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ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE  
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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 2D BATTALION, 358TH INFANTRY  
(90TH INFANTRY DIVISION) AT THE OUR RIVER CROSSING  
STOURACH, LUXEMBOURG, 29 JANUARY 1945  
(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)  
(Personal experience of the E Company Commander)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY BATTALION ATTACKING  
ACROSS A RIVER

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ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NUMBER TWO



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- A-2 History of the 90th Infantry Division  
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(Personal possession of the author)



THE OPERATIONS OF 2D BATTALION, 358TH  
INFANTRY, (90TH INFANTRY DIVISION)  
AT THE OUR RIVER CROSSING, STOURBACH,  
LUXEMBOURG, 29 JANUARY 1945  
(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)  
(Personal experience of the E Company Commander)

ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the 2d Battalion, 358th Infantry, 90th Infantry Division, in the crossing of the OUR RIVER, STOURBACH, LUXEMBOURG, 29 January 1945, during the ~~first days of the~~ RHINELAND CAMPAIGN.

"A battalion is the basic tactical unit. It is the smallest unit with a complete staff; reinforced, it is capable of accomplishing any type of mission; and it has the capacity of withholding a reserve of adequate size to swing the tide of combat." The actions of the 2d Battalion, 358th Infantry, subsequently related, analyzed and reviewed covering the above mentioned operation will very vividly illustrate these capabilities.

When troops of the United States FIRST ARMY invaded the beaches of NORMANDY on 6 June 1944 elements of the 90th Infantry Division were attached to the 4th Infantry Division for the assault landing, and the 90th was completely closed in by D plus two. (1) Like so many other divisions the 90th made mistakes, but eventually they started rolling. When the THIRD ARMY became operational on 1 August 1944 the 90th was part of that soon to be famous "PATTON'S THIRD ARMY". (2) The months of August, September, October and November found the 90th moving relentlessly Eastward slugging it out with the best the German Army had to offer.

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(1) A-2, p. 5  
(2) A-2, p. 19



By 21 December the 90th had torn a threatening salient in the wanted SIEGFRIED LINE at DILLINGEN, GERMANY, however on 21-22 December the division was forced to withdraw because of the mounting German offensive in the ARDENNES sector. (See Map A) Until 5 January 1945 the 90th remained in the area between the SAAR And MOSELLE RIVERS preventing the enemy in that area from reinforcing the counter-offensive in the North. However on the 6th and 7th of January the division moved North to an assembly area in the vicinity of ARLON in BELGIUM. (3) (See Map A) Two days later the division was committed to reduce the German salient Southeast of BASTOGNE and to drive the enemy back through BELGIUM and LUXEMBOURG into GERMANY. (4) By the 26th of January the 90th was standing on the threshold of GERMANY at the corridor where LUXEMBOURG, BELGIUM and GERMANY form a juncture and through which the Germans had ridden roughshod in 1940 and more recently in the breakthrough. (5) (See Map A)

#### THE GENERAL SITUATION

The 26th of January 1945 found the THIRD ARMY disposed on a line running generally North and South between ST. VITH and SAARLAUTERN-- a distance of approximately ninety-seven miles--and on the hill mass East of the DIEKIRCH-ST. VITH road. (See Map B) THIRD ARMY was now composed of four corps; namely, the VIII consisting of the 4th, 87th, and 90th Infantry Divisions and the 11th Armored Division, the IX Corps with the 17th Airborne and 6th Armored Divisions; the XII Corps comprised of the 4th Armored, 5th, 76th and 80th Infantry Divisions; and XX Corps with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, 26th, 94th and 95th Infantry Divisions. (See Map B)

(3) A-2, p. 50

(4) A-2, p. 51

(5) A-2, p. 57

beginning of the SIEGFRIED LINE. (10) (See Map B)

The 90th Infantry Division was occupying positions along an eight mile front in the right portion of the VIII Corps zone. Confronting the division were elements of the German 9th Panzer Division fighting as infantry as their vehicles had either been destroyed or abandoned for lack of gasoline. (11) (See Map B)

Since landing in NORMANDY the 90th had fought for 234 days with little or no rest, and losses had been extremely heavy. Replacements were constantly being received, but practically all key personnel had been lost. Due to the extreme weather conditions during the months of December and January and constant exposure to the elements, morale of our forces was far from high. Supplies were barely adequate and most of the rifle companies had been existing on K-rations for several weeks. On the other hand the Germans had suffered terrific losses and were not anywhere near normal strength. In addition, as mentioned earlier, the enemy facing the 90th were fighting a new kind of action; that of the doughboy. There could be no doubt that the combat efficiency of the Americans was far superior to that of the Germans. (12)

