



**Robert T. Gholson**  
**World War II – Europe 1944-45**  
Tracy Dungan - 2002

**Robert T. Gholson**  
**Battery B, 313th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm Howitzers)**  
**80th Infantry Division ("Blue Ridge") (Div. Commander: Maj. Gen. Horace L. McBride)**  
**U.S. Third Army (General George S. Patton)**

### **Campaigns:**

Northern-France  
Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge)  
Rhineland  
Central Europe

The **80th Infantry Division** insignia; a white bordered escutcheon of gold emblazoned with three azure blue mountain peaks. It symbolizes the three "Blue Ridge" states, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. The **80th Infantry Division** was assigned to **General George S. Patton's Third Army**, fighting its way across Northern-France, Belgium, and into Germany. The **80th Infantry Division** had a hard fight for a crossing of the Moselle River in September, and in November participated in the drive to the Saar River.

### **1943**

**June 14 – 313th Field Artillery Battalion** left Camp Forrest for maneuvers in Tennessee.

**July 5 –** Maneuvers underway for the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**.

**August 25 – 313th Field Artillery Battalion** finishes Maneuvers in Tennessee.

**September 16 – 313th Field Artillery Battalion** reports again to Camp Phillips, Kansas. Camp Phillips is a nice camp. They have a sixty-foot mountain to prove this country is different from the rest of Kansas.



**December 5** – **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** move from Camp Phillips for desert maneuvers in California. At this point, the division was training for action in the Pacific. It was later decided that the **80th Division** would be deployed in Europe.

## 1944

**April 2-8** – **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** left the deserts of California and drove through Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Washington D.C. and arrived at Fort Dix in New Jersey on April 8.

### **General Patton's Speech to the Third Army, May 31, 1944**

**May 31** – While the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was still in the United States (as was the rest of the **80th Division**), **General Patton** spoke to the other divisions of the **Third Army** already assembling in England. **Gholson's** battalion and the rest of the **80th Division** were about to join the **Third Army** across the ocean.

*The Corps chaplain gave the invocation while the men stood with bowed heads, asking divine guidance for the great Third Army so that they might speed victory to enslaved Europe. Major General Cook then introduced Lt. General Simpson. "We are here," said General Simpson, "to listen to the words of a great man. A man who will lead you into whatever you might face, with heroism, ability and foresight. A man who has proved himself amid shot and shell."*

***General Patton** arose and strode swiftly to the microphone; the men snapped to their feet and stood silently. **Patton** surveyed them, thousands of men standing in the fields of the English countryside. "Be seated," he said. The words were not a request, but a command.*

*The General's voice rose high and clear, "Men, this stuff that some sources sling around about America wanting out of this war, not wanting to fight, is a crock of bullshit. Americans love to fight, traditionally. All real Americans love the sting and clash of battle.*

*You are here today for three reasons. First, because you are here to defend your homes and your loved ones. Second, you are here for your own self-respect, because you would not want to be anywhere else. Third, you are here because you are real men and all real men like to fight. When you, here, every one of you, were kids, you all admired the champion marble player, the fastest runner, the toughest boxer, the big league ball players, and the All-American football players. Americans love a winner. Americans will not tolerate a loser. Americans despise cowards. Americans play to win all of the time. I wouldn't give a hoot in hell for a man who lost and laughed. That's why Americans have never lost nor will ever lose a war; for the very idea of losing is hateful to an American."*

*He paused and looked over the silent crowd. "You are not all going to die. Only two percent of you right here today would die in a major battle. Death must not be feared. Death, in time, comes to all men. Yes, every man is scared in his first battle. If he says he's not, he's a liar. Some men are cowards but they fight the same as the brave men or they get the hell slammed out of them watching men fight who are just as scared as they are. The real hero is the man who fights even though he is scared. Some men get over their fright in a minute under fire. For some, it takes an hour. For some, it takes days. But a real man will never let his fear of death overpower his honor, his sense of duty to his country, and his innate manhood.*

*Battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can indulge. It brings out all that is best and it removes all that is base. Americans pride themselves on being He-Men and they ARE He-Men. Remember that the enemy is just as frightened as you are, and probably more so. They are not supermen.*

*All through your Army careers, you men have bitched about what you call "chicken shit drilling." That, like everything else in this Army, has a definite purpose. That purpose is alertness. Alertness must be bred into every soldier. I don't give a shit for a man who's not always on his toes. You men are veterans or you wouldn't be here. You are ready for what's to come. A man must be alert at all times if he expects to stay alive. If you're not alert, sometime, a German son-of-a-bitch is going to sneak up behind you and beat you to death with a sock full of shit!"*

*The men roared. **Patton's** grim expression did not change.*

*"There are four hundred neatly marked graves somewhere in Sicily, all because one man went to sleep on the job. But they are German graves, because we caught the bastard asleep before they did.*

*An Army is a team. It lives, sleeps, eats, and fights as a team. This individual heroic stuff is pure horse shit. The bilious bastards who write that kind of stuff for the Saturday Evening Post don't know any more about real fighting under fire than they know about screwing!"*

*The men slapped their legs and rolled with glee. This was the old boy as they imagined him to be and in rare form too.*

*“We have the finest food, the finest equipment, the best spirit, and the best men in the world. Why, by God, I actually pity those poor sons-of-bitches we’re going up against. By God, I do.”*

*The men clapped and howled delightedly. There would be many a barracks tale about the old man's choice phrases. This would become a part and parcel of Third Army history.*

*“My men don't surrender, and I don't want to hear of any soldier under my command being captured unless he has been hit. Even if you are hit, you can still fight back. That's not just bullshit either. The kind of man that I want in my command is just like the lieutenant in Libya, who, with a Luger against his chest, jerked off his helmet, swept the gun aside with one hand, and busted the hell out of the Kraut with his helmet. Then he jumped on the gun and went out and killed another German before they knew what the hell was coming off. And, all of that time, this man had a bullet through a lung. There was a real man!”*

*He halted and the crowd waited.*

*“All of the real heroes are not storybook combat fighters, either. Every single man in this Army plays a vital role. Don't ever let up. Don't ever think that your job is unimportant. Every man has a job to do and he must do it. Every man is a vital link in the great chain. What if every truck driver suddenly decided that he didn't like the whine of those shells overhead, turned yellow, and jumped headlong into a ditch? The cowardly bastard could say, ‘Hell, they won't miss me, just one man in thousands.’ But, what if every man thought that way? Where in the hell would we be now? What would our country, our loved ones, our homes, even the world, be like? No, Americans don't think like that. Every man does his job. Every man serves the whole. Every department, every unit, is important in the vast scheme of this war. The ordnance men are needed to supply the guns and machinery of war to keep us rolling. The Quartermaster is needed to bring up food and clothes because where we are going there isn't a hell of a lot to steal. Every last man on K.P. has a job to do, even the one that heats our water to keep us from getting the ‘G.I. Runs.’*

*Each man must not think only of himself, but also of his buddy fighting beside him. We don't want yellow cowards in this Army. They should be killed off like rats. If not, they will go home after this war and breed more cowards. The brave men will breed more brave men. Kill off the cowards and we will have a nation of brave men. One of the bravest men that I ever saw was a fellow on top of a telegraph pole in the midst of a furious fire-fight in Tunisia. I stopped and asked what the hell he was doing up there at a time like that. He answered, ‘Fixing the wire, Sir.’ I asked, ‘Isn't that a little unhealthy right about now?’ He answered, ‘Yes Sir, but the damned wire has to be fixed.’ I asked, ‘Don't those planes strafing the road bother you?’ And he answered, ‘No, Sir, but you sure as hell do!’ Now, there was a real man. A real soldier. There was a man who devoted all he had to his duty,*

*no matter how seemingly insignificant his duty might appear at the time, no matter how great the odds.*

*And you should have seen those trucks on the rode to Tunisia. Those drivers were magnificent. All day and all night they rolled over those roads, never stopping, never faltering from their course, with shells bursting all around them all of the time. We got through on good old American guts.*

*Many of those men drove for over forty consecutive hours. These men weren't combat men, but they were soldiers with a job to do. They did it, and in one hell of a way they did it. They were part of a team. Without team effort, without them, the fight would have been lost. All of the links in the chain pulled together and the chain became unbreakable.”*

*The General paused, staring challengingly out over the silent seas of men. You could hear a pin drop anywhere on the vast hillside. The only sound was the breeze stirring the leaves and the animated chirping of the birds in the branches off the General's left.*

*“Don't forget, you men don't know that I'm here. No mention of that fact is to be made in any letters. The world is not supposed to know what the hell happened to me. I'm not supposed to be commanding this Army. I'm not even supposed to be here in England. Let the first bastards to find out be the Goddamned Germans. Someday I want to see them rise up on their piss-soaked hind legs and howl, ‘Jesus, it's the Goddamned Third Army again and that son-of-a-bitch **Patton**.’ We want to get the hell over there. The quicker we clean up this damned mess, the quicker we can take a little jaunt against the purple pissing Japs and clean out their nest, too. Before the Marines get all of the credit.”*

*The crowd laughed and **Patton** continued quietly, “Sure, we want to go home. We want this war over with. The quickest way to get it over with is to go get the bastards who started it. The quicker they are whipped, the quicker we can go home. The shortest way home is through Berlin and Tokyo. And when we get to Berlin, I am personally going to shoot that paper-hangin’ son-of-a-bitch Hitler. Just like I'd shoot a snake!*

*When a man is lying in a shell hole, if he just stays there all day, a German will get to him eventually. The hell with that idea. The hell with taking it. My men don't dig foxholes. I don't want them to. Foxholes only slow up an offensive. Keep moving. And don't give the enemy time to dig one either. We'll win this war, but we'll win it only by fighting and by showing the Germans that we've got more guts than they have; or ever will have. We're not going to just shoot the sons-of-bitches, we're going to rip out their living guts and use them to grease the treads of our tanks. We're going to murder those lousy Hun bastards by the bushel.*

*War is a bloody, killing business. You've got to spill their blood, or they will spill yours. Rip them up the belly. Shoot them in the guts. When shells are hitting all around you and you wipe the dirt off your face and realize that instead of dirt it's the blood and guts of what once was your best friend beside you, you'll know what to do!*



*I don't want to get any messages saying, 'I am holding my position.' We are not holding a God-damned thing. Let the Germans do that. We are advancing constantly and we are not interested in holding onto anything. We are going to twist his balls and kick the living crap out of him all of the time. Our basic plan of operation is to advance and to keep on advancing regardless of whether we have to go over, under, or through the enemy. We are going to go through him like crap through a goose; like shit through a tin horn!*

*From time to time there will be some complaints that we are pushing our people too hard. I don't give a damn about such complaints. I believe in the old and sound rule that an ounce of sweat will save a gallon of blood. The harder we push, the more Germans we will kill. The more Germans we kill, the fewer of our men will be killed. Pushing means fewer casualties. I want you all to remember that.*

*There is one great thing that you men will all be able to say after this war is over and you are home once again. You may be thankful that years from now when you are sitting by the fireplace with your grandson on your knee and he asks you what you did in the great World War II, you won't have to cough, shift him to the other knee and say, 'Well, your Grand-pop shoveled shit in Louisiana.' No, Sir, you can look him straight in the eye and say, 'Son, your Grand-pop rode with the **Great Third Army** and a Son-of-a-Bitch named **Georgie Patton!**' ...That is all."*



*General George S. Patton, Jr. – Commander U.S. Third Army*

**June 6** – While **Gholson** and the rest of the **80th Division** are still in the United States, Operation Overlord commences and the Allied invasion of Normandy in France is underway.

**June 22** – **Gholson** left Fort Dix, along with his battalion, and arrived at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey later that evening.

**June 28** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** left Camp Kilmer by train for P.O.E. (point of embarkation) at New York harbor. **Gholson** and his buddies crossed the harbor and boarded the Queen Mary at Pier #5. The whole **80th Division** loaded their equipment for the journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

**July 1** – The Queen Mary sailed at 3:00 PM.

**July 7** – The boat arrived at Greenock, Firth of Clyde, in Scotland. **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** men disembarked in typical Scottish weather - pouring rain. They were greeted by bagpipers. The men of **Gholson's** battery waved and loaded onto a train. The train left that evening and they rode all night.



*U.S. Troops aboard the Queen Mary*

**July 8-13** – The train arrived at Camp Newton Le Willows, United Kingdom. At Golbourne Park the battalion received their new vehicles (trucks, jeeps, personnel carriers and the 105-mm howitzer guns). The **313th** was billeted at Newton Le Willows. They soon proceeded south to Northwich, England, for more training.

**July 26** – **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** drove in a convoy 143 miles south to the British Camp Sennybridge. Here the 105-mm howitzer guns of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** were test fired for the last time before combat.

## **From United Kingdom onto the Coast of France**

*“With his main forces trapped and broken in Normandy, the enemy (Nazi Germany) had no means of checking the **Third Army** drive, the brilliant rapidity of which was perhaps the most spectacular ever seen in modern mobile warfare. The three corps, each spearheaded by an armored division, raced headlong toward Paris and the Seine with an impetus and spirit characteristic of their leader, at once guarding the flank of the armies to the north and seeking fresh objectives of their own.”*

*-- **General Dwight D. Eisenhower** - Report of the Supreme Commander*

**August 2-4** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion**, along with the rest of the **80th Division** began moving to the marshalling area near the northern outskirts of Southampton harbor, in the Marsh Forest. Soon after arriving in the marshalling area the troops started moving toward the



harbor. **Gholson** and his buddies were packed in a long line of vehicles, men and equipment, waiting for hours. Red Cross women came by and fed the soldiers their meals. Eventually, they boarded LST 130 (troop landing ship).

**August 6** – In the early morning hours, the **Gholson's** landing ship started its journey across the English Channel. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** landed on Utah Beach in Normandy at 3:00 AM. The two front doors swung open and the ramp was dropped into the water. The battalion moved forward and inland at 6:00 AM that morning. Military Police led the battalion to the assembly area as a complete unit. It was a beautiful Sunday morning in the Norman countryside. The assembly area was 20 miles from the front. Orders were to be ready to move out at a moment's notice. On this day, with the initial mission of blocking the roads southwest of Laval, the **80th Infantry Division** proceeded toward the town with the mission of blocking the roads to the southeast.

The beach areas had been secured many days before and the combat zones were several miles further into the Normandy countryside. Jeeps, trucks, half-tracks and tanks poured out of the ships, moved across the beaches littered with boats, vehicles, equipment and supplies, and onto the narrow, winding country roads of Normandy, France. It was during this landing and movement along the Normandy country roads that the men of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** saw their first carnage of war, many dead German and American bodies were seen. Along the roads throughout the Normandy area were stock piles of captured German ammunition and supplies, which the men took great interest in examining. Many indications of recent fighting still remained; such as the booby-trapped fences and gates, mines and fox-holes along the roads and the destroyed vehicles and equipment, both Allied and German, scattered throughout the area.

The afternoon and evening was spent in unloading and getting into bivouac area near beach at the town of St. Germaine De Verreville. Vehicles were gassed; rations were passed out to everyone. The men of the **313th** slept in a large hedgerow-surrounded field that night. **313th Battery B** member Max Wheelwright was on guard this first night when two German soldiers wandered into their camp wanting to surrender. Max didn't know quite what to do with them!

The fighting of the Allied troops thus far since the invasion had been slow, hard and costly in this hedgerow country of Normandy. The hedges consisted largely of small trees growing very close together, with a dense undergrowth of tough, willowy, brush. They were usually about ten to fifteen feet high and three to six feet thick. In many cases they were planted on the top of a ridge of earth and rock about three feet high with a ditch on one side.

