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attack on 17 August to secure this terrain feature. The assault was to be made by the 359th Infantry committing initially 1 Bn. As a prelude to the attack, 358th Infantry was alerted to relieve during the night of 16 - 17 August those elements of 359th Infantry in the LE BOURG ST LEONARD area. These plans were never put into execution.

At 2300 the XV Corps relinquished command of the 90th Division and 2nd French Armored Division and a Provisional Corps composed of these two Divisions and the 80th Infantry Division (to join later) was constituted under the command of General Gaffey, (Third Army Chief of Staff). This Corps was given the mission of attacking on order to the NW to seize and secure TRUN. The 90th Division was to attack to the N to seize ONMAEL and the high ground NE of CHAMBOIS, to secure a bridgehead for the passage of armor. The Division plan contemplating the main effort to be made by the 358th Infantry (less 2 Battalions) attacking on the right of 359th Infantry from an LD at EXEMES. 359th Infantry initially with 2nd Bn 358th Infantry attached, was to complete occupation of LE BOURG ST LEONARD and to continue the attack to HILL 129 SW of CHAMBOIS.

At dawn 17 August the Boche renewed his attack against A & B Cos, 359th Infantry at LE BOURG ST LEONARD. It had become apparent the day before that we were faced with something different than the disorganized resistance encountered in the previous campaign which initiated at ST HILAIRE. This was a desperate and well coordinated German force in 2 Bn strength, fighting savagely to maintain the shoulders of the gap through which the German 7th Army was fleeing. The area around LE BOURG ST LEONARD dominated the valley to the NW and provided observation over the entire escape route leading through CHAMBOIS. By 0900, 2 Battalions 358th Infantry had moved into position at EXIMS in preparation for the attack in the directio of CHAMBOIS, and had relieved Company C 359th Infantry, garrisoned in that area. This relieved Company was immediately set in motion westward to join up with the remainder of the their Battalion engaged at LE BOURG ST LEONARD. At the same time, the 3rd Battalion 357th Infantry initiated the relief of the 2nd Battalion and L Company 359th Infantry, the relieved elements moving by motor to the vicinity of LE PIN AU HARAS. The battle at LE BOURG ST LEONARD continued throughout the day. Contact was established between the 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry and 1st Battalion 359th Infantry just S of the town, about noon. But the Boche retained control of the town proper. At one time an attempted German envelopment temporarily cut off elements of B Company who held positions in the southern portion of the town. But effective work by the attached tanks and the movement of 3rd Battalion 359th Infantry to a position generally astride of the Y east of the town eliminated this threat.

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At 1400 the 90th Division along with the 2nd French Armored Division and the 80th Infantry Division passed to the control of V Corps and First Army. The CG V Corps after surveying the situation, altered the Corps attack plan and postponed its execution until 180800. The revised plan was in substance as follows: The two Infantry Divisions, 90th on the right and 80th Division on the left, would attack to secure the line: high ground NE of CHAMBOIS to ARGENTAN inclusive. The 2nd French Armored Division was to remain in position protecting the left flank of the Corps. Juncture with elements 21st Army Group was anticipated in the vicinity of CHAMBOIS. The Division order directed the attack to be launched by the 359th Infantry on the right and the 358th Infantry on the left while the 357th Infantry maintained the roadblocks within its sector of responsibility. As a preliminary to the attack, the 358th Infantry less 2nd and 3rd Battalions displaced to the N edge of the PETIT FORET DE GOUFFERN. The 3rd Battalion 358th remained in the vicinity LE PIN AU HARAS. 357th Infantry moved the remainder of the regiment to vicinity of NONANT LE PIN and assumed responsibility for the roadblocks at EXMES. E Co 358th Infantry rejoined its battalion and the entire 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry rejoined its battalion and the entire 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry sas earmarked for return to regimental control upon clarification of situation at LE BOURG ST LEONARD. CO 359th Infantry was directed to secure LE BOURG ST LEONARD by midnight to guarantee a reasonable LD for the morrow's attack.

At 1800, the Germans, under the increasing pressure from our augmented forces, withdrew slightly to the N and NW and the 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry was passed through the 1st Battalion to mor-up the town. By midnight, the 359th Infantry had accomplished its mission and was in complete control of LE BOURG ST LEOMARD.

