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O P E R A T I O N S

# 90<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

MONTH OF MARCH '45

*MR*

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BY AUTHORITY OF THE ACTING GENERAL  
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• AFTER  
• ACTION  
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90TH INFANTRY DIVISION

REPORT OF OPERATIONS

FOR MONTH

OF

MARCH 1945

*390-334*  
*390-013*

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## INTRODUCTION

March began quietly. The 90th Division still sat in SHAEF Reserve just inside the German border vicinity WINTERSPELT after having punched through the SIEGFRIED LINE. The rehabilitation of the troops who had fought so hard was underway. The Division CP remained at WINTERSPELT.

On the VIII Corps front, the units were continuing to attack toward the KYLL River. After the collapse of the West Wall it was expected that the next German major defense line would be along this river.

6th Armored Division and 6th Cavalry Group were across the PRUM River. Though they were meeting delaying forces there was nothing to indicate immediate employment of the 90th Division. Certainly, there was no harbinger of the almost incredible mileage that was to be covered by the 90th within the days ahead.

The operations for the month fall naturally into four phases:

- Phase I -- Through the Hills of EIFEL.
- Phase II - From the MOSELLE to the RHINE.
- Phase III - From the RHINE to the MAIN.
- Phase IV - Through the Hills of HESSEN.

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PHASE I  
THROUGH THE HILLS OF EIFEL  
1-10 MARCH

★ SEE PLATE II ★

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PHASE I

THROUGH THE HILLS OF EIFEL

1 - 2 March 1945

Reorganization continued and the major Div activity was experimentation with the use of searchlights for artificial ground illumination on nights without a moon. This continued work begun on the last night of February. For the next several days Infantry and Engineers busied themselves with the lights and found them practicable. / Jll

As of 021200A, Major General LOWELL W. ROOKS relinquished command of the Division to Brigadier General HERBERT L. EARNEST. General ROOKS went to assignment with SHAEF G-3.

In early morning of 2 March, VIII Corps gave warning that 90th Division would probably revert to its control and move through the 6th Armored Division. Corps Operations Memo Number 27 confirmed this and gave the day of attack as 4 March and the mission to seize a crossing over the KYLL River at MURLENBACH (L1973) and clear enemy in zone.

Plans were made, a Field Order roughed out and discussed with unit commanders at a meeting at 2000. 357th and 359th Infs were alerted to make the relief and commanders initiated reconnaissance. Corps set the Division main supply route on the HABSCHIED-FRONS-FELD axis. Two bridges were needed at the latter town to make the road usable. 315th Engineers were alerted and began immediate work.

3 March 1945

They rushed to completion a 60 foot Bailey bridge by 0150 and a 90 foot Bailey by 0640 to open the road.

Division Field Order Number 57 was issued at 0750 and directed movement to new assembly areas 3 March, relief of 6th Armored Division night of 3 - 4 March and attack E at H-Hour 4 March to secure bridgehead across the KYLL River, prepared to continue E on order.

Plans for the relief were necessarily flexible as the 6th Armored Division was still moving and the exact point at which the relief would be accomplished could not be determined beforehand. Definitely established 6

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3 March 1945 (Cont'd)

was that the front line held by the armor would be the line of departure for the attack.

90th Division Artillery moved in late morning to new positions while the two Infantry Regiments -- 357th and 359th -- proceeded to their assembly areas E of the PRUM River in the afternoon. Numerous enemy mines of all types -- particularly plastic -- were encountered in the new areas. Several vehicles were damaged and some troops became casualties.

The Division plan was to use 357 on the left, 359 on the right and 358 (initially in its present location) in reserve. A TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY composed of Hq and Co D 712th Tk Bn, Rcn Co 773rd TD Bn and 90th Rcn Tr was organized and attached to 359th Inf.

Since the relief would be made at night it was expected that commanders would ask for time for daylight reconnaissance the following morning before moving out in attack. Instead they desired an early hour in order to gain the high ground beyond the NIMS River before daylight. On this high ground the Germans had several high velocity guns which controlled avenues of approach. It was hoped these positions could be gained before the gun crews could see for effective fire. Accordingly, H-Hour was set for 040600A.

Division Command Post moved to FRONSFELD in the afternoon, opening at 1600.

Relief of CCB 6th Armored Division by 357 began after dark and was completed by midnight. 3d Bn occupied the left of the zone while the 1st Bn took the right side. The regimental plan gave the 3d Bn the mission of securing GIESDORF and blocking to the N while the 1st Bn moved from SCHONECKEN through NIEDER and OBER HERSDORF to the NE. 2d Bn would follow the 1st ready to secure key points along the regimental right flank.

Meanwhile, CCA 6th Armored Division had broken loose, crossed troops over the NIMS River on the right and were on the high ground on the far side. 359th Inf therefore decided not to relieve but to pass through this section of the front beginning at 0600. As a result they assembled in forward areas on the near side of the NIMS. 3d Bn settled at WETTELDORF and 2d Bn at HEISDORF.

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3 March 1945 (Cont'd)

359th's plan was to send TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY along two routes forward to secure crossings over the KYLL River at MURLENBACH and DENSBORN since the sudden spurt of 6th Armored Division indicated a possible enemy withdrawal. Two infantry Bns with their attachments would follow to sweep the area. 3d Bn would move on the left to secure MURLENBACH while 2d Bn on the right would secure DENSBORN. 1st Bn was to wait in reserve at DACKSCHEID with one company prepared to move on trucks in event the situation broke rapidly.

During the night, 315th Engineers put in a foot bridge and Treadway bridge near SCHIERSSTHAL for use by 2d Bn 359 and artillery units. 6th Armored Division had already captured several bridges at SCHONECKEN which the 357 could use.

4 March 1945

At 0600 the attack jumped off without artillery preparation and at this time responsibility for the zone passed to 90th Division. Light resistance faced the units with the hilly, densely-wooded country more of an obstacle than the Germans.