**August 7** – The concentration of the **80th Infantry Division** in France at St. Jores from August 3-7, 1944, occurred simultaneously with the break-through at Avranches and the attack on the Brittany Peninsula. The rapidity and strength of the break-through had temporarily thrown the Germans on the U.S. Army front into confusion.

Field Marshall Rommel had been reported wounded and Von Kluge had been made German Commander in Chief in the West. The enemy had committed at that time approximately forty-five divisions on the Normandy front and had managed to build up a mobile reserve of five

panzer divisions. This reserve, together with remnants of the units swept aside at Avranches, counter-attacked on August 6, from Mortain in a desperate effort to cut the Third U.S. Army supply lines in the vicinity of Avranches. It was to meet this counter-attack that the **80th Division** received its first combat orders on August 7, 1944.

The thunder of artillery barrages permeated the early morning hours. The officers were told that the 7th German Army was attacking the American surge and had made an advance towards Mortain. **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion** worked on their equipment and got ready to move to the combat zones.

The other battalions of the **80th** were already on the move. While driving through the town of Cosse-le-Vivian, units of the **80th** received its first hostile fire. That morning found the tanks and trucks pushing into the fray. It was another clear, warm day, after a starless night. Buildings scattered here and there showed the signs of battle scars. Those that indulged in liquor, had their choice of wine, cognac or calvados (a brandy made from apples), showered on them from the jubilant French as they roared through villages, and wide spots in the road. All about them was the horrible stench of putrefying horses, used by the Nazis to tow equipment and bombed by the Air Corps. Many a man remembers how that smell stayed with you and refused to go away. The task force converged at Meslay-du-Maine and then headed southeast to Sable. There this mighty spearhead turned to the east and pushed on toward Le Mans.

**August 9** - The **317th Infantry Regiment**, supported by **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion**, moved north and liberated Evron and St. Suzanne and received fire from occasional snipers. The Division advance northward, however, was opposed only by small disorganized groups and by minefields and demolitions.

## Breakout Across France

**August 8-10** – The **80th Infantry Division** got its “baptism of fire” on August 8, 1944, when it took over the Le Mans Bridgehead in the XX Corps area. The division moved forward as part of **General Patton's Third Army** drive. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 67 miles forward into action. The division mopped up any remaining German soldiers in their wake.

**Gholson** was assigned to **Battery B, 313th Battalion**, 105-mm field artillery howitzers. The battalion also had a mortar company of 4.2-inch mortars attached to it.

**Gholson** was primarily a lineman in the Wire Section. The Wire Section men would work to place telephone and radio communications between the guns, Service Battery, Observation Post and sometimes, all the way out to the Forward Observer.

Ray (Mousey) Myers of Indiana worked with **Gholson** in the Wire Section of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion - Battery B**. He described the duties of the men in the Wire Section –

*“...You got A, B, and C gun batteries. **Gholson** was in **B Battery** with me. And there was four guns in each battery, and we had to wire in the guns and all of the sections like, the Service Battery and all of the Ammunition Sections... and Headquarters that runs the firing center, they*

*ran the shooting of the guns, they have to be surveyed-in but, they also need communications. Radio and telephone - because the telephone a lot of times gets knocked out by either trucks running over them or (most of the time) shells would break them in two. So, that disrupted the communications... that was mostly what I did and I know everybody else did - was the repair of these lines.”*

*“...During combat we had to keep running out and repairing the lines... and then we would run a line out to the Observation Post which was some high-ground place where we could see the enemy, where to point and shoot. Then, we also sometimes ran a telephone line out to the infantry, the Forward Observers, and I know that **Gholson** got involved with that. They’d go out in a jeep and lay wire or we would lay wire in a ¾-ton truck but, a lot of it got knocked out and the radio would be all that worked and they’d have to go fix the lines again. It would usually be **Gholson** and one or two of the other guys – so it was dangerous... they had to go out where our infantry was... and the infantry would want fire here or there on the enemy so, they would relay that back to the firing center, who then relayed it to the gun crews and they’d fire over our infantry positions at the enemy positions...”*

**Gholson** was a driver of the GMC 2 1/2 ton 6x6 trucks that supplied the artillery battery crews. When the battalion was on the move, **Gholson** was a driver. These heavy trucks, along with their ammunition also towed the 105-mm howitzer artillery guns. **Gholson** also had temporary duties as a cook in the **Battery B** cook truck when needed.



*313th Field Artillery Battalion, Battery B*

## **M-2 105mm Howitzer**

The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** used the M-2 105-mm Howitzer. The M-2 howitzer is towed by the GMC 2 1/2 ton 6x6, duce-and-a-half, truck. The howitzer, truck, material and personnel required to service that piece constitute a Howitzer Section. The section personnel consist of a Chief of Section, Gunner, 7 Cannoneers, Driver, Assistant Driver and additional



*GMC 2.5 ton CCKW Prime Mover for 105-mm Howitzer – WWII, soft cab version*



*GMC 2.5 ton CCKW Prime Mover for 105-mm Howitzer – WWII, hard cab version*



*The interior cab of the GMC 2.5 ton truck*

Cannoneers for relief. In addition each Howitzer Section is supported by an Ammunition Section.

### **M-2 105-mm Howitzer Stats**

#### **Range:**

12,200 yards (6 miles)

#### **Ammunition:**

Semi-fixed High Explosive, Heat, White Phosphorus and Chemical Smoke.  
(These projectiles weigh approximately 28 to 33 lbs)

#### **Weight:**

4,980 lbs

#### **Rate Of Fire:**

4 Rounds Per Minute in bursts  
2 Rounds Per Minute in prolonged fire

#### **Dimensions:**

Length: 19 ft, 8 in

Height: 5 ft, 5 in

Width: 6 ft, 8 in

#### **Carriage:**

Type: 2 wheel split trail

Traverse: 22.5 deg right & left

Elevation: -0 deg to +64 deg

#### **Notes:**

Piece fires from wheels.

Piece takes approximately 3 min to emplace.

The artillery battalions would provide support for the infantry units advancing in a combat zone. **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion** always provided fire support to the **317th Infantry**. Wherever the **317th Infantry Regiment** was, **Gholson's** artillery battalion was 4-6 miles behind them in most cases. The artillery batteries would be moved into position several miles from the target area, behind the infantry. Pillboxes, houses with German soldiers, groups of advancing German soldiers and German Panzers (tanks) were targets the artillery battalions fired upon.

The batteries utilized a Forward Observer (by radio and telephone contact) who would relay to the battalion fire control - the target, the coordinates, and the type of shell needed. There were three types of shells: fuse quick, fuse delay, and time fire. Fuse quick went off (disintegrated into shrapnel) on impact and was used for counterattacks on German soldiers. Fuse delay would penetrate and then explode, so they were used on tanks and machine gun nests in buildings. Time fire would explode 15-20 feet off the ground and was used on enemies out in the open.



Generally, field artillery work wasn't as dangerous as it would have been with an infantry regiment but, **Gholson's** job in the Wire Section made his duties more hazardous than most of the artillerymen. Being an experienced, older member of the Wire Section, he was called on to do the difficult jobs by the Wire Section head, Ed Carey.

**August 11** – **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion** was part of the American forces that captured the town of Le Mans. The **313th** was 4 miles from Amne at 2:00 PM this day.

**August 13** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** engages enemy machine gun positions.

**August 14-16** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was in bivouac area for assembly once again after the actions of the previous days.

**August 17** – **Gholson's** battalion moved through the night into positions for the battle at the town of Argentan. The morning was warm and after some sleep the men of the **313th** were ready. Everything was in good shape and they were making preparations for the coming attack on Argentan. They were joined by units of the Free French 2nd Armored. No longer was the central issue that of saving the supply corridor of the **U.S. Third Army**, now the question was; how much of the German Seventh Army under General Von Kluge would be able to extricate from that precarious position of being cut off and surrounded.



*Damaged vehicles along the road in Normandy*

**Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion** drove their trucks and guns as a part of the rapidly moving columns of the **Third Army**. The spearheads of **General Patton's** army had continued their divergent paths - across Brittany to the west, east toward Paris, north, and even northwest, to Argentan. Concurrently, these operations had been aimed at sealing off the German Seventh Army in the Falaise-Argentan pocket and in continuing the relentless drives toward the Brittany ports on the one hand, and the heart of France on the other.

**August 18-20** – The battle for Argentan raged. The city of Argentan and the high ground north of Argentan to Le Bourg St. Leonard was strongly held by the 728th Infantry Regiment of the

116th Panzer Division. Argentan itself was held by a G.A.F. Battalion and a detachment of about 100 SS troopers. 14-15 Panther tanks and numerous self-propelled 20 mm A.A. guns were also committed to the defense of the city and vicinity.

The **313th Field Artillery Battalion's** 105-mm guns supported the 318th Infantry's advance. The guns blasted the high ground north of the town and the enemy positions in the Gouffren Forest. Just before midnight on August 19, seven battalions of artillery (including the 313th) let go with five Volleys, setting the town ablaze. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** captured six young German prisoners fleeing the area. On the evening of the 20th it rained on the troops for several hours.

The diary of the 702nd Tank Battalion on the 19th read –

*“...Moved into an area outside of Juvigny Surovne and listened part of the day to artillery observers giving orders to the artillery batteries. It was a field day for them. After heavy fighting by the infantry units, Objective Hill 213 about 11 miles north of Argentan was taken.”*

**August 21-25** – **Gholson** and his buddies in the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** rested in bivouac near Medavy and got ready for their next advance. Word came that the Falaise Gap had been closed and British troops were seen nearby. Hostilities ceased in this area. The trapped remainder of the German Seventh Army formally surrendered.

**August 26-27** – The **Third Army's** big push across the heart of France was started. Everyone was ready, busying themselves packing and finishing final details for departure. The route was round-about, as they were kept off the main supply roads. They followed a general southwest route to Mortrie, Carvauges, Couztrain, and Jaurou, then swinging southeast to Villaines, Courcite and Sille Le Guillaume, then south to Cruix on the main Le Mans highway. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved out at 6:00 AM on the 26th and traveled 260 miles to the area of Orleans, arriving at the towns of Beaumont and Boolonville at 7:00 AM the next morning.

At this point the officers and men of the **80th Infantry Division** could enjoy a freedom from immediate concern and an absence of threatening peril to a measure. Throughout the warm, sunny day the motor column moved on through Le Mans. The industrial capacity of America was making its superiority felt. Here was one of the decisive advantages of the American forces; their superior mobility power. The continuing mobility of the **Third Army** was to be a source of unending amazement for its German enemy.

The trip was a refreshing one. Here great fields, which only a few weeks earlier had yielded their important crops of wheat, would rival those to be found in the American Middle West. It was refreshing because instead of ghost towns of ruined bare walls, there were towns humming with activity. For the first time men saw French shops open for business. It was refreshing because attractive farms replaced the squalor and death that had been Normandy, and in these farms the feeling was that, in spite of war, people in this area were not going hungry. The trip was like a triumphal procession the whole way. Enthusiastic people lined the streets at every village, and often in between. They called, waved, tossed fruit and flowers.

This is a march that topped all previous marches. The morning dawned bright and clear for the men of **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion**. The sun shone brilliantly, and the rays, mixed with clouds of dust, burned many faces, causing a blistering that, in some cases was unbearable. The sun finally set, and the cool of evening was appreciated by everyone. The night was illuminated by a full moon, and the galaxies of stars.

The great column made an impressive sight to the citizens of the newly liberated towns. To show their appreciation, the civilians threw flowers to all of the vehicles and at every short halt gave cider, wine, cognac, and even champagne to their liberators. Large, tri-color flags were taken from hiding and flown from windows and roof tops. Signs were erected saying "Welcome to our Liberators" and "Vive la France, Vive L'Amérique." It was a happy day for the civilians as the Americans came by. Frequently one village would telephone ahead to the next and when the Battalion entered the next town flags would be flying and people would throng the streets. Many times it was more like a parade than a war.

Every effort was being made in this move to keep the soldiers informed of the events in which he was participating. In reporting the news of the previous 24 hours, officers described the battle still raging in the Falaise–Argentan pocket. The German Army had been surrounded and was trapped. The Army Air Corps pounded the retreating Germans from the air, attacking some 3,000 German vehicles. It was described as a massacre – 10,000 German soldiers would die in the "Falaise Gap" as it would later be called.

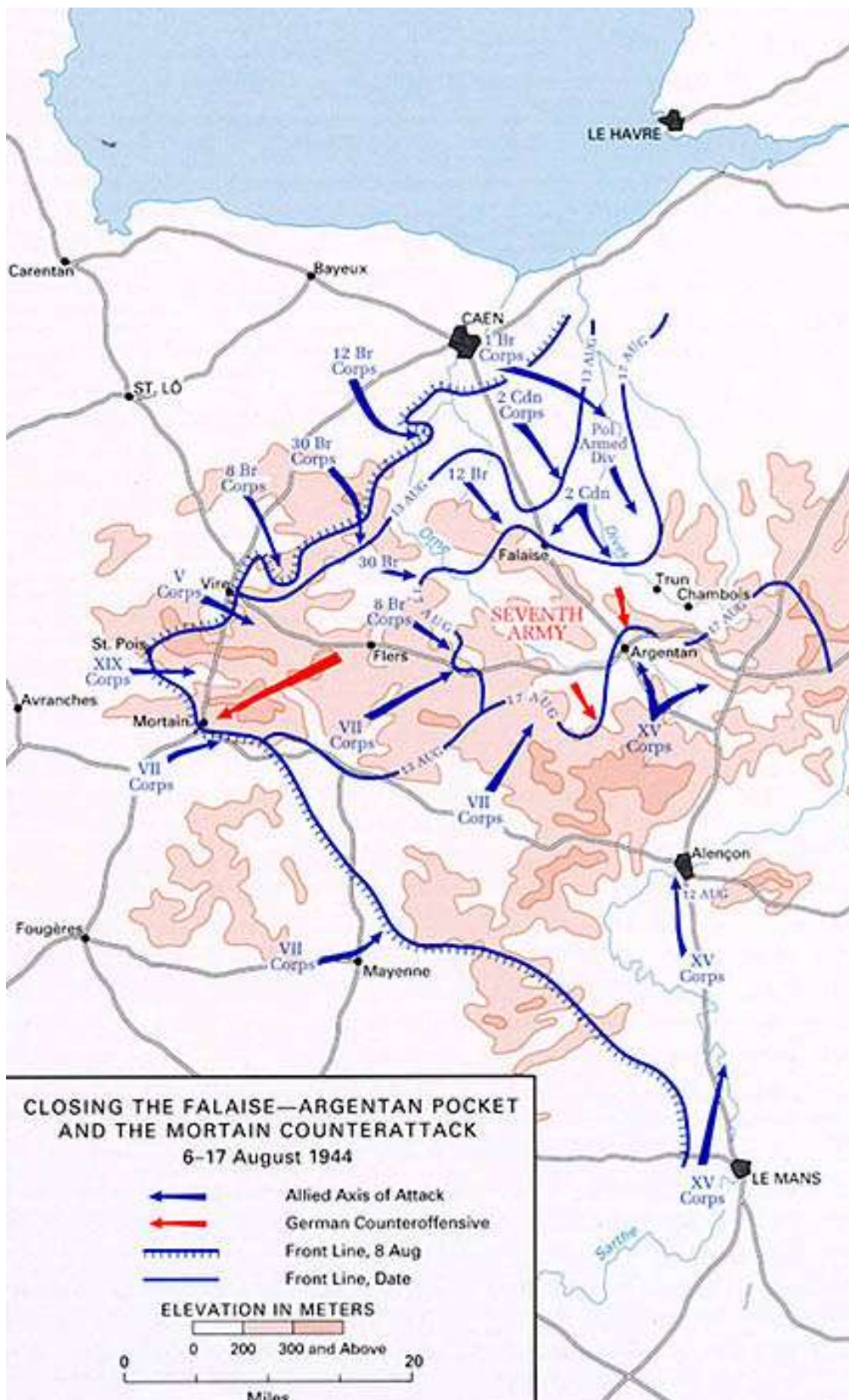
The Third Army was slowing to a halt for want of gasoline. That supply lines should be taxed in trying to support an advance at once so rapid and so far away from the bases was to be expected. Something of the nature of the problem was suggested in the announcement on September 4 that airplanes had dropped 10 tons of maps to **General Patton's** racing units.