In accordance with the Corps order the 90th Division, commanded by Major General James A. Van Fleet, destined to become a Corps Commander a few days later, planned to attack with two regiments abreast, via 50th and 53rd, 66 secure crossings over the OUR RIVER and seize the high ground East of the river. (See Map C) The 359th Infantry was in reserve. (13)

#### DISPOSITIONS AND PLANS OF THE 358TH INFANTRY

Since assisting in the reduction of the German salient Southeast of BASTOGNE the 358th Infantry had waded Eastward through snow two feet deep, warming itself where it could as freezing winds numbed hands and

(10) Statement of Lt. Col. Jacob W. Healke, Jr. (formerly Colonel commanding the 358th Infantry and at present on duty at TIS)

(11) Personal knowledge

(12) Personal knowledge

(13) Statement of Lt. Col. Jacob W. Healke, Jr.



THIRD ARMY G-2 reported the following German Divisions on the front: 246th, 560th, 9th Panzer, 15th, 540th, 9th Parachute, 276th, 79th, 130th, 9th, 352nd, 272nd, 212th, 11th Panzer, 416th, 719th, and the 547th. It was estimated that these units totaled approximately 42,000 combat effectives. (6) The Army G-2 further estimated that in view of the fact that the enemy had now assumed a defensive attitude on this front, and also had moved most of the Panzer Divisions to the East, that he would continue to maintain a defensive attitude throughout the West as long as the situation in the East remained critical. (7)

THIRD ARMY was now poised to strike into the German homeland and orders were issued to continue the attack on 29 January to the East and breach the SINGFRIED LINE. (8)

General Middleton, commanding the VIII Corps, formulated his plans for the attack with the 87th Division on the left, the 90th on the right, followed respectively by the 95th, which had been ordered to move North to VIII Corps control, and the 4th Division. After a certain advance the 90th was to form a defensive flank to the right and the 4th Division was to pass through and do the same farther to the East. The 95th was to pass through the 87th when the latter became tired and would continue the attack along the axis of the Corps. This

"on right into the line" maneuver was necessary so as not to hit the SINGFRIED LINE diagonally which would, in effect, make it much thicker.

It was not necessary to form a defensive flank on the left because the FIRST ARMY would provide protection there. The 11th Armored Division was to close in behind the 90th and be prepared for exploitation. (9) The Corps objective was designated as the SCHNEE-BIHEL which was the most prominent terrain in the area and marked the

(6) (7) A-1, p. CLV  
(8) (9) A-4, p. 227

feet, and fighting a stubborn enemy in a succession of delaying actions.

On 26 January the regiment was ordered to drive the enemy East of the OUR RIVER and prepare for a coordinated attack across the river. At this time the regiment was advancing with two battalions abreast, the 2d on the right and the 3rd on the left. The 1st Battalion was in reserve at a rest camp in HABAYE LA NEUVE, BELGIUM, some forty-five miles to the Southwest in the vicinity of ARLON. (14) When the zone had been cleared of enemy the 3rd Battalion was ordered to assemble in the village of LASCHIED, the 2d Battalion at LEITRUM, and regiment ~~occupied MOULIER~~. The two battalions were located approximately 2500 yards West of the OUR RIVER. (15) (See Map C)

Colonel Jacob W. Bealke, Jr., commanding the 368th Infantry, planned to effect two simultaneous crossings of the river in the regimental zone; the 3rd Battalion at a point some six hundred yards South of the village of WEIGLER, and the 2d Battalion at the twin-villages of STOURBACH and STUPBACH. (See Map C) The main effort was to be made by the 2d Battalion as the road in this area, as well as the bridge over the river, constituted the axis of supply leading into the Corps Objective. When the crossings were secured the bridgeheads ~~would be expanded to allow the 4th Division to pass through.~~ (16)

Artillery support for the operation would consist of the 344th Field Artillery Battalion and priority of fire was given to the 2d Battalion. Engineer support would be very limited as the Division Engineers were frantically engaged in assisting the Army Engineers in keeping the main supply route cleared. Not only did this consist of clearing the roads of snow, but also of mines which the Germans had used liberally in their retreat to the homeland. However, the regiment

(14) (15) (16) Statement of Lt. Col. Jacob W. Bealke, Jr.



had been assured of a snow plow and some bridging equipment on the afternoon of the 29th of January. No armor would be available because the tanks could not move in the deep snow. (17)

