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Authority NND 735017

By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

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DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE

90TH INFANTRY DIVISION

REPORT OF OPERATIONS

FOR MONTH

OF

JANUARY 1945

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PART I

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

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1 - 5 January 1945

The turn of the year disclosed little change in the Division's activity. With 3rd Cav Sq attached, the 90th covered a sector from the NIED to the SAAR. All units continued to probe with patrols enemy defenses in depth, harassing their positions with artillery fire and limited objective attacks. An extensive obstacle barrier containing 14,402 AT mines, 477 AP mines, 120 flares, 136 craters, 50 bridges, and 27 debris prepared for demolition and 13 craters, 5 bridges, and 9 debris blown for a total of 55,338 lbs placed and 5,835 lbs of explosive blown, had been arranged. Delaying positions had been reconnoitered in event of enemy attack in strength.

Although the Division was defensively situated, the Division Staff had for some days been preparing plans for an attack to the confluence of the SAAR and MOSELLE Rivers through the SIEGFRIED switch position. These had been developed to the extent of conferences with the Commanding General and Staff of 10th Armored Combat Command "A" which was to be attached. Personnel of this Combat Command reconnoitered assembly positions. Regimental Commanders were oriented as to their probable employment of three regiments abreast in order 357, 359, 358 from left to right on a narrow front and had begun reconnaissance of their areas. All PSW information was carefully sifted as were patrol reports for indications of enemy defenses and strength. A march table was prepared for redispositions. Engineers experimented with methods of bridging AT ditches. Then without warning, on night of 5 January, Corps phoned a cryptic message: "Be prepared for movement." Nothing more. But all patrols were cancelled and plans for attack were scrapped.

6 January 1945

At 0230A Corps ordered one RCT moved at 1200 with the rest of Division to follow on the 7th. As yet there was no indication of destination or employment but 357th Infantry was alerted to move while the Division Commander went to Army Hq to receive his orders.

It developed the mission of the 90th was to cut off an enemy penetration SE of BASTOGNE and entrap and destroy the enemy forces which were being contained by 26th, 35th Inf and 6th Armored Divs. These units of III Corps had forced back the enemy and had fought for several weeks. Now they were thinly spread and lacking in force to make the necessary drive. By regroupment and introduction of another division it was felt the job could be quickly accomplished and the threatening salient cut off at its base.

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Authority NND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

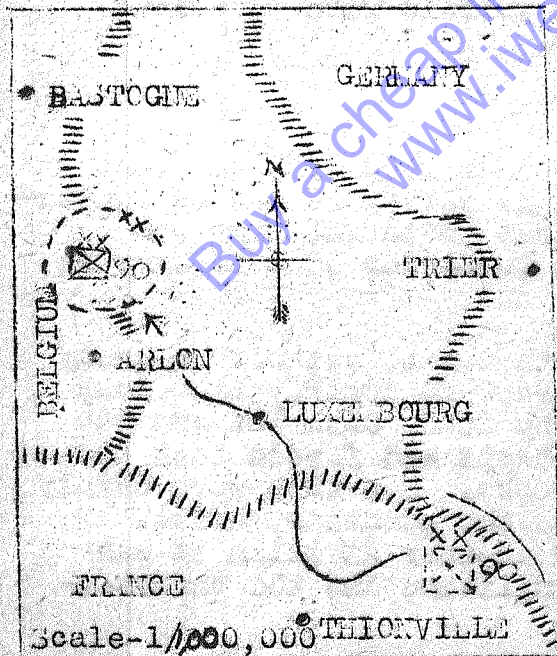
6 January 1945 (Cont'd)

By 1230 plans were finally agreed upon: The 90th would assemble in rear of the 35th and 26th Divs and attack through the 26th on 9 January.

Meanwhile 357th Infantry was ordered to move without yet knowing their destination. But they were directed to pick up III Corps guides at SAUEL in LUXEMBOURG and the CT cleared the Division area at 1630. 712th Tk, 773rd TD and 345th FA Battalions made night moves, halting generally in vicinity of SAUEL and beyond. III Corps had anticipated the 90th would attack through the 35th from the SW. The 90th Div Commander, however, asked for and received permission to directly assault the salient from the SE. This change threw away the Corps plans for assembling the troops but readjustments were quickly made by unit commanders while the convoy was enroute to the area. CT 357 halted vicinity of BIGONVILLE - RAMBROUCH - HOSTERT - NOERDANGE.

The weather was most unfavorable for the 50 mile journey: bitter cold, snow, and little shelter available. War had steam-rollered three times over this area as the Americans first attacked, the Germans plunged westward and the Americans counterattacked. Consequently, nearly every building was gutted or leveled.

43rd Cav Sq relieved 359th by 2000 and 358th made preparations for relief by the 94th Inf Div, establishing guides for the incoming troops.



7 January 1945

357th Inf:

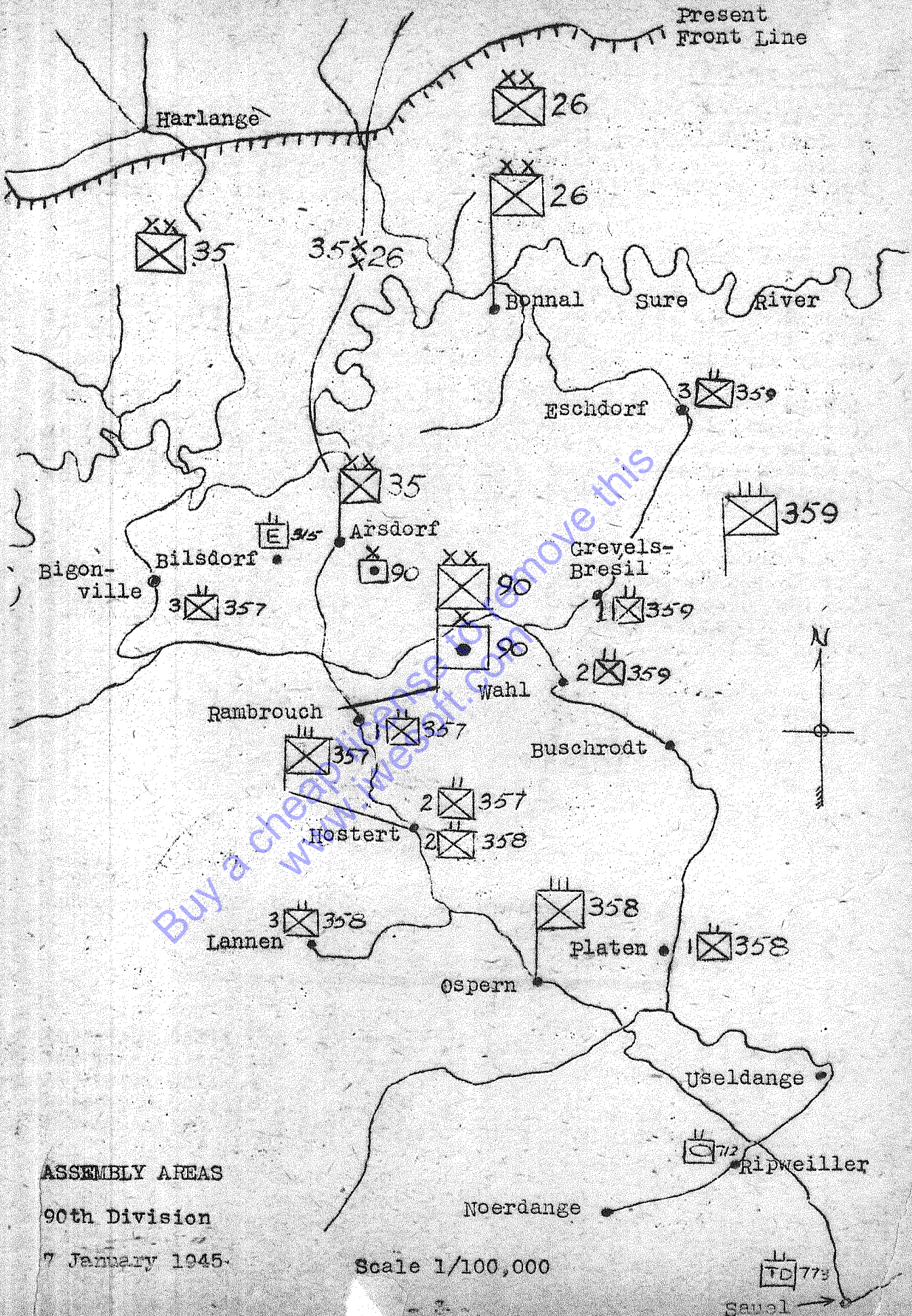
Battalions retained their positions. CP moved from NOERDANGE to USELDANGE to OSPERN and opened a Forward CP at HOSTERT.