The Division attack was launched on schedule at 180800. The 3rd Battalion 359th Infantry attacking NW, cross-country, from a LD on the LE BOURG ST LEONARD - EXMES Road, flanked the resistance on the LE BOURG ST LEONARD Road and made excellent progress aided by remarkable observation from the LD. 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry initially held its position at LE BOURG ST LEONARD, while the 1st Battalion continued reorganization in an area 2 km s of LE BOURG ST LEONARD. 1st Battalion 358th Infantry attacked N on the axis MEGUILLUME - ST EUGENIE with an initial objective of the latter town. It met considerable resistance along ARGENTAN - LE BOURG ST LEONARD Road and not until mid-day was it able to force entry into the FORET. The 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry, less 1 Company, which remained at the crossroads it had been occupying, moved W astride LE BOURG ST LEONARD - ARGENTAN Road to clear that road and prepared to follow the 1st Battalion. 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry was moved by marching to the north edge of the FORET DE GOUFFERN. Throughout the day, ground and air observation reported huge columns of vehicles moving NE across the Division front through ST LAMBERT SUR DIVES and CHANBOIS. All agreed that these columns were Krauts moving out of the trap. Liaison officer from the Canadians had reported however that his elements were in CHANBOIS and "No Fire" line

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which excluded ST LAMBERT and CHAIBOIS to us was restated by the Canadians when a radio request was sent to them for permission to fire on these two localities. The evidence of a fight on the TRUN-CHAIBOIS Road N of ST LAMBERT SUR DIVES was conclusive evidence that no friendly troops were in ornear CHAMBOIS, and the Commanding General V Corps authorized the Division to shoot into that area. This was initiated with vehemence by 11 battalions of artillery with amazing results.

The 3rd Battalion 359th Infantry continued its advance, and by a wide employment to the NW, cut the LE BOURG ST LEONARD - CHAILBOIS Road midway between the two towns and causing great havoc among German personnel and equipment retreating into their very arms. The 2nd Battalion moved NV from LE BOURG to annihilate the Boche force at FOUGY while the 1st Battalion, still in regimental reserve, moved up to replace the 2nd Battalion in the town, the control of which was the first key in the closing of the gap.

The 1st Battalion 358th Infantry made good progress towards ST EUGENIE until stopped late in the day by an enemy group astride the road. The poor visibility in the damp, dense woods, heightened by the thick smoke from the timber set ablaze by our WP made accurate appraisal of hostile strength and dispositions and control of our forces difficult and definitely slowed the prosecution of the attack. As the Division picture unfolded, it became apparent that additional punch on the right of the Division would afford the greatest measure of success and consequently the 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry passed to Division control and was moved to the Y east of LE BOURG ST LEONARD. I Company of this battalion was placed on Hill 137 to control the RJ there and to protect the right rear of the 359th Infantry.

The close of the day's fighting found the 90th Division halfway to its objectives, with sufficient reserve strength to punch through on the morrow. Our artillery and the British Air had had a field day in the pocket.

V Corps ordered continuation of the attack on 19 August to assigned objectives and attached to the 90th Division, 1 Combat Command of the 2nd French Armored Division. The missions of the 358 th and 359th Infantrys remained the same, with the latter prepared to capture CHAMBOIS on order. 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry was directed to attack to the N on right of the 359th Infantry to seize the high ground NE of CHAMBOIS and cut the exit roads from that town. General Le Clerc, CG 2nd French Armored Division with Col. De Langlade, whose CC was to be attached, arrived at Division Headquarters late in the evening. The mission presented for Col. De Langlade and agreed to by his Division Commander, was to attack N

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from EXES, block the road leading E from CHALBOIS and assist the 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry in securing its objective; thereafter it was to protect the right flank of the Division.

