

Pratt
16 May
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Staff Department
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE
1949-1950

THE OPERATIONS OF THE 313TH INFANTRY (79TH INFANTRY
DIVISION) IN THE PREPARATION AND CROSSING OF THE
RHINE RIVER, GERMANY, 9-24 MARCH 1945
(RHINELAND CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Regimental Motor Officer)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY REGIMENT IN A
RIVER CROSSING

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ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the 313th Infantry, 79th Infantry Division, in the crossing of the RHINE RIVER, GERMANY, 9-24 March 1945.

A brief orientation of events that led up to this action:

The 79th Infantry Division landed in NORMANDY, on UTAH BEACH, 14 June 1944. The Division was committed into action on 19 June 1944. The 79th was engaged in combat from that time until 24 October 1944 at which time it was relieved by the 44th US Infantry Division in the vicinity of LUNEVILLE, FRANCE.

(1)

The Division moved to a rest area in the vicinity of ROSIERES. This much needed, brief, rest period lasted until 12 November 1944 at which time the Division was recommitted to the east of LUNEVILLE and continued to fight until 6 February 1945. The next break for the 79th came when the 101st Airborne Division relieved them on the above mentioned date in the vicinity of HAGENAU, FRANCE. (2)

On 17 February 1945 the Division was transferred from the 7th US Army, in the southern Allied sector, to the 9th US Army, in the extreme northern sector. (3)

- (1) A-1, p. 128-129
- (2) A-1, p. 130
- (3) A-1, p. 157

On 22 February 1945 the 313th Infantry moved to an area east of the city of MAASTRICT, HOLLAND. The German border was very close with the city of AACHEN, GERMANY just a few kilometers away. The American troops were on the ROER RIVER and it was believed ready to cross. (4)

As the Regiment already had 213 combat days to its credit and a number of new men and attachments, training was the immediate mission. However, the training program was just getting under way when the Regiment was placed on a three-hour alert to move. The 102nd US Infantry Division had crossed the ROER RIVER and was to be relieved by the 79th Division. This alert lasted from 28 February until 3 March 1945. However, the 102nd Division was so successful that a relief was not necessary and the plan was called off.

The 3rd of March found the 313th Infantry moving to the vicinity of HILDENRATH, GERMANY with the mission of policing up behind the 102nd Division. This mission consisted of Task Forces made up of Tanks and Infantry cleaning out small overrun pockets.

On 8 March 1945 the 313 th Infantry moved back into HOLLAND, supposedly to take up where they left off with their training. However, on the morning of 9 March 1945 the Regiment received orders to prepare plans for special training in river crossing at a site on the MAAS RIVER south of MAESEYCK, HOLLAND. The actual assault crossing, the order said, would be a point on the RHINE RIVER north of ORSOY, GERMANY. (5)

(4) A-1, p. 157

(5) A-1, p. 156-157

The 79th Division was to cross the river on the south flank of the US 9th Army with the US 30th Infantry Division on the north. This operation was known as "OPERATION FLASHPOINT". (6)

THE GENERAL SITUATION

By the middle of March 1945, the Allied Armies were in position along the west bank of the RHINE from the SWITZERLAND border to the Channel. The great Allied plan called for a crossing of the river in strength from north to south. The First Army had forced a bridgehead at REMAGEN on 7 March 1945, but it was imperative that the river be crossed in strength, especially on the left flank to capture the industrial area of the RUHR. (7)

In importance this operation was unequalled by any other inland amphibious action conducted during World War II and perhaps in all history. From the Allies point of view the RHINE was the last great German defense. (8)

The major Allied units that were lined up on the west banks of the RHINE, to destroy the Germans, were - from north to south as follows:

Canadian First Army
British Second Army
United States Ninth Army
United States First Army
United States Third Army
United States Seventh Army
French First Army (See Map A)

- (6) A-5, p. 36
(7) A-5, p. 204-205
(8) A-5, p. 199

All of these Armies had many experienced fighting troops among their units. (9)

The enemy confronting the Ninth Army, of which we are interested in for this situation, were listed as follows:

Seven light field artillery batteries and

Ten dual-purpose Antiaircraft Artillery batteries.