358th Inf:

Although relief was not entirely complete by noon, first elements of the regiment began motor movement at 1230. By mid-afternoon the entire regiment was on the road and closed vicinity NAGEM-OSPERN late this night.

359th Inf:

Preceded by 344th and 915th FA



ASSEMBLY AREAS
 90th Division
 7 January 1945.

Scale 1/100,000

TD 773
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 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

7 January 1945 (Cont'd)

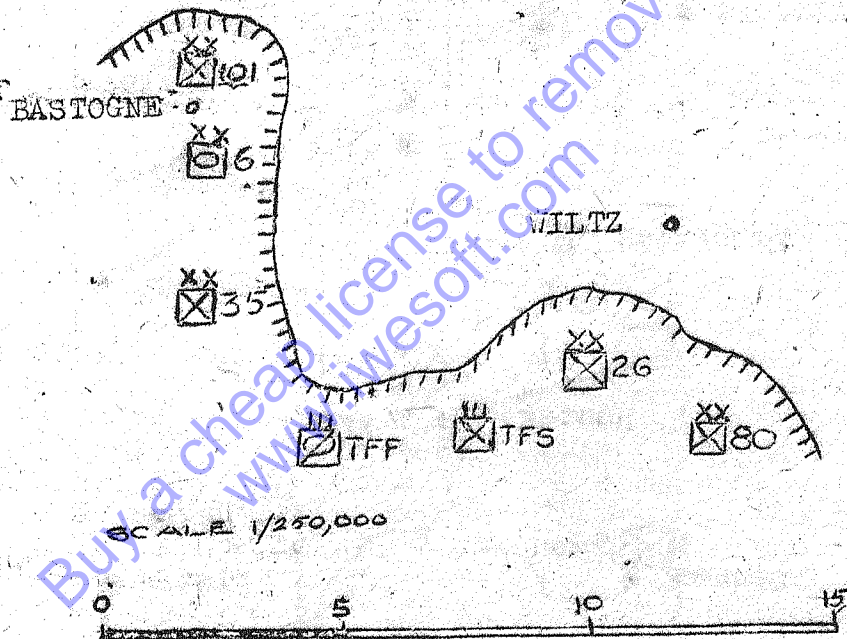
Battalions, the regiment initiated move at 0800 and closed vicinity ESCHDORF - WAHL at 1530.

Division Headquarters established an operations forward at ARSDORF, but the bulk of the CP assembled vicinity RAMBROUCH.

8 January 1945

35th and 26th Inf Divs completed their planned readjustments. 26th Div held the front through which the 90th would attack, with TF SCOTT (101st Inf Regt reinf) holding the sector immediately adjacent to the 90th's proposed left.

Beyond them was TF FICKETT (6th Cav Gp reinf) and then 35th Div (- 2 Bns, 320th Inf on loan to 6th Armored Div as reserve) holding the line to S of BASTOGNE where 6th Armored Div held the American re-entrant E and NE of the town. The III Corps plan prescribed a simultaneous attack by all units with 90th Div making the main effort.



Division CP opened at BONNAL in the former CP of 26th Div. At 1000 Tk and TD Bn Commanders were oriented and one company assigned to each of the assaulting regiments. The remainder were staged forward to vicinity BOULAIDE. All FA Bns displaced to position areas N of the SURE RIVER except 345th FA Bn which was located vicinity BONNAL.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735017By WDP NARA Date 11/10/018 January 1945 (Cont'd)

At 1300 verbal orders were given unit commanders, who had already begun route reconnaissance forward to the line of departure. Written orders followed later in the day and called for the attack at 091000A by 357th on left and 359th Inf on right with main effort on the right. Division's plan involved 357th attacking two Bns abreast to peel off and contain to the W while 359th penetrated enemy lines and cut the enemy supply routes through DONCOLS, 358th Inf, initially in reserve, would then attack through the funnel thus created to capture the Division objective -- the high ground NE of BRAS.

357th Inf:

Starting early in the morning 357th staged to forward assembly areas, closing at 1850. 1st Bn moved to vicinity WILTZERWEG, 2nd Bn to BAVIGNE, and 3rd Bn to LIEFRANGE. 90th Ren Tr was attached with mission of maintaining contact with TF SCOTT after the attack jumped off.

359th Inf:

Assembled (- 2nd Bn) in forward area vicinity MECHER-DUNKRODT.

358th Inf:

Remained in initial location.

* * * * *

Preparations were now complete for the attack. Greatest precautions had been taken to insure surprise. The 94th Inf Div took over and maintained the 90th's radio traffic in the old area. Unit markings on personnel and vehicles were covered during the move, a large part of which was made at night. In occupation of the new sector behind the 26th and 35th Inf Divs, the Division moved into concealed assembly areas without taking over any part of the front and planned to launch its attack through a portion of the front held by the 26th Div. Artillery emplaced battery by battery near the 26th Div batteries. In registering prior to the attack, a 26th Div gun stopped firing as each gun of the 90th fired so as not to increase the density of fire.

Prisoners taken by the 26th Div were interrogated for late enemy information. 1/10,000 scale maps were prepared for platoon leaders and the wooded areas on the 1/25,000 scale map were corrected by photo interpretation, for the terrain, admirably suited for delaying action, was as much of an obstacle as the enemy.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MND 735017
By WDP NARA Date 11/10/018 January 1945 (Cont'd)

Consisting of many steep and unrelated hill masses rising in some instances to 2000 feet and covered with large dense evergreen forests, the country was made more difficult by ice and deep snow. Movement was canalized largely to roads and observation and fields of fire were poor short of the E-W line through BASTOGNE.

The Division sector was further complicated by the presence on its own right flank of dominating ground NE of the WILTZ RIVER, where most of the enemy artillery was concentrated and from where he could place fire on the Division as it assaulted directly along the WILTZ - BASTOGNE ridge road. Of the principal roads, the enemy had fought hard to keep open this most direct route to Germany.

Confronting the Division was a well equipped enemy with better than average training and a fairly high state of morale. Successive defense lines were dug-in foxholes along high ground and in the dense forests. Most of the troops were armed with automatic weapons. Mobile reserves including SS Pz Units were available.

In some ways more formidable than the enemy was the weather. The temperature hung only a few degrees above zero and frost-bite and trenchfoot were paramount concerns of commanders. For several days it had snowed without let-up and the white barrier piled in deep drifts, blocking roads and making rapid cross-country movement out of the question. Impossible, too, was concealment for the infantry with their dark clothes silhouetted against the clean white landscape. How to get armor forward on the icy routes and up the steep slopes posed another problem. And a last disconcerting item was the grey and forbidding sky, harboring more snow, which precluded the use of CUB observation planes, still grounded near THIONVILLE.

Now H-Hour approached and after a night of disturbed, half-frozen sleep, the Infantry stirred numb bodies into welcome action. No artillery preparation was fired as the Division struck.

9 January 1945357th Inf:

Attacked at 0950 with two Bns abreast, Cos F, E and A in assault from left to right. Initial resistance was light as the surprised enemy was overrun by what PSW later stated was thought to be a strong patrol action. S of BERLE the enemy in prepared

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Authority NND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

9 January 1945 (Cont'd)

positions stiffened his resistance. Following a ten minute artillery preparation by 343rd, 344th and 345th FA Bns, Co A assaulted across the open ground from the S while a task force composed of one platoon Co E, one platoon tanks and one platoon TDS flanked from direction of BAVIGNE. Co B supported by fire. By dark BERLE and 80 PSW were captured including the Bn CP of 929th Bicycle Bn.

359th Inf:

2nd Bn marched to assembly area in early morning to follow 1st and 3rd Bns. As expected, the German strength was on the right and he fiercely contested with artillery, tank, nebelwerfer and small arms fire the attack by 3rd Bn at 0950. Nonetheless, one strong point was wiped out as Cos I and L drove a wedge one mile deep in the enemy line. Several pockets of resistance were left to be eliminated by reserve units. 1st and 2nd Bns, moving in column behind 3rd Bn, received heavy concentrations of 120mm mortar and nebelwerfer fire. 3rd Bn captured CR of the road between WINSELLER and BERLE and maneuvered Co L to capture TRENTTELHOF, an enemy strongpoint. Darkness came before this could be accomplished and the attack was put forward to daylight.

