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THE OPERATIONS OF TASK FORCE WEAVER
(REINFORCED RCT 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION)
FROM ST HILAIRE DU HARCOUET TO LE
MANS FRANCE, 5-9 AUGUST 1944
(NORTHERN FRANCE CAMPAIGN)
(Personal experience of a Task Force Provost Marshall)

Type of Operation described:
TASK FORCE IN THE ATTACK

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ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO II

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page 635

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operation of task force Weaver, the Reinforced Regimental Combat team of the 357th Infantry, 90th US Infantry Division, from St Hilaire du Harcouet to Le Mans, France, 5-9 August 1944, during the Northern France Campaign.

In order that the reader be better oriented, a brief picture of the activities of this division will be given leading up to this action.

The US 90th Infantry Division was activated at Camp Barkeley, Texas in March 1942. Basic Training and unit training took care of the period up to January 1943, at which time the Division moved to the Louisiana maneuver area and participated in maneuvers against the 77th US Division.

April 1943 found the 90th back at Camp Barkeley going through a period of specialized training, such as attack against fortified areas, river crossing exercises and street fighting. In August 1943, the Division moved to the California-Arizona maneuver area at Camp Granite, California. From August to 26 December, the Division maneuvered against the 93rd US Infantry Division. At this time, it was evidently felt by the War Department, that the Division was ready for combat against our enemies. On 20 December 1943, the Division was en-route by train to Fort Dix, New Jersey for final staging in preparation for a move to an overseas theater. By the Middle of April, the Division had closed in seven widely separated camps in England and Wales. Senior Officers and their staffs were immediately briefed on operation Neptune, which was the plan for the Invasion of France. Some specialized training was undertaken during this period and the D-Day landings of the Division in France. One battalion of the 90th US Division landed on Utah Beach on 6 June 1944, and by nine June the 90th was completely on shore and was given their first mission.

After the completion of the Normandy Campaign and on 28 July 1944, the 90th Infantry Division was assigned to the recently activated US XV Corps of the 3rd Army, commanded by Lt. General George S. Patton. On 30 July 1944, the Division was assigned two new General Officers; Brigadier General Raymond S. McLean, as Division Commander and Brigadier General William G. Weaver, as assistant Division Commander. This made the fourth General Officer to assume command of the Division since his activation.

Morale was low after a succession of grueling battles and very heavy losses during the Normandy Campaign. Another reason for lack of esprit de corps and morale was the holding of

the 90th obscured and not releasing them to the press until late in the Normandy Campaign. Generals MacLean and Weaver immediately set about to raise the general morale of the Division. Officers and noncommissioned officers of the Division were assembled and given short talks on a forerunner of what to expect in the future. Both of these fine officers personified confidence and trust in the 90th and "caught on" with the officers and men at once.

At this point, the 90th was situated just north of Periers, France, awaiting orders. Its first mission, under the XV Corps, was to move south to St Hilaire du Harcouet, to seize and secure bridges over the Selune River and to protect a dam over the Selune. After fighting a stubborn German rearguard, in the vicinity of St Hilaire, this was accomplished on 3 August 1944. The 90th was then ordered into a defensive position to await further orders. This set the stage for the operation I am about to describe.

GENERAL SITUATION

At 2115 4 August, the XV Corps Commander received oral orders from General Patton to move without delay to the south and east and to seize and hold a bridgehead over the Mayenne River at Mayenne, until relieved by the 1st US Army; to seize a bridgehead at Laval and to secure the Mayenne River between these two points; 90th Infantry Division on the left, 79th Infantry Division on the right and the 5th Armored Division echeloned to the right rear.

At 0100 5 August 1944, the 90th received orders to move on Mayenne, in its zone, and to secure a bridgehead across the Mayenne River and hold until relieved by elements of the 1st US Army, then to advance and capture Le Mans, France.

3rd Army G-2 report for August: enemy situation continues too fluid to define an established frontline. Estimated Battalion Infantry reported at Ernee.

At this time, the Commanding General 90th Infantry Division felt he needed a hard-hitting, mobile striking force, that could move with speed and still be large enough to take care of itself, if it ran into stiff German resistance. Le Mans was 90 odd miles behind German lines the decision was then made to form a Task Force. This force became the famous "Task Force Weaver" and was composed of the following units:

Detachment 90 Division Staff	Company A, 315th Medical Battalion
90th reconnaissance Troop	Company A, 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion (Towed)
712th Tank Battalion	Battery A, 537th AAA Battalion (AW)
357th Infantry	Detachment 90th Military Police
343rd Field Artillery Battalion	Detachment 90th Signal Company
345th Field Artillery Battalion	Company A, 315th Engineer Battalion
(For organization of Task Force see Appendix B)	

SPECIAL SITUATION

For this operation 50 trucks each, from 5th Armored Division and 3rd US Army, were made available for the Task Force. Reconnaissance elements were across the initial point in St Hilaire at 0630 5 August, and the rest of the Division to follow by marching at 0800. Task force Weaver was responsible for its own flank security and orders were, "advance to be pushed at all costs and resistance en-route be promptly bypassed." Task Force Weaver was also given a squadron of P47's from XIX Tactical Air Force for daylight air cover. Reconnaissance elements of Task Force Weaver moved out promptly at 0630 and met little resistance, initially.