#### THE BATTALION SITUATION

After the 2d Battalion had assembled in LEITHUM on the 26th of January, Company E was ordered to advance approximately 1000 yards to the Northeast and furnish local security for the battalion. This position was a pine covered hill at the intersection of the roads leading to LASCHIED and the twin-villages of STOURACH-STUPBACH, located on the West and East banks of the OUR RIVER respectively--the river being the boundary between LUXEMBOURG and GERMANY at this point. (18)

(See Map C). As Company E moved to this position they were subjected to several rounds of very accurate mortar fire. The Company Commander quickly retaliated with fire from the 81mm mortar platoon of the heavy weapons company and the enemy fire ceased. Upon reaching the position the bodies of three German soldiers were discovered. They were identified by the Company Commander (a graduate of the Military Intelligence School) as members of the German 9th Panzer Division, and this confirmed the intelligence reports of higher headquarters. Tracks in the snow disclosed that several others had departed in an Eastwardly direction. (19)

The Battalion Commander ordered a patrol from Company F on the night of the 27th to develop the situation, however the patrol was fired on at the edge of the town of STOURACH and withdrawn without gaining any more information that the fact that the village was occupied. The veracity of this report was doubtful because the E Company Commander reported the next day that his listening posts had detected no sounds of firing during the night. This patrol leader made no attempt to move

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(17) Statement of Lt. Col. Jacob W. Bealke, Jr.

(18)-(19) Personal knowledge



around the town and reconnoiter for crossing sites which had been part of his mission. The only worthwhile information reported was that vehicles could not progress farther than the line held by Company E until the road had been cleared of the deep snow. The following day Company E dispatched a patrol to the banks of the river approximately a half-mile South of the twin-villages. Fifteen to twenty Germans were observed moving around in the town on the far side of the river, and two enemy soldiers were observed crossing the river on the frozen ice with little or no concern. This patrol brought in additional information that there was at least one bridge intact across the river between the two towns, that the road turned abruptly to the left after crossing the river, and that the ground behind the village on the far side of the river rose very steeply. (20)

I wish to emphasize that during the two days preceding the attack no reconnaissance was made by the Battalion Commander, members of his staff, or the company commanders. (21)

The strength of the 2d Battalion was now approximately 550 officers and men, and about fifty-percent of these were replacements received from the Zone of the Interior on the 16th of January. They were typical of the replacements being furnished at this time in that they had received only the minimum of training, were not first class fighting men, and, as a result, had to be led in the literal sense of the word. With the exception of the heavy weapons company all of the company commanders were 1st Lieutenants and they were fortunate enough to have one other officer in each of their companies. Most of the non-commissioned officers had been privates only a few short months before and were sadly lacking in

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(20) (21) Personal knowledge



Company H would be in general support of the attack from positions near that of Company E. The machine-gun platoons would be attached to the two assault companies. The line of departure was designated as the line held by Company E, and the route of advance would be along the stream bed North of E Company's position. The objective, of course, was the twin-villages and the high ground on the East bank of the OUR RIVER. Order of march: Company G, command group, and Company F. H hour was 0400. Company E would be in reserve in their present location and would move forward on order to occupy the twin-villages. (24)

Wire would be laid by the command group from the present command post to the twin-villages. The battalion command post would remain in LEITHUM until the villages were secured. Likewise the ammunition dump and aid station would remain in their present location. Arrangements were made to issue one day's rations and extra ammunition on the evening of the 28th. (25)

I would like to bring out here that the planning and conduct of this operation was under the command of the Battalion Executive Officer, Captain James S. Morrison. Lt. Colonel Wallace was stricken with an attack of influenza on the 26th and was unable to participate in this action. (26)

#### MOVEMENT TO THE LINE OF DEPARTURE AND FINAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE ATTACK

The assault elements of the battalion left LEITHUM about 0300 hours on the 29th and arrived at the line of departure at 0330 hours. The E Company Commander met Captain Morrison at this point and transmitted information to the effect that his listening posts reported no activity

(24) (25) (26) Personal knowledge



many of the attributes of a leader. However, they possessed a wealth of knowledge gained the hard way and could be depended upon to carry out orders to the best of their ability. (22)

The weather during this period was bitterly cold with the temperature at night ranging from five to ten degrees below zero. To add to the discomfort fresh snow fell on the 27th and 28th and it now reached a depth of three and four feet. Notwithstanding the issue of shoe-pacs a week previously trench-foot and frost-bite still took its daily toll, and at least one man was evacuated every day with pneumonia. (23)