3rd Platoon, Co D, 712th Tk Bn, assigned to protect 2nd Bn forward CP fired on two columns of German Infantry as they approached the CP about 1750. An undetermined number were killed but 27 were captured.

During the night a Mark V tank fired a flare which had a short fuse. Outlined by its own flare the enemy tank was smashed by the platoon leader, 1st platoon, Co B, 712th Tk Bn, who fired his 76mm gun at 20 yard range. PSW from 3rd Co, Fusilier Bn, later stated this action frustrated a Bn counter-attack supported by 2 Panther tanks and 2 assault guns. Their attack collapsed immediately after our Sherman destroyed their tank. Enemy Bn withdrew to vicinity WILTZ.

358th Inf:

Regiment staged forward to vicinity ARSDORF - RAMBROUCH and reconnoitered routes to the front.

10 January 1945

357th Inf:

Renewing the attack at 0720A, the 1st Bn (- Co A which remained at BERLE) pushed on through the deep snow and woods to the high ground overlooking DONCOLS. Movement was tortuously slow--

Authority NND 735017By WDP NARA Date 11/10/0110 January 1945 (Cont'd)

a mile in an hour and a half.

During the attack the Air Corps in close coordination bombed and strafed enemy columns racing along the SONLEZ-DONCOLS road. BRAS was bombed and PSW later reported a Bn CP was hit as well as a cellar containing 25 enemy soldiers most of whom were killed. The fighter-bombers then interdicted all German escape routes. 344th and 345th FA Bns applied the finishing touch with concentrated fires on trapped columns.

Arty also smashed a counter-attack of 200-300 Germans as they came SE down a draw on the regtl left to attack 2nd Bn. The Bn continued along the draw and halted abreast of 1st Bn.

90th Ren Troop, screening the Div left, encountered enemy MG's vicinity RJ 1200 yards SW of BERLE. Two medium tanks were sent to reduce this resistance. One mired, was hit by enemy fire and had to be destroyed and abandoned. 3rd Bn shifted to regtl left to forestall further threats on the exposed flank as result of slow progress by adjacent units who fought their way through thickly wooded and mined areas. Co A sent one platoon forward from BERLE to keep contact with 1st Bn.

359th Inf:

3rd Bn attacked TRENTTELHOF at 0720A but made little headway against this enemy strongpoint, which included 4 enemy tanks and 2 SP guns. Arty and high velocity fire from N and E increased as the Germans tried to stall the advance. One TD was knocked out after it fired 12 rounds into TRENTTELHOF. At 0900 1st Bn swung past the right of 3rd Bn to maneuver around it and cut off TRENTTELHOF. From the high ground NE of the WILTZ River the Germans with good observation directed mortar and arty fire, disrupting the Bn and blunting its attack. Closer in, enemy infantry, dug in the woods, controlled the open ground with MG's and small arms.

An accompanying platoon of light tanks attempted to advance on the right flank of the 1st Bn through dense woods, as the enemy was sensitive to all movement over open ground. Four of the tanks threw their tracks. Two were recovered under fire, but two had to be abandoned because of intense arty and rocket barrages.

2nd Bn cleared out a pocket of Germans behind the 3rd Bn, capturing 40, including the Bn commander of the II Bn, 36 Regt, 9th VG Div. Although well-equipped and dug-in, this enemy Bn had suffered heavily with almost all officers killed or captured.

Authority MND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

10 January 1945 (Cont'd)

359's 2nd Bn then cut between the stalled Bns at 1600 but was itself halted abreast of the 3rd Bn.

In view of the deadlock a night attack was ordered and planned for 0100A.

358th Inf:

Remained in Division Reserve at ARSDORF - RAMBROUGH area.

11 January 1945

359th Inf:

The temperature dropped to 5 degrees above zero, but the surprise attack of 3rd and 2nd Bns was delivered on schedule and overran three enemy defensive positions and five 75mm guns. The impetus of the assault carried the Bns through sleep-confused Germans to within 500 yards of their objective (the main crossroads just east of BOHOEY) before enemy tanks, half tracks and SP guns could be brought to stem the advance. Artillery was promptly called for and Co K seized the crossroads and captured 75PsW.

At daylight, 3rd and 2nd Bns consolidated their positions with 2nd Bn refusing the right flank. Both Bns then busied themselves with German vehicles lining the roads. Division and Corps Arty swung their fires, including concentrations of Pozit, on these columns with devastating results.

TDs of Co C, 773rd TD Bn, moving up, surprised a company of enemy infantry and killed an estimated 100. In addition, they destroyed 1 Mark III, 2 Mark IV, 3 Mark V, 1 armored car, 1 half-track, 7 SP guns and 1 motorcycle.

In the afternoon Cos I & L seized Hill 510 to the NE driving off enemy resistance. Co K remained at the CR tied in with 357 on the left. 1st Bn assembled vicinity TRENTELHOF. 380 PsW were taken in the night attack and subsequent blocking action during the day.

357th Inf:

The attack of 1st Bn toward DONCOLS found the enemy unwilling to give up the town since the advance threatened his withdrawal routes to the NE. Exerting more pressure, the Bn entered the town shortly after noon under increasing arty and small arms fire. Mop-up continued until after dark. Over 300 PsW were captured.

2nd Bn attacked SONLEZ surprising and capturing 65 PsW at a mill S of the town. This proved to be a Regtl CP and numerous documents of value were captured. Continuing on at 1430, Co's G and E met very

Authority NND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

11 January 1945 (Cont'd)

stubborn resistance which continued until Co E outflanked the town from the NE after dark. SONLEZ was entered at 2200 and several hundred more PSW were gathered up as the Bn fought groups of bewildered enemy trying to escape through the town. Not until 1130 the next day was SONLEZ completely cleared. After agreement with TF Scott established a temporary boundary, 3rd Bn attacked at 1330 toward the high ground on the regtl left to secure a passageway for commitment of the 358. Co K moved toward the N hill and Co L the S. Again the enemy fought dislodgement from prepared positions until at last pressured by TF Scott from the SW and 3rd Bn from the SE the Germans gave ground, losing 53 prisoners to Co L and 150 to Co K.

90th Rcn Troop was detached from the 357 at 1545 and troop assembled at BOULAIDE as Div Res.

358th Inf:

Alerted for commitment on Division left, the Regiment shuttle-marched at 0730 to forward assembly area at BAVIGNE. Later the Battalions closed in assembly areas behind 357th Inf.

* * * * *

Captured documents revealed considerable confusion among enemy units. Interrogation of enemy officers elicited that communications had been hadly disrupted the day before and many units did not know what was happening. This accounted in part for some of the 1265 prisoners captured in this one day.

In addition, confirmation was gained that the Division's original attack on the 9th was in fact a surprise. Paragraph 2 of a directive issued by 13th Para Regt on 10 Jan at 2015 hours reads as follows:

"It is imperative that steps be taken to ascertain whether or not the American 90th Infantry Division has been committed. Special attention must be given to the numbers 357, 358, 359, 343, 344, 345, 915 and 315. Prisoners identified with these numbers will immediately be taken to the Regt Section "Ia" (G-3).

Without doubt the Division's hard-hitting, three-day drive from its unexpected inception had severely mauled the enemy defenses and ham-strung his efforts at withdrawal. The next several days would see complete collapse of the enemy salient.

The following units were considered totally wiped out: I & II Bns, 36th Regt. The Fusilier Bn of the Fuehrer Gren Brig. The Gren Bn of the FGB. The Begleits (Escort) Co of the FGB. The 929th Bicycle Bn attached to the FGB. The 13th Regt of the 5th Para Div. The 5th Mortar Bn of the 5th Para Div. It was believed that most other units of the 5th Para Div could no longer operate as such, even if not completely destroyed.

Authority MND 735017
By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

12 January 1945.

357th Inf:

Prior to moving forward, the regiment mopped up within its area. Then 2nd Bn continued its attack to the high ground SE of BRAS.

358th Inf:

At 0730 the regiment attacked in column of Bns - 1st, 2nd and 3rd - up the draw on regtl left. Initial resistance was light and 1st Bn quickly seized its objective containing to the W as the 35th Inf Div drove in from that direction.

