground at approximately 060273. Company F crossed the line of departure 30 minutes later than Company G. ^{and} Moved without resistance to a position approximately on line and ^{to} the ^{right} ~~regiment~~ of Company G. The plan was that Company F would use the ridge line running from 060255 to 072272, using this ridge as ~~their~~ ^{its} right flank protection.

When both companies were abreast, they moved off to ~~gather~~ to assault the edge of the Bois d'Amelecourt. As they crossed over the ridge and approached the road which runs east out of Bresnes, they ran into wire entanglements supported by a very heavy volume of enemy flanking machine gun fire from ^{the} vicinity of 071271 and were stopped. Almost immediately thereafter, a heavy volume ^{of} artillery and mortar fire started to fall. Company F began to break and became disorganized, and the men at first in smaller movements and then in greater movements started falling back towards the line of departure. Company G, on the left, though receiving the same fire had not been disrupted as badly, since it had more protection, due to

the broken nature of the terrain in their area. The withdrawal of Company ^F became almost a rout, and, if it had not been for the presence of a battalion staff officer in their rear who stopped and collected the men as they fell back, the company probably would have ~~been~~ disintegrated.

At this point, the reserve Company, Company E, which had been following Company F and which at that time had just moved into an area along the railroad track, was ordered to pass through Company F and take over its mission.

The 2d assault against the edge of the Bois d'Amelecourte was organized. But because of the difficulties of communication caused by wet weather, the attack was delayed some three or four hours while we attempted to secure artillery support for the attack. By this time the communication between company ^F and battalion was reduced to runners. The ^{sec} 300 radios had completely gone ~~out~~ ^{DEP}, even though the distance between battalion OP and companies was less than 500 yards.

The 2d attack jumped off after a 10 minute artillery preparation on the edge of the woods and on areas from which we had received ^{fire} fire. Smoke was laid down to cover the right flank. The attack progressed reasonably well until half of the distance to the edge of the wood had been reached, when the artillery battalion ran out of smoke shells. The smoke screen ~~on~~ our right flank dissipated rapidly in the strong breeze which was then blowing. With this right flank screen gone, the same enemy withering fire was brought to bear upon the advancing troops, and the movement again bogged down. Because of the supporting fires of the machine guns and gallant action of the men, Company F on the right, was able to withdraw to a more

covered position. Darkness came before any further action could be taken and the battalion remained in its position during the night.

During the entire day the battalion was in the open ground under observation from an enemy OP at 063283. The troops were continually shelled with artillery and mortar fire. Although the casualties were high, they were not as high as they might have been because the shells ~~were~~ all ^{HAD} impact fuses and sank into the soft ground before they exploded ~~and~~ reduced ^{to} the shell fragments. The soft ground gave it a delayed action effect.

A patrol was sent out in the early morning of 9 November to reconnoiter the enemy positions. The information they brought back indicated that the enemy positions were as we had met them the day before. Immediately after daylight, the company of tanks which had been supporting the 3d Battalion in the attack on Fresnes was attached to 2d Battalion to support its new attack on the Bois d'Amelecourt. Again, due to communication difficulties and the time required to obtain an artillery preparation, the attack was delayed until approximately noon. ^{AFTER} ~~at that time~~ the attack jumped off. The tank company moved up to the ridge, which we had gone over the day before, and fired into the edge of the woods and at the ^{ENEMY} targets. ^{ON THE RIGHT FLANK TO WHICH WE DIRECTED THEM.} When the attack started, the enemy artillery and mortar fire which had been firing continually increased in tempo. It became necessary for the leaders, both non-commissioned and commissioned, to move among ^{the} men to get them to start moving behind the tanks. However, once the tank fire began to bear on the woods ^{and} the OP at 063283, the artillery fire slackened and movement became easier. The infantry moved behind the tanks and as the tanks stopped on the

ridge passed through them and moved into the woods with very little opposition. Almost immediately thereafter, the 1st Battalion, which had been committed on our left, also entered the woods. ~~THE 2ND~~ ^{THE 2ND} battalion then continued the advance to the north-south road at approximately 075280 ~~which~~ ^{AND} reached by dark.