The terrain occupied by the 2d Battalion was known as the Skyline Drive and this huge ridgeline ran generally Northeast-Southwest across LUXEMBOURG and into GERMANY. This was cut with many small streams and valleys and presented a very difficult problem for movement, particularly in view of the deep snow. Near Company E's position the ridgeline dropped off on the North to a small stream, and East of the position the ground fell abruptly to form the West bank of the gorge through which the OUR RIVER flowed. (See Map D)

#### THE BATTALION PLAN OF ATTACK

The regimental attack order called for a coordinated attack by the 2nd and 3rd Battalions timed to coincide with dawn on the 29th of January. In order to accomplish this the Battalion Commander decided to move into the town on the West bank of the river before daylight with his command group and two rifle companies. Then at daylight they would place an artillery concentration on the village across the river and move over closely behind the preparation. In addition to the normal support of the 344th Field Artillery Battalion the 81mm mortar platoon of

(22) (23) Personal knowledge



in or around the twin-villages. Orders were issued for absolute silence and the approach to the objective continued. (27)

#### NARRATION

##### THE ATTACK

Company G, led by 1st Lt. Lawrence L. Kelso, crossed the line of departure in a column of files exactly at 0400 hours on 29 January 1945. Progress was extremely difficult as the lead men had to break paths through the deep snow and it was necessary to replace them from time to time. Company G reached the first houses of the village of STOUBACH at approximately 0500 hours and Lt. Kelso boldly sent his men to search every house on the West side of the river. Six German soldiers were routed out of one of the houses but escaped across the river. The command group and Company F moved in without incident and instructions were issued for local security to be posted and prepare for the continuation of the attack at daylight. Shortly thereafter Lt. Kelso reported to Captain Morrison that the bridge across the river had been destroyed, and that water was flowing in the river. He also stated that the river was about thirty yards wide and that the banks were approximately three or four feet in height. (28)

During the next two hours no enemy action was detected across the river yet no attempt was made to secure permission from regiment to exploit the surprise that had been achieved thus far in the operation. (29)

Promptly at 0700 hours the artillery preparation commenced and when it lifted Companies G and F abreast, Company G on the right of the street and Company F on the left, started across the two hundred yards of open area to the river banks only to be suddenly met with a withering hail of small arms and automatic weapons fire which forced

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(27) (28) (29) Personal knowledge.



them back to the protection of the houses. Several casualties were received in this attempt. Reorganization was effected and about an hour later another artillery concentration was called for and when it ceased the two assault companies bravely made another attempt to gain the river bank. This, too, was crowned with disaster and failed miserably. Most of the men were experiencing their first taste of real action, and, although they started out gamely enough, the devastating fire cut them up into small groups and lacking proper leadership they fell back to the protection of the houses. The two company commanders believed this fire was coming from two main sources: a pillbox dug in the hill at the South end of the village across the river and from the basement of several of the houses near the same position. Artillery and mortar fire was directed on these suspected positions but with little effect as the buildings were constructed of heavy stone blocks. Any movement in the open was now met with accurate small arms fire and enemy mortar fire started falling in the village which further restricted movement. (30)

During the next two hours reorganization was again effected, but no further attempts were made to reach the river. At this time Company E was notified to move towards the villages following the same route taken by the assault companies. The E Company Commander assumed that the villages had been secured although he had been able to hear the sounds of battle very clearly. But, it did not occur to him to question the order and the move began almost immediately. When about half the distance had been covered the column was subjected to several rounds of enemy mortar fire. The men automatically dispersed and no casualties were inflicted. The Company Commander had

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(30) Personal knowledge



learned early in the game to keep his men moving forward and this order was enforced now. The older men in the platoons did much to keep the replacements under control. After a dozen rounds or so the fire suddenly shifted to the top of the ridge interdicting the road running along the crest. Actually, one could not tell that there was a road there except from looking at the map and by the telephone poles along the side. Sounds of firing could again be heard in the village and the E Company Commander now decided to halt the column and send his runners to the village to contact the Battalion Commander and see just what the company was supposed to do. But this was not necessary as the SCR-300 came to life with orders for "Company E to move to check point 28 and get your feet wet". A hasty look at the map told the Company Commander that he was to move to a point on the river about 1000 yards South of the villages and near the point where the E Company patrol had been the day before. (31)

