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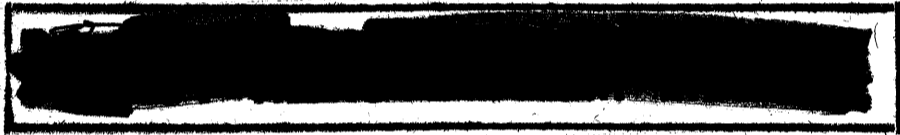
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TOPIC OUTLINE

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3. Background
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 - a. ~~The 90th Division~~ as judged
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Each person has a personality, one which is portrayed to all but one which is interpreted in many different ways. An individual's personality is portrayed as the individual sees himself, as those closest to him see him, as those who stand off a distance see him, and as those who hear about him picture him. Just as each person has a personality, so does each organization. An organization's personality, likewise, is seen in many different ways. To the individual who works at the lowest level of an organization he sees the organization's personality in a much different light than does the commander, each successive commander in the chain of command, and the historian. Each person judges an organization's personality on what he has done, seen, read, or been told.

Before judgement is passed on the actions of any unit, one should be careful to examine those actions as seen by the doer, the observer, the reporter, the reader, and the teller. However, many times judgements are formulated and actions taken when insufficient evidence or information to make the proper decision has been made available or has been sought. As commanders or potential commanders, each officer in the United States Army must insure that before judgement is passed on any individual, unit or activity, all sides of the story must be heard and evaluated properly. As a means to illustrate this the actions of the 90th Infantry Division, and the interpretation of these actions from several conflicting points of view, will be presented.

The 90th Infantry Division is used at the United States Army Command and General Staff College as one of the teaching vehicles for leadership instruction. The college portrays the 90th Infantry Division as a "problem division" during its initial combat operations in World War II. (12: p. 6-1.) Chapter 6 of RB 22-1 leads one to believe that during its first six weeks in combat, among other serious difficiencies, the 90th Division suffered from lack of

leadership by subordinate leaders and commanders and lack of proper training; and as a consequence, failed in its first three operations.

It is not the intention of the author to be critical of the instructional material from the United States Army Command and General Staff College. The sole purpose of this study is to support the thesis that reports alone are a poor judge of performance and that for a true evaluation checks must be made from within as well as from without.

On 10 June 1944, the 90th Division, as part of VII Corps, was committed through the 82d Airborne Division to seize the line of the Douve between Terre-de-Beauval and St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte. (Appendix 1.) The northern portion of the division objective was assigned to the 357th Infantry attacking from the west of la Fiore. The 358th Infantry was to attack toward Picauville to St. Sauveur-le-Vicomte. The 357th Infantry reached le Motey by the end of the day while the 358th Infantry advanced a few hundred yards west of Picauville. The following day the 357th Infantry was fighting in the vicinity of les Landes while the 358th Infantry had encircled Pont l'Abbe. On the 12th of June the 359th Infantry was committed between 357th and 358th and assigned an objective along the Douve in the center of the division zone. By 13 June the 90th Division had established a line from Gourbesville to Pont l'Abbe. On that date the division commander and two regimental commanders were relieved. The Corps commander for want of speed then decided to change his scheme of maneuver. The attack to the West was taken over by the 9th Division and the 82d Airborne Division. (9: pp. 401-403.)

On the 13th of July thought was given to the relief of the new division commander of the 90th Division. (6: pp. 332-333.) The mission assigned to the 90th Division for its second major operation was a coordinated attack to the southwest to seize Mont Castre. The division attacked with the 359th Infantry attacking through the

hedgerows to the slope of Mont Castre to meet the 79th Division south of La Haye-de-Puits. The 358th Infantry attacked on the left to force the corridor between Mont Castre and the Prairies. Once on the high ground the 357th Infantry would be committed to the corps objective. (Appendix 2.) The attack jumped off on 3 July. By the end of the day the division advanced less than a mile at a cost of over 600 casualties. 13 July found the division on Hill 122, but at the price of two companies having been cut off, and an overall casualty rate of 2,000. (3: pp. 64-70.)

The 90th Division's third operation for the described period was ordered as a "stepping-stone" to facilitate breakout and pursuit across France. The mission assigned to the division was to seize the "island" of St. Germain-sur-Seves. (Appendix 3.) This mission was assigned to the 358th Infantry. On 22 July the 358th Infantry attacked with two battalions abreast to seize the "island." By the end of the day only one battalion plus one company was successful in crossing the Seve; and the attack stalled short of the objective. The following morning the battalion on the "island" surrendered. A week following this operation the division commander was relieved. (3: pp. 202-204.)

In order that proper comparisons and evaluations may be made of the 90th Division's personality, the division's first three major undertakings in combat are examined, in part, as expressed by historians, commanders at higher echelons, regimental commanders, a company grade officer, and two enlisted men.

As previously stated, it appears that on the surface the quality of leadership of the subordinate leaders was inept. From the Office of the Chief of Military History indications of this may be found in a training report which reflects that with the rapid expansion of the Army in 1942 there was a dearth of competent regimental and battalion commanders. Also reflected was that junior and noncommissioned

officers provided uncertain leadership. (11: p. 459.) During its first taste of combat, two regimental commanders were relieved, as well as the division commander. Following the Mont Castre operation it was concluded that "Some subordinate commanders still lacked the power of vigorous direction. Too many officers were overly wary of counter-attack." (3: p. 72.) The action reports of the St. Germain-sur-Seves operation relate that a battalion commander was relieved, and also indicate lack of positive leadership at battalion and company level. (3: pp. 202-204.)

In the eyes of General Omar Bradley, the Commanding General 1st US Army, the 90th Division was observed as lacking in leadership at the lower echelons during its first six weeks of combat. Following the division's first operation, when describing the actions which led to the relief of the division commander, General Bradley had this to say of the subordinate commanders, "....his [the relieved division commander] legacy included too many inept subordinate commanders. . . ." (6: p. 296.) General Bradley alluded to the same problem following the attack on Mont Castre by writing, "Landrum [the division commander] has cleaned house but not thoroughly enough." (6: p. 297.) Again, General Bradley expressed grave dissatisfaction with the subordinate commanders of the 90th Division upon the conclusion of the attack on St. Germain-sur-Seves. Upon assigning the third commanding general to the division in a six week period, Gen. Bradley directed that the new division commander was to provide a list of those officers who warranted relief. Two days later, 16 field officers were relieved according to the 1st US Army commander. (12: p. 6-4.)

56
At this point it is clearly indicated that the judgements passed on the quality of the division's subordinate commanders were realistic. But a check with personnel who served with the division paints a much different picture.

A former regimental commander, Colonel J. H. Rustemeyer, who trained with the division prior to its departure overseas, has said that the division experienced the normal "growing pains" of all divisions which were activated during the war. There was a degree of personnel turbulence created by the loss of noncommissioned officers who left the unit to attend OCS. But, as those noncommissioned officers left, personnel who were deemed best qualified would fill the vacancy and be developed into leaders. One major problem that existed, which affected the command as a whole, was that similar to this regimental commander, the division commander who trained the division did not deploy overseas with the division. Also, there was a degree of instability in the field grade officer ranks. However, this did not detract from the command's readiness. (14: pp. 1-2.)

Another former regimental commander, Maj. Gen. G. B. Barth, who served with the division during June and July, 1944, relates that the division, like all other divisions, experienced some lack of leadership by subordinates, particularly when first committed to combat. He stated that in training attempts were made to insure that the best qualified personnel were selected to be the leaders. The real test came in battle. Where a leader or leaders failed, invariably someone would rise to the occasion and take command. Some of the best leaders at the lowest levels of command sprang from unknowns who possessed this fine quality of leading. (1: pp. 1-2.)

At the conclusion of the division's third operation, it was stated that 16 field officers were relieved as a measure to get the division on its feet. Actually, only two field grade officers were relieved and none of them were battalion or regimental commanders. The remainder were company grade officers. Noteworthy to mention is Gen. Barth's expression that the successes achieved immediately following the division's third operation were attained with the commanders and leaders that were present at the time the second division commander was relieved. (1: pp. 1-6.)

An enlisted man, Neal Rodriguez, who served with the division throughout its operation in Europe had this to say about the quality of its leaders, "One thing that accounted for good morale was that our leaders were out in front with the troops. This may be one reason why we lost so many leaders." (13: pp. 1-2.) This is supported to some extent by a comparison of decorations which were awarded for meritorious action during June and July, 1944. From one battalion, of the ten men to earn Distinguished Service Cross Awards, five were officers and one was a noncommissioned officer. (2: pp. 75-85.)