The following morning, 10 November, the battalion was passed through by the 3d Battalion and became regimental reserve. ~~at~~ ^{at} dark that same day, the battalion was moved to the north to take up a line facing north approximately on the 29 east-west grid line. This position was a locking position against a threatened counter-attack from that direction.

It was at this time that the first evidence of trench foot appeared. Several of the men discovered it when they took off their shoes to change socks and found that they were unable to get their shoes on again. I believe that the cause of the trench foot ^{was} due not only to ignorance on the part of the men as to proper care of their feet, but mainly to the fact that for the two previous days they had not been able to remove their shoes or do anything about their feet, as they were having enough trouble trying to stay alive.

On 11 November the battalion moved to another reserve area in the vicinity of 1092295 where they placed security out to protect the reserve area and the area of the regimental CP installations. They remained here until 12 November.

On the morning of 13 November the battalion moved by march to the town of Vaxy (1128) where it remained in reserve. On 14 November the battalion was made available as reserve for the 134th Infantry and moved by march from Vaxy through Vannecourte and Dalha

(1433) to Bellange (1534) where it remained for approximately 30 minutes ~~and~~ ^{AND} was ordered to move to the town of Pevange (1835) by way of the town of Haboudange (17-33). The mission was still one of reserve. As the battalion reached the vicinity of {162342} and turned south towards Haboudange, a considerable amount of enemy mortar and artillery fire compelled it to move off the road in dispersed formation and advance across country, directly to Pevange. We were told ~~that~~ Pevange had been cleared by the 1st Battalion, ^{Infantry,} 134th but when we arrived there we found that the 134th was still fighting on the eastern outskirts of the town. As our battalion entered the town, they were caught in a heavy shellin of the town, ~~and~~ ^{THEY} closed into the town with excessive casualties, ready to support the action of the 1st Battalion, 134th Infantry. It remained in assembly in Pevange on ~~the~~ 15-16 November reverting to control of the 320th Infantry on 17 November. It moved by march from Pevange to an assembly area in the eastern edge of Merhange (19-36) where it was ordered to attack from vicinity of Rachrange (22-36) toward Virming (28-29) the following morning. The attack jumped off ^{at} daylight on 18 November with Company F on the left and Company G on the right. It progressed satisfactorily, until it reached a line at approximately 227380 to 239370, where the attacking companies were taken under well-aimed machine gun fire from the town of Bernhering (2537) and the cross road (245379), which ~~now~~ stopped any further movement in the direction of the attack. Company F, on the left, was completely ambushed by this fire because of the fact that the entire company had been permitted by the enemy to move down to the forward slope of the ridge that they were on, before the fire was opened on them. As a result, they were unable to move at all

Company E, the reserve Company, was then committed to move into the woods at {238368} with the mission of clearing it and setting up a base of fire to support the movement of Company G in their original direction of movement. When Company E reached their position after cleaning out the woods, they were able to bring a heavy volume of fire into the enemy troops opposing Company G. Included was the fire of a TD platoon which moved up with Company E. Company G was able to move forward approximately 150 yards at which point the supporting fires were masked and the Company ^{forced} ~~forced~~ to step.

Immediately after dark, patrols from Companies G & E ^{BEGAN TO} reconnoiter the town of Bremering ~~through the night~~. Early in the morning of 1 November, Company G patrol was able to enter the town and was followed by the remainder of Company G. Company E followed Company G into the town and patrolled the woods to the east of the town. Company F, which had assembled at daylight in its position as battalion reserve, was then moved to ~~the ridge~~ the ridge north of the town. At this point, the 3d Battalion was committed in our sector in conjunction with an attack by the 4th Armored Division, and this battalion became regimental reserve in the town of Bremering.

On 20 November the battalion was moved as regimental reserve to an assembly area in the woods at {290400}, where it was given the mission of attacking at daylight, 21 November ^{in a} due east ^{ly} direction along the area north of the town of Francaltroff (3140) to seize the high ground in the vicinity of 360444.

