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Auth: CG 35th Inf Div

HEADQUARTERS

Initials *RYH*

60TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

APO 35 c/o Postmaster, New York, NY Date *11 Nov 44*

2 November 1944

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SUBJECT: Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports.

TO : The Adjutant General, War Department, Washington 25, D.C.

THRU : Commanding General, 35th Infantry Division,  
APO 35, c/o Postmaster, New York, New York.

In compliance with 1st indorsement, letter Headquarters First United States Army, File ref: 319.1/401 (C) dated 13 July 1944, forwarded herewith Action Against Enemy, Reports After/After Action Reports.

For the Commanding Officer:

*Charles D Meckes*

CHARLES D MECKES

1st Lt CE

Adjutant

3 Incls:

1-Action Against Enemy, Reports After/

After Action Reports with three (3) photographs.

2-Journal, 60th Engr Combat Bn.

3-Daily Engineer Situation Reports for month of October 1944.

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## HEADQUARTERS

60TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION  
APO 35 c/o Postmaster, New York, NY

ACTION AGAINST ENEMY, REPORTS AFTER/AFTER ACTION REPORTS  
1-31 October 1944

At the beginning of this period, the battalion was continuing its mission of constructing defense works on the line Ajoncourt-Fossieux-Chambre, around the east of the Foret de Gremecy. On 2 October 1944 the Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel John B Canada, became ill and was evacuated and Major Philip Botchin assumed command. On 17 October 1944, Captain Louis H Johnson was assigned from the 1135th Engineer Combat Group as Executive Officer. Other key officers during the month were Capt Charles W Jones, S-2; Capt Frank G Rennis, S-3; Capt Robert H Houk, S-4; Capt Robert W Johnston, ADE; 1st Lt Charles D Meckes, S-1; 1st Lt Charles W Harris, commanding Hq & Serv Co; Capt Tim Mercer commanding Company A; Capt Elwyn W Smith commanding Company B; Capt Fred B Waters, Jr commanding Company C. The battalion strength at the beginning of the period was 28 officers, 3 warrant officers and 575 enlisted men.

During the month of October 1944 the battalion was bivouaced at la Candale Farms, one and one-half mile south west of Bouxieres, France, with the 1135th Engineer Group in direct support. As the division was in a defensive position, the battalion's primary mission was to construct defensive works in front of the division MLR. As a secondary mission, all roads in the division sector were maintained and kept in a state of repair, and all unexploded enemy shells destroyed. The division front extended from Ajoncourt east to Manhoue, north of the Foret de Gremecy and south to Chambre with two infantry regiments abreast. Company B was placed in direct support of the 137th Infantry, Company C in support of the 320th Infantry and Company A plus five squads of 133d Engr Combat Battalion placed in direct support of the 134th Infantry. In establishing a defensive line in the division sector, each company used to the fullest advantage, all available rolls of barbed wire, concertina, AP and AT mines, and sandbags. Infantry CP's were dug in, and eight foot timbers cut so that all individual and squad dugouts would be adequately covered. M-48 and M-49 warning devices (flare type) were installed with 15 to 20 feet of trip wire near all barbed wire fences, and in areas which were logical avenues of approach for enemy patrols. These warning devices were covered by fields of fire, and on several occasions, enemy patrols tripped these warning flares and lighted the immediate area, thus providing an easy target for our defending forces.

On 3 October 1944 the five squads of the 133d Engineer Combat Battalion were relieved of support of Company A. Two days later the supporting group constructed a class 40 D/S Bailey Bridge over the la Seille River in the vicinity of Bey, and Company B removed the class 10 expedient pneumatic float bridge which they had constructed 25 September 1944.

On the morning of 8 October 1944, Companies A and B were placed in direct support of the 134th Infantry Regiment to facilitate the attack of the regiment to the new MLR. The 134th was on the division left flank and advanced 500 to 800 yards so that the division defensive line would be straightened. Numerous friendly AP and AT minefields were removed so that the regiment could move forward. These mines were later used to protect the new MLR.

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X To neutralize any mechanized attack which the enemy might launch on the Division left flank, six bridges over the la Seille river, all of which were in enemy territory, were destroyed by demolitions between 9 October and 13 October 1944. On 9 October 1944 Company A, using tank-infantry-engineer teams, destroyed a bridge northeast of Fossieux. The engineers and infantry rode to the bridge on the tanks, and while the engineers placed their explosive charges, the infantry and tank teams provided the necessary covering fire for the engineer working party.