While the subordinate leaders displayed the impression of ineptness during the division's indoctrination to combat, it should be acknowledged that any unit or command exposed to fire for the first time will find leaders who fail to carry their share of responsibility. Certainly this was true of the 90th Division. However, following its initial baptism of combat, the subordinate leaders of the division, with a few exceptions, can not be credited with failing to do their duties. With the relief of its commander and two regimental commanders during its initial operation, too much attention may have been focused on the 90th Division so that, as a result of subsequent shortcomings on the part of a few, the division may have been overly criticized as a whole when this was not warranted.

6a Another "personality indicator" of the 90th Division is whether or not it was properly trained. Because of its performance of mid-June, 1944, in an unpublished letter to General Marshall, dated 5 July 1944, General Eisenhower judged that the division had not been "properly brought up," and that it was "less well prepared for battle than almost any other." (5: p. 100.) On the other hand, Gen. Bradley alluded to the fact that he must have been satisfied with the division's combat readiness prior to D-day. He has written that the reason he allowed the 90th Division to go into battle under the command of the leader who brought the division to England was that "his

performance during those two brief months in England convinced me that he warranted a fair tryout as a division commander." (6: p. 296.)

The 90th Division was reactivated in April, 1942. For over two years it prepared for combat. In early 1943, it took part in maneuvers in Louisiana where it maneuvered against the 77th Division, (16: p. 18.) and in September, 1943, it commenced a three month desert training period in Arizona and California where it was pitted against the 93rd Division in a "two-sided" maneuver. (10: pp. 1-2.) Of the 64 Infantry divisions trained in the United States, only 13 had the opportunity to conduct training in the California-Arizona Maneuver Area. (11: p. 470.) A training report dated 12 April 1943, filed in the office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, reflects that the division at one time was experiencing difficulty in obtaining ammunition for both artillery and infantry. (11: p. 464.) A check with a regimental commander who participated in training the division revealed that he knew of no shortage of ammunition and received as much as his units could use. (14: p. 2.)

The training status of the division as seen by members of the division reflects favorably.

6 b Col. Rustemeyer indicated that the division was well trained, and that as far as his regiment was concerned, his proof that he had trained it well was exemplified on two occasions following the war. At a 1954 regimental convention, his entrance into the convention hall was announced with a comment by one of the attendees that "here was the man who saved our lives." And, as late as Christmas, 1965, he received a letter from his former regimental S-2 who wrote:

". . . Over the past several years I have visited many of your 358th Infantry officers, and the respect we have for you has grown with the years.

"You made us do things properly and would not stand for any sloppy, unorganized work."

"I am sure all of us are better off in civilian life because of the wonderful lessons you taught us."

Similar comments appear in 8 letters from correspondents who took time from battle in August and September, 1944, to express their gratitude to Colonel Rustemeyer. (14: p. 4.)

General Barth was of the opinion that the division was no worse or better trained for combat than any other division. His observation was based on what he learned of the division after he joined it in Europe. The only major shortcoming which he could detect was that the division did not conduct training in hedgerow fighting while in England. This, he stated, was a shortcoming of all divisions and provisions should have been made for it as there were plenty of hedgerows in England available for training. (1: pp. 1-2.)

The opinion that the division was well trained prior to combat is further supported by the comments of a company grade officer, Jim Clark, who had been with the division from its activation through the termination of the war. (7: p.1.) One enlisted man indicated that the quality of the training he received in the 90th Division far exceeded that which he had received during his basic training. (13: p. 1.) Another enlisted man reaffirmed that he was well prepared for combat, and further stated that he recalled having received training in hedgerow fighting while in England. (15: p. 1.)

With two years of training under its belt, it is indicated that the 90th Division was adequately trained for combat, with the exception of hedgerow training, possibly. Because of the opportunity to train both in Louisiana and in the California-Arizona Maneuver Areas, it is conceivable that the division may have been better prepared for combat than the majority of other divisions who were not afforded these opportunities.

79 The last item selected to assist in determining the 90th Division's personality is to look at what it accomplished during June and July, 1944.

For the three days immediately preceeding the 90th Division's baptism of fire, the 82d Airborne parried with the 91st (German) Division for control of the west bank of the Moderet River. By the time control was gained, the 82d Airborne Division had committed five battalions, one of which was reinforced with a fourth rifle company. (9: pp. 396-401.) When the 90th Division was committed on 10 June, it passed through the 82d Airborne Division and fought with only two of its assigned regiments. The 359th Infantry had been attached to the 4th Division. On 12 June the 359th joined its parent organization. On 13 June, General Collins, the VII Corps commander, called the operation to a halt. The following day General Collins continued the attack by passing both the 82d Airborne Division and the 9th Division through 90th Division to seize the objectives assigned to that one division. On 16 June, the objectives were taken.

(8: p. 58.)

7 b The 90th Division's actions during this operation have been omitted. The 90th Division Operation Memorandum was critical of the division's performance and pointed out that "training lessons had not been properly applied." (9: p. 402.)

Before discussion of the division's accomplishments or lack thereof during the Mont Castre operation, a description of Hill 122 is necessary. Hill 122 can best be described as it affected the 90th Division operations in June, 1944.

"At no time since the landings on UTAH Beach had the invaders been free of the watchful eye of the enemy. . . . Eighteen kilometers to the south was Hill 122, Mont Castre. From the observation post the Germans were able to observe almost at will with practically unlimited visibility." (10: p. 9.)

Jim Clark described Hill 122 as possessing overwhelming fields of fire and providing excellent observation to the UTAH Beachhead.

(7: p. 2.)

Again, the 90th Division failed to reach its final objective at Mont Castre, mainly because the losses sustained during the fighting in June, and in capturing Hill 122, left the division too weak to continue the attack. What had the division accomplished with the seizure of Hill 122? "It tied down and destroyed the greater part of two enemy divisions, forced the commitment of the immediate reserves of the opposing corps, and made necessary the hurried dispatch to la Haye du Puits of army reserves. Despite rugged opposition fought at close range, the 90th Division advanced seven miles in twelve days, a normal gain in the battle of the hedgerows, but an outstanding achievement considering the opposition and the terrain." (5: p. 101.)

It was during the seizure of Hill 122 that the 3d Battalion, 357th Inf. earned the Distinguished Unit Citation. (2: p. 87.)

The final action under examination is the ill-fated attack of St. Germain-sur-Seves. Without a doubt, this operation was a failure. It has often been stated that a small part of a unit is representative of the whole. In many respects that is correct. But for all practical purposes, this operation was a regimental operation which, in the long run, can be credited to the failure on the part of only one of the division's battalions. The day prior to the attack, a regiment of the ~~83d~~ Division was assigned a similar mission and failed. Its failure was caused by many of the reasons that the "island" operation failed. (4: pp. 73-75.) Yet, little is heard or recorded of the ~~83d~~ Division's action. The appalling fact that two companies were surrendered during the "island" operation is the reason for such severe criticism.

8 The accomplishments of the 90th Division during June and July, 1944, should not be measured by whether or not it accomplished the mission, but rather what was accomplished. Is success to be measured by kilometers gained regardless of enemy strength, or should it be measured in terms of what obstacles were overcome? The division's

first taste of combat found it short of its assigned objective when the operation came to a halt. Green to battle, with modest gains the division did achieve a degree of success, but most important it provided the cohesion needed for future battles. The Mont Castre operation found the division again short of its objective. But in terms of what was accomplished against a determined enemy, there remains little doubt as to whether another division could have done as well. At St. Germain-sur-Seves the division failed miserably. Or should it be said that one battalion of the division, or the lack of one effective leader of that battalion caused it to fail? A detailed study of this operation would be required to provide the answer.

The 90th Division has been presented as observed by many. Through June and July, 1944, the division aged and matured. In presenting these views a deliberate effort was made not to analyze the leadership provided at division level. Though many untried replacements had been assigned to ^{the} division to fill the ranks of those that had fallen in combat by the end of July, sufficient, well-trained men and leaders remained to keep this giant rolling. With the proper guidance from its top, success in combat could not be denied.