2nd Bn entering SONLEZ, had a lively skirmish with enemy elements not yet mopped up. Continuing on, the Bn entered BRAS from the S. A hot fight developed with enemy infantry and armor who maintained an aggressive defense. After several hours of see-saw battling, our troops held the lower part of BRAS but could not gain the upper terrace.

359th Inf:

1st Bn moved to BOULAIDE as Div Reserve. Other positions were unchanged. About 2000, 30 Germans, who were security guard for the crossroads at vP650545, penetrated from the NE to the intersection. 10 were killed, 10 captured and others escaped, shooting at several jeeps belonging to the 357th Inf on the road toward DONCOLS. This group also managed to lay mines at the intersection which was not discovered until morning when the 3rd Bn Commander was injured as his jeep blew up.

90th Ren Troop:

Traveling around Division left flank, the Troop made contact with elements 35th Inf Div who were on the high ground SW of BRAS, the 6th Armd Div who were 12-14 hundred yards NW of BRAS, and the 358th Inf, 1st Bn.

13 January 1945.

358th Inf:

At 0400, having brought up its own tanks and TDs, the 2nd Bn attacked upper BRAS again, hitting the enemy on the flank as he faced W to counter 6th Armd Div's push vicinity of WARDIN. The

Authority MND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

13 January 1945 (Cont'd)

Germans had reinforced the position with SS troops and halted the battalion's attack with tank fire. A coordinated attack with 3rd Bn was planned for 0700. After the jump off, Cos F and G pushed through the town, leaving Co E to mop up and the battalion slowly forced the Germans back across the road, up onto the high ground beyond and into the woods. Further advance was stopped by tank or SP fire from the N and mortar and artillery fire from the E.

3rd Bn, attacking on the right, hit the retreating enemy again on the flank, disrupting his organization. The enemy reinforced the high ground at 1100 with another company of SS troops and SP guns and fought back furiously. Two US tanks were disabled by high velocity fire. AT guns and Arty blazed away at the enemy in both battalion areas and Co I finally captured the high ground (Hill 530) at 1500. In the severe fighting the battalion suffered 30-40 casualties but had taken 70 prisoners. 122 PSW total were captured during the day.

357th Inf:

2nd Bn continued the attack on right of 358th Inf echeloned to the right rear. 3rd Bn relieved 3rd Bn, 359th Inf on Hill 510.

359th Inf:

Prepared for relief by 357th Inf and elements 26th Inf Div as new Division boundaries were assigned. The 26th Div had been given the mission of organizing and holding its position on the high ground overlooking WILTZ. 2nd Bn, therefore, was relieved by 3rd Bn, 328th Inf, at 1515 and the battalion closed in BOULAIDE at 1815. 3rd Bn, relieved by 357, moved to BAASCHLEIDEN, closing at 1715.

Division CP opened at battered HARLANGE, LUXEMBOURG, at 1400.

90th Ren Tr continued to maintain contact between 358th Inf and 6th Armd Div.

14 January 1945

Division had joined hands with 6th Armd Div and 35th Inf Div attacking from the W. The salient was sheared off and Corps now called for resumption of attack to the NE. Redisposition of units was accomplished as Division side-slipped into its new sector with 6th Armd Div on its left, 26th holding on the right and 35th Division in Corps Reserve.

Authority MND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

14 January 1945 (Cont'd)

358th Inf:

Patrols to the front kept enemy contact and brought back several prisoners. Contact patrols between 2nd and 3rd Bn gathered up 14 more PSW. In the morning 2nd Bn joined 3rd Bn on Hill 530. Both 2nd and 3rd Bns attacked in the afternoon toward their new objective vicinity NEIDERWALPACH. 2nd Bn cleared to the RR tracks but as it crossed received intense fire from tanks, SP guns, and Infantry. One TD and one tank were knocked out and leaving one platoon of Co E across the tracks, the remainder of the battalion disposed generally just S of the tracks. Captured 32 PSW in a building at vp626575. 3rd Bn became heavily engaged and fought every yard of the way thru the thick woods. As the enemy were forced back, they shelled the battalion areas unceasingly. By dark 3rd Bn was echeloned to the right rear of 2nd Bn and still fighting on into the night.

357th Inf:

Continued to send strong combat patrols forward in zone capturing PSW. In the afternoon 2nd Bn attacked on right of 358th Inf meeting only light resistance. Battalion halted with three Cos, E, G, F, on line from left to right; tied in with 3rd Bn who remained on Hill 510. Co B was attached to 2nd Bn as reserve while 1st Bn (-) remained in DONCOLS.

359th Inf:

The regiment remained at BOULAIDE as Division Reserve, but received warning orders to be ready to assemble vicinity WARDIN prepared for employment on Division left flank.

15 January 1945

358th Inf:

The attack to the NE was resumed at 0800. 2nd Bn, with so much open ground on its left covered by assault gun fire, did not venture more than a platoon beyond the railroad tracks. Resistance in front of the 3rd Bn proved unexpectedly strong, the enemy having reinforced during the night. Caught in a heavy cross-fire of MGs, an enemy artillery TOT and intense small arms fire from enemy entrenched on the reverse slope, the battalion finally fell back slowly some 500 yards where it halted and resisted all further attempts to drive it back. One tank pushed to the railroad track only to be hit from the rear by an AT gun. A second tank forced its way across the railroad tracks where it met a similar fate from an 88 gun and other AT guns. The battalion's casualties were heavy (about 46 men killed and wounded including

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735 017
By WDP NARA Date 11/10/0115 January 1945 (Cont'd)

6 officers). 1st Bn had started in the trace of 2nd Bn but en-route met small arms from the NE. Five men, including one Company Commander, were wounded as Co A cleared the pocket. Then came orders from Regiment directing 2nd and 3rd Bns to hold in place while 1st Bn made a forced march around the Division left in the sector of the advancing 6th Armd Div to attack NEIDERWAMPACH from the vicinity of BENONCHAMPS. At 1700, 14 battalions of Field Artillery dropped a 2-round TOT on NEIDERWAMPACH. Too stunned to withdraw, 302 Germans after a brief fight quickly surrendered to the 1st Bn as it closed in from the NW. Only four casualties resulted to the attacking battalion during its brilliant maneuver which outflanked the enemy line. An enemy SP gun was knocked out by tankers from the 712th Tpk Bn as the town was entered.

357th Inf:

2nd Bn moving forward to maintain contact with 358th Inf, became heavily engaged with enemy strongpoints in and around the railroad tunnels along the valley. The regimental mission was temporarily changed to a containing action. 1st Bn relieved 3rd Bn who assembled in rear of 2nd Bn in the early morning. 1st Bn then patrolled toward the river killing and capturing a number of enemy patrols and outposts. 3rd Bn relieved 2nd Bn after dark and the latter assembled at DONCOLS.

359th Inf:

2nd Bn moved on motors to vicinity WARDIN in late afternoon. Rest of regiment remained at BOULAIDE prepared to stage forward in the morning.

16 January 1945359th Inf:

1st Bn moved by motor from BOULAIDE to BENONCHAMPS, arriving at 1100. 3rd Bn moved by motor from BOULAIDE at 0850 and closed in WARDIN at 1042. At 1000 2nd Bn attacked with Co E on the left and Co G on the right, Co F in reserve, in coordination with 6th Armd Div to capture the high ground E of LONGVILLY. The infantry mopped up the town and proceeded to their objective against light opposition. Moving onto the forward slope Cos E and G received heavy small arms, MG and SP fire and pulled back to the reverse slope. Co F captured the BOURCY - LONGVILLY road junction and kept physical contact with 6th Armd Div. 1st Bn followed along the high ground and tied in for the night between Co F and 1st Bn, 358th Inf. Co's E and F returned to LONGVILLY. 3rd Bn marched to BENONCHAMPS, closing at 1500. Patrols from 2nd Bn went E toward the high ground at (vp665698) and drew small arms fire from

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735017
By WDP NARA Date 11/10/0116 January 1945 (Cont'd)

the woods at (vp6760) and high velocity fire from the NE.

358th Inf:

During the night 3rd Bn relieved 2nd Bn of its portion of the front and at daylight pushed patrols forward. 2nd Bn assembled vicinity BRAS.

1st Bn mopped up at NEIDERWAMPACH and gathered up 60 more PSW. In early morning Co F moved around the Division left flank and occupied the nose at (vp638584). The rest of the Bn marched later in the morning and the unit assembled at NEIDERWAMPACH.