359th Inf - TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY was augmented by 2d Platoon, Co C 773rd TD Bn, 2 Rifle Platoons and 2 mine-sweeping units from Anti-Tank Co. This Force was then sub-divided into two smaller forces:

TASK FORCE KELLY contained the Rcn Co 773rd TD Bn, 3d Plat Co D 712th Tk Bn, and 1 Section 2d Plat Co C 773rd TD Bn.

TASK FORCE DYE had the 90th Rcn Tr, 1 Section 3d Plat Co C 773rd TD Bn, Assault Gun Plat 712th Tk Bn and 2d Plat Co D 712th Tk Bn.

TASK FORCE DYE on the S got off to a late start at 0630 but moved without trouble to SEITERATH. They left this town with Co L. 700 yards beyond the town, German infantry supported by one tank were still erecting a road block. The tank crew, however, were caught dismounted. 50 Caliber machine gun fire from the Task Force dispersed the enemy personnel and flushed 25 PsW from the surrounding woods. A tank destroyer and assault gun demolished the road block.

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~~RESTRICTED~~4 March 1945. (Cont'd)

The Task Force continued to DURBACH, then left the infantry company and turned S to NEUSTRASSBURG. Here the enemy opened up with small arms and a flat trajectory weapon, possibly a tank. TD guns and tanks responded in kind, driving off the enemy weapon. An artillery and mortar barrage immediately hit the Task Force, who directed counterbattery fire which silenced the enemy guns. The town was then captured as well as 15 Psw. Beyond the town was a 200 yard road block of felled trees interspersed with rounds of live ammunition. No bypass was available and the Task Force returned to NEUSTRASSBURG and outposted it, contacting 6th Cavalry Group who were moving on the 90th's right flank.

As TASK FORCE KELLY on the N approached JAKOBSKNOPF (133744) at 0650 they received enemy fire from a self-propelled gun on the ridge to the SW and the small arms fire to their front. They assaulted the settlement and took 19 prisoners.

Two miles beyond the town in early afternoon the Task Force met a road block commanded by a 150mm gun emplaced in the center. TDs' accurate fire smashed the gun and destroyed the block. The tanks swung around the block only to receive machine gun fire. Firing their guns in rebuttal, they captured the two Germans manning the gun.

The Force continued to a bend in the road and found themselves in the line of fire of another enemy self-propelled gun in position. Two shots by the TDs brought three rounds in prompt answer. Attempts to outflank this gun failed because of heavy woods and continued fire from the gun, which covered all approaches. Retracing their route and detouring around by SEIWERATH to try a new approach from the E, the Task Force made contact with Co K 359 but was again stopped. This time it was two Mark IV tanks hiding in the woods to protect the same crossroads which the Force failed to reach from the N. No suitable firing positions could be found to engage the enemy tanks, so artillery was placed on them. They withdrew during the night.

Meanwhile the infantry plodded on through the thick forests and up steep slopes, finding little to face them. The ground favored a strong delaying action, but there was little aside from numerous road blocks. The enemy, pressured all along the Third Army front, was apparently bending all his efforts to get E of the KYLL River.

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~~RESTRICTED~~4 March 1945 (Cont'd)

359th Inf moved out with 2d Bn on right and 3d Bn on left. K Co reached SEIWERATH at 0700 and were passed through By Co L who moved on with TASK FORCE DYE. At 0830 I passed through Co L and continued two miles E and slightly S of SEIWERATH at which point patrols hit an enemy strongpoint. K Co, which had been ordered to pass through I Co on TDs came forward after three road blocks had been removed from behind I Co, reduced the strongpoint and continued on to capture the crossroad beyond. Two enemy tanks opened fire. TASK FORCE KELLY closed behind Co K and Co L came up on the right.

2d Bn after toiling across the wooded ridges S of SEIWERATH was directed to turn down the road in the path of TASK FORCE DYE and seize the crossroad about one and a quarter miles NE of NEUSTRASSBURG. About 500 yards W of the crossroad, E Co engaged in a fire fight which they cleaned up at 1900. By 1930 both E and G Cos were on the crossroad and the Bn halted for the night.

Co A was kept motorized and staged forward to SEIWERATH in late morning. In midafternoon, 1st Bn was ordered to pass through 3d Bn and turn S to contact 2d Bn at the crossroad NE of NEUSTRASSBURG, prepared to continue E to seize DENSBORN. Co C moved on tanks, Co A stayed on trucks and Co B trailed on foot. The Bn met scattered resistance and road-blocks which got so numerous that they dismounted and continued on foot. Made contact with 2d Bn at crossroad at 2020.

Engineers began work on the road block in front of TASK FORCE DYE who was to be attached to 1st Bn in the morning. TASK FORCE KELLY was to be attached to 3d Bn.

357th Inf - The regiment moved virtually unopposed. 1st Bn gathered up 33 Psw and some 120mm mortars at NIEDER HERSDORF and continued on with Co B to OBER HERSDORF where a short fight was encountered. As the Bn pressed on through the wooded area NE of OBER HERSDORF many small fights occurred with enemy forced into the sector by advance of 11th Armored Div on left.

3d Bn captured the high ground E of GIESDORF in early morning, assembled and moved to NIEDER HERSDORF in regimental reserve. Co I was sent to clear LOCH in the afternoon and contact 4th Div at WALLERSHEIM.

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2d Bn moved at 0730 generally along the road to the S with advance impeded by road blocks, but by nightfall had captured KOPP. 1st Bn closed behind and both Bns prepared to advance during the night to seize positions overlooking the KYLL River.

358th Inf - Moved by shuttle march from W of PRUM R to new assembly area E of the river in vicinity of ORLENBACH - WINRINGEN - MATZERATH. Remained in Div Reserve.

Div Command Post left PRONSFELD and opened at SCHON-ECKEN at 1600.