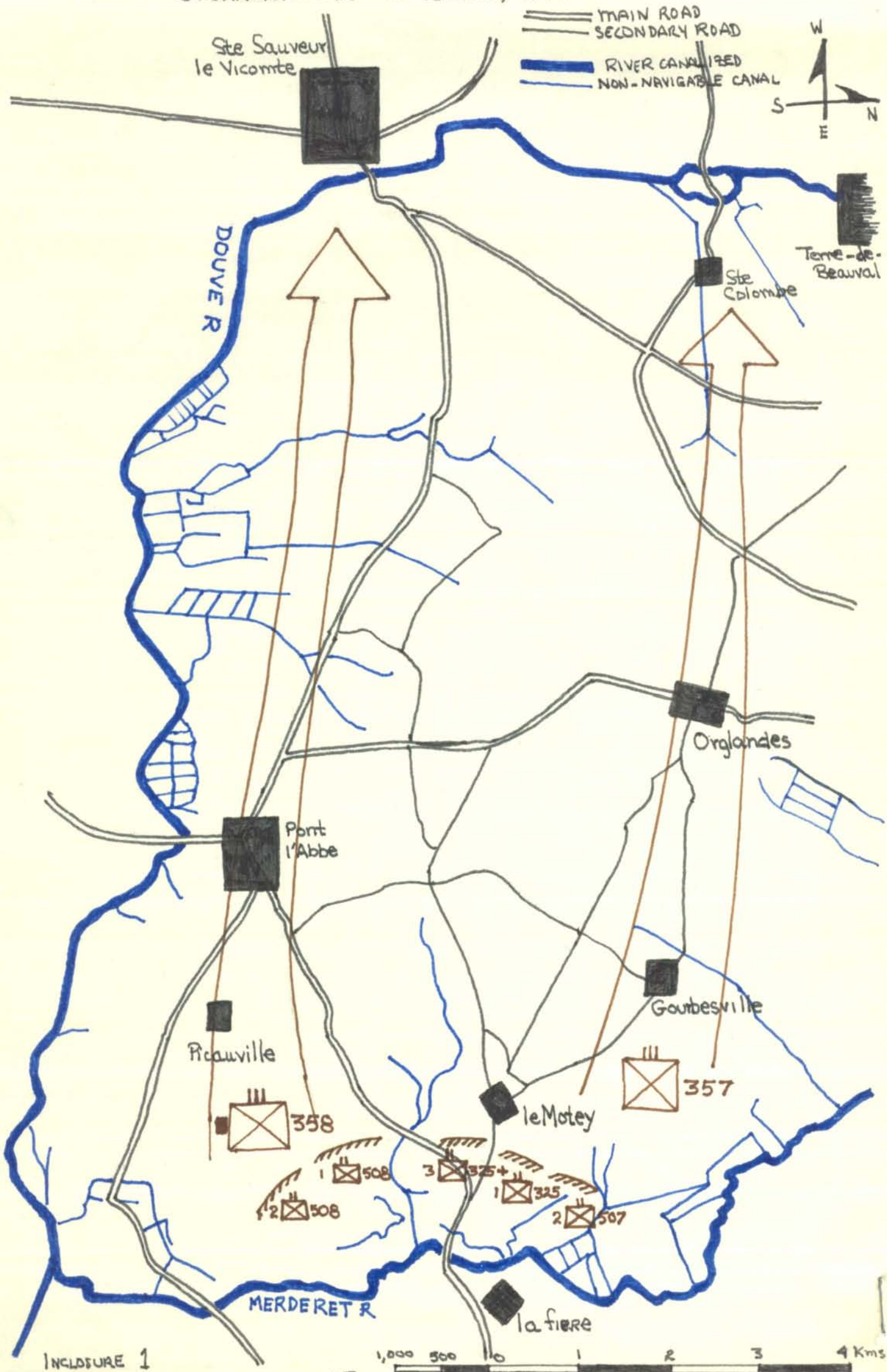
Whatever conclusions are made of the 90th Division's performance following D-day, or judgements passed on any person, unit, or activity, care must be taken to insure that all the facts and observations are made known. Then, and only then, can a just judgement be made on a personality.

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Inclosures: 1. Operations Map, 10-13 June, 1944.
2. Operations Map, Mont Castre
3. Operations Map, St. Germain-sur-Seves
4.-8. as stated herein.