At 1300, 3rd Bn, 357th Inf, was attached and it took over the entire zone of this regiment.

At 1500 2nd Bn attacked SE to secure the wooded area at (vp645578). 1st Bn attacked E sending Co A to SHIMPACH and Cos B and C to capture OBERWAMPACH. Both 3rd Bns, moving NE, swept out the woods S of the RR tracks. Despite enemy artillery and mortar fire and small arms fire from the high ground SE of SHIMPACH and OBERWAMPACH, all units were on their objectives by dark and tied in together in a firm line facing E. Approximately 100 PSW were captured in these operations. At 2050 a half track with SS mortar men entered OBERWAMPACH and were captured. At 2355 two tanks attacked Co C and were repulsed. Heavy mortar fire hit 2nd Bn at NEIDERWAMPACH throughout the hours of darkness.

357th Inf:

During the night, elements 328th Inf and Co A, 101st Combat Engr (26th Div) relieved 1st Bn, in conformance with newly established Division boundaries. 1st Bn put Co A on line along side of 3rd Bn. 2nd Bn motor-marched to BAASCHLEIDEN. At 1300, 3rd Bn was attached to 358th Inf and took over the regimental front. The 1st Bn thus completely relieved, moved to BOULAIDE where the regiment went into Division Reserve.

* * * * *

On every hand now were evidences of a German withdrawal. Scattered enemy units were thrown together in hastily formed groups to resist the cutting of eastbound exits. Forsaking the protective cover of night, the Germans crowded the roads in daylight with traffic of all kinds. The withdrawal was comparatively orderly, but delaying forces turned on attacking troops with fury of cornered animals.

Authority NND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

16 January 1945 (Cont'd)

For artillery and Air Corps it was a fete. visibility was unlimited as skies cleared of snow. P 47's strafed enemy columns and directed artillery concentrations when their ammunition ran out. Troop and tank concentrations NE of ALLERBORN were trapped and pummeled. Enemy columns travelling N and E were victims of prolonged concentrations. All routes, assembly points and enemy towns were interdicted.

17 January 1945

359th Inf:

3rd Bn moved from BENONCHAMPS in the grey morning hours prepared to attack through the 2nd Bn and seize the nose and woods at (vp664596). Upon capture of this objective it was intended that 2nd Bn would take over and 3rd Bn would continue on to cut the road.

The 3rd Bn closed at OBERWAMPACH at 0800 and sent patrols to the front. At the old mill (vp661598) one patrol caught 4 PSW and drew fire from the woods beyond. The attack was planned for late morning but was postponed as enemy activity sharply increased in the form of heavy vehicular movement and counterattacks in vicinity OBERWAMPACH.

358th Inf:

At 0330 the Germans suddenly attacked OBERWAMPACH. Some 40 men of 1st SS Div, one tank and three assault guns entered the town firing their weapons and yelling at the top of their voices. Unfortunately for them the first few buildings were unoccupied and their noise served only to further alert the waiting infantrymen of the 1st Bn who called for prepared fires and quickly repulsed the attack. The enemy tanks and survivors withdrew. At daylight the Bn counted 22 dead SS and found 3 wounded who were promptly captured.

Both 1st and 2nd Bns sent reconnaissance patrols to the high ground SE of SHIMPACH and OBERWAMPACH and found the enemy entrenched along the forward slopes of the twin knobs.

3rd Bn 358th with 3rd Bn 357th combed out the wooded area S of the RR track, harassed as they did so by enemy observing from the high ground across the river who directed mortar and artillery fire on them. The three tunnels which had been sore spots previously were now vacant and bare, save for debris and water.

At 0900 the enemy attacked again from the NE with tanks and infantry. A TOT of 14 battalions of artillery had been prepared

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735017
By WDP NARA Date 11/10/0117 January 1945 (Cont'd)

for 359th's debouchment to the high ground. This fire was immediately called for and crushed the attack as it moved in. The tanks withdrew and the infantry fled to the woods.

Another attack followed at 1030 to receive similar treatment. At 1300 elements of 2nd Panzer Div, formed into KG GUTMAN, attacked OBERKAMPACH from the N with the mission of seizing the village, holding it and establishing 3 75mm AT guns and 5 120mm mortars in the town. The force comprised about 150 infantry, 2 Panther tanks, 11 Mk IV tanks, 3 75mm assault guns SP and 4 armored scout cars. Their attack was preceded by a preparation of artillery and mortar fire.

No fire hindered their approach until the enemy were close to the village when they were met by point blank fire from tanks, TDS and riflemen. The lead vehicle - an armored scout car containing the infantry CO - was pierced at 10 yard range by one of our tanks. The leader took cover, leaving his command without direction as he was subsequently captured. Five enemy tanks were set afire. As the enemy turned to flee his routes of withdrawal were covered by our armor and further tanks were destroyed. Enemy personnel casualties were heavy.

At 1330 the final counterattack of the day was launched from the SE by approximately 80 men and 3 tanks, who pushed their way in around our TD's in the SE part of town until destroyed. One TD had to be abandoned but was destroyed by its Sgt with a thermite grenade in the gun barrel. The enemy captured and occupied 4 houses on the outskirts of OBERKAMPACH, where they stayed overnight.

357th Inf:

The regiment minus its 3rd Bn, which reverted to Division control, remained in Division Reserve in the BOULAIDE - BAASCHLEIDEN area. Training in firing 120mm mortar was begun in view of the large number of mortars and great amount of ammunition captured in the operation. Some 40 mortars were taken intact.

18 January 1945

In the big picture, the bulge W of ROUFFALIZE had collapsed and elements of 11th Armored and 2nd Armored Divisions joined at the town. The 17th A/B moved from reserve to replace 11th Armored Division while the latter sideslipped S and relieved 101st A/B who were advanced beyond BOURCY. The relief was completed during the night.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

18 January 1945 (Cont'd)

358th Inf:

The day was scarcely an hour old when the Germans swarmed like angry bees on OBERWAMPACH. They came from the NE, E and SE with tanks in support and harried the town with fire until finally repulsed about 0330. Two tanks which accompanied them were hit. One burned but the other limped off into the darkness. When light came the Germans held seven houses at the SE end of OBERWAMPACH.

Supporting tanks and TD's maneuvered to position for direct fire at the enemy held houses. Directed by a forward observer who crawled to where he was finally pinned by enemy fire, artillery crashed down on the stronghold. The Germans withdrew to a barn on the outskirts leaving a Tiger tank as lone sentinel to guard their retreat. Two PSW were captured - huge men from the REMER Brigade.

In retaliation the enemy's shelling of OBERWAMPACH and surrounding area increased. About 1000 rounds were received. 3rd Bn, relieved by 357th Inf 3rd Bn, assembled in the woods near the SCHIMPACH RR station.

* * * * *

The action at OBERWAMPACH of the past two days ably demonstrated the excellent results obtained from the fluid teamwork of Inf, Arty, Tanks and TDS. Together, these four frustrated all 9 counterattacks with minimum losses - a total of 20 wounded and 3 killed. Tank and Arty observers repeatedly crawled to exposed positions from which to direct fire. One Arty observer from the 344th FA Bn spent the night and next day with his radio 500 yards beyond the front lines from where he directed concentrations on the Germans as they fled in disorder. As enemy tanks were pierced by Tk and TD fire causing the crews to scramble out, the artillery lashed them with repeated concentrations and blocked the path of those who turned to escape. In 36 hours, 344th FA fired 6000 rounds.

German losses were enormous and mounted as heavy snow storms blanketed enemy dead and wounded alike. Those casualties not immediately evacuated were frozen to death. No exact count was possible but an estimated several hundred Germans were buried from sight for long after the Division had left the area.

The enemy also lost 19 tanks: six by 712th tankers, eight by 773rd TD gunners, five by artillery fire.

DECLASSIFIED

 Authority NND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

18 January 1945 (Cont'd)

359th Inf:

For this regiment it was a quiescent period broken only by light artillery shelling and patrols. Patrols from both 1st and 2nd Bns encountered enemy fire 300 - 400 yards to the front but no other action was reported.

357th Inf:

The regiment remained in Division reserve at BOULAIDE-BAASCHELLEIDEN except for 3rd Bn which continued to sweep out its area, gathering up 16 tired and hungry NAZIS. The Bn harassed the railroad station at (VP654563) with 81mm mortar and 105 fire as well as 28 rounds TD fire but evoked no enemy reaction.

