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# 83<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

## RHINE-RUHR-ELBE OPERATION PART I

Report 24060/179

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### THE RHINE-ELBE OPERATION

Comments on the part played by the 83d Infantry Division 1 April 45 to 20 April 45:

Having shown capabilities as a dependable fighting unit, in the advance to the Rhine River, the 83d Infantry Division was chosen to play a leading role in the assault made by the Ninth US Army across the great plains of Prussia. This was to be a breakthrough mission spear-headed by armor; however the division with ingenuity kept abreast of the motorized units, and was able to effect a strong bridgehead across the vital Elbe River, the only bridgehead successfully held by the Ninth Army troops.

The initial break through had been achieved already by the XIII Corps, and this simplified the infantry's first mission. The 83d Infantry Division was attached to the 2d Armored Division, which was ordered to cross the Lippe Canal and River, pass through the bridgehead established by the XVIII Airborne Corps, advancing east in zone seizing Ludinghausen (A8053), then cross the Dortmund-Ems Canal and continue to cut the communication facilities of the Ruhr east and southeast of Hamm (B0642). This operation was accomplished within two days and opened the way to the vast eastern plains.

As the 2d Armored Division pushed speedily through

its zone, the 83d Division had to mop up those bypassed enemy pockets that the armor had not reduced. The crumbling remnants of the German army offered little resistance to our armored spearheads and less to the 83d Division, for as we continued to advance behind the 2d Armored the only obstacle to the advance was traffic congestion caused by large numbers of refugees and displaced persons, about 18,000 of whom had left their camps and were moving to the west.

On 31 March the corps mission was changed to read, "cross Dortmund-Ems Canal and secure all bridges intact across the Lippe River with the Dortmund-Ems Canal as right flank from Hamm to Dortmund and reconnoiter to the south until hitting something."

The elements of a complete breakthrough were evident in that spearheads were never opposed by any organized division of the German Army. Great numbers of separate infantry replacement, training units, home guard battalions, recuperative units, AAA units, and a great host of rear echelon and service troops were encountered, and our PW cages often held a weird collection of these troops.

The only divisional unit encountered in the early phase of the drive was elements of the 116th Panzer Division which were defending Hamm with the hope, eventually, of finding a gap in the rapidly-closing northern wall of the Ruhr pocket.

1 April found the 83d Division taking up positions along the Lippe River as the 2d Armored continued its drive toward Lippstadt (B4242). At this time the 83d was released from attachment to the 2d Armored.

The reason for the mission of taking over the Lippe was not only to establish contact with the enemy, protect the main supply route, and the Corps right flank; but to prevent the 116th Panzer Division, known to be sliding along the northern wall of the Ruhr pocket from finding an outlet, in this general vicinity. However, the First and Ninth Armies junction in Lippstadt sealed in the 116th Panzer Division and many other such crack German units.

The 83d Division remained in its position along the north bank of the Lippe for two uneventful days and on the third was relieved by the 95th Division.

The proposed plan at this time was to give the 2d Armored the left sector of the Corps zone, followed by the 30th Infantry Division, allowing the 8th Armored to pass through the 83d and spearhead its drive in the right sector, having the 113th Cavalry Group attached.

Immediately the 113th Cavalry assumed the job of screening the 83d and the drive was resumed, the objective being a bridgehead over the Weser River. The 329 Infantry, assumed control of the division's left sector while the 331 Infantry took over the right sector. The 330 Infantry,



still holding the line on the Lippe between the attacking 95th and 8th Armored Divisions, was eventually to contact the 331 RCT and provide flank protection for not only division but the corps right flank. This, however, did not materialize, for the 330 Infantry was held in its position along the Lippe and finally placed in corps reserve, while still holding the river line.

The transportation situation was a very serious problem, not only during this phase but also through the whole operation. Both corps and army, having their own supply difficulties, had very few if any trucks to lend the 83d. This being the case, tanks, TTDs, artillery prime movers, anti-tank ton and a halves, kitchen trucks, and even Jerry trucks were used to keep in contact with the fast-moving armored elements. The use of kitchen trucks to transport troops made it utterly impossible to serve hot meals, even once a day.

The terrain, up to this point, had been quite open and flat, making it exceedingly good tank country, but as the 113th Cavalry entered the southern extremities of the Teuterborgerwald, very hilly country was met. This, however, did not delay the movement in the least.

The 331 and 339 RCTs had been meeting light to moderate opposition consisting of some manned road blocks and half-heartedly defended towns, which they took care of very easily. All the battalions of these RCTs established standard operational procedures for taking road blocks and towns.

Battalions, were kept as compact as possible, usually in column of companies. The first company would ride tanks while the second rode TDs and the third company would often through necessity be shuttled throughout the phase. Approaching a town, the lead company would deploy while the tanks would fire their 75s into the houses. If there was no return fire, the infantry would remount, roll through the town, leaving the searching of each house to the company being shuttled forward. Road blocks were handled in approximately the same manner, although the infantry made sure the position could not be remanned.

Continuing their rapid pace to the Weser River, the division experienced intermittent showers that did not hinder its movement in the least. The overcast prevented air operation, there was no drastic need for close-in air support on this mission, the lack of air did not slow up our drive.

The Weser River was considered a formidable obstacle to our advance, not only because it was a serious natural barrier, but also because it was thought that the Germans held it in strength. It soon became apparent that neither was the case. The 329 CP crossed the river at Grohnde (C158815) over a 2d Armored bridge site while the 331 remained on the near side clearing their area of a few small groups of Jerries. At this time the 330 RCT, having reverted to division control, was ordered across the river in

the 329 sector and was then to swing south, taking over the right half of the division sector. Both RCTs having reached the no-advance line, which had been established on army order, they immediately began preparing, by re-organizing and cleaning weapons, to continue the attack.

The reasons for this halt, as explained by various members of the division staff, were: an overextended supply line and regrouping to allow our adjacent units which were the 2d Armored and 30th Infantry Division on our left flank and the 3d Armored on our right flank, to get abreast of us for the final push. This condition shortly was remedied and we were once again on the move, crossing the Leine River with very little difficulty.

Ahead lay the Harz mountain area, which was extremely rugged. Not only was the natural growth of the country an obstacle, but snow further made fighting conditions bad.

The only effective enemy units were encountered in the northern approaches to the Harz mountains south of Goslar (C8671), where our forces had to contend with elements of the 116th Panzer Division and <sup>3</sup> ~~three~~ Panzer Grenadier Divisions that had managed to extricate themselves from the Ruhr pocket. In addition, a newly formed division, the Potsdam, and a scratch division of Wehrkries 11, CT Grerbig, made up the enemy forces in the Harz area.

Fortunately, the enemy had no mortars or artillery,

a condition which had been constant throughout the whole advance. The absence of tree bursts was very helpful. Captain Brisbine said, "It could have been an awful messy affair if they had had artillery or mortars."

As the 329 RCT in the left half of the division sector, and the 330 in the right half surged ahead, resistance stiffened slightly along the edge of the woods northeast and southeast of Seesen (C680685); however, the 329 continued to drive around the northern edge of this area with very little difficulty.

9 April brought the 330 Infantry to the vicinity of the Harz mountains, where it spent the next 10 days in cleaning the 83d Division's sector of the mountains, which was approximately 10 kilometers deep and 45 kilometers long.

The plan for the operation was for the first battalion to move from west to east through the mountains while the other two battalions attacked south from the northern edge of the mountains to meet the first battalion, thus thoroughly clearing a small segment at a time.

Clearing of this vast area was a grueling grind for men already exhausted from endless movements. Here, too, SOPs were made up and followed. The battalions, being given certain sectors to clear, would follow the road nets with two companies abreast, one on either side of the road and the reserve company following that company expected to meet the stiffest resistance. Having advanced slowly all day, due



to rugged terrain, at nightfall a road block would be established supported by TDs, from the 801st TD Battalion. The next morning the battalion would again continue its combing operation, leaving the TDs at the established road block until called for that evening for the same purpose. This leap-frog method continued throughout the campaign.

As the 329 RCT's drive progressed, the 331 RCT was ordered to skirt the north edge of the Harz area, swinging slightly south and again take over the right half of the division sector, protecting the right flank. This was shortly done and the RCTs emerged on the slightly rolling but open country leading to the next objective, the Elbe River. Throughout this phase, the 83d Recon as well as the 113th Cavalry screened the division's drive.

The method used by the recon over the open approaches to the river was that of speed when visibility was good. The three platoons, consisting of three squads each, and those in turn consisting of three jeeps and a half-track, would be given missions to reconnoiter sectors to prevent the uninterrupted advance of the division. The platoons would send their squads out, on parallel roads if possible, to towns or any other points of vantage thought to be held by the enemy. The squads, like fingers stretching out in all directions, moved not only forward as well, in order to detect a flank attack. If they hit resistance they could

not handle, they had two alternatives: to bypass it and warn the oncoming columns; or to contain it until the arrival of friendly forces.

The men, feeling the effects of a breakthrough, were eager to continue, although practically at the point of exhaustion.

This was the type of picture seen from the Harz mountain area to the Elbe, although resistance stiffened considerably at Barby (D8582) on the brink of the Elbe, where the Germans defended the west bank of the river.

The backbone of the defense of Barby was the 1st Battalion, 1064 Infantry Regiment, Potsdam Division. This was one of the three newly-formed divisions organized in the vicinity of Berlin within the previous ten days. Personnel were mainly NCOs and officer candidates released from the NCO and reserve officers school in the Berlin Area. The other two divisions were the Scharnhorst and the Ulrich von Hutten.

After a day's fighting, the enemy withdrew across the river and Barby was entered. Immediately, the 1st Battalion, 329 Infantry crossed the Elbe, followed by the remainder of the RCT. Captain Dennis E. Hendricks, S-3 said, "The crossing of the river was completely unopposed."

The bridgehead was established and enlarged by the 331st Infantry, elements of the 2d Armored and 35th Division. These forces repulsed three counterattacks of a sizeable nature with very minor losses.

~~NOT TRUE~~ *LS*

During these counterattacks the air force and our supporting artillery again proved their value. Had it not been for the volume of accurate fire laid down by the artillery, the strafing and low-level bombing by our air force, we might have found ourselves swimming the Elbe for the near shore. The artillery took care of the infantry and the air corps dispensed with the tanks leaving little for the doughboy to do, except produce an impenetrable volume and pattern of small arms fire.

All this time the 330 Infantry was constantly fighting not only road blocks but rugged terrain and the elements. However, having cleared the Harz area, it reverted to division control and relieved the 320 Infantry which had been attached to the 83d.

When the Jerries saw that we were not preparing to further the attack, their minds were diverted to the Russian drive. An interrogated PW officer revealed that the policy of the German forces at this time was to surrender their unarmed troops to the American forces and to continue fighting the Russians as long as possible.

Here, German defensive action differed greatly from previous campaigns. Extensive trench systems and foxholes which were seen everywhere in France, Luxembourg and Germany up to the Rhine River, were encountered rarely east of the Rhine. "This", same officer said, "just goes to prove two points, they never expected us to penetrate

this deep into Germany; and our armored columns are not giving them enough time even to attempt digging the semblance of a defensive line."

The defense of what at one time was considered the three largest natural barriers confronting us, the Weser, Leine, and Elbe Rivers were very weak and poorly utilized tactically. It seems very strange indeed, having a natural obstacle already existing, that hastily dug fox-holes were not established along the far shores of these rivers; instead they seemed to withdraw in mass, so to speak, many kilometers to points not as advantageous for defensive action. This very type of thing happened at both the Weser and Leine River. However, when they did see fit to defend the Elbe, all orthodox tactics seemed to be thrown to the winds. Instead of establishing their line on the far side of the river, where havoc might have been raised with the assaulting troops while on the river, they preferred defending it on the near side. Thus they were confronted with two obstacles, our advancing forces to their front and quite a large river to their rear. However, this might have been done in order to prevent as much as possible anybody from withdrawing on their own accord. When finally they did decide to withdraw, again they moved many kilometers from the river before setting up their hasty defense.