5 March 1945

VIII Corps issued FO # 14 which extended the attack to the NE and gave as long range objectives the W bank of the RHINE between ANDERNACH (F7604) and SINZIG (6516).

90th Div was directed to cross the KYLL R and follow 11th Armored Div on the right of the Corps, protecting that flank.

New boundaries were established, giving the 90th more ground on the left and including GEROLSTEIN. This shift caused a change of effort of the Div from the MURLNBACH area to the BIRRESBORN - LISSINGEN area.

Accordingly, the 352th was directed to halt on the W bank of the KYLL R. TF KEDROVSKY was detached and given to 357 with the mission of relieving elements of 11th Armored Div and 4th Inf Div in the newly acquired territory on the left. 357 was told to force a crossing while 358 was alerted to move forward to an assembly area vicinity KOPF or vicinity WALLERSHEIM. Dependent upon the situation, the regiment was to be prepared to attack through the 357 or on the Div left to seize GEROLSTEIN.

357th Inf - During the night both 1st and 2nd Bns moved out to occupy the high ground overlooking the river. In early morning Cos G and F descended to BIRRESBORN and cleared the town shortly after dawn. Co A took MINERALBRUNNER. Both Bns then prepared to cross later in the day. From the far bank the enemy sniped with small arms and shot artillery and nebelwerfer fire into BIRRESBORN and MINERALBRUNNER as well as the high ground above.

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The crossing looked like a difficult job. All bridges were blown and directly across the river the ground rose sharply for several hundred feet of thickly-forested slope. Some enemy earth entrenchments could be seen and it was obvious there were many more that could not be observed. The Germans also had the observation and good fields of fire. But the Div had two things in its favor: First, the enemy in his panic-stricken flight was badly disorganized and might be unable to defend as well as he should. As it turned out, this assumption proved correct. Second, heavy rains had made some prepared positions untenable, flooding them with water.

357's first intention was to cross the 2nd Bn at 1600. But as the enemy fire developed throughout the day and smoke cover appeared insufficient this plan was abandoned and crossing after dark was planned. However, our own artillery softened the enemy positions with particularly effective fires throughout the latter part of the day. Two fords were selected, one N of BIRRESBORN and one N of MINERALBRUNNER. These were for both foot troops and armor.

Two platoons of Co A pursuing the enemy from MINERALBRUNNER, probed into LISSINGEN at 1600 and found only one enemy. The units squatted in the SW part of town until relieved after dark by elements of TF KEDROVSKY.

This unit was attached to 357 at 051000A March. The platoon of TDs from C Co 773rd was replaced by a platoon from A Co which was attached to 357. The TASK FORCE assembled at WALLERSHEIM. Then the TD Rcn Co. and 3d Plat Co of 712 Tk Bn moved forward to relieve 11th Armored Rcn Troop at 1500 and occupy HINTERHAUSEN. Later they moved into LISSINGEN and cleared the rest of the town about midnight, capturing 25 PsW.

As the arc of the proposed bridgehead covered some five miles, the 357th planned to employ all three Bns on line. 1st would take the left and use the N ford. 2d Bn would secure the ground on the right and 3d Bn would attack the center, crossing after 2d Bn. In the actual crossing this order was reversed as 2nd Bn waited for a footbridge which they finally decided to do without. At 2300 3d Bn started Co L to ford the

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river. 1st Bn started crossing at MINERALBRUNNER.

359th Inf - At 0600, Co K sent a platoon to the main crossroad about 2 1/3 miles W of MURLENBACH which had been such a sensitive spot the previous night. The enemy were gone but a large road block effectively prevented any armor or wheeled vehicle from getting by. The entire Co and engineers went to work to remove the block. At 0730 Cos I and L moved through to reach MURLENBACH without resistance. There they received fire from across the river.

1st Bn attacked at 0700 and likewise found the enemy gone. The Bn moved to the W bank across from DENSBORN where they received high velocity and small arms fire from across the way. Road craters prevented supporting armor from getting down to the unit.

915th FA Bn picked up the supporting job and secured hits on the enemy armor at DENSBORN, knocking out one tank. Other elements Div Artillery silenced German nebelwerfers located SE of MURLENBACH and NW of SALM.

359 now was given verbal orders to defend the sector with one Bn, assembling the others in the rear prepared to cross through the 357. 1st Bn was designated and it relieved 3d Bn with Co C and AT Co beginning at 1900 and completing at 2305. Contact was maintained with 80th Inf Div on the 90th's right in vicinity of ALTENHOF.

2d Bn assembled vicinity NEUSTRASSBURG while 3d Bn assembled about three miles W of MURLENBACH in vicinity of DURBACH. 1st Bn prepared to send patrols across the river.

358th Inf - Alerted to shuttle forward in afternoon, the regiment actually began to move about 1430. 161st Chemical Co (Smoke Generator) was attached to the Div and 25 trucks of this unit were allocated to 358. They were considerably late in arriving, however, having had to drop their load at PRONSFELD and midnight found the regiment still on the road enroute to NEIDER and OBER HERSDORF and WALLERSHEIM.

On the Div left flank, 11th Armored Div met stiffened resistance and 4th Inf Div gathered its forces to

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secure a bridgehead for the armor. On 90th Div right, 6th Cavalry Group was pinched out by the juncture of the 90th and 80th Divs at the KYLL and the Group assembled to move up on the Corps left.

6 March 1945

357th Inf - 3d Bn continued to cross against small arms fire. About 0200 2d Bn likewise began to ford. At MINERALBRUNNER; 1st Bn crossed B, C and A in that order. They, too, received a flurry of small arms fire but pushed on through intending to clean out at daylight. Co C turned N. Co A went E while Co B cut between. Both flank Cos were soon engaged in fire fights. 315th Engrs began to construct a foot-bridge at BIRRESBORN, which Co I used in crossing, and tanks and TDs forded across to support the attack.