These were not identified as to units, as they were spotted by the Air Corps. The following were identified by intelligence:

59th Infantry Division

338th Infantry Division

176th Infantry Division

183rd Infantry Division

2nd Parachute Division

190th Infantry Division

Division Hamburg (A hastily formed special unit)

180th Infantry Division

In front of the British zone on the north flank of the Ninth Army were the: 84th Infantry Division, 116th Panzer Division, and the 466th Infantry Division. The last two being held mobile in the rear. To the south confronting the US First Army, on the Ninth Army's right flank, was the 476th Infantry Division. (10)

On 23 March 1945 the northwestern part of the Allied line was being held by the British 21st Army Group, commanded by Field Marshal Sir B. L. Montgomery. The group was composed of the

(9) A-4, p. 373

(10) A-5, p. 242

British Second Army, the First Allied Airborne Army and the US Ninth Army. (11) In the southern part of the Ninth Army's sector was the industrial area of the RUHR. (12)

This province is very rich in minerals, coal and iron and is one of the greatest steel and machinery producing sections of the world. This area is very densely populated yet it has many rich and well kept farms. The terrain, outside the cities, is generally flat and the road nets are far superior to any that had been encountered, by the Allies in Europe, to date. However the land itself was damp and became muddy if vehicles were forced to operate off the roads.

The weather was generally fair, there were intermitten showers, and during the early part of the morning it was rather misty, but was usually quite warm by mid-morning.

The Ninth Army supply situation as of mid-March was better than it had been for any previous operation. The roads were in very good condition and as a matter of fact excellent as compared to the ones the Army operated on west of the ROER. Since there had been a very small number of casualties during the period after the ROER crossing, the hospitals were well equipped and ready for the next action. There were no serious shortages of any major items of equipment within the units of the Ninth Army. The Army was utilizing various types of captured supplies and equipment which left the authorized items for future use in crossing the river and subsequent action which was to follow.

(11) A-3, p. 36
(12) A-5, p. 204-205

The largest problem facing the Army G-4 and the various supply people was to build up 138,000 tons of supplies close to the west bank of the RHINE. Through the efforts of all concerned the logistical problem was well handled by all units of the Ninth Army. (13)

DISPOSITIONS AND PLANS OF THE 79TH INFANTRY DIVISION

On 5 March 1945 the 79th Division moved to the vicinity of HOENSBROEK, HOLLAND, where units were to begin extensive training in river-crossing.

The division planned to have the 313th Infantry on the right and the 315th Infantry on the left to be the assault regiments. Therefore these two regiments would have priority on the practice sites.

Upon completion of their training the division returned to Germany and on 24 March would pass through the 75th Infantry Division in its present position on the west banks of the RHINE. All supporting weapons of both divisions would be coordinated in the attack. (14)

THE REGIMENTAL SITUATION

On 9 March 1945 the 313th Infantry received a warning order from division to prepare plans to train for a river crossing. The order contained information that the training would take place on the MAAS RIVER south of MARSSEYCK, HOLLAND. The order also said that the preparations would include crossing in column of battalions. The second battalion was selected as the first

(13) A-5, p. 219-220

(14) A-2, Narrative, p. 1

assault battalion, followed by the first battalion and the third designated as the reserve unit. (15)

The training operation was broken down into phases for convenience in planning and carrying out the mission. The phases were as follows:

1. Training
2. Reconnaissance
3. Intelligence
4. Planning
5. Execution (The crossing itself)
6. Follow-up

As these phases, at times, were receiving attention simultaneously the various officers doing the planning found it necessary frequently to interest themselves in each others specialty not done in normal operations. It was a test of the versatility and ingenuity of the commanders and their staffs. (16)

On 12 March the regiment issued a regimental training memorandum which directed that the battalions would conduct practical work in infantry-tank tactics, the organization of combat teams with engineers, daylight and night crossings, foot marches in leather shoes, street fighting and village fighting tactics, conduct in Germany, chemical warfare training (examination of gas masks), mines and booby traps (especially recognition of German minefields), and engineer familiarization. (17)

(15) A-1, p. 157-158

(16) A-2, Exhibit A, p. 1

(17) A-2, Exhibit A, Annex 1

As the tables of organization and equipment of an infantry regiment contain only land vehicles, special equipment had to be obtained to cross a river. Therefore the transportation and motor maintenance people of the regiment had to be trained in special amphibious operations. The specialized use of the organic and attached equipment was accomplished through on the job training. All drivers were given demonstrations and practical work in the loading of their vehicles and were assisted or instructed by the mechanics. This phase was carried out with little difficulty. The regiment was issued a number of M-29 and M-29C full track vehicles, commonly known as "Weasles". The M-29C is to some extent amphibious, however, prior experience with this vehicle told the regimental motor officer that they would be impractical, as a matter of fact impossible for them to cross a river as large and as swift as the RHINE. So all plans to use them, except on land were abolished. However, drivers were trained in their operation and they were used very successfully for evacuation and as prime movers on the approaches and landing sites. (Both of these vehicles have the capacity of a 1/4-ton.) (18)