Lieutenant General William H. Simpson, Commanding Officer, Ninth Army, while visiting the 329 Infantry CP on



20 April commended the officers and men on the splendid achievement of their unit in the past campaign. Referring to the very low casualty rate, he inferred that to keep it as such, the bridgehead was secondary in importance. If it became necessary to withdraw in order to save human life, that would be done immediately, for apparently we were going to await the arrival of the Russians.

Proof of the statement that this vast maneuver was primarily a fight against the elements and exhaustion rather than a fight against the enemy is proven by the G-1 casualty report for the month of April. Battle casualties consisted of 44 officers and 98 enlisted men, while non-battle casualties skyrocketed to 17 officers and 550 enlisted men. }

22 April brought to a close approximately 20 days of successful skirmishes, mad dashes, and the end of the war for the 83d Division in the European Theater of Operations.

### OUTLINE OF DAILY MOVEMENTS

After crossing the Rhine River on the 29th of May, the 83d Infantry Division while on the heels of the 2d Armored Division, actually did nothing but move from one assembly area to another. However, this changed on the 1st of April and the division was off on a separate mission of its own.

#### 1 April

The 329th Infantry, as a regimental combat team, moved to a point three miles east of Ludinghausen (A798526), thence to Ascheberg (A920548) and on to Beckum (B210510) for the night. While the remainder of the RCT remained in Beckum, the 2d Battalion was committed on the north side of the Lippe Canal in the regiment's sector.

At 0730, the 1st Battalion, 330th Infantry, began its move from Ahlen (B1152) to Beckum (B2151) for the purpose of relieving elements of the 2d Armored Division in that sector. The 2d Battalion took over the defense of Ahlen at about the same time, and the 3d Battalion remained in an assembly area between Ahlen and Beckum, ready to aid either the 1st or 2d Battalion if necessary. At 1745, the regiment moved to Wadersloh (B353490) preparatory to relieving elements of the 2d Armored Division along the Lippe River and to protect the right flank of XIX Corps. The 1st Battalion took the left

sector from B410413 to B480457, the 3d Battalion the right sector from B293402 to B410413. The 2d Battalion, in reserve, assembled near Liesborn (B363463).

The 1st Battalion, 331st Infantry, was sent to secure the crossing of the Lippe Canal at Dolberg (B1346), arriving at 1800. The 2d Battalion moved to occupy Heessen (B0745) and cut off the northeastern part of Hamm, which was achieved by 2130. The 3d Battalion jumped off about three miles north of Hamm and had cleared Nordenfeldmark, just across the Lippe from Hamm, by 2045.

#### 2 April

The 329th Infantry remained in its present locations.

The 1st Battalion, 330th Infantry, seized three bridges over the Lippe Canal at B4845, B466437, B449430, and the bridges at Lippstadt (B4242). The 3d Battalion held a bridge at B351400. The battalions held these same positions until relieved by elements of the 95th Division about noon of 7 April.

The 1st Battalion, 331st Infantry, maintained its position. The 2d Battalion, although in the same position around Heessen, supported by fire the attack of the 3d Battalion on Hamm (B0542) proper.

### 3 April

The 1st Battalion, 329th, was relieved in Beckum by elements of the 95th Division and was alerted to move between 1500 and 1600 to relieve elements of the 8th Armored Division north of Neuhaus (B675500) and then occupy said town. The 3d Battalion also moved from Beckum to a new assembly area in Sennelager (B678530). The 2d Battalion was still on line along the Lippe, awaiting relief by the 95th Division.

The 330th RCT had made no change.

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 331st, were relieved by the 95th Division and both moved to assembly areas near Delbrück (B5752). The 3d Battalion, holding the bridgehead over the Lippe Canal at Hamm, was relieved by 2315, at which time they proceeded to Delbrück.

### 4 April

The 2d Battalion, 329th Infantry, which was relieved by the 95th Division late in the evening of 3 April, moved to Hostenbeck (B716614) by 0200. They then moved to Horn (B833646) about 1100. The 3d Battalion (- Company I) moved cross country from Sennelager through Schlangen at 1100. Being held up by Task Force Biddle, the battalion was told to swing cross country to Veldrom (B830595). Company I was given the mission of cleaning out the heavily



wooded area in the vicinity of B8058. The 1st Battalion shoved off from Neuhaus to the northeast, through Bad Lippspringe (B750545) and on to Schlangen (B765575), where it reverted to divisional reserve.

The 330th RCT made no change.

The 1st and 3d Battalions, 331st, were given a mission of protecting the right flank of the division to the rear of Task Force Biddle. From Delbrück, the 1st Battalion reached Altenbecken (B8352) by evening. The 2d Battalion was to clear out bypassed enemy pockets to the rear of TFB and by early evening had cleared Schwaney (B8247).

#### 5 April

At 1000, the 2d Battalion, 329th Infantry, took off from Horn with Task Force Ritchie screening the whole move. It passed through Kreuzen (B855671), Belle (B910675), Vahlhausen (B872660), Billerbeck (B900656), Wobbel (B940675) and ending up at Schieder (B975695). The 3d Battalion left Veldrum and moved cross country toward Leopoldstal (B850615), which took all morning due to the rugged terrain. From there they passed through Heesten (B862627), Oberheesten (B862630), Kuterbrock (B867624), Ottenhausen (B895646), and to Vinsebeck (B893640). It later moved to Steinheim in division reserve. The 1st Battalion, which was in Schlangen, proceeded through Horn, passed through the

3d Battalion at Vinsebeck, continued through Steinheim (B936640), Lothe (B975657), Hagedorn (B983634), Ruensiek (B990641), Brakelsiek (B985670), and was met by slight resistance upon reaching Schwalenberg (C007654).

The 330th remained stationary.

The 1st Battalion, 331st, moved to clear the woods in the vicinity of B850535 and had cleared Bergheim (B9060) by early evening and reined up there. The 3d Battalion cleared the woods between Schwaney and Bad Driburg (B8949). By the end of the day, they had reached Vorden (C0359), Altenbergen (C0456) and Hinnenberg (B9948).

#### 6 April

The 1st Battalion, 329th, left Schwalenberg in the morning only to be held up after a short advance by a road block at C0566, just west of Reschenau (C065660). Companies A and C then continued to Elbrinxen (C045890), at which point they met Company B, which had been sent to Brakelsiek (B985670) and through the dense woods between there and Elbrinxen. The battalion then continued to advance to the east through Ratsiek (C057695), Sabbenhausen (C067695), Worderfeld (C090693), and pulled up in Vahlbruch (C105693). The 2d Battalion, which had been in Schieder, moved to Harzburg (C007707) with a mission of clearing out the pass through the hills and protecting the 3d Battalion as it proceeded through. After

this had been accomplished, the battalion proceeded to assembly areas in Glashutte (B9972) and Harzburg, later moving to Lugde (CO38745). At 1500, the advance to the east was resumed, the battalion reaching Kemnade (C221778) by nightfall. Company E was sent to Brevorde (C165697) about midnight because some enemy activity was noticed there. The 3d Battalion passed through the 2d Battalion in the pass northeast of Scheider, moved through Lugde, and then advanced 36 kilometers along the north boundary of the division to the Weser River. The river was crossed at Grohnde (C160815) and the battalion arrived at Halle (C256788) at 1300. Company K was sent to Hunxen (C2878) and Company I went to the east side of Bodenwerder (C225770) where it encountered very stiff resistance.

The 330th Infantry was still maintaining its old positions.

The 1st Battalion, 331st, in Bergheim, continued to mop up behind elements of Task Force Biddle, on 6 April, with Rolfzen (B978620) being cleared early in the morning. They then continued to Lowendorf (C063618) and in the late afternoon the battalion was told to secure Falkenhagen (C0767) and clear the area from there to the Weser River in the vicinity of Polle (C1568). Falkenhagen was stubbornly defended by tanks and infantry but was cleared in the evening and the battalion remained there that night. The

3d Battalion held in its positions of the day before except that Company L assisted the 125th Cavalry in securing Albaxen (C1559) toward the close of the period.

7 April

The 1st Battalion, 329th, was given the mission of cleaning out the wooded area from Vahlbruch to the river, concentrating on the area around Brevorde. The battalion later crossed the river on ferry sites near Hehlen (C193779). The 2d Battalion (- Company E) crossed the river in the morning and by nightfall had reached Brunkhausen (C397790). Company E had attacked toward Polle (C1568) when the enemy was sighted attempting to cross the river there. The 3d Battalion cleared Breitenkamp (C247736) and continued on to Eschershausen (C3172), where Company I returned. The battalion then continued its advance to the east, having the Recon Troop screening their advance to the Leine River.

The 330th Infantry was relieved by elements of the 95th Division about noon and then moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Heven (C2180), closing by 2030.

The 1st Battalion, 332nd, continued its advance to the east against stubborn resistance, toward Polle. Stiff resistance was met at Hummersen (C1065), but it was

cleared early in the day by Companies A and C. Heinsen (C1766) was reported clear by Company B at 1935. Companies A and C commenced the assault on Polle, against fanatical resistance, and by the end of the day the companies had managed to gain a foothold in the edge of town, not completely clearing it until 0605 the next morning. The 3d Battalion was ordered to aid the 125th Cavalry Group in capturing Hoxter (C135545), which surrendered at 1930 except for sporadic sniper fire, after a bombing mission had been flown against the town.

8 April

The 1st Battalion, 399th, crossed the Weser at 1000 and moved to an assembly area at Delligsen (C418736) and then to Alfeld (C435785), after it had been taken by the 2d Battalion. The 2d Battalion jumped from Brunkensen (C397790) at 0730 and took Warzen (C410778), Alfeld, Eimsen (C4380), Langenholzen (C4579), Wrisberg (C4983), Grafelde (C5083), Sellenstedt (C5182), and Adenstedt (C5180) by 1600. The 3d Battalion took off from the Leine River at 0730 and by 1600 had reached its objective of Lamspringe (C5676) and Harbarssen (C5379). The Recon Troop went on and cleared Bockenem (C6482), securing the bridge over the Nette River there.

The 330th Infantry, in the very early morning, moved out to secure Holzminden (C1860), with the 2d Battalion in that zone on the right of the regimental



sector, the 1st Battalion on the left in the sector and the 3d Battalion on its right. The 1st and 2d Battalions met stubborn resistance, but the 3d Battalion moved rapidly forward, meeting negligible resistance all the way to Greene (C521645). Company I was responsible for this and also for establishing a bridgehead there across the Leine River before nightfall. The bridge there was captured intact. The remainder of the battalion had cleared a pass at C466714 and had secured Dankelsheim (C565695) by nightfall.

The 1st Battalion, 331st, crossed the Weser at Polle over the bridge which was constructed there after the town was captured that morning. Company C was left to guard the bridge while Company A crossed and advanced as far as Beveren (C2163) by the close of the day. The 3d Battalion, with Company B attached, crossed the river in assault boats south of Polle and had cleared Allersheim (C2062) by 1800. The attack on Holminden (C1860) was postponed till the next day. Company B had meanwhile rejoined the 1st Battalion and had advanced to and cleared Lügge (C2268).

#### 9 April

The division boundary was shifted to the right on the morning of 9 April, and the 1st Battalion, 329th, moved from Alfeld to Gehrenrode (C5773) to occupy the right portion, relieving elements of the 330th there

about 1600. The 2d Battalion was relieved in its area by elements of the 2d Armored Division at C5080. The 3d Battalion moved from Lamspringe to the vicinity of Neuhoef (C5878) as the left flank battalion.

The 2d Battalion, 330th, was relieved in its positions by elements of the 331st Infantry at 1020, after which it proceeded to Greene and took over the guarding of the bridges over the Leine River. The 3d Battalion remained and consolidated its last positions, and after the 1st Battalion had cleared the last remaining resistance in its area it moved up to the 3d Battalion and took over the right portion of the regimental objective, while the 3d Battalion held the left portion. Company B, attached to the 113th Cavalry, helped occupy Seesen (C6768) before nightfall, establishing road blocks to the south and southeast at that point.

In the early morning, the 1st Battalion, 331st, cleared Golmbach (C2468), after having cleared Lobach (C2364). At 1120, elements of the 1st Battalion relieved elements of the 330th on a road block at C247655. They patrolled the general vicinity and stayed in Golmbach for the night. The 3d Battalion attacked Holzminden (C1860) at 0530, and by 0800 the town had been cleared. The battalion then assembled in Beveren for the night. The 2d Battalion, which had been operating with TF Biddle, reverted to regimental

control at this time, and it closed into Stadtoldendorf (C3066) for the night.