Daylight found the units still receiving scattered small arms fire as they struggled up the steep hillsides. Co A had disengaged and turned to follow Co B. The rear of A Co's column was ambushed and captured in the pitch black by enemy who came from the S. As light filtered down the thickly wooded draws, other bypassed enemy opened up on B and A Cos. Co K was ordered back to assist the tanks and TDs were sent up. After several hours hard fighting, the enemy pocket was overcome. 40 prisoners were taken and the Americans captured earlier were rescued. Co A then seized NEIDEREICH.

3d Bn continued E and captured MICHELBAACH and BUSCHEICH. 2nd Bn swung up to the SE. TF KEDROVSKY was detached at 0820 and put under control of 358.

During the day several hundred prisoners were totaled up as the regiment secured the high ground dominating the crossing area. By midafternoon the objectives were taken and the regiment was halted to let 359 go through.

Supporting engineers immediately began construction of an infantry support bridge and Bailey bridge at BIRRESBORN.

After the 359 passed through, the regiment assembled within its area minus blocking elements from 2d Bn

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who covered the approaches from the S. 1st Bn assembled in MINERALBRUNNER, 2d Bn (-) in BIRRESBORN and 3d Bn in MICHELBAACH and BUSCHEICH. Dry clothes and socks were issued to the water-soaked infantrymen.

\* \* \* \* \*

Examination of the defenses along the river showed that had the Germans manned them fully and chosen to resist in force the fighting would have been most bloody. Positions were cunningly camouflaged and one had to approach to within several yards before seeing some of them. Outposts on the flat ground adjacent to the river were connected to the battle position several hundred yards back on the higher ground by covered and carefully sodded communication trenches so that only the exit holes were visible and those only after careful survey. Foxholes, too, were well dug with all spoil removed, leaving only a hole level with the ground. But the rain had rendered many of them unusable. Several AT guns subsequently captured were adroitly concealed. The work was strongly reminiscent of the carefully prepared positions met in NORMANDY.

358th Inf - The zone held by TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY now became the zone of the 358th and the regiment was ordered to capture GEROLSTEIN. Using organic motors the regiment shuttled 1st and 3d Bns to LISSINGEN. Progress was slow as the roads were heavily cratered and all available engineers were put to work filling these. Bridging and engineer help were requested from 11th Armored Div.

GEROLSTEIN, once a prominent marshalling yard and American PW camp, was surrounded by numerous entrenchments and fortifications, which were reportedly manned. But the chief obstacles encountered were an AT ditch, road craters and high velocity fire from six tanks, one of which was concealed in a cave.

At 1340 two platoons of 90th Rcn Troop and one plat 773rd TDs, all dismounted, crossed the river. Artillery and one plat Co D, 712th Tank Bn, supported the action by fire. By 1500 they had seized the town despite scattered small arms fire. Four Ps were taken and the TASK FORCE returned to LISSINGEN after 3d Bn 358th Inf passed through at 1530 to complete the

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roundup for a total of 17 prisoners in all. By 1700 GEROLSTEIN WAS CLEAR. The enemy tanks withdrew to PELM and 3d Bn prepared to attack that town.

2d Bn advanced to the high ground N of GEROLSTEIN and 1st Bn entered GEES from the W as 359th Inf entered from the S.

359th Inf - The regiment (- 1st Bn) was directed to move initially to vicinity of BIRRESBORN and then to pass through 357th Inf and continue the attack. In the event 358th Inf encountered heavy resistance at GEROLSTEIN, the 359th Inf was to be prepared to take this objective and PELM. Both 3d and 2d Bns began to move in midmorning using organic transportation.

3d Bn crossed first on the footbridge and infantry support bridge at BIRRESBORN and attacked NE through 357th's right to capture GEES. Battalion entered the town in late afternoon making contact there with 358th, 1st Bn.

2d Bn, 359th Inf followed the 3d Bn across then turned N through 357th's left to capture the high ground above GEROLSTEIN. 40 disorganized Germans were encountered in the woods there. 15 were captured and the rest killed or dispersed. Combat patrols left to contact 358th at GEROLSTEIN.

1st Bn captured PsW who told of Germans withdrawing from DENSBOREN. A and B Cos were therefore dispatched to capture the town and the high ground beyond. C Co crossed to take the rest of MURLENBACH. All crossings were made on debris of partially blown bridges. 34 stragglers were picked up in both towns. Both battalions then sent patrols E and captured 3 - 120mm mortars, an anti-tank gun and crew of six men and an artillery Major. Units then consolidated their gains.

Div CP moved from SCHONECKEN and opened at 1800 at KOPP.

Engineers continued to work throughout the night on bridges. The two searchlights from 226th AAA Bn (S/L) were set up at KOPP and illuminated the construction work at BIRRESBORN until that bridge was completed at 2300. Then the lights were beamed over LISSINGEN where a bridge was started for 358th Inf. A light mist was falling which changed later to heavy snow.

*Illumination*

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The infantry as well as the Engrs were enthusiastic over the illumination afforded by the searchlights which had helped speed the bridges to completion. Infantry patrols, working the area toward PELM, had high praise for the lights.

7 March 1945

11th Armd Div was previously ordered to pass through either 4th and/or 90th Inf Div and range out ahead. CCA was designated to cross in the 90th's zone as soon as the bridge at LISSINGEN was completed.

358th Inf - As fast as possible the area was prepared for passage of the 11th Armd Div; AT ditches were filled in at GEROLSTEIN and later at PELM and debris was swept aside from the road through the former town.

Following an artillery TOT on PELM, Co L entered the town at 0700 to find the enemy gone. 3d Bn then moved on to the high ground <sup>E</sup> of the town to hold the shoulders of the exit for debouchement of the armor.

At 1040 the LISSINGEN bridge was finished and at 1045 the 11th Armd began to roll across, pushing on through the 8 kilometer bridgehead established by the 90th.