The following day, demolition squads from Company B, using the same tank-infantry-engineer team method, destroyed two bridges south of Aulnois-sur-Seille. On the night of 11 October 1944, strong patrols from Company A destroyed two twenty foot masonry bridges, one west of Malaucourt, and the other southeast of Malaucourt. The following day, a patrol from Company B destroyed the bridge northeast of Fossieux without incident.

From 13 October to 18 October 1944, the battalion performed extensive road maintenance in the division sector, dug in artillery pieces, and cut revetting timber for the infantry and artillery. All of the roads in the division sector were swept for mines and several flame-thrower classes were conducted for the 137th Infantry.

During this defensive phase of operations, it became apparent that the enemy could, at any time they chose, destroy the earthen dam at the north end of the Lindre Lake, southeast of Dieuze, and flood the la Seille river valley. This action by the enemy would isolate the front line regiments from the rest of the division, and cut off supply and communication lines across the river valley. To neutralize this threat, it was decided to destroy this dam by dropping high explosive bombs after all necessary dykes and improvements were made.

It was estimated that after the dam was destroyed, the valley would be inundated to a depth of approximately five feet, and that the river would not recede to its former level for another ten to fifteen days. As the north-south road from Aboncourt to Alincourt would be inundated by the river, a dyke was constructed between the road and river by Company A.

The supporting Engineer group removed all of the bridges in the division sector which would be covered by flood water and dyked the approaches to the bailey bridge at Brin so that the foundations would not be undermined. The only remaining bridges in the division sector were at Ajoncourt, Manhoue, and Pettoncourt.

Company B was relieved of support of the 137th Infantry and placed in direct support of the division, while Companies A and C moved to high ground across the river, Company A at Aboncourt and Company C at Manhoue. These companies were to repair and maintain roads and dykes in the division sector after the dam had been destroyed. The 453rd Amphibian Truck Company was attached to the battalion in the event an unforeseen flood level was reached and troops and supplies had to be ferried across the river. Reconnaissance disclosed that suitable ferrying sites were located at Manhoue, Aboncourt, Brin, and Pettoncourt. Water gauges were installed at Brin and Pettoncourt and checked hourly by the battalion reconnaissance section.

At approximately 1400 hours on 20 October 1944, Thunderbolt planes using 1000 pound bombs, skip-bombed the dam. It was definitely established that there was at



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least one direct hit on the dam and one near miss. In the division sector the water rose five feet in approximately 72 hours and remained at that level for five days, before gradually receding. Although the river rose to the level of the dykes, they adequately protected the roads and bridges, and the flow of traffic was not curtailed during the flood stage. The amphibian trucks were not needed for ferrying, but remained alerted in the event of an emergency. On 30 October 1944, reconnaissance planes determined that a gap had been blown in the spillway of approximately fifty feet in length and that the lake had receded to a level even with the bottom of the gap, thereby eliminating any threat of isolating troops east of the river.

On 24 October 1944, the 453rd Amphibian Truck Company was relieved of attachment and the battalion continued on the mission of general support of the 35th Infantry Division. During the remainder of the month, the battalion maintained all roads forward of the division rear boundary, cut revetting timbers for division artillery, and constructed twenty latrine boxes for the use of the enlisted men of the 320th Infantry.

From 25 October 1944 to 31 October 1944, Company C constructed a corduroy road near Chambrey for use of ammunition trains of the 216 Field Artillery Battalion. A "Y" junction was constructed and as over 10,000 timbers were used, it is probably one of the longest corduroy roads to be constructed in the ETO. It was estimated that ten days would be required for completion of the project, but in spite of adverse weather conditions, it was completed in eight days.

During this period, 28 officers and enlisted men were awarded Bronze Stars. One enlisted man was awarded the Silver Star, and two officers and one enlisted man received the Silver Star posthumously, and one enlisted man received the Bronze Star posthumously. General Order 46, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 23 October 1944, awarded the Silver Star to Tec 5 Harry P Rahn, Medical Detachment, for heroic service in rendering first aid to fourteen men wounded in an explosion of anti-tank mines near Ajoncourt, France. Tec 5 Rahn administered first aid in spite of the fact that he had been so severely wounded that he had only the use of one arm. General Order 39, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 2 October 1944, posthumously awarded the Silver Star to Major Edwin C Pumroy for conspicuous gallantry during an assault river crossing at Nancy, France. General Order 46, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 23 October 1944, posthumously awarded the Silver Star to 2d Lt G H Miller Smith, Company A, for conspicuous gallantry while making a hazardous daylight reconnaissance in enemy territory preparatory to blowing a bridge. General Order 41, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 7 October 1944, posthumously awarded the Silver Star to Cpl Thomas J J Downing, Company A, for gallantry in action while leading his squad to safety during an enemy counter-attack of a river crossing operation near Flavigny, France. General Order 39, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 2 October 1944, awarded the Bronze Star posthumously to Tec 5 Angelo J Mineconza, Company A, for heroic service while reconnoitering for a crossing site on the Moselle river near Flavigny, France. General Order 40, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 5 October 1944, awarded the Bronze Star to Capt Elwyn W Smith, Sgt Robert L Chesney, Sgt Elwin L Wright, Tec 5 William F Ague, Tec 5 Stanley J Delgado, and the Bronze Star, Oak Leaf cluster, to 1st Lt George W Bond, all of Company B, for