10 April

The 1st Battalion, 329th, jumped from Gehrenrode at 0800, advancing in the right portion of the regimental sector against light resistance and reaching Goslar (C8571) and Oker (C8971). Schlewecke (C9370) had been reached by early evening. The 2d Battalion, in reserve, followed the 1st Battalion by bounds and stopped for the night at Harlingerode (C917715). The 3d Battalion jumped off from Neuhoof and met light resistance in moving to Vienenburg (C9476).

Initially, the entire 2d Battalion, 330th Infantry, was left in Greene to protect the Leine River bridges, but later in the day it moved to reserve positions in Harrhausen (C6264) and Ildehausen (C652642), leaving Company F to protect the bridges. The 3d Battalion relieved Company B in Seesen, after which the company started following Troop C, 113th Cavalry, through the woods in the direction of Lautenthal (C7566), taking it that night. Companies A and C moved to Munchellof (C6864) behind the cavalry and met heavy machine gun fire west of the town. Company C swung to the north to flank the town but met fire from Herrhausen (C652661), which was cleared by 1600. At that time, they swung down to rejoin Company A. The 2d Battalion remained in its reserve position all day, but at 2000 it had moved to

Langelsheim (C7974) and begun an attack to the south. Company L secured Walfshagen (C6971) by 2130, while Company K established road blocks south of Langelsheim. Company F was also relieved at Greene and moved to Seesen, where it relieved Company I on the road blocks.

The entire 331st Infantry moved to assembly areas in the vicinity of Alfeld (C435785), closing at 2030.

#### 11 April

The 2d Battalion, 329th Infantry, attacked at 0700 from Harlingerode and by nightfall had cleared Bettingerode (C955723), Stapelburg (D017710), Vickenstedt (D065712), Tangeln (D108725), Hendeber (D143717), moved through the southern half of Halberstadt (D2871), and taken Wegeleben (D370705) and Harsleben (D320688), where it held up for the night. The 3d Battalion started from Vienenburg at 0800 and swung southeast to assist the 2d Battalion at Halberstadt. At 1600, the battalion moved to Grovingen (D395765), where it met heavy resistance with most of the night being required to clear the town. The 1st Battalion went into regimental reserve and followed the 2d Battalion all day, after having cleared the woods near Schlewecke (C930705) on the regiments right flank, spending the night in Halberstadt.

The 2d Battalion, 330 Infantry moved to the vicinity of Oker (C8870) in the morning of 11 April to

attack south from there and from Bad Harzburg (C945670). The battalion began its attack with G Company pushing south from Oker and Company E from Bad Harzburg. A slight amount of trouble was had with the enemy infiltrating behind both companies lines, but this was readily taken care of in the afternoon for F Company, being relieved in Seesen, was sent to clean up the area in the rear of G Company. E Company managed by themselves very nicely. In the meantime the 1st Battalion continued advancing east over the steep and wooded terrain. Companies A and C had cleared Wildemann (C7561) by 1400 and Company B had secured Hahnenklee (795655) by 1900. The 3d Battalion established road blocks south of Langelcheim and cleared the regimental sector west of the 78th north-south grid line of all organized resistance. In the evening, Company I moved to Goslar (C8571) and Company K to Ilsenberg (D026673), where each blocked and patrolled to the south.

The 3d Battalion, 331 Infantry was alerted to join Task Force Biddle, and at 0730 it moved out to do so. The remainder of the regiment started to move to an assembly area near Goslar (C8571) at 1530, but instead of stopping there it moved on to Derenburg (D1868), arriving at 0900, 12 April.

12 April

Instructions to the 3d Battalion, 329 Infantry



were to move straight through to the Elbe River as fast as possible, without bathering to clean out the sector thoroughly. The 1st Battalion followed along behind to attend to the cleaning up operation. The 3d Battalion was to seize the railroad bridge at Barby (D8582) and cross the river if possible. However, after having had light resistance all day, the battalion ran into a tough defense line at the outskirts of Barby in the middle of the afternoon, and by night fall had only been able to gain a foothold in the outskirts of the town. The railroad bridge was blown up at 1945. The 2d Battalion took the right sector of the regiment, and moved off from Wegeleben early in the morning, meeting light resistance in its advance to the river. The 1st Battalion spent the night in Wespen (D8181) and Grosse Muhlingen (D7380) in regimental reserve.

In the early morning the 1st Battalion, 330 Infantry started from C805640 toward the positions of Company I at Goslar, with Company B leading. Dug in infantry was met at C804643 but progress was comparatively rapid after the pocket had been reduced and B Company had contacted Company I at C842698 around 1600. The 1st Battalion then assembled there for the night. The 2d Battalion was given the mission of clearing the area south along the 89 grid line to the 66 grid line, then east to the 95 grid line and north to Bad Harzburg (C9569). The 3d Battalion maintained road blocks ~~near~~ L Company having

taken over Company G's position at C885697, Company I held road blocks in Goslar until relieved by Company B at 1800, at which time it moved to Weinigerode (D1064) and relieved the 113th Cavalry of their blocks. Company K held road blocks at Ilsenburg (D0267) and Altenrode (D0665). At the close of the day, the sector west of the 85 grid line had been cleared and blocked, and the sector north of the 67 grid line to the 95 grid line had been swept and blocked.

The 2d Battalion, 331 Infantry having arrived in Derenburg (D1868) at 0900 immediately jumped off at that time and reached Nienburg (D7868), a distance of 40 miles, by 1750, resistance being generally light in the towns encountered. The 1st Battalion attacked toward Barnecke (D2763), which was defended quite strongly by small arms and panzerfaust, but the battalion succeeded in clearing the town by 1500. Then they moved on to Westerhausen (D2962) against no opposition and upon arrival there was given the mission of blocking along the south boundary of the division from Hedersleben (D4268) to Frose (D5161). The 3d Battalion was given the mission of clearing the woods around (D2066), which took from 0900 to 1600. They then moved to a position south of Halberstadt (D2871) for the purpose of stopping any enemy counterattack from that direction.

13 April

At 0945, Barby surrendered, although the defending troops had already withdrawn, thus the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 329 Infantry moved into the town. The 1st Battalion, following closely behind, proceeded through the town and crossed the Elbe River in assault boats at 1330. The operation was "just like a Sunday afternoon picnic with no fire of any kind being received at the time", as was said by Lt. Stout. The town of Walternienburg (D8882) was soon taken with only slight resistance. At 1500 the 2d Battalion followed the 1st Battalion across the river, advancing to Walternienburg and then swinging north to Flatz (D8784). The 3d Battalion at that time was being held in reserve at Barby.

All three battalions of the 330 R.C.T. were engaged in blocking and sweeping areas along the northern edge of the mountains. As a result of the days operation, the area north of a line between C825686 and C957655 was cleared of enemy troops and road blocks were established around the area. The regiment passed to XIX Corps control on 13 April, but its mission remained the same.

The 2d Battalion, 331 Infantry had secured Calbe (D7875) by 0940, after which the battalion moved to Barby (D8582) and crossed the Elbe River over the 329

th Infantry bridge, and by the end of the day had established positions in the vicinity of Walternienburg (D8982) and in the woods south of there. The 1st Battalion was in an assembly area near Brunby (D7474), with two companies in Calbe to protect the divisions right flank.

14 April

The 329th R.C.T. had made plans to continue the attack at 1600, but this was called off. During the evening, Combat Command R of the 2nd Armored crossed over our bridge and took over the left sector of the bridgehead. There were no other position changes.

All three battalions of the 330 Infantry began their mission of sweeping south in their assigned zones. The 1st and 2d Battalions met heavy small arms and sniper fire during the day and encountered many road blocks of fallen trees. All bridges in the zone of advance had been destroyed, but by the end of the day the battalions were on a line from C879632 to C921629. The area in-between had not been completely cleared, however. Company K had advanced south from Ilsenburg to about D031637 by night, while the rest of the battalion maintained the road blocks to the east and south at Ilsenburg, Altenrode (D066657), and Weinigrode (D1064).

The 1st Battalion, 331 Infantry followed B Company, which had completed its move by 0315, across the river arriving at 1155. It then moved south to clear the woods

around D903818, resistance being quite heavy. The woods were cleared to D901817 by 1435, however, and the battalion remained there the rest of the day. The 2d Battalion jumped off at 0930 to clear Baditz (D923792), and this had been done by 1330. When the battalion attacked Kameritz (D912812), it hit stiff resistance. The 3d Battalion was released to regimental control again and crossed the river by 2130. There, it went into regimental reserve, where it remained for the rest of the action.

15 April

The 329 R.C.T. launched an attack at 0930, for the purpose of enlarging the bridgehead area. The 1st Battalion, on the right, moved six or seven kilometers occupying Nutha (D9382), while the 3d Battalion passed through the 2d Battalion, on the left and advanced to a line roughly even with the 1st Battalion. The 1st Battalion met resistance from dug in infantry and self-propelled guns in its advance through the woods between Walternienburg and Nutha. The 2d Battalion was held in reserve in Walternienburg at that time. The situation since that time, has remained comparatively stationary, with only slight changes in boundaries.

The progress of the 330 R.C.T. was generally more rapid and resistance was very much lighter. Both



Company A and C made contact with elements of the 1st Division at C924609, at 1100, while the 2d Battalion did the same at C874640, at 1340. At that point, the 2d Battalion swung east and had reached C951625, by 1900. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion established road blocks at C924610 and then proceeded to sweep north and east to C938653. At night fall, forward elements of the battalion were at C980624. The 3d Battalion continued to maintain road blocks in its sector and to clear the areas between the strong points encountered.

The 1st Battalion, 331st Infantry continued mopping up operations in the woods between Baditz on the river on 15 April and met only light resistance in the clearing of the woods around D917827. Company B advanced to a line from D935773 to D929767, by 1600. The 2d Battalion continued its attack on Kameritz and secured the town against heavy small arms fire by 1330. Company G had cleared Habenlepte (936813), by 1600 against light resistance.

These are the positions we have remained in since, improving them as the time went on. We repulsed a couple enemy counterattacks with the aid of our supporting artillery and since then everything has been very quite.

1 6 April

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 330th Infantry resumed their attack to the east at 0630 and made good progress against light resistance all morning. At 1200, division

ordered one battalion of the 330th Infantry to be attached to the 329th Infantry as soon as possible. The 2d Battalion side slipped over and included the 1st Battalion sector, as they assembled at Ilsenburg at 1645.

The 2d Battalion continued making very good progress although, with the absence of the 1st Battalion, made it possible for small enemy groups to infiltrate behind our lines and harass our supply lines. The 3d Battalion maintained positions along the north flank of the sector and continued to patrol between strong points.

17 April

Steady progress was made throughout the day by the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 330th Infantry. The 2d Battalion advanced east to a general line between D0360 and D030615, while Company E remained at the contact point with the 1st Division. D13600. At 1930, Company K's leading elements of the 3d Battalions advance was abreast of Company F at D038614, and Company L had reached D045615.

18 April

Opposition on the 18 April appeared to be better organized. The 3d Battalion, 330th Infantry continued to advance to the southeast and the 2d Battalion to the east. Elements of the 801st Tank Destroyer Battalion relieved Company E on its blocks at D094616 and D013598, after which the company advanced to D038604 and established

a defense for the night. At nightfall, Companies F and G were on a line from D046595 to D046593 and were engaged in a fight against two self-propelled guns. The 3d Battalion met light resistance as Company E advanced to the east to D060609, then turned south to D066604. At the close of the period, Company L was at D08760. Areas between our strongpoints continued to be swept by strong combat patrols.

