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HEADQUARTERS 119TH INFANTRY
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AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

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PROMOTING COMMITTEE

1 October 1944

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

TO : Commanding General, 30th Infantry Division.

On September 1, 1944 the 119th Infantry under the command of Colonel Edwin M. Sutherland was in assembly area northeast of Fresnoy-en Thelle. It had just completed a pursuit from the Seine bridgehead at Manche-Gassicourt and was hoping for a short rest. However, at 0400 an order was received from division that the regimental combat team preceded by a task force consisting of cavalry, tanks, 1st Battalion, 119th Infantry, Engineers and Artillery, and followed by the 120th Regimental Combat Team would entruck and move to the vicinity of Tournai in Belgium during the day. The distance was approximately 125 miles and although the the enemy was badly battered and was withdrawing it was anticipated that we might have to fight our way on occasions.

At 1400 the leading element, the 3rd Battalion crossed the I.P. at the crossroads southwest of Tillet, and followed by the rest of the combat team moved northeast through Roye and Peronne, passing the latter town at 2250. Little resistance was encountered and there were no casualties or prisoners. However, the gap behind Task Force Harrison had been closed and forward movement depended upon them.

On the 2nd at 0730 General Harrison, the Assistant Division Commander, commanding the task force was wounded and Colonel Sutherland took command. Lt. Col. Quinn, the regimental executive officer, took command of the regiment. At 1120 reconnaissance elements reported mortar and sniper fire in Cambrai and for the next hour there was considerable activity there. By 1230 the 3rd Battalion which was backing up the 1st and the tanks reported that they were at the railroad tracks in town, and in spite of reports of enemy tanks, at 1315 the 3rd Battalion stated the route through Cambrai was clear.

No more serious resistance was encountered and at 1905 the forward C.P. group crossed into Belgium. At 1935 the C.P. was set up in a farm house about a mile south of Tournai and the 1st Battalion was clearing out enemy small arms across the river in Tournai at 2240. Five men were wounded on the 2nd.

On the 3rd scattered enemy resistance was encountered and knocked out, various isolated groups being overcome. At first no friendly troops other than individuals of the Belgian White Army were encountered in the area, but shortly before 1050 the 1st Battalion established contact with the advance party of the British 11th Armored Division. Outlying patrols and road blocks were withdrawn to permit the passage of this unit. Various minor changes were made in the dispositions around the town, and through the afternoon occasional contact with small enemy groups was reported. There were no casualties during the day but 106 prisoners were rounded up.

On September 4, the town of Tournai was turned over to the 7th Battalion

Green Howards of the 69th Brigade, 50th Northumbrian Division, and our positions were changed accordingly. One man was missing and 10 more prisoners were brought in.

On the 5th the men cleaned up and replacements fired various weapons in a nearby quarry. Two men were missing and 3 prisoners came in. On the 6th a quartering party moved east toward Liege to locate areas for the move scheduled on the 7th.

On the 7th at 0700 the regiment crossed the regimental I.P. in Bruyelles, moving by motors south through Valenciennes and then east through Mons, La Louviere Nivelles, arriving at the new C.P. in a chateau just south of Boussal at 1115. The last elements closed into the area at 1330 and trucks were released. By picking up German units attempting to withdraw along the railroad 92 prisoners were taken. The weather was definitely becoming chilly and all who could slept under cover.

On the 8th the regiment moved east on foot to the vicinity of Autre-Eglise a few miles south of Fodoigne. The C.P. made two jumps arriving at the destination at 1355. Several reports of enemy were received, but actual contact was established south of the line of march in the Bois de Buis. The Tank Destroyers and the Engineers moving in the Regimental Combat Team motor column took care of this group and the last element, the motor column, closed into the new area at 1945. At 2100 1st Battalion made contact with the 117th Infantry. Two were wounded and seven prisoners were taken.

On the 9th the regiment continued its eastward move on foot with the exception of the 1st Battalion which remained in the assembly area prepared to move by truck back to Tournai and aid in repelling a German counterattack. The leading element, the 3rd Battalion, crossed the I.P. at 0800 and followed by the remainder of the regiment reached the destination in the vicinity of Thys without event. At 1140 the 1st Battalion was released and reached the new area at 2100. The C.P. closed at 0720 and reached the new area at 1445. Twenty prisoners were taken.