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gallantry in action in the capture of a bridge at Rosieres aux Salines, France. Presentation was made at a formal ceremony at la Condale Fme, France, 18 October 1944 to all except Sgt Chesney who was wounded in a later action and was not present for the presentation. At this ceremony, Lt Bond was also awarded the Bronze Star for heroic service from 11 July to 6 September 1944 as authorized by General Order 37, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 27 September 1944. General Order 41, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 7 October 1944 awarded the Bronze Star to 1st Lt Richard C Strachan, S Sgt John S Mortensen, Tec 5 Joseph B Staubach and Pfc Frederick J Meiniker, all of Company C for heroic service while preparing a bridge for demolitions in the vicinity of Manhoue, France. Formal presentation was made at la Condale Fme, France, 15 October 1944. The above mentioned order also awarded Bronze Stars to Sgt Edward Affenita, Cpl William E O'Brien, Pfc Arnold A Feuerman, Company A, for heroic service in the evacuation of wounded infantrymen during a river crossing operation near Flavigny, France, and to Pvt Patrick J Brennan, Company A, for heroic service in the evacuation of his mortally wounded assistant squad leader in the same river crossing operation. Formal presentation was made to Pfc Feuerman and Pvt Brennan at la Condale Fme, France, 12 October 1944. Sgt Affenita and Cpl O'Brien were not present, having been wounded and evacuated. General Order 43, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 11 October 1944, awarded Bronze Stars to M Sgt John S Parker, Hq and Serv Co, for exceptionally meritorious service from 11 July to 22 September 1944, to Sgt Anthony S Sadowski, Cpl Rocco J Margagliotti, and Pvt Edward Stone, Company A, for heroic service during a river crossing operation near Tomblaine, France. Formal presentation was made to M Sgt Parker at la Condale Fme, France, 12 October 1944 and to Cpl Margagliotti and Pvt Stone on 18 October 1944 at la Condale Fme, France. Sgt Sadowski having been wounded was not available for the presentation. Sgt Frank Mussa, Company B, was awarded the Bronze Star for heroic service during an enemy shelling near Bioncourt, France, on General Order 44, Hq 35th Infantry Division, dated 16 October 1944, and formal presentation was made at la Condale Fme, France, 23 October 1944. General Order 46, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 23 October 1944, awarded Bronze Stars to Capt Robert H Houk, Bn S-4, for exceptionally meritorious service from 25 September to 13 October 1944 and to Capt Tim Mercer, Company A, and Capt Fred B Waters, Jr., Company C, for exceptionally meritorious service from 10 July to 10 October 1944. Formal presentations were made 28 October 1944 at la Condale Fme, France. General Order 47, Hq 35th Inf Div, dated 23 October 1944, awarded Bronze Stars to Sgts John L Garvey and Clarence F Nelson, and Pfc George L Wagnis, Company B, for heroic service after an explosion of anti-tank mines at Ajoncourt, France, to 2d Lt James B Glidewell, Company A, for heroic service while on a demolitions mission and to Pfc Roland H Cooper, Company A, for heroic achievement while on a dangerous daylight reconnaissance into enemy territory. Formal presentations were made to Pvt Cooper at Aboncourt, France, 30 October 1944 and to Sgt Nelson at Alincourt, France, 31 October 1944. Lt Glidewell, Sgt Garvey and Pfc Wagnis, having been wounded and evacuated, were not available for presentation.

X On the night of 10 October 1944, Company B, suffered the loss of 47 men in an explosion of anti-tank mines at Ajoncourt, France. The third platoon and elements of the first platoon were engaged in a night mine laying operation just north of the town. The squad trucks loaded with mines were parked at a point just south of the town and the mines were being fused and unloaded from the trucks and carried to the mine field. At approximately 2300, a terrific explosion from the leading truck which



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was loaded with mines, caused the sympathetic detonation of a nearby truck load of mines and mines stacked on the ground nearby. Approximately 1500 mines in all exploded. The entire area immediately became an inferno of exploding mines, small arms ammunition and burning vehicles. Intermittent enemy artillery and mortar fire had been falling in this area, but it has never been definitely established whether this or a defective fuse caused the explosion. Eighteen identifiable bodies were found and fifteen men were missing. Fourteen men were wounded and evacuated to aid stations. The night was very dark and there was a heavy fog which made rescue work most difficult, but there were numerous incidents of heroism. Several wounded men pulled wounded comrades from the nearby la Seille river thereby saving their lives.