19 April

Company E, 330th Infantry, in the morning, established road blocks at D056596 and D071583, and was relieved there by Company G at 1830. Company L advanced to the north edge of the lake at D100590, becoming involved in a fairly heavy fire fight with some enemy infantry and vehicles. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy and Company L continued to hold that position throughout the day. Company K, meanwhile, came up along the west side of the lake and cut the only road leading away from the lake in that sector, thereby surrounding the enemy force being engaged by Company L. Company I had pushed on to the east and had taken the road junction at D123611 by nightfall. The 2d Battalion, meanwhile, moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of D110633 at 1840. At 1930, an order was received calling for the relief of the regiment by Combat Command A of the 8th Armored Division, on the morning of 20 April, and this relief was completed

the next morning. The regiment then moved to its present defensive positions on the 83d Division's Elbe River bridgehead, where it has remained ever since.

Interview Number 9

Unit: 330th Infantry Regiment, 83d Division.

Action:

Source: Captain Tom R. Bristine, S-3.

Interviewer: 1st Lt. Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Walternienburg, Germany (D8982);  
1000, 28 April 1945.

Maps: GSGS 4416, Munster, Dortmund, Detmold, Paderborn,  
Hildesheim, Halberstadt, and Magdeburg sheets, 1:100000.

Journals: After Action Report, April; 330th Infantry.

COMMENTS



Interview with Captain Brisbane, S-3, 330th Infantry.

The initial mission given the regiment was one of mopping up, establishing road blocks, and assuming responsibility for areas behind the advance of the 2d Armored Division. There was practically no fighting involved in the operation, the 2d Armored Division having cleared all resistance in the 330th's zone of advance. "The most difficult phase of the operation was the control, feeding, and administering to the thousands of displaced persons as well as establishing military government in the areas overrun and guarding installations and warehouses to prevent looting by German civilians and displaced personnel," said Captain Brisbane.

At about 0730 of 1 April, the 1st Battalion started to move from Ahlen (B1152) to Beckum (B2151), arriving there and taking over the sector from elements of the 2d Armored Division at 1030. The 2d Battalion took over the defense of Ahlen at about the same time, and the 3d Battalion remained in an assembly area between Ahlen and Beckum ready to aid either of the other two battalions if necessary. At 1745, the regiment moved to Wadersloh (B353490) preparatory to relieving elements of the 2d Armored Division along the Lippe River to protect the right flank of the corps.

The 1st Battalion took the sector on the left along the river, from B410413 to B480457, where it made contact with the 3d Armored Division of the 1st Army. The 3d Battalion took the sector from B293402 to B410413 along the river. The 2d Battalion was in reserve and assembled near Liesborn (B363463).

On 2 April, the 1st Battalion seized three bridges over the Lippe Canal at B4845, B466437, and B449430, as well as the bridges at Lippstadt (B4242). The 3d Battalion held a bridge at B351400. It also made contact with the 329th Infantry on the right. Many prisoners were taken in the area, but little action occurred. The battalions held these same positions, with no contact with the enemy, except for the taking of prisoners in the sector, until it was relieved by elements of the 95th Division about noon of 7 April. The regiment then moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Heven (C2180), closing by 2030.

In the very early morning of 8 April, the regiment moved out to secure Holzminden (C1860), with the 2d Battalion in the right rear portion of the regimental sector, the 1st Battalion on the left in the sector and the 3d Battalion on its right. The 1st and 2d Battalions both met stubborn resistance, but the 3d moved rapidly forward. The 2d Battalion ran into a strongpoint at C2868 and Company F was left to contain

it; it was finally reduced with the aid of an air mission during the afternoon. Companies E and G advanced to and secured Negenborn (C263673), after reducing a strongpoint in the pass in the vicinity of C250664. The dug in infantry, with panzerfausts, was finally eliminated by outflanking it with tanks and some of our infantry. Before night, the battalion took Golmbach (C2468). The 1st Battalion, meanwhile, met some stubborn small arms and panzerfaust fire at Stadtoldendorf (C3066), but by night it had taken Wangelnstedt (C348653) and Luthorst (C370629). The 3d Battalion, meanwhile, met very little resistance except just west of Greene (C521645), where a little small arms fire was encountered. However, Company I, which reduced this opposition, established a bridgehead there across the Leine River before nightfall, the bridge having been captured intact. Companies L and K cleared a pass at C466714 and had secured Dankelsheim (C565695) by nightfall.

On 9 April, the 2d Battalion was relieved in its position by elements of the 331st Infantry at 1020, after which it moved to Greene and took over the guarding of the bridges over the Leine River there. The 3d Battalion consolidated its positions where they were, and after the 1st Battalion had cleared out the last remaining resistance in its area it moved up to the 3d Battalion and took over the right portion of the regimental objective there while the 3d Battalion

held the left portion. Company B was attached to the 113th Cavalry and helped occupy Seesen (C6768) before nightfall, establishing road blocks to the south and southeast at that point.

This brought the regiment to the vicinity of the Harz Mountains, where it spent the next ten days in the clearing of the 83d Division's sector of the mountains. These mountains are a heavily wooded range rising abruptly out of the north German plain. In 12 kilometers, the elevation rises from 200 meters on the plain to 1142 meters on the highest peak. All but the highest peaks are covered with a dense growth of trees principally of the evergreen variety. The road net through the mountains is excellent, but due to the growth of trees along the roads are easy to block. Cross country travel by vehicle, either tracked or wheeled, is impossible.

The plan for the operation was for the 1st Battalion to move from west to east through the mountains while the other two battalions attacked south into the north edge of the mountains to meet the 1st Battalion, thus clearing thoroughly a small segment at a time. The 801st TD Battalion (- Company C) was to follow closely the lead elements and establish blocks to the south and east on main roads after they had been cleared by the infantry and to prevent the enemy from re-entering cleared areas or using roads for vehicles,

and thus the infantry was released to move east and clear out another sector. Besides the TDs mentioned above, a company of tanks was also attached to the regiment for the operation, as well as one company of the 308th Engineer Battalion.

Initially, on 10 April, the entire 2d Battalion was left in Greene to protect the Leine River bridges, but later in the day the battalion moved to reserve positions in Harrhausen (C6264) and Ildehausen (C652642) with only Company F protecting the bridges. The 3d Battalion relieved Company B in Seesen, after which the company started following Troop C, 113th Cavalry, through the woods in the direction of Lautenthal (C7566). It moved slowly through the woods all day against panzerfaust and small arms fire and by 1700 had taken a road block at C716672. While the regimental mine platoon was blowing the block so that the cavalry's vehicles could get through, foot elements advanced as far as C725674. Company B continued on to take Lautenthal that night. Meanwhile, Companies A and C moved to Münchendorf (C6864) behind the cavalry but met heavy machine gun fire west of the town. When Company A attacked, it ran into resistance from infantry supported by four tanks. Company C went to the north to flank the town from that direction but ran into fire from Harrhausen (C652661). However, it succeeded in taking the town by 1600 and then swung southeast to the



woods to join Company A, which had bypassed the town. The 2d Battalion remained in its reserve position all day, but at 2000 it had moved to Langelsheim (C7974) and begun to attack south on the two main roads leading south from the town. Company L had taken Walfshagen (C6971) by 2130, while Company K established road blocks south of Langelsheim and sent a patrol to contact Company B, attacking Lautenthal from the east. Company F was relieved at Greene and moved to Seesen, where it relieved Company I on the road blocks there.

The 2d Battalion moved to the vicinity of Oker (C8870) in the morning of 11 April to attack south from there and from Bad Harzburg (C945670). The battalion began its attack with Company G pushing south from Oker and Company E from Bad Harzburg. Both companies were forced to advance along the ridges flanking the roads, as the enemy fire from these ridges made the roads rather unhealthy. In the early afternoon, Company F, which had been relieved in Seesen and sent to Oker, was committed to follow Company G and to clear the road blocks so that the vehicles could get through them. Trouble was had with enemy troops infiltrating behind both Company E and Company G late that afternoon, but Company E managed to get it under control and Company F wiped out those behind Company E. In the meantime, the 1st Battalion continued advancing east over the steep and wooded terrain. According to Captain Brisbane, "all

resistance was centered around road blocks, but it was generally no more than moderate. The difficult terrain made maneuvering quite hard and the whole operation had to move quite slowly and carefully." Companies A and C had cleared Wildemann (C7561) by 1400 and Company B had secured Hohnenkel (C795655) by 1900. The 3d Battalion established road blocks south of Langelsheim and cleared the regimental sector west of the 78 north-south grid line of all organized resistance. In the evening, Company I moved to Goslar (C8571) and Company K to Ilsenberg (D026673), where each blocked and patrolled to the south.

Companies A and C were fighting all during the night of 11-12 April with enemy manning a road block near C803641, while Company B took Bockweise (C791643). In the morning, all three companies started from C805640 toward the positions of Company I at Goslar, with Company B leading. Dug in infantry was met at C804643, but progress was comparatively rapid after that pocket had been reduced and Company B made contact with Company I at C842698 at 1610. The 1st Battalion then assembled there for the night. The mission of the 2d Battalion was given as being to clear the area south along the 89 grid line to the 66 grid line, then east to the 95 grid line and north to Bad Harzburg (C9569).

Company E, on 12 April, maintained road blocks at C940657, while one platoon cleared the area to the north and east. Companies F and G swept east from the positions they had held the previous night clearing the woods and mountains. At 1900, the two companies linked up at C910678, at which point Company G established road blocks for the night while Company F continued to clear the woods north toward Bad Harzburg. In the 3d Battalion's zone, Company L took over Company G's road blocks at C885697 in the morning, when Company G moved east. Company I maintained road blocks in Boslar until it was relieved by Company B at 1800, at which time it moved to Wernigerode (D1064) and took over the road blocks there from the 113th Cavalry. Company K held road blocks at Ilsenburg (D0267) and Altenrode (D0665) during the period. The advance of the battalions was opposed by miscellaneous units, with principal resistance coming from fanatical groups of Hitler Jugend. The enemy employed road blocks of felled trees extensively to impede our advance. At the close of the day, the sector west of the 85 grid line had been cleared and blocked and the sector north of the 67 grid line to the 95 grid line had been swept and blocked.

On 13 April, all three battalions were engaged in blocking and sweeping areas along the northern edge of the mountains. The only resistance of any extent was

encountered in the sectors of Companies E and I, where three small counterattacks were repulsed in the vicinity of C937651. A little artillery fire was also received, for the first time, in this sector. As a result of the day's operation, the area north of a line between C825686 and C957655 was cleared of enemy troops and road blocks were established around the area. The regiment passed to XIX Corps control on 13 April, but its mission remained the same.

All three battalions began their mission of sweeping south in their assigned zones on 14 April. The 1st and 2d Battalions met heavy small arms and sniper fire during the day and encountered many road blocks of fallen trees. Strong flank patrols were used to cover all advances, as small groups of enemy were continually attempting to circle our leading elements and attack from the flanks. All bridges in the zone of advance had been destroyed, but by the end of the day the battalions were on a line from C879632 (2d Battalion) to C921629 (1st Battalion). The area in between had not been completely cleared, however. Company K had advanced south from Ilsenburg to about D021637 by night, while the rest of the battalion maintained the road blocks to the east and south at Ilsenburg, Altenrode (D066657), and Wernigerode (D1064).

On 15 April, progress was generally more rapid and resistance was lighter. Companies A and C made contact with elements of the 1st Division at C924609 at 1100 and the 2d Battalion did the same at C874640 at 1340. At that point, the 2d Battalion swung east and had reached C951625 by 1900. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion established road blocks at C924610 and then proceeded to sweep north and east to C938653. At nightfall, forward elements of the battalion were at C980624. The 3d Battalion continued to maintain road blocks in its sector and to clear the areas between the strong points encountered. With the 1st and 2d Battalions generally abreast and the 3d Battalion blocking all exits to the northeast and the 1st Division abreast on our right, the pocket was slowly being compressed with little chance of organized troops escaping the trap in our sector.

The 1st and 2d Battalions resumed their attack to the east at 0630 of 16 April and made good progress against light resistance all morning. Only small pockets of enemy were encountered, but they were often effective in slowing down progress because of the difficulty of maneuvering in this terrain. At 1200, the 83d Division ordered one battalion of the 330th Infantry to be attached to the 329th Infantry as soon as possible, so the 2d Battalion began to sideslip to



the north and assume the sector of the 1st Battalion. The 1st Battalion assembled at Ilsenburg at 1645, ready to be transported to the sector of the 329th Infantry. The 2d Battalion meanwhile continued to make good progress in the face of small groups of enemy riflemen who were fighting a stubborn delaying action. The removal of the 1st Battalion left too big a sector for the 2d Battalion to cover effectively and made it possible for small enemy groups to infiltrate behind our lines and harrass our supply lines. The 3d Battalion maintained positions along the north flank of the sector and continued to patrol between strong points. At the close of the period, Company E's leading elements were at D000616.

