

DECLASSIFIED
735017
NADA: Date

SECRET

OPD
cto

HEADQUARTERS
60TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION
APO 35 US ARMY

2 December 1944

SUBJECT: Letter of Transmittal.

TO: Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division,
APO 35, US Army.

Transmitted herewith Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Report
of this unit for the period 1-30 November 1944.

Nov
44

For the Commanding Officer:

Charles D Meckes
CHARLES D MECKES
1st Lt CE
Adjutant

2 Incls:

- 1--Journal 60 Engr C Bn 1-30 Nov 44
- 2--Daily Engr Situation Rpt 60 Engr C Bn 1-30 Nov 44

aug-nov 44

335-ENG-0,3

5
5

7755
JAN 27 1945
master

SECRET

DECLASSIFIED

735017

NAVJAG Date

S E C R E T

HEADQUARTERS

60TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION
APO 35 c/o Postmaster, New York, NYACTION AGAINST ENEMY, REPORTS AFTER/AFTER ACTION REPORTS
1-30 November 1944

At the beginning of this period, the battalion was continuing its mission of maintaining roads in the division sector and constructing and maintaining defense works on the line AJONCOURT - FOSSIEUX - CHAMBREY around the east of the FORET DE GREMECY. Key officer personnel consisted of Major Philip Botchin, Bn Comdr; Capt Louis H Johnson, Ex O; Capt Robert W Johnston, ADE; Capt Frank G Rennis, S-3; Capt Charles W Jones, S-2; Capt Robert H Houk, S-4; 1st Lt Charles D Meckes, S-1; 1st Lt Charles W Harris, commanding Hq & Serv Co; Capt Tim Mercer, commanding Co A; Capt Elwyn W Smith, commanding Co B; Capt Fred B Waters, Jr, commanding Co C; Capt Robert T Bandi, battalion surgeon. The battalion strength at the beginning of the period was 26 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 549 enlisted men.

At the beginning of the period, Co A was bivouaced in ABONCOURT, France, on the east side of the la SEILLE River. The battalion (-) was bivouaced at la CANDALE FARMS, France, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles southwest of BOUXIERES, France, with the 1135th Engineer Combat Group in direct support. As the division was in a defensive position, the battalion's primary mission was to maintain the engineer works on the division main line of resistance and all roads and bridges in the division zone forward of the division engineer rear boundary. Due to the inclement weather, it was necessary to constantly haul gravel to patch weak spots in the roads, and continual overhauling of drainage ditches was necessary. On the MLR, domestic animals would occasionally set off mines and trip flares, and it was necessary to replace these booby traps. During this period, the battalion conducted refresher schools in the use of the ANPRS mine detector.

X In order to strengthen the division's defensive positions, the bridges over the la SEILLE River southwest of JALLAUCOURT and southwest of MALLAUCOURT had been destroyed by demolitions during the month of September. As the XII Corps planned to attack to the north and east on 8 November 1944, and cross the river at these points, it was necessary to design sturdy expedient ramps which could be carried to the site by hand and erected hurriedly, as soon as the sites were free of small arms fire. In order to determine the gap on the demolished structures, Capt Frank G Rennis, battalion S-3, on the night of 3 November 1944, led a reconnaissance patrol to the sites and secured the necessary information.

Construction of ramps was started immediately. The JALLAUCOURT ramp was a class 60 ramp, 15 feet long, and the MALLAUCOURT ramp was a class 40, 20 feet long. All ramps were 45 inches wide with a gap of 40 inches between ramps. A locking piece was devised so that the ramps would not slip while in place. They were constructed of 3" by 12" timbers and the MALLAUCOURT ramp was designed to accommodate a Sherman tank which could safely push before it a 30-ton mine detonating roller. X

On 5 November 1944, Co B was placed in direct support of the 137th Infantry and Co C in direct support of the 320th Infantry Regiment. Co A was battalion reserve. The following day, Co B moved to MANHOUVE and Co C to the FORET DE GREMECY.