In the planning stage traffic control was to be one of the greatest problems. The 79th Division set up a traffic control headquarters which would regulate traffic up to the regimental rear marshalling areas and supervise up to the beaches. Traffic control on the beaches would be by the supporting engineers. (19)

(18) Personal knowledge

(19) A-2, Exhibit A, p. 14

THE REGIMENTAL PLAN OF ATTACK

The line of departure would be the west bank of the RHINE RIVER at ORSOY; H hour, 0300 hours 24 March 1945.

The regiment, supported by the 187th Engineer (C) Battalion, would cross the line of departure in column of battalions. The 2nd Battalion, in two waves, to cross and capture the town of VIER LINDEN. The 1st Battalion, in two waves, to cross and capture the town of WALSUM. The 3rd Battalion, in reserve, to cross as soon as boats were available and protect the north flank of the regimental sector northeast of WALSUM. (See Map C) Regimental observation post group to follow the reserve battalion and proceed to WALSUM to set up the command post.

Division and Corps artillery to be in general support and would start firing at H minus 1.

The following units were attached to the regiment:

- Company A, 304th Engineer (C) Battalion
- Company A, 304th Medical Battalion
- Company C, 813th Tank Destroyer Battalion
- Company A, 717th Tank Battalion
- Company A, 89th Chemical Mortar Battalion
- Company B, 809th Tank Destroyer Battalion

The 313th Infantry will be on the right of the Division with the 315th Infantry on the left. The XIII Corps on the right of the Division. (20)

(20) A-1, p. 160-161

NARRATION

CROSSING OF THE RHINE RIVER

On the night of 23-24 March 1945, the 313th Infantry moved by organic vehicles and vehicles furnished by Division for the move to a detrucking point several thousand yards behind the dyke in the vicinity of PELDEN, GERMANY. There the troops dismounted and proceeded to their final assembly areas. The 2nd Battalion marched up to the dyke approximately 2000 yards north of ORSOY. The 1st Battalion moved to an area 500 yards behind the tail of the 2nd Battalion column. The 3rd Battalion moved to an area approximately 500 yards west and 300 yards north of the 1st Battalion. The Battalions used the black top road coming north from ORSOY as a guide. The 2nd straddled the road at the dyke, the 1st to its rear in the same formation and the 3rd to the north of the road. (See Map C)

The night was very dark and made control difficult. In addition to this the fear of enemy shells made dispersion a must. However with excellent supervision and the benefit of previous training the 2nd Battalion closed in to its position at 0030 hours and just prior to 0200 the foot troops of the regiment were in position ready for the crossing.

Throughout the regiment the next few minutes seemed like hours and everybody was very tense. The preparation that was to start at 0200 seemed as it would never begin.

As the 1st Battalion Commander, Lieutenant Colonel William A. Hylton, left the forward regimental control station he was

patted on the back and wished good luck by the members of the group and he replied: "Hell I am coming back." There were various other scenes such as this within the regiment.

At 0200 hours the artillery preparation began. As far as anyone could see, up and down the river, from the crossing site the west bank was ablaze with the flashes from the artillery pieces. The thunderous crashes on the far bank were terrific. If at that time the enemy artillery or mortars were firing there was no evidence of it in the regimental sector, either from the sound or casualties. However over head there were shells bursting and everyone thought that the Germans were returning some fire. (This proved later to be the new VT fuze). (21)

The Division artillery and supporting Army and Corps artillery, actually fired 300,000 rounds of ammunition into the German lines, from 1,000 guns of all sizes, beginning at 0200 until 0300 24 March. This was to become the greatest bombardment of all times and added to the success of the assault by the 79th Division soldiers. (22)

To the south of the crossing site, directly east of the town of ORSOY, there was to be a diversionary attack to start at H hour. This was to be accomplished by employing all direct fire weapons available that were not in the initial crossing. The plan was as follows: starting at D-2 all available tank destroyers were to be brought up at night infiltrating from one to four hours apart, dug in, in prearranged and reconnoitered positions, next