Steady progress was made throughout 17 April by the 2d and 3d Battalions. Opposition continued to be from small groups of enemy infantry supported by automatic weapons defending road blocks and defiles. The enemy continued to infiltrate in small groups to the rear of our lines attempting to escape or ambush small parties on our supply and communication lines. Over 200 rounds of artillery fire, from guns in the 1st Division's sector on our right, fell in the 2d Battalion's sector on 17 April. The 2d Battalion advanced east to a general line between D0360 and D030615, while Company E remained at the contact point with the 1st Division (D013600). At 1930, Company K, leading elementx of the 3d Battalion's advance, was abreast of Company F at D038614, and Company L had reached D045615.

Opposition on 18 April appeared to be better organized. An enemy demolition squad, supported by infantry, established road blocks and blew bridges just ahead of the 2d Battalion's advance all through the day. The 3d Battalion continued to advance to the southeast and the 2d Battalion to the east. Elements of the 801st TD Battalion relieved Company E on its blocks at D094616 and D013598, after which the company advanced to D038604 and established a defense for the night. At nightfall, Companies F and G were on a line from D046595 to D046593 and were engaged in a fight against two self propelled guns. The 3d Battalion met light resistance as Company E advanced to the east to D060609, then turned south to D066604. At the close of the period, Company L was at D087601. Areas between our strongpoints continued to be swept by strong combat patrols.

In the morning of 19 April, Company E established road blocks at D056596 and D071583, and it was relieved there by Company G at 1830. Company L advanced to the north edge of the lake (D100590), where they became involved in a fairly heavy fire fight with some enemy infantry and vehicles. Heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy and Company L continued to hold that position throughout the day. Company K meanwhile came up along the west side of the lake and cut the only road

leading away from the lake in that sector, thereby surrounding the enemy force being engaged by Company L. Those members of the enemy party who had not already been killed soon surrendered upon realizing this, and the battalion took over 500 prisoners and 60 vehicles of all types during the day. Company I pushed on to the east and had taken the road junction at D123611 by nightfall. The 2d Battalion meanwhile moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of D110633 at 1840. At 1930, an order was received calling for the relief of the regiment by CCA of the 8th Armored Division on the morning of 20 April, and this relief was completed the next morning. The regiment then moved to its present defensive positions on the 83d Division's Elbe River bridgehead, where it has remained ever since.

During the regiment's operations in the Harz Mountains, an area was cleared extending 47 kilometers in length, 15 kilometers through 2/3 of the way, then narrowing to five kilometers at the eastern end. In the ten day period, 2516 prisoners were taken, not including hospital patients, from a great variety of units including the 26th Volksgrenadier Division, the 116th Panzer Division, two regiments of the Potsdam Division, Hitler Jugend, Volkssturm, training units, and "werewolves".

Except for the two days moving from Lippstadt to the Harz Mountains, we just followed the 2d Armored Division. There was no action at Lippstadt; we just sat there expecting to have the 116th Panzer Division hit us from the south. We had our biggest fights at Staßfurt and Negenborn, where we ran into several Mark IV tanks and panzerfaust, plus small arms fire. Even in the Harz Mountains they didn't have time to get organized, because we moved too fast. In the mountains, the terrain was such that a small group of defenders could easily hold up an entire battalion at times. The enemy would fight for a while, but when we put mortar fire on them they would either fade away or surrender. Fortunately, the enemy had almost no mortars or artillery in the mountains, or things could have been very messy.

Interview Number 10

Unit: 1st Battalion, 330th Infantry.

Action:

Source: Lieutenant Colonel Norman A. Campbell,  
Commanding Officer, 1st Battalion, 329th Infantry.

Interviewer: 1st Lieutenant Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Stassfurt, Germany (D6569);  
1000, 4 May 1945.

Maps: GSGS 4416, Hildesheim, Halberstadt Sheets, 1:100000.

Journals: None used in interview.

COMMENTS



Interview with Lt. Col. Campbell, CO 1st Bn, 320th.

"We didn't have any fun at all till we got to the Harz Mountains," said Colonel Campbell at the beginning of the interview. "Munchehof (C685640) and Seesen (C680685) are where we started to fight, going into the Harz Mountains in two columns."

Company B moved along the road from Seesen to Lautenthal (C7667) in a task force of its own, including a platoon of tanks from the 736th Tank Battalion. The remainder of the battalion started in from Munchehof and went first to Wildemann (C7561). The two columns kept moving and met in the vicinity of Bockswiese (~~C803640~~) (C7964) and Hahnenklee (C7965). Five enemy naval officers were captured in Hahnenklee, which also appeared to be one of the German "baby factories". The battalion was slightly ahead of the 1st Division, which was clearing the mountains to the right, so it worked southeast until the 1st Division was contacted at Altenau (C8759). Company C knocked out three enemy half tracks and other equipment at the crossroads at C803640) during this move. After the 1st Division had been contacted, the 1st Battalion was pulled out and sent first to Goslar (C8571) and then to Bad Harzburg (C9468), from which point it again started to work south into the mountains.

This time, the battalion worked as far south as Torfhaus (C934593), where it contacted the 2d Battalion of the 330th Infantry. The battalion then pulled back to a point several thousand yards south of Bad Harzburg and worked east again. The advance was to a point just south of Ilsenburg (D0367) and then north to Ilsenburg itself. Just before the battalion got to Ilsenburg, a large road block was found which 30 Germans had just finished constructed. These men were taken prisoner and were so grateful that they removed the road block for us. During this move, a hotel on top of Hill 1142 (C988597) was taken with a number of officers becoming prisoners. It was later found that this was probably the directing point for the entire defense of the Harz Mountain area.

This clearing of the mountains took from 11 April to about 1700, 16 April, which is the time when the battalion assembled at Ilsenburg to be taken to the 83d Division's Elbe River bridgehead. Resistance was very light generally, except for a few Hitler Jugend which Company B hit during the first several days in the mountains. There were a great many road blocks in the mountains and the terrain was quite rugged, but it was not defended nearly as well as it could have been.

INTERVIEW NUMBER 11

Unit: Company B, 330 Infantry

Action:

Source: 2d Lt. Floyd V. Ward, 3d Platoon Leader,  
1st Lt. Francis W. Frinder, 2d Platoon Leader,  
1st Lt. James E. Zall, 1st Platoon Leader

Interviewer: 1st Lt. Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Hallendorf, Germany (C813987)  
1400, 28 April 1945

Maps: G.S.G.S. No. 4416 Halberstadt and Hildesheim Sheets

Journals: No journals used

Comments:

Interview with 2d Lt Floyd V. Ward, 3d Platoon leader,  
1st Lt. Francis W. Frinder, 2d Platoon leader, and  
1st Lt. James E. Zall, 1st Platoon leader, Company B,  
330th Infantry

The area between Lautenthal (C7667) and  
Hahnenklee (C8066), covered by Company B on 11 April  
is typical of the greater percentage of fighting in  
the Harz Mountain area.

B Company, with elements of the 119th Cavalry  
attached, left Lautenthal at 1000 proceeding along  
the main road southeast of town. The cavalry consist-  
ing of 3 jeeps and 3 armored cars led out with the 3d  
Platoon of B Company, which was in staggered column,  
on either side of the road abreast of the cavalry.  
The 2d Platoon was also in platoon column, on either  
side of the road, following closely behind. The 1st  
Platoon was mounted on 3 attached tanks from the 736th  
Tank Battalion. As they progressed along the road, the  
lead armored car was hit by a panzerfaust at approximately  
(C7786 57). Immediately, the 3d Platoon deployed on the  
left side of the road with two squads forward and one  
in support. The 1st Platoon at the same time, having  
dismounted from their tanks, moved up on the right of  
the road abreast of the 3d Platoon. The 2d Platoon  
maintained its original position, allowing the tanks to  
proceed with them and in their column for security.

This one panzerraut and a couple burp guns was the sum total of enemy strength at this point and was easily uprooted after opening up with everything for a few minutes. Continuing along the road a road block was met at C745648, although not manned. This road block, as many of them were, consisted of felled trees for about 75 yards. It took two hours to clear the road, with the aid of the tanks. The 3d Platoon remained here, not only to help clear the area but also as security. The 1st and 3d Platoons, in open column on both sides of the road bed proceeded on after encountering the road block. They saw quite a few Jerries, but most of them gave up or took off upon seeing us approach. Hahnenklee was reached and secured about 1800, without a shot being fired.

In general, this whole area consisted of pockets, they would fight hard for a short time and then give up or dissappear leaving us march for a half a day. The terrain was very rugged, looked like a jungle, which hindered our advance considerably. About an average of a hundred yards on each side of the road were cleared while going through the area. As for the area further in, they do not yet know whether it has been cleared or not.

"Most of the time was taken up clearing road blocks, so that tanks could catch up with the leading elements"

Interview Number 12

Unit: 2d Battalion, 330th Infantry Regiment

Action:

Source: Captain Charles W. Schmitt, S-3.

Interviewer: 1st Lieutenant Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Flotz, Germany (D876846);  
1100, 30 April 1945.

Maps: GSGS 4416, Dortmund, Munster, Detmold, Paderborn,  
Hildesheim, Halberstadt, and Magdeburg Sheets, 1:100000.

Journals: None used in interview.

COMMENTS



Interview with Captain Schmitt, 2d Bn, 330th Infantry.

"It was just a rat race from the Rhine to the Harz Mountains. We couldn't tell one town from another, we moved so damn fast," said Captain Schmitt at the beginning of the interview. The battalion crossed the Rhine on 29 March and went to Buchholt (A290385), staying there till the 31st. It moved on to Ascheburg (A9255) on 31 March and to Leisborn (B364462) on 1 April. It stayed there till the 7th, blocking along the Lippe River, but there was no action involved -- just holding road blocks and outposts. On the 7th, the battalion went on to Eschershausen (C3172).

The battalion cleared the road from Negenborn (C509613) to Holzminden (C1960) on 8 April. There was a well defended road block at C252658. The enemy troops there were few in number but were well concealed and strategically located, with rifles and machine guns. Some SS troops were among them. It took Company E, the leading element of the battalion, all day to clear this out, and 23 casualties were sustained by the company. Another strong point was encountered east of Negenborn, at C2868, but the 40 odd enemy troops there were soon discouraged by mortar and artillery fire.

On 9 April, the battalion moved to Greene (C5265) and to Oker (C895705) on the 10th, by way of ~~Harpies~~

hausen (C620638). This brought the battalion to the north side of the Harz Mountains, where it spent the next ten days in clearing the woods and hills in the region. In the forests, a company was put on each side of the road with the reserve company following whichever of the leading companies was expected to run into the most trouble that day. There was considerable trouble with enemy infiltration behind our lines, and we had to watch out for that at all times. It was very slow work, and we had to be extremely careful.

Companies G and F started clearing the sector along the main road south from Oker on 11 April. During the operation, these companies moved to about the 66 east-west grid line. Company E cleared south from Bad Harzburg (C9569) to about the 65 grid line. Company E worked along this road to the junction at C924610, then sent a platoon to C870616 to contact the 1st Division there. The company then cleared cross country to C985625, using unmapped trails and clearing out the woods along the way. The road net at D9863 was also cleared and opened up by Company E by 18 April. All the companies assembled at Werrigerode (D1963) again on 18 April, after having cleared their assigned sectors and being relieved on the road blocks they had established. The battalion then moved to its present position in Flotz (D877847), on its defensive mission.

