

29th Infantry Division  
After-Action-Report  
November 1944

PHASE X - THE BATTLE FOR JULICH - 1-30 November 44

As November opened the 29th Division was occupying positions in the vicinity of MIGELSHOVEN, HOLLAND (K8256). This was the general situation. A breakthrough of the SIEGFRIED Line had been achieved by the 30th Division in the vicinity of AACHEN. The city itself had been captured and largely destroyed. The 30th Division had then gone into defensive positions and begun training. The 2nd Armored Division, which had operated on the left of the 30th Division and on the right of the 29th was also engaged in the defense of its sector. The 1st Belgium Brigade on the left of the 29th was also continuing in defense. The 113th Cav Gr and the 407th Infantry Regiment of the 102nd Infantry Division held the line for the 29th Division. The 110th FA Bn was in support of the 407th Infantry, the 111th FA Bn supported the 747th Tk Bn and the 113th Cav Sqdn. The 224th FA Bn reinforced the fires of the 110th FA Bn and the 283rd FA Bn was in direct support of the 125th Cavalry Squadron. The 227th FA Bn was employed in general support missions.

The 29th Division was undergoing preparatory training for the attack that was to come on GERMANY. Demonstrations were held by all units of the Division with a view to clarifying, reviewing and exhibiting their ideas and methods for the benefit of all other units. In this way greater understanding was promoted and new methods and procedures were explained. An intensive training program was also carried on, stressing battle drills with special emphasis being placed on tank-infantry-tank destroyer training. Further regrouping was also carried on. The 2nd Armored moved around to take up positions to the left of the 29th and the 30th moved to take up positions to the right of the 29th Division. <The Corps plan called for the Division to make the main effort on the right, force a crossing of the ROER river in the vicinity of JULICH (FO35590) and be prepared to attack to the N or NE in conjunction with the 2nd Armored Division. The 30th Division on the right of the 29th was to capture the inhabited areas, MARIENDORF (K9152) and HONGEN (K930535) and then be pinched out. The 2nd Armored Division on the left was given the mission of protecting the Corps left flank as far N as GERBONSWELLER (K9305) and be prepared to exploit any weakness of the enemy in the direction of LINNICH.>

On 5 November the Division received a letter of instructions which ordered the relief of the 2nd Armored Division by the 29th Division. This relief took place on 6 November by the 1st Bns of the 115th and 175th Infantry Regiments. The 115th took over the line from slightly SE of BETTENDORF (K922553) to the E of BABSWEILER (K910586) and then S to a point just NE of OLDFWELLER (K913563). Here the 175th Infantry took over. Their line ran S and SW in an arc around OLDFWELLER (K913563) and thence to a point N of SCHAUFENBERG (K900560). The Regiment assumed defensive positions utilizing the Bns that held the line and their other units continued rehabilitation training. The 2nd Bn, 116th Infantry was alerted and prepared to move into Division Reserve at three hours notice. At the time of this shift of forces the following units were attached to the Division:

747th Tk Bn  
821st TD Bn T  
92nd Cml Bn (less Cos C and D)  
283rd FA Bn  
554th AAA AW Bn

On 8 November at 1200 hrs the 967th FA Bn was attached to the Division and given a general support role.

The time for the attack depended entirely on the weather and was left up to the 8th Air Force. Targets selected for the medium and heavy bombers were ALDENHOVEN (K980560) and JULICH (FO35590). After this paving of the way two more missions were scheduled to interdict the enemy's communication and supply routes. This was known as Operation "Q". The XXIX Tactical Air Command was also to provide close support by the medium of fighter-bombers and they were to be on call. The weather was unfavorable until 16 November. Ground haze and rain were abundant and ground operations as well

as air operations were restricted. Finally the weather cleared somewhat and on 16 November at 1245 hrs the 29th Division attacked. Division policy provided that towns would not be attacked initially, and instead, high ground in the vicinity of and dominating the town was to be seized and the town surrounded. Experience in the past, particularly at VIKS had shown that capturing a town without first taking the high ground dominating it was usually a costly operation.

The attack progressed extremely well and not too much opposition was encountered, but it was "head on" stuff that was met. The 175th Infantry succeeded in taking the town of BETTENDORF (K922553). Bitter resistance was met as SIERSDORF (K940565) was approached. This town was on the boundary between the 115th and 175th Infantry Regiments and they each conducted attacks to secure that portion of the town in their respective zones. The 3rd Bn, 115th advanced to seize the Northern portion of the town. The 2nd Bn, 175th Infantry attacked from the S in conjunction with the 115th Infantry's attack from the N and the two Bns succeeded in securing the town at 1630 hrs, 18 November.