OPERATIONS MAP 10-13 JUNE, 1944



INCLDSURE 1



OPERATIONS MAP, MONT CASTRE



La Haye-de-Port

HILL 122

MONT CASTRE

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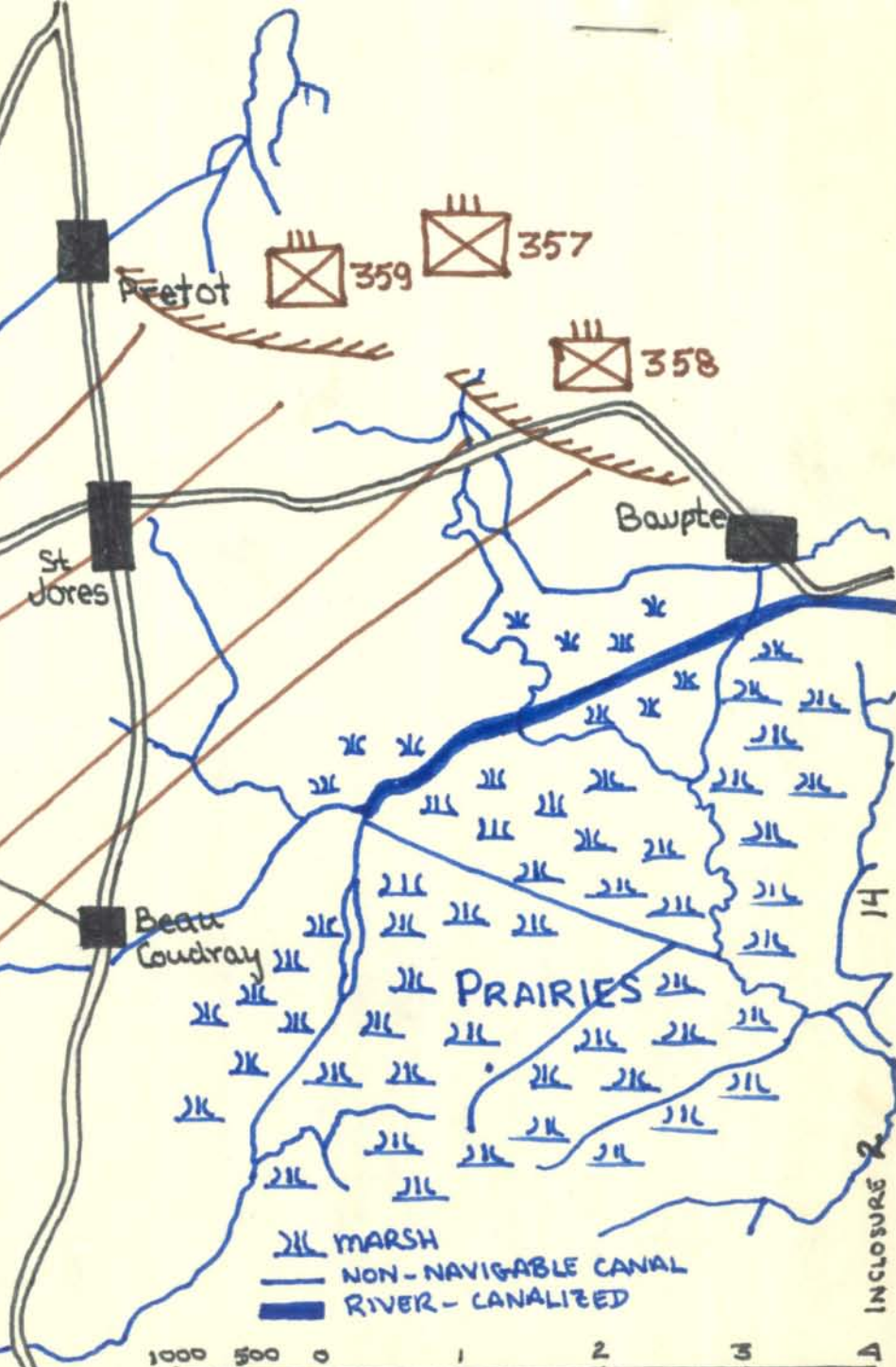
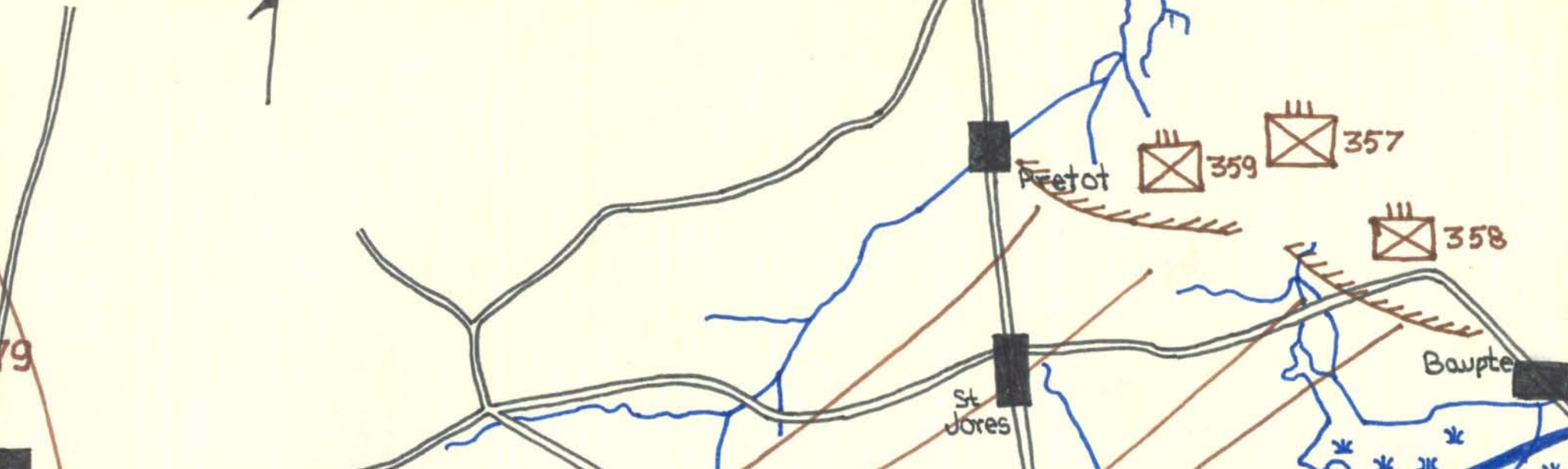
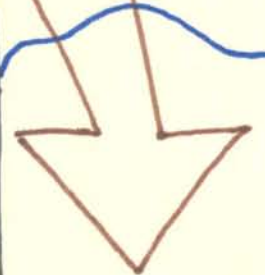
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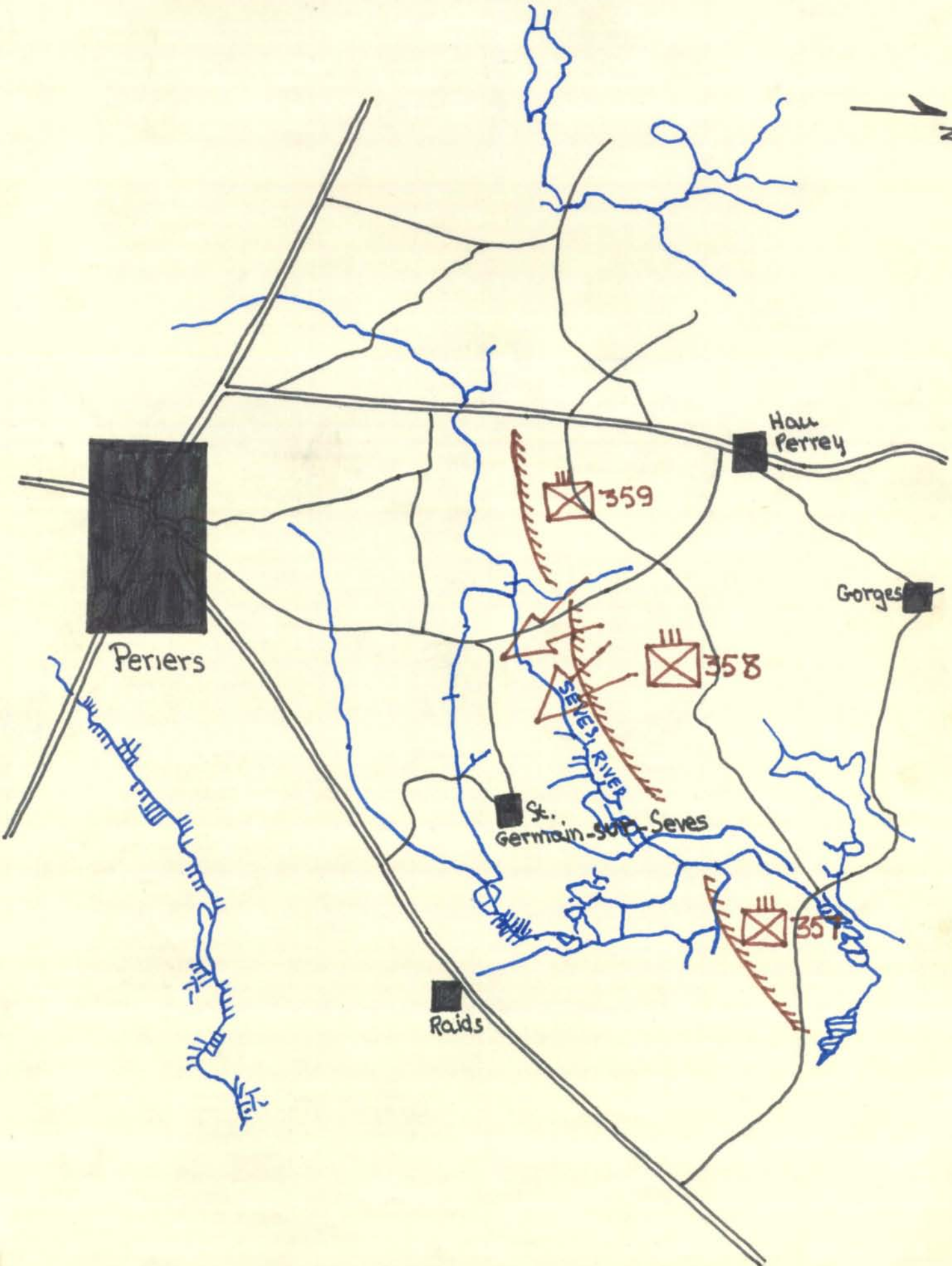
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INCLOSURE

OPERATIONS MAP, ST. GERMAIN-SUR-SEVES



Summary of Interview with Maj. Gen. G. B. BARTH (Ret), Leavenworth,
Kansas, 10 January 1966

Question: What was your assignment in the 90th Division in June and July, 1944?

Answer: On 16 June I assumed command of the 357th Infantry.

Question: Gen. Eisenhower has been quoted as writing "the division had not been brought up properly." Do you agree?

Answer: No, I don't think that the 90th Division was any worse or better trained for combat than any other division. When the division was first committed there was some floundering and lack of leadership at the lower levels. But this can be said to be true of any unit during its first engagement. When a squad leader would fail and not lead, invariably someone would take over. That is one great quality that the American soldier has always displayed. Prior to battle we select the people who are best qualified to lead. The true test comes in battle. Time and again, where the selected leader at the lower level failed, someone, junior officer or private would rally the forces and take charge. I recall that at one time a lieutenant took charge of a battalion and led the battalion although there was a captain senior to him who should **have** been in charge.

Question: Do you have any information on the training which the division received in England prior to commitment?

Answer: No, I feel that while the division was in England ~~it should~~ have been trained in hedgerow fighting. The same was true of all divisions. We knew that we would be fighting in hedgerows. There were plenty of hedgerows in England. Yet, higher headquarters did not require hedgerow fighting to be integrated into the training program.

Question: When the division was first committed on 10 June 1944 to expand the UTAH beachhead it was stated that the division floundered

Inclosure 4

and gained little ground in three days. Yet the 82d Airborne had attempted to take the same ground two days earlier. Again, at Mont Castre a similar situation occurred. Only this time the division secured Hill 122, but with delay and high casualties. This operation was conducted in conjunction with the 79th Division who achieved the same results. Again, in the "island" operation we find the same situation when another division, the 83d Division, had been given a similar operation the previous day and had failed, and when committed to its mission the 90th Division likewise failed. In view of these similarities, why is it that the 90th Division was the only unit chastized to the degree that thought was given to breaking up the division and two division commanders were replaced?

Answer: First of all, keep in mind that when the division was first committed it was committed to battle without the 359th Infantry Regiment. The 359th Infantry was attached to the 4th Division. People have lost sight of this or have given it no considerations.

I don't know what happened as I wasn't assigned to division at that time. I joined the division on the 16th of June. Keep in mind that this was the division's first taste of combat. In the first few days you are going to find a certain amount of subordinate leaders who recoil, but as I said before the true leaders will come forward and take over.

The Mont Castre operation is a different story. Certainly we sustained many casualties, but we accomplished our mission. Our objectives were above us and all our actions could easily be seen by the enemy. Our attacks were frontal attacks, but, generally speaking, because of the size of our lines at the time, there was a lack of maneuver room. To our front the enemy had as many as 50 machine guns, well emplaced. One regiment received over 1000 casualties during this operation and at the end fought with 100 men. This shows how fierce the fighting was.

I have no first-hand knowledge of the "island" operation. However, I was told by a person who was there that he witnessed the battalion commander surrender his men on the morning of the 23d of July.