The rest of the Task Force was not so fortunate, as 50 of the allocated trucks failed to show up. The Division Commander ordered the kitchens of all three Regiments unloaded for the Task Force. The column finally got under way at about 0900. In the interim, the covering screen met resistance in the form of roadblocks at (?)anner, Paille and Ernee. These were quickly reduced and the column turned to the east, on the main road running into Mayenne, the first big objective.

To the doughboy, this fast advance was almost too good to be true, for previous to this time, every inch of ground had been hotly contested and gains had been measured in yards and hedgerows, not in miles. French civilians lined the streets of towns and villages and cheered, threw flowers and proffered cider and wine. Morale was definitely rising to the sky, even as these few villages were liberated.

THE ATTACK ON MAYENNE

About 1115, the reconnaissance elements had reached the western outskirts of Mayenne. Here, about a mile and a half from the city, two M-8 armored cars were hit with high velocity shells and immediately caught fire. All crew members were casualties. About noon the advance guard, under command of the 1st Battalion Commander, passed through the reconnaissance elements, de-trucked and started deploying. The 1st Battalion commander requested the 343rd Field Artillery Battalion go into position, and support the attack. He also knew, that it was essential to secure a bridge over the Mayenne River and that speed was paramount. At this time, General Weaver ordered the remainder of the 357th under the Regimental Commander to cross the river to the south and to cut the south and southeastern approaches to the city. In order to more clearly portray this action, I will describe each attack separately. The 1st Battalion attack supported by the 345th Field Artillery entered the western half of Mayenne in face of small arms fire. B Company led the attack with two platoons of tanks from Company A, 712th Tank Battalion and a squad of Engineers from Company A, 315th Engineer Battalion, attached. After house-to-house fighting, B Company reached the western edge of the river at 1630 and reported one of the three bridges was still intact, but that they were receiving heavy mortar and artillery fire. During this period, several German vehicles entered the western half of Mayenne from the north and were promptly destroyed by the Anti-Tank Platoon of the 1st Battalion. The "Krauts" had no idea we were even close to Mayenne.

Observation was now the main problem, as the eastern portion of the city was on high ground. Mortar observers and the Battalion Artillery Liaison Officer located an observation post on top of a building facing the bridge. The tanks were now ordered up the side streets close to the river. The plan for assaulting the bridge was as follows; artillery was to fire a 10 minute preparation from 1750 to 1800, then shift fires to cover roads leading into Mayenne from the northeast; mortars to cover the main road leading to the bridge from the east; tanks to support the attack from positions on the West bank and shoot at anything that moved; D Company's machine guns to support the attack from windows and buildings on the west bank of the Mayenne River. The attack was to start at 1800, with the 1st Platoon of B Company leading, followed by a squad of Engineers, that would sweep the bridge with mine detectors for the attached platoon of tanks, that would follow. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons, with tanks, were to follow the 1st Platoon. The artillery preparation opened as scheduled, shortly, a very loud explosion was heard on eastern side of the river and a resulting blanket of smoke. The Battalion Commander immediately seized this opportunity to cross the bridge. He ordered the 1st Platoon across the bridge as soon as he could lift the artillery preparation. Two minutes later, the 1st Platoon rushed the bridge, led by the Company Commander. Several riflemen were killed, but the platoon advanced into eastern Mayenne just in time to kill the Germans, who were to blow the bridge. They were followed by a squad of Engineers. Immediately, the Platoon of Tanks wheeled and followed the Engineers, their 76's belching hot lead as they advanced. Those, who saw this action, realized they had witnessed the classic example coordination of Infantry, Tanks, Engineers and Artillery. B Company fought their way through town to the east and made contact with the 3rd Battalion of the main body, who had crossed the river from the south. Many houses, that had been prepared for defense, were bypassed by rushing tanks and accompanying riflemen passed them. These houses were mopped up by A Company, which followed and then turned to the north. C Company stayed in western Mayenne and protected the northern approaches. The bridge was ours! Engineers immediately de-mined the bridge and found it had been prepared for demolition with eight 500 pound aerial bombs. The attack had been so swift and carried out with such dispatch, that the Germans had not been able to blow the bridge.

While this action was taking place, the remainder of the Regiment was de-trucked and marched to an assembly area to the south and west of the river. The Regimental Commander, 3rd Battalion Commander and part of their staffs worked their way down to the river's edge. Only sporadic rifle fire was coming from the other side, so the Regimental Commander ordered an immediate crossing. A skiff and an old leaky boat were pressed into service and a nearby picket fence was torn down for use as oars. The Regimental Commander accompanied the first boatload of Infantry across the river, as the men seemed somewhat dubious of the makeshift equipment. By the time the engineer rubber boats arrived, I Company was across the river and the rest of the crossing went very rapidly. By 2030, both the 3rd and 2nd Battalions were across and the 3rd Battalion had fought its way to the main road to the southeast of the city. Many prisoners were taken as the 1st Battalion was driving the Germans to the east into the 3rd Battalion. By 2200 the town had been completely mopped up and the Task Force Command Post had located in the southeastern part of the city. General Weaver disposed the forces in a perimeter defense and all roads leading into the city were blocked. All night long German vehicles approached the town from all directions, only to be blown to bits.