It is necessary to digress a moment here and explain the check point system that was SOP throughout the 90th Division. Actually the system had been adapted from that used by the division artillery for use in the regiments, and merely consisted of a series of numbers, each within a circle, placed on the maps on all prominent terrain features. This simplified units reporting their positions and was a great help in calling for supporting fires. (32)

From the above message the E Company Commander quickly deduced that the battalion had not accomplished its mission and that he was to effect a flanking maneuver. In view of the fact that he had personally led the patrol that went out on the 28th from E Company he was thoroughly familiar with the terrain in this area, and while the platoon

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(31) (32) Personal knowledge

would follow the 2d Platoon, and the rest of the company in their present order. Before movement started the Battalion Commander would be contacted by radio and requested to keep intermittent artillery fire on the village to be lifted on order of the Company Commander. As soon as the company was across the river the route of march was to turn North on the trail along the river to a point approximately 500 yards South of the village. This was designated as the assault position, and at this point the 2d platoon commanded by 1st Lt. Merritt E. Hein was to deploy and move North along the side of the hill in rear of the houses. The 1st Platoon commanded by Sergeant First-Class Hobart Mueller was to make the assault on the town.

The command group would follow the 1st Platoon and the 3rd Platoon was to be prepared to support the 1st Platoon. The light machine-gun section of the Weapons Platoon was to move to positions on the river bank and protect the rifle elements while crossing, and after the assault platoons had cleared the assault position the Weapons Platoon was to occupy this position and furnish security to the rear and right flank. (See Map D)

At approximately 1430 hours the leading elements moved out fast across the frozen river and the squad leader signaled back that the ice was safe and that there were no indications of enemy troops on the far bank. The rest of the company moved over quickly and the advance North on the trail continued. It is interesting to note here that when the Company Commander contacted battalion to continue the artillery fire he was informed that the battalion had received considerable counter-battery fire and forced to abandon their position. Therefore, no artillery support would be forthcoming but the 81mm mortars would continue to fire. (34)

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(34) Personal knowledge



leaders were assembling his plan of action was quickly formulated. Feeling that speed was of the essence he decided to turn abruptly to the right from his present position, (See Map D) cross over the ridgeline and into the protection of the woods, and then proceed to the river notwithstanding the fact that the column might be subjected to enemy mortar fire while crossing the open ridgeline. The platoon leaders were apprised of the situation and the order issued as outlined above. Further orders would be issued when the river was reached. The order of march would continue in a column of files with the 2d platoon leading, followed by the command group, 1st platoon, weapons platoon and the 3rd platoon. (33)

The move across the ridgeline was accomplished without mishap and the protection of the woods was reached at approximately 1300 hours.

(See Map D) It had taken an hour to move a thousand yards, half of this distance being uphill, and it was necessary to alternate the leading men every few minutes because of the exertion required to make any headway through the three and four feet deep snow. The going became even more difficult in the woods because of the thick underbrush in addition to the snow, and it was not until 1400 hours that the leading elements came in sight of the river. Here a halt was called and the Company Commander led the platoon leaders to a vantage point and explained his plan for the assault on the town. Briefly, this would consist of sending a squad from the 2d platoon over the river first to insure the ice still be strong enough to support personnel and to furnish protection for the remainder of the platoon which was to follow as soon as the squad leader had ascertained there were no enemy in the immediate area. The command group

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(33) Personal knowledge



Upon reaching the previously designated assault position Lt. Hein quickly deployed his platoon and only a momentary halt was encountered. The mortar fire was ordered lifted and the 1st Platoon continued on up the trail. It was not until they had approached within 200 yards of the first house that they could be discerned because of the protection of a slight rise in the ground just at the edge of the village. At this point Sergeant Mueller sent his men racing to the protection of the first two houses. At the same time Lt. Hein's platoon opened fire upon the rear of the buildings further down the street. Sergeant Mueller sent groups of three and four men to each of the half-dozen houses at this end of the town and the attack was so sudden that each group was successful in getting several prisoners from the cellars of the first four houses. A couple of hand grenades was necessary in two instances to convince the occupants of the cellars to come out, but no real resistance was encountered. In the meantime Lt. Hein's platoon had continued to advance along the side of the hill in rear of the houses and had reached a line about even with the fourth house when suddenly a withering hail of automatic weapons fire swept across his front and into the buildings occupied by men of the 1st Platoon. Hein's platoon moved farther up the hill to be out of the line of this heavy fire, and the Company Commander, who had raced forward with the 1st Platoon and was now in the third house, directed that the two bazookas of the platoon be brought to bear on the pillbox which had now disclosed its position. Two men raced to the upstairs floor of the house and very effectively delivered three rounds into the log constructed pillbox. Hein's platoon quickly surrounded this obstacle on three sides and twenty very subdued



German bands staggering out with hands upraised and shouting "KAMERAD".