**August 28-29** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** had been slowed by the lack of gasoline as had been the whole of the **80th Division**. The **313th** was parked for a few days near a creek bed at Chalons. Lou Shirey of **Battery B** remembers the local French residents came out to meet the soldiers in their camp.

**September 1** - The **80th Division** moved east from Chalons towards the Meuse River. No enemy defensive line was established, but organized resistance in the form of delaying actions by strong enemy motorized patrols reinforced with some self-propelled artillery were encountered. The bridgehead across the Meuse River was established at Commercy without difficulty.

**September 4** - Attempts to cross the Moselle River at Pont A Mousson and north of Pont A Mousson met with fierce enemy resistance determined to be elements of the German 3rd Panzer Grenadier and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions, and American units withdrew to make further preparations. These German divisions were brought from Italy to establish a line at the Marne River had finally managed to get into position at the Moselle River.

**September 5** - Mopping up operations continued on the West bank of the Moselle River. An enemy task force, composed of paratroops and German Air Force personnel and known as



Combat Team Hilmer, doggedly held the Foret de L'Avant Garde and the towns of Pompey, Marbache and Bellevilie against our attacks, suffering heavy casualties in so doing.

**September 8** - The gasoline shortage had been alleviated sufficiently to permit further movement of the **80th Division** toward the Toul-Nancy area and the Moselle River. On closing in the new area, the battalions began to operate motor patrols, and the French began to bring information of the enemy. A new crossing site was selected in the neighborhood of Dieulouard, about four miles south of Pont-a-Mousson. In the new plan, the **317th Infantry** again would be responsible for seizing the river crossing and securing a hold on the enemy bank, it's initial objective to be the series of hills and ridges immediately east of Dieulouard. Once the **317th** was across, two battalions of the 318th Infantry were slated to follow into the bridgehead, wheel north, and capture Mousson Hill and the surrounding heights. Patrols crossed the canal near Dieulouard and scouted as far as the river, selecting possible crossing sites and routes of approach. No further patrolling was allowed and all movement of troops or vehicles into the **317th** area was prohibited.

## The “Bloody” Moselle River Bridgehead

By the time the news had arrived of the fall of Paris and of the rapid advances being made by allied troops in nearly every area, and optimism was mounting among all ranks. Rumors and good news continued throughout the week. Rumors of advances continued the next day (September 6), and there even was a rumor of German peace overtures. Wagers were being laid on how much longer the war could last - three weeks or six, or “over by Thanksgiving.”

**September 10** – As a preliminary to the **80th Division** attack, the IX Bomber Command sent (58) B-17 bombers on September 10 to cut the bridge at Custines, that spanned the Mauchere River and provided a quick route over which reinforcements might be moved from Nancy into the Dieulouard sector. **Gholson** and the men of the **313th** watched and cheered the B-17 Flying Fortresses flying overhead. The American bombers damaged the bridge, but it is problematical whether this hindered subsequent troop movement by the enemy.

Morale was high, as each day the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** fired concentrations on the targets selected for special treatment on the day of the assault, so as to forestall an enemy alert when the guns opened prior to H-Hour. Counter-battery fire was laid on all known enemy gun positions but was none too successful.

The winds generally blew towards the German lines, thus curtailing effective sound ranging by the **313th**, and the numerous hills and hollows east of the river offered flash defilade. Apparently, the enemy interpreted this artillery activity as normal harassing and counter-battery work. No German local reserves were moved into the Dieulouard sector and the daily German intelligence reports prior to September 12th concentrated on exclusively on the signs of coming American attacks at Metz and south of Nancy.

The Moselle itself, as it winds through the Dieulouard sector, is no serious military barrier to any modern army. The average width of the river here is 150 feet, with a depth from 6 to 8 feet. Several fords are available for crossing infantry, but the river bottom is too muddy for tank



going. East of Dieulouard the Moselle River and the Oubron Canal form two arms that wind around a flat bare island, a little less than 2,000 yards across. A macadam road runs across this island and the approaches to fords and bridging sites, via the island, are good. Parallel to the western bank of the Moselle at this point is a barge canal, 50 feet wide and 5 feet deep, separated from the river by an 8 foot dike that rises abruptly between the two.

North and south of the island, the Moselle River meanders through a wide flood plain covered by marsh grass and dotted by a few scattered trees. But once off the river flats, infantry and armor advancing toward the east are faced with a series of abrupt ascents leading to the hills that crop out of the Moselle Plateau-Mousson Hill to the north, Hill 382 in the center, and the Falaise to the south. Numerous draws, gullies and low ridge lines lead back to the heights, but all of these avenues of approach are dominated by neighboring hills and afford excellent corridors for counter-attacks directed down toward the river.



*The Moselle River near the bridgehead of September 12, 1944*

There were a number of very strongly-built old forts on dominating hills throughout the Toul-Nancy area, and a determined enemy would be able to make a great deal of trouble at any of them. Mazieres (a village about 5 miles east of Thuilley) had been receiving artillery fire from time to time. This was indicative of an organized defense; these reports of artillery fire had been the first since the hedgerow country. Enemy artillery weapons were reported to be located in the Forêt de Haye - a large forest in the big bend of the Moselle between Toul and Nancy.

The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** had advanced eastward from the bridgehead to Toul to enter Gondreville, Domartin-les-Toul, and Chandeneu areas, but the enemy still held strong Fort de Villey-le-Sec. Moreover, it soon became evident that German patrols were operating to the west of the river. The **80th Infantry Division** was stopped cold here for several days.

As a matter of fact, the Moselle River was found to be a bitterly defended barrier all the way along the line. Indeed, later that morning the **317th Infantry** likewise was forced to abandon a crossing of the river, although later that Regiment was able to make a new attack and secure a permanent bridgehead. With the **80th Infantry Division** below Toul on the north side of the big

bend of the river, the Nazis had made good use of their prepared emplacements and gave little ground to the Americans who wanted to get across the river.

During September, 1944, the **80th Division** was fighting for its life, in the bloodiest fighting in its history to date. Under constant bombardment from German artillery, The **80th Division's** valiant Engineers were about to get a bridge across the Moselle on the 12th. The entire Moselle valley was under direct enemy observation from Mousson Hill, east of the river. The plan was, get a foothold across the river, take Mousson Hill from the Germans, consolidate the bridgehead, and then move east.

Now the Stars and Stripes Newspaper was saying: "Some of the bitterest fighting since St. Lo and LaHaye de Puits was reported from the Third Army front - Germans with their best remaining divisions along the Moselle were trying to hold the fortress towns of Metz, Toul, and Nancy."

**September 11** – At 8:30 PM in the evening, **Gholson** and the rest of the battalion moved five miles forward to new positions close to the Moselle River. A new crossing site was selected in the neighborhood of Dieulouard, about four miles south of Pont-a-Mousson. In the new plan, the **317th Infantry** again would be responsible for seizing the river crossing and securing a hold on the enemy bank, it's initial objective to be the series of hills and ridges immediately east of Dieulouard. Once the **317th** was across, two battalions of the 318th Infantry were slated to follow into the bridgehead, wheel north, and capture Mousson Hill and the surrounding heights. At midnight on September 11, the two assault battalions of the **317th Infantry** moved into line along the west bank of the barge canal.

**September 12** – The **317th Infantry** attacked across the Moselle River at 4:00 AM, they had traversed the island and were at the Obrion Canal. **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** followed to the rear, moving through the town of Monteville while it was being shelled by German 88-mm artillery. Making their way to the swampy river crossing, several times the men of the **313th** had to hit the ditch and take cover as the German fire got close.

The **317th Infantry** forded the Obrion Canal and by 5:30 AM, had possession of its first objective, la Cote Pelee, and south of Bezaumont. The infantry waded across the Moselle, or crossed in plywood boats, and at 8:00 AM was also in position on the heights at St. Genevieve.

With the infantry already across the river and taking fire from the Germans on the high ground, **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** crossed the first assault bridge built over the Moselle River. The crossing took place with the normal difficulties but no losses. Intermittent shelling was in process from the enemy-held heights.

The trucks blazed their own roads across the island and to their respective positions. After **Gholson** and his battery were across the bridge, it was hit by German shell fire and damaged. A drizzling rain reduced visibility in front of the enemy observation posts. However, the German gunners were on target, and succeeded in damaging the bridge. The engineers made repairs under fire the next day. German shells were landing all around the **313th's** vehicles as they took up a tactical position approximately 3/4 mile over the river to return fire. **Gholson's** battery was

located along the west side of the St. Genevieve-Bezaumont road south of some ruins at houses known as le Pont de Mons. They continued to draw some German artillery fire all through the morning.

In the early morning hours there was a semi-organized front of some 3,000 yards. Just before noon, the 318th Infantry, began crossing into the center of the bridgehead and took up positions on the reverse slope of Ste. Genevieve Ridge and west of Bezaumont.

As night drew, the five American battalions were not dug-in, but holding tenuous positions scattered among the hills, and effectively cut off from one another by the terrain. A sense of – “no one knowing where each other was” prevailed. While opposition was expected, no one anticipated a strong, well organized counter-attack. By midnight of September 12, two companies of the 702nd Tank Battalion, the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**, some anti-tank guns, and a few towed tank destroyers were in the bridgehead, the heavy weapons and vehicles being assembled in the dark, close to the exit from the main pontoon bridge-near a small cluster of houses at le Pont de Mons.



*The engineer's bridge was damaged by constant German shelling*

That evening and early the next morning every soldier of the **313th** was in foxholes, manning bazookas, automatic weapons and rifles. The German assault kept coming all night long. Units of the German Fifth Panzer Army / 112th Panzer Brigade had twelve Panther G-model heavy tanks, along with assault guns in the combat area and everyone – cooks, linemen, drivers, mechanics, medics, were needed to keep the Germans at bay. The German assault kept coming all night long.

The greater part of the German 553rd Volks Grenadier Division was concentrated in and around Nancy, about ten airline miles to the south of the **80th Division** bridgehead. The left wing of the 3rd Panzer Grenadier Division had been stripped to send reinforcements northward, where other elements were engaged alongside the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division in the attempt to erase

the XX Corps bridgehead. Lacking local reserves in the Dieulouard sector, the enemy had been unable to launch a prompt counterattack.

The small detachments of the **317th Infantry** out posting the north tip of the Ste. Genevieve Ridge were driven back into the 318th Infantry positions. Communications were destroyed and command posts overrun. At the command post of the 318th Infantry, a sharp fight briefly halted the German attack, part of the regimental staff was captured, and about 120 American officers and men were killed.

Little coordinated resistance was possible as the scrambled units of the **317th** and 318th were forced back toward the bridges. Officers gathered small groups wherever they could locate a few men in the darkness, majors commanding platoons and captains commanding battalions. Near the bridge site, the situation was further confused when American vehicles coming from across the river met the stream of trucks and infantry moving back toward the bridges. About 5:00 AM, a thin line of infantry firing from the ditches along the road between Loisy and the crossroads west of Bezaumont momentarily checked the enemy; but this position was quickly overrun by German tanks that left the ditches full of dead and wounded.

**September 13** – As daybreak arrived, the soldiers of the **313th** were still pinned down by the constant German fire, but managed to hold their positions and fire their artillery. Pvt. Mike Zelinski (a soldier of **Gholson's** battery) was killed when a German 88-mm shell exploded near him. The Army Air Corps sent fighter-aircraft over the bridgehead to support the infantry troops. The members of **Gholson's** battery watched above as an American P-47 was hit by German anti-aircraft fire and crashed near their positions.



*Fighting rages in the bridgehead – Forward Observer calls fire on German positions*

Later in the day, the Germans mounted an organized counter-assault in the area. The German infantry was engaged in small arms combat with the artillerymen of **Gholson's Battery B**. This was the only time during the war that the **313th's** gun positions were overrun. Machine gun fire was all around members of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**. The Germans (almost to the rear of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** position) captured the Command Post of the **318th Infantry**. **Gholson** and his buddies were almost completely surrounded by the enemy. Some of the **313th** artillerymen that went up to help the infantry were captured by the Germans.

The German tanks and assault guns were almost right on top of **Gholson's Battery B**. Karl Weishaupt was a member of one of the **Battery B** gun positions. Karl told via a phone conversation –

*“... We could see and hear the Kraut tanks ...big ones. They almost came right into our guns. We had the guns all trained down to fire at them point blank if need be. Our tanks and bazooka men stopped the first couple and then the others retreated. If they (German panzers) had come right down a few hundred yards closer... we would have been in big trouble... We lost a lot of men, wounded mostly, a few killed – by the German troops...but, if those tanks ...oh boy ...”*

The infantry were pouring back to the bridge behind the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** positions. One company of the 702nd Tank Battalion, parked in a defensive semi-circle, and using the tanks for shelter, rallied the retreating infantry, to help the Sherman tanks stop the attack. The actual number of infantry standing ground with the tanks was minimal. Essentially, the 702nd Tank Battalion was all that stood between victory and defeat for the **80th** this day. It was this stubborn determination that halted this German counterattack. The Germans had been caught by surprise. They did not know there were tanks at le Pont de Mons.

While the infantry fought from houses and the artillerymen hung on, B Company of the 702nd Tank Battalion knocked out the leading enemy tanks and assault guns at ranges as close as two hundred yards. No Germans reached the bridges, although at one time the fight surged within a hundred yards of the eastern exits, where three companies from the American 248th and 167th Engineer Combat Battalions defended the bridges with rifles and machine guns.

Captured German artillery observers attributed the failure of the counter-attack to the direct fire from the American tanks coupled with the fact that a lucky hit from the **313th's** guns, by damaging their antenna, put the enemy observers out of contact with their artillery. The attack had spent itself, the German commander had no fresh troops to give the added impetus needed for the last few hundred yards and with full daylight, and the attackers began to withdraw toward the north, harassed by shells from the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** - the only American artillery unit in the bridgehead.

Max Wheelwright, forward observer for the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** told via a telephone conversation that **Gholson** and the members of **Battery B** were mighty involved in the action near the Moselle River of 1944 –

*“We crossed the Moselle River near Pont a Mousson, that was one of the **313th's** battle stars, that was a battle for 4 or 5 days, we crossed the engineer's bridge right in daylight and they (Germans) were shooting at us and we run the trucks, guns and got everything across there and dug in there on the other side. They were shooting at it (the bridge) and trying to blow it up. And the infantry reserve, I don't know which one it was (318th), they were behind us, on the other side of the river and we were supposed to be four miles behind. I know that there were 702 Battalion tanks right in our position that night and they told us that our artillery was blasting right in the area of German infantry and enemy tanks, looped straight out... Man, I tell you... that was some action....”*



Soon after, Combat Command A, 4th Armored Division, had begun to cross into the bridgehead and the head of the column cut into the retreating enemy. By 8:00 AM, the advance guard had fought its way into Ste. Genevieve, and the armor was rolling toward the east, leaving the American infantry to recover its lost ground and hold the bridgehead. The troops around le Pont de Mons were hastily reorganized. Many of the enemy left in the wake of Combat Command A were captured, and at no point could the Germans stand and hold.