The attack jumped off approximately 30 minutes late. The following morning, because of the trouble experienced in moving up to the line of departure during darkness without having had the

the opportunity for a daylight reconnaissance. The attack progressed well, and the ridge east of Francaltreff was captured without resistance. The forward elements were held up here^{because} of the fact that the stream which ran east of Francaltreff was flooded, and passage across it was impossible especially for vehicles. The only route across^{it} was along the road leading into the town of Lenning (3240), and that was for^{foot} troops only. For this reason, the reserve company, Company G, was committed to take the town of Lenning, which patrols reported to be unoccupied. Lenning was secured without resistance, and work on a treadway bridge started immediately. During this time, Companies E & F on the ridge had been patrolling to their front to determine the locations and disposition of the enemy's forces. It was reported by the patrols that the only opposition was in and around Grening (35-42). Plans were prepared to take the town and the woods to the north of the town.

The attack jumped off with Company E moving towards the woods north of the town, and Companies G & F converging on the town itself, Company F from the high ground at 330415 and Company G moving from its position in Lenning. The attack progressed favorably. In 30 minutes, Company E reached ^{the} eastern group of woods north of the town without opposition. However, when Company F reached within 200 yards of the town it was stopped by a volume of small arms and machine gun fire, ~~also fire~~. Company G, advancing ~~from~~ from Lenning, ran into this small arms fire and was also stopped. That was as far as the ~~abattalion~~ ^{the} moved that day, as darkness fell rapidly. During the night 21-22 November, Companies F & G were counterattacked by the enemy from the town of Grening.

The attack consisted of approximately two tanks supported by a company of infantry. The main weight of the counter attack struck in the sector of Company F, mainly ^{due} to the fact that it had been impossible to get any AT weapons of any kind other than bazookas across the stream, and ^{that} as at Fracaltreff the companies were without anti-tank support. Due to low morale in Company F, caused by its previous experience at the Chateau Salins Forest, the week before, the continual loss of leaders and the fact that the leadership at that time had practically collapsed, it entirely ~~is~~ disintegrated as a fighting force. Though Company G, received part of the attack, it was held together by good leadership and was able to fall back toward Lenning and hold a fairly secure line for the remainder of the night. Company E, in the woods north of Grening, was able to hold its positions and prevented any action against it, other than harassing patrols and enemy ~~ammunition~~ ~~at Grening~~, except interdicting tank fire. During the following day, 22 November, another attempt was made to seize ^{Grening} ~~Grening~~. Company F was on the north. Company G attempted to move south on the town. The 3d Battalion was committed in the gap between Companies E and G which had developed with the disintegration of Company F. The attempt was frustrated. Early

Early in the morning of 23 November the 3d Battalion moved into Grening while Company E moved on through the woods directly north of town without opposition. We then became regimental reserve and moved into an assembly area in the vicinity of Petit Tenquén (36-43) where we remained until 27 November ^{at which time we} ~~and~~ moved to the town of Guessling-Hemering. We remained there until 2 December and moved to the town of Hilsprich (40-46). On 3 December we relieved elements of the

10th Armored Division along the Maderbach River and executed reconnaissances for sited crossings of the river, in the vicinity of Remering 41-48. The crossing started approximately 0400 on the 4th, ~~the crossing~~ about 2 hours before daylight.

The plan formulated, provided for ~~crossing~~^{A CROSSING} on a dam at the north end of Remering and on ~~the~~^A spillway at the south end of the town, at 0400, 4 December, and ~~then~~^A seizing^{OF} the town of Grundviller, (4449) Early in the evening of 3 December our patrols successfully crossed the river and reconnoitered the area beyond the river for approximately 1000 yards toward our objective, and ^{met} no resistance in that vicinity.