Mueller's platoon now had about thirty prisoners and every house at this end of the village was clear. The 3rd Platoon was ordered forward and directed to clear the remaining houses in the North end of the village. However, this platoon was destined to receive no laurels for the day inasmuch as they found only civilians huddled in the cellars of the few remaining houses. (See Map D) (35)

The village was pronounced secure at about 1530 hours and Companies G and F were now free to move on across the river and proceed to the high ground. Intermittent mortar fire continued to fall on the villages, but it did not seriously hamper the continuance of the mission. (36)

As soon as the villages were secured a snowplow started out from LEITHUM to open the road and by dark the majority of the battalion had moved into STUBACH and STUPBACH, and preparations were made to continue the attack the next day. (37)

To sum up the results of this battle we can frankly state that Company E saved the day for the 2d Battalion of the 358th Infantry. In accomplishing its task of relieving the assault elements of the battalion from their rather embarrassing position of being pinned down by only a comparatively small group of enemy, Company E had made a close enveloping maneuver covering approximately 2500 yards of rugged, snow-covered terrain; successfully captured fifty of the enemy; suffered no casualties; and all in a matter of three and one-half hours.

EXPLANATORY NOTE: No doubt the reader is slightly confused as to how Company E was able to cross the river on the ice while in the town the water was flowing on top of the ice. The only explanation that can

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(35) (36) (37) Personal knowledge



be offered by the writer for this freak of nature is that the bridge at STOUBACH-STUPBACH had been destroyed and it is believed the explosives broke the ice formation allowing the water to flow on top of the ice for a short distance through the narrow channel in the town and then to go back under at a small dam at the South end of the villages.

### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

#### 1. RECONNAISSANCE

Our tactical doctrine demands that reconnaissance be continuous, timely, coordinated, and progressive, and that the battalion commander and his staff execute a personal reconnaissance whenever possible. In this operation no reconnaissance was made by the battalion commander, members of his staff, or by the company commanders of the assault companies. Other than a map study the only information available on the terrain was that furnished by the E Company Commander. Had a proper reconnaissance been made it is felt a more advantageous crossing site could have been selected and the mission accomplished without such a long delay.

#### 2. FORM OF ATTACK

Although the mission of the 2d Battalion was to secure a crossing site at the twin-villages, this did not dictate that a frontal assault was called for on an area known to be occupied by the enemy. As many times as the Germans had utilized this corridor to the West it is only logical to assume that they would defend here in some strength. Furthermore, the battalion commander committed the bulk of his striking force against a position about which he had little or no information as to the strength of the enemy.

#### 3. SURPRISE

In my opinion the failure of the battalion commander to exploit the element of surprise gained initially in this operation contributed almost wholly to the failure of the battalion to capture the objective



- without considerable delay. Had the battalion commander asked regiment for permission to exploit this success I am sure Companies G and F could have gone on across the river practically unopposed.

#### 4. EMPLOYMENT OF RESERVE

Once again we see a flagrant violation of accepted tactical doctrine in that the battalion commander hesitated for some time before committing his reserve. The time to employ the reserve is often the commander's most difficult and important decision, and it should be made as soon as the leading elements show signs of being stopped.

#### 5. ENEMY POSITIONS

The Germans's positions on the East bank of the OUR RIVER took full advantage of the natural defensive strength of the terrain and the heavy stone buildings of the small village. From their position they could deliver accurate flanking fire and they were high enough to be afforded excellent observation across the river.

#### 6. E COMPANY'S ATTACK

The success of E Company's attack can be attributed to the aggressiveness of the small unit leaders and to the fact that the Company Commander was thoroughly familiar with the terrain in the zone of the battalion. Also the enemy's failure to maintain outposts at the edge of the village resulted in his failing to detect the advance of E Company until the assault had begun.

#### 7. COMMUNICATIONS

Adequate planning for communications in this operation enabled the battalion commander to keep in touch with his reserve, and no delay was experienced when the decision was made to commit them. Wire and



radio were both used to good advantage.