Question: Do you think that the "island" mission assigned to the 90th Division was necessary?

Answer: No, I do not. There was nothing to be gained. Two days following the "island" operation we started our attack for operation "COBRA" by-passing the "island" and as we by-passed the "island" the enemy was forced to withdraw as they were threatened to be cut off.

Question: Until the start of "COBRA" the missions assigned to the 90th Division all appear to have been frontal attacks into well defended positions. Do you think these were necessary?

Answer: Yes, at division level the attacks were frontal attacks. Where we could conduct envelopments at the lower levels, we did. Also, the small frontage which was established in Normandy allowed little room for maneuvering. The hedgerows, swamps, and rivers were ideal for defense.

Question: Due to the inability of US Forces to keep to the estimated time phasing during the initial portion of the campaign in France could the 90th Division have been used as a "whipping dog" by our senior commander?

Answer: No, I don't think that any of our commanders were that small. Initially we didn't keep up with the planned estimates for the operation in France, but we made up for it during the pursuit which followed the breakout. One thing that may have caused persons to look very closely at the 90th Division was that its division commander and two regimental commanders had been relieved following its third day in combat.

Question: With respect to the "island" operation, maximum artillery and air support were available. However, due to weather that morning the air support was called off and artillery fires were unobserved and could not be adjusted. No smoke was used. Attacking across open

terrain the assault faltered. Was the mission doomed to failure prior to its start?

Answer: Yes, smoke would have materially assisted. The best way to attack the island would have been from the flank and come around it to the rear.

Question: General Patton has written that if you haven't gone anywhere in the first four hours, you should look for another way to accomplish the mission. Does this apply to the "island" operation?

Answer: Yes, it does. As I said, because the best method for attacking the "island" or any other prepared defensive position is from the flank, get to the rear and clean up. In this case the objective wasn't taken, but from what I know of the operation, the foothold which was established on the 22d of July could have been retained if the proper leadership had been there. But I doubt that the objective could have been taken with the men on the island at the time.

Question: The "island" operation actually was a regimental operation. Was any administrative action taken against anyone at regimental or battalion level as a result of the failure?

Answer: Following the "island" operation charges were written up against the battalion commander who had been taken prisoner. These charges were lost during the war. I don't know what happened after that.

Question: Immediately after the "island" operation the division participated in the breakthrough and pursuit across France. With the hedgerow fighting behind the division, and the open plains of France to the front, could the division have been successful under General Landrum?

Answer: No, and I say this because I felt that he had no faith in us. He was depressed and gloomy. As a result, I lost confidence in him. Gen. McLain was different. He backed us 100%. I remember when he first visited the regiment, it did not take me long to realize that the division had a commander who would command its faith and trust.

The actions described in your RB on Leadership are correct except that when Gen. McLain took command of the division, he did not relieve 16 field grade officers. Actually, he did relieve 16 officers, but only two in the field grade ranks. I know of no battalion or regimental commanders who were relieved, nor any of the principal staff members of any headquarters.

Question: Do you recall if Gen. McLain gave the division the nickname of "Tough Hombres?"

Answer: No, I don't remember.

Summary of Telephonic Interview with MR. JIM CLARK, Lawrence, Kansas,
10 January 1966

Question: Mr. Clark, what was your assignment in the 90th Infantry Division from June through July, 1944?

Answer: I was the 358th Infantry Regiment liaison officer to 90th Division Headquarters.

Question: Would you comment on the training of the 90th Division prior to D-day in Europe.

Answer: We trained for two years. The 90th Division was a well trained unit. As you know, for a while we trained at the desert training camp in Arizona; earlier we had been on extensive maneuvers in Louisiana. When we arrived in England we conducted little training prior to the invasion.

Question: Can you describe the division's first action in France?

Answer: The division landed at UTAH beach in two increments. The 359th Infantry (on D-day) went ashore with the 4th Division to whom it was attached. As I was a member of the 358th Infantry Advance Party, I went ashore with the remainder of the 359th on the following day. The boat carrying the division's advance party, the 359th Infantry Headquarters and the 2d Battalion, 359th Infantry sank off the beach and although no lives were lost, all equipment, with the exception of individual equipment, was lost. It took about three weeks before the lost equipment was replaced.

When the division was first committed we didn't do too well. I recall that during our first action either Gen. Collins or Gen. Bradley came to our area and had a very heated conversation with the regimental commander. We were near Picauville at the time. Our unit had been strafed by our own air and hit by our own artillery. The conversation was about our troops being hit by our own forces. It was during this operation that Col. Thompson, the Regimental Commander, was wounded.

Inclosure 5

Actually, we really became a division during the assault on Mont Castre. The division did a great job, but we paid the price in casualties.

Question: Can you tell me more about the Mont Castre Operation?

Answer: I have been to France two times since the war. On both occasions I returned to the Mont Castre area and walked over Hill 122 with my son. The area has remained untouched. In fact, last summer we found two German helmets. The German bunkers are still there. As I looked from Mont Castre, I was amazed that we took the hill. From Mont Castre one can see all the way to the beach upon which we landed on D-day. The observation and fields of fire from Hill 122 are overwhelming.

Question: What did you think of the leadership at Division level?

Answer: Gen. Mac Kelvey took us into Europe and didn't last too long. He was more of an artillery commander than a division commander. Gen. Landrum didn't get a chance as he had the division for about a month. Actually I felt that he was more of a staff officer than a leader. The first real commander we had was General Van Fleet.

Question: What do you attribute to General McLain's success with the 90th Division?

Answer: At the time General McLain took command the difference in fighting was a difference between day and night. During the hedgerow fighting we were fighting a determined enemy in well prepared positions. When General McLain took over we went into the breakout and pursuit across France. I remember when we jumped off at the start of operation "COBRA" that we were surprised to meet little resistance. The saturation bombing by the air corps had cleared a tremendous path for us. We moved by truck and foot for kilometers at a time.

Question: What can you tell me of the "island" operation?

Answer: The objective area was wide open with no concealment of which to speak. Because of the creek and enemy fire we couldn't get anything

out, or help in to reinforce those on the far shore. Once a beachhead was established, the 2d Battalion couldn't advance without tanks. They dug in. The enemy artillery fire was so thick I could see it literally pick up our men and throw them out of their holes. About 4 o'clock the day of the attack one of our chaplains arranged a truce with the Germans and for three hours wounded and dead were evacuated. During the truce a P-51 straffed the island. The German's were well disciplined and didn't fire at the plane as it made two passes at the island. They realized that we hadn't arranged for the straffing. In fact, during the straffing the 2d Battalion Chaplain took cover in the German commander's shelter.

I didn't see the battalion when it first surrendered, but I did see the men being marched away with their hands above their heads.

Question: How did the Division come about it's nickname "Tough Hombres?"

Answer: I don't know for sure, but I recall that a division newspaper, titled "Tough Hombres" was published while we were in Texas. Also, I can remember that throughout our operations in June and July, the Germans would broadcast at night and refer to us as "Tough Hombres." I'm inclined to think we had the nickname before we arrived in France.

Interview With MR. CLARK, 15 January 1966:

Question: As you know, the division didn't do too well initially. Yet, when the VII Corps attacked to the northwest through the 90th Division, they experienced less difficulty. To what can you attribute their success?

Answer: For one, we came up against a solid, well prepared front. When the VII Corps attacked the enemy which confronted them, the enemy was split from the main body of the German Army. In essence, they were pulling back toward Cherbourg. The bulk of the resistance still remained to the south.

Question: Is there anything else which you would like to add about the division's first operation? It has been stated that the 358th Regiment advanced only a few hundred yards and then dug in.

Answer: That's correct; we didn't advance very far, but I don't recall that we dug in. The only digging which I can recall is that used for the regimental CP. Enemy fire and artillery kept us from advancing.

Comment by Author: The remainder of this meeting reaffirmed what was discussed on 10 January 1966.

Summary of Interview with MR. NEAL RODRIGUEZ, Leavenworth, Kansas,
10 January 1966.

Question: What was your assignment in the 90th Division?

Answer: I was a switchboard operator in Headquarters, 357th Infantry Regiment.

Question: Can you describe the training of the regiment as you experienced it?

Answer: I joined the 357th Infantry in June, 1942, after it had been activated. I had just finished my basic training in Camp Walters. There was a great difference in the quality of training that I received at Camp Walters and that experienced while in the 357th. By far, the 357th training was much superior. It seemed like all we did was train day and night in the 357th Infantry, many long forced marches. The troops were well conditioned.

Question: During the first two months of the invasion, what was the status of morale in your unit as you saw it?

