

358 IM

June 1, 2, and 3, 1944

358th Infantry busy with final preparations for embarking. Division was sealed in its "Marshalling Area" camps. 358th Infantry was at Camp Llamartin near the village of that name in Wales. Certain Regimental and Battalion Staff Officers and Enlisted Men were "Bigoted" on the impending operation. All staffs were busy studying the plans for the proposed use of their respective units. The troops continued training in hardening exercises, such as 12 mile fast road marches with the unusually heavy loads they would be expected to carry. These loads were hand-carried automatic weapons and large supplies of ammunition.

June 4, 1944

358th Infantry moved, by motor, from Camp Llamartin to dockside at Newport, Wales. 3rd Bn boarded the "BIENVILLE", the remainder of Combat Team 358, plus the CG, 90th Division and certain members of his Staff and Special Troops boarded the "EXCELSIOR" there.

June 5, 1944

The "BIENVILLE" and the "EXCELSIOR" sailed from Newport, Wales and rendezvoused off Cardiff, Wales just after dark. They dropped anchor there with about a dozen other passenger ships and tankers.

June 6, 1944 (D-Day)

Sailed from Cardiff in escorted convoy. Kept within sight of Southern Coast of British Isles. Received radio reports that this was "D-Day" and initial reports of the Invasion.

June 7, 1944 (D-plus 1)

Continued Eastward in convoy. Witnessed destruction of an enemy "E-Boat" by gunfire from an escorting destroyer. The troops were briefed by their respective company CO's or representatives thereof. Sea calm. Weather cloudy. All quiet. Heavy attendance at both Catholic and Protestant Church Services.

June 8, 1944 (D plus 2)

Sailed along the coast of the CHERBOURG PENINSULA, past many ships, some of which were war vessels.

Anchored off "UTAH BEACH" within sight of ST MARCOUF ISLANDS about 1100 hours. The fighting on the bluff above "OMAHA BEACH" to the North could be plainly seen through field glasses. LCT's and LSI's and other types of landing craft began coming "alongside" and debarkation started at 1130 hours. The Division Commander, Brig. Gen. JAY W. MCKELVIE and Staff, Regimental Commander, Colonel JAMES V. THOMPSON and Staff, went ashore with the first load of troops, landing on "UTAH BEACH" at 1154 hours. The debarkation of troops proceeded smoothly and without incident. Upon reaching shore, boat leads moved inland along a dirt road South of ST MARTIN DE VARREVILLE, thence North and East by roads to TURQUEVILLE, as the areas to which the Combat Team had expected to move had not yet been cleared of the enemy.

While marching, boat groups joined similar groups and reformed into companies and then battalions. By the time they reached TURQUEVILLE the Regiment moved into its assigned assembly area, by battalions, and closed therein before dark.

The motor vehicles and guns began unloading from the six ships that brought them to "UTAH BEACH" and by midnight 54 vehicles, 23 trailers, and 11 guns had rejoined the troops. By daybreak, practically all vehicles and guns had rejoined the troops.



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June 8, 1944 (D plus 2 - cont'd)

Two (2) men wounded by snipers. Two (2) Pw's (Georgians from the static beach defense division.)

June 9, 1944 (D plus 3)

The Combat Team completed its assembly. Received orders to attack on the following day (less 2nd Bn in Division Reserve). CO and Staff went on reconnaissance. Orders for the attack: 1st Bn to cross the MERDERET RIVER, Southwest of CHEF-du-PONT and capture PICAUVILLE and PONT L'ABB'E (ETIENVILLE); 3rd Bn to follow the 1st Bn; 344 FA Bn and Cannon Co to support the attack; Co's B & C, 315th Engr Bn to blow out the bridges over the DOUVE RIVER at BEAUZEVILLE-LA-BASTILLE and at PONT L'ABBE. 1st Bn to retain all life belts it had on hand from the beach landing and Regiment try to get additional ones for use by 1st Bn in its attack across the inundated MERDERET RIVER. German 88's reported in PICAUVILLE.

An enemy plane circled the regimental area, flying low and hotly pursued by American aircraft. All of our machine guns and some rifles were fired at the German plane.

June 10, 1944 (D plus 4)

1st Bn jumped-off at 0400 with the Division and Regimental Commanders present.