(21) Personal knowledge

(22) A-2, p. 125

the 57mm antitank guns from the regimental antitank company plus the guns from the antitank platoon of the reserve battalion were to be emplaced between the tank destroyers and dug in. The remaining gaps to be filled in with all of the .50 caliber machine guns of the regiment plus the .30 caliber machine guns of the reserve battalion. In addition to all these, the direct fire weapons of the 75th Division that were emplaced along the dyke were to fire. The execution and control of this operation will be mentioned later. (23)

The regimental observation post was set up in a large factory on the waters edge on the right flank of the crossing site. The observation post group consisted of: the regimental commander, Colonel Edwin M. Van Bibber, S-3, Assistant S-3 (operations), Assistant S-3 (OP group commander), S-1, SCR-284 radio and operator, two SCR-300 radios with operators and four members of the I&R Platoon as guards. (24)

Finally as H hour approached the 2nd Battalion, carrying its boats, moved off from the dyke and at 0300 hours slid into the water as one. At the same instant the direct fire weapons to the south opened up with a terrific bang and a glare of tracers.

The first wave of the 2nd Battalion landed on the east bank of the river at 0315 as scheduled. This first wave consisted of: Company E, Company F, machine guns of Company H, forward observers of Company H and the battalion observation post group. The second wave of the 2nd Battalion, consisting of Company G, Headquarters

(23) A-1, p. 160

(24) A-1, p. 161

Company, Medical Section and an Engineer Platoon, left the west bank of the river at 0310 and landed at 0325. The noise of the direct support weapons firing tended to drown out the put-put of the boat motors therefore aiding the battalion to cross without incident.

The first wave of the 1st Battalion, using the same craft, with the same tactical loading, embarked at 0350 and cleared the far shore at 0400; this unit also being on schedule. The second wave of the 1st Battalion embarked at 0400 and landed at 0420. The reason for the ten minute delay in this wave was that one of the assault boats got swamped and a number of the other boats got confused and returned to the near shore. This could have been a bad situation, as the reserve battalion was just behind the dyke getting ready to cross, but was detected and corrected promptly so no casualties resulted.

As the boats returned and reorganized the 3rd Battalion was moving up behind the dyke. The reserve battalion embarked at 0632 and cleared the far shore at 0655 without incident.

The regimental OP group, close behind the 3rd Battalion, embarked at 0635 and were on the far shore by 0645. Thus completing the crossing of the foot troops of the 313th Infantry.
(25)

During the crossing of the 2nd Battalion the antitank platoon and the pioneer and ammunition platoon managed to load and cross, 3 57mm antitank guns with 3 M-29C's as prime movers and 4 M-29C's

(25) A-1, p. 162

loaded with ammunition. This operation worked very successfully but was not included in the Battalion Commanders plan as there were doubts as to the success of getting these units across under fire. The 1st Battalion carried out the same operation and were also very successful. Although the antitank guns were not needed they provided a good morale factor for the troops. (26)

Early in the planning stages of the operation it was realized that some sort of screening agent must be used to conceal the open terrain. At daylight the 4.2 chemical mortars fired WP on the far banks and into the villages of WALSUM and VIER LINDEN. The smoke from the mortars went to the east and failed to cover the crossing sites and the river. A smoke generator unit was quickly called up from division and put in action south of the crossing site. The wind was from the south and the smoke screen proved very satisfactory. It is believed that this unit should have been attached to the regiment initially. However, the combination of the two allowed the vehicles, equipment and the remainder of the regiment to cross.

At H hour communications were more than adequate. At H plus 150 minutes the Division Signal Company started to lay an underwater cable to the far bank of the river and within 10 minutes wire communications were established. This cable was weighted down with small anchors and laid with a 2½ ton DUKW amphibious vehicle. (27)

(26) Personal knowledge

(27) A-2, Exhibit E, p. 5

While all these things were taking place the supply and transportation people were also well occupied. The troops carried one days supply of rations, water and small arms ammunition with them. Therefore it was imperative that resupply of food, water and ammunition be sent across the river as soon as possible. The supply plan was set up to take care of whatever action may take place such as a limited attack, defense or pursuit action. Each Battalion S-4 was assigned one DUKW for resupply and evacuation. The Regimental S-4 and ammunition officer had two DUKWs for resupply, ammunition and equipment. The regimental surgeon had priority on all vehicles returning to the near shore. The casualties were so light however that most of the return vehicles brought back prisoners. A forward supply and ammunition point was established about 1,000 yards east of the crossing point and just to the south of the regimental main supply route. The first loads of ammunition were dropped there just after daylight and from then until the bridge was completed supplies and ammunition continued to flow at a rapid rate with the use of the amphibious vehicles.