**September 14-15** – The battle raged on. The Germans were being pushed back but, there were still many heavy engagements taking place. German artillery and mortars were still firing on the bridgehead, the infantry had been hit by counterattacks in considerable force on September 14; every available rifleman was engaged in a bitter struggle to hold the ground already won, and extend the bridgehead line out to the east and onto the last chain of hills, grouped around Mount Toulon and Mount St. Jean.

The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was now taking more casualties – Pvt. Davis received a broken arm caused by a mortar shell fragment. Other slightly wounded soldiers of **Gholson's** unit included Noxon, Grooms and Birch. Others, John Lonick and Lt. Black (A Battery) were killed, as was Brigadier General Searby, who was killed by German tank gunfire.

Ray (Mousey) Myers described how he got lost one afternoon, out to repair telephone wires, not knowing he was near the enemy –

*“...At the Moselle we got counter-attacked by the Germans each morning. We repelled them each time but, boy it was difficult – they knocked our tanks out and we knocked some of their tanks out... we really had a mess there, we didn't know where the front lines were between us and the Germans... I know I got out in no-mans land one time there... and an ole boy told me, 'You better get down quick – you're gonna get shot' – well, I didn't know where our lines were and their lines were... I tell ya, those gunners in our battalion were the best – they always hit their targets...”*

In the bridgehead, the **317th Infantry** continued to defend Mousson Hill with help from the guns of **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion** which hit enemy tanks and troops at the bottom of the hill. Just before dawn, on September 15, the German counter-attack started, covered by an intense concentration of German artillery and mortar fire. The **317th Infantry** was driven back about one thousand yards on the Falaise by the left wing of the southern force. On the rear slope, the battalion dug in and held while four battalions of American artillery laid time fire on the enemy infantry, lining the hill with corpses lying in even rows. In the afternoon, the **317th Infantry** counter-attacked and pushed the surviving German infantry off the Falaise. At 2:00 PM on the 15th, twenty German tanks were sighted moving from west of St. Genevieve into the Foret de Facq. The tanks were dispersed along the hill. Shermans and M-10 tank destroyers started firing and artillery was called on the Foret de Facq. A barrage by the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was fired later. Eleven of the German tanks were destroyed.

On the east flank of the German southern group, however, the enemy made good progress toward the north, since there were only a few American outposts to bar the way, and here formed a tenuous connection with the German units moving down from the Foret de Facq.

With the **80th Infantry Division** units over the Moselle River in mid-September, the German forces engaged in attacks further south were forced to move to meet the Americans. This allowed the 35th Division to make its crossing near the town of Nancy. On September 14-15 elements of the **80th Infantry Division** and 134th Infantry Division attacked the town of Nancy.

The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** would provide support for the advancing American troops by shelling the German positions. About six enemy locomotive-trains containing escaping German troops and equipment were observed on the afternoon of the 15th moving north. They were attacked by Allied fighter-bombers and the **80th Division** artillery units.



*Battery B 105-mm howitzers blast away at enemy positions*

**September 16** – This day found **Gholson's Battery B** blasting away at German positions, but still receiving fire. Hodge and Simpson sustained casualties, while another, Pvt. Clayton shot himself in the hand to be evacuated. Lt. Birgdall was injured the next day. Late in the day, the German artillery shelled the Falaise heavily in preparation for a twilight counter-attack from the valley to the east, but the enemy infantry broke and fled when eleven P-51's came over, bombing and strafing. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** gun crews finished the job with time fire on the survivors. The German attempt to wipe out the Dieulouard bridgehead had come close to success, but had failed. **Patton** ordered the 318th Infantry to sidestep farther south, so as to support the **317th Infantry** along the new axis of attack, and asked for more artillery in the bridgehead.

Over a four-day period, **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion** had been the only American artillery in the bridgehead and gave close support to the infantry units battling against incessant German attempts to overrun its positions. The battalion had distinguished itself and had fought on occasion as infantry. It was called one of the most gallant epics in the annals of American artillery combat. The **313th** would later receive the War Department's Distinguished Unit Citation for their efforts at the Moselle River.



*These German soldiers surrendered on September 15, 1944*

**September 19** – The rain came and fell all day. The Germans had been pushed back. There was a short period to rest and regroup. Medical and ammunition supplies were dropped to the battalion this day.

**September 20** – As the **317th Infantry Battalion** began to move forward, so did the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**. As **Gholson's** battery moved forward they could see the results of their barrage over the past several days. Knocked out German tanks and vehicles lay strewn in their path but even so, a German P.O.W. says the Americans will never smash through the Siegfried Line. After the city of Nancy was liberated, the **80th Infantry Division** turned its attacks to the north of the big bend area of the Moselle River. Combat commands of the **80th Infantry Division** were driving deep into enemy territory from the area to the north. Some elements of the **80th Division** were fighting southward in an effort to meet the 35th.

**September 21** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** took new positions near the town of Gustines. They would provide artillery support for the American forces about to advance on the Germans in Gustines.

**September 23** - American forces came together in a pincer move at Gustines to trap an enemy force of approximately 1700 men - including elements of the 1119th Grenadier Regiment, the 1120th Grenadier Regiment, the 1121st Grenadier Regiment, the 92nd Luftwaffe Regiment, and the 593rd Flak Battalion - occupied Bois de Faulx. Allied aircraft dropped gasoline bombs on German infantry. Loose horses were running around and Air Corps was just raising complete hell with the German's withdrawal. The way was cleared for a renewal of the general advance to the east.

**September 24** – General Patton had been watching the progress of the **80th Division** with much interest. He met the XII Corps commander and relayed **General Eisenhower's** directive halting offensive operations by the **Third Army**; but **General Patton** added that “limited objective” attacks would be continued and that the **80th Division** must push on toward the Seille River,

where a proper defense line could be organized. The **80th Division** commander concluded that this mission might best be accomplished by a turning movement, through the towns of Moivron and Jeandelaincourt, designed to outflank the formidable hill mass confronting his right wing.

On this day the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was advancing across a small road in an open field when the artillery columns were attacked from a distance by a German Nebelwerfer unit (6 barrel rocket launchers). The “screaming-meemies”, as they were called by the Americans, were hitting all around the vehicles of the convoy. The drivers were zig-zagging over the field trying to avoid the rockets.

**September 26** - On this day the attack was resumed on the new axis. But the 553rd Volks Grenadier Division had turned back to the west, under strict and peremptory orders from the German First Army commander, and was dug in to meet the Americans. The **317th Infantry** launched an assault to take Moivron but, although supported by the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** and fighter-bombers, the worn and decimated infantry could not take the town. The **80th Division** drive now came to a halt short of the Seille River.

For the entire **80th Infantry Division**, the battle casualties at the Moselle River were 569 killed in action, 2,397 wounded in action, 685 missing in action. A total of 1,748 Prisoners of War were captured by the **80th Division**. 497 American dead were evacuated. 350 German dead were evacuated.

**September 28** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** once again dug in their guns for defense. The weather had cleared significantly. The better weather brought out the German Luftwaffe aircraft during these days. The Americans had to keep an eye out for German fighter planes.

**October 1** - Rain fell this day.

**October 2** – Maintenance was performed on the unit’s vehicles and guns. The **313th** organized their positions.

**October 3** – **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** received enemy artillery fire on this day.

**October 6** – An American P-47 fighter aircraft dropped a bomb on **313th Field Artillery Battalion** by mistake this day. It landed only 700 yards away from the motor pool mechanics.

**October 7** – Anti-aircraft fire control was established through the Observation Post of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**. The anti-aircraft batteries were near **Gholson’s Battery B** position.

**October 8** – At 6:00 AM another big push north was on for the **317th Infantry Battalion**. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion’s** guns were roaring, blasting away at the German positions, softening up the resistance.

**October 9** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved to a new position north at Bratte. It rained on the battalion all day.

**October 10** – The town of Sivery was taken.

**October 11** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was idle this day and once again it rained most of the day.

**October 13** - The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved north again, close to the Moselle River to provide defensive support to the infantry units. **Gholson** and his buddies witnessed the gruesome sight of German horse-drawn artillery slaughtered on the roads, all shot to pieces.

**October 14-23** – At this point the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was once again in bivouac. The **80th Infantry** units were given much needed rest, and the battalions regrouped and made repairs. Rain fell from the 14th through the 19th and it even got very cold. By the 21st it was starting to become sunny, but it didn't last long. Rain, rain and more rain. Many passes were given to the men for R&R in the local French cities, as Marlene Dietrich, of Hollywood, was making a personal appearance in Pont A Mousson.

**October 29** – Finally, the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved forward by about 3 miles.

**November 4** – It was a quiet day for most of the **80th Division** but, not for the men of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**. German 88-mm guns and Nebelwerfers opened up on the battalion. The men took cover as best they could. One **313th** soldier was killed when an artillery shell exploded directly in his fox hole. After the shelling stopped, it was quiet for some time but, then the clank and roar of a German Panther tank was heard coming toward them. The heavy panzer looked as big as a house and the American artillery men were without a bazooka. Suddenly a burst of .50 caliber machine gun fire was heard and the noise of the tank went away. The men of the nearby batteries came over to see two of the German tank crew, halfway out of their hatches, almost cut right in two. The lone .50 caliber had stopped the tank.

**November 5** – On this day a truckload of men from the Service Battery of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** were killed while picking up dud shells in the area. Killed were Wilson, Agens, De Jorden and Fritz.

**November 6-7** – Rain.

## **Metz and the German Frontier**

**November 8-9** – At the town of Atton a new Third Army drive began at 5:00 AM. **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** rode all day and most of the night through the rain and cold crossing the Seille River. Late the next evening they stopped to rest for a few hours.

**November 10** - The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved through the towns of Epeley-Roslves, Nomeny, Mailey and Raisncourt.

**November 11-13**- The battalion moved again several times on these days. **313th Field Artillery Battalion** soldier Sgt. Vertrees was killed on the 13th. The weather was now turning really nasty



and the snow was falling. The winter of 1944-45 would be one of the harshest seen in Western Europe over the past hundred years.

**November 14** – **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** received mortar fire from German positions. Some rounds landed within 200 yards of **Battery B**. There were American tanks in the **313th's** area and this is what brought in the enemy fire.

**313th Battery B** cook, Lou Shirey remembers-

*"... I remember we went into position and here these tanks (702nd Tank Battalion, Company A) pulled into our area and boy oh, that noise they made, and soon as they got into position we got a lot of mortar fire. Then our Captain went out there and said, 'Get them damn tanks outta here! Get them outta here!' They had to turn around and go into another area."*

**November 15-18** – While in the same positions and with the rain and snow still falling, the **313th** once again received shellfire from the Germans on these days. Captain Beck was hurt when two shells landed beside him near a railroad track. Pvt. Partche's couldn't take the constant shelling and shot himself in the foot.

**November 20** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved out this day. All through the night the vehicles slogged through the washed out and muddy roads in the area. They constantly had to winch out trucks that had gotten stuck in the mud. It was 3:00 AM in next morning when Lou Shirey was finally able to serve dinner to the **Battery B** soldiers.

**November 21** – The battalion was in bivouac the next few days, regrouping, cleaning equipment and gathering supplies in preparation for a new drive forward by the **80th Division**.

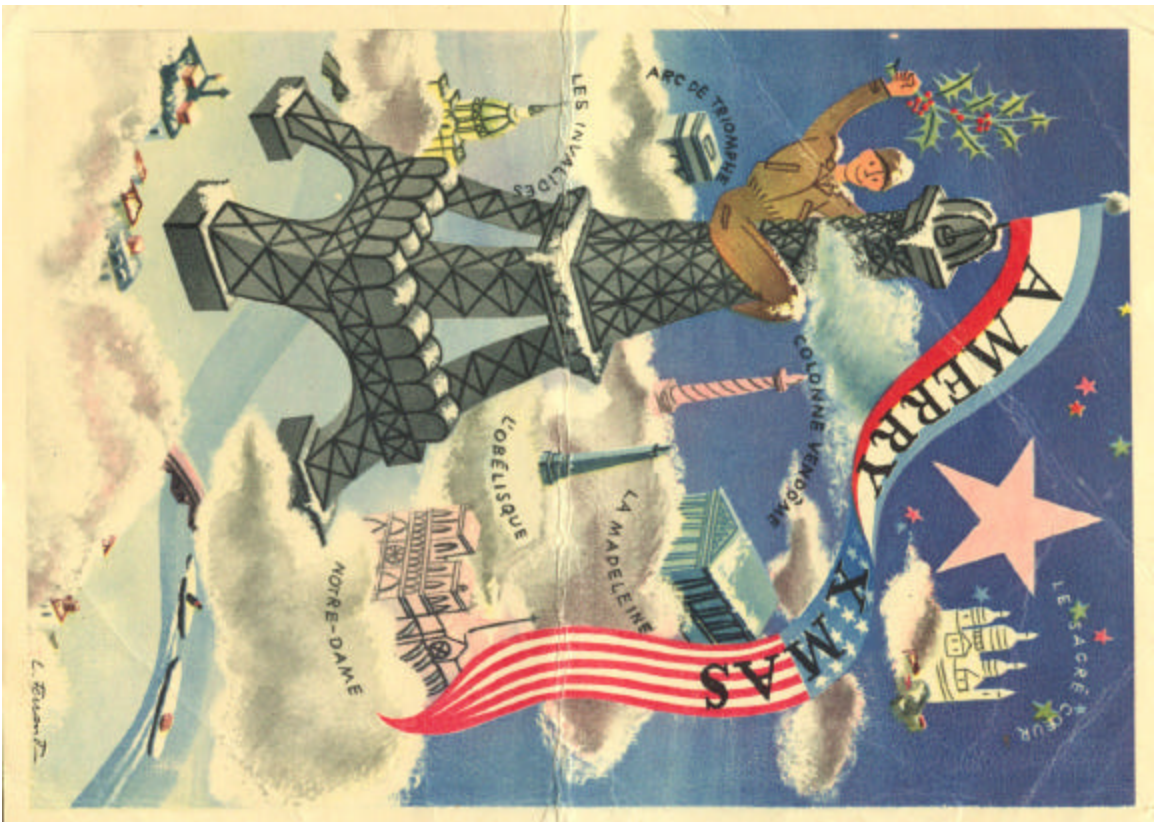
On this day **Gholson** found time to write his wife Laura a letter for the holidays...

*"From Somewhere in France, Tuesday Nov. 21 – Dearest Sweetheart, I hope you get this and I hope you have a nice Christmas and New Year. I hope I'm home with you all of the rest of the year to come. I will really miss you at Christmas. I may not be there in body and soul, but I will be there in thoughts, right at the table with you. I miss you very much. Be sweet and good. I love you. Yours, - Bob"*

**November 23** - The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner on this rainy, cold day in France.

**November 25** – A new drive by the **80th Division** was started on this day at 7:30 AM. The 105-mm howitzers of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** roared throughout the early morning in support of the **317th Infantry Battalion**.

**November 26** – The **80th** was on the move again. **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion** passed through a portion of the old French Maginot fortifications and crossed the Nied River.



Some where in France  
Tuesday Mar 21,

Dearest sweetheart

I hope you got this and  
I hope you have a nice Christmas  
and a better new year.  
I hope in some with you  
all of the rest of the year to come  
I will really miss your Christmas  
but I may not be there in body  
and soul but I will be there in  
thoughts right at the till with  
you. I miss you very much  
Be sound and be good  
I love you  
yours  
Bob

**November 27-28** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved through the town of St. Avold. The Battery would stop periodically and support the infantry units by shelling the Germans during the advance.