* * * * *

On the Army front, XII Corps jumped off and made some progress. 80th Division cleared NOCHERT advancing beyond it about 2 kilometres. 5th Division crossed the SURE River and installed several bridges. Within the III Corps neither 6th Armored Div nor 26th Division made any forward movement. The 134th Infantry Regiment (35th Division) replaced the 320th Infantry Regiment (35th Division) attached to the 6th Armored Division, and the 35th Division assembled to move to XX Corps vicinity THIONVILLE minus its one Regiment.

19 January 1945

There was no forward movement as 359th and 358th tested the enemy's presence with patrols. 3rd Bn, 358th Infantry, relieved 2nd Bn, who proceeded from NEIDERWAMPACH to the Division Rehabilitation Center at HABAY-LA-NEUVE. 357th Infantry remained in Division Reserve.

20 January 1945

358th Inf:

Cos A and L attacked to secure an outpost line on the high ground S and E of OBERWAMPACH. Co L took its objective without difficulty. Co A moving up the draw toward DERENBACH was surprised by fire from the woods on their left rear and pinned to the open snow. At the same time the Company received fire from the high ground along the DERENBACH ROAD. The Command Group and one platoon engaged the left flank force. The two forward platoons, decimated by heavy enemy fire, assaulted and captured several buildings along the road where they continued to fight, cut off and out of communication until 1800 when the survivors were overwhelmed.

Authority MND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

20. January 1945 (Cont'd)

In view of the unexpected enemy strength all units were withdrawn to original positions.

359th Inf:

The 2nd Bn attacked and captured ALLERBORN, taking 11 PSW. Cos E and G remained in the town.

357th Inf:

Remained in Division Reserve.

90th Ren Troop:

Maintained contact between 359th Inf and 6th Armored Division.

21 January 1945

III Corps resumed the attack to the NE.

358th Inf:

1st and 3rd Bns moved out at 0830, proceeding cautiously in view of yesterday's mishap. No opposition developed, however, and DERENBACH fell about 1200. 3rd Bn garrisoned the town while 1st Bn plodded through the snow to capture Hill 480 and BOEVANGE LES CLERVAUX just beyond at 1700.

359th Inf:

Attacking in order, 2nd, 1st and 3rd Bns at 0830, the Regiment found only deep snow and occasional stragglers to impede their advance. Hill 520, HANVILLE and WINCRANGE were all taken in the day's move. 6th Armored Division on the left, without adequate roads for their CCA, turned into the 359th's zone. Their vehicles located a minefield at WINCRANGE and at LULLANGE had a short skirmish with enemy entrenched beyond the town. 359th Inf closed up and the two units settled together for the night. 2nd Bn remained at WINCRANGE, 1st Bn at LULLANGE and 3rd Bn vicinity road junction vPill648. Patrols to the front contacted enemy outposts.

357th Inf:

Moved by motor to BASTOGNE. 3rd Bn, relieved by passage of 328th Inf, joined its unit at the same town.

90th Ren Troop:

Shifted to right flank to maintain contact between 1st Bn, 358th Inf, and 359th Inf.

Authority NND 735017By WDP NARA Date 11/10/0122 January 1945359th Inf:

The Regiment swung fan-wise to clear and occupy STOCKEM, RUMBLANGE, DONNANGE, and DEIFELT. 1st and 3d Bns patrolled to the E, maintaining enemy contact.

358th Inf:

Pinched out by action of 359th Inf, the Regiment's 1st Bn reverted to Division Reserve. 3d Bn motored to BASTOGNE. 1st Bn, under Division control, held its positions until uncovered by advance of the 26th Inf Division at 1130.

357th Inf:

Moving by motor, 1st Bn staged to vicinity HAMIVILLE where it detrucked, continuing to the NE on foot. By dark 1st Bn was at ASSELBORN, Co's B and C continuing to SASSEL.

2d Bn motored to vicinity ASSELBORN, then marched SE to BOXHORN where G and F Cos remained. Co E secured and occupied the woods at vP767677, following a brisk fire fight with a small enemy group. Division CP crossed the border and occupied WARDIN, BELGIUM at 1100.

23 January 1945359th Inf:

Attacked at 0900 to seize the high ground in the BISCHENT WOODS and hold until relieved by 6th Cav Group who were moving up on the Div right to pinch out the 26th Inf Div. Co K occupied the objective at 1500.

358th Inf:

1st Bn assembled in WINCRANGE and replaced 2nd Bn in the Rest Camp at HABAY-LA-NEUVE.

2nd Bn returned on trucks of 1st Bn in afternoon and closed in DERENBACH at 1800.

357th Inf:

3d Bn left BASTOGNE 0730 and closed 0930 in ASSELBORN. 1st and 2d Bns attacked at 1300, crossing the CLERF River. The enemy countered with small arms, machine gun and Nebelwerfer fire. Aided by TD fire the attackers drove the enemy from his trenches and gained the high ground on both sides of the draw (Hills 470, 490 and 500 on the left and 520 on the right). Continuing after dark, 1st Bn attacked and captured BINSFELD and a 75mm AT gun. 2d Bn spread its companies facing SE along Hill 520 and the Hill to the SW. 3d Bn moved forward to vicinity SASSEL and placed Co L on Hill 490 and 500 to hold that flank.

Supporting armor began its move across the river but the first 3 Medium tanks bogged down, blocking the road. One platoon,

23 January 1945 (Cont'd)

Co D, 712th Tank Bn was attached in an effort to get some AT guns up to the 1st Bn without success. 12 bazooka teams from AT Company were rushed forward to 1st Bn instead.

To keep pace with the fast-moving situation, Division CP moved to HANVILLE.

24 January 1945

357th Inf:

About 0230A, 1st Bn was counterattacked by enemy infantry and tanks from HOLLER. Hardly set in their defensive positions and without AT guns or armor support, the Bn fought desperately to hold the town. By heroic effort of machine gunners who held their posts in face of point-blank tank fire to mow down accompanying infantry and a shield of fire laid down by 343rd FA Bn, (who fired 900 rounds up to 0600) the attack was broken. 58 PSW were captured. The enemy tanks withdrew and those few Germans not killed or captured fled.

Meanwhile supporting armor with engineers, who removed 19 mines from the road, and a platoon of infantry from Co K all crossed at TROISVIERGES and worked down the road to BINSFELD where they remained after their arrival at 0600.

Both Division and Regimental boundaries changed during the night which shifted the axis of attack to the E.

The Regiment therefore sent patrols toward OBERSTENWALD following with 2nd Bn on left and 3rd Bn on right. Following reduction of an enemy strongpoint at the CLERF River, OBERSTENWALD was taken after dark and 3rd Bn tied in echeloned to the right rear. Division ordered the halt as adjacent units failed to come up. About 2130 a party of 25 - 30 Germans came to reoccupy positions in OBERSTENWALD. They came in through 3rd Bn who remained quiet until the Germans were in their area, then encompassed them. 2 Germans were killed and 25 captured.

359th Inf:

The change of boundaries necessitated reemployment of 359th Inf in the attack. Accordingly, 1st and 2nd Bns moved to forward assembly areas in early morning and attacked after midday. 3rd Bn remained in place and supported by fire. 2nd Bn crossed the CLERF after overcoming resistance along the railroad track. 1st Bn, faced with entrenched enemy on the far shore, made little headway until late afternoon when the Bn swung in trace of 2nd Bn and crossed in their zone to outflank the position. The enemy withdrew. 3rd Bn assembled for a night attack to seize HUPFERDANGE.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

24 January 1945 (cont'd)

358th Inf:

Remained in Division Reserve.

25 January 1945

357th Inf:

Despite zero temperatures, the attack continued in the morning. Organic artillery battalions laid concentration after concentration along the "Sky Line Drive" (LUXEMBOURG-ST VITH ROAD) paralleling the OUR RIVER, smashing enemy vehicles and guns and cutting down the German soldiers as they sought to escape. 3rd Bn cut the "Sky Line Drive" at 1210; then proceeded to capture HEINERSCHIED where the enemy fought tenaciously until 1645 when the town was cleared and all resistance ended.

2nd Bn advanced easily to the high ground SW of LAUSDORN where 100 Germans and machine guns resisted. LAUSDORN itself was captured after dark after patrols reported the enemy had apparently withdrawn. Regiment then consolidated positions and sent patrols to the front.