On 20 October 1944, at Manhoue, France, S Sgt Clarence J Regas, Company C, was sworn in as a Second Lieutenant, Corps of Engineers. Lt Regas received his battlefield appointment after having served as acting platoon leader for one month during which time he distinguished himself as a leader of men while under fire.

The battalion suffered a great loss when 2d Lt G H Miller Smith was killed in action while making a personal daylight reconnaissance in enemy territory so that he might be thoroughly orientated with the terrain when leading his platoon that night to blow a bridge across the la Seille river near Malaucourt, France. When fired upon by the enemy, Lt Smith, instead of withdrawing, made his way forward, knocked out several enemy positions with accurate rifle fire, and forced the surrender of six enemy soldiers. While withdrawing with his prisoners, he was mortally wounded. 2d Lt James B Glidewell was wounded while evacuating wounded men after the completion of a demolitions mission.

In all there were 18 enlisted men and one officer killed in action and 15 enlisted men missing in action during the period. One officer and 27 enlisted men were wounded in action and there were 46 non-battle casualties. The battalion received 50 replacements and 33 enlisted men returned to duty from hospitals. The battalion strength at the end of the period was 26 officers, 3 warrant officers, and 552 enlisted men.



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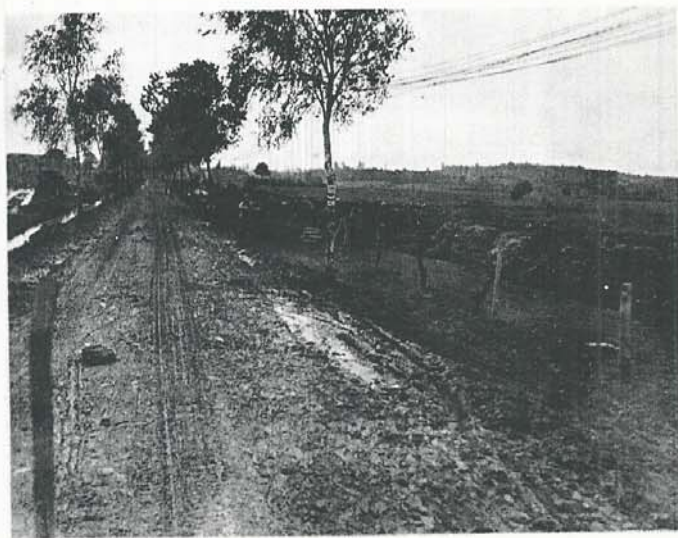
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CORBUROY ROAD CONSTRUCTED BY  
CO C 60<sup>TH</sup> ENGR COMBAT BN 25-31 OCT  
44 NEAR CHAMBREY, FRANCE

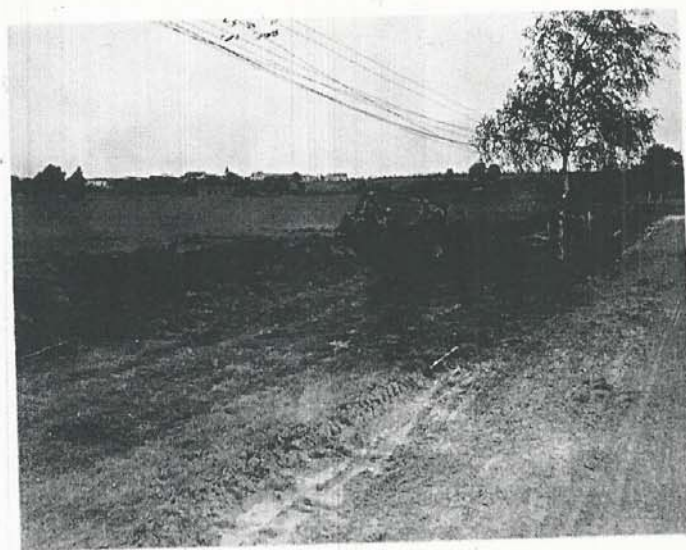
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VIEW OF DYKE FROM ABINCOURT TO  
 ABINCOURT FRANCE, CONSTRUCTED  
 FOR THE FLOODING OF THE LA SEINE  
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