**December 1-3** – The advance was slowed. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was stationary.

**December 4** – Some units of the **80th** pushed forward a few miles, but it is unclear if the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was part of this action.

**December 5-7** – The **313th** was out of action on these days. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was ordered to Fonteney for test firing of the new VT or “Pozit” shell fuse. Present for the testing was **General George Patton** himself, along with General Eddy, General Walker and General McBride. Some of the **Battery B** men were allowed passes to town. But, late on the 7th the **313th** moved 38 miles through the rain and snow to the town of Bitche.

**December 8-9** – **Gholson** and the soldiers of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** were allowed shelter in the houses and barns of the local towns.

**December 10-17** – The winter weather conditions were really bad. Military operations were hampered greatly in this period. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved back to St. Avold and once again they were sheltered in local houses and barns. The **80th Division** was being primed by the **Third Army** for the forthcoming attack against the West Wall. The **80th** had been granted priority on replacements and rested at St. Avold.

**December 18** – The **313th** moved 55 miles this day to a town named Vittersburg. The units of the **80th Division** were on their way into the line near Zweibrucken when **General Patton** ordered a sudden move to Luxembourg.

## **The German Ardennes Offensive – Battle of the Bulge**

Nine days before Christmas Nazi Germany launched a massive counter attack, sending three German Armies through the Ardennes Forest into Belgium and Luxemburg. The immediate Allied mission was the “relief” of Bastogne and the use of its road network for a drive by the **Third Army** to St. Vith. The start for the Allied counterattack was to be December 22. The forces to be employed had been selected as early as the night of December 18 when **Patton** agreed to move the new Corps headquarters from Metz to Arlon. The divisions were given to Major Gen. John Millikin (consisting of the 26th Infantry Division, **80th Infantry Division**, and 4th Armored Division). All these troops had been out of the line or in a quiet sector when the **Third Army** was ordered north, and thus were selected almost automatically.

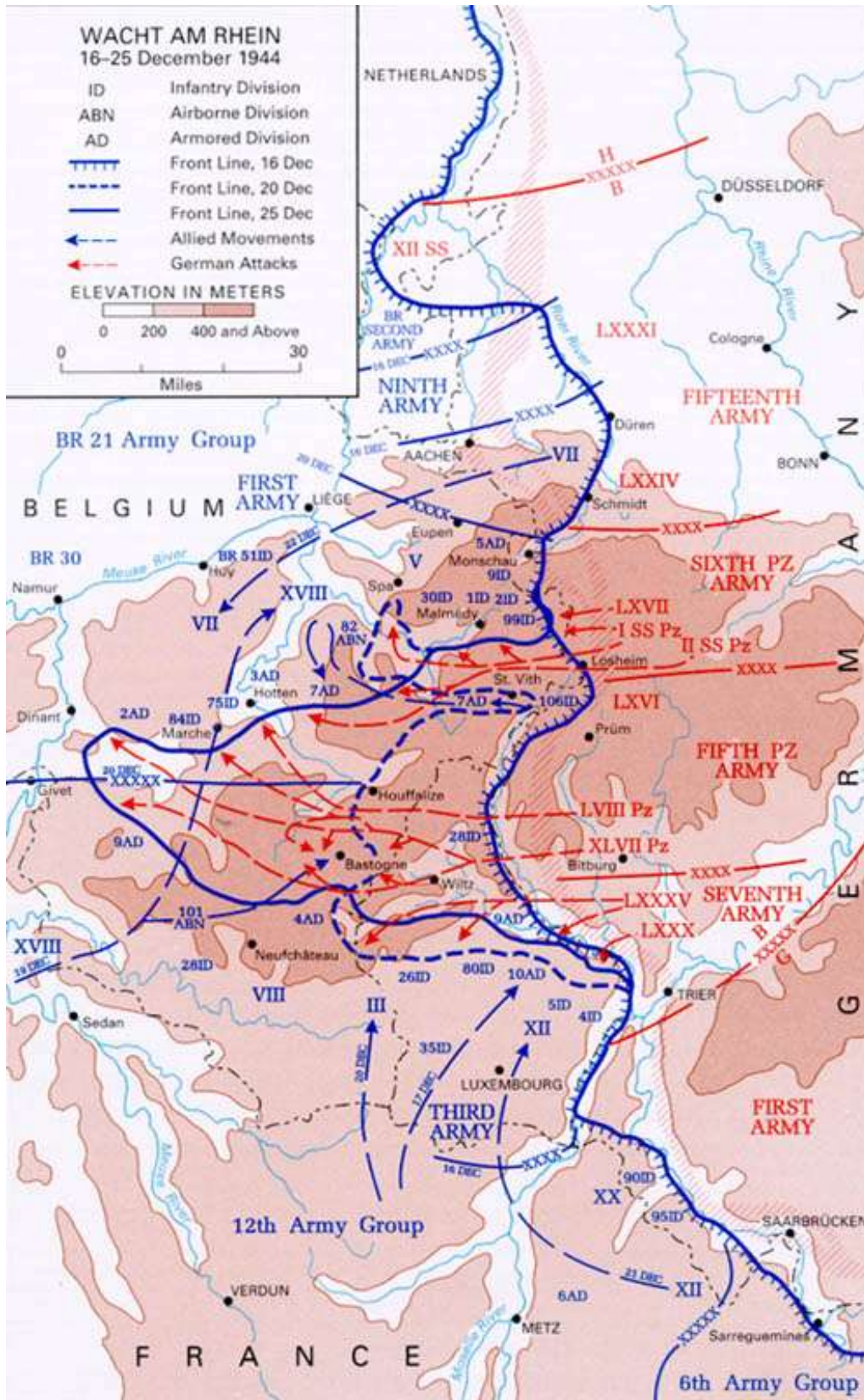
**December 19** – The **80th Infantry Division** was instrumental in saving Luxembourg City from German troops commanded by German Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt during the Battle of the Bulge (the Ardennes Offensive). On this day **Gholson’s 313th Field Artillery Battalion** was ordered north to defend Luxembourg City from the onslaught of the German advance in the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge).



**WACHT AM RHEIN**  
16-25 December 1944

- ID Infantry Division
- ABN Airborne Division
- AD Armored Division
- Front Line, 16 Dec
- - - - - Front Line, 20 Dec
- Front Line, 25 Dec
- ← Allied Movements
- German Attacks

ELEVATION IN METERS





*Nazi troops advancing during Battle of the Bulge*

“Drive like hell,” said **Patton**. The main road from Metz was jammed with Third Army armored vehicles. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** trucks were among this traffic jam. **Gholson** and his unit would have been towing their guns and supplies by truck, sloshing through the snow, slipping and sliding off the road. They drove all day and night (40 hours) through terrible conditions and steep mountainous roads during the 128-mile trek. By the time they reached Luxembourg, it was the middle of the night - right in the middle of a German air raid. It was so dark all they could see were flashes of anti-aircraft fire. The artillery battalions moved into an area a few miles north of Luxembourg City. There they found troops of the 28th Division and 10th Armored already in place.

**December 20** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved forward a few kilometers closer to the front this day, pushing north toward Belgium through the hills. The terrain in this part of Belgium / Luxembourg consisted of steep mountainous roads and towns in small valleys.

**December 21** – **Gholson’s** battery moved again twice this day.

**December 22** – For the next three days the **80th Division** would wage a lone battle to reach and cross the Sure River. The purpose being to form a wedge - on the north by the Sure and on the east by the Sauer River - with a base represented by the Ettelbruck-Heiderscheidergrund road. This area the **80th** named the Bourscheid triangle. Within this area lay thick forests, deep ravines, and masked ridges. Artillery support-except at clearings and villages-would be ineffective. The infantryman would be duly thankful when tanks, tank destroyers, or artillery could give a hand or at least encourage by their presence, but the battle in woods and ravines was his own.

The **80th Division**, whose regiments earlier had assembled north of Luxembourg for the defense of that city, had as line of departure the Mersch-Arlon road on a front of five and a half miles. General McBride ordered the 319th Infantry to pass through the 109th Infantry, relieving it in place. There was no artillery bombardment prior (nor were there any certain targets) for the surprise attack.



The two assault regiments, the 319th Infantry on the left and the 318th Infantry on the right, went forward fast on this cold cloudy morning, tramping over a light blanket of snow which had fallen during the night. In two hours the 319th Infantry reached Vichten and relieved the 109th; as the regiment moved on toward Mertzig the first few rounds of small arms fire came in. The 318th Infantry headed for Ettelbruck, constricted to column formation by the Alzette River on the east and a high ridge on the west. South of the bridgehead town enemy shellfire briefly stopped the advance until the German guns were quieted by counter-battery from the 314th Field Artillery Battalion.



*80th Division columns slug through the weather northward*

The German 352d Volks Grenadier Division was advancing along the Diekirch-Ettelbruck-Mertzig highway in front of the American advance from the south. The German commander was under the impression that his division had broken through the American line and was now marching through empty country. It was the artillery regiment of the German 352d Volks Grenadier Division, bringing up the tail, which ran into the 318th Infantry. The Germans did not expect an attack from this direction.

Farther west the rear of the German 915th Regiment column was moving directly across the 319th Infantry's path. To their amazement, the Americans suddenly saw the Germans filing past, only a few hundred yards away and oblivious of any danger. The American tanks, tank destroyers, and the 57-mm. antitank guns opened up, ending the German parade.

**Gholson** and the men of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**, waiting for the order to move, watched as a few American and German aircraft battled in the skies.

At sundown the **80th Division** could look back on a highly successful day. Extensive gains had been made along the entire front and **Patton** was very pleased. This was, he told General Millikin, a chance to win the war; the attack must be kept rolling through the night. The 319th Infantry loaded into trucks and drove as far as Oberfeulen. There the 319th Infantry dismounted about midnight and under a full moon began an advance to take Heiderscheid. The 318th Infantry at nightfall began a series of successful assaults to gain the hills, which looked down upon Ettelbruck from the west.

The **80th Division** would have to do some bitter fighting before this bridgehead over the Sure and Alzette was cleared of the enemy, but the division had cut one of the main supply routes of the German Seventh Army.



*Gholson's Battery B water truck and cans*

**December 23** – General McBride decided to keep the attack rolling by introducing his reserve regiment, the **317th Infantry**, between the two attacking regiments. The **317th Infantry**, supported by **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion**, was given the mission of clearing the ridge running north to Welscheid. The **317th Infantry's** attack would be launched in the hills between the thrusts of the 319th and 318th. Once beyond Welscheid the **317th Infantry** troops were to turn east toward the Sure River, thus cutting to the rear of Ettelbruck. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved north of the town of Mersch in Belgium and provided artillery support for the advancing **317th Infantry**.

When night fell the **317th Infantry** was on its way. Nearing Welscheid sometime after midnight, the forward battalion started into the assault over a series of rough slopes where each man was outlined by the bright moonlight reflecting from the glazed field of snow. The enemy, waiting with machine guns on the reverse slopes, had easy targets. The American tanks tried but could not maneuver over the broken ground. The battalion commander therefore sent two of his companies to make a wide detour through a deep gorge.



*313th Battery B cook - Lou Shirey*

The 319th Infantry had continued its battle against Heiderscheid. Just north of Heiderscheid were several crossing points on the Sure River, the chief natural obstacle to be surmounted by the **80th Division** in its march northward. When two rifle companies neared the edge of the village German assault guns stopped them. Americans with submachine guns worked close enough to fire bursts into the positions from which the orange line of the tracers came but could not deal with the German assault guns.

Two American tanks belonging to the 702d Tank Battalion came forward only to be checked by a minefield at a crossroads. A German gun took a shot at the tanks but in so doing gave away its own location, and a quick return shot set the assault gun afire. Guided by the light from the blazing gun carriage the American riflemen rushed the gendarmerie building, took it, and there barricaded themselves. About this time the explosion of a German shell detonated the minefield, and the tanks ground forward to the village. An hour or so before noon the last of the stubborn German defenders had been routed out of Heiderscheid.

The fight was not finished, for at noon two German companies of the 79th Volks-Grenadier-Division converged in a yelling assault on Heiderscheid. Then affairs took a more serious turn as eleven enemy tanks from the Führer-Grenadier-Brigade drove in sight, decks and cupolas packed with snow for camouflage. Two of the enemy tanks fell prey to the bazooka teams, and then the other panzers stayed back. Friendly tank destroyers appeared in time to account for four more German panzers, and a Sherman tank knocked out a fifth. Later, the 314th Field Artillery Battalion opened up on Heiderscheid with their 155-mm "Long Tom" howitzers, destroying any remaining German forces.

**December 24** - Daylight found the two **317th Infantry** units out in the open and dangerously exposed to German fire. The attack had to be abandoned; new plans were made for bypassing the town and striking directly at Bourscheid and the Sure River.

Meanwhile, the Americans of the 318th Infantry were losing their hold on Ettelbruck. German heavy weapons had mauled the Americans. The division commander decided to call off the attack; at dusk all of the companies withdrew while the 314th Artillery Battalion plastered Ettelbruck. This second day had voided the bright promises of the first, for The **80th Division** finally was in contact with the main German forces that were well-entrenched in towns and villages over broken and difficult terrain.

**General McBride's** operation would be designed to interdict the movement of reinforcements heading for Bastogne and to contain the enemy in the Ettelbruck and Bourscheid sectors. Orders from General Millikin, received at the **80th Division** command post early on the 24th, underlined the shift of gravity westward: McBride was to send two battalions of the 318th Infantry from Ettelbruck to assist the 4th Armored Division.

For the past twenty-four hours the **317th Infantry** had been attacking to reach Bourscheid and the high ground there. Although the 2d Battalion lunged ahead as far as Welscheid during the night, it failed to take the village and spent all the daylight hours of the 24th waiting for two companies to extricate themselves from the ridge on whose slope they lay pinned by German fire. At the close of the 24th the **317th Infantry** could report severe losses but no progress and the German tanks and assault guns were raking the Americans wherever they concentrated, even laying with accuracy on the battalion command posts.

**December 25** – Early on Christmas morning in the bitter cold the 80th Division returned to the attack, its main thrust aimed at Bourscheid. Colonel Fisher sent the 1st and 3d Battalions of the **317th Infantry** toward Kehmen and Scheidel, hoping to open the road east into Bourscheid. Since General McBride had ordered the regiment to close up to the Sure, to eschew any crossing attempt, the battalion was content to outpost along the river. From Tadler, small groups of the enemy could be seen moving about on Ringel Hill.

The Americans, on the other hand, had wired in to their division artillery, and by now had a prearranged pattern of fire. Four American artillery battalions answered the call for help. A few of the attackers got close to Ringel, but only to meet the whistling ricochet of armor piercing shells fired by a single tank destroyer that rushed around the village like a man stamping out a lawn fire. On Christmas Day, witnessed the most artillery activity of the entire division advance. The guns were well forward, the infantry held good ground for observation, and the fighting now surged at many points out of the woods and into the open. The German 79th Volks Grenadier Division did what it could with what it had, in almost daily counter-attacks of small compass, only to be beaten off each time by the American howitzers.

Christmas for the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was spent outside of Mersch. **Battery B** member Lou Shirey served dinner to the unit's soldiers in the frozen cow pasture outside of town. The meals were delivered to the gunners who were firing their howitzers on the hill.