Instructed to advance to DRIES and OBER EHE, 3d Bn on left and 1st Bn on right moved out to NE.

Co K captured the high ground <sup>S</sup> of ROCKESKYLL and got involved with enemy in the town, so captured it too, although it was out of the Division boundary. Arrangements were made with 4th Inf Div to remain in the town overnight.

Co L moved to HOHENFELS and later to BETTLEDORF which they captured after eliminating some resistance.

Co I seized ESSINGEN where they caught 8 prisoners - a demolition crew with truck and explosives.

1st Bn captured BERLINGEN; then moved Co A to HOHENFELS to replace Co L.

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2d Bn began to assemble in GEROLSTEIN with Co G left on the high ground N of the town to assist by fire the 4th Inf Div who were meeting strong resistance all along the line.

By this time the road was a continuous conveyor belt of armor and with CCR and CCB 11th Armd, ordered to follow CCA, because of resistance in 4th Inf Div's zone, the 358th abandoned all further efforts to move forward.

TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY remained in LISSINGEN less the 90th Rcn Tr which was detached and attached to 359th Inf at 070700A.

359th Inf - The 90th Rcn Tr was attached for the purpose of combing out the large SALMWALD area as directed by Corps. 2d Section, 3d Plat, 773d TD Bn was attached by the regiment to the Troop and the unit moved from BIRRESBORN at 0900 with the mission as stated plus that of making contact with 1st Bn at MURLENBACH and DENSBORN. The Troop moved toward SALM then turned W and searched the woods back to the KYLL. Two stragglers were picked up but no opposition was encountered. 5 tanks and numerous field pieces were found abandoned. Having made contact with 1st Bn at 1500 the Troop headed for its assembly point at NEROTH.

Objectives for the 359th were KIRCHWEILER, HINTERWEILER and NEROTH. 2d and 3d Bns moved out at 0700. 3d moved by way of GEE with K followed by I approaching from the W while L entered the town from the S. No resistance was met and KIRCHWEILER was secured at 1330.

2d Bn moved from BUSCHEICH on tanks, TDs and vehicles until they encountered a road block that defied immediate removal. The troops dismounted and covered the remaining 2000 yards on foot. No resistance was offered. One enemy tank in the town withdrew.

New orders awaited both battalions: 3d was to continue to DOCKWEILER. 2d was to capture and block at WALDKONIGEN. 3d Bn accomplished its mission but returned to HINTERWEILER as DOCKWEILER was full of 11th Armd troops.

2d Bn reached the edge of WALDKONIGEN without being seen since the terrain afforded well covered routes of approach. They saw many soldiers in the town and others leaving the edge. The battalion opened fire on the town and directed artillery on the retreating columns.

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7 March 1945 (cont'd)

The enemy force numbered about 200 and were part of a strong rear guard left to block further advance to the N. Cornered, the Germans turned and fought a savage house-to-house battle. The fight began at 1830 and lasted well on into the night. An enemy tank E of the town opened fire and was itself fired upon by the TDs following the troops. The tank was destroyed. At 2200 the battalion had the town but spent most of the night cleaning it out. 90 prisoners were taken.

After contact by 90th Rcn was made, 1st Bn was relieved of its mission and assembled at BIRRESBORN.

357th Inf - The regiment remained in Division Reserve. Its blocking force was relieved after 90th Rcn cleaned SALM WALD. Corps allocated two truck companies to the Division and these were assigned to 357th to prepare them to move as a motorized RCT, through either 358th or 359th Infs.

At 1000 Division CP opened at KIRCHWEILER. At 1850 Division issued FM # 40 which detached 90th Rcn Tr from 359th as of 072000. Troop reverted to Division control with mission of reconnoitering routes forward on 8 March.

Both 358th and 359th were instructed to hold present positions until the armor had cleared and then be prepared to move NE. One motorized battalion was to be maintained by each regiment to assist 11th Armd if necessary.

357th was to remain in Division Reserve, motorized as stated.

On the right of the 90th elements of 5th Inf Div were at SALM as they cleaned up behind the meteoric advance of the 4th Armd Div.

8 March 1945

Aside from 90th Rcn and elements of the 359th Inf, Division units remained generally fixed during the day, limiting activity to patrolling, road reconnaissance and movement of the 1st Bn 359th to DOCKWEILER in early morning.

2d Bn 359th Inf sent E Co B to STEINBORN to see if it was clear. No enemy were found and Co returned to WALDKONIGEN. AT and Cn Cos occupied STEINBORN.

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8 March 1945 (cont'd)

The Rcn Tr reconnoitered as far as KELBERG and HEIROTH, clearing out OBER EHE, BRUCK, BEINHAUSEN, NEICHEN and KRADENBACH on the way. 50 PsW were captured, 40 enemy infantrymen and a tracked vehicle were seen in HEIROTH and the troops directed a barrage of 345th FA Bn on the town.

Priority of work went on road repair. These narrow thoroughfares were in bad shape from German crater holes and eight continuous days of drizzling rain. The S/L section continued as in days past to supply illumination for Engineers working on the roads at night.

11th Armd Div continued to roll, however, and were reported beyond MAYEN at midnight and still moving. As this indicated rapid follow-up, the Division formed the regiments in normal combat teams and prepared to go on radio for communication.

9 March 1945

The day was marked by complete disintegration of the German defenses within the Corps Z. 11th Armd's rush to the RHINE netted them about 6,000 prisoners, including some displaced persons. They left behind confused and bewildered groups of enemy who offered little or no resistance. In some villages which the 90th Rcn Tr entered, the German townspeople waved white flags and offered to surrender the German soldiers, if their town was not fired upon. In others German soldiers were chased from the village to fight in the woods. Nearly every town was a babel of polyglot nationalities - Russians, French, Belgians, Poles, Czechs, Yugoslavs, Italians and others impressed as laborers or captured as German PsW, and Civil Affairs resources were strained to the limit to provide food and water for these wanderers.