359th Inf:

At 0200, 3rd Bn passed through 2nd Bn and captured HUPPERDANGE and 7 PSW. 2nd Bn closed in HUPPERDANGE at 1100. 1st Bn cleared GRINDHAUSEN in late afternoon. Having their objective, Regiment consolidated and dispatched strong patrols to the front.

358th Inf:

Remained in Division Reserve.

26 January 1945

Another reshuffling of units moved the 90th division from III Corps control at noon on the 26th. With some overlap the Division began an exchange of places with 6th Armored division who moved to the right of our sector replacing us and elements 26th Inf Division. This displacement was further complicated by passage southward through the Division sector of the 17th Airborne Division who replaced the remainder of the 26th Inf Division. The 26th assembled and moved S out of III Corps.

Traffic continued to be the principal problem for the next several days as the limited road net was strained to bursting point with foot troops, motors and armor.

Authority MND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

26 January 1945 (Cont'd)

357th Inf:

Patrolled toward OUR RIVER. 1st Bn relieved 2nd Bn who assembled at HOLLER. In the afternoon having found the area clear, 1st Bn occupied LEILER with Co B at 2000. 3rd Bn side-slipped north, prepared to attack the next morning to seize the high ground 3 kilometers E of WEISWAMPACH.

358th Inf:

2nd Bn and CP moved to TROISVIERGES during the morning with the Bn continuing forward on foot to occupy WEISWAMPACH following its capture by 6th Armored Division. The relief was accomplished by 1500. At noon 3rd Bn motor-marched from BASTOCNE to vicinity TROISVIERGES and assembled at WILWERDANGE where it established contact with 17th Airborne elements still in line. Patrols were sent to BEILER.

359th Inf:

At 0900, 3rd Bn marched on foot to HACHIVILLE. At 1400 the CP moved to TROINE. At 1500, 2nd Bn marched to HOFFELT. 1st Bn remained overnight at HUPPERDANGE. Regiment reverted to Division Reserve upon relief.

The Division CP opened at ASSELBORN at 0945.

Throughout the day Division artillery battalions, operating on call of air observers, beat a steady tattoo on enemy traffic across the OUR RIVER. Near DAHNEN (VP 865653) traffic became hopelessly snarled as all roads were interdicted. Vehicles, bumper to bumper, were pounded to rubble by the incessant fires of the division and supporting artillery guns. Four enemy 88's trained their sights on the C-47 planes in desperate efforts to stop the carnage but were themselves flattened by battalion concentrations.

27 January 1945

Amid snow flurries Division continued attack to clear the W bank of the OUR RIVER in conjunction with 87th Inf Division who had replaced 17th A/B Division on the 90th Division's left. The need for "Lebenstraum" became acute as the Division crowded its installations forward of the CP at ASSELBORN to make room for the 4th Inf Division assembling in its rear.

357th Inf:

3rd Bn attacked to the northeast with Co L on the left and Co K on the right and secured the high ground over-looking the OUR River

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735 017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

27 January 1945 (Cont'd)

at 1200. Enemy infantry and one tank counterattacked Co K from the NE but were driven off.

358th Inf:

2nd and 3rd Bns attacked toward the river initially without resistance. The advance was halted by determined delaying forces at the BELGIUM border beyond LEITHUM and southwest of LASCHEID. Co E cleared the strong point E of LEITHUM. Co I entered LASCHEID from the NW at 1900 where they were harassed by MG and 20mm gun fire from two German tanks which withdrew after our own tanks closed into the town. Co I, unable to contact Co I, continued to fight enemy dug-in south of the town, ultimately driving them off and remained for the night on the high ground below LASCHEID. Co K closed 500 yards behind the assault companies and dug in for the night.

Regimental CP moved to WILWERDANGE while 1st Bn closed all of its elements into WEISWAMPACH after motor-marching from HABAY-LA-NEUVE.

359th Inf:

Remained in Division Reserve. Forced out of its area by 4th Div's arrival, the regiment less its 1st Bn moved to TROISVIERGES. 1st Bn, shifting first to CINQFONTAINES, later joined its unit at TROISVIERGES.

90th Rcn Tr:

Maintained contact between 87th Div and 358th Inf.

* * * * *

At 1645 Division received the VIII Corps order assigning the 90th the mission of crossing the OUR RIVER to protect the right flank of the Corps as it directed a penetration of the SIEGFRIED LINE. 4th Div was to knife between the 90th and 87th Divisions, passing through elements of the latter as VIII Corps attacked at 0830 on 29 January. 95th Inf Div and 11th Armd Div would remain initially in reserve.

Division Field Message #26 ordered continuation of the attack on 28 January to clear the W bank of the OUR RIVER.

28 January 1945

The winter fury increased and heavy snows seriously hampered military operations. 315th Engrs worked 'round-the-clock with limited equipment to keep roads open.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735 017By WDP NARA Date 11/10/0128 January 1945 (cont'd)

A conference with regimental commanders in early morning fixed the Division's plan for the new order. Briefly, it contemplated a wheeling movement by the three infantry regiments with 357th as the hub. 357th Inf was to hold its right flank firm on the W bank of the OUR RIVER, attack with its left battalion and secure WELCHENHAUSEN and the high ground to the SE above the town. 358th Inf, attacking in the center, would make the main crossing with two battalions and seize the high ground south - west of HECKHUSCHEID.

359th Inf, on the Division left, would cross through an initial narrow zone, capture STEFFESHAUSEN and AUFL and then fan out to seize WINTERSFELT and the high ground S of EIGELSCHEID.

Division Field Order # 51, embodying the above plan was issued at 1815.

357th Inf:

Co I replaced Co K in the line during the night. The regiment cleared all but the river towns during the day and made extensive reconnaissance for crossing sites. After dark the 3rd Bn sent platoons to occupy the river towns in its zone. Co I dispatched one platoon to PETERSKIRCHE where it captured 7-8 PSW and remained overnight. Co L occupied four houses at the S end of OBERHAUSEN, approaching from the S and not meeting the enemy who were dug-in on the high ground W. of the town.

358th Inf:

Patrols encountered enemy in the vicinity of STOUBACH (vp865765) and at vp864743. Combat patrols were sent out in early morning to clean out the enemy to the front, followed by larger units later in the day to secure crossing sites. By dark Co I had captured WEWELER after a brief fight and Co's L and K were poised on the high ground to the south - East.

1st Bn displaced forward to the wooded area 1200 yards NE of LEITHUM.

Co's F and G occupied STOUBACH by midnight. Co E remained at the cross-roads 600 yards NE of LEITHUM. Enemy were heard digging in across the OUR RIVER.

359th Inf:

Remained in Division Reserve at TROISVIERGES.

DECLASSIFIED

Authority NND 735017
By WDP NARA Date 11/10/0128 January 1945 (cont'd)90th Ren Tr:

Assembled at MALSHEID since 358th Inf now had direct contact with 87th Inf Div at BURG-REULAND. Troop reconnoitered the 357th's positions S of LEILER prepared to take over on Division order.

29 January 1945

Throughout the dark hours the assault battalions floundered through deep snow to get troops and bridging materials to the river's edge in preparation for the morning's attack. The night was almost as bright as day but the hills, sloping precipitously to the river valley, considerably slowed the advance. Such roads as once existed were blanketed with snow and were unusable. Engineers worked throughout the night to clear a road down in each regiment's zone.

At 0600 the 2nd Bn left its assembly area with Co E on the left and Co G on the right. As Co E approached the river, they met Germans entrenched on the W side. A brisk fire-fight ensued for several hours. The enemy dug-in W of OBERHAUSEN fired upon Co G as they came near the town. The company deployed and fought back, overcoming the opposition, and entered OBERHAUSEN where they cleaned out the north end of town. 70 prisoners were captured.

From across the river the Germans opened up with artillery, mortar, and small arms fire and stopped attempts to cross at this site. Swinging S of OBERHAUSEN, Co's G and F crossed the river into Germany without engineer equipment and moved toward the high ground SE of WELCHENHAUSEN. Co E forced a crossing 800 yards N of the town and closed in from that direction. Confronted with this encirclement, the Germans fought more furiously but finally surrendered in late afternoon. 80 PSW were taken during the operation. Co G had gained the high ground SE of WELCHENHAUSEN with Co F tied in on their right. Co E remained at WELCHENHAUSEN.