Answer: On the 6th of June morale was low. We were scared. On the 7th morale continued to be low, and our leader had trouble getting us out of our foxholes. But, by the 8th of June, we started to operate together. I think that most people exposed to combat for the first time must have acted the same as we did. On the 10th of June we were in action and morale was good. One thing that accounted for the good morale was that our leaders were out in front with the troops. This may be one of the reasons why we lost so many leaders.

After the first few days, I know that my morale stayed high, except for one occasion. Sometime in July I monitored a telephone conversation between the regimental commander and one of the battalion commanders. The battalion commander was crying because he had been cut off from his battalion and could not contact them. He gave me the impression that we were all going to be cut off

by the Germans. I was scared. The regimental commander told him to calm down and go out to find his unit. This was the last time I was scared.

Question: Did you at any time feel that the division was performing poorly or that thought was given toward possibly breaking up the division as a unit?

Answer: No, as a switchboard operator I knew what telephone calls were important and I always monitored those calls. I never monitored a call which indicated that we had failed. We had our tough times, but we never failed.

Comment by author: It was clearly indicated that Rodriguez was surprised and startled that the division's performance during its first six weeks of combat was rated as being doubtful.

Summary of Interview with COLONEL JOSEPH H. RUSTEMEYER (Ret), Leavenworth,
Kansas, 10 January 1966

Question: What was your position in the 90th Division?

Answer: At the time of the 90th Division reactivation in March, 1942, I was the Commanding Officer of the 358th Infantry Regiment. I remained with the 358th Infantry until the Spring of 1943. I found it odd that I would train this regiment for combat, while knowing that I would never go overseas with it. I say this because at the time I took command of the 358th Infantry, I was 51 years old, and it was the Army's policy that I would not deploy with the regiment because of my age.

Question: One reference which relates to the state of training of the 358th Regiment prior to its rotation overseas says that it lacked qualified leaders at the lower levels of command. Did your regiment experience this difficulty?

Answer: When the regiment was activated we received cadre from the 20th Infantry. The majority of men assigned to the 358th Regiment were draftees. I had good NCOs, but with the Army's need for officers, many of my best NCOs left for OCS. To fill vacant NCO positions it was necessary to develop NCOs from men of the lower ranks. As they developed, then they too would go to OCS. So, you see, it took a long time to shakedown the regiment. Regardless, our early training went off very well. In particular, I feel that the small unit training was well done. Of all the Army's newly activated divisions, the 90th was one of the few which had the opportunity to conduct two-sided division maneuvers in Louisiana. By then, we were experiencing stability in the positions of our squad leaders. I feel that all newly activated divisions experienced the same personnel turnover situation.

Question: Another reference pertaining to training of the division

states that the 90th Division Artillery experienced a shortage of training ammunition. Did this apply to your regiment as well?

Answer: No, we had ample ammunition, and experienced no shortage. In fact, I can say that we got as much as we could use.

Question: What was the status of morale within the regiment?

Answer: I feel that it was always high. One thing that helped was that I had an exceptionally good special service officer. He organized a regimental band, complete with drum majorette, and a regimental orchestra. Esprit was good.

Question: Can you think of anything which may have detracted from the 90th Division's readiness?

Answer: I have already told you that I could not deploy overseas with them because of my age. Another shortcoming may have been that the division commander did not deploy with the division. I recall a loss of continuity in certain areas during my year with the 358th Infantry. I had 4 executive officers. This may have created some confusion through lack of continuity.

Question: Is there anything else pertaining to training that you can add?

Answer: Yes, as I have told you I left the 90th Division in 1943, prior to the time it went overseas. In 1954 I attended a 358th Regiment Convention. I was pleased to find that so many men still recognized me. As I came into the convention room one man yelled, "Here's the man that saved our lives." Since then, I have kept in contact with many men from the 358th Infantry. This last Christmas I received a card from the former regimental S2. Keep in mind that I had not heard from him since the war. In his letter he stated:

"Over the past several years I have visited many of your 358th Infantry Officers and the respect we have for you has grown with the years.

"You made us do things properly and would not stand for any sloppy, unorganized work."

"I am sure all of us are better off in civilian life because of the wonderful lessons you taught us."

Question: Have you received any information from former members of the 358th Regiment about the 2d Battalion's performance during the "Island" Operation, 22-23 July 1944?

Answer: The regimental S4, who had been my adjutant during the training of the regiment wrote to me and stated that the battalion commander had surrendered his force in that particular operation. Charges were preferred against the battalion commander. After the war that particular battalion commander visited me. He was a student at Fort Leavenworth at the time. He said that he had been cleared by a board of inquiry of all charges.

Annexes:

- A. Letter from Beakle, dated 25 January 1945
- B. Letter from Paul P. Bimms, dated 18 February 1945
- C. Letter from William F. Falvey, dated 2 September 1944
- D. Letter from Blair, dated 3 September 1944
- E. Christmas card, 1944, from Colonel Chris Clark, undated
- F. Letter from Mrs. Clarine Tiffany, dated 17 September 1944
- G. Letter from Knarf, dated 4 September 1944
- H. Letter from William Falvey, dated 3 October, 1944

Saxenburg

January 25, 1945

Dear Sir,

For a long, long time I have intended to write to you, but a terrible conglomeration of reasons, including lack of knowledge of your address, and lack of a lot of other things, including time, have failed to do so.

I want to thank you for the sound, solid training you gave me at Berkeley. I have managed to keep blending along, and what I have learned from you plus a hell of a lot of good luck and some extremely capable Company commanders have managed to keep out of the fire.

I saw your last letter to Falang. Got more recent news of our old people out of that letter than from all other sources combined. There are now only three of the original cadre left - Jeffrey, Nichols, and myself. Still a few of the first group of officers from Roberts around, but even they are getting thin now.

The Division has made a magnificent record in this war, and the 358th is the outstanding regiment of the Division. You will be greatly proud of your handiwork when the final scores are added up. Everyone of us who remain from the old regiment are convinced that you got us off on the right foot. If only every division in the U. S. Army had taken as many prisoners and killed as many Krauts as we have this war would be over.

You may remember what a time K Company had in getting going. Since arrival here, that Company developed into the best company in the Division. They called themselves the K Kompany Kraut Killers, and were afraid of nothing that walked or crawled on this earth. Time after time I've seen them charge straight down the middle of hell and spit in the devil's eye as they went in. The marauding spirit of the plain riflemen in the front lines causes me to wonder and marvel.

Since you left, I have managed another increase in my family. It seems that I'm trying to out do Eddie Carter, because the last one was also a girl. That makes three

of them, none I haven't seen the nearest one
since she was about five months old, but
I'm looking forward with great hopes to be-
ing introduced to the young lady some time
this year.

Please give best regards to Mrs. Bealke
and myself to Mrs. Pastewicz.

Sincerely

Bealke

LETTER FROM BEALKE , DATED 25 JANUARY 1945



Oahu, T. H.
Feb 18, 1945

Dear Col. Rustemeyer,

Guess you might happen to remember me, I'm another of the brats you educated at Barkley. Tiffany + I were in the first 10 officers that were sent to the regiment from O. C. S.

I had planned to visit sooner, but was ignorant of your location until a short time before leaving the states.

Vickery told me about his visit with you last year + spoke of it as being very enjoyable. Kinda felt sorry for Vick when he was discharged. He had spoken to Tiff + I several times about his hopes to transfer his commission to R.A. + make a career of the military. He was staying with Mike Strong at the time he received discharge + Mike said it sort of bothered him a bit.

I don't get a lot of news from the regiment. Hear from Baldwin pretty often. Glad his doing O.K.

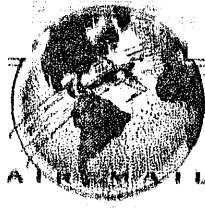


Had a letter from Tiff today telling me about his new boy. He seems to be doing O.K. Two boys in a row.

When home last I saw the letter you wrote my Father in answer to the one he wrote concerning our Regt's gatherings. He was pleased that you found time to answer.

Noticed a shot of Gen. Sultan in the news reel a few days ago. Looked like he might have headed Gen. Stilwell's campaign hat.

Have heard several rumors, but am wondering to what extent Capt. Stauffer + Thompson were wounded. I met a couple of Naval Officers recently who were with a beach party at Normandy. They had nothing but praise to offer from their observations of the 90th. I'm sure you have heard this before, but let's say again, that the 358th can point to their first C.O. for a large percentage of their successes. I can say for myself that any resemblance of myself to anything military was origin-



ated by your example.

I am pretty well pleased with my present assignment. We're flying C-47's with the Troop Carrier Command. Possibly some Troop Carrier planes have shuttled you about on your present duties. At any rate you are probably very familiar with their operations.