- 1 -

S E C R E T

DECLASSIFIED

735017

NARA Date

S E C R E T

Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports, Hq 60 Engr C Bn, 1-30 Nov 44

X On the night of 7 November 1944, Co's B and C cleared numerous gaps in the MLR so that the infantry regiments could attack through our own defenses. At 0600 hours the following morning, the division attacked successfully to the north and east. The squad from Co A encountered enemy machine gun and rifle fire as they attempted to launch the JALLAUCOURT ramp, and it was necessary to use the covering fire of assault guns on the tanks that were waiting to cross. The treadway was launched at 1030 and ready for use in a period of 20 minutes and immediately after launching, tanks successfully crossed the ramps. At the MALLAUCOURT site, the ramps, weighing approximately one ton, were carried to the site on a $2\frac{1}{2}$ ton truck trailer. As a launching squad from Co A arrived at the high ground west of the bridge, they found that observed enemy artillery fire was so intense that it was impossible to approach the site with truck and trailer. Capt Louis H Johnson, Battalion Executive Officer, who was present in an advisory capacity, conceived the idea of unhitching the trailer from the prime mover just below the crest of the high ground, and with the aid of a jeep, pulled the trailer over the high ground, down the hill to the site, thereby successfully launching both sections in a minimum of time. X The same day the battalion (-) moved to GREMECEY.

The following day Co A was placed in direct support of the 134th Infantry Regiment, and following the advance of the infantry regiments, the battalion (-) moved to JALLAUCOURT on 10 November 1944; GERBECOURT on 12 November 1944; and ACHAIN on 14 November 1944.

On 12 November 1944, Co C was relieved of direct support of the 320th Infantry Regiment and reverted to battalion control. During the period, Co C was battalion reserve, removed considerable obstacles and road blocks from roads in the division sector which, because of the large amount of mine clearing to be done, could not be accomplished by other engineer troops.

On 14 November 1944, Co A constructed a 24 foot, class 40 steel treadway bridge over a demolished culvert northwest of HABOUDANGE and the following day, Co C replaced steel treadway which had been laid by supporting troops, with two Bailey bridges, a 50 foot D/S north of BREHAIN, and a 20 foot S/S south of BREHAIN. To expedite traffic through the town, considerable rubble was removed from the streets with a bulldozer.

The following day, Co B removed 2000 lbs of explosives from a culvert on the main highway approximately $3/4$ miles north of BARONVILLE. The charge was to have been detonated with a time mechanism but was found and neutralized before the time limit had expired.

On 17 November 1944, Co A was relieved of support of the 134th Infantry Regiment and reverted to battalion reserve, while Co C was placed in direct support of the 320th Infantry Regiment. The 1135th Engineer Combat Group was relieved of support of the 35th Infantry Division and the 1117th Engineer Combat Group was placed in direct support.

On 18 November 1944, Co B removed and destroyed four 200 lb aerial bombs which were used as demolitions with the intention of destroying a culvert southeast of HARPRICH. On 20 November 1944, Co B removed two 200 lb bombs from a culvert north of BISTROFF and three days later removed six 100 lb aerial bombs from a culvert approximately one mile west of HELLIMER.

On 19 November 1944, battalion (-) moved to a bivouac area one mile northeast of MORHANGE.

DECLASSIFIED

735017

NARA Date

S E C R E T

Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports, Hq 60 Engr C Bn, 1-30 Nov 44

On 23 November 1944, Co A constructed a 24 foot, class 40 treadway bridge over craters west of HELLIMER. The same day the first platoon of Co A was attached to the 134th Combat Team and the 1117th Engineer Group relieved of support of the 35th Infantry Division. The 1135th Engineer Group was again placed in direct support of the division. The following day the battalion (-) moved to ERSTROFF.

On 25 November 1944, Co A (-), replaced treadway bridges southeast of FRANCAITROFF and southeast of LENNING with culverts and fills, and constructed a culvert on the road west of HILSPRICH. Co B removed aerial bombs from a culvert in the vicinity of HELLIMER. The following day Co A (-) replaced treadway south of FRANCAITROFF with a culvert.