On September 10th the regiment completed its move to the Meuse. The 3rd Battalion crossed the I.P. in Odeur at 0800 followed in column by the 1st and 2nd Battalions. At 0825 the I & R platoon reported the route was clear to the river. The march was made without incident, the motor column clearing into the new area at 1530. The C.P. opened at Heure-le-Romain at 1330.

Patrols were sent out to the canal first to determine that no enemy were on the West bank, which was completed by 1700, and then to prevent any enemy crossings. Meanwhile preparations were made for crossing. 2 prisoners were taken.

September 11th at 0055 the 1st boat landed on the east bank of the Meuse as a reconnaissance patrol. During the morning the 2nd and 3rd Battalions crossed by ferrying to the island between the canal and the river. At 1420 a foot bridge was completed across the canal, and at 1500 the 1st Battalion was prepared to cross the river on order. The necessary vehicles were sent to Liege where a bridge across the river had already been put in by the 1st Division.

By 2040 the 1st Battalion was across, and "B" Company with-held fire on an enemy column approaching from the north until it was possible to practically annihilate them. By 2058 all Battalions were across driving toward the assigned areas with the mission of taking Vise in the morning. "A" Company was left on the island as security to the rear. Three men were wounded and 6 prisoners were taken.

On September 12, at 0645, after being in contact with the enemy all night

the 1st Battalion lost contact and resumed movement into Vise. The 3rd Battalion resumed its advance and around 0800 reached its objective in the vicinity of Dalhem. At 0756 Division directed that the regiment continue to objectives "E" and "F" with a halt on Phase Line 12 until the artillery could catch up.

Shortly after 1000 movement was resumed with 1st Battalion on the left going through Longchamp and the 3rd Battalion on the right moving through Bombaye toward Warsage. The 2nd Battalion picked up "G" Company and moved on behind the 1st Battalion. At 1125 the 1st Battalion was near Fouron-le-Comte receiving 20mm and rifle fire, and by 1245 they had pushed one company into the town. The 3rd Battalion reached Warsage on Phase Line 12 without encountering resistance, but dug in enemy and anti-tank guns were encountered on the ridge to the east.

At 1343 1st Battalion sent two companies around to the right to outflank the town and 3rd Battalion was ordered to resume forward movement and keep in contact with the 1st Battalion. At a short distance from Phase Line 8 both units were to hold up and wait for the artillery to cross the river.

After various postponements the vehicular bridge was completed around 1245 but several mishaps slowed movement and the regimental combat trains and weapon carriers and supporting artillery did not get across until well into the afternoon.

At 1536 the 1st Battalion was held up around Fouron-le-Comte. At 1555 the 3rd Battalion advanced to the nose to the east of Warsage and pushed past the right flank of the line established by the 1st Battalion. They continued on until 1000 yards inside the Dutch border near Noorbeck when they were ordered to dig in on Phase Line 10 in contact with the 117th Infantry. They were, however, held up 500 yards short of this point, near Terlinden.

Tanks were sent to help the 1st Battalion and the 2nd Battalion was instructed to mop up behind them. From 1830 on more or less steady progress was made by the 1st Battalion until they dug in in the vicinity of Banholt. The 2nd Battalion went into assembly area near Inheer at 2020. The C.P. closed into the chateau at Atembrouck at 2030. During the day 3 were killed, 27 wounded, 1 was missing and 56 prisoners were taken.

On September 13, at 0800, the 1st Battalion in column of companies moved forward from Banholt and the 3rd Battalion on the right with two companies abreast moved forward from Terlinden. The 2nd Battalion, in Regimental reserve remained near Atembrouck.

Reimerstock was occupied by the 3rd Battalion at 0935. At 0950 the 1st Battalion was held up by enemy fire from Termaar and at 1010 a platoon of tanks was sent to help them. At 1035 "G" Company was moving around to left flank of the 1st Battalion toward Hontem and at 1135 "B" Company took Termaar. Friendly artillery fire then held up the 1st Battalion for a short time but by 1220 the artillery had lifted and the 1st Battalion passed through Margraten.