INTERVIEW NUMBER 13

Unit: Company E, 330 Infantry

Action:

Source: 1st Lt. Terence D. Queally, Weapons Platoon Leader,  
and 1st Lt. Thomas B. Peterson, Executive Officer

Interviewer: 1st Lt. Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Barum, Germany (D8495); 1500,  
4 June 1945

Maps: G.S.G.S. No. 4416 (AMS M641) Hildesheim

Journals: No journals used

Comments:

Interview with 1st Lt. Terence D. Queally, weapons platoon leader, and 1st Lt. Thomas B. Peterson, executive officer, Company E, 330 Infantry

While in Eschershausen (C3172), on the evening of 7 April, orders were received to move to Negenborn (C265675). E Company arrived in Negenborn around 0615, 8 April, with no trouble, and was given the mission to secure the pass at (C2566) and establish a well defended road block. It was a very hazy evening with visibility from one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards. At 0815 E Company left Negenborn with the 3d platoon leading, followed by the 1st, Weapons, and 2d platoons, all being in column, within visual distance and having two squads forward and one in support. The company was on the right of Negenborn-Lobach Road (C233-647), heading generally southwest. At about 1000, after having been very cautious while crossing this open ground with the aid of the haze, the scouts of the 3d platoon had reached (C254662) when the haze suddenly lifted and the whole platoon was brought under fire of small arms and panzerfausts from the wooded area to their front and right front. The Platoon Leader tried to maneuver his men, but he was killed and his platoon was unable to move. The 1st platoon was then given orders to swing aside to the right, enter the woods at about (C252670) and clear the edge of the wooded

area to the south. They entered the woods with two squads forward and one in support, advancing to (C2566) at which point they too were stopped. The 2d platoon was then also committed around the right flank. They entered the woods at (C2567) with two squads forward in open squad column and one in support. They worked slowly forward along the crest of the hill until meeting the 1st platoon. Two attached tanks were brought up to the rear of the 3d platoon to spray the wooded area with 75 and machine gun fire. This, however, seemed to do little good. Our artillery was also quite ineffective for with a 1:100,000 map, ranges were very hard to estimate. When the 1st and 2d platoons had made contact, they established a line running generally north and south, and were here, as well as the 3d platoon, held up until 1700. The plan, at this time, was changed after a meeting with the Battalion Commanding Officer. The new plan was to have G Company, which had established a line facing south, to spray the area to our front as we advanced to the west. This, however, fell through, for the Jerries started pulling out and shortly thereafter the area was reported clear. Thus, we set up defensive positions and remained the rest of the evening. "The defensive positions Jerry held were probably the best I've ever seen, for the terrain was very suitable."

INTERVIEW NUMBER 14

Unit: Company G, 330 Infantry

Action:

Source: 1st Lt. Milton L. Aliff, Executive Officer and  
1st Lt. William N. Hesketh, Weapons Platoon Leader

Interviewer: 1st Lt. Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Vienenburg, Germany (C9576);  
1300, 31 April 1945

Maps: G.S.G.S. No. 4416 (AMS M641) Hildesheim

Journals: No journals used

Comments:



Interview with 1st Lt. William N. Hesketh, Weapons platoon leader, 1st Lt. Milton L. Aliff, Executive Officer, Company G, 330 Infantry

We arrived in Negenborn (C264675) from Golmbach (C248685) at about 0731, 8 April, with very little trouble. One or two snipers fired a round or two and then gave up. We stayed in town for a few hours, and at 1200 jumped to the southwest toward Lobach (C232646). The company moved out in an open column of platoons with the 1st platoon leading, followed by the 2d, weapons, and the 3d platoon. Our mission at that time was to clear the wooded area to the right of E Company, who was held up in the vicinity of (C252658) and protect their right flank when they pushed forward. We followed the stream that runs along the western edge of town to the junction of it and the Forst B. at which point we turned right following it to approximately (C251675), where again we turned left and started into the wooded area at (C250673). All the time we were crossing this open area, which offered little cover or concealment except at some points along the stream bed, we were receiving sniper fire from the woods. As the 1st platoon entered the woods, the 2d platoon came abreast of the 1st, on its right flank, and in squad columns, both proceeded forward against that which was stated as fanatical resistance. There was about a squad of enemy dug in among the rock formations, giving them excellent cover. The two tanks that were attached to our company were of no use at all. The

wooded area made it impossible for them to approach the enemy positions and their fire was hindered by the trees. As the company continued to advance, it took about an hour and a half from where they entered the woods to approximately (C2566), where they held up and made plans to assault the remainder of the woods by marching fire after a sixty round mortar barrage. This plan, however, never did fully materialize for after the barrage the Jerries started taking off and a few minutes later the area was reported clear, at which time the company moved back to the town of Negenborn for the evening. "This amounted to a very effective ambush, with automatic weapons and panzerfausts being well used." "This was the stiffest resistance we met in the whole operation, for Jerry was well dug in and looking down our throats, although we only had one man killed all day."

Interview Number 15

Unit: 3d Battalion, 330th Infantry Regiment.

Action:

Source: Captain Ben D. Cunningham, S-3;  
Lieutenant Colonel George M Shuster, CO.

Interviewer: 1st Lieutenant Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Flotz, Germany (D876846);  
0930, 30 April 1945.

Maps: GSGS 4416, Dortmund, Munster, Detmold, Paderborn,  
Hildesheim, Halberstadt, and Magdeburg Sheets, 1:100000.

Journals: G-3 Journal, 3d Battalion, 330th Infantry;  
April, 1945.

COMMENTS

Interview with Captain Cunningham and Lt. Col. Shuster, C.O.  
3d Battalion, 330th Infantry.

We crossed the Rhine on 30 March and moved to Hunxe (A330388) that night. About dark on 31 March, we moved on to another assembly area at Lehmbraken (A641543). We then went on to take over the 2d Armored Division's bridgehead over the Dortmund-Ems Canal at Seppenrade (A765519) and Ludinghausen (A8053). Before settling down for the night, the battalion moved on to Ascheburg (A922550). In the morning of 1 April, the battalion moved to Liesborn (B364463), with very little activity on the part of the enemy. A sector along the Lippe River there was occupied till 5 April, but there was almost no action during that time. On 5 April, the battalion moved to Lippstadt (B4242), where the 2d Armored and 3d Armored Divisions had linked up; the mission there was to prevent any enemy troops from escaping from the encircled Ruhr Valley at that point. However, no action took place there either, although many prisoners gave themselves up to us there. On 7 April, the battalion moved from Lippstadt to Luerdissen (C300745), to an assembly area there.

About 0100, 8 April, the battalion started following the 113th Cavalry through Eschershausen

(C310717), the only opposition that day being an undefended but mined road block at Rimen (C408666). The battalion moved on east and Company I was sent to Greene (C5265), where a short fire fight developed; the company took 50 prisoners there shortly. While Company I was clearing Greene, Company K secured the pass at C4771. It was necessary to use artillery on Greene before Company I could take the town. Then Company L crossed the Leine River at Grosse Freden (C4872) and moved on to Ohlenrode (C553707) and Dankelsheim (C565695). Company I remained at Greene that night, securing the bridge over the Leine there. Company K crossed at Greene that evening and moved to Gehrenrode (C568730), remaining there for the night. The battalion stayed in these positions until the 10th, when it moved to Akenhausen (C605685) and cross country to Seesen (C680685), both of which had been taken previously by other units. The battalion left there that afternoon and, by marching and shuttling by trucks, got to Langelsheim (C790745). The mission of the battalion at that time was to follow the advance of the 329th Infantry and to block roads into the Harz Mountains along its route of advance. In fulfilling this, Companies L and K established road blocks into the mountains at Langelsheim while Company I did so at Goslar (C855712).

On 11 April, the battalion moved to Ilsenburg (D0367) and Company K put up road blocks on the roads leading south at that point. Companies L and I remained in Goslar, but Company L was soon attached to the 2d Battalion at Oker (C895705) and placed road blocks on the roads to the south there. On 12 April, Company K remained at Ilsenburg on its blocking mission, Company L went to Altenrode (D070655) and Company I to Wernigerode (D1064). The company CP's remained in these positions till the 20th, while the battalion's area in the mountains to the south was being cleared. On the 12th, this clearing, from the 00 grid line east to the 13 grid line and south to the 60 line commenced. There was considerable resistance in small groups, and the numerous road blocks were usually defended with rifles, machine guns, and panzerfausts. The action was by company or platoon groups, usually, with the clearing proceeding during the day and road blocks being established at the points of furthest advance and other critical positions to prevent the enemy from infiltrating back into the cleared area. The next morning, elements of the TD platoons would take over these blocks and the companies would continue on their clearing mission from there.



In this manner, the battalion averaged over 100 prisoners a day during the operation. Company K cleared south on the main roads to about D010641, then turned southeast and advanced to D046612, swinging from there across Hill 557 to the main road at D071582, where it arrived on 18 April. On the 19th, Company K went south along this main road and swung east to the southern tip of the lake at D0958. On the 19th, 330 men and 60 vehicles surrendered to the battalion at the lake. The company held its positions at the south end of the lake until it was relieved by elements of the 8th Armored Division on the morning of 20 April.

"It didn't take a great force to clean out the small pockets we encountered, but there were so many of them that it was a very tedious and difficult job," said Captain Schmitt. Company L worked south from Ilseburg down the main road to the 64 east-west grid line, where it was pinched out by Company K on the 18th. The company then swung back up to Wernigerode and moved south to the northern tip of the lake, at D1059, by the night of the 18th. On the 19th, it and Company K pinched in the previously mentioned 330 men and 60 vehicles, as well as five 20mm guns, and forced this enemy group to surrender. The company was relieved by elements of the 8th Armored Division on the morning of 20 April.

Company I worked south on the main roads from Wernigerode and established road blocks at D069611, D095613, and D122623. From the 12th to the 18th, the company cleared the area among the included road network. On the 19th, the company had reached D120606, where it stayed till it was relieved in the morning of 20 April. "There were no big pockets of resistance, just a lot of little ones which made you be careful. The small arms fire was quite accurate and caused many casualties," stated Captain Schmitt.

On 20 April, the battalion moved on trucks to Flotz (D876846), on the 83d Division's Elbe River bridgehead, where it relieved the 3d Battalion of the 32Qth Infantry Regiment (35th Infantry Division) in its defensive positions there. These positions have been maintained ever since.

Interview Number 16

Unit: 331st Infantry Regiment, 85d Division.

Action:

Source: Lt. Col. Henry Neilson, Executive Officer  
(then 1st Bn. CO)

Interviewer: 1st Lieutenant Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Badetz, Germany (D923792);  
1000, 25 April 1945.

Maps: GSGS 4416, Munster, Dortmund, Detmold, Paderborn,  
Hildesheim, Halberstadt, and Magdeburg sheets, 1:100000.

Journals: None used in interview.

#### COMMENTS

Colonel Neilson was most cooperative and called in the battalion representatives to the regimental CP so that we could interview them more easily and quickly. All had their own notes prepared in advance and were able to give quick and concise narratives of what had happened during the move. The men had been occupying defensive positions for about a week and were well rested.

Interview with Lt. Col. Neilson, Exec. Off, 331st Infantry.

On 31 March, the 1st Battalion was given a mission of relieving elements of the 2d Armored Division between Olfen (A755458) and the crossing of the Dortmund-Ems Canal at A775450 and to patrol to Kalonie-Hermann (A813438). The battalion reached Olfen at about 0930, and by 1130 it had reported the crossing secure and Kalonie-Hermann clear of enemy. Bork (A815410) was also reported clear by 1400. By 1600, the 2d and 3d Battalions had also advanced to Olfen and stopped for the night. The regimental CP opened in Nordkirchen (A857490) for the night at 2240.

On 1 April, the 1st Battalion was relieved from its holding mission along the canal and was sent to secure crossings of the Lippe Canal at Dolberg (B1346). Some artillery fire was received from across the canal, but it was reached by 1800. The railroad bridge at B125451 was found to be still intact. The 2d Battalion moved to occupy Heessen (B0745) and cut off the northeastern part of Hamm (B0542), which objective was achieved by 2130. The attack on Heessen was met by considerable small arms and artillery fire, but the battalion managed to gain a foothold in the town and the attack progressed favorably after that. The 3d Battalion jumped off about three miles north of Hamm and had cleared Nordenfeldmark, just across the Lippe Canal from Hamm, by 2045. The regimental CP moved to Welstedde (B045510) at 0725.