On the W bank of the OUR, the regiment's right boundary was changed and 90th Ren took over the area S from LEILER to the Division boundary. 1st Bn, relieved thereby, left one platoon, Co B on the line while the battalion (-) assembled at WEISWAMPACH as regimental reserve. Co K also remained in WEISWAMPACH. The rest of the 3rd Bn was spread along the W bank of the OUR.

358th Inf:

As light came, the Germans fired mortar, artillery, small arms and high velocity fire from across the river into WEWELER and STOUBACH. Because of bad communications, the smoke which 3rd Bn had planned to cover their crossing was not fired and left

29 January 1945 (Cont'd)

the crossing site exposed to the murderous fire of the enemy. With communication restored, the smoke was fired at 1420 and Co I started to cross but was immediately engaged in a heavy fire fight. On regimental order the crossing was halted and the battalion waited further orders.

The situation confronting 2nd Bn had not improved. The Germans continued to throw a hail of fire across at the assault companies, (F and G), which they answered with mortar, bazooka, small arms and artillery fire. Finally, Co E, in reserve, crossed the river below STOUBACH and outflanked STUPBACH from the S capturing the town and 45 prisoners in mid afternoon.

This attack broke the enemy resistance which slackened rapidly in this area. Following up its advantage the battalion crossed F and G Cos while 1st Bn crossed just above. Both battalions then struck out for the high ground overlooking the river.

Co I was left to contain at WEWELER while the rest of 3rd Bn was brought S to cross in trace of the 2nd Bn.

359th Inf:

Moved 3rd Bn at 0800 to vicinity BURG-RUELLAND. Battalion contacted 12th Inf Regiment of 4th Division and sent patrols to STEFFESHAUSEN and AUDEL. Both patrols made contact, receiving small arms and mortar fire.

In the afternoon, 1st Bn moved to WILWERDANGE at 1430.

By day's end, having crossed the OUR RIVER, the 90th Division in part had once more battered an opening into the Reich -- the first unit in the corps to reenter Germany after von Rundstedt's grab had been rebuffed. The next several days would see this opening wedge expanded and driven deeper until the entire division would stand on German soil. This was historic country at the juncture of LUXEMBOURG, BELGIUM and GERMANY. Twice the Germans had ridden rough-shod through this passage to the West: in 1940 and more recently in the breakthrough. Now, his gamble ended in disheartening failure, von Rundstedt had pulled his elite -- but battered -- divisions back to the security of the West Wall, leaving Volksgrenadier along the German border to breast the rising tide of Allied might and to cover the withdrawal of the major forces.

30 January 1945

357th Inf:

315th Engr Bn worked all night to make a passable ford at

Authority NND 735017
 By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

29 January 1945 (Cont'd)

WELCHENHAUSEN. They hauled rocks and removed mines from the approaches and the water itself despite artillery and mortar fire. Shortly after daylight three tanks crossed, which tore up the bottom so that further crossings of armor had to be postponed.

The regiment itself consolidated positions. Co F closed up on left of Co G and one platoon Co E, reinforced later by the rest of the company, moved to Co F's left in order to contact 358th. Contact was not gained as enemy on both flanks and front continued to resist. Co K, attached to 2nd Bn, shifted to WELCHENHAUSEN as battalion reserve.

1st Bn relieved 3rd Bn along the river and 3rd Bn (-) assembled at WEISWAMPACH. At 2000 one platoon of Co B raided OUREN where enemy had been reported but found the town vacated of all but civilians.

358th Inf:

During the night engineer crews cleared roads of drifted snow, mines, and debris. A bridge was in at 0800 despite enemy fire and supporting armor crossed.

1st and 2nd Bns continued their attack, securing STEIN-KOPF by dark. About 75 PSW were taken in the drive. Co C set up an ambush and captured 35 prisoners, killed 6 and wounded 4. At 1750, 80 enemy infantry counterattacked Co C in an effort to regain the high ground, but artillery dissolved the attack before it gained contact. Co I rejoined its battalion which was poised in center of regimental zone in regimental reserve.

359th Inf:

3rd Bn planned to cross the OUR with Co L on left and Co K on right following a ten minute artillery preparation. The preparation appeared to alert the enemy and at the river's edge the assault companies received mortar, small arms and machine gun fire. Co L searched for a new crossing site which they found several hundred yards away. Entering STEFFESHAUSEN, they engaged in a small arms and machine gun fight. Co I crossed immediately to assist. By 1200 the town was secured but mop up of the outskirts continued.

Co K, pinned down by fire from across the river, made their crossing by infiltration, reaching STEFFESHAUSEN at noon. 3rd Bn crossed on the frozen river rather than footbridges as planned.

1st Bn staged from WILWERDANGE to BURG-REULAND then crossed the ice to attack through 3rd Bn and capture AUDEL. This mission was

DECLASSIFIED

Authority MND 735017By WDP NARA Date 1/10/0130 January 1945 (Cont'd)

accomplished by 1800 despite difficult terrain and enemy resistance. Battalion contacted 358th on the right.

Engineers completed a Bailey bridge across river at 2110 for vehicles and armor.

Division CP opened at WILNERDANGE, LUXEMBOURG, at 1400.

31 January 1945357th Inf:

Contact with 358th was made at 1900 after Co E pushed forward. One platoon Co K moved to OBERHAUSEN to prevent infiltration from the S.

358th Inf:

All three battalions continued the attack meeting considerable resistance as they crossed the German border. Artillery and armor support greatly aided the advance. Co A, driving on, captured the high ground S and E of HECKHALENFELD while B Co seized the town and 50 prisoners. 3rd Bn seized the objective despite frequent machine gun fire from the flank. 2nd Bn drove the enemy from the woods and tied in with 357th Inf on the right. 1st Bn linked with 359th Inf on the left.

359th Inf:

Plowing on through deep snow, 1st Bn seized the high ground W of WINTERSFELT then advanced in the afternoon to cut and block the road SE of WINTERSFELT.

2nd Bn moved by motor to BURG-REULAND, marched to AUDEL and set off at 1000 to attack WALLMERATH. Stiff resistance was encountered by Co F and the enemy still held the N end of town at dark. Co G, followed by Co E, closed on WINTERSFELT which they took after passing through mine fields and subduing several strong points.

1st Bn at 1430 jumped off again to seize EIGELSCHEID. Co C entered the town against light resistance. Co B then moved in.

3rd Bn closed its units into AUDEL and remained in regimental reserve.

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In the summing up, January was marked by change from a relatively static position astride the German border in the SAAR to an

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unheralded drive through LUXEMBOURG where the 90th sheared off the enemy salient near BASTOGNE. Climaxing the month was the return to GERMANY through BELGIUM and LUXEMBOURG as the Division spearheaded VIII Corps' crossing of the OUR RIVER.

It was the Division's first real test at prolonged winter warfare. Supply -- always a problem -- was made more difficult by the constant snow storms and the limited road net of the narrow Division sector. Engineers labored unceasingly to keep roads open. Where available, M-29's were used with excellent success for evacuation and supply, but their number was few. Litters were attached to skis to expedite evacuation in forward areas and were used also to haul supplies forward, reducing the number of men needed for carrying parties. Skis were attached to Cub planes to permit artillery observation to continue despite snow-covered terrain. Tanks were white-washed for camouflage and it worked well but near-zero temperatures and drifting snow caused much mechanical trouble for both tanks and TDS. Withal, armor support as well as accurate artillery fire were again invaluable in crushing the enemy defense.

Again the infantry had done its part magnificently and borne the brunt of the Division effort. Gradually "winterized" as, first, captured German underwear, and later, snow garments were issued, followed by shobpacs and a trigger modification on the M-1 rifle for firing with gloves on, they had carried out their assigned missions across the steep slopes, through waist-deep snow and icy water, through dark nights and biting cold days. Theirs the credit and theirs the victory. Not without its price, however, as the bitter cold, deep snow and stiff resistance exhausted troops and exacted casualties.

Reduction of the pocket and advance across the OUR netted 3349 PSW, raising the Division total over the 25,000 mark. A wealth of enemy materiel was captured or destroyed, including in part 33 tanks, 16 SP guns, 99 trucks, 16 staff cars, 31 half tracks, 9 full tracks, 12 88mm guns, 40 120mm mortars, 15 75mm guns, 6 AT guns, 14 105mm guns, and 4 nebelwerfers. Rapid movement and boundary changes precluded a complete and final survey.

But more important, the goal was at hand and the 90th Division once more held firm one sector of ground from which von Rundstedt's troops had driven other Americans six weeks earlier.

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VAN FLEET
 COMDG