At 1136 the 3rd Battalion was meeting considerable small arms fire from the vicinity of the railroad cut near Vosboach and although enemy was reported seen by 1st Battalion pulling out from in front of the 3rd Battalion, 20 mm and continued small arms fire necessitated sending tanks at 1345. By 1414 "K" Company was on the edge of Ingber and "L" Company with "I" Company on its right were to attack the town from the west. Although the bridge was out where the road from Terlinden crossed the railroad, "L" Company reached the main East-West road at 1445 and by 1515 resistance was described as light.

L-19

From 1220 on the 1st Battalion made progress and although they were held up by enemy around 1430, the enemy pulled out and were fired on by our artillery. At 1627 a few snipers were encountered by 1732 the 1st Battalion was in its good egg and was fighting the enemy in Sibbe.

The 2nd Battalion less "G" Company (which reached Hontem at 1350) started moving at 1435 and at 1550 closed into its objective at Margraten and Termaar. The C.F., moving by bounds, reached its night's location southeast of Termaar at 1647.

At 1525 the 3rd Battalion was out of contact with the enemy and moving rapidly and at 1540 "L" Company was approaching Scheulder, Ingber and Hut. By 1710 the 3rd Battalion had occupied its area and was fighting at Beertsenhoven on its northern edge. Except for Cannon Company this was the last action of the day. At 2130 Cannon Company repulsed a counterattack at Grootwelsden, capturing 6 and killing one. In all we had 41 wounded and took 172 prisoners.

During the morning of September 14, patrolling was carried on to determine crossings of the Geul River. At 0935 the 1st Battalion reported a bridge intact at Valkenburg and was directed to seize and hold the bridge with a company if necessary. However, at 1115 this bridge was also reported blown. At 1130 it was directed that a platoon each be sent to hold each of four bridge sites, 2 by the 1st Battalion and 2 by the 3rd Battalion, but at 1145 this was amended and the 1st Battalion was directed to send a company supported by heavy weapons to the site in Valkenburg and "G" Company went to Sibbe to secure the supply routes. By 1715 the 1st Battalion was in a large fire fight and shortly afterwards received considerable enemy artillery. Tanks were sent but thru confusing similar town names did not arrive until 2050 when they were ordered back out of town for the night to avoid the artillery fire.

The 3rd Battalion established its bridgeheads without resistance and located a ford at Wijlre. During the day 1 was killed, 17 wounded and 73 prisoners were taken.

On the 15th a bridge was put in east of Gulpen at 1300 but artillery fire prevented building the bridge at Valkenburg. 120 unarmed Dutch soldiers who were in Valkenburg and Oud Valkenburg were sent to Maastricht to the Dutch Army authorities. General Hobbs visited the C.F. and awarded silver stars to Major Herlong, Captain Simmons and Lieutenant Krause. In spite of what seemed a quiet day 20 men were wounded and 16 prisoners were taken. Most of the casualties were due to artillery fire in Valkenburg.

On the 16, in accordance with the division order, the regiment advanced at 0800 with the 3rd Battalion on the right, crossing the river at Wijlre and the 1st Battalion on the left crossing the river at Valkenburg on a causeway built by the battalion of rubble from destroyed houses. Throughout the day the 1st Battalion met heavy resistance consisting of direct fire artillery, mortars and small arms. Fire was particularly heavy from the high ground to the northeast, and a counterattack was repulsed at 1333. The 2nd Armored Division reached the vicinity of Valkenburg at 1530 and attacked on the high ground north of Valkenburg in conjunction with the 1st Battalion. With this help it was possible finally to clear the town and by 1920 the battalion was trying to get to the road junction at Sint Pieter to stop there for the night.

The 3rd Battalion encountered, in general, less resistance and was able to advance steadily, occupying Elkenraad at 1100, Kruishoef at 1148, Kolmont at 1431,

Ubachsburg at 1900, and occupying its objective at 1930.

The 2nd Battalion, at first in regimental reserve, had the mission of maintaining contact between the two assault battalions and covering the river crossings in this area. "F" and "G" Companies filled this mission until relieved by the 3rd Battalion of the 117th Infantry at 1530. Then they followed "F" Company on the left flank of the 3rd Battalion, while the 3rd Battalion, 117th Infantry, remained at Strucht with a company at Oud Valkenburg.

The regimental C.P. left the vicinity of Termaar at 0920 and moved to Ingber. They remained here until 2000, and arrived at the C.P. in Elkenraad at 2040. During the day 1 man was killed, 22 wounded, and 22 prisoners were taken.