17 November, at 0700 hrs the 1st Bn, 116th Infantry was attached to the 115th Infantry and attacked with the town of SETTERICH (K922592) as the objective. Heavy opposition met the Bn all the way, but early in the morning of 18 November the Southern edge of the town was reached. This Bn then reverted to parent control and the day closed with the Bn occupying the Southern part of the town. The 2nd Bn, 116th Infantry was thrown into the attack for SETTERICH (K922592) at 0630 hrs, 19 November. One of the main obstacles in the path of the 1st and 2nd Bns in that attack was the AT ditch E of the town. This ditch was strongly defended and no mean obstacle in itself, being about 15 feet deep and 10 feet wide. The capture of this ditch and the town itself aided the 2nd Armored Division on the left to advance toward FRIEDLADENHOVEN (K958600). The job was completely done by 0925 hrs, 19 November and at noon a boundary change placed SETTERICH (K922592) in the 2nd Armored Division zone and the two Bns of the 116th Infantry were relieved by the 119th Infantry, then attached to the 2nd Armored Division.

The 115th Infantry attacked in the general direction of DURBUSLAR (K960573). Stiff opposition developed as the attack progressed. Small arms, mortar and artillery fire were heavy. Initially, the 1st Bn was the attacking element, but at 0145 hrs, 17 November, the 3rd Bn was swung to the S of the 1st and took up the attack which again stiffened as the attack progressed. Small arms and mortar fire were the chief means of resistance of the enemy. This Bn then took up the aforementioned attack on SIERSDORF (K940565). On 19 November, at 0700 hrs the 2nd Bn, 115th Inf was committed to attack in the direction of DURBUSLAR (K960573). This Bn moved out in a column of companies with the tanks of Co C, 747th Tk Bn. By 0900 hrs the outskirts of the town were reached by the 2nd Bn. The 3rd Bn, after completing the clearing of resistance from the N section of SIERSDORF (K940565) moved to assist the 2nd Bn in DURBUSLAR (K960573). These two Bns completed the occupation of the town at 1500 hrs, 19 November. While this was going on elements of the 1st Bn occupied ROTTGEN (K936585) while the remainder of the Bn moved S and secured the northern portion of SIERSDORF (K940565). The 116th Inf relieved the force occupying ROTTGEN (K936585) and then this force moved to SIERSDORF (K940565) and rejoined the Bn.

The 175th Infantry, after taking BETTENDORF (K922553) with the 1st Bn, was immediately concerned with the town of SCHLEIDEN (K950550). The 3rd Bn, 175th Infantry had moved to an LD South of the 1st Bn and at 0900 hrs, 17 November jumped off to attack SCHLEIDEN (K950550). The advance was slow and the enemy strongly resisted our attempts to advance. On 19 November the railroad at K925546 was secured by the 3rd Bn.

In the early afternoon of 18 November the attack was resumed and the close of the day found the Bn 1000 yds N of HONGEN (K930535). At 0730 hrs, 19 November the attack was continued to the town of SCHLEIDEN (K950550) itself. Co A, 92nd Qml Bn and Co A and 1 plat of Co B, 747th Tk Bn supported the attack. The 1st and 2nd Bns, 175th Infantry supported the attack by fire.

The 1st supported the attack from positions in BETTENDORF (K922553) and the 2nd from SIERSDORF (K940565). The enemy offered moderate resistance to the Bn's advance and at 1430 hrs SCHLEIDEN (K950550) was secured.

The close of operations on 19 November found the Division occupying the line DURBOSLAR (K960573) - SCHLEIDEN (K950550). The 2nd and 3rd Bns, 115th Infantry occupied DURBOSLAR (K960573), and the 2nd Bn, 175th was in SIERSDORF (K940565), the 1st Bn in BETTENDORF (K922553) and the 3rd Bn in SCHLEIDEN (K950550). The 3rd Bn, 116th occupied ROTTGEN (K936585) while the remainder of the Regiment was in an assembly area immediately N of BAESWELLER (K940586).