2 April found the 1st Battalion maintaining its positions in the vicinity of Dolberg and along the north bank of the Lippe Canal. The 2d Battalion did the same in its positions around Heessen and supported by fire the attack of the 3d Battalion on Hamm proper. The 3d Battalion moved to secure a bridgehead on the south side of the canal, and by 0800 Company K had crossed the railroad bridge and secured a bridgehead in Hamm proper. Company I soon joined them, and the two companies made slow progress against heavy resistance that morning. In the afternoon, Company I was also sent across the canal to protect the bridge, and progress continued very slow against the stubborn resistance. Small arms, automatic weapons, and 20mm fire was quite heavy. Our mortars and artillery, which provided very close support, kept any threatened enemy counterattacks under control during the period. The battalion continued to hold this bridgehead until relieved by elements of the 95th Division, this being completed at 2315, 3 April. The 1st and 2d Battalions had been relieved earlier by the 95th Division, and both battalions moved to assembly areas near Delbrück (B5752) on 3 April.

On 4 April, the 1st and 3d Battalions were given a mission of protecting the right flank of the division to the rear of the advance of Task Force Biddle. From its assembly area near Delbrück, the 1st Battalion had reached Altenbecken (B8352) by evening against light resistance.

The regimental CP also moved there, arriving at 2100. The 2d Battalion was given a mission ~~of~~ clearing out bypassed enemy pockets behind Task Force Biddle, and by the end of the day it had cleared the town of Schwaney (B8247) against moderate resistance.

On the morning of 5 April, the 1st Battalion moved to clear the woods around B850535. Opposition was light, but it took until 1600 to reach and clear Bergheim (B9060), which was the battalion's resting place for the night. The 3d Battalion cleared the woods between Schwaney and Bad Driburg (B8949). Resistance was spotty, and by the end of the day the battalion had been able to reach Vorden (C0359), Altenbergen (C0456), and Hinnenberg (B9948).

The 1st Battalion continued to mop up behind elements of Task Force Biddle on 6 April, with Rolfzen (B978620) being cleared early in the morning. The battalion then followed elements of the 113th Cavalry to Lowendorf (C063618). In the late afternoon, the battalion was told to secure Falkenhagen (C0767) and clear the area from there to the WeserRRiver in the vicinity of Polle (C1568). Falkenhagen was stubbornly defended by tanks and infantry, but it was taken during the evening and the battalion remained there that night. The 3d Battalion held in its positions of 5 April during 6 April, except that Company L assisted the 125th Cavalry in securing Albaxen (C1559) toward the close of the period.



The 1st Battalion continued to advance east toward Polle against stubborn resistance on 7 April. Stiff resistance was met at Hummersen (C1065), but it was cleared by Companies B and C early in the day. Heinsen (C1766) was reported clear by Company B at 1935. Companies A and C commenced the assault on Polle, which was being fanatically held by the enemy, who were using 20mm guns, automatic weapons and small arms, plus a Tiger tank to great advantage in the defense. By the end of the day, the companies had managed to gain a foothold in the edge of town, but it was not finally cleared until 0605, 8 April, after a brisk all-night battle. It was found later that the garrison there had consisted of two companies of SS troops, four of regular Wehrmacht, and a conglomeration of stragglers. Over 400 prisoners were taken from the town, and many others escaped across the river. The 3d Battalion was ordered to aid the 125th Cavalry in capturing Hoxter (C135545), and after an air mission had been flown against the town about 1900, it surrendered at 1930, except for sporadic sniper fire.

After the capture of Polle in the morning of 8 April, a bridge was constructed there and Company C was left to guard it while Company A crossed and advanced as far as Beveren (C2163) by the close of the day. The 3d Battalion crossed the river in assault boats south of Polle in the

morning, with Company B being attached; by 1800, Allersheim (C2062) had been cleared and the battalion got to the vicinity of Holzminden (C1860). The attack on Holzminden was postponed till the next day, due to the fact that no tanks or TDs were as yet available to the battalion on the east side of the Weser River. Company B had meanwhile rejoined the 1st Battalion and had advanced to and cleared Lutgnade (C2268).

In the early morning of 9 April, Company A cleared Lobach (C2364) and Company B got to Golmbach (C2468). At 1120, elements of the 1st Battalion relieved elements of the 330th Infantry on a road block at C247655. Company B then moved to clear the woods north of Golmbach, and this took until 1640, at which time the battalion assembled in Golmbach. Company A patrolled the woods in the vicinity of C2461 that night, but there was no action. The 3d Battalion attacked Holzminden (C1860) at 0530, and by 0800 the town had been cleared of the enemy. Resistance was quite light during this attack. The battalion then assembled in Beveren, as word was received that the regiment was being placed in division reserve. The 2d Battalion, which had been operating with Task Force Biddle, reverted to regimental control at this time, and it closed into Stadtoldendorf (C3066) for the night.

On 10 April, the entire regiment moved to assembly areas in the vicinity of Alfeld (C435785), closing at 2030. The 3d Battalion was alerted to join Task Force Biddle, and at 0730 of 11 April it moved out to do so. The remainder of the regiment started to move to an assembly area near Goslar (C8571) at 1530 but instead of stopping there it moved on to Derenburg (D1868), arriving at 0900, 12 April. The 2d Battalion jumped off at that time and reached Nienburg (D7868), a distance of 40 miles, by 1730, resistance being generally light in the towns encountered. The 1st Battalion attacked toward Bornecke (D2763), which was defended strongly with small arms and panzerfausts, but the battalion succeeded in clearing the town by 1500. The battalion moved on to Westerhausen (D2962) against no opposition and then was given a mission of blocking along the south boundary of the division from Hedersleben (D4268) to Frose (D5161). The 3d Battalion was given the mission of clearing the woods around D2066, and this took from 0900 to 1600 due to heavy mortar and artillery fire and some small arms fire. The battalion then was placed in position south of Halberstadt (D2871) to stop any enemy counterattack from that direction.

The 2d Battalion had secured Calbe (D7875) by 0940 of 13 April, after which the battalion moved to Barby (D8582) and crossed the Elbe River over the crossing used by the 329th Infantry there. The crossing had been

completed by 1630 and by the end of the day the battalion had established positions in the vicinity of Walternienburg (D8982) and in the woods south of there. The bridgehead was held that night against moderate small arms and artillery fire. The 1st Battalion was in an assembly area near Brumby (D7474), with two companies in Calbe to protect the division's right flank. Company B was sent across the Elbe River to reinforce the bridgehead area there, but its crossing had not been completed till 0315, 14 April. The remainder of the 1st Battalion also crossed the river, completing the move at 1155. It then moved south to clear the woods around D903818, but resistance was quite heavy. The woods had been cleared to D901817 by 1425, however, and the battalion remained there the rest of the day. The 2d Battalion jumped off at 0930 to clear Badetz (D923792), and this had been done by 1230. However, when the battalion attacked Kemeritz (D912812), fanatical resistance was encountered from 20mm guns, small arms, automatic weapons, and panzerfausts, and the town was still not clear at the end of the day. The 3d Battalion was released to regimental control again and crossed the river by 2130. There, it went into regimental reserve, where it remained for the rest of the action.

The 1st Battalion continued mopping up operations in the woods between Badetz and the river on 15 April and met only light resistance in the clearing of the woods around D917827. Company B advanced to a line from D935773 to D925767 by 1600. The 2d Battalion continued its attack on Kameritz and secured the town against heavy small arms fire by 1330. Company G had cleared Hohehlepte (D938813) against light resistance by 1600. On 16 and 17 April, the regiment repulsed several enemy counterattacks, with the aid of the attached artillery, and improved its defensive positions. A particularly heavy counterattack was received in the morning of 18 April, but it was driven off by noon. The sector has been quiet since that time.

Interview Number 17

Unit: 1st Battalion, 331st Infantry.

Action:

Source: Lt. Col. Henry Neilson, then Commanding Officer,  
and 1st Lieutenant John B. Clevenger, S-2.

Interviewer: 1st Lt. Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Badetz, Germany (D9279);  
1100, 25 April 1945.

Maps: GSGS 4416, Dortmund, Munster, Detmold, Paderborn,  
Hildesheim, Halberstadt, and Magdeburg sheets, 1:100000.

Journals: None used in interview.

#### COMMENTS

See comments for interview with Col. Neilson, regimental executive officer. Col. Neilson had the accompanying sketch of the action around Polle made for us by one of the office staff.



Interview with Lt. Col. Neilson and 1st Lt. Clevenger,  
1st Battalion, 331st Infantry.

Except for a few notable instances, particularly Polle (C1569) and the first day on the bridgehead over the Elbe River, resistance was generally quite light, and a display of power was about all that was necessary to get most of the towns to surrender.

The 1st Battalion occupied Dolberg (B1346), on the Lippe Canal, by 1800 of 1 April and soon extended itself east several kilometers to the autobahn which cuts through at that point. Some direct fire and small arms fire was received upon approaching the autobahn, but after the tank destroyers circled to the left of the pocket and sent in several rounds, the resistance collapsed. The railroad bridge over the canal at Dolberg was seized intact by the battalions, but no crossing was made. Direct fire from 20mm guns on the south side of the canal was received throughout the time the battalion occupied these positions. During the night, patrols were sent along both sides of the canal, and the Germans tried to recapture the bridge (B125451) between 0330 and 0530, but they were driven off by our mortar, artillery, and automatic fire. During 2 April, action was limited to a few patrols

along the canal. Some enemy artillery was directed against the bridge, but no damage resulted from it. The same was true on 3 April, until the battalion was relieved by elements of the 95th Division about 1945. A heavy barrage of enemy artillery was placed on Dolberg about 1500, but very few casualties resulted. At 2030, the battalion moved to an assembly area east of Delbrück (B5752).

On 4 April, the battalion continued moving to assembly areas, first at Paderborn (B7047) and then at Altenbecken (B8352), where a perimeter defense was set up for the night at 2000.

At 0730, 5 April, the battalion started out with a mission of mopping up the area behind the 113th Cavalry Group. Very little resistance was encountered all day, and when there was any a few rounds from the tanks ended it. Rolfzen (B9762) was reached by 1430, and another perimeter defense was set up there for the night.

On 6 April, Company B headed in the direction of Heinsen (C170666), with Company C following and mopping up, but there were several enemy tanks and some dug-in infantry in the wooded area and the companies ran into considerable trouble there. The resistance became particularly heavy around Falkenhagen (C0867) and the companies were held up there till midnight. In the

meanwhile, however, Company B occupied Niese (C073635) with no resistance being offered there. Company B also hit Hummersen (C1066) and got into a fight there which lasted all the rest of the night. Civilians as well as the regular troops were defending the town with small arms and automatic weapons. In the morning, however, the defenders pulled out and headed for Polle, with Company B chasing them all the way. Company A had occupied Rischenau (C063660) early in the evening of 6 April with little trouble; Kollerbeck (C035630) had been overrun earlier. Companies A and C finally got into Falkenhagen about 0030, 7 April, after the tank and SS men had been pulled out.

When the troops which Company B had been chasing entered Polle (C1568), the company swung down and occupied its original objective of Heinsen in the morning of 7 April. Companies A and C got to the outskirts of Polle about 1715. Some Jerries in the woods at C1469 were soon induced to surrender after a mortar barrage had been placed on the area. At 1935, after smoking the town and giving it a going over with mortars, artillery, and TDs, Company A hit Polle from the high ground on the left and Company C from the right. The companies got a foothold in the town against only moderate resistance by

2030, but then the resistance began to stiffen considerably. Burning buildings kept much of the area lit up quite well till after midnight. Heavy automatic weapons and 20mm fire was received from the graveyard at Cl47682, and a Tiger tank kept wandering around the town and using its 88mm gun to great advantage. Also, there were a great many 20mm guns spread out all over the town in well camouflaged positions and their fire was quite effective in keeping our troops under cover. There was so much fire of all types being received that neither company had reached the center of town by midnight. Soon after midnight, a TD was sent toward the center of the town to knock out any 20mm guns it could find and to try to get the Tiger tank if possible. However, it ran into the tank unexpectedly and was knocked out by the tank's 88mm gun. However, the town was clear except for some scattered snipers by 0600, when the troops which had been in the town started to cross the river. Mortar and artillery fire was placed on them with good effect as they were crossing. The final prisoner count came to 417, and many of these stated that there had been two companies of SS troops and four of regular Wehrmacht troops during the defense of the town.