The river was crossed at 0400, 4 December. The north flank security patrol which ^{was} stationed on the Metz-Strasbourg Highway, discovered a column of troops approximately 200 in strength moving southeast along the highway in the direction of Richeling (43-48). They were unable to warn us sufficiently in advance, and when our columns crossed the river, it collided with the force on the road. As a result, there was a considerable amount of confusion and fighting which practically developed into individual grenade fights. No one fired for fear of sheeting his troops. The fight ^{continued} until daylight, at which time our troops were able to reach the little cover afforded by the bank of the river. They were unable to move after daylight because of the flat ^{AND} open ground between the river and the road, ^{ALONG WHICH} the Germans had set up a hasty defense line. At the same time the enemy was prevented from moving toward the river. However, in some positions in and behind the town of Remering there was excellent observation of the road, and throughout the day we fired artillery, mortar, TD ~~AT~~, AT gun, automatic and small arms fire

on the observed enemy positions. By dark we had been able to advance and seize ^{the} enemy line along the road. Several captured PW's reported that almost the entire enemy force had been eliminated.

During the early hours of 5 December, we patrolled the town of Grundviller and found it unoccupied. The battalion immediately occupied ^{the} town and pushed forward to Heckenransbach (51-45) without opposition, arriving there ~~at~~ about noon. The battalion was then ordered to seize the town of Hambach (49-51) and to reconnoiter the area to the east of Hambach including the town of Siltzheim (53-51).

The battalion moved in column of companies and after reaching Hambach without incident found it unoccupied. It continued the advance without further orders ^{to} Siltzheim. The outskirts of the town was reached just about dark. A reconnaissance patrol reported it unoccupied, and the battalion moved into the town with a TD platoon and set up a perimeter defense of the town for the night. The only enemy activity during the night was a small enemy patrol which attempted to enter the town from the north and ^{which} was easily repulsed. The following day, 6 November, Company F moved through the Bois de Zetting with little opposition and occupied the town of Zetting (⁵⁶⁻⁵³ ~~56-55~~) by dark that night. On 7 November we were ordered to reconnoiter sites for a crossing of the Sarre River in the vicinity of Zetting. Reconnaissance was very limited because of the fact that the enemy was well entrenched on the steep slope of the east bank of the river opposite Zetting and had excellent observation on all movements along the river bank. Sniping and observed artillery fire on all movement in that vicinity was continuous. As a result, reconnaissance was decidedly insufficient.

Despite this, plans were drawn up to effect a crossing at 0408 December, with one company in the vicinity of Zetting proper and one company in the vicinity of the blown out railroad bridge at 562528. Company F was to cross in the vicinity of Zetting with one platoon crossing in assault boats and two platoons crossing on the bridge at 565533, which was determined to be passable for foot troops. Company G was to cross to the south at the blown-out railroad bridge with two platoons in assault boats.

At approximately 0200, 8 December, the companies started to move to their assigned positions in preparation for the assault crossing. It was then found that the canal in the vicinity of the Company G crossing site was an obstacle because of its steep banks *boats from being corraed over to the river. Thus at this last minute, the assault* which prevented the assault crossing in the vicinity of the railroad bridge had to be abandoned. Company F, however, was able to start its crossing on time and within 30 minutes had platoons across the wrecked bridge at 565533. The left assault platoon, which crossed in assault boats, ran into difficulties in crossing the stream, because of the swiftness of the current and the lack of training on the part of the personnel in the boats. Some of the men paddled and others did not. The result was that most of the boats landed down stream, some 1000 yards from the point at which they were expected to land. However, this platoon was reorganized by the only available squad leader and moved and joined the battalion in the middle of the fight sometime later in the morning. After Company F cleared the bridge at 565533, Company G was ordered to cross behind them, ~~and~~ which they succeeded in doing quickly. Both companies then moved directly up the steep slope in column of companies, ~~then moved directly up the steep slope~~ *reaching the* summit of the slope without being observed. Both companies then moved across the ridge