By 0530, the 1st Bn had crossed the MERDERET RIVER with 2 casualties from mines. The Chateau on the island between BEUZEVILLE-LA-BASTILLE and CHEF-du-PONT at (315920) had been destroyed by fire by the 345th FA Bn. By 0545, the bridge over the DOUVE RIVER at BEUZEVILLE-LA-BASTILLE was ours and 2 bazookas and an AT gun had been placed there. Co B was on the right (North) and Co C on the left (South) with Co A in Bn Reserve. The 1st Bn CP was at (313933). The Bn was in contact with elements of the 82nd Airbourne Division.

At 0820 the 3rd Bn was ordered to send one rifle company supported by its heavy weapon's company fire and the 345 FA, to attack the island Chateau as enemy small arms fire was still coming from there. Co I jumped-off for this attack, supported by Co M's long-range machine gun fire at 0930. At 0945, the 1st Bn reported the capture of PICAUVILLE, suffering 10 casualties, against enemy machine pistol fire. 2nd Bn alerted for movement forward behind 3rd Bn, still in Division Reserve.

At 1000, the 1st Bn was ordered to halt while elements of the 3rd Bn captured the Southern approaches to the bridge at BEUZEVILLE-LA-BASTILLE preparatory to blowing the bridge. The Germans withdrew slowly to a position West of PICAUVILLE and the Regimental CP was moved forward. The I & R Platoon was ordered to cover the gap to our right (North) to the 357th Infantry. One hundred men from the 82nd AB Div came into our lines and arrangements were made to feed them. By 1300, the 1st Bn had been stopped 600 yards West of PICAUVILLE after beating off a counter-attack. The enemy was reported to have left a lot of small blue packages, all booby-trapped; also abandoned American Paratrooper equipment had been booby-trapped by the enemy. The 3rd Bn, less Co K in Regt'l Reserve, was ordered to come up alongside the right (North) flank of the 1st Bn. The 358th CP was moved to CHEF-du-PONT at 1430. Information was obtained from a civilian in CHEF Du PONT. An attack was ordered by Colonel THOMPSON to jump off at 1645 with 2 Bn's abreast; 3rd on the right and 1st on the left, to be supported by 3 battalions of artillery and to capture PONT L'ABB'E. Regt'l CP moved to (289433). It made some progress but was stopped just outside PONT L'ABB'E.

1st and 3rd Bn's ordered to dig-in and hold for the night when the 3rd Bn got alongside the 1st Bn. Capt. FALVEY, Regt'l S-2, brought into the CP a captured German map showing gun emplacements around PICAUVILLE and PONT L'ABB'E. It had been made by a German Company Commander and showed fields of fire.

Received casualties and much harassment from enemy 88's, but were unable to locate them. Harassment was also effected by German snipers.

June 11, 1944 (D plus 5)

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June 11, 1944 (D plus 5)

By 0450 Capt Burns, S-3 3rd Bn, reported that the 3rd Bn had contact and was dug-in. At 0505, Lt. Clark, in O from 358th Inf to Div Hq, arrived with the information that our attack would be supported by four battalions of artillery. He had trouble with snipers en-route to 358th CP. Colonel Thompson notified all Bns that troops would only fire at targets they could actually see. Enemy believed to be an Engineer Bn armed with many machine guns and machine pistols that have a high cyclic rate of fire. At 0600, Lt. Col. Clarke, CO 2nd Bn, was informed that his Bn would revert to Regt'l control at 1000 and to report to 358th CP for orders at that time. At 0850, Lt. Col. Nave, CO 1st Bn, reported that the enemy had his 88's and 81mm mortars accurately zeroed-in on all hedgerows and that snipers were believe to be in the hedgerows rather than in the trees. He reported heavy losses on the previous day and that his rifle companies now numbered about 120 men each. Lt. Col. Clarke asked Lt. Col. Nave how to get through this hedgerow country. He was told that most casualties were caused by 88's and mortars, that the enemy waits for us to fire with our weapons so he can locate us and then he plasters us with mortars and 88's. Also, their snipers lie in wait and shoot us from the rear. Lt. Col. Bealke CO 3rd Bn, also stated that messages had to be sent by patrol as one runner could not get them through due to snipers. At 0900, Lt. Col. Munson, CO 344 FA Bn arrived and went over details of direct support artillery for the next attack.