On 27 November 1944, Co C removed approximately 650 pounds of TNT from one-half mile of railroad track southeast of LENNING. The same day Co's B and C reverted to battalion control and moved their CP's to ERSTROFF. The following day the first platoon, Co A was relieved of attachment to the 134th Combat Team, and rejoined the company in ERSTROFF.

On 30 November 1944, Co B constructed a 70 foot, class 40 D/S Bailey bridge southeast of HEMERING.

X In addition to these tasks, all of the companies performed extensive maintenance and daily minesweeping of roads. The retreating enemy blew innumerable craters in roads in an attempt to slow down the advance of the division, but these craters were generally adequately filled with the use of a bulldozer and engineer working parties, or bridged with treadway. During this operation the battalion encountered more enemy craters and roadblocks than it had since its arrival in FRANCE. Aerial bombs, used as demolition charges, were encountered for the first time, and in great quantities. The enemy also made copious use of "S" mines, Tellermines, and the little known "Riegel" or rail mine, which detonates with only slight pressure, thereby making it a hazard to both personnel and vehicles. It was found that the most practical way of disposing of the Riegel mine was to "blow" it in place, or as soon after removal as possible, as it is believed that many of them are fused with time fuses and may detonate after having been removed a considerable length of time. In no instance are these mines to be removed and stacked. Not since NORMANDY has this battalion encountered as many engineer works as in this operation. Every town in the division sector was barricaded with log barriers and farm implements. In almost every instance roads leading into and out of a town were cratered, thus isolating the town. From an engineer point of view, each town was a bridgehead, as immediately after a town had been captured by infantry troops, it was necessary to quickly bridge or fill, the craters in the roads leading into town. Mines were well camouflaged, even to the extent of burying them in a road and covering them with a thin layer of tar so that it would appear to be merely a "road patch". Mine sweeping was extremely difficult due to the dampness and muddy roads, in addition to shrapnel which littered the roads and made accurate recording difficult. X

During this period, two enlisted men were awarded Bronze Star Medals, General Orders 52, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 17 Nov 44, awarded the Bronze Star to S/Sgt Chester

DECLASSIFIED

735017

NADA: DLR

S E C R E T

Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports, Hq 60 Engr C Bn, 1-30 Nov 44

Wade, platoon sergeant of Co A, for heroic service during the construction of defensive works from 23 to 25 October 1944 in the vicinity of BRIN-sur-SEILLE to GREMECY, France. Formal presentation was made 19 November 1944, one mile northeast of MORHANGE, France. General Order 53, Hq 35th Inf Div dated 23 November 1944, awarded the Bronze Star to Cpl Edward M Smith, an assistant squad leader of Co B for heroic service in the evacuation of a wounded comrade under fire near JALLAUCOURT, France. Formal presentation was made 26 November 1944 at ERSTROFF, France. M/Sgt John S Parker, former battalion operation's sergeant received a battlefield appointment as second lieutenant, Corps of Engineers in recognition of the leadership ability displayed by him since the entry of this unit into combat. He has been assigned platoon leader of the first platoon, Co A.

On 8 November 1944, the battalion suffered a great loss when Captain Elwyn W Smith, Commanding Officer of Company B was wounded while leading his company in the placing of prefabricated bridge sections across a destroyed bridge southwest of JALLAUCOURT, France. 1st Lt George W Bond has assumed command of the company. In the same operations, Sgt Peter J Maccio and Pvt R C Huffman, both Co B, were killed by artillery fire. On 10 November 1944, a detail from Co C were sweeping a road in the Forest de Chateau Salins and were ambushed by a strong enemy position. All but four members of this detail escaped, but Cpl Carl J Schroeder, Pfc Glenville W Voges, Pvt Ben R Hohlt, and Pvt Thomas C Fabiano were not found and are carried as missing in action. Total casualties for the month were two enlisted men killed in action, one officer and eleven enlisted men wounded and there were 51 non-battle casualties. The battalion received 55 replacements and 55 men returned to duty from hospitals. Battalion strength at the end of the period was 29 Officers, 3 Warrant Officers, and 593 enlisted men.

S E C R E T