Organized as combat teams, the 90th Div advanced by foot and motor with CT 358 on left and CT 359 on right to march objectives just W and NW of KELBERG, which was the forward limit prescribed by Corps. CT 357 moved motorized at 0630 directly to KELBERG following guides furnished by 359th Inf from NEROTH.

Enroute, the 357th was ordered to continue to MAYEN, in accordance with later instructions from Corps, and to protect the route thereto with troops at key points.

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9 March 1945 (cont'd)

3d and 1st Bns proceeded to MAYEN while 2d Bn detrucked at BOOS to set up road blocks and outposts. 178 prisoners were gathered up in the day's operation.

On the Division left flank, 90th Rcn Tr augmented with 1 Plat light tanks from 712th Tk Bn, swept through a large area from HEIROTH to JAMMELSHOFEN and contacted first TASK FORCE RHINO (4th Div TF) on the left and later 6th Cav Gp after they relieved 4th Inf Div, which assembled and awaited orders. 90th Rcn Tr gathered some 234 prisoners.

Pressed by more Psw than they could handle, 11th Armd Div turned to the 90th for aid in evacuation. The Reconnaissance Co of 773rd TD Bn was dispatched to assist the round-up. With darkness approaching and 2000 prisoners and displaced persons on hand, the unit herded the group into a bowl-shaped valley around the rim of which they placed jeeps with headlights on, flooding the group, Cn Co of 359th Inf was sent to help guard until evacuation could begin. Throughout the night Germans in groups of two or three appeared like moths out of the dark and headed for the light to turn themselves in.

At 1400 Div CP moved to KELBERG, closing at 1630.

At 2130 Division issued FM # 42. It directed CT 357 to assemble the battalion deployed between KELBERG and MAYEN, to mop up Z with not more than one battalion and to maintain present road blocks.

CT 358 (less TF KEDROVSKY), CT 359, and 90th Rcn Tr were all given areas to clean up behind the restraining line which was the main road running NW from MAYEN. Assembled in these areas after the mop up, they would be ready to relieve the 11th Armd Div as soon as it cleared out its Z.

10 March 1945

Mopping up operations were completed by late afternoon. No organized resistance was encountered, but several hundred prisoners were picked up, many in civilian clothes.

Corps boundaries were changed and Division right boundary was set almost due E from MAYEN. This placed

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part of the 4th Armd within the new Division sector and they were to be relieved as well as elements of 11th Armored Division. All units were notified to be ready to move on one hour's notice any time after 0800. A meeting of commanders of 357 and 359, who were to be on line, and of the Div Arty was set for 0730 at MAYEN to discuss plans and make reconnaissance of new areas.

343d FA Bn in registering its guns fired the first shot of the Division E of the RHINE River.

11 March 1945

With all the machinery set in motion, a "stop order" came from VIII Corps. Previous instructions were rescinded and the 90th Div was transferred at once to XII Corps. Although artillery and some infantry had already moved, the relief was halted and commanders met at Div CP at 2000 to discuss the new plan. XII Corps Operations Directive # 86 told the 90th Div to relieve the 4th Armd in its missions. Under the new boundary this sector was just S of where the Div was. Further, the 90th was to protect Corps N flank and be prepared to attack S across the MOSELLE River with 5th Inf Div to seize a bridgehead on Corps order.

This altered the position but not the role of the regiments. The plan was to use 357th Inf on the left of the new sector instead of the right and 359th on the right instead of the left. 358th Inf would remain in reserve.

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PHASE II  
FROM THE MOSELLE TO THE RHINE  
12-23 MARCH

★ SEE PLATES III - IV ★

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## PHASE II

## MOSELLE TO RHINE

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12 March 1945

New march tables were set up and units began their move to new assembly areas in early morning. FO # 16 was received from XII Corps. The Corps mission was to cross the MOSELLE River vicinity TREIS and HATZENPORT to secure a bridgehead, prepared to continue attack to SE and seize a bridgehead across NAHE River vicinity BAD KREUZNACH. The mission of the 90th Division was to cross the MOSELLE within zone and be prepared for advance to SE to seize a bridgehead across NAHE River between BAD KREUZNACH and BINGEN. Lastly it was to protect the left flank of Corps.

Preparatory plans were drawn up and Division CP opened at POLCH at 1200A.

359th Inf - Moved to new area beginning at 0900. 1st Bn set up in MUNSTERMAIFELD. 2d Bn in METTERNICH. 3d Bn at WIERSCHEM. Regimental CP opened at MUNSTERMAIFELD. Regiment directed 2d Bn to make the necessary relief, hold the line with two companies, keeping one in reserve, and patrol the N bank of the River. 1st and 3d Bns were to send combat patrols across the River.

2d Bn placed Co E in HATZENPORT and Co G in LASSBERG. 3d Bn put Co L in LASSBERG as well. The enemy harassed this town with sporadic rounds of 75mm gun fire. Regiment closed at 1645 and made plans to conduct training in assault boat handling on 13 March.

The swift MOSELLE current overturned the light rubber boats used by the patrols to cross after dark and the patrols were forced back. They then patrolled the near bank of the river and observed lights and movement on the far side. Contact was established with the 5th Inf Div at MOSELKERN.

357th Inf - Starting at 1100, 357th Inf moved 2d Bn(-) to MORZ and 1st and 3d Bns to KALT. Regimental CP opened at KUTTIG. Here too, 2d Bn was designated to occupy the line and Co E went to LOF while Co F set up a platoon at KATTENES. Although LOF had been cleared by the Cavalry with 4th Armd Div, enemy had infiltrated back and Co E had to fight its way into the town.

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12 March 1945 (Cont'd)

Full possession was not gained until 0500 the next morning.

358th Inf - Remained in present location with plans to move on 13th.