At 1044, Major Nichols, S-3, 358th Inf, called the 1st Bn and stated that the AA fire on friendly planes at 1040 seemed to come from the 1st Bn and to cease firing on our planes. At 1050, the 1st Bn called back to say that the AA fire came from the Germans at PONT L' ABB'E and was medium flak. Bns and Regt displayed recognition panels for the information and guidance of friendly aircraft. At 1055, Regt received the Division attack order for the capture of PONT L' ABB'E. Time of the attack was to be 1300 and the 2nd Bn, 358th Inf was to revert to Regt'l control as of 1000. It called for a tactical air bombardment at 1300 and all Div Arty to support the attack. The 2nd Bn was ordered to move at 1130 to a position abreast of and on the right (North) of the 3rd Bn and to jump-off with the remainder of the Regt at 1300. The Division Commander and the Ass't Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Samuel T. Williams, visited the Regt'l CP during the morning.

At 1215, the enemy was reported working around the right (North) flank of Co L, which was the right company of the 3rd Bn.

At 1300, the attack jumped off. At 1330, the 1st Bn reported 88's were firing into their CP. The left of the 2nd Bn came up behind the right of the 3rd Bn instead of coming up beside it, but Lt. Parrish straightened it out. By 1400, Co A had been stopped by enemy machine gun fire and its support platoon was committed to envelope and knock out these weapons. At 1410, our artillery had knocked out a machine gun on Co A left and that company had to go around a field that was mined and booby-trapped. At 1500, Capt Jackson, S-1 1st Bn, reported that a civilian had shot one of their men and the civilian was being sent to the PW enclosure. By 1600, the 1st and 3rd Bn's were on a line with check point "A" and the 2nd Bn on check point "C". Sgt. Oliver's platoon of Co E was reported tying onto the 3rd Bn as it had had to go around a strong point consisting of 2 or 3 machine guns and 2 mortars at 283941. By 1640, the enemy had been pushed back into PONT L' ABB'E on our left (South) flank and our artillery was ordered to fire there to assist the 1st and 3rd Bns as they attacked the town. The 2nd Bn was still trying to by-pass the town to the North, but was meeting increasing resistance. General Devine, Div Arty Comdr, was at Regt'l CP around 1645 for an hour. Col. Thompson went forward to PICAUVILLE shortly thereafter.

At 1655, one platoon of Co K was reported at (277937), one platoon of Co L at (277940) and an enemy strong point at (27659420), containing an 88 and some machine guns and mortars. At 1702, the 357th Inf was reported as having advanced in its zone up to the PICAUVILLE-GOUBERSVILLE road, but had been forced back to its line of departure. The 315th Eng Bn was reported on our left flank, but about a mile away. At



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27 June 1944 (cont'd) D plus 21

troubles again with Major Davis, our CAC representative. They are in too close to our areas, according to Lt. Col. Clarke. Lt. Rudes, Blue S-2, has turned in a working radio which will send as well as receive. Capt. Steckla, Regt'l Comm O, is checking it along with Sgt. Chittenden. Map supply, as well as all of our other items of supply has been excellent. Major Knouf, Regt'l S-4, has a motto of keeping us well fed, armed, and clothed. Mr. Zabel, CWO RSO, keeps Major Knouf busy. Of course, when it comes to supply of a few individuals it is either too large or it is too small.

Plans to use the German mortars we have captured are completed. Lt. Col. Bealke says that he believes he has a way that will work in battery. Lt. Donnelly comes forth with another ordnance idea. The idea is to use a spike instead of a regular tri-pod for the light machine gun. Tests so far have proven more than satisfactory. Capt. Beville, 2nd Bn S-3, has been quite busy checking flare situations at night. Jerry planes have so far been few. We have received orders from Army not to allow any civilians to pass either out or in our lines. A rather quiet day, with the normal amount of German shelling and mortar fire.

28 June 1944 (D plus 22)

Lt. Flym is usually the last person at night or the first person in the morning that you see in the CP. He usually has information to or from the 83rd Div. Lt. Barnard and his platoon from Co E at the outpost in BAUPTE keeps us supplied with reports and information concerning patrols. Our men and officers have started to really work on counter-battery fire by carefully checking azimuths and possible distances. Ten rounds of artillery fire fell in the 1st Bn area this morning. Lt. Edleman 2nd Bn S-2, reports small arms fire was heard during the night. Col. Munson, with Major Seeger, walked artillery fire out on an azimuth last night to knock out a piece that had been firing on them. Lt. Aughtry, 1st Bn S-2, to report on one of his Bn patrols that called out for the Germans to surrender and received gun fire instead of prisoners. Col. Partridge was Div Hq today to discuss plans with Gen. Landrum. Pvt. Lindquist, Hq Co, came in with news of his patrol. Stated that Pvt. Draper, Co L, who was with him was killed about 1300, 28 June 1944, near LES SABLONS. Capt. Midyett, Co B Engrs, gave us the use of a bull-dozer to cut fire-lanes in the hedge-rows. Capt. Stotler, 1st Bn S-3, reports that the bull-dozer can do the work of a squad in one half the time. We, at the CP are learning the tricks of telephone routes to be used. Major Wallace, Regt'l S-3, has been able to talk to his Bn S-3's by going all around the Div route.