On the morning of 6 August, the Division Commander visited the Command Post of Task Force Weaver and informed General Weaver that the 1st US Infantry Division, of the 1st US Army, would arrive in Mayenne sometime during the day to relieve the Task Force, so it could proceed on to Le Mans. General Weaver made the decision to split his forces, to save valuable time. The plan was for two columns along different routes. He directed that the Regimental Commander with 1st the 2nd Battalions, 357th Infantry, proceed to the south as soon as the troops could be assembled. For purpose of clarity, I will refer to this column as Task Force Barth. The force, to stay in Mayenne, will be referred to as Task Force Weaver. Task Force Barth was to proceed via Montsurs, St Suzanne, L'Arche on to Le Mans. Task Force Weaver would proceed via Aron, Evron, St Suzanne, St Denis, L'Arche on to Le Mans. This meant the columns would cross at St Suzanne, if only slight opposition was encountered. If stiff resistance was met, the two columns would converge like pincers on St. Suzanne.

THE ADVANCE ON LE MANS

Task Force Barth

6-7 August

The column got underway at about 1400. The column was now on foot, as the attached vehicles had been released the previous afternoon. Additional trucks with the Task Force had been requested and these trucks reported to Task Force Barth, 6 miles south of the Mayenne, at about 1600. At this time, Barth's column was again completely motorized. Slight resistance was encountered in Montsurs and was brushed aside and this column again turned east toward St. Suzanne and Le Mans. By 1930, the 1st Battalion and a platoon of tanks, the Advanced Guard, were in Viviers. Colonel Barth and the Command Group were in St. Suzanne awaiting the 2nd Battalion to close. At this time, Colonel Barth decided to stop for the night. Through some misunderstanding, the 2nd Battalion had stopped just east of Montsurs and was being attacked by strong German Forces. Realizing that the column had been cut, Colonel Barth ordered 2nd Battalion Commander to attack at daylight and close up on St. Suzanne. Shortly after dark, St. Suzanne was attacked from the north and southwest. The Regimental Defense Team and the Antitank Platoon, which were with the Command Group, put up a gallant fight. Two houses were prepared for defense and withstood the German attacks. About 2400, it was evident, that the Germans were reforming to take the town, so the Regimental Commander made the decision to recall the 1st Battalion from Viviers. When 1st Battalion Commanding Officer received this message, he was engaged in a firefight with the enemy who was attacking piecemeal from the east, and he could not break contact immediately. His column, with tanks, finally moved into St. Suzanne about 0630 7 August, and none too soon, as they immediately opened fire on large numbers of attacking Germans and drove them to the west. This enemy was annihilated between the 1st and the oncoming 2nd Battalion, whose attack had started at daylight. By 1000, the column was reunited and the advance again resumed. Soon after leaving St. Suzanne, a force of 15 to 20 tanks was spotted in the woods, to the south of the road. The 345th Field Artillery was placed in position and fired on them, driving them deeper into the woods. The road to the east was in plain sight of the woods, but the 345th, then displaced forward and finally the 3rd battery displaced, as fast as the trucks could go. The next resistance was encountered in Bernay. The 1st Battalion attacked with tanks and a company of Infantry and drove the enemy to the north of town and held them there, while the rest of the column continued on to La Quinte. These

Germans were surrounded and many were killed and 23 prisoners taken. The column was again closed at La Quinte at 2300 and an all around defense was set up for the night.

Task Force Weaver
6-7 August 1944

Shortly after Task Force Barth departed Mayenne, elements of 1st US Infantry Division started to arrive, to effect the relief. At this time, Mayenne was being heavily shelled from the east and southeast and reconnaissance reported German tanks in vicinity of Aron. Air reconnaissance reported enemy in the woods just north of Evron. General Weaver decided to attack Aron, while reconnaissance was probing to the north and south. The advance guard (1 company of Infantry) met stiff resistance at Aron, so 3rd Battalion (-) was ordered to bypass Aron to the south. The bypassing force met such stiff resistance, that it actually became an enveloping force. Progress was steady, but slow and was hindered by enemy tank attacks. Prisoners that were captured, said that they were part of a force sent to recapture Mayenne. Task Force G-2 estimated the force to be 2 Battalions of Infantry with supporting weapons and tanks. The decision was now made to withdraw under cover of darkness and proceed south along the route to Montsurs, Vaiges, St. Dennis on to Le Mans. The withdrawal was accomplished, but not without incident. The 16th Infantry of the 1st US Division fired into the withdrawing troops and several casualties in both units were taken before the firing was stopped. The men were then rested for three hours, the column reformed and proceeded to vicinity of Vaiges by morning of 7 August. Here Task Force Weaver met elements of the 359th Infantry Regiment, which was advancing by foot. The 359th was in contact just east of Vaiges and was waiting for their column to close. General Weaver decided to proceed to the northeast through Chammes and thence to St. Dennis and Le Mans. The advance guard company ran into very stiff resistance just to the west of Chammes. Chammes fell by mid-afternoon and the advance head again stalled in a heavily wooded area to the east. P-47's dive-bombed and strafed these woods and the attack again got underway. Progress was steady, but very slow, as numerous tank-infantry attacks were beaten off. Captured prisoners stated that there was a Battalion of Infantry, three companies of Engineers and some tanks and self-propelled weapons in the woods. It was felt that the attack had "bogged down", so decision was made to again withdraw at darkness and double back through Vaiges and pass through the 359th Infantry, which had stopped for the night about 4 miles east of Vaiges. The same tactics were used, that had been employed the previous night and by 2200 the column had passed through the 359th Infantry Regiment. Token resistance was encountered at St. Jean s-Erve and at St. Denis-d'Orques and these towns were quickly secured. Here, the column stopped for the night to reorganize and replenish ammunition supply in preparation for the advance on Le mans the next day.