During the morning of 8 April, Company B crossed the river with the 3d Battalion at Heinsen (Cl70665)

and then waited for a bridge to be constructed at Polle so that Companies A and C could join them. The bridge was completed about 2030 and the rest of the battalion crossed then. Company C stayed back in regimental reserve while Company A went to Lobach (C232646) and Company B cleared Golmbach (C250685). The battalion remained in these positions until 1400 of 10 April, when it mounted tanks and TDs and advanced to Wrisberg (C495835), arriving at 1800. At 2000, ~~the next~~ 11 April, the battalion left for Heudeber (D1472), it having remained in Wrisberg on 11 April. The battalion got to Heudeber at 0630, 12 April, and at 0730 Company B moved to Langenstein (D2467), meeting very little resistance after a small flurry of small arms fire as the town was entered. The entire battalion moved on to Dittfurt (D3965) that afternoon, meeting no resistance in the process.

On the morning of 13 April, the battalion moved into Hedersleben (D425680), with no opposition being offered, and at noon it moved to Calbe (D7875) to protect the south flank of the division there. At midnight, Company B moved to Barby (D3582) and crossed the Elbe River there at 0300, 14 April, to reinforce the bridgehead of the 329th Infantry there. No trouble

was encountered during the crossing. The entire battalion moved to Barby in the morning of 14 April and had crossed the river by 1135. The battalion started clearing the woods south of Walternienburg (D387823) and encountered heavy mortar, artillery, and automatic weapons fire there. There were also six enemy tanks in the woods at first, but the artillery got three and the others withdrew. After the woods had been cleared, Company A attacked and secured Badetz (D9279) and Company C attacked Kameritz (D9181) but ran into well-nigh fanatical resistance there. The defenders of the little town used everything they had to hold off the company and the town was not finally cleared till the next morning. Company A cleaned the woods between Badetz and the river on the morning of 16 April to protect the bridge crossing there. Except for a heavy counterattack on the morning of 18 April, which was repulsed by artillery and infantry, the situation has been static since then.



INTERVIEW NUMBER 18

Unit: Company C, 331 Infantry

Action:

Source: T/Sgt James W. Swafford, 2d Platoon, S/Sgt Harry W.  
Harding, 3d Platoon, PFC Nick Yatsko, Commanding  
Officer's Runner

Interviewer: 1st Lt. Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Gandersheim, Germany (C5866);  
1500, 31 April 1945

Maps: G.S.G.S. No. 4416 Detmold and Hildesheim Sheets

Journals: No journals used

Comments:

Interview with T/Sgt James W. Swafford, 2d Platoon,  
S/Sgt Harry W. Harding, 3d Platoon, PFC Nick Yatsko,  
Commanding Officer's Runner, Company C, 531 Infantry

Leaving Falkenhagen (C0867) early in the morning of  
7 April, we followed B Company along the main road to  
Polle (C1568). The company was in open column on either  
side of the road with the 1st platoon leading, followed  
by the 2d, 3d, and weapons platoon. As Baker Company  
reached approximately (132679), they were held up by sniper  
fire from the hills on both flanks and to the front. At  
1000, B Company received orders to withdraw from their  
present position, after Charlie moved forward and relieved  
them, and prepared to attack from another direction. As  
we moved to, and slightly beyond B Company's positions,  
they immediately moved back and about the same time we  
started receiving the same fire that had held them up.  
The plan of attack was immediately changed. The 3d platoon,  
at this time, was sent up the ridge on the left of the  
road. Entering the woods at (C125682), with two squads  
forward, in squad column, and one in support, the platoon  
moved to (C125685) where they turned east and easily clear-  
ed the area to (C139338). Here they remained for about  
twelve hours until the attack began, firing at targets of  
opportunity in Polle and receiving sniper fire from the  
town. The 1st and 2d platoons, from their location,  
dropped back slightly and moved to HILL 234.

Entering the wooded area at (C118668) in a skirmish line, both platoons proceeded forward. The 1st platoon, on the left of the 2d platoon, guided on the edge of the wooded area and both platoons moved to positions overlooking Polle, at (C143670) and (C148670) about 1200. These positions were held all afternoon while the enemy was observed withdrawing across the Weser River. At 1600 the 1st and 2d platoons received word to retrace their steps along the wooded ridge line to the road, at (C115678), and be prepared to continue the attack. Five tanks were attached to us at that time. As we jumped off at 1800, A Company also attacked at the same time from the north. The 1st platoon was on the right of the road and the 2d platoon on the left, both abreast, and having two squads forward and one in support. The attached tanks followed the 2d platoon. "It was pretty warm from there on in for a tank, a couple 40 MM direct fire weapons, and a few snipers gave us considerable trouble." The attached tanks fired every weapon they had, which kept the enemy fire down to a minimum. By dark, some of the men had infiltrated into the edge of town and by morning a good hold was had on the town. The 3d platoon, prior to this, had joined with the 1st and 2d platoons as they passed their positions, and had continued into town, with these platoons abreast. After an uneventful evening, the town was cleared by 0900 on 8 April. The company remained here the rest of that day.

Interview Number 19

Unit: 2d Battalion, 331st Infantry.

Action:

Source: Captain James F. Patterson, S-1.

Interviewer: 1st Lt. Frank Houcek

Place and Date of Interview: Badatz, Germany (D923792);  
1115, 25 April 1945.

Maps: GSGS 4416, Dortmund, Munster, Detmold, Paderborn,  
Hildesheim, Halberstadt, and Magdeburg sheets, 1:100000  
Journals: None used in interview.

COMMENTS

See comments for interview with Col. Neilson,  
regimental executive Officer.

Interview with Captain Patterson, S-1, 2d Bn, 331st.

At 0230, 1 April, the 2d Battalion, with Company E leading on tanks and Companies F and G following on TDs and trucks, left its assembly area at Olfen (A755457) and moved to the vicinity of Heessen (B075453), just north of Hamm (B0542), to cut the east-west road from Hamm which led through there. The town was well defended with heavy small arms and panzerfaust fire, but the tank fire which was placed on the town soon discouraged this resistance and Company E, using marching fire, was able to enter fairly easily and to clear it out by 1730. At 1900, Company F swung around to the left of the town and ran into some 20mm fire as it tried to enter, but fire from the TDs stopped this fire. Company G entered shortly thereafter. Perimeter defenses and road blocks were put out and the canal was patrolled from then until noon of 3 April. Patrols kept contact with the 3d Battalion, on the right in the direction of Hamm, during this time.

At noon of 3 April, the battalion commenced a move to an assembly area at Hovelhof (B636585), arriving at 2000. It was then attached to the 113th Cavalry Group for operations on 4 April. Company E, with some tanks and TDs, moved toward the town of Kohlstadterheide (B760603) at 1030 and cleared the town against sporadic

resistance by small arms and one road block on the far side of town by 1800. The company then went to Horn (B8364) to relieve Company G there. Company G had left Hovelhof at 0800 and cleared the woods in the vicinity of Oesterholz (B750605) of dug in infantry. Then the company moved to Horn but found that it had already been cleared by the 329th Infantry. "The situation was very confusing for about three days, with the 329th on our left taking some of our objectives, and vice versa," said Captain Patterson. Company F was attached to Troop C of the 113th Cavalry and moved behind them on 4 April through Buke (B835580), Bad Driburg (B885495) (300 prisoners were taken there with practically no trouble), Attenhecken (B8352), and Reelsen (B8952). Resistance was negligible all along, with about 100 more prisoners being taken in Reelsen.

Company F cleared towns from Oynhausen (B9158) to Bredenborn (C0058) during the day, with resistance being very light. After Bredenborn had been cleared by Company F, Company E and the battalion headquarters moved there. Company G was attached to Task Force Clyde of the 113th Cavalry and cleared Oberheesten (B8663), Vinsebeck (B8962), and Steinheim (B935640) against very light resistance. On 6 April, Company E moved out with the 125th Cavalry and had cleared Furstenau (C0960) by 1000 with the capture of 50 prisoners. Two



blown bridges just beyond Furstenau held up the advance for a while, but by 2130 the company had advanced to and cleared Brenkhausen (C115575). The 2d Platoon of Company F went to Biesterfeld (C0665) and soon cleared out the resistance there, but the 1st Platoon ran into very stiff resistance at Rischenau (C0666) and it was necessary to call in the entire company to clear the town. This was completed at 1500, with the capture of 50 prisoners. Company G cleaned out Kemnade (C223777) by 0800 and had also gotten into Schwalenberg (C007655) after an attack across open fields into some fairly heavy small arms fire. In the clearing of these towns, the cavalry group merely called for a platoon ~~here~~ and a platoon there, which made it quite difficult to keep track of just where everything was. The company rejoined Task Force Ritchie at 1200 and moved into Hohe (C1974). Company F remained in Rischenau that night, while Company E and the battalion headquarters crossed the Weser River and moved to Eschershausen in the evening of the 6th. They remained there over the 7th. Company F moved from Rischenau across the river to Kreipke (C235797) on 7 April, but stopped there for the day. Company G went from Hohe to Grohnde (C1681) and crossed the river there. It cleared Frenke (C1681), Brockensen (C2082), Heyen (C215805), and Esperde (C2282), then rejoined the battalion at Eschershausen at 1800. Resistance was negligible all day.

Company E moved out with five tanks and three  $2\frac{1}{2}$  ton trucks and took over the high ground around Evershausen (C5482) and Gehrende (C5773) and outposted them, but no opposition was met there on 8 April. The 2d Platoon of Company F moved to Wengelinstadt (C345655) in the afternoon and outposted the town, also against no opposition. The rest of the battalion was outposting and securing the bridges over the Leine River in the division sector. On 9 April, the rest of Company F went to Wengelinstadt, then to Greene (C5265), closing there at 2000 and immediately outposting the town. The 1st Platoon moved to Einbeck (C4760) with Troop B, 113th Cavalry, and easily occupied the town. Company G went first to Greene, then to Einbeck with the remainder of Company F at 1700. The town was outposted for the night, and the enemy garrison surrendered the next morning without a fight, after it realized that it had been surrounded during the night. The battalion remained in these positions throughout 10 April.

On 11 April, the battalion returned to regimental control and moved to the vicinity of Langenstein (D245666), starting at about 1800 and arriving at 0130, 12 April. The battalion was to clear the Main Supply Route from Langenstein to Nienburg (D7867), on the Salle River. Very little resistance was encountered as Company E,

the leading element, passed through as rapidly as possible and Company G made a hasty mop up behind them. The enemy attempted to make a stand at Nienburg itself, but tank fire soon discouraged the riflemen there and the town was occupied.

On 13 April, Company F moved out at 0630 along the Salle River, soon reaching Calbe (D7875), which was being cleared by elements of the 329th Infantry. The entire battalion moved to Barby (D8582) about 1300, and the first elements of the battalion started to cross the Elbe at 1630. There was a little harrassing fire during the crossing, but no damage resulted. The battalion then moved to Walternienburg (D8982) and dug in around the south side of the town. Several fanatical counter-attacks were launched by some young Nazis from an OCS school, but they were held off during the night by the riflemen and some antitank guns. A bridge was completed over the Elbe at 0<sup>7</sup>30, 14 April, and the tanks started crossing to reinforce the bridgehead. Companies G and E swung around to Badetz (D923792) against medium small arms resistance and soon occupied the town and dug in there. Company G attacked <sup>S.W.</sup> ~~northeast~~ <sup>7'</sup> of Tockheim (D9079) and dug in one kilometer from the town. At 1030 of 15 April, Company F, with a platoon of tanks and a platoon of TDs, attacked Kameritz (D9181). The

resistance there was very stubborn; one platoon moved to the town using marching fire and with covering fire from the tanks and TDs and gained a foothold there. Small arms and automatic fire were heavy, but the town had been cleared by 1800. Company G cleared Hohenlepte (D938815) with only sniper fire being encountered. Company E dug in one kilometer south of Badatz, and the situation has remained static since then. Company F also moved to the vicinity of Hohenlepte in the evening of 15 April. All action has been purely defensive since then.

END OF  
PART I