We are having "B" Rations tonight. Quite a change over K's. Capt. Blodgett, who commanded Co M during our training days at Camp Berkeley, is now Ass't S-3 of the Regiment after having been gone quite some time on a cadre and airbourne troops. Col. Partridge had a meeting with Unit Comdrs and Staff to give us plans of the forth-coming attack. We are still doing some training and are improving our positions very much while in the defensive situation waiting for CHERBOURG to fall.

29 June 1944 (D plus 23)

The day started early with Lt. Aughtry calling at 0001 to report artillery fire in 1st Bn area. Sgts Himmerick and Shannon report from OP that they can see flash of gun at 210 degrees and 240 degrees. Both are members of the I&R Platoon. Lt. Rudes and his patrol Sgt reported to regiment with what they had seen in way of enemy. M/Sgt Midener, our IPW Sgt, was in to give a report of the PW situation. Cpl. Carr, I&R platoon, reported two vehicles moving North at 267848 was fired on by artillery--success. Capt. Rooney of 2nd Bn was in to check on the "Big picture" Capt. Shipe, Ass't S-3, gave him all the information he had on all fronts. Our men have become quite interested in the situation on all the fronts. We are doing our best to keep them informed of the world situation. Capt. McKibben, Ass't S-2, has been busy with the patrol activities and their reports. General Landrum called for CO, S-3, and Arty CO, for a detailed plan of our forthcoming operation. More movement than before has been reported by our OP. Lt. Col. Munson says they are getting too



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brave and that he will surely get his artillery to work on them. Major Chandler, 2nd Bn CO, with Capt Beville, came to CP to receive orders. At last, no rain for five minutes. Quite comfortable now and only sunshine will give us a chance to dry out. Co E, 358th and Co E 331st are now along side and hold BAUPTÉ and the bridges. The 83rd Rcn is trying a three boat patrol across the swamps tonight. Lt. Col. Bealke and Lt. Col. Clarke and Capt Falvey talk over patrols and what we can do tonight to aid them penetrating the lines more than we have. Suggests artillery fire and allow them to sneak through close by the fire. Patrol leader reports that he has seven men still close to 296851 and is trying to rescue them. Capt. Falvey and Capt. Popke, Co F, are making plans. With our patrols and OP's on the job, Lt. Col. Munson's artillery have been able to knock out a few emplacements that will pay dividends on the next attack. Plans are now being smoothed out to a high degree.

30 June 1944 (D plus 24)

Patrols tonight on particular missions prescribed by Col. Partridge and Capt. Falvey. They are to search out the enemy lines where the attack is expected to hit after the fall of CHERBOURG. Capt. Falvey and Major Conn discuss with Col. Partridge and Col. Boswell, Div G-2, the possibility of firing leaflets "to give up now." This was done and several rounds of Polish, Russian and German leaflets were fired. Two 357th Medics, who were captured and escaped, returned via the 83rd Div lines. They gave information of rail-lines being broken up in several places, location of large enemy CP and that, as PW's they were made to dig emplacements and foxholes for the the Germans. The Commander of the Tank Bn held a conference with several comdrs and members of the Staff. During this conference the limitations and possibilities of Tank-Infantry support were developed. Today several of the enemy crossed the swamps to give up to the American doughboys. Two different groups of seven each came in. It was reported that there would be more later on so Lt. Col. Munson suggested that more leaflets, followed by a little artillery fire, might convince them on the seriousness of the situation. Liaison is being maintained by us to the adjacent units. Chaplain Wilson and the Corps Chaplain visited the chaplains of the regiment. Their work has been superb and we expect a lot from them. Future operations will bear this point out to a very high degree. Capt. Marsh, of the support Bn heavy weapons company, visited Div CP relative to supporting attack of which plans are in the making. Lt. Col. Stilwell called and stated that 90th Rcn Trp relieve 2nd Bn outpost during the night of July 1st or 2nd. Capt. Burns, 3rd Bn S-3, reported that action was developing to the front of 2nd Bn. He had been at the CP. Nothing expected other than it was possible the enemy shifting for better defensive fires.