Task Force Barth
8 August 1944

Next day, Task Force Barth started their advance, from La Quinte about 0900. The plan for the operation was for the Advance Guard Battalion to turn to the west when it reached the main crossroad in L'Arche and block the road on which Task Force Weaver would be advancing, thereby squeezing any defending force in front of Task Force Weaver between the two forces. No resistance was encountered, until L'Arche was reached. Here, the Advance Guard ran into

enemy coming from the west and trying to escape into Le Mans. This enemy turned out to be about 15 vehicles of an Anti-Aircraft unit. The lead tanks immediately opened fire and destroyed all the vehicles as the Infantry riding on the tanks killed 30 Germans, who tried to escape. This action completely blocked the crossroad and the rest of the 1st Battalion was deployed to the west. At this time, the Regimental Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon and a Platoon of Tanks were detached from the 1st Battalion and attached to the 2nd battalion to continue to the east in the direction of Le Mans. This battalion was slowed by German delaying positions, that employed self-propelled guns just over each rise on the way into Le Mans. The column was also harassed by our own 79th US Division, which was coming up on our right. The 79th evidently mistook us for Germans, fleeing to the east, and brought artillery down on our column. This fire was finally stopped and the remaining German resistance was reduced and our forces entered the city of Le Mans.

Task Force Weaver
8 August 1944

On the 8th, Task Force Weaver was destined to encounter a typical German delaying action. In Charnie they ran into a heavy roadblock in the vicinity of a mined bridge. Our engineers de-mined this bridge under fire and then the Advance Guard pushed the enemy into the woods to the east. Up to this time I have said little about the cooperation of the P-47's, which were attached and in constant communication with Task Force Weaver by radio. As the column left Charnie, the Artillery Liaison Plane reported five Mark IV Tanks about 2 miles ahead of the column, traveling to the east. The P-47's were immediately given this information and came out of the skies on the tanks. A few minutes later, the planes reported mission accomplished. When the column arrived at the scene of the tanks, the lead tank was in a crater that had been blown just in front of it. The snout of its long gun buried in soft dirt on the bottom of the crater. The other four tanks were all fire and smoking. Here were five tanks the doughboys wouldn't have to bother with. It wasn't quite so simple for the Engineers as they had to fill the craters and repair the road.

Enemy resistance was met at both Brains-s-Gee and Coulans, in the form of mined roads and roadblocks covered by a few riflemen. The Advanced Guard cleared these two points and then advanced to Chauffour de Notre Dame. Here, the Advance Guard was greeted by strong rifle fire and some mortar fire. The village was attacked finally by the Advance Guard Company and enveloped from both the north and the south by the remaining two rifle companies. Just after dark, the village and its garrison fell and the Advance Guard continued to the east. At about 2200, the Advance Guard reported the link up with Task Force Barth.

Our forces entered the city of Le Mans shortly after midnight, on 9 August almost simultaneously with the 79th Infantry Division, which had entered from the southwest. At this time Task Force Weaver was officially dissolved. By [1000?], the 90th Infantry Division was occupying the northern portion of the town with one regiment disposed to the north and east. Actually, we were on the right flank and to the rear of the German Seventh Army, poised to continue the advance to the east or to turn north and cut into the flank and rear of the Germans, which we later did.

During this operation, General Weaver's motto was "Hit them where they ain't." This motto was followed and so many of the enemy were bypassed, that the columns were continually subjected to high velocity and small arms fire from the flanks. This was offset by the air protecting our flanks and strafing anything they observed and by the use of the Company of Tank Destroyers. The Tank Destroyers would push off the main routes and fire to the flanks and then advanced by bounds after the tale of the column had cleared. In summarizing this action of four days, we find that the Task Force advanced some 90 odd miles through enemy held territory, made a river crossing, captured the large city of Mayenne by street fighting tactics, established a bridgehead, fought a meeting engagement with a superior enemy force in the vicinity of Aron, made two successful night withdrawals to deceive the enemy and five numerous small engagements. Pursuit was continuous and speedy and any captured position was considered just another line of departure. On many occasions, enemy vehicles were found standing with their motors still running. Communication between organic units was excellent and all subordinates were continually kept abreast of the situation and therefore could carry out their assignments with dispatch. Our main losses in this operation were in the Reconnaissance Troup and the Tank Battalion, but these material losses were compensated for by the relative small loss of men. The Task Force sustained less than 300 casualties of all types and no 90th soldiers were taken prisoners. To contrast to this, the enemy lost an inestimable amount of matériel, such as trucks, tanks, artillery pieces and self-propelled weapons. Prisoners taken, were over 3, 000 and an estimated 350 were killed and wounded. Mission accomplished!