At 0300 hours the prearranged traffic plan began to function at full speed. The vehicles had started forward right after darkness and at H hour were in the forward marshalling area ready to cross. The first vehicle to move forward was the engineer M-4 tank dozer. Its mission was to knock down the dyke just south of where the foot troops were embarking, push a one way path to the river, load on a bailey raft, cross and make a path to the far dyke and then finally knock down the dyke. Next to cross in

order of priority were: 57mm guns with M29 prime movers, M29 ammunition carriers, M29 with an artillery liaison officer, 2½ ton engineer dump trucks, 90mm tank destroyers, 76mm tanks, 1½ ton trucks of the antitank mine platoon. Next, were more 57mm antitank guns, M29 ammunition carriers, ammunition and pioneer platoon 1½ ton with 1 ton trailer and the remainder of the tank destroyers and tanks. The next vehicles to cross would be loaded as boats of the type that could carry them became available; they were, regimental I&R platoon, tank destroyer reconnaissance company M-20s, M-8s, and ½ tons. That concluded the forward echelon. The supporting units were next with the following priority: regimental cannon company, attached chemical company and evacuation vehicles of attached medics. From this point the vehicles of service company took over all available boats.

There were a number of things that contributed to the success of the movement of the vehicles across the RHINE, among them were excellent condition of the vehicles (many of which had 10,000 miles or more), expert driving by all concerned, the feeling that the drivers had about getting to their units as soon as possible with the ammunition and equipment and the cooperation of all that took part in the ferrying of the vehicles. There were six different Army branches and the Navy working as one unit. Some of these men had never heard an enemy gun fire before and many, such as the 461st Amphibious Truck Company, had been in action at the Normandy D-day landing.

The battalion motor officers had crossed with the last elements of their battalions, set up their collection points and moved the necessary vehicles forward to their companies as needed.
(28)

The enemy resistance on the regimental objectives was spotty and disorganized although there were plenty of Germans around. The battalions had taken approximately four hundred prisoners and between five and six truck loads of enemy dead had been evacuated. All this could be contributed to the artillery, even though most of the dead were killed by small arms, it was made possible because they were stunned by the shock of the artillery preparation. (29)

A little after noon on D day the German artillery fire on the crossing site increased but was still unobserved, however at approximately 1400 hours the wind shifted and more smoke had to be laid on. The smoke generator unit was reinforced and soon took care of the situation. The 4.2 mortars were now out of range as the impact areas were occupied by our troops. This situation was not too serious but did hold up the tanks and tank destroyers for some time.

It was about this time that the Commanding General, Major General Ira T. Wyche, was at the crossing site. An enemy shell exploded right next to the General, knocking him down, but luckily he was not injured. In less than half an hour the General was on the far bank headed for the 313th CP.

(28) Personal knowledge
(29) A-1, p. 163

The attached tanks and tank destroyers had sent guides forward with the battalion OP groups so that when the vehicles finally got across the river they were able to move promptly to the assembly areas, rendezvous and prepare to advance with the battalions who were to jump off again at 1630 hours.

The maintenance section Company A, 717th Tank Battalion, consisting of a tank retriever and a jeep, came off the boat and up the bank through the dyke as did the regiment with its attachments. The motor officer leading this section apparently got confused and instead of turning right, as he should have, turned left into enemy territory. They could be seen going up the road, that constituted the regimental boundary, into the German lines. On order of the Company Commander one of the tanks fired a warning shot in front of the jeep. This, however, just made them go faster so the order was given to hit the retriever, ^{or} on the track or suspension system if possible, in order to stop them before they were captured. This was done and the track vehicle burst into flames but personnel were seen to jump from the burning vehicle to the side of the road and disappear. The members of the jeep also jumped out and ran off and this vehicle was also hit by one of our tanks in order that the enemy could not capture it. This unit had never been in combat before so some confusion could be expected. However this was the end of the maintenance section. (30)

(30) Personal knowledge

At 1500 hours the regiment was successfully on its objectives, supply and evacuation were functioning in as normal a manner as could be expected for this type of operation. The krauts were on the move again and this time as usual to the rear.