On the 17th, the regiment continued its advance toward the assigned objectives. The 1st Battalion resumed its advance at 0600 and after going slowly at first because of mortar, small arms and heavy artillery fire was 700 yards beyond the railroad tracks in Valkenburg at 0745, moving east. At this time the 1st Battalion had committed its attached tanks across its front and was in contact with Combat Command "A" on the left. The 1st Battalion occupied Klinnen, Ransdaal, Kunrade and finally entered Heerlen at 1730. Sporadic resistance was encountered.

The 3rd Battalion moved forward on the right at 0800. At 0940 two companies were connected with "I" on the left and "K" on the right, 1000 yards short of Bengenrade. At 1004 the enemy withdrew and in spite of some artillery fire the battalion occupied Bengenrade at 1030 and went on through Heerlerbaan to the gooseegg at Onderspeckholz at 1235. It moved on to Terwinselen, clearing in at 1553.

The 2nd Battalion moved at the same time as the 3rd Battalion, followed behind it, and entered its area at Heerlerbaan at about 1430 and fired to aid the advance of the 1st Battalion.

The 3rd Battalion, 117th Infantry, was held back to maintain contact on left with the 1st Battalion. At 1353 they were directed to move from Kruishoef to Ubachsberg and closed into their gooseegg at 1554.

The C.P. set up in Heerlerbaan at 1740. During the day 4 were killed, 26 wounded and 104 prisoners were taken.

September 18, as a result of enemy information obtained from a civilian, the area of the 1st Battalion was extended at 0300 to include certain organized enemy positions which existed between the former 1st and 3rd Battalion positions. "F" Company of the 2nd Battalion was attached to the 1st Battalion and it was to move at 0700 for this purpose. At 0842 "G" Company was in a fire fight in the woods by Kaumer and a platoon of tanks was sent as reinforcement. Throughout the morning various elements received enemy fire but by 1225 it appeared that the situation was satisfactory and that "G" Company reached its objective.

At 1400 the 1st Battalion followed by the 2nd moved to the Groenstraat area in accordance with Division Field Order #41. The 3rd Battalion remained in position until relieved by the 120th Infantry. This occurred at 1808 and the Battalion started at 1810. Some enemy fire was encountered in making the move, but the 1st and 2nd Battalion cleared into their area in Groenstraat at 2030 and the 3rd Battalion into its area in the western part of Waubach at 2220. The C.P. reached its location at a grocery in Nieuwenhagen at 1926. There were 3 killed, 14 wounded and 21 prisoners taken.

The next morning, the 19th, at 0755 the C.P. moved to a new location in a very comfortable private residence in the same town. Artillery fire was received soon after in the vicinity. Plans were made for the assault of the Siegfried Line and were given to unit commanders. 1 man was killed, 4 wounded and 20 prisoners were taken.

On the 20th the C.P. moved to Groenstraat at 0948 and preparations were made for the assault but were called off definitely at 1153. Patrolling was immediately resumed to determine strength and location of enemy installations either on or across the river, and also to determine possible crossing sites. Nightly contact patrols were also arranged. Three men were missing and 7 prisoners were taken.

On the 21st it was explained that the attack would probably be postponed until the 29th Division from Brest had joined the Corps. On the 22nd certain bombs which had been loaded on planes in preparation for the assault were dropped on the Siegfried Line. The effect of the fire bombs were watched with interest. Starting on the 25th each battalion in turn went for 2 days to a training area to the rear where the terrain resembled that to be assaulted in the Siegfried Line. The 1st Battalion sent 4 companies, the 3rd the whole battalion and the 2nd Battalion one company.

While these activities were taking place those units not engaged in active work took showers, saw a U.S.O. show, went to movies, and were visited by A.R.C. Doughnut wagons. In effect all units of the regiment had close to a weeks rest although artillery fell throughout the area daily. It was even possible to feed "B" rations to the rifle companies. This was an outstanding treat since over long periods of time when in action or moving rapidly, this was impossible for these units.

For the ten day period September 21 to 30, 4 were killed, 11 wounded, and 45 prisoners were taken.

Submitted herewith Unit Journal and supporting papers for period.

For the Commanding Officer:

ALLEN S. HUBBARD, JR.,
1st Lieut., Infantry,
Adjutant