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In making a study of the Task Forced Operation, it becomes immediately apparent, that the Division Commander of the 90th made a correct estimate by the situation on 5 August, when he made the decision to organize a Task Force. This Task Force contained all the attached firepower of the Division and over half of the organic artillery fire power.

If the attack had started with a Division is a unit, it may not have been so successful, because it would have lacked the necessary mobility and have given the Germans additional time to organize the defenses of the Mayenne River line. If a regimental combat team had been used, it would have lacked the necessary firepower to reduce the existing German defenses.

The principles of mass and surprise are very prominent in this operation. At all times the force was sufficient in strength to have the required mass at the decisive point. Surprise was attained through out by mobility of the force and by excellent leadership in all echelons. In all operations, coordination is essential, but coordination is only attained by leadership from the top. The decision to place this Task Force under the able leadership of the Assistant Division Commander, brought about the coordination necessary for a successful operation.

Throughout this action, plans were very simple and orders clear and concise. At no time did plans or orders add to the confusion of combat as they sometimes do.

In all phases of this operation, security of the Task Force was not neglected. On several occasions, the Germans could have cut into the column and impeded our progress, had not flank security of the form of anti-tank weapons, tank destroyers and the Air Force been on the alert to

protect the flanks. At night, security was particularly important and either a perimeter or all-around defense was employed and found to be very effective.

Reconnaissance was continuous and so thorough, that in my opinion it was the deciding factor in the success of the operation. The Reconnaissance Troop, the Company of Light Tanks and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon of the 357th Infantry were continually probing to the right, left and in front of the column and as soon as resistance in strength was met, they would immediately initiate finding routes around the flank of the enemy. In many cases a reconnaissance echelon closed with fire on small delaying forces and neutralize them, thereby not delaying the column.

Points to be criticized are not as numerous as one would expect, considering the magnitude of the operation initially, staff cooperation was lacking, when 50 of the allocated trucks did not arrive in time to start the operation.

Communications broke down at an essential time, when the 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry, stopped and was attacked outside of Montsurs. But generally, radio played an Herculean part in maintaining communication as it was impossible to lay wire in an operation of this sort.

On two different occasions, coordination with adjacent units was lacking. First, in the withdrawal from Aron to Mayenne, several lives would have been saved, if the correct coordination had been effected and disseminated down to the troops. Again, on the road from L'Arche into Le Mans, several casualties were taken because our troops were mistaken for Germans, by the 79th US Division. On both occasions, liaison Officers were used and were aware of the situation, but the breakdown seemed to be in the dissemination of information to the leading elements of the units, the individual doughboy. In situations such as these, time must be taken into consideration as a factor.

Supply was sometimes lacking, because of the extended supply lines. Gasoline was short on the morning of 8 August and was the reason Task Force Barth got such a late start, but generally, under the circumstances, supplies such as ammunition and food were prompt.

LESSONS

Some of the lessons brought out in this operation were:

1. [Illegible]
2. Adequate staff planning for an operation of this type is a necessity.
3. Communication is essential to gain the desired degree of coordination.
4. Reconnaissance and intelligence are two outstanding factors for successful operations.

5. Supply plans must be in conformance with a mission to be undertaken.
6. Leadership is a deciding factor of the success or failure of any operation.
7. Special organizations can be constituted from an Infantry Division to gain mobility and to perform specialized types of missions.

END NOTES

(1-4) A-1
 (5,6) A-5
 (7) Personal Knowledge
 (8) A-3
 (9) A-3
 (10) A-7
 (11) Personal Knowledge
 (12) Personal Knowledge
 (13) Personal Knowledge, Statement of Edward S. Hamilton, CO 1st Bn, 357 Inf
 (14) Personal Knowledge

(15) Personal Knowledge, Statement of Edward S Hamilton, CO, 1st Bn, 357 Inf
 (16,18) Personal Knowledge
 (17) Personal Knowledge, Statement of Col. G B Barth CO 357 Inf
 (19-21) Personal Knowledge
 (22,23) Personal Knowledge, Statement of Col. G B Barth, CO, 357 Inf
 (24,25) Personal Knowledge
 (26,28) Personal Knowledge

(27) Personal Knowledge, Statement of Gen Weaver, ADC, 90th Div
 (29) Personal Knowledge, Statement of Gen Weaver, ADC, 90th Div
 (30,32) Personal Knowledge
 (31) Personal Knowledge, Statement of S B Barth, CO, 357 Inf
 (33,34) Personal Knowledge
 (35) A-4
 (38,38) Personal Knowledge

APPENDIX A

SECRET

Auth: CG 90th Div
Date: 5 Aug 1944
Inst: R.G.L.

90thINF DIV
VIC LAUNAY
060600B AUG 44

FO #19

Maps: G905, 1/50,000

1. a. See Intelligence Annex.

b. XV CORPS attacks 5 August to seize and secure crossing of MAYENNE R from LAVAL to MAYENNE, both inclusive. 79th Infantry Division attacks on the right of the 90th Division, securing that part of the Corps objective [illegible] location prepared to support either or both the 79th or 90th Division.