Noticed some time ago that Gen. Twiss is on duty with 22nd. Corps. I read in the field paper that he was among a party with Gen. Odd. observing some Air Service maneuvers.

Sincerely hope that this shall find you & your family enjoying the best of health & circumstances. Best wishes to you all. Would enjoy hearing from you when it is convenient to write.

Sincerely

Paul P. Terzina 0456394 Paul P. Terzina
2 T.C. Sqdn. APO 964 90 PM
Francisco Calif

LETTER FROM PAUL B. BIMMS, 18 FEBRUARY 1945



UNITED STATES ARMY

France
2 Sept 44

Dear Colonel:

Hope to be able to change the above address to Germany before long.

The outfit that you trained has done a fine job in France. I am sure you are very proud of it. The men and officers of your regiment had excellent training before they entered combat and what is more they had the right spirit. Almost without exception they went forward without faltering even under very heavy fire during the early beachhead days.

In our first fighting the regiment pushed forward in spite of German counter attacks. It was a case of "have to" and by golly we did it.

Since then we have had three real tough battles and many small scraps.

The tough battles lasted about a week each and it was a day and night proposition. Seems like the Germans don't put up the maneuver flags at night.



UNITED STATES ARMY

I remember one night Stan Turner called 169 and said some German Tanks were forming in front of L Company. Well Stan adjusted artillery fire on them and really dispersed them. Wow what a score about 2 AM,

Chuck Wagner did outstanding work with "G" Co. His outfit always led the attack of the second battalion.

Bealke is the star of the whole show as far as I am concerned. He has Two Silver Stars, a purple heart, is in for DSC and his unit is up for a presidential citation. I know the facts of the case and that Battalion really deserves the citation.

During the above action Bealke's CP group stopped two attacks by German para troops.

It even got to where Bealke was shooting his pistol and throwing hand grenades.

"Boy he is tough. The old officers call him another Rustameyer. Every man in his Battalion admires him. Really I can't praise his work too much,



UNITED STATES ARMY

Baldwin did a fine job with the record. He is now in the Hospital at Temple, Texas. Bob Schultz then took over the record Batt and he is a real leader. We have a new CO for the first by the name of Lyell and he is a good one too. Col Clarke has had the regiment for some time now and is doing well too. He has the silver star, a bronze star, a purple heart and has really been on the ball. I guess I shouldn't be talking to you that way about my regimental CO but I'll stick my neck out anyway. The Division Commander has complimented Col Clarke on his running of the regiment on several occasions and I will truthfully say that some outstanding achievements have been obtained by Colonel Clarke with this Regiment.

I must tell you two of Bealkie's Highlights. ~~One~~ ^{Two} Bazooka men in K Company knocked out 4 tanks in 10 minutes - ~~He~~ ^{They} ~~got~~ ^{are} getting the DSC for that action. The other is really funny now. A 3d Bu Column was moving out one night and Jaffray led a tiger tank right into the column. He thought it was one of ours. The 3d Batt knocked that tank out too.



UNITED STATES ARMY

As I get the story when Jaffrey found out that the Tank was German there was some dispersion by all until they knocked out the tank.

Stotler - Burns - Coghill - Knof - Marsh - La Forge well why mention them I'll just say that all the officers that you trained did outstanding jobs.

We all speak of you often. I remember many of your quotations -

"Nitch your wagon to a store"

"Read all of the words"

"Don't give an untrue report"

"The BAR man is the last man left in each squad"

"Toilet Paper is important"

"Too much Bunching" = Famous last words over here.

Well Colonel I have already said for too much but I thought you would like a little of this kind.

When you left the regiment in Louisiana the second Battalion was in Division reserve. I was liaison at Division HQ and I said goodbye to you there. At that time I told you that no one could have taught me as much Army in one years time as you did. That still goes and I appreciate it. Say "Hello" to Mrs Rustomeyer for me please.

Very truly

William J Falvey

THREE CHILDREN -

LETTER FROM WILLIAM F. FALVEY , DATED 2 SEPTEMBER 1944

3 Sept. 44

Dear Col. Kustemeyer:

Received your welcome letter today upon my return from a trip to see Mike Knouf and G.V. Thompson. Found Mike getting along very nicely although he shows signs of having been hurt worse than he will admit. It will be a month or two before he is out depending upon how long it takes the muscles in his left upper leg to return to normal. Gets around now some with a crutch & cane and should be able to drop the crutch in a week. Jimmy should be near you or at Atlanta by the time you get this or very shortly thereafter. He is getting along nicely but has quite a little time to spend in a hospital yet. Baldwin is in M^{rs} Chosky General in Texas. ^{1st Lt.} Seeger, ^{Capt.} Moore & Spayde were captured over a month ago so their people should know it by now. J. Oehlker & Ralph Starbuck, both Majors, have been transferred to higher headquarters - jobs I don't know. Caldicott is Ex O, 1st Bn - CO Lytle whom I don't know - not even his rank. Maj Schulz has the

Water the Sat. Eve Post for an article entitled "Dear G. V. Thompson" around Sept. 1.

2nd Bn & I don't know who his Ex. is. Bealke is still going (at last report which is a little old now - about 2 weeks as is all this) with Spivey as his Ex. Morris, Turner, Jackson, Don Brown, Spelce, Underwood, Bellew, Spelce and probably others I have not heard of are getting along nicely in hospitals and should be back with the unit before too long. Expect you heard of Wegners, Marshs, Supornick, Waterbury, & Isenberg's deaths - all long enough ago that the families have been notified for I rec'd notice of several through Alice. Also know that Mrs. Shueby & Mrs. Garrett have been notified.

You mention the situation regarding Fales in connection with your leaving - you'd know that is false modesty for there was no comparison in results obtained. However even at that his case was entirely unjustified from what I can hear which is supported by the fact he has been reassigned - is now on the reclassification board without action on his case. Believe someone wanted his job - name of Bacon then C of S. Expect you have heard that Williams is back in the US & with Terrell from what

Tommy had heard as a Lt. Col. Landrum is
also there and we heard he was now a Col.
from Maj. Gen. The other one relieved was J.W.
McKelvie, CD - still holds rank with a job
in the 505 near where I am but have not seen
him but once. Last reading Chris was commanding
the unit for about the sixth or seventh time
since D-day, Barth formerly C/S of the 9th Div
had the 7th and Bacon the 9th. Very few
changes in FA command staff in the highest
rank - Costain was killed and Beach now is
CO - others OK including Devine - about all I know ^{can write}
I was hit in the CP after returning from
the front lines - one Bn pushed back a little
and we had three mortar barrages - got me
with the next to last shell of the last one. Tommy
got his the next morning up behind one of
the platoons that was struck - machine gun - about
eight I believe. Mike got his much later - over a
month - up behind Seger about the time he
was taken - within minutes I think. He
would not have been so bad if he ~~had~~ ^{had} not
been so far away and across water from the

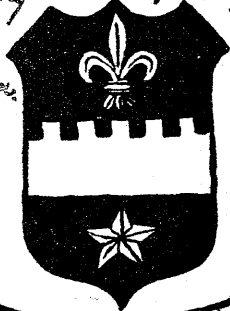
aid station.

The staff now is Stehla S-1, Maj. Falvey - S-2 either Wallace or Nichols S-3 and W. Olson S-4. Wallace was a replacement - S-3 of a disbanded glider regiment and Nick has returned so we do not know here who is S-3. Bill Slupe is the assistant S-3 and Char Beradt personnel. Jack has Service Co and Chisholm is the MTO now. Don't know too much about the Bn staffs but the S-1s are Hubert Jackson, 1st and Jaffray, 3rd. (Mobley of 2nd has been transferred and a replacement Capt has the job - don't know his name) Aughtrey - S-2, 1st, Ruder 3rd; Stotter, Beville & Burns S-3. Martin 1st S-4, Vann 3rd and Henderson in Chisholm's job. This information is all old enough that it should not be cut out - over two or three weeks. Hope your golf is not getting so bad that I could beat you. Have not played since last Aug. in Abilene. Am going to try to get to play at least once here. Must quit now & write to Alice. Had a nice letter from Mark Smith dated Aug. 8 and one from Jeffries 17 Aug. He is in Kentucky on the farm. My best regards to you and the family. I enjoyed your letter very much & like to hear from you. Sincerely Blair.

LETTER FROM BLAIR, DATED 3 SEPTEMBER 1944

To Colonel Ruestemeyer -

The man who put the iron
in the 358th, where it is now
paying off as the best regiment
in, by far, the best division in
the Third Army. Best regards to
you Rusty
Jeannette & Jess.



and to
Sincerely
Chris



Chris Clark

He was my
5-3 unit

2nd BN
Command

War or no war...



here's wishing you



the Merriest Christmas ever!

