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HEADQUARTERS 331ST INFANTRY
APO 83
UNITED STATES ARMY

8 August 1944.

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

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

In compliance with paragraph 10, (C3), AR 345-106, the following report of the period 1 July 1944 through 31 July 1944 is hereby submitted:

From 1 July 1944 to 0445, 4 July 1944, the 331st Infantry remained in its defensive positions in the vicinity of Auvers. During this period the main activity of the unit was in strong night patrolling to feel out the enemies weak points and to locate disposition of his weapons. Our supporting artillery, the 908th Field Artillery Battalion, fired nightly interdictory and harassing fires, and counterbattery fires against known mortar and artillery positions. This was supplemented by strong harassing fires by our 81mm mortars day and night.

The Germans fired harassing fires with artillery and 81mm mortars. Our OPL was under single gun and occasional battery fire daily with an increase in fires during hours of darkness.

The enemy was known to be remnants of the 6th Parachute Regiment.

At 2220, 3 July 1944, the 331st Infantry closed into its new CP near Meautis (map France, Sheet 31/18 SE) in preparation for the initial attack by the Regiment with the Division scheduled for 0445, 4 July 1944 with the mission of driving the enemy to the Southwest.

Strength of the Regiment prior to the start of the operation, 2400, 3 July 1944, was as follows:

Officers - - - - -	158
Warrant Officers - - - - -	5
Enlisted Men - - - - -	<u>3045</u>
Total - - - - -	3208

From 4 July 1944, to 31 July 1944, the 331st Infantry participated in three distinct phases of action.

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PHASE 1.

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The Regiment reinforced attacked at 0445, 4 July 1944, and immediately upon crossing the Line of Departure met heavy machine gun, machine pistol, mortar and artillery fires. Throughout the day the troops worked forward tediously in face of cutting fire and over terrain broken by hedge rows and heavy foliage. Casualties among our troops were heavy and so weakened the fighting effectiveness of the Regiment that it was not able to hold the gain made and fell back. Again on 5 July and 6 July 1944, the attack was resumed and ground was gained yard by yard. With the advance, the troops worked their way into flat, marshy country which offered little protection from enemy observation and fire.

Captured prisoners bore out the belief that the 6th Parachute Regiment had been either replaced or reinforced prior to the initial attack in that it was found that the Regiment had strong elements of the 2nd SS Panzer Division DAS Reich in front of it.

It was at the initial phase of the attack--at 0750, 4 July 1944, that the Regimental Commander, Colonel MARTIN D. BARNDOLLAR, was killed by a German sniper while directing the operation from the Regimental OP. His command was temporarily taken over by Lt. Colonel WILLIAM E. LONG, Regimental Executive Officer, until the arrival of Colonel JOHN B. WHITCOMB who was relieved by Lt. Colonel GEORGE BOWEN on 7 July 1944.

On 7 July 1944 at 0835, the 22nd Infantry, 4th Division passed through the Regiment to resume the attack in the 331st Infantry's zone and the 331st Infantry withdrew to an assembly area 1000 yards Northwest of La Sadetterie at 1530 hours. The Regiment was alerted immediately to join the attack of the Division, in progress with the 4th Division on its right, with the mission of seizing the town of Sainteny and the high ground to the East.

The Regiment attacked at 1700 hours with the 1st and 3rd Battalions in the attacking echelon supported by one company of SP Tank Destroyers, and one company of Medium Tanks, the 908th Field Artillery Battalion. Light resistance was met initially, although there was a great deal of trouble with snipers armed with machine pistols. Tanks had difficulty following the troops due to hedge rows and closeness of country. Just before dark, resistance increased and the attack bogged down in face of well concealed dugouts and several tanks north of Hotot. Tanks were Mark V's and several old French Renaults which were dug in and well concealed, with fires covering road bends and cross roads.

The next morning, 8 July 1944, the Germans launched an attack at 0800 from vicinity of Hotot which was broken up by artillery.

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At 0945, the Regiment resumed the attack, following a glide and dive bombing attack by our aircraft and moved forward easily, meeting lighter resistance but soon met three or four tanks immediately north of Hotot. By late afternoon these tanks were either withdrawn or knocked out and our forces occupied the ground. During the night there was some tank activity in this area.

On 9 July 1944, Colonel JAMES D. BENDER assumed command of the Regiment vice Lt. Colonel GEORGE BOWEN relieved.

At 0830, 9 July 1944, the Regiment resumed the attack with the 2nd and 3rd Battalions in the attacking echelon, the 2nd Battalion on the right and by 0930 hours had reached their initial objective on Highway #4, 1000 yards northeast of Sainteny in the face of growing artillery, tank, and machine gun fire.

Repulsing several counterattacks, the 2nd Battalion took and finally held all of Sainteny by 1700 with the 3rd Battalion facing very strong resistance at Bois Grimot to the east of the city. Captured prisoners were from the 37th and 38th Panzer Grenadier Regiments who reported extremely heavy losses.

On the 10 July 1944, the regiment consolidated defensive positions while the 329th Infantry passed through the regiment to the south of Sainteny. At midnight, the 3rd Battalion was counterattacked and after a fierce hand grenade battle over hedgerows, fell back 300 yards and dug in.