2. a. 90th Infantry Division:

Atchd: 173rd Field Artillery Group
40th Field Artillery Group
693rd Field Artillery Battalion
712th Tank Battalion
537th Antiaircraft Artillery (AW) Battalion (M)
607th Tank Destroyer Battalion

Attacks 5 August to seize and secure crossing to the MAYENNE River within its zone extended to the east and north to all MAYENNE inclusive, Routes, objectives, body - see overlay

3. a. Task Force Weaver: - Brigadier General Wm J. Weaver, Commanding
Troops: Detach Division Staff Company A, 315th Med Bn
90th Reconnaissance Troop 1 Company, 607th TD Bn
712th Tank Battalion Detachment 90th Sig Co
357th infantry (Mtz) Detachment 90th of MP
343rd Field Artillery Battalion 345th Field Artillery Bn
Company A, 315th Engineer Battalion

(1) Move by motor via route indicated on overlay. Seize, secure and bridgehead the crossings of the MAYENNE River from the Division right boundary to MAYENNE inclusive.

(2) Reconnaissance element will cost IP (LA RICHARDIERE) at 050630. Infantry elements will cross IP is 050800.

(3) Task Force Weaver will provide own flank security throughout its advance.

(4) 50 trucks each from 5th Armored Division and from Third Army are available for this move will report to ST HILAIRE at 050630. The 50 trucks from the 5th Armored Division will be released to that unit immediately 357th Infantry detrucks.

b. CT 8:

(1) Will advance by marching within its zone via route indicated on overlay.

(2) Will initiate movement by 050800 and will make such preliminary dispositions is necessary to insure that its columns will not interfere with the movement of Task Force Weaver.

(3) For March objective and alternative - See overlay.

- c. CT 9:
(1) Will advance by marching within its zone via route indicated on overlay.
(2) Will initiate movement by 050800.
(3) For March objective - See overlay.
- d. Division Artillery: (less CT attachments):
Attached: 173rd Field Artillery Group
40th Field Artillery Group
537th Antiaircraft Battalion (-1 Battery)
607th Tank Destroyer Battalion (-1 Company)
(1) Artillery Battalion to be prepared to move by bounds in the zone of either CT 8 or CT 9 on order this Headquarters.
(2) 1 Company 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion will support the advance of CT 8 and CT 9 respectively.
- e. 315th Engineer Battalion: (less attachments):
Be prepared to move long orders this headquarters.
- f. (1) Foot elements will not be delayed for the passage of motor elements through the columns.
(2) CTs are responsible for security to both flanks.
(3) Advance will be pushed at all costs; resistance on route will be promptly bypassed.
4. Administrative order number 35.
5. a. (1) 30I Index - G1-10.
(2) Armored vehicles will display cerise florescent panels.
- b. Division advance order opens LA RICHARDIERE (470025).
Time of opening - 050800.
March CPs - Head of main body.
Ax Sig Co - Route of advance.

McLAIN
COMMANDING

/a/ Stillwell
/t/ STILLWELL

G-3

DISTRIBUTION: "I".

TASK FORCE NEAVER **ORGANIZATION OF COLUMN** **FOR MARCH ON MAYENNE** **(TOTALLY MOTORIZED)**

COMMUNICATIONS THROUGHOUT COLUMN AND TO DIV. BY RADIO (ALL TYPES), MOTOR MESSENGERS AND ARTY. CUB PLANE. NOT TO INTERFERE WITH ARTY. MISSION. SUPPORT BY RADIO PLANE. ALL OPERATED UNDER DETACH. 90TH SIG. CO. (USE OF CUB PLANE)

AIR SUPPORT ☐ SQUADRON P-47S (DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS)
 DISCOVER ENEMY TO FRONT AND FLANKS-REPORT.
 CLOSE IN ENEMY, ATTACK ON ORDERS IN CONJUNCTION WITH GROUND FORCES.

RECON ECHELON

- ☐ 90TH RECON TROOP
 ADVANCE ON ROUTE AND PARALLEL ROUTES.
 WHEN PRACTICABLE, GO OUT AND BACK AT ROAD
 INTERSECTIONS. ON MEETING RESISTANCE, CLOSE
 WITH FIRE, DISCOVER ENEMY POSITION.
 IMMEDIATELY FIND PASSAGES AROUND FLANKS.
 OPERATE ON FOOT AS NECESSARY.
- ☐ CO D 712 TK BN

☐ ROUTE MARKERS AND GUIDES, DETACH. 90TH M.P.,
 IMPLEMENTED BY U.S.T.

☐ FORWARD COMMAND GROUP TASK FORCE

ADV. GD.

- ☐ 8 CO 351 INF CO A 712 TK BN
 FOR DIRECT ASSAULT AGAINST ENEMY
 RESISTANCE.
- ☐ DETACH. CO A 315 ENGR BN WITH BULLDOZERS
- ☐ 1ST BN 351 INF (-)
 ASSIST DIRECT ASSAULT-ENVELOP-INITIATE
 BY PASSING.

☐ 345 FA BN AND BTRY A 537 AAA BN

☐ REMAINDER 351 INF (LESS ADV. GD.)