### LESSONS

1. Reconnaissance must be continuous, timely, coordinated, and progressive in all echelons of command.
2. Although frontal attacks are sometimes necessary, the envelopment is the preferred form of maneuver.
3. When surprise is achieved it must be exploited to the fullest extent.
4. The reserve should be engaged without hesitation before the assault echelon has reached the point where it can no longer advance.
5. The natural characteristics of the terrain must be utilized whether attacking or defending.
6. Once the reserve has been committed it must move quickly and close with the enemy in an aggressive manner.
7. Adequate communication is essential to maintain control.



MAP D  
THE ATTACK OF STOUBACH  
29 JANUARY

ROUTE OF 2<sup>d</sup> BN : - - - -  
ROUTE OF CO. E : . . . .



LUXEMBOURG

3  
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2

STOUBACH  
OUR R.  
STUPBACH

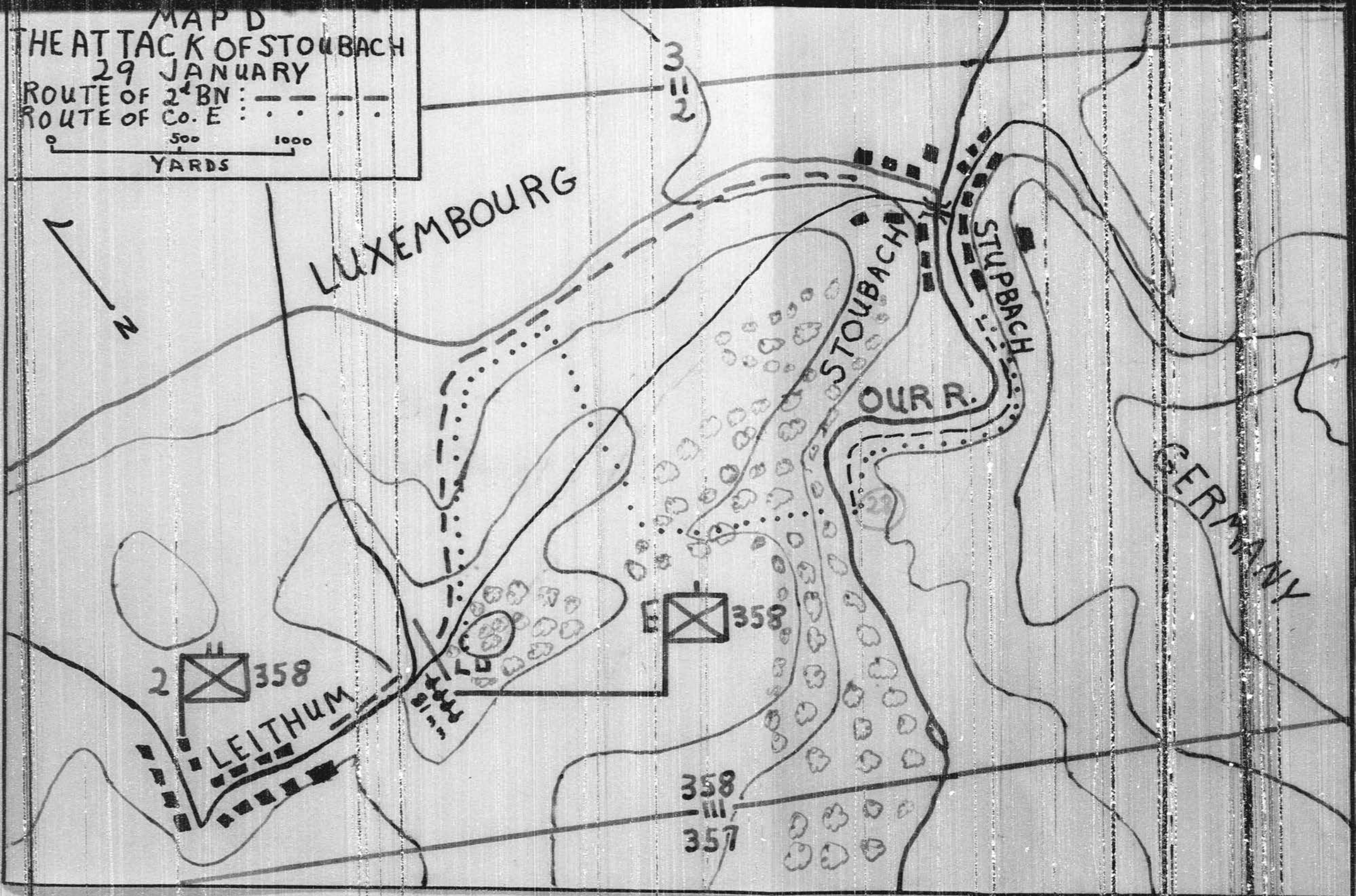
GERMANY

2 358

LEITHUM



358  
||  
357





LUXEMBOURG

ULF R.