3rd Battalion 358th Infantry advanced with speed on 19 August and had cut the road leading E from CHALBOIS by mid-morning. K Co was pushed aggressively onto the high ground NE of CHALBOIS where it controlled the road leading NE from that town. It soon set an ambush and had destroyed 12 tanks in a matter of half an hour. L Co soon joined them and between them they captured and killed Krautby the score, as they came out of CHALBOIS. Recognizing this serious threat to their line of retreat the Boche attacked the 3rd Battalion from both flanks and forced the right of the battalion backward. In general, however, the battalion stood firm and continued its work of destruction. Tanks were sent to assist this unit along with some additional TDS and the situation was restored. The German continued to counterattack until late in the evening, but was completely repulsed. The aggressive action of this battalion was a material factor in the rapid closing of the gap and resultant wholesale destruction of the German force left in the pocket.

The 3rd Battelion 359th Infantry advanced toward Hill 129, but was initially unable to seize that Hill because of friendly fire on it by the Allied Forces to the N/. After a radio message to the British had secured a "Mo Fire" line, the 3rd Battalion was able to continue. Enroute it destroyed numerous tanks and captured and killed truck loads of Infantry who thought their avenue of escape was safe. The 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry, after occupying FOUGY without resistance, was re-directed on CMALBOIS. Crossing behind the 3rd Battalion, it fought its way N to control the southern half of the town. Again friendly artillery fire from our Allies prevented complete occupation. This battalion also created wide-spread damage and destruction to German personnel, vehicles and tanks. 1st Batalion 359th Infantry advanced NV from HE BOURG ST LEONARD along the left of the regimental zone of action, mopping up the eastern edge of the FORET DE COUFTERN and occupying the high ground N of the FORET. 1 Composite Co of Engineers was dispatched to garrison LE BOURG ST LEONARD.

The 1st Battalion 358th Infantry advanced through the woods witl out opposition and captured ST EUGLNIE. From this area it was also in a position to raise havoc among the retreating Germans. This Battalion continued the attack to the V to capture LE BON MENIL and by dark was on the high ground dominating the town but not in physical possession of it. Heanwhile the 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry had advance through the woods to hold ST EUGENIE.

CCL of the 2nd French Armored Division secured OMMAEL and pushed a patrol to FRENEE on the right flank of the 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry but did not hold this ground in force.

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3rd Battalion 357th Infantry had been moved to vicinity of Hill 137 in position to support the 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry and CO 357th Infantry was alerted to be prepared to take over the 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry for further operations in that zone. 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry was passed to control of 357th Infantry when communications were established late in the day. When second counterattack developed against the 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry, I Co 357th Infantry was moved to vicinity of LE FEL and attached to 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry.

At the close of the day's operations, the Division had substantially occupied all portions of its assigned objectives. It had captured nearly 5000 prisoners and killed a considerable but undetermined number. It had captured or destroyed hundreds of German tanks, vehicles and artillery pieces. It had made junction with the Polish Rcn elements in vicinity of CHAMBOIS. The Artillery, reinforced by five (5) Corps Battalions, had plastered the escape area from dawn to dark and aided by magnificent observation, had effected wholesale destruction.

The 20th of August, the day planned for the consolidation of the Division's position developed to be one of the most momentuous in the Division's history. Shortly after daylight, as the 3rd Battalion, 35°th Infantry was consolidating its position on the NW slope of Hill 129, it was struck in the fire-covered gap between the two leading companies by a column of tanks and Inf in half-It was not in any sense an attack but rather a last destracks. perate attempt to break out to safety on the part of the Boche. portion of this column did break through the murderous hail of fire leveled upon it by Tanks, TDs, Arty, AT Guns and the organic weapons of the 3rd Battalion, bounced off the left of the 2nd Battalion, which further cut down its original strength, ran into L Co of the 357th Infantry which further maulled it and the 3 remaining halftracks were snipped at in passing by the Regimental Command Group of the 357th Infantry. The 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry completed the conquest of CHAMBOIS against heavy but sporadic resistance. 773rd TD Bn moved into position to support in depth the zone of the 359th Infantry and the regimental position was consolidated. CHAMBOIS throughout the day continued to be the hot spot and veritably the coffin corner for the cornered Krauts. During the day, the Polish, in contact with 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry in CHAMBOIS were cut off from their parent unit, and were resupplied by the 90th Division.

1st Battalion 358th Infantry captured LE BON MENIL while 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry mopped up FORET DE GOUFFERN.