Ringel Hill continued as the chief Nazi objective in these fruitless and costly attempts, and here the German 79th made its last full blown effort in a pre-dawn attack on December 30. The American division arranged for nine battalions of field artillery to give protective fire, and the men in the garrison strengthened their outposts. The enemy made the assault with such speed and skill, and entered the village before a single salvo could be fired. Concentration after concentration poured in on the building that sheltered the garrison troops, killing, maiming and demoralizing the grenadiers. Those of the enemy who could not escape, surrendered in groups to the first Americans they could find.

It was hard for the gunners of **Gholson's** battery to support the **317th Infantry** during these days because of the mountainous terrain. But, Christmas Day witnessed the most artillery activity of the entire division advance; the infantry held good ground for observation. The total number of rounds fired by the **80th Division** artillery was large when assessed against the terrain: 3,878 rounds and 142 missions. The **80th Division** advance ended the day after Christmas, with the 319th Infantry chasing the enemy out of the woods on the near bank of the Sure, the **317th** digging in opposite the Bourscheid bridgehead, and the lone battalion of the 318th exchanging fire with the Germans across the Sauer, in the course of which the commander of the German 352nd was severely wounded.



*313th Battery B 105-mm howitzer and shells*

Throughout Christmas Day corps and division artillery beat the northern approaches to Eschdorf, hoping to isolate the uncertain dogfight within the town. As it turned out, the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade had no intention of intervening there but was slipping north through the woods and ravines, while a few rear guard detachments fought on to form a new bulwark to defend the Sure River line.

**December 29** – An American plane accidentally strafed the trucks and vehicles of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**. One soldier, Lt. Sutton, was killed. **Gholson** and all his buddies hit



the ditch. Later that day the battery's guns were blasting away in support of a huge battle taking place further north.

**December 30** – On this day Ringel Hill continued as the chief Nazi objective in these fruitless and costly attempts, and here the German 79th made its last full blown effort in a pre-dawn attack. The American division arranged for nine battalions of field artillery to give protective fire, and the men in the garrison strengthened their outposts.

The enemy made the assault with such speed and skill, and entered the village before a single salvo could be fired. **Gholson's Battery B** guns were still blasting away at German positions soon enough. Concentration after concentration poured in on the building that sheltered the German garrison troops, killing, maiming and demoralizing the grenadiers. Those of the enemy who could not escape, surrendered in groups to the first Americans they could find.

**313th Field Artillery Battalion** men, Sgt. Brand and Pvt. Stackhouse were evacuated. Cpl. Gray went to the field hospital after he was seriously injured.

## 1945

**January 1** – Some of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** men received Bronze Stars – Hogan, Brand, Page and Simeby.

**January 4** - Heavy snowfall fell of the battalion this day.



*80th Division troops and trucks moving forward in the Ardennes*

**January 5** - The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was stationary for the past several days. The guns were still supporting the infantry to the north.

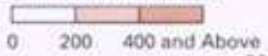
**January 7-18** – **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** were held in reserve for many days. The **313th** men stayed busy, trying to stay warm and preparing for a new move north.

# ERASING THE BULGE

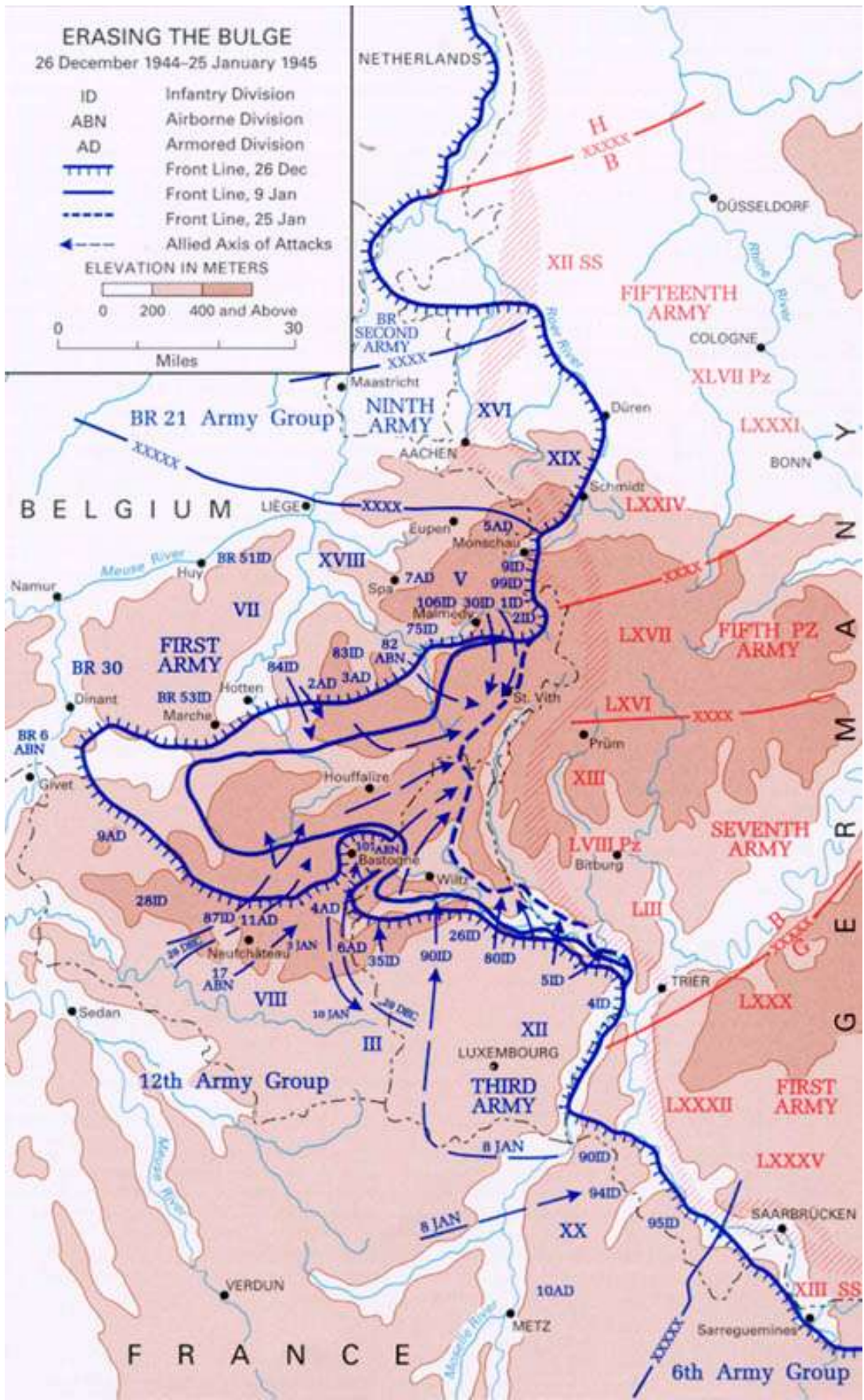
26 December 1944–25 January 1945

- ID Infantry Division
- ABN Airborne Division
- AD Armored Division
- Front Line, 26 Dec
- Front Line, 9 Jan
- Front Line, 25 Jan
- Allied Axis of Attacks

ELEVATION IN METERS



Miles



**January 21** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved north 7-8 miles to Goesdorf through the snow covered countryside. Miserable conditions as the men built their tents in the cold. Three men of the battalion were killed in a minor skirmish with the Germans.

**January 22** – **Gholson's** battery moved from Goesdorf to Wiltz. German shells were falling all around the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**.

**January 23-25** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion's** guns were positioned outside of Wiltz and firing in support of the **317th Infantry**. The weather was even worse these days – as the temperatures got down to -5 degrees Fahrenheit. German artillery fire and mortar shells were falling near **Gholson's** battery. Pvt. Grathouse was hit and died a day later.

**January 26** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved north a few miles, near Wilverwiltz (Luxembourg). Some of the **313th** men were billeted in the local houses. The Germans were being squeezed from all sides by the American forces. Finally the German “bulge” was being pushed back to the German frontier. The **80th Division** was pushing from the south and was about to push east.

**January 28** – The Germans were retreating. **Gholson's 313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 40 miles this day. After supporting the troops in northern Luxembourg, the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** now moved to the outskirts of Diekirch to prepare for the eventual campaign for the Rhineland and the heart of Germany.

**February 3** - The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** had been in bivouac for several days and the troops were given an opportunity to rest and regroup. **Gholson**, along with Pehanich and Ambrosics drove to Mersch, about 12 miles south of Diekirch. The three men had a 1-day pass for R&R. In Mersch, **Gholson** and his buddies went to see a USO Show.

**February 4-6** – On February 4, the Battalion received Field Order No. 30, Headquarters **80th Infantry Division**. The **80th Division** reinforced was to attack at 2:00 AM, February 7, 1945, across Our and Sauer Rivers, breach the Siegfried Line and continue the attack to the Northeast. The battalion was to emplace all available weapons for fire on targets east of the Our and Sauer Rivers. In compliance with the above Field Order, 702nd tanks from Company A reported to **313th Field Artillery Battalion** to reinforce their fire capabilities.

The weather had turned from snow to rain and the temperatures had improved somewhat. The men of the **313th** were preparing these days for the attack eastward toward Germany. On the 6th the men of **Gholson's Battery B** watched a film about Germany.

**February 7** – The **80th Division** launched an attack against the Siegfried Line (a line of heavy fortifications at the German border) near the Our and Sauer Rivers. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** guns fired 550 rounds on this day, blasting the fortifications ahead of the advancing **317th Infantry**. They were assisted by self-propelled artillery brought over from the 702nd Tank Battalion. One section of 105-mm tank assault guns were placed for indirect fire positions to reinforce the fire of the **313th Field Artillery**. The guns of **Gholson's Battery B** fired direct fire



missions on pillboxes located across the Our River from positions southwest of Hoesdorf. The unit continued firing until February 14.

**February 10** – The **313th** was intermittently firing on targets. But, throughout the day there was time for everyone to enjoy the sunshine and rest a bit and prepare for the next movement forward.



*105-mm Gun Sections of the 313th relaxing on Feb. 10, 1945, left to right: Section One and Section Two*



*105-mm Gun Sections of the 313th relaxing on Feb. 10, 1945, left to right: Section Three and Section Four*

**February 12** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved forward 10 miles this day, following the advance of the infantry.

**February 13-14** – The rain came again on these days, slowing the activity of the **313th** somewhat. On the 14th **Gholson's** battery moved forward another 2 miles.

## **Into the Rhineland and the Heart of Germany**

**February 15-16** – The weather was clear and the guns of the **Baker Battery** were shelling the Germans across the Sauer River. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** was much closer to the front at this point and enemy shells and mortars fell in their positions. **Gholson's** buddy, Pehanich, was hit and had to be evacuated. The line was fortified with interlocking concrete pillboxes, disguised and heavily armed. It was winter, but already some snow was melting and the river was high. Across the river the Germans had it well defended, with crisscrossed barbed

wire on steel stakes stuck into the shallow waters. Fire was coming from the German bunkers in the hills.

**February 17** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved across the Sauer River into Germany. The men of **Gholson's** battery were concerned about the German civilian's reaction towards the American troops. They had heard on Nazi radio the broadcasts telling the German people to fight back, never give up, etc. They also knew that the civilians had been told by these same broadcasts that the U.S. forces would certainly rape and kill the German citizens. So, it was an uneasy time for everyone.

**February 18** - The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** started to lay down concentrations of fire at 5:00 AM and fired until 6:30. The Germans fired some rounds in the vicinity of the Sauer River.

**March 4** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 5 miles this day.

**March 7** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 2 miles this day. **Gholson's** battery found shelter from the snowfall that night in a local resident's barn.

**March 8-9** – The battalion had a break from action these two days.

**March 10-11** – The **80th Division** was really rolling now, moving deep into Germany. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** raced 70 miles south during these two days, arriving three miles past the German towns of Mondorf at the border of Luxemburg. With the First U.S. Army over the Rhine River at Remagen, **Patton** rushed his troops to find their own crossing points.

**March 12-13** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved again these days, getting lost from the division for awhile in the area of Saarburg, by the Saar River. The speed of the advance is evidenced by the fact that it was possible to lose track of a whole battalion for some hours. The Service Battery of **Gholson's** unit "liberated" some cases of wine from a local German winery – maybe this is why the battalion got lost!

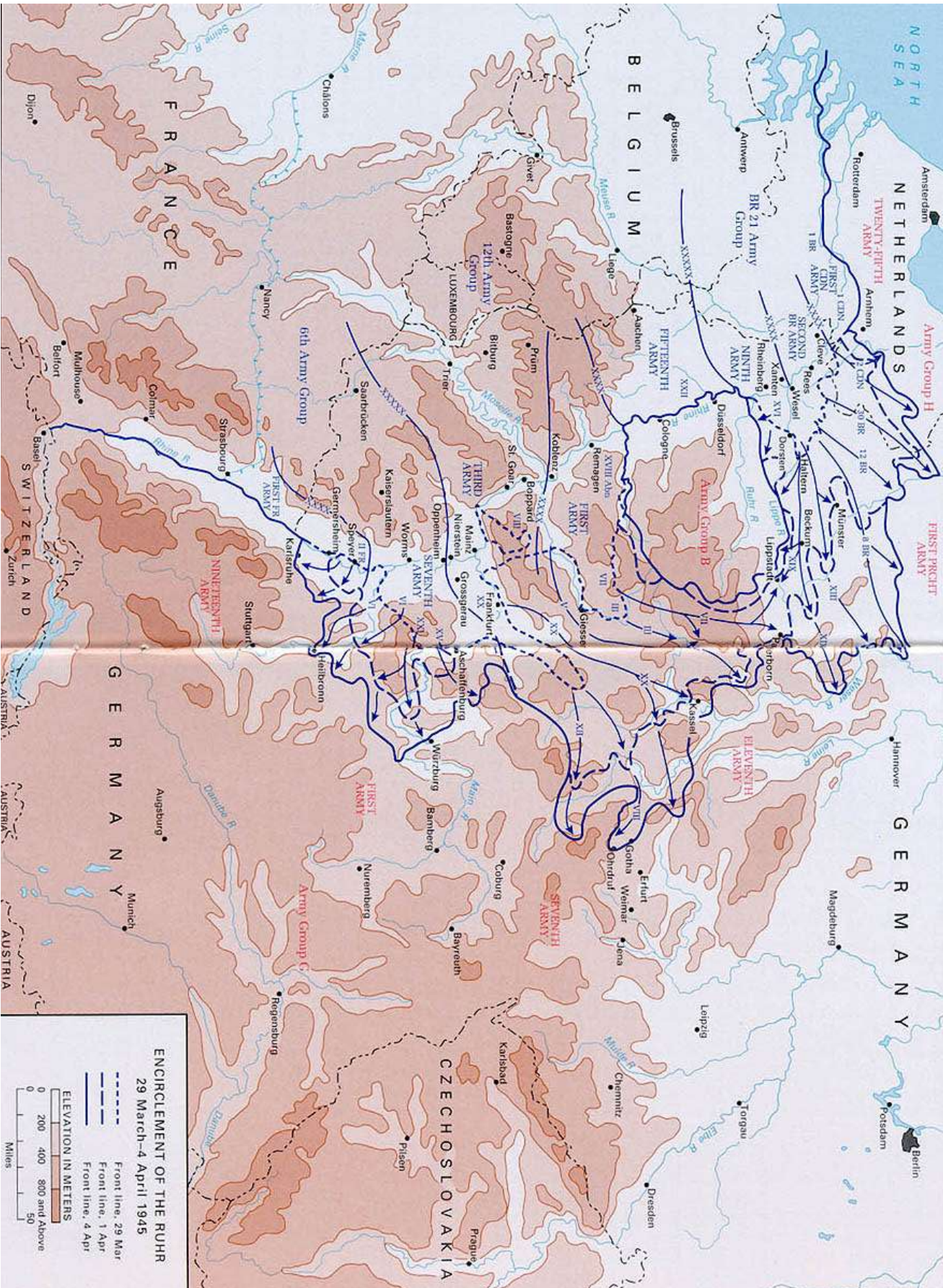
**March 14** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 4 miles this day and then rested the next day.