CHRISTMAS CARD , 1944, FROM COLONEL CHRIS CLARK , UNDATED

September 17, 1944
Ft. Worth, Texas

Dear Col. & Mrs. Rustemeyer,

Bob enjoyed his first trip to N.Y. so much that I just feel like saying "Thanks" too. You certainly made him happy - arranging for the tickets and entertaining all the boys in your home. I don't see how anyone could have seen more in the time they had than those kids did! I hope we will have an opportunity to repay your kindness someday.

Col. Rustemeyer, since you are way off in New York and can't "shush" me and since down deep every fellow appreciates

knowing he is well thought of by his fellowmen. I'd like to tell you a few little things you may be interested in:

Yesterday we drove down to Temple, Texas to McCloskey Hospital to see Marion Baldwin and Carl Spelce. Well after a few minutes greeting, small talk etc. Gladys, Jewel & I found that the fellows were no longer aware of us. They were deep in a discussion of the old 358th. Each one boasted of something special. the old regimental soldiering - the parties. the spirit & friendships of the regiment and the first thing you gathered

was the fact that a fellow they call, (among themselves!) "Rusty" - had built up the finest regiment in the whole army! Course this fellow "Rusty" knew how to "step on toes" - but then they all admitted that toes sometime "get in the way." Each one could recall stories of "Rusty" and his influence - and fore long we all felt proud and warm thinking of what one man had meant to his men & their families (cause we families are influenced too and when Bob played "Cuddle Up A Little Closer" & "When You're

a Long Long Way From Home" it seemed as if the separations in the regiment had never taken place at all. I hope it will make you feel proud knowing that your influence affects all those men now in the fight in France & Germany. The fellows' regard for you impressed me so that I just felt like saying it out loud so you'd know too.

Sincerely,

Clarine Tiffany

LETTER FROM MRS CLARINE TIFFANY, DATED 17 SEPTEMBER 1944

LETTER FROM MRS. CLARINE TIFFANY, DATED 17 SEPTEMBER 1944



AMERICAN RED CROSS

4 Sept 44
England

Dear Colonel:

I'm sorry that I wasn't subtle enough to get my meanings across to you in the last letter. I'll do better this time.

The BG who did not get promoted: McKelvie. The Co's were all happy to have a new CG; especially Jimmy. He never did get along with Mr K.

Since the above change we have another, both CG + asst. It's now Mr Clavis + Weaver. Clarke (Chris) is our CO, and better than them writes the Bats, I thought. Eagles in the office I hear by grapevine. The setup now is a Lytle with Spincy eyes, Schultz & (2) (3), Bealke and Caldecott. Leaves a new man Lammie in Staffak's old spot. Steckla is adj., Walt Olson mine, Jacks in Service Co with Chisholm in his job. Personally I

"To furnish volunteer aid to the sick and wounded of armies" and "To act in matters of voluntary relief and to accord with the military and naval authorities as a medium of communication between the people of the United States of America and their Army and Navy" The Charter of The American National Red Cross. By Act of Congress, January 3, 1905.

think Jack should have kept his job & sent
in Chris as CO, but —. La Forge & Le Baron
have gone to a higher Hdqrs., where or for
what I don't know.

That about clears me on information
that may be included in a letter.

Stauffer was over this week end to
see me. I certainly appreciated the chance
to visit with him. He is getting along
very well now, and the nose scar isn't too
badly scarred. I know that your his
address, has reached you in his letter by
now. He was expecting a letter from you
soon.

Seeger was captured the day I was hit,
about 6 weeks ago. I'm sorry to have been
knocked out, just a couple of days before the
breakthrough, and have to miss the
enjoyable part of the France fight, after
beating our heads with so little progress
for 6 weeks, but I also feel very fortunate
not to have been too badly hit. I was



AMERICAN RED CROSS

lucky, couple of small armor bullets in my left upper thigh, one crossing the front of my stomach, doing very little damage. My only trouble now is rather heavy drainage from the hip, but Doc is going into it tomorrow and try and find the cause and eliminate it. Her recovery should be quite rapid. I have had excellent medical care, from the front through to my present location. Spent 10 days in a field Hosp. in France, and those men are saving the lives. Clearing Companies are really just excess, Collecting Cos. are outstanding, as are our own medics. Andrews is going strong when I left. My trouble was the usual one, on the front lines and too careless. After being shot at so many times and never a scratch, I guess I thought I was invulnerable, and still insist they're poor shots on the whole.

"To furnish volunteer aid to the sick and wounded of armies" and "To act in matters of voluntary relief and to accord with the military and naval authorities as a medium of communication between the people of the United States of America and their Army and Navy" The Charter of The American National Red Cross. By Act of Congress, January 5, 1905.

Our riflemen are far superior shots, and better equipped with arms.

Have you broken your course record yet? It does sound like you have been able to get in enough golf to keep yourself in top condition. Mrs. Ruteneyer is keeping quite active, but I'm sure that games and her swimming will insure that. My best to both of them.

Colonel, you don't know how much of a thank you had in our smooth working. CO's and Staff showed it especially. The pounding you gave us was not wasted, I can assure you.

Wagner and March joined Skechy. They were the last ones of the original group in their Co. job, the latter ones. Was a little rough. Just about broke Bealke up for awhile. He was doing outstanding work.

4207 U.S. Army Hosp. Plant
APO 69 c/o PO
NY NY

Sincerely,

Finney

LETTER FROM KNARF , DATED 4 SEPTEMBER 1944

3 Oct 1944

France.

Dear Colonel:

Received your two letters and was very happy to hear from you. I regret very much that I can not help locate the photographer who took the picture of Colonel Sheehy. There are only three left in the regiment who went to Benning as the Originals, Col Clarke, Col Bealpis and Major Nichols.

~~as the~~
I asked all of them if they knew anything about the picture and they said that they did not. Col Clarke asked to be remembered to you. He says he would like to write to you but that he has been awful busy. He is expecting his Eagles in a day or so and he really deserves them because he has had the outfit for almost all of its combat.

Col Bealpis is a Tough little fighter. "K" Co has a special medal called "Kroat Killer". In order to get one a soldier must have four verified kills. About half the company has them and they even rate the silver star down there.

MSGT Allen is still operations. He is very steady worker and has a good head on him. MSG Erickson is still around Headquarters and he is really a hardy man. We use him as Lieutenant, clerk or most any thing. Some of the German Equipment we have, 2 typewriters, 2 mimeograph machines, Reams of paper and almost any thing else you can think of. If we did not have 5 extra German trucks in HQ Co we could not move the outfit.

Parrish, Corns, Crotty and Bendrik reported back for duty today. They are AWOL from the replacement company but I guess that they will get by with it.

We were joking about the time you lost your gold crown out near Cedar Creek. You know what we needed to find that was a mine detector.

Saw Major Leo Olson today on the road. He is working for a high headquarters and is really in the know so I now have to watch out and not talk in my sleep. He likes his new job swell but almost cried when he left the Regiment.

We all have very much confidence in our CQ. He has had much combat experience on all fronts and really is fine.

We were lucky one day. The block out tent got so many holes in it that we had to turn it in for a new one. I guess one of the E14 was in it but he did not get hurt.

Cpt Trasier has made up our 1944 Christmas card and it is very clever. He helps in the 2-3 section during busy times. Well Colonel I'll have to blow tapers on this one but I want to say once again that all of us who were here when the outfit was yours appreciate what you did for us. You were the only one who knew what combat would be like. We now know that it is rough and is no child's play.

Sincerely yours,

Bill Talley

LETTER FROM WILLIAM FALVEY , DATED 3 OCTOBER, 1944

Summary of Telephonic Interview with MR. JENKIN WELLS SKAGGS, Dearborn Mo., 11 January 1966

Question: What was your position in the 90th Division?

Answer: When we hit Normandy I was a private. By the end of the war I was 1st Sergeant of Co. G, 357th Infantry.

Question: What did you think of the training which the regiment conducted in the states? Do you think that you were adequately trained for combat?

Answer: We had good training and we were well prepared for combat. I know of no time when the regiment didn't do a good job. By the end of the war about 25% of the men in my company had been with the company since the invasion.

Question: What training was conducted in England prior to the invasion?

Answer: We conducted rifle training, forced marches and the usual training.

Question: Was hedgerow fighting conducted in England?

Answer: Yes, we conducted training in hedgerow fighting.

Comment by the Author: As indicated by the above, Mr. Skaggs was not responsive to questions and had little to offer.

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