On 20 November the 3rd Bn, 115th Infantry attacked from DURBOSLAR (K960573) in the general direction of ALDENHOVEN (K980560). This attack was assisted by the 2nd Bn which, while defending the town of DURBOSLAR (K960573), assisted the attack of the 3rd by fire. This attack was supported by chemical mortars and tanks and progress was made to positions at K974578. The next day the 1st Bn, 175th Inf took up the attack while the other two Bns supported this attack by fire. The NE approaches to the town were seized with moderate opposition developing as the attack went along. This opposition was largely light small-arms fire and the objective was taken in just fifty-five minutes. On 21 November, at 2000 hrs the Regiment received orders, placing it in Division Reserve and moved into DURBOSLAR (K960573) - SIERSDORF (K940565) area for rehabilitation.

The 3rd Bn, 116th Infantry attacking from ROTTGEN (K936585) to the E captured the little town of UNGERSHAUSEN (K965585) with ease. The "jump-off" took place on 20 November at 1330 hrs and by 1425 hrs the town was secured. Co A, 116th Infantry was attached to the 175th Infantry at 2000 hrs, 20 November. The following day the Regiment, with the 3rd Bn again in the lead, moved out in the direction of KOSLAR (F050595). The move was almost a walk until the immediate vicinity of the town was reached. There heavy small-arms and mortar fire greeted the Bn and at 1415 hrs the 2nd Bn, with supporting tanks was committed around the left with the mission of capturing the woods just S of KOSLAR (F050595). This capture provided a covered approach to the town itself and the only covered route available. The enemy from positions S and SE of the town and particularly from the AT ditch SE of KOSLAR (F050595) delivered strong fires on the 2nd Bn. Co A reverted to Bn control at 0900 hrs, 21 November, and Co B, 92nd Cml Bn was attached to the 175th Inf at 0800 hrs while Co C, 747th Tk Bn relieved Co B, 747th Tk Bn at 2100 hrs. During the day two prisoners were taken who claimed they were sixteen years of age. They didn't look that. The enemy was quite active to the E of KOSLAR (F050595) and our artillery enjoyed a field day firing approximately 3522 rounds on targets of every description.

After taking SCHLEIDEN (K950550) in a beautifully coordinated tank - infantry movement, the 3rd Bn, 175th Infantry moved SE against NIEDERMERZ (K968545) and by 1030 hrs on 20 November the town was occupied. The other two Bns of the 175th, the 1st and 2nd, resumed the attack on ALDENHOVEN (K980560) on 20 November. The 1st Bn moved out on the right against light resistance at 1030 hrs. As ALDENHOVEN (K980560) was approached stiffer opposition developed. By noon leading elements of both the 1st and 2nd Bns had entered the town. The night of 20-21 November was spent in mopping-up operations in the town which resulted in ALDENHOVEN (K980560) being completely secured by morning. The town, due to the heavy artillery fire, aerial bombardment and heavy fighting, was well "ventilated". The 3rd Bn, 175th Infantry, after securing NIEDERMERZ (K968545) on 21 November, resumed the attack to secure the important road net SW of ALDENHOVEN (K980560). Light resistance, chiefly small-arms fire, was encountered and the attack was successful. This attack was made without I Company which moved from SCHLEIDEN (K950550) to secure NIEDERMERZ (K968545) when the main body moved out in the attack.

At 1445 hrs, 21 November the 175th Infantry launched an attack at BOURNHEIM (F015570). Scattered resistance was met, and at 2200 hrs at least two platoons were in the town itself. These men had evidently slipped through the enemy's defensive set-up, for in the morning opposition became so stiff that this force withdrew to ALDENHOVEN (K980560) in the face of a superior number of enemy.

At 2400 hrs, 20 November the boundary between the 29th and 30th Divi-

sions changed. Instead of the 30th Division being pinched out as formerly planned, their boundary was changed so as to give them a narrow zone of action parallel to that of the 29th Division.

The 175th Infantry, after being pushed out of BOURHEIM (FO15570), immediately laid plans to retake the town the next day. Captured documents showed that the enemy's defense of JULICH (FO35590) was based on the perimeter defense of the three villages, KOSLAR (FO50595), BOURHEIM (FO15570) and KIRCHBERG (KO30560). This statement was partially born out by the strong defense the enemy put up in these places and the repeated attempts he made later to get them back. The 1st Bn, 175th Infantry, therefore, attacked at 0700 hrs, 22 November. The attack which "jumped off" from positions in the vicinity of ALDENHOVEN (K980560) was directed at BOURHEIM (FO15570) from the N and NW. The attack went slowly all morning and by noon it was obvious that it was a two battalion job. The 3rd Bn then, from positions SW of ALDENHOVEN (K980560) was directed to attack the town from the S. At about 1800 hrs the western perimeter of BOURHEIM (FO15570) was secured and the Bns buttoned up for the night.