**March 16** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 5 miles this day stopping for the night at 5.00 PM.

**March 17** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 10 miles this day. **Gholson** and the men of **Battery B** talked to many recently liberated Russian slave-laborers from Sankt Wendel in the evening.

**March 18** – Starting again at 8:00 AM the **313th** moved all day, covering 7 miles. They came to a stop at 10:00 PM that evening. All along the roads near the German town of Kirchen (Nunkirchen today, near Losheim) the civilians were excited and waving at the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** as their trucks drove through the town. The German collapse looked





**ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE RUHR**  
 29 March-4 April 1945

- - - - - Front line, 29 Mar  
 - - - - - Front line, 1 Apr  
 - - - - - Front line, 4 Apr

**ELEVATION IN METERS**  
 0 200 400 800 and Above  
 50

Miles



imminent to everyone. But, the war wasn't over yet, as two German soldiers were captured by the **Battery B** soldiers.

**March 22** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** drove 21 miles this day stopping at Monsheim around 8:00 PM. Just before their arrival, eight FW 190's (German fighter aircraft) passed over the area at 2,000 feet. The aircraft entered the area from the south made one bomb and strafing run during which fragmentation bombs of comparative small size were dropped, intended for exposed vehicles of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**. The enemy aircraft were engaged by 40-mm and M-51 anti-aircraft guns. One direct hit with 40-mm fire was observed on one of the attacking FW 190's, causing it to smoke heavily and lose altitude rapidly, when last seen aircraft was in an uncontrollable dive behind enemy lines.

The **80th Division** had completed their part in the southern encirclement of the remaining German armies west of the Rhine River. The U.S. First and **Third** Armies had captured 50,000 prisoners, 200 enemy tanks, 300 artillery guns and over 5,000 German vehicles. That evening near Monsheim, **Gholson** and the members of **Battery B** drank champagne.

**March 23** – The **313th** moved 27 miles, edging their way toward the mighty Rhine River.



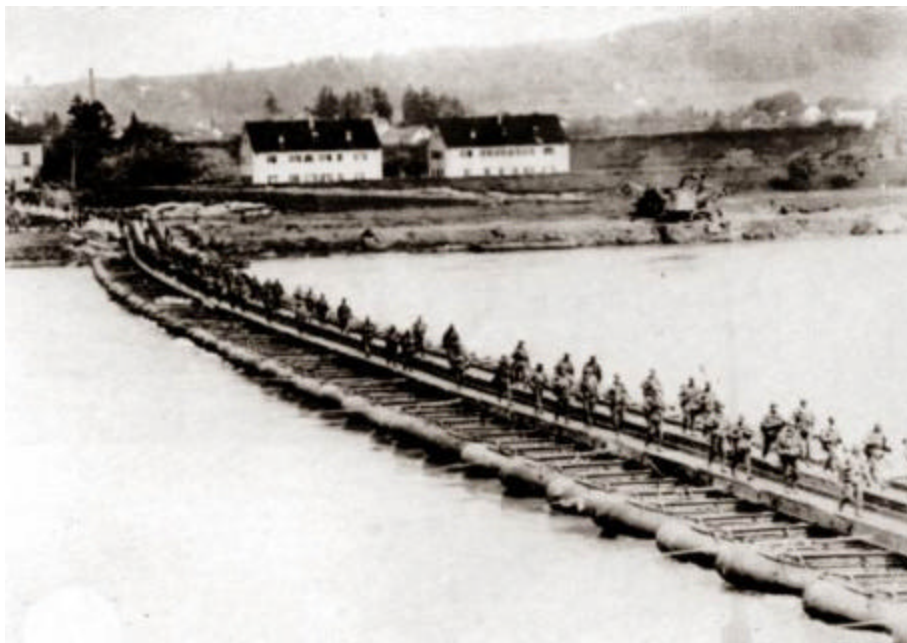
*March, 1945 Germany*  
*Standing: Stewart, (Mousey) Myers, Gholson    Sitting: Intennicolar, Martin*

**March 26** – After a few days of rest, **Gholson's** battalion moved 35 miles north to the town of Neider-Salheim.

**March 27** – This day the rain fell as the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 9 miles, stopping at the town of Mainz – only two miles from the Rhine River.

**March 28** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** fired concentration across the Rhine all day long. The 105-mm howitzers were clearing out any remaining German forces on the opposite side of the river. The **317th Infantry** crossed the Mainz River and cleared out the town of Weisbaden. Along the way they captured factories, air strips, ammunition storage depots, and a champagne factory filled with 4,000 bottles of the wine.

**March 29** – **Gholson** and the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** made their way to the river crossing arriving at 6:30 PM. **Battery B's** trucks and guns drove across the huge (almost a mile long) pontoon bridge constructed by the engineers a few days before. The whole area was encased in smoke from smoke-canisters set off to shield the Americans from view as they crossed. The smoke was so dense that after they crossed to the east side they couldn't see but 10 or 15 feet in front of themselves. The **313th** traveled another few miles after the crossing to Weisbaden.



*Crossing the Rhine River at Mainz*

Word of the **317th's** champagne victory the day before had spread fast. The men of the **317th Infantry** made sure that their friends (the artillerymen in the **313th Field Artillery Battalion**), who had supported them for so many months, didn't miss out on the "bubbly-booty". That evening **Gholson** and his buddies celebrated hard and officers looked the other way.

**March 30** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** continued to move forward. This day **Gholson** and his buddies drove past a makeshift cemetery under construction. They were shocked to see about 100 dead bodies lying nearby, dead civilians and German soldiers.

**March 31** – **Gholson's** battalion drove an incredible 99 miles this day, heading toward Kassel. The German Autobahn made travel fast and easy for Allied troops in middle Germany. Gone were the hills and mountains and now flat straight roads lay ahead.

**April 1-2** - The **80th Division** was south of Kassel. The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 31 miles, traveling through Homberg. Opposing our forces were elements of the German 166th and 356th Infantry Divisions, plus many miscellaneous units including replacement, anti-aircraft and Landesschuetzen battalions. Fierce resistance from enemy small arms, automatic weapons, mortar and direct fire weapons met our attacking forces north of the Eder River. Towns and key terrain features were used as strong points. The enemy made use of blown bridges and other defensive works to slow our northward advance to Kassel. Niederzwehren, Wellerode, Dennhage and Guzhagen were captured this day.



*Gholson – March 1945 Germany*

**April 3** – Moving carefully ahead to the north, the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** took positions just outside of Kassel. While on the road, eight Nazi fighter planes came overhead, signaling that the enemy was still fighting. Some of the reports for this day say that these were Messerschmitt Me-262's – the first German jet-fighter. That night **Battery B** men slept in a local house.

**April 4** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** positions were attacked by German aircraft. Six airplanes came over firing. **Gholson** and the **Battery B** men took cover.

**April 5** – The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved through Kassel covering 15 miles. The German women in Kassel brought out freshly cooked food to **Gholson** and his buddies as their convoy drove by. After about 15 miles they stopped for the night.

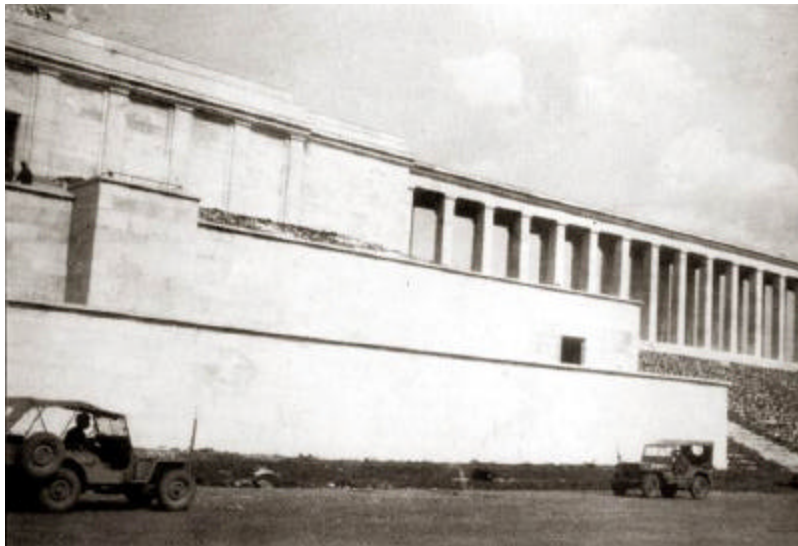
**April 6** - The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved 65 miles south stopping near Gotha. Along the way the men of **Gholson's** battery met up with G.I.'s from the 76th and 89th Divisions. It rained on the battalion all day. They slept in a house near Gotha. The **80th Infantry Division** sped to the east through Erfurt, Weimar-Buchenwald (location of the infamous

Buchenwald Concentration Camp) Weimar, Jena and finally to Limbach, near Chemnitz. Berlin was only a couple days away to the north, but its capture was reserved for the Soviets.

**April 18** - Near Limbach, eight American P-47 fighter planes circled over the area and made a strafing attack on positions of **Gholson's 313<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery Battalion**. As soon as the artillerymen saw that these were "friendly" aircraft, they set out yellow smoke pots, signifying to the aircraft that they were attacking a friendly unit. In spite of this, the planes circled and dove twice more, strafing their own men. **Gholson** and the men of **Battery B** cursed the pilots and took cover. In the second and third attacks, gun sections opened up on the planes. Fortunately, no casualties or damages were received by the planes or ground units. No distinct or characteristic markings, other than the normal white star in the blue background were observed on the planes. It was later learned that the planes were piloted by Germans, using captured American P-47's.

**April 22** - The **313th** and the **80th Division** was near Nurnberg (Nürnberg) in Bavaria, Germany.

**April 25** - The men of the **313th** toured a factory in the forest near Nurnberg (Nürnberg). Over the past few days they were sleeping in the German cottages. They traveled over to view the Nazi Olympic stadium and Nazi Party rally point, where so many of Hitler's fanatical speeches had been made just years before.



*Nuremberg – The site of the infamous Nazi Party rallies*

**April 29** - The **313th Field Artillery Battalion** moved to Regensburg, crossing the Danube River, traveling 75 miles to the southeast. The **80th Division** went next into Austria, chasing the last German SS division. The Germans had run out of gasoline, had abandoned most of their vehicles and were picking up the best horses on their way to the mountains.

**April 30** - The battalion moved 25 miles this day and fired their guns at German positions for a short time. Getting further into the mountains, the terrain yielded snow once again.



**May 1-7** – The absolute and complete disintegration of German resistance during the last days of the war in Europe was never more apparent than in the **80th Division's** drive through Austria, from Braunau to Liezen. With the end in sight, thousands of German soldiers threw down their arms with the realization of the hopelessness of further resistance. During the spring campaigns, the idol of Nazis had been beaten to dust on all fronts, and with each succeeding Allied victory, greater doubt was cast in warped minds for Nazi victory.



*Mopping up during the drive across Germany*

The **313th** was constantly moving across southern Germany these days. The war was coming to an end. On March 7 at 2:45 PM, **Gholson** and the men of **Battery B, 313th Field Artillery Battalion** got the news of the German surrender and they celebrated that evening. They were survivors. The next day, German General Balck, Commander of the 6th German Panzer Army, surrendered his 200,000 man panzer army to the **U.S. 80th Division**.

★ NORTHERN FRANCE ★ ARDENNES ★ RHINELAND ★ CENTRAL EUROPE

# 80th Forward

Volume 1, Number 3 THE 80th ONLY MOVES FORWARD Monday July 30, 1945

## Four D.S.C.'s to 318th

Major Charles G. ...  
 Captain ...  
 Lieutenant ...  
 Sergeant ...

## Four 80th Units Cited for Meritorious Service

### "Blood & Guts" and "Blue Rider"

193d Sq. Co., 112th vs. 8th, M. P., and Band Honored  
 Four "Blue Rider" organizations ...  
 80th's Own Revue to Tour Division  
 ...  
 ...

Near the end of the war, the Third Army captured a concentration camp near Ebensee, Austria. The concentration camp Ebensee was established as a satellite camp of Mauthausen on November 18th, 1943 near the village of Ebensee in Upper Austria. It was one of over 40 outposts of the concentration camp Mauthausen, where prisoners had to work for the German armament industry. The aim of "Project Cement", which was the code name used by the SS, was the construction of gigantic subterranean gallery systems that were intended for the relocation of the Peenemünde missile testing station. In these tunnels, rocket research and rocket production

were supposed to be safe from air raids. Because of technical problems and the urgency of other armament productions, the missile project was abandoned. In one tunnel complex an oil refinery was installed in August 1944.

It was horrible in the camp; consisting of dirt streets and crude housing where prisoners would sleep on tiered boards. The average life span in a concentration camp was only six weeks. People would die of starvation and then were burned in the crematory.

These bodies were stacked in a room next to the crematory and in a trench behind the crematory. This was a smaller camp; larger concentration camps were worse than this. A few days after the liberation of this camp, several of the **Battery B** men drove over to view the area. They were shocked at what they saw. There was a mass grave where over 1200 prisoners had been buried several days before. The “survivors” were emaciated skeletal figures who could barely walk or talk. After almost a year in combat – this was one of their worst memories.



*Photos taken by Gholson's buddy, Lou Shirey, at Ebbinsee Concentration Camp in Austria*

By V-E Day the **80th Infantry Division** had amassed 277 days of combat and had captured more than 200,000 enemy soldiers. By war's end some **80th** units had gotten as far as Austria and Czechoslovakia.

NOTE: One thing that all of the veterans talk about, besides the battles, was the miserable cold, cold winter and how awful it was to live in that environment for 5 months.

