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HEADQUARTERS 117TH INFANTRY
A. P. O. 30, U. S. ARMY

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BY ENL. [REDACTED] 2/17

4 December 1944.

SUBJECT : Resume of Operations for the Month of November 1944.

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

During the month of November 1944, the 117th Infantry made substantial additions to its already voluminous record of victories and successes in the destruction of the German Army. In the great offensive that carried the Allied Armies to the banks of the Roer River, the 117th Infantry, in the initial assault, carried out what was termed by higher headquarters as three perfect infantry attacks with artillery, tank, direct fire, and other supporting weapons coordinated faultlessly. Although engaged offensively for but a short part of the period, the Regiment captured more than 800 prisoners, large supplies of enemy ammunition, weapons, and other equipment.

At the beginning of the period, the 117th Infantry was maintaining an active defense along a line running from Schaufenberg, Alsdorf, to Kol Kellersberg, Germany. Deep penetrations were made repeatedly into enemy territory by reconnaissance elements. The aggressive and highly successful patrolling by units of the First Battalion evoked the commendation of the Regimental Commander.

On 15 November 1944, the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, and Bronze Star awards were made to members of the Regiment by Major General L. S. Hobbs, Division Commander. The following day, the troops, in a perfectly conducted attack, gained the town of Mariadorf, Germany. Within fifteen minutes from the inauguration of the assault, this section of the hostile Main Line of Resistance had been taken. Dense enemy mining was encountered by the attacking force, the foe having made extensive use of the wooden "box-type" mine which was extremely difficult to detect. Numerous casualties were suffered while crossing the mine fields and considerable mortar and artillery fire encountered. However, strong concentrations of friendly artillery and mortar fire had neutralized the bulk of the enemy resistance prior to the attack. 104 German prisoners were taken during the day's activity.

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The attack was resumed at 0700, 17 November 1944, with the 1st Battalion cleaning out the remainder of the town of Mariadorf and progressing 700 yards beyond the Aachen-Cologne Highway against stubborn enemy resistance. Only ground weapons were available for fighting considerable tank opposition. Because of the inclemency of the weather a scheduled air mission had to be canceled. The 2nd Battalion jumped off towards Hongen, and although subjected to severe hostile artillery and mortar fire as well as a fiercely determined infantry, seized the town by 1645. 228 additional prisoners were captured during the operations.

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At 0730, 18 November 1944, the 1st Battalion of the 117th Infantry launched an attack upon the town of Warden, Germany. The initial blow was thwarted by powerful screens of enemy artillery and small arms fire, as well as direct fire from dug-in tanks. At 1115 hours the attack was renewed, but again the devastating superiority of opposing fire power caused heavy casualties and stopped the advance short of its goal. Company "B" alone lost more than seventy men in the short engagement. At 1515 hours, following closely behind an intensive artillery preparation and friendly fire from direct fire weapons, the 1st Battalion plus Company "F", launched a coordinated attack against the strongly fortified town. Our troops rode forward on tanks, four men upon each tank. Three rifle companies and eleven tanks approached the city from three sides. The enemy utilized concrete emplacements, houses as strong points, and with the support of at least four direct-fire assault guns resisted the drive fiercely. Nevertheless, the key town was seized and cleaned out in bitter house to house fighting. Another 209 prisoners was captured in addition to tons of ammunition and two self-propelled assault guns.

On 19 November 1944, the 2nd Battalion of the 117th Infantry passed through the 1st Battalion and attacked South in the direction of Kinzweiler, Germany. Simultaneously the 3rd Battalion directed an attack against St. Joris. Mortar and artillery barrages, and direct fire from supporting arms preceded the drives in each instance. Both objectives were taken within thirty minutes, as the troops of the 117th Infantry again rode forward upon the armor. 223 prisoners was the bag for these skillfully executed operations, while our forces sustained only light casualties.

During the balance of the month, the 117th Infantry constituted Corps Reserve. The battalions alternated in going back to a Rest Camp for well earned periods of relaxation. Reorganization, maintenance, and training was also conducted. The training included practice firing with mortars, bazookas, and other small arms.

On 28 November 1944, Major General L. S. Hobbs again awarded numerous decorations to officers and enlisted men of the Regiment for heroic acts and meritorious service. These decorations included The Distinguished Service Cross to Lt. Col. Robert E. Frankland, Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion, and an Oak Leaf Cluster for the Silver Star to Colonel Walter M. Johnson, the Regimental Commander.

For the Commanding Officer:

E. W. Pearce
ELE W. PEARCE
WOJG, 117th Infantry
Assistant Adjutant

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HEADQUARTERS 117TH INFANTRY
A. P. O. 30, U. S. ARMY

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5 January 1945

SUBJECT: Resume of operations for Month of December 1944.

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

When the enemy initiated its spectacular counter-thrust against the American First Army, on 16 December 1944, the 117th Infantry was in a Rest Status at Mariadorf, Germany. Training schedules were being conducted while the Battalions and Special Units alternated in taking advantage of the Rest Camp facilities at Kerkrade, Holland, for forty-eight hour periods. Rocket firing and armored demonstrations took place during the second week. On 11 December 1944, General L. S. Hobbs, Division Commander, presented the Distinguished Service Cross, and Bronze and Silver Stars, to officers and enlisted men of the Regiment. Additional awards were made by the Division Commander on 16 December 1944; and, on the same day, Colonel Walter M. Johnson, the Regimental Commander, departed for London on a short leave.