The order stating that the reserve battalion would not be committed except on division order was canceled and the regiment prepared to attack. The 2nd Battalion was ordered to take the slag pile to the southeast. The 3rd Battalion was directed to attack north and take WATERBECK, the 1st Battalion to revert to regimental reserve.

To sum up the operation of the 313th Infantry crossing the RHINE RIVER it is significant to quote the Regimental Commander, "Judged by my standards, this operation was completely successful. The objective was attained in remarkably short time. The enemy units opposing the landing were virtually destroyed, and the casualties sustained were negligible." (31)

It is interesting to note that the whole XVI Corps losses for this hazardous operation included: 38 killed, 426 wounded, and 3 missing. Elements of the Corps captured 1,896 prisoners of war and it was estimated that the enemy lost 250 killed and 430 seriously wounded. (32)

During this operation the 313th Infantry did not lose one vehicle through enemy action or accident and the personal equipment loss was negligible. (33)

(31) A-1, p. 164

(32) A-3, p. 46

(33) Personal knowledge

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

1. TRAINING

The training for the crossing was realistic and had a definite objective in view. It was conducted according to current teachings and when a new or difficult problem arose a solution was worked out on the spot. There were capable and experienced officers and noncommissioned officers to carry out the proper supervision of the training program.

2. INTELLIGENCE

Due to the tactical situation there was not ample opportunity for the regimental intelligence officer to function as he normally would. However with the aid of information received from the unit, occupying the positions, that the regiment was to pass through and information from higher headquarters a sound plan was produced.

3. RECONNAISSANCE

It was impossible to carry out the proper reconnaissance for an operation of this type. The reason being that the distance from the assembly area (about 75-100 miles) to the crossing site was too great to get the proper people up to OPs near the objective. Security was stressed by all of the higher headquarters thus curtailing a unit the size of a regiment to make the necessary reconnaissance. Aerial photos were used to a great advantage in the absence of ground observation and reconnaissance.

4. PLANNING

Planning for the operation was carried out from the time the warning order was issued until the completion of the operation.

The basic plan for a regiment to attack on a narrow front and envelop the objective proved sound. The plan to use track and amphibious vehicles for supply and evacuation turned out to be very successful.

5. EXECUTION

The planning on the part of higher headquarters to have superior combat power at the decisive point at the decisive time was done with the great artillery preparation followed by a rapid close in attack by the infantry. When the enemy regained his senses it was too late for him to do anything but to fall back.

6. SURPRISE

The element of surprise was attained as shown by the lack of casualties on the part of the regiment as compared to the number of prisoners and dead on the part of the Germans. This whole operation shows a true picture of the value of security in that the enemy apparently had no idea that the 313th Infantry was in the vicinity of the place where the crossing took place and, therefore was not prepared to defend strongly in that area. Cooperation is a must in an operation of this type where there are so many different branches of the service working so close together. Not only is cooperation necessary at higher echelons but it is of prime importance down to the individual concerned. Initiative must be present at all echelons of offensive type warfare. If it had not been for the initiative of the officers and men of the regiment throughout the planning, training and execution of the operation, there certainly would have been considerable more damage done to our troops.

7. ECONOMY OF FORCE

The rapid movement of troops and equipment was remarkably smooth throughout. The economy of force used in the crossing proved its point when the battalions reached their objectives far beyond the hopes of the higher headquarters. The operation was planned and carried out in the simplest possible form. This proved fruitful in that the troops and equipment were quickly assembled into combat units on the far banks of the river.

LESSONS

1. Special training with proper equipment and with engineers thoroughly trained in the operation of that equipment prior to the time training starts, an infantry unit, in a weeks time, can train to a degree of perfection that will accomplish a similar crossing in excellent fashion.

2. Intelligence may be produced for a unit, as small as a regiment, from information gathered from higher headquarters. Also information of great value may be obtained from the unit that is to be relieved in an operation of this type.

3. Ground reconnaissance is not absolutely necessary where good clear maps and aerial photos are available. Regimental and battalion headquarters can furnish enough detail to make an operation successful without the lower echelons actually making their own reconnaissance.

4. Simple plans easy for the soldier to follow under the stress of combat greatly aid the attack.

5. The rapid execution of a well planned attack throws the enemy off balance. An operation well planned will be well executed.

6. Surprise is of the greatest importance in any military operation. The river in this case was a natural barrier and had the enemy defended it properly it would have been very costly to take.

7. Economy of force and speed in making available superior mass at the decisive point saves both time and casualties.