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Inte: 35th Div CP at Stouichamps, Belgium

8th Jan 45-

Interview Lt Col Doherty - Notes by T/Sgt CD - Argyle  
35th Div - Lorraine Campaign - 8th Nov. to 21st Dec.

From 24 September to 7 November, the 35th Infantry Div was holding a line along the northern edge of the FORET DE GREMECEY, extending to the north and south. The Division CP was at ATTILLONCOURT (V500221)

On 8 November, the 137th Regimental Combat Team<sup>was</sup> on the left, the 320th R<sub>g</sub>imental Combat Team<sup>northeast</sup> attacked/through the 134th on the right. The 320th was commissioned to clear the high wooded terrain known as the FORET DE CHATEAU SALINS. This high ground dominated the avenues of approach on the north and south which were to be used by the 4th Armored Div. The 134th after being passed through, occupied a mobile reserve position guarding the exposed right flank of the division. As yet the 26th Infantry Div had not moved up to eliminate this exposure. The next day, 9 November, the 134th R<sub>g</sub>imental Combat Team was committed to attack from the right flank.

The 320th Regimental Combat Team was on its final objective, the northeast edge of the FORET DE CHATEAU SALINS, on 12 November. This Team was then pinched out by the 137th Regimental Combat Team on the north and the 134th on the south. On 15 November MORHANGE (V519236) was taken by the 134th.

The 134th and 137th were then on the final objectives<sup>at Benestroff, Capt. H. O.</sup> along the BENESTROFF ( )-AUBECOURT ( ) railroad. Then the Division rested. This completed the first phase. During this period the terrain had been impassible for armor leaving the roads. Thus canalized, the tanks were easy prey to the antitank measures taken by the enemy. The armor tried to move ahead but the lead tanks would always be stopped. The columns clogged the roads since they were unable to move cross coun-  
<sup>Road block at Benestroff. Road blocked. armor</sup>

try due to the mud. Thus the infantry could not move through the armor.

The infantry argued to be permitted to spearhead the advance.

On 18 November at 0800, the 137th and 320th Regimental Combat Teams/ attacked to the northeast with the 134th in reserve. At HELLIMER (V533244) the Division received the report that the 6th Armored Div was attacking through them. There was a repetition of what had occurred previously with the 4th Armored Div. The tanks could not move cross-country. The result was that the roads were jammed and the had to move off the road on both sides. The armor was stopped but the infantry was unable to move forward. The armored units stopped at ST JEAN ROHRBACH (V538247). The infantry was ordered to attack through the armor and the Maginot fortifications. The plan was to push the infantry forward up the main axis road (NANCY ( )-PUTTELANGE (V541505) road) to take PUTTELANGE. The lakes and rivers in this area had been flooded due to the heavy rains. These had formed a part of the old Maginot fortifications.

River crossings in assault boats north and south of PUTTELANGE were effected on the LADERBACH river. The 134th then struck out for the town, ~~and~~ caught the Germans by surprise, marched right through the town and continued on. The 137th, in reserve, followed up and mopped up the town.

The Germans were withdrawing but stiffened their resistance as they approached the Siegfried Line. It was a delaying action. The main enemy defenses were set up along roads in the realization that the armor was bogged down because of the flooded areas and mud. After ST. JEAN ROHRBACH the armor was moved northward and was not involved

in the advance of the 35th Infantry Div.

The next obstacle to the advance of the Division was the SAAR river. There were three possible crossing sites: southeast of REMELFING (V553255) SAAREINSMING (V554254) and WITTRING (V557251). The Division was supported by the 1135th Engineer Group.

The 134th Regimental Combat team was at SAAREINSMING, the 320th at WITTRING.

The enemy held high ground east of SAAREGUEMINES (V551257). From this vantage point the enemy possessed commanding observation and excellent fields of fire/

Bailey bridges were put in at WITTRING and SAAREINSMING, and a treadway bridge at REMELFING. The engineers worked under direct fire from the high ground to the north where self-propelled guns were in position.

The 26th Infantry Div was in the process of taking ACHEN (V559249). After this was accomplished, it came alongside the 320th Regimental Combat Team at WITTRING, enabling the latter to cross.

The crossing on 8 December by the 134th at SAAREINSMING was a fire crossing with Cos A and D of the 737th Tank Bn, and the 654th Tank Destroyer Bn supporting with direct fire.

The 134th Regimental Combat Team entered the town of SAAREGUEMINES. The main point of resistance was a factory. The American infantrymen fought with machine guns and hand grenades to clear out the enemy.

The 134th and 320th Regimental Combat Teams reorganized along the

road (5358-8054). Preparations were made for a second river - the BLIES. The enemy occupied a hill (353261) surrounded on three sides by the river, which point enfiladed the entire valley to the southeast.

The 134th crossed in assault boats at HABKIRCHEN (V555259). A bridge was constructed after the infantry had made a bridgehead. The Germans, determined to push it out, made several counter-attacks all of which were smashed by our artillery fire. The 320th crossed at BLIESBRUCK (V559257). An assault in rubber boats was followed by the construction of a bridge.

The 35th Infantry Div was occupying the high ground just north of the BLIES river, and performing a holding mission ~~and~~ (19-22 December) when disengagement was ordered.

At that time the Division's reconnaissance troop was guarding the flank WELDERDING (V549257)-SARREUEMINES (V556260) and the 2nd Cavalry Squadron was holding the line, SARREUEMINES-FRAUEMBERG (V556260)

BLIESMUNGER (V559260) and GERSHEIM (V561261) were the points of farthest advance.

The 44th Infantry Div came up before official orders were out. Oral orders, later confirmed, were issued from XII U. S. Corps.

No ground was lost during the relief.

The disengagement was effected with remarkable ease. There was however, no lessening of enemy pressure.

One company of the 654th Tank Destroyer Bn was in direct support of each regiment. In all river crossings an effort was made to get Tank Destroyers across as soon as possible after the assault infantry.