Constant vigilance was maintained by the troops as renewed enemy activity became manifest. The command was alerted frequently to be on guard for hostile aircraft. Two German planes appeared over the Regimental Area during the early hours of 17 December 1944, but dropped no bombs. At about the same time, six Nazi Paratroopers were picked up in the vicinity of Bardenburg, Germany.

At 1140, 17 December 1944, the Regiment was alerted to move South within six hours. The Quartering Party left two hours after receipt of the order. Colonel Johnson returned from Brussels at 1550, and the Command Post at Mariadorf, Germany, was closed by 1945. Original plans called for movement through Aachen, Germany, to an Assembly Area near Eupen, Belgium, where the Regiment was to be attached to the Fifth Corps. Brigadier General, William K. Harrison, Assistant Division Commander, intercepted the convoy enroute with instructions to proceed to Malmedy, Belgium, and to assume an all around defense of the area without delay.

A temporary Command Post was set up for the night at Retteris, Belgium, and orders issued for continuing the move. The Third Battalion was to lead out at 0230, 18 December 1944, preceded by the Regimental I & R Platoon, and a platoon of the 30th Reconnaissance Troops. Enemy aircraft harassed the convoy with flares and dropped some bombs causing no casualties and little effect upon the movement. By 1010, 18 December 1944, the Regimental Command Post had been established in Malmedy, Belgium.

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The enemy penetration was then in a fluid state. Forward elements had reached the town of Stavelot, Belgium, on the way to Liege. Company "A" of the 526th Armored Infantry Division had been driven from this key objective by superior forces after knocking out three hostile tanks. The Third Battalion of the 117th Infantry took up an immediate defensive position around the South-eastern edge of Malmedy while the First and Second Battalions advanced toward Stavelot. By 1245, 18 December 1944, the Second Battalion was in position midway between Stavelot and Malmedy, dominating the main road linking the two towns, and destroying three German tanks in ninety minutes. The First Battalion moved into Stavelot and occupied the city by 1520, after disposing of a sizeable force of infantry and armor. A counter-attack sustained several hours later with the enemy using three American half tracks and three jeeps was quickly repulsed and all of the vehicles knocked out. 2200 hours of the next day, the vital bridge at Stavelot, spanning the L'Ambleve River was blown out. The Northern salient of Von Rundstedt's mighty effort was contained along this line and the imperilling of Liege averted by the determined and aggressive action of the troops of the 117th Infantry.

On 19 December 1944, the Third Battalion was directed also to recapture the town of La Gleize, Belgium. With the 120th Infantry assuming responsibility for defense of the Malmedy Sector, the Third Battalion proceeded to this objective at 1115. At 1510 the Regimental Command Post was moved to Francorchamps, Belgium. After knocking out a Mark V Tank the Third Battalion took up a defensive position near Moulin DuRuy. Company "L" was disposed at Roanne; Company "K", at Cour; and, Company "I", at Ruy. A twilight attack upon the First Battalion was dispersed by artillery fire. The 823rd Tank Destroyers incapacitated four enemy tanks during the day's operations including a King Tiger and a King Royal, while Company "A" of the 105th Engineers destroyed the main bridge across the L'Ambleve River leading into Stavelot from the South. This feat was accomplished in total darkness under extremely hazardous conditions. During the night, Company "A", of the 117th Infantry, smothered several enemy attempts to penetrate its lines.

The following morning, General Hobbs authorized the use of Company "F", 120th Infantry, in support of the First Battalion in case of emergency. Strong forces of German tanks and infantry attacked the Right flank of the Battalion, engaging "A" and "B" Companies in a stiff fight and compelling the unit to withdraw approximately 100 yards. In the meantime the enemy was reported to be constructing a bridge across the river south-east of Stavelot. Artillery concentrations slowed up the enemy advance and demolished the river installations. The Nazis then began massing a large force upon the South bank of the river confronting the Second Battalion positions; but, the artillery hurriedly put an end to this threat with a voluminous barrage which inflicted heavy casualties upon the foe. Whereupon, the Second Battalion completed the task of cleaning out the remaining enemy troops North of the L'Ambleve River and two platoons outposted the area from Challis to Chevofosso.

During the afternoon of 20 December 1944, the 526th Infantry was counter-attacked West of Stavelot and the Third Battalion of the 117th Infantry reported strong enemy opposition at the road junction North of La Gleize. However, with a Task Force from the Third Armored

Division, which was attached to the 117th Infantry at the time, Company "K" battered down the fanatical resistance of the enemy and reached the outskirts of the town by 1800. The attack was resumed during the night and Company "K", with the cooperating Task Force, succeeded in penetrating La Gleize only to be surrounded by the foe. Encirclement was averted by a slight withdrawal to the North after the Third Battalion had opened a wedge.