This date, while leading the 2nd Battalion in its attack, Lt. Colonel JAMES F. FABER was killed by a direct hit from a German 88 shell.

PHASE 2.

The following day, 11 July 1944, the regiment reinforced attacked at 0900 with the mission of seizing the town of Marchesieux to the south with the 1st and 3rd Battalions in the attacking echelon, the 3rd Battalion on the right.

At 0930, this date, while moving up to the Regimental OP, Colonel JAMES D. BENDER was killed by a direct hit on his jeep from a German 88 shell.

Progress was very slow. Resistance was mainly from tanks secured by small infantry detachments which made working the bazooka teams, anti-tank guns and tank destroyers up to striking distance almost impossible. Infantry was well dug in and camouflaged and reinforced dugouts provided mutually supporting machine gun fire, which caused heavy casualties in the 3rd Battalion in the Bois Grimot section.

On the 13 July 1944, the attack was resumed with all three Battalions committed initially, the 1st Battalion on the left

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battled heavy resistance in La Lande and secured the point of land to its south by mid-day and reverted to Regimental reserve while the 2nd and 3rd Battalions crossed the open swamp ground to the south of Bois Grimot.

The 3rd Battalion reached a point 1000 yards south of Chateau D'Auxais and the 2nd Battalion south of Auxais. During the night, the 3rd Battalion received heavy fire from cruising tanks and infantry teams which had a demoralizing effect and it withdrew to the Chateau area leaving approximately 120 troops behind which were cut off.

On 15 July, 16 July 1944, the attack was pressed forward again and at one point the 2nd Battalion reached Le Village Des Saints, but heavy mortar fire, closeness of hedge rows and inexperience of replacements made the progress extremely slow. Again enemy tanks forced both attacking Battalions to pull back.

PHASE 3.

There followed a period of three days; 17, 18, and 19 July 1944 during which time every effort was made to cross the swamp to the La Varde Peninsula.

On the 17th at 1800, the 1st Battalion attempted an attack and again at 0300 the next morning, 18 July 1944, by going straight across the swamp to the southeast. The 3rd Battalion attempted a crossing via the causeway on 20 July 1944 at 0400 and crossed successfully, only to retire later with very heavy losses, two rifle companies losing fifty percent of its personnel. It was at this time that Lt. Colonel ROBERT CHEAL, 3rd Battalion Commander, was reported missing in action and has not been found since.

In view of the costly and unsuccessful attempts to seize the La Varde Peninsula at this particular location, plans to renew the attack across the swamp were foresaken.

During the period 21, 24 July 1944, activity was confined to strong patrolling to the southwest toward Le Village de Saints. There was little enemy ground activity except for fairly strong, heavy mortar and artillery harassing fires on Battalion front and rear areas.

At 1100 hours, 25 July 1944, the VII Corps on our left launched a coordinated attack preceded by an intense aerial bombardment. Plans for a coordinated attack the following day was made and it was found that the Germans had placed a number of "S" mines and booby trapped Teller mines in the hedges to the front.

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On 26 July 1944, the regiment attacked at 0503 on the left of the 83rd Division and met heavy small arms and mortar fire. The Commander of the 1st Battalion, on the left, Lt. Colonel HAROLD A. ERICKSEN, was killed early in the attack. By 1300, the 1st Battalion had advanced 200 yards and the 2nd Battalion on the right had advanced from 150 to 400 yards. Enemy tanks made coordination of the attack impractical and units sent out strong combat patrols to reduce machine guns and pill boxes. Numerous "S" mines were found only two hedge rows in front of Company "F", and further attempts at advancing were stopped to remove them.

At 0900, 27 July 1944, the 329th Infantry, on this Regiment's right, launched an attack, which enabled our patrols to advance on our objective, Le Village de Saints. However, the area to the front was thickly sown with mines and booby traps which greatly retarded the 1st and 2nd Battalions in following the patrols to the objective. Indications were that the enemy had withdrawn during the night south of the Taute River and the regiment immediately crossed the swamp to La Varde Peninsula. By 2400, the 2nd Battalion had reached Le Marsheslieux. By daybreak, it had with the 1st Battalion reached an area 1500 yards south of the town.

At 0800, 27 July 1944, the Regiment moved south in a column of Battalions with the 2nd Battalion leading, followed by the 1st and 3rd Battalions. Route of advance was Les Alouets, Feugeres, La Cardonniere. At 1630, the Regiment occupied a defensive position along the high ground immediately north and east of Le Comprond, following an unopposed advance of 14.3 kilometers south of the Taute River.

During the day's operation, the regiment was pinched out by elements of the 9th, 90th, and the 1st Division. The result was a disposition at Le Comprond as follows: 1st and 3rd Battalions, 18th Infantry to the south and southwest; 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry to the west and the 1st Battalion, 39th Infantry to the east.

The remainder of the month, 27 July through 31 July 1944, was spent in improving the defensive positions, reorganizing, training, and some recreation for the men.

Casualties sustained during the month of July are as follows:

KIA	240
WIA	1274

Replacements received during the month of July:

Officers	120
Enlisted Men	2110

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CLASSIFICATION CONTINUED
BY AUTHORITY OF
Lt. Col. J. P. Jago
1st Lt. Jago
7 MAR 1945