

# Journal Entries of Paul Bystrak

Major Paul Bystrak was in the 1st Quartermaster [QM] Company, 1st Infantry Division

## December 15, 1944

Location CP: Hauset (vic) Aachen

Location ICP: Neu Moresnet

The 7th FA Bn. Reverted to Division control at about 1600 hours.

The Division (less 5th FA Bn.) was not in contact with the enemy during 15 December 1944. Division remained in a "rest" status and continued to refit and re-equip.

Message received on issuing of new protective ointment containers and all units informed.

## December 16, 1944

Location CP: Hauset (vic) Aachen

Location ICP: Neu Moresnet

At 1200 hours the 26th Combat Team was placed on a "six hour" alert for possible move to the vicinity of Elsenborn. The enemy is counter-attacking with large forces of tanks and Infantry in the V Corps Sector, about 40 miles S.E. of our present area.

At 1400 hours, the entire Division was placed on a "six hour" alert for possible move to the V Corps Sector. Six truck companies will be assigned to effect this move. (Goodbye rest area!!!) CCA, 3rd Armored Division also alerted.

At 2100 hours, the 26th Combat Team was placed on a "One Hour" alert. Arrangements were made to have two truck companies (3807 & 3711) report to a prearranged assembly point by 2400 hours to move the Combat Team to Elsenborn.

The 5th FA Bn. Reverted to Division control at 1600. It is sort of ironical that on the day the entire Division is assembled in a rest area, the Division is again alerted for immediate combat.

Col. Anding, Corps G-4, called stating the entire matter of trucks is being handled by Army and the companies are on an alert status.

Col. Curtis called Col. Eymer of V Corps regarding Class I, III, and V supplies for the 26th Infantry in connection with this move. Col. Eymer informed that trucks are to be held and not released until orders are received from V Corps.

Col. Curtis called S-4 of 26th Infantry inquiring as to the critical shortages. He stated the 26th Infantry is short 6 Bazookas, 24 BAR's, 209 Grenade Launchers M7, and 8 Jeeps, 2-2 ½ ton trucks, and 3 Half-tracks are in the shop for repair. Called DOO who reported he can furnish these weapons in the morning. He will have most of these shortages in the hands of the 26th Infantry tomorrow night.

Capt. Zera, CWS Officer, reported they have no excess equipment in the Division other than 11 flame throwers.

Received Army Administrative Order No. 8.

## December 17, 1944

Location CP: Sourbrodt, 5 miles S.E. of Eupen

Location ICP: Neu Moresnet

...The 1st U.S. Infantry Division is placed under operational control of V Corps upon arrival at destination.

It appears that the enemy attacks in the V Corps area are major efforts. Identification of elements of the German 6th Panzer Army has been made. This Army, which contained Panzer Divisions, has been in Army Reserve and heretofore believed bivouacked in the Cologne area. The fact that this Army has been committed confirms G-2 estimates that the present attacks may well develop into the deciding battles of this war...

## December 19, 1944

Location CP: Sourbrodt (vic) Eupen

Location ICP: Neu Moresnet

The 16th Infantry recaptured a platoon of the 47th Field Hospital including 17 nurses, and some Corps Engineer troops that had been captured earlier in the day by elements of the 1st SS Panzer Division. (P.S. The "First" is the number "One" outfit of the 47th from now on in.)

The 16th and 26th Combat Teams were in contact with enemy forces. There were five enemy attacks and several strong enemy patrol actions against Division positions. The Division maintained its positions. Twenty-five FW 109's bombed and strafed the Division area and enemy artillery, including Nebelwefers, were active. The 18th combat Team continued to comb the rear areas for parachutists.

The "Big Picture" looks a lot brighter. Army boundaries will be changed and many new Corps and Divisions are being moved into the battle area. The German penetrations on the North appear to have been checked – by the 1st U.S. Infantry Division, but the enemy is moving his "penetration finger" South and West.

Captured parachutists are clothed in American uniforms, including identification tags and underwear, have American arms, and are well supplied with American cigarettes and candy.

Col. Curtis called V Corps G-4 informing him of the trouble units are having on the road, lost and not knowing where they are to go or why. These units are causing traffic jams and tie-ups on the main road between here and Eupen. He requested that Corps coordinate with the Division MP's about control and to notify this office when units are on the move. Corps G-4 stated he will have Corps MP's check these units and try to straighten matters out...

## December 20, 1944

Location CP: Sourbrodt (vic) Eupen

Location ICP: Neu Moresnet

The German penetration on the northern flank – 1st U.S. Infantry Division sector- has definitely been stopped. Division forward troops are occupying defensive positions on high ground. Mine fields have been laid and all positions booby trapped and well wired.

Elements of the 12th German Panzer and 3rd Parachute Division attempted three probing attacks along the division front. All attacks were successfully repulsed and at least ten enemy tanks were knocked out.

The 18th Combat Team completed the "sweep" of the rear wooded areas and captured five and killed an additional three parachutists. Twenty-three Americans were recaptured from the parachutists during this operation.

The 1st U.S. Infantry Division continued to consolidate and hold positions without loss of ground. The 2nd U.S. Infantry Division is on our left (North) flank, and the 30th U.S. Infantry Division remains on the right (South) flank...

## **December 21, 1944**

Location CP: Sourbrodt (vic) Eupen

Location ICP: Neu Moresnet

The Division received the strongest and largest scale attack yet launched by the enemy since our arrival in this area. This attack was made in the 26th Combat Team sector and was preceded by intense artillery fire.

Slight penetration was made by 5 tanks and infantry but they attack was repulsed and positions regained. The tanks were later destroyed in the Division rear area and the enemy eliminated.

One prisoner taken in this engagement, for the purpose of interrogation, reported that the Germans expected to make a deep penetration in the 1st U.S. Infantry Division sector – ridiculous!!!...

## **December 22, 1944**

Location CP: Sourbrodt (vic) Eupen

Locations ICP: Neu Moresnet

It appears that the enemy's intentions were to penetrate First Army lines, capture sufficient gasoline to operate his Panzer Division, and capture the cities of AACHEN-EUPEN-MALMEDY-VERVIERS, and LIEGE with the Meuse River as his western flank.

The 1st SS Panzer Division was the spearheading Division which broke through and over ran the 2nd and 99th U.S. Infantry Divisions and turned south. The 12th SS Panzer Division followed the same route and turned North where it was stopped "cold" by the 1st U.S. Infantry Division. The 3rd Parachute Grenadier Division followed closely behind the Panzer Division and it, too, was stopped abruptly in the "First's" zone of action...