The next day mopping-up operations in the town were resumed with the two Bns splitting the town into North-South sectors. The 1st Bn covering the N-sector received heavy artillery support and advanced with little trouble until the E side of the town was reached. Here the enemy opened up with everything he had; small-arms, tanks, mortars and artillery were all thrown against our troops in the NE edge of town. The battalion held its ground. The 3rd Bn attacking in the Southern portion of the city was opposed determinedly the whole day and was unable to register any appreciable gain. At the close of operations for the day the 1st Bn was holding the Eastern section of town while the 3rd controlled the opposite end of BOURHEIM (FO15570) on the night of 22-23 November. Cos A and B, 747th Tk Bn were detached and one platoon of Co D, 747th Tk Bn was attached to the 175th Infantry at 1700 hrs, 23 November.

The 2nd town of so much interest to the enemy, KOSLAR (FO50595), was in the zone of the 116th Infantry. On 21 November the attack opened and as has already been stated the AT ditch E of the town was the chief obstacle. Advances were therefore limited, as the ditch was strongly held. On 22 November, at 1600 hrs, the 2nd and 3rd Bns, 116th Infantry resumed the attack. The 3rd Bn was unable to jump off, as the enemy positions were too close. The 2nd Bn, however, was able to attack and though faced with determined opposition, nevertheless advanced 300 yards during the day. The next day the 2nd and 3rd Bns attacked abreast at 1000 hrs in a further attempt to seize KOSLAR (FO50595). Resistance throughout the day was characterized by repeated local enemy thrusts. G Co was dispatched around the right flank of the 2nd Bn and by evening the Bn was in the outer perimeter of the KOSLAR (FO50595) defenses.

The 3rd Bn, advancing on the right and also supported by chemical mortars and tanks, advanced approximately two hundred yards. L Company of the 116th Infantry made the largest advance of the day when in the early afternoon the Bn reached the edge of objective "W". This objective was the high ground just E of KOSLAR (FO50595). At approximately 1500 hrs the enemy forced this company to withdraw to the west to the SE perimeter of KOSLAR (FO50595). Co C, 747th Tk Bn was detached and one platoon of Co D, 747th Tk Bn was attached to the 116th Infantry at 1700 hrs, 23 November.

On the evening of 23 November the Division was generally disposed as follows: The 175th Infantry, with the 1st and 3rd Bns, defended BOURHEIM (FO15570). The 1st Bn defended the Northern and Eastern sections and the 3rd defended the Southern and Western perimeter of the town. The 2nd Bn, less Co E, was in ALDENHOVEN (K980560) and Co E defended the left flank of the Regiment.

The 116th Infantry occupied positions in the defensive perimeter of KOSLAR. The 2nd and 3rd Bns held the line with the 3rd Bn on the right. The 1st Bn remained in Regimental reserve in the rear. The 115th remained in Division Reserve in the SIERSDORF (K940565) - DURBOSLAR (K960573) area.

The 175th Infantry experienced a rough day on 24 November. The enemy maintained constant pressure on BOURHELM (FO15570) and fire from mortar, small-arms and especially artillery was severe. Early on 25 November Co G was brought up on the left to fill the gap between the 116th and 175th Infantry Regiments.

Again on 26 November the enemy attempted action against the 175th Infantry in BOURHELM (FO15570). Approximately five hundred infantry, six tanks and one SP gun attacked early on 26 November. His attack was successfully contained by the 175th Infantry and with air support the attackers were driven off. The 224th FA Bn claimed one tank, the fighter-bombers claimed two damaged and one destroyed and the 283rd FA Bn also claimed some probable hits on this day.

In this attack the Tank Destroyers learned a valuable lesson. Individual shelters had been dug too far from the guns. Enemy artillery fire was so heavy that the men were unable to leave their shelters and the tanks were able to advance almost unmolested in conjunction with this fire. The 2nd and 3rd Bns did an heroic job on this day for by this time both outfits were pretty well depleted. Two tanks were destroyed at BOURHELM (FO15570), but at least one broke into the town and shot things up generally. The 2nd Bn, in Regimental Reserve in ALDENHOVEN (K960560), moved Co F to assist in the repulsing their attack. In the late evening the 175th Infantry was relieved by the 1st Bn, 115th Infantry. The 175th then moved back to the SIEGSDORF (K940565), DURBOSLAR (K960573) area and began rehabilitation in Division Reserve. This relief was accomplished in small groups, under cover of darkness, since any movement was visible to the enemy and heavy artillery fire would have been his reaction.

