



bridge at Ponthierry demolished. Reconnaissance revealed two suitable assault crossing sites near Tilly, a hamlet a mile to the north. After a heavy artillery preparation at 1615, two companies of the 179th Engineer Combat Battalion, using seventy-six assault boats the 509th Engineer Light Ponton Company supplied, began crossing the armored troops at both sites. Initial waves went across without casualties, but succeeding waves met rifle fire that killed two of the engineers. The engineer battalion suffered even more heavily later in the evening when a German artillery shell hit one of its trucks, killing five men. Meantime, elements of the 179th Engineer Combat Battalion had started

construction of a treadway bridge at the northernmost site, aided by elements of the 7th Armored Division's organic 33d Armored Engineer Battalion. (During the fast pursuit the troops of the 33d had been riding on the outside of tanks acting as riflemen and had under-