For the 1st day since the start of the month, no rain fell and the weather held promise of clearing.

13 March 1945

Plans were completed for the crossing and FO # 58 issued at 1100. Div objectives were the high ground and road net vicinity HALSENBACH, EMMELSHAUSEN, BICKENBACH and BRAUNSHORN. For the crossing 315th Engr Bn would support the 359th Inf while 166th Engr Bn would support the 357th Inf. Three bridges were indicated by Corps in the bridgehead. One at HATZENPORT, one at MOSELKERN on the Div right boundary and one in 5th Div area. 1135th Engrs were to construct the M-2 treadway at HATZENPORT. Five traffic control posts were established by the 90th to insure flow of vehicles over the narrow roads after the bridge was built.

Search lights were placed in position to be used on call of the regimental commanders. H-hour was 140200A.

90th Rcn Tr was ordered to take over the front from KATTENES to Division left boundary, screening the latter from the MOSELLE River to DRECKENACH. After 2d Bn 357th Inf began to assemble prior to crossing, the troop was to include KATTENES as well.

4th Armd Div asked for and received permission to assemble CCA in an unused area on the Division left flank within our zone.

358th Inf moved at 0900 to its assembly area putting 1st Bn at KOLLIG, 2d Bn at GERING and 3d Bn at EINIG. Regimental CP was located at MERTLOCH.

359th Inf changed their right crossing site from LASSBERG to MOSELKERN in order to get their boats closer to the water and avoid an 800 yard hand carry necessary at LASSBERG. The far bank was very steep and every effort was made to spare the assault troops unnecessary drain on their endurance, which was to be

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13 March 1945 (Cont'd)

severely tested.

14 March 1945

By 0130 all troops were ready to go except Co K 359 who were delayed. At 0200 the attack began, achieving a measure of surprise according to PsW reports even though a crossing was expected. Sporadic small arms and machine gun fire sprayed the crossing areas, but enemy resistance did not build up until along toward daylight. Thirty minutes after the crossings began, Div Arty interdicted roads and routes of approach to intercept any reinforcement of the river line.

357th Inf - 1st Bn crossed just S of LOF and in less than an hour were all on the far bank. C Co turned S to clear out BRODENBACH and were heavily engaged with 200 enemy troops in the town. At daylight Co A moved around Co C's left flank to assist. The town was not cleared until noon. B Co meanwhile was working up to the high ground SW of BRODENBACH and gained the hill top shortly after daylight. Following capture of BRODENBACH, 1st Bn advanced to seize HERSCHWIESEN and OPPENHAUSEN where they remained for the night.

3d Bn crossed just S of KATTENES and met sporadic small arms fire. Co K leading, turned N to ALKEN while Cos I and L continued E to capture the high ground, which was to be an assembly area for 2d Bn. Troops of 6th SS Mountain Division Ren Bn put up a strong resistance and ALKEN did not fall until mid-afternoon. 31 PsW were captured, some in American fatigues and combat boots which were captured in the ARDENNES Bulge. Cos I and L gained their objective by 0500.

With the immediate hill masses secured, 2d Bn crossed at 0600 and pushed through the 3d Bn to capture UDENHAUSEN after dark, Co F taking the town. Co E's efforts to grasp PFAFFENHECK were repulsed by enemy infantry and heavy flak gun fire. With both flanks exposed by a 500 yard advance, the Bn had been ordered to go no further until tanks and TDs could be crossed.

359th Inf - 1st Bn crossed at HATZENPORT. Brushing aside some light resistance the troops climbed to the high ground and advanced over the rough terrain some 4 kilometers. Enroute, Co B met dug-in enemy

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14 March 1945 (Cont'd)

infantry in a draw about 2000 yards inland. A Co began to outflank the position around B Co's right but artillery smashed the resistance and both Cos continued forward. 56 PsW were taken and 3 80mm mortars captured. Reaching MORSHAUSEN at 1600, they entered the town, found Germans in it and pulled back from town to fire artillery on it. A and B went to the woods W of the town, while C came back to the N. At 1840, A and B Cos assaulted the town again and gained one third of it.

The enemy troops in the town included some who had been forced out of BRODENBACH in the early morning by 357th Inf and some previously encountered by Co B. All were from 1211 Regt of 159 VG Div. Added to these were 57 laborers from a construction Bn drafted as infantry by an officer of the 1211. Two enemy tanks and an armored car entered the town from the S in time to support the defense.

Since the bridge was not in, our own tanks and TDs were unavailable and the Bn shot up its bazooka rounds in trying to hold off the enemy armor. After the bridge was in a section of tanks and one of TDs were rushed up to 1st Bn. The enemy tanks withdrew.

In the 3d Bn, Co I crossed at MOSELKERN first and moved NE up the river road then E onto the high ground in the HOLENHAU woods without meeting resistance. Co L reached the outskirts of BURGEM at 0500 where they stopped by fire from a Bn of enemy infantry (200-250 men) in and around the town. By 0700 Co L had gained only a third of the town. Co E then moved on the town from the N and this added pressure broke the resistance. The town was cleared at 0830 and Co L had 35 prisoners.

Co K crossed the river at 0635 and joined Co I on the high ground. The Bn continued forward at 1300 toward MACKEN without meeting further resistance. Patrols to MACKEN drew fire. Artillery was laid on the town and Cos L and K occupied the town in part.

2d Bn began to cross at HATZENPORT at 0600 in assault boats as foot bridges were not in. Directed to assemble in Regimental Reserve at BURGEM, the Bn moved in after Co L cleared the town. They were completely closed by 1000.