with Company F proceeding north and Company G proceeding south. It was just daylight, and the enemy was not yet aware of our move. North and south along the slope of the ridge were enemy prepared trench systems which were occupied by the enemy, and as our companies advanced they hit the ~~German positions~~ ^{ENEMY} flank and fired at the enemy down the trenches. The supporting weapons fired from positions in Zetting and were able to hit numerous groups of enemy as they attempted to get out of the trenches or exposed themselves in any manner. This supporting fire pinned down the enemy until infantrymen could come in behind them and dispose of them. By noon the entire ridge east of Zetting was completely cleared and in our hands. Company E, the reserve Company, then moved across the river and took up positions blocking to the north, while Company F and Company G held the ridgeline facing east. During the night of ^{8 December} ~~the~~ and the following day, 9 December, the Germans attempted several counterattacks against our position, but each attempt was successfully repulsed. However, our movement was greatly restricted by reason of the fact that the Germans still held the high ground in the vicinity of 560555 which overlooked the north flank of our position and the town of Zetting, and from which they had observation and could direct accurate mortar and artillery fire on our positions.

On the morning of 10 December the battalion attacked due north in conjunction with the 1st Battalion on our right. Here again ~~the~~ the machine guns were employed on the west bank of the river along the railroad at 558543 to support the advance of the rifle troops on the east bank. They delivered constant fire across the front of the advancing troops, and this flank fire proved extremely

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effective especially when the advancing rifle companies started to push the Germans out of the north edge of the woods. As the enemy came out of the north edge of the woods, the machine guns fire^d enfilade fire, from the^r positions along the railroad at 558543, on the north edge of the woods, frustrating the attempt of the enemy to retreat, ^{and pinning them down.} After making several attempts to withdraw, and finding ~~it impossible~~ it impossible, several enemy groups returned to the woods and surrendered. At the completion of this mission the battalion went into regimental reserve in the Lehighwald woods where they remained until 15 December.

On the morning of 15 December, the battalion was committed to attack with the mission of seizing the town of Niedergailbach. The battalion moved through the Blies-Bruecken woods maintaining contact with the 87th Division on our right, and seized the south edge of the woods (608575). Coordinating its advance with the 87th Division, it moved to a position approximately ^{at coordinates} {610590}, overlooking the town of Niedergailbach. On the afternoon of 16 December the 87th Division, on our right, attempted to assault the town of Niedergailbach; but were driven back into the woods along side of our troops. Heavy enemy artillery fire fell into the area of the woods to which they ^{had} withdrawn. This same fire fell among our units. However, we were there several hours and that time were well dug in and did not suffer severely.

The order then came down for us to seize the town of Niedergailbach. During the evening ^{of} 16 December we patrolled the town, and, finding it unoccupied, moved into it under cover of darkness in the early morning of 17 December in column of companies. Late in the afternoon we were ordered to seize that portion of town of



Gersheim (61-61) on the east bank of the river. The attack was to be coordinated with the 3d Battalion, who^{was} to seize that portion of the town on the west bank. The attack ~~was~~ to be preceded by heavy artillery preparations. The tanks on the west bank of the river were to open fire after the artillery preparations^{was fired}, and support the advance of our troops. The battalion advanced across the ground between Niedergailach and Gersheim under cover of this tank fire and the continuing artillery fire, and reached Gersheim at dusk. By the next morning, we had the portion of the town on the east bank cleared and in our hands and had good contact with the 3d Battalion across the river. We set up a defense of our portion of the town, maintaining contact with the 87th Division on our right.

At midnight, 20 December, I received a call to report to the CP of the 87th Division in Gersheim. Upon arriving there, I found that we were to be relieved by the 87th Division, and without further question I proceeded with the relief, even though I had received no information from my regiment that the relief was to be made. Arrangements for the relief were started, and ~~the~~ regiment was informed upon my return to my own CP. The relief was completed before daylight, 21 December, and by afternoon the battalion had moved by march to Wiesviller, ~~and~~ from there, ^{it} moved in trucks to an assembly area in the town of Bettring, arriving there at midnight, 21 December. On the night of 22-23 December it moved by motor to Metz.