☐ REMAINDER 712 TK BN

☐ CO A 315 ENGR BN (-)

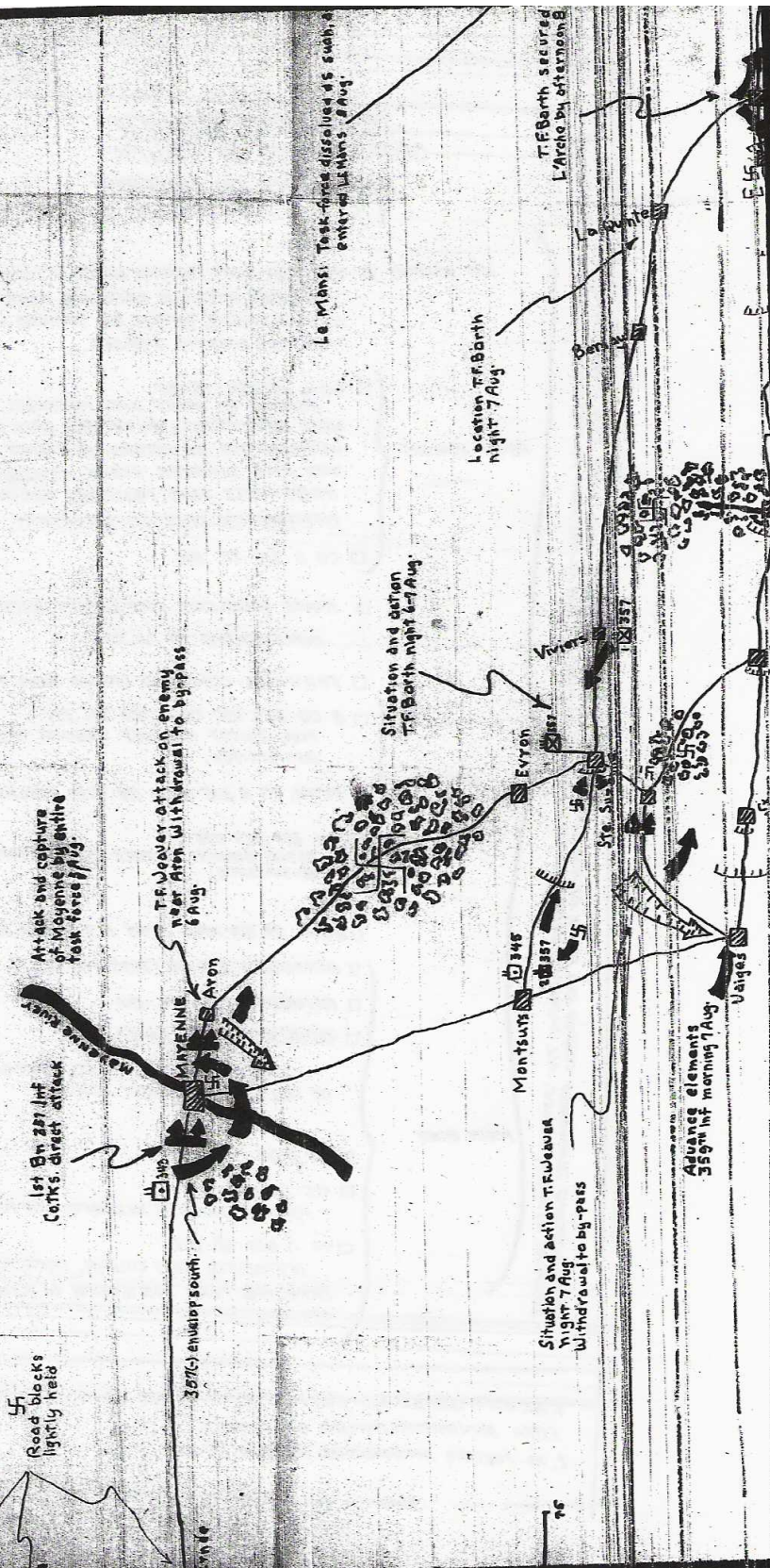
ASSAULT & RUBBER BOATS, BRIDGING MATERIAL
 ON CALL TO DIV. ON SHORT NOTICE.