**Robert T. Gholson** left his buddies in Germany and traveled home in mid-July, 1945. The rest of the **313th Field Artillery Battalion** would stay in Germany until December. He had more “points” than most soldiers - since he was married and had a child. He also had been regular army before the war broke out, so he was high on the list of determining factors. He returned to Fort Caffee, Arkansas in September of 1945, while the whole of the **80th Division** returned to the States in January 1946 and was placed on inactive status. –



## **80th Infantry Division Statistics**

### **Commanding General:**

7 Jul 44 Maj. Gen. Horace L. McBride

### **Assistant Division Commander:**

7 Jul 44 Brig. Gen. Owen Summers

7 Mar 45 Col. George W. Smythe

1 May 45 Brig. Gen. George W. Smythe

### **Artillery Commander:**

7 Jul 44 Brig. Gen. Edmund W. Searby

19 Sep 44 Brig. Gen. Jay W. MacKelvie

### **Chief of Staff:**

7 Jul 44 Col. Max S. Johnson

10 Jan 45 Col. Samuel P. Walker

### **Movements:**

Activated 15 July 1942

Arrived ETO 7 July 1944

Arrived Continent (D+58) 3 August 1944

Entered Combat 8 August 1944

Days in Combat 239

### **Casualties (Tentative):**

Killed 2,614

Wounded 10,795

Missing 654

Captured 397

Battle Casualties 14,460

Non-Battle Casualties 11,012

Total Casualties 25,472

### **Prisoners of War Taken:**

212,295

**Unit Composition:**

317th Infantry  
318th Infantry  
319th Infantry  
80th Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized)  
305th Engineer Combat Battalion  
305th Medical Battalion  
313th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm Howitzer)  
314th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm Howitzer)  
905th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm Howitzer)  
315th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm Howitzer)  
702 Tank Battalion  
610 Tank Destroyer Battalion  
633 Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion

**Command Posts:**

13 Jun 44 Liverpool (Adv) Lancashire England  
14 Jun 44 Sandiway (H mi SW; Pettypool Hall) (Adv) Cheshire England  
07 Jul 44 Sandiway (H mi SW; Pettypool Hall) Cheshire England  
031 Jul 44 Salisbury (marshalling area V-1) Wiltshire England  
03 Aug 44 St-Jores (3 mi NE) Manche France  
09 Aug 44 Montsuer Mayenne France  
11 Aug 44 Amne (vic SW) Sarthe France  
13 Aug 44 St-Mars Sarthe France  
15 Aug 44 Jublains Mayenne France  
17 Aug 44 Alencon Orne France  
17 Aug 44 Almeneches Orne France  
26 Aug 44 Valetien (3 mi NE) Aube France  
27 Aug 44 St-Flavy (2 mi E) Aube France  
28 Aug 44 Villeseneux (11 mi NE) Meuse France  
30 Aug 44 La Veuve (1 mi E) Meuse France  
01 Sep 44 Vignot (2 mi E) Meuse France  
03 Sep 44 Girauvoisin (1 mi E) Meuse France  
04 Sep 44 Limey (1 mi SW) Meurthe-et-Moselle France  
12 Sep 44 Mamey (2 mi E) Meurthe-et-Moselle France (crossed Moselle River)  
18 Sep 44 Dieulouard (1 mi N) Meurthe-et-Moselle France  
19 Sep 44 Dieulouard (6 mi S) Meurthe-et-Moselle France  
25 Sep 44 Dieulouard (2 mi S) Meurthe-et-Moselle France  
27 Sep 44 Dieulouard (2 mi N) Meurthe-et-Moselle France  
29 Sep 44 Belleville Meurthe-et-Moselle France  
13 Oct 44 Ville-au-Val Meurthe-et-Moselle France  
10 Nov 44 Mailly Moselle France  
11 Nov 44 Liocourt Moselle France  
13 Nov 44 St-Epvre Moselle France  
16 Nov 44 Lesse Moselle France  
24 Nov 44 Charbonnages Moselle France



28 Nov 44 St-Avold Moselle France  
18 Dec 44 Bining Moselle France  
20 Dec 44 Luxembourg City Luxembourg  
21 Dec 44 Dommeldange Luxembourg  
22 Dec 44 Reckange les Mersch Luxembourg  
06 Jan 45 Oberfeulen Luxembourg  
24 Jan 45 Wiltz Luxembourg  
28 Jan 45 Fels Luxembourg  
18 Feb 45 Bettendorf Luxembourg  
26 Feb 45 Mettendorf Rhineland Germany  
06 Mar 45 Rittersdorf Rhineland Germany  
11 Mar 45 Mondorf Rhineland Germany  
13 Mar 45 Beurig Rhineland Germany  
17 Mar 45 Losheim Rhineland Germany  
19 Mar 45 St Wendel Rhineland Germany  
20 Mar 45 Glen-Munchweiler Pfalz Germany  
21 Mar 45 Kaiserslautern Pfalz Germany  
21 Mar 45 Bad Durkheim Pfalz Germany  
24 Mar 45 Rockenhausen Pfalz Germany  
27 Mar 45 Mainz Hessen-Nassau Germany  
29 Mar 45 Wiesbaden Hessen Germany  
30 Mar 45 Lich Oberhessen Germany  
31 Mar 45 Neukirchen Hessen-Nassau Germany  
01 Apr 45 Homburg Hessen-Nassau Germany  
04 Apr 45 Oberzwehren Hessen-Nassau Germany  
07 Apr 45 Gotha Thuringia Germany  
12 Apr 45 Dietendorf Thuringia Germany  
13 Apr 45 Weimar Thuringia Germany  
14 Apr 45 Gera Thuringia Germany  
16 Apr 45 Limbach Saxony Germany  
19 Apr 45 Schesslitz Bavaria Germany  
22 Apr 45 Nurnberg Bavaria Germany  
29 Apr 45 Ziegelsdorf Bavaria Germany  
30 Apr 45 Ergoldsbach Bavaria Germany  
02 May 45 Frontenhausen Bavaria Germany  
03 May 45 Simbach Bavaria Germany  
05 May 45 Vocklabruck Ober Oesterreich Austria

## Sources:

Details from the diary of Sgt. Frank J. Ambrosic Jr.; Diary of **Battery B, 313th Field Artillery Battalion**, APO – **80th Infantry Division**, US ARMY (Ambrosic was a mechanic in the same battery as **Bob Gholson**)

Book: **Patton's** Troubleshooters, by Terry D. Janes – Opinicus Publishing.

## Sources (cont.)

Green Book: United States Army

Book: **80th “Blue Ridge” Infantry Division** – Turner Publishing 1992.

Telephone conversations with Lou Shirey of Reading, Pennsylvania. Lou was the Mess Sgt. of **Gholson’s Battery B, 313th Field Artillery Battalion**. Lou also supplied the photos of **Gholson** and **Battery B** during the war.

Telephone conversation with Max Wheelwright of Perry, Iowa. Max worked in the wire section with **Gholson** and **Battery B, 313th Field Artillery Battalion**.

Telephone conversation with Ray “Mousey” Myers of Waveland, Indiana. Ray worked in the wire section with **Gholson** and **Battery B, 313th Field Artillery Battalion**.

Telephone conversation with Karl Weishaupt of Fallon, Nevada. Karl worked in the Wire Section with **Gholson** of **Battery B, 313th Field Artillery Battalion**.

## Photographs



*Bob & Laura Gholson 1940*



March 1945, Germany  
Standing: Stewart, Myers, **Gholson**  
Sitting: Intencolar, Martin



*Wire Section – **Battery B, 313th Field Artillery Battalion**  
Standing left to right: Intenicolar, Breakage, Myers, **Gholson**, Wheelwright, Carey, Sarsen, Bartee, Barnholdt  
Sitting left to right: Seders, Weishaupt, Richie*



***Gholson** and buddies from the Wire Section*





## Gholson In Battalion That Gets Citation

Pfc. Robert T. Gholson, 1012 South 13th, is a driver in the 80th "Blue Ridge" Infantry Division's 313 Field Artillery Battalion in Germany, which has recently received the coveted War Department Distinguished Unit Citation in the name of the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt, according to word received from the public relations office of his unit.

The decoration accompanying the citation is a gold framed blue ribbon, worn on the right chest.

The 313th Field Artillery Battalion crossed the Moselle river in France September 12, 1944 over the first assault bridge to give close support to the Infantry and in four days battling against incessant German attempts to overrun its positions wrote one of the most gallant epics of American artillery annals.



*Gholson's buddies from Battery B*



*Gholson's buddies from Battery B*





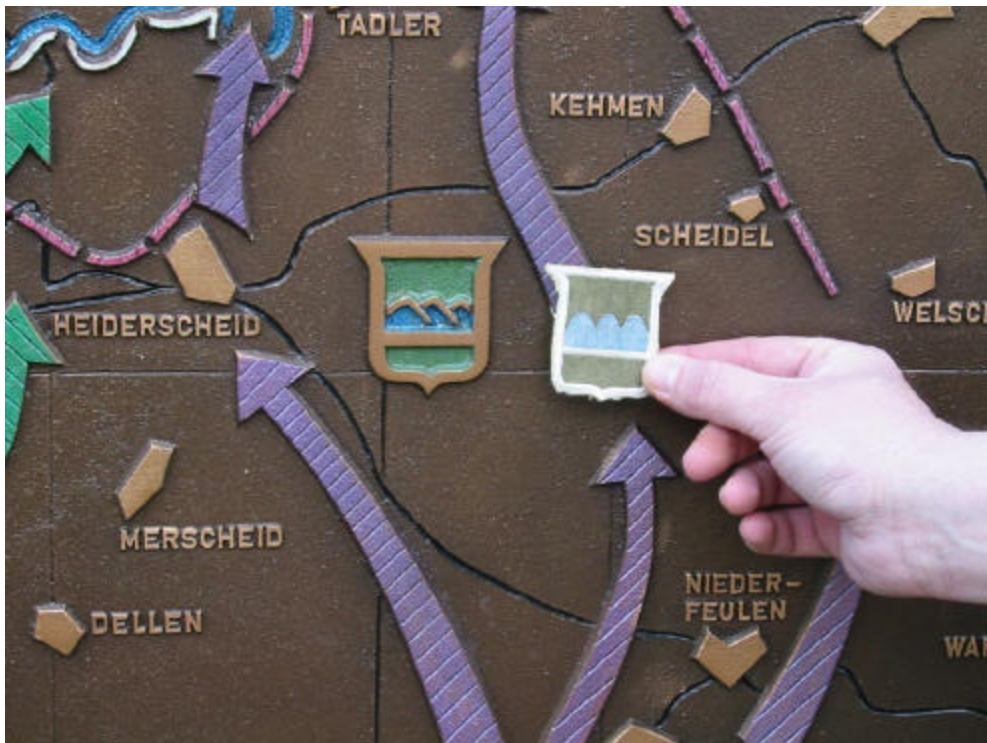
*Chowtime! **Battery B** cook Lou Shirey in the kitchen, Pfeffenberg, Austria – June 1945*



***Baker Battery** at chowtime – March 1945, Germany*



*Monument to American forces near Diekirch, Luxembourg 2002*



*Bob Gholson's 80th Division patch*



Enl in RA at Fort Sill, Okla 40 Apr 47 to serve three (3) years *Robert G La Rue*  
**ENLISTED RECORD AND REPORT OF SEPARATION**

*Robert G La Rue*  
 Major, Inf,  
 CO C.E.S.

jpn

**HONORABLE DISCHARGE**

1. LAST NAME - FIRST NAME - MIDDLE INITIAL <b>Gholson Robert T</b>		2. ARMY SERIAL NO. <b>6 273 859</b>	3. GRADE <b>pfc</b>	4. ASR OR SERVICE <b>FA</b>	5. COMPONENT <b>RA</b>
6. ORGANIZATION <b>Btry A 382d Fld Artillery Bn</b>		7. DATE OF SEPARATION <b>30 Sep 45</b>	9. PLACE OF SEPARATION <b>Separation Center Camp Chaffee Arkansas</b>		
8. PERMANENT ADDRESS FOR MAILING PURPOSES <b>1201 S 19 St Chickasha Grady Co Okla</b>		10. DATE OF BIRTH <b>12 May 17</b>	11. PLACE OF BIRTH <b>Saymour Texas</b>		
12. ADDRESS FROM WHICH EMPLOYMENT WILL BE RECEIVED <b>See 9</b>		13. COLOR EYES <b>Blue</b>	14. COLOR HAIR <b>Brown</b>	15. HEIGHT <b>5'8"</b>	16. WEIGHT <b>160 lbs</b>
17. NO. DEPENDENTS <b>Two</b>	18. U.S. CITIZEN <b>YES</b>		21. CIVILIAN OCCUPATION AND NO. <b>Truck Driver Light</b>		
19. RACE <b>X</b>	20. MARITAL STATUS <b>Y</b>				

**MILITARY HISTORY**

22. DATE OF INDUCTION <b>10 Feb 40</b>	23. DATE OF ENLISTMENT <b>10 Feb 40</b>	24. DATE OF ENTRY INTO ACTIVE SERVICE <b>10 Feb 40</b>	25. PLACE OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE <b>Ft Sill Okla</b>
26. COUNTY AND STATE <b>None</b>		27. HOME ADDRESS AT TIME OF ENTRY INTO SERVICE <b>Gen Del Ryan Jefferson Co Okla</b>	
28. MILITARY OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALTY AND NO. <b>Field Lineman 641</b>		29. MILITARY QUALIFICATION AND RATE (L.e., Industry, aviation and other leadership badges, etc.) <b>Driver</b>	
30. BATTLES AND CAMPAIGNS <b>Rhineland Ardennes GO 40 WD 45 Northern France GO 46 WD 45 Central Europe GO 48 WD 45</b>			

31. DECORATIONS AND CITATIONS  
**American Defense Service Ribbon Distinguished Unit Badge  
 GO 27 313th FA Bn 45 EAME Service Ribbon and Four Bronze Service Stars**

32. WOUNDS RECEIVED IN ACTION  
**None**

33. LATEST IMMUNIZATION DATES			34. SERVICE OUTSIDE CONTINENTAL U.S. AND RETURN		
SMALLPOX 14 Mar 44	TYPHOID 23 Oct 44	TETANUS 23 Aug 44	DATE OF DEPARTURE <b>1 Jul 44</b>	DESTINATION <b>EAME</b>	DATE OF ARRIVAL <b>7 Jul 44</b>
35. TOTAL LENGTH OF SERVICE			36. HIGHEST GRADE HELD		
CONTINENTAL SERVICE			US		
FOREIGN SERVICE			22 Sep 45		
YEARS MONTHS DAYS <b>4 4 29</b>	YEARS MONTHS DAYS <b>1 2 22</b>	<b>8 Sgt</b>			

37. PEIRN SERVICE  
**United States Army 3 years**

38. REASON AND AUTHORITY FOR SEPARATION  
**Conv of Govt RRL-1 (Demobilization) AR 615-365 15 Dec 44**

39. SERVICE SCHOOLS ATTENDED  
**Field Artillery Cooks & Bakers 16 Wks Comp**

**PAY DATA** *3778*

40. LIVESAVINGS FOR PAY PURPOSES	41. MORTGAGE PAY	42. SAVED DEPOSITS	43. TRAVEL PAY	44. TOTAL AMOUNT. NAME OF DISBURSING OFFICER
YEAR 8 MONTH 7 DATE 21	TOTAL \$100 THIS PAYMENT \$100	None	15 65	124 07 H SINGER Capt FD

**INSURANCE NOTICE**

45. KIND OF INSURANCE	46. HOW PAID	47. Effective Date of Assignment Discontinuance	48. Date of Next Premium Due (One month after 50)	49. PREMIUM DUE EACH MONTH	50. INTENTION OF VETERAN TO
<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>30 Sep 45</b>	<b>31 Oct 45</b>	<b>. 6 80</b>	<b>X</b>

51. REMARKS (This space for completion of above items or entry of other items specified in W. D. Directives)

**Lapel Button Issued  
 ASR Score (12 May 45) 98**

**RIGHT THUMB PRINT**

**1258503**

**FOR COM. USE - A CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY NO. 1258503 HAS BEEN ISSUED BY THE WARREN AIRBORNE FORCE HEADQUARTERS FOR THE SERVICE OF ANY QUALIFIED INDIVIDUAL WHOSE TITLE IS TO THE SERVICE OF A REG. ADJUTANT GEN. OF THE AIR FORCE AND WHOSE NAME IS LISTED IN THE SEPARATION PAPER TO WHOM THIS SEPARATION PAPER WAS ISSUED.**

52. SIGNATURE OF PERSON BEING SEPARATED <i>Robert T Gholson</i>	53. PERSONNEL OFFICER (Type name, grade and organization - signature) <b>L S RILEY 1st Lt AUS</b>
--	--

WD AGO FORM 23, 25  
 1 November 1944

This form supersedes all previous editions of WD AGO Forms 23 and 25 for enlisted persons entitled to an Honorable Discharge, which will not be used after receipt of this revision.

1950's and 1960's







*1962 – Tracy and Grandpa Gholson*



Tracy Dungan 2002  
1st Edition