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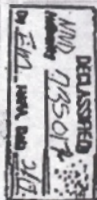
At 0800, 21 December 1944, the 105th Engineers established a road block at Roanne. Shortly thereafter the Tank Destroyers attached to the Second Battalion demolished three Nazi tanks which had pierced the Right flank of the 120th Infantry. With all points of direct contact firmly stabilized the enemy endeavored to infiltrate the First Battalion positions by swimming the L'Ambleve River. Company "B" sharpshooters picked them off like clay pigeons in a shooting gallery. None succeeded in getting across and but a few managed to escape the watery grave. Approximately 150 of the foe were eliminated in this spectacular fashion. Mines impaled the two lead tanks of a Third Armored Task Force, "Mike", advancing on La Gleize from the West. The two rear tanks were put out of action by enemy fire. Consequently, the remaining armor, in the center of the column, was wedged in and could not be moved. The Task Force then attempted to enter La Gleize from the South. Meanwhile, Companies "I" and "L", 117th Infantry, by an attack through the woods from Roanne, attained the cities of Ster and Renardmont after overcoming strong opposition, occupied the town of Parfondruy while heavily engaged from both sides of the river, and made contact with the First Battalion of the 117th Infantry in Stavelot. The 823rd Tank Destroyers assisted in the operation by knocking out some more United States' M-8's and M-10's which were being used by the enemy.

Twenty-two robot bombs were observed passing over the Regimental Command Post between the hours of midnight and 0700, 22 December 1944, all of them headed in a North-westerly direction. The First Battalion jumped off early to attack Ch des Montis, encountered heavy fire from hostile tanks and infantry, but cleared the town past the cross roads and established a road block while maintaining an active defense of the sector. The Second Battalion also defended actively, knocking out a number of German vehicles. The Third Battalion, less Company "K", which had started out for Ch des Montis before daylight, was stopped by a superior enemy force, so it supported the attack of the First Battalion and assisted in defending the area.

The enemy managed to infiltrate West of Trois Ponts in the evening, and Company "L" moved into Ster in order to protect the South flank of the Regimental line. Company "E" of the 120th Infantry relieved the Third Platoon of Company "A", 105th Engineers, which had been holding out at Petit Coo, after assisting Task Force "L" recapture the Aid Station and village of Arret de Coo. Company "A", 117th Infantry, cleaned the remaining enemy out of Stavelot. A robot bomb struck in the Second Battalion Area but caused no serious damage. Prisoners of War admitted killing Belgian civilians in cold blood, and Colonel Johnson requested that photographic evidence be taken of the atrocities. He then cautioned the troops that the foe is not surrendering easily, that no chances should be taken with them since some are dressed in American uniforms, and that gas masks were to be carried at all times.

On 23 December 1944, the Second Battalion of the 120th Infantry,

which was attached to RGR 117th Infantry, and Company "L", of the 117th Infantry, jumped off in the early morning hours to clear the woods on the North bank of the L'Ambleve River. The First and Second Battalions maintained a vigorous defense of their sectors and engaged in continuous patrolling. Further enemy penetration was held and contained despite fiercest efforts by the foe to augment its break through. As the Third Battalion was liquidating the opposing force in the woods on the West bank of the river, the I & R Platoon reconnoitered the edge of the forest between Stavelot and Roanne, picking up stragglers and probing enemy strength.



The enemy still held strongly fortified positions in La Gleize and on the hills South of the town. Elements of the 117th Infantry and the Third Armored Task Force tenaciously protected their line East and North-east of La Gleize. At 0730, 24 December 1944, Task Force Harrison attacked the town from three directions, North, South, and West. By 1030, this enemy strong point was in American hands, along with 300 prisoners, 200 American soldiers recaptured, and large quantities of materiel and supplies were seized.

Company "K", 117th Infantry, was released from attachment with Task Force "M" and proceeded to Moulin De Ruy. The First and Second Battalions continued defending their respective sectors. An enemy patrol struck at Company "G", at 1500, 24 December 1944, and evidently captured two enlisted men. The First Battalion was instructed to mine the bridge to its front and the Second Battalion to watch for vehicular traffic in its area moving from West to East. Because of heavy nebelwerfer and direct fire from emplaced tanks the mines could not be laid so the bridge was ordered destroyed. Enemy resistance North of the river was whittled down further and Company "I" moved down to the railroad tracks under cover of darkness while Company "L" took up a position on the edge of the woods.

By 26 December 1944, the Nazi bulge into Belgium was firmly held and the 117th Infantry had practically wiped out an entire German SS Regiment. Not many prisoners were taken but enemy dead filled the forests, the fields, and the river. In the Regimental Sector alone, twenty-two tanks were knocked out, twelve half tracks, thirty-two trucks, and seven guns of various calibers destroyed, in nine days fighting.

The balance of the month was spent in vigorous patrolling and active defense of the corridor. A patrol from the First Battalion swam across the L'Ambleve River, the night of 29 December 1944, and returned with three prisoners.

For the Commanding Officer:

William A. Buckley

WILLIAM A BUCKLEY
Captain, 117th Infantry
Personnel Officer