90

WEIGLER

LASCHEID

STOU BACH

STU PRACH

BEILER

LEITHUM

OUR R.

GERMANY

3 358

358

344

2 358

358  
357

MAP C  
DISPOSITIONS  
OF THE  
358<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY  
26-29 JANUARY

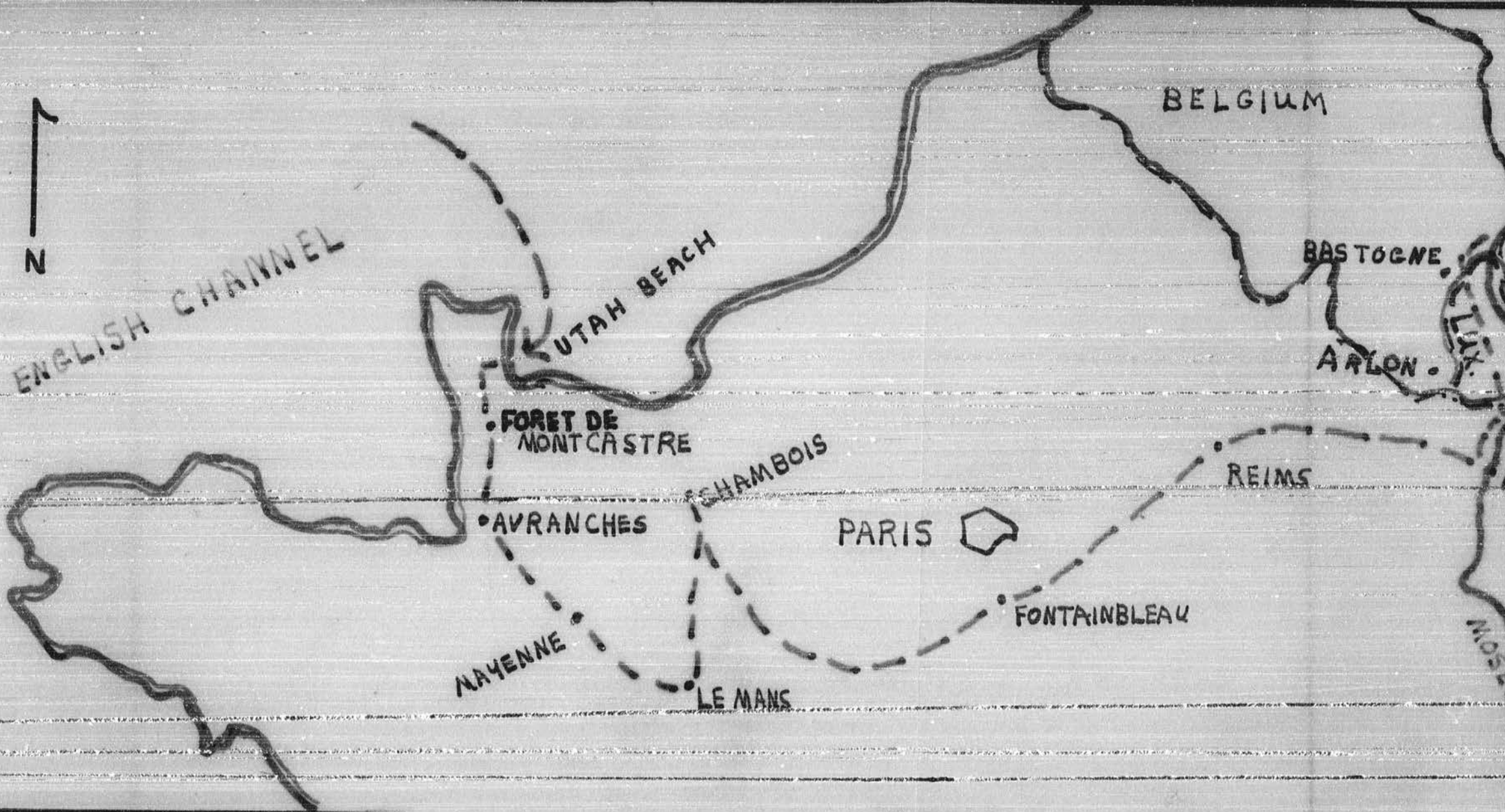
YARDS

1000 500 1000









MAP A  
NORMANDY TO OUR RIVER

0 50 100  
SCALE-MILES