MAIN BODY

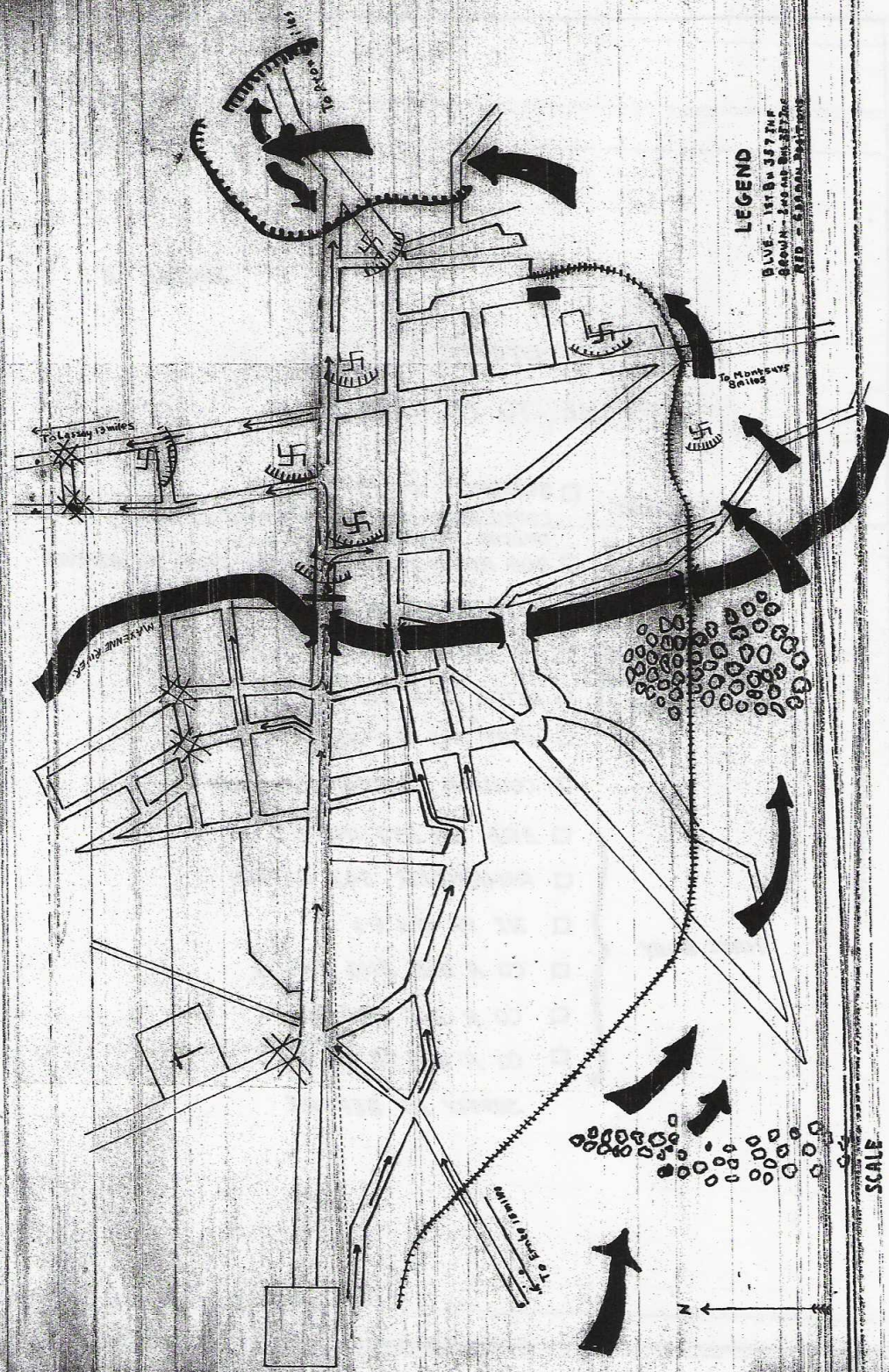
- ☐ CO A 315 MED BN.
- ☐ 345 FA BN
 FOLLOWED ROUTE & IN DIRECT SUPPORT
- ☐ CO A 607 TD BN
 DISTRIBUTED THRU COLUMN. PRINCIPAL MISSION
 FLANK AND REAR PROTECTION OF ELEMENTS OF

1. RE-UNITING AND REPAIRS, EQUIPPED AND SERVICE, FOOD, WATER AND
 EXTRA AMMUNITION CARRIED ON VEHICLES.
2. RE-FUELING ACCOMPLISHED ENROUTE BY DIV.

90th INF DIV 5-9 AUG 1944



STATENNE FRANCE AUGUST 1944



LEGEND

BLUE - 1st Bn 387 Inf
BROWN - 1st Bn 387 Inf
RED - 1st Bn 387 Inf

SCALE

YARDS
0 400 800 1200
FEET
0 100 200 300

TASK FORCE WEAVER COLUMN

MAYENNE TO LE MANS

COMMUNICATIONS AS BEFORE

AIR SUPPORT

☐ SQUADRON P-47'S
COVER BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH COLUMNS
ORDERS AS BEFORE

RECON BATTALION

☐ 90th RECON TROOP. ORDERS SAME AS BEFORE

☐ LT TK CO 712 TK BN

ADV. GU CO CHOR

☐ 1 CO OF INF RIDING ON MEDIUM TKS

LEADING CO 3RD

☐ DETCH. CO A 315 ENG BN

BN 357 INF

☐ BTRY 343 FA BN

☐ COLUMN COMMAND GROUP

☐ 3RD BN 357 INF (-)

☐ REMAINDER 343 FA BN

MAIN BODY

☐ 712 TK BN (-)

☐ CO A 315 ENG BN (-)

☐ CO A 315 MED BN

☐ CO A 601 TO BN (-)

SUPPLY AS BEFORE

APPENDIX F

**TASK FORCE BARTH COLUMN
MAYENNE TO LE MANS**

COMMUNICATIONS SIMILAR TO SOUTH USING REGT'S NET

- AIR SUPPORT ■ SQUADRON P-47'S FURNISHED FROM SOUTH COLUMN
- RECON ECHELON ■ I & R PLAT.
- ADV. GD. {
 - CO. A 712 TK. BN.
 - 1 INF. BN.
 - COLUMN COMMAND GROUP
- MAIN BODY {
 - 1 INF. BN.
 - 1 CO. MED. TKS.
 - DETCH. 315 ENGR.
 - 1 PLAT. CO. A 607 TD BN.
 - 345 FA BN.

SUPPLY AS BEFORE