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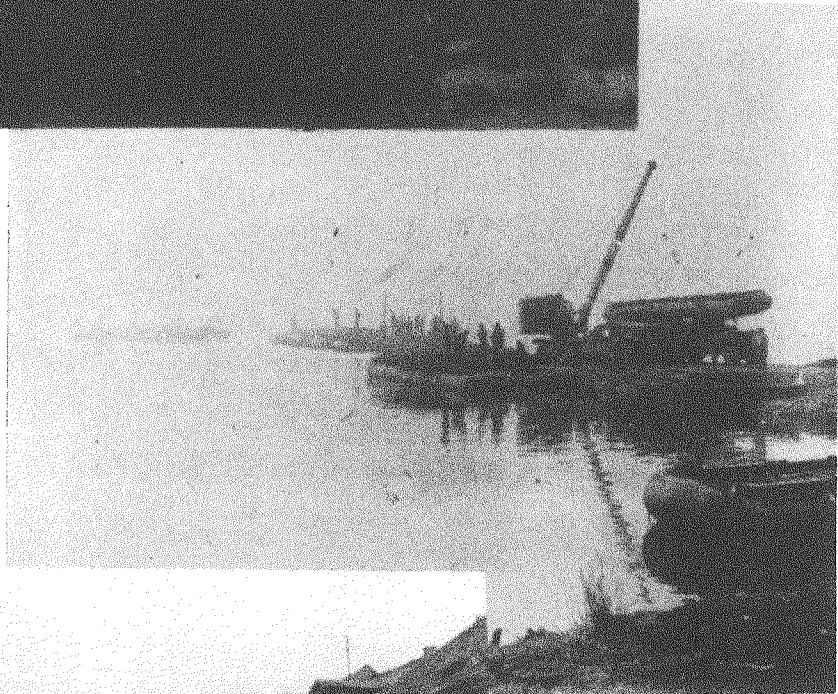
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**T H E  
S E C O N D  
M O S E L L E  
C R O S S I N G .**

**Infantry,  
assault boats,  
and smoke.....**



then, after the 90th's  
infantry had crossed,  
Division engineers  
began a pontoon bridge  
at Hatzenport.

\*\*\*\*\*

Left: 90th Division  
infantrymen advance  
through artillery-  
marked Bingenbrücke.

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~~RESTRICTED~~14 March 1945 (Cont'd)

358th Inf - Regiment staged forward to vicinity MET-TERNICH. Closed at 1100A. At about 1730 began to cross MOSELLE River in assault boats and infantry support raft at HATZENPORT. Assembled in Div Reserve at BRODENBACH and guarded bridge upon completion. Crossing was completed in about two hours.

Enemy shelling harassed the bridge site, but did little damage as the early morning fog and later a smoke screen concealed the site from enemy observation. But the swift current of the MOSELLE gave the engineers some trouble. The cable broke on the footbridge above HATZENPORT as it neared completion and swept it downstream, where it smashed into the floating treadway under construction below the town. The bridge was knocked out of line and work delayed several hours. The cable also broke on the footbridge in 357 area and finally both projects were ordered abandoned with attention directed to rafts and ferry. Two light ferries were installed by noon but worked only intermittently because of motor trouble. A heavy raft (M-2 floating treadway) was assembled around 1400, however, and vehicles were moved across in good order.

The heavy ponton bridge at MOSELKERN was finished at 1855 and the HATZENPORT bridge a few minutes later and traffic immediately flowed over both bridges.

\* \* \* \* \*

The assembly area used by 358th vicinity KOLLIG was set aside for 2d Cav Gp (-2d Cav Sq), which began assembly in the afternoon. On the Div right flank, 5th Div crossed and gained initial objectives with little resistance encountered. On Div left flank 87th Inf Div occupied the W bank of the MOSELLE.

15 March 1945

The attack was resumed at 0700. It was characterized by stiffened resistance and counterattacks on the Div left (N) flank, while on the right enemy forces fell away in the face of our advance.

2d Cav Gp (- 2d Sq) crossed the HATZENPORT bridge at 0900 to assume protection of Corps left flank and begin relief of 357th Inf who were blocking in that direction.

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15 March 1945 (Cont'd)

4th Armored Division was alerted to pass through with CC's abreast in zone of 90th and 5th Inf Divs and CCA began to cross the HATZENPORT bridge at 1200.

357th Inf - At 0600 Co B was counterattacked by estimated 150 enemy and 2 tanks from the draw to the NE of HERSCHWIESEN. Artillery repulsed the attack. Co B mopped up area until relieved by Co A 358th Inf. A and C Cos continued to advance with Co A capturing WINDHAUSEN and Co C driving for BUCHHOLZ which it captured in late afternoon after bitter fighting. The area was defended by infantry supported by flak guns.

On the left flank of the regiment the enemy infiltrated and counterattacked and was most aggressive. 50 SS troops from 11 SS Regiment (6th SS Mtn Div) slipped in around Co L at NORTERSHAUSEN but were repulsed. 42d Cav in process of relieving 357th Inf 3d Bn joined the encounter with its light tanks and the two units worked throughout the day to clear the area so the relief could be completed. In late afternoon 2d Bn 358th was attached to help hold this flank as resistance continued.

2d Bn 357th Inf continued to find trouble at PFAFFENHECK as 100 SS troopers and a tank fought furiously to hold the road to BOFFARD. One platoon Co E forced an entrance in early morning and then were cut off before reinforcements could reach it. No gains were made during the period. With 357th Inf committed to fend the resistance along the left flank, Division now ordered the 358th forward to expand the bridgehead to the E.

358th Inf - At 0700 the regiment staged 1st and 2d Bns forward to HERSCHWIESEN and OPPENHAUSEN respectively. 2d Bn remained at BRODENBACH in Division Reserve until attached to 357th Inf at 1740 to help clear up the left flank.

Co A relieved Co B 357th Inf and Co A proceeded down the draw NE of HERSCHWIESEN finding a sizeable force of enemy still holding out there.

3d Bn advanced to SE to capture DIELER, NEY, HALSEN-BACH and KRATZENBURG before stopping for the night. At HALSEN-BACH they captured a flak Bn Hq and 30 prisoners.

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