The 115th Inf made plans to take the town of KIRCHBERG (FO30560) on 27 November. On the night of 26 November the 2nd Bn moved from DURBOSLAR (K760573) through ALDENHOVEN (K960560) into the 30th Division zone at PATTERN (FO03544). The attack for KIRCHBERG (FO30560) began at 1000 hrs, 27 November. The attack was directed at the town itself from the SW and was supported by fire by the 1st Bn in BOURHELM (FO15570). The 30th Division, from positions E of PATTERN (FO03544), also aided in this attack and their mortar fire was particularly effective. At 1130 hrs the Bn was in the town. Bitter house-to-house fighting ensued and the enemy was extremely hard to route out of his positions. The 3rd Bn consequently was brought up to assist in this important capture. At 1600 hrs that evening the enemy resistance suddenly collapsed and the attackers swept through the town and secured the high ground dominating the ROER river.

The 2nd and 3rd Bns, 116th Infantry on the western perimeter of KOSLAR (FO50595) continued attacks to secure the town in spite of the battle the enemy put up to hold it. On 24 November the 2nd Bn made two hundred yards while the 3rd remained in defense. Enemy artillery, as in the 175th zone, was intense and constant. The next day the 2nd Bn advanced to gain the western half of the town. Co C was moved forward and occupied the positions vacated by the right elements of the Bn. The enemy during this period made numerous attempts at infiltration. The first was made just before noon and was quickly dispersed by supporting artillery fire. The second, made in mid-afternoon was broken up by a combination of infantry and artillery fire. The 29th Cav Recon Tr was attached at 1630 hrs, 25 November and was assigned the mission of protecting the Regiment's left flank and preventing infiltration from the 2nd Armored Division zone. The next day, 26 November was a critical day for the 2nd Bn, 116th Infantry. This Bn was actually in the town of KOSLAR, and during the hours of daylight it was almost impossible to go up to them as the ground to the W was flat and under direct observation. The Bns positions were such that the men were forced to stand in water almost constantly and it was a terrific job to keep weapons clean and functioning. Supplies were dropped by liaison plane and the companies were in constant communication with higher headquarters by radio. Out of eleven plane loads dropped, eight were recovered. The enemy in some force attempted twice to penetrate between the 2nd and 3rd Bns. Infantry and artillery fire again proved the winning combination and they were driven back, less a goodly number. The second attack with six tanks was also unsuccessful and in this engagement the fighter-bombers of the XXIX TAC played a very substantial role.

The 1st Bn at approximately 0300 hrs on 27 November moved out from ENGELSBOHRF (K990584) in an attack to take KOSLAR and establish physical contact with F and G Cos. The attack was begun at this time so that the exposed ground W of KOSLAR could be crossed before daylight. By 0635 hrs the outskirts of the town had been reached and the tedious, hard house-to-house fighting had begun. Cos F and G at this time became engaged with approximately two companies of the enemy. Supporting artillery once again took care of this threat and at 1730 hrs physical contact was established with three companies. The 29th Cav Rcn Tr moved forward also to establish contact between the 116th and the 2nd Armored Division. The 28th November saw the fall of KOSLAR. After three days of ceaseless pounding the determined resistance by the enemy had collapsed.

The close of this day found the 29th Division in possession of the key towns of KOSLAR, BOURHEIM, and KIRCHBERG and the ROER river line in the Division zone, with the exception of a small pocket in front of the 116th Infantry, was completely cleared. The last days of November were spent in regrouping and rehabilitation. Patrolling to the front was vigorous, as conditions and terrain along the ROER river had to be clarified.

In the 115th Infantry sector the 2nd Bn and Co B of the 1st Bn were withdrawn from the line and this left the Regiment with the 1st Bn, less Co B, on the left and the 3rd Bn, less Co K on the right.

The 116th Infantry front was held down by the 1st Bn while the other two conducted rehabilitation programs. The 29th Cav Rcn Tr was detached at 0600 hrs, 29 November and one platoon of Co D, 747th Tk Bn was detached at 2359 hrs, 28 November.

As November closed the Division was preparing for the next important step, the crossing of the ROER river. This was the last major barrier in front of the RHINE and it would open the way for a drive across the COLOGNE plain to the heart of GERMANY.