The 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry consolidated its position NE of CHAMBOIS while the 3rd Battalion 357th Infantry remained in supporting position behind it. 2nd Battalion 357th Infantry, motorized, was passed to Division control and was moved along

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LE BOURG ST LEOMARD - ARGENTAN Road on the left flank of the 358th Infantry from which point it established contact with right regiment of the 80th Infantry Division and mopped up the FORET DE GOUFFERN along Division boundary. Subsequently it was moved in an assembly area S of 3rd Battalion 357th Infantry.

On this day the Polish in contact with the 2nd Battalion 359th Infantry and 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry linked up with their Division to the N of CHAMBOIS and the gap was closed.

The result of the operations for the day will forever stand as an imposing record. The Division maintained and improved defensive organization on assigned objectives, forming contact with 80th Infantry Division on its left and Polish elements on its right. It withstood with negligible casualties, continuous pressure on the part of the enemy. It inflicted terrible casualties in both personnel and equipment on remnants of the 7th German Army, took 5500 prisoners, destroyed 150 tanks and a miscellany of 4000 vehicles and killed or wounded more than 4000 Germans. It resupplied and evacuated wounded and prisoners of our Allies with whom contact had been made at CHAMBOIS.

August 21st brought the end of the pocket. Throughout the day the destruction continued. It was strictly in the nature of mop-up operations as all pressure had ceased and the Germans remaining, continued mass and individual surrender. Two German Field Hospital were evacuated through our lines to continue operations under Army control.

Late that day, arrangements were made for the relief of our units by the British 50th Division.

On 22 August, the relief was initiated and completed and the Division infiltrated to assembly positions S of ARGENTAN - EXMES Road. The campaign had ended and the Division was alerted for movement to the  $\mathbb{E}$ .

The campaign which began with the advance N from LE MANS and culminated with the juncture of American and British forces N of CHAMBOTS will forever be regarded as one of the most brilliant episodes in the battle of France. The 90th Division, initiating the campaign in a support role, subsequently became the motivating factor in the success of the scheme. In the first 3 days the Division closely followed and in effect pushed the 2nd French Armored Division, consolidating the French gains and successively sealing the escape route through ALEPCON and through SEES. After relieving the 5th Armored Division NE of SEES, it was not content to remain

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passive, but immediately initiated plans to rapidly close the narrowing gap. It stood firm against the repeated attempts of the Deutschland Regiment to open up LE BOURG ST LEOMARD as an escape exit and beat that unit to its knees. With the control of LE BOURG ST LEOMARD secured it utilized this point as a pivot and swung rapidly to the NW, outflanking the resistance on the LE BOURG ST LEOMARD - CHAMBOIS Road, captured CHAMBOIS and the high ground to the SW and NE. From these positions, it set the greatest ambush of the war and aided by effective leadership and aggressive action by all units maintained that ambush against all counterattacks. The Division Artillery for 4 straight days capitalizing upon excellent observation, the magnificent work of its ground and air observers and the splendid organization developed in anticipation of the course of the action, delivered murderous fire upon the pocket area causing untold destruction and lowering the German moraleto and below the breaking point; unquestionably the Artillery was largely responsible for the resulting mass surrender.

In a period of 4 days, the Division took over 13,000 prisoners, killed or wounded 8000 Germans and destroyed 1800 horses, freeing 1000 more.

The materiel box score, based on an incomplete inventory, is as follows:

Tanks - 220
SP Arty Pieces - 160
Towed Arty Pieces - 700
AA Arty Pieces - 130
Half-Track vehicles - 130
Motor Vehicles - 5000
Wagons - 2000
Areas of Am and Misc Dumps of which time prevented inventory.

(Included upon these vehicles were valuable technical equipment of all descriptions, including high-powered radio and cryptographic sets, mobile ordnance shops, medical laboratories and surgical instruments, the importance of which to our technical intelligence service has not yet been completely estimated.)

If the Division had not been held back for over 24 hours in attack on CHAMBOIS the results would have undoubtedly been greater.

All this the Division accomplished at the cost of but 600 casualties and a loss of 5 tanks, 2 AT guns and 6 vehicles for the entire campaign.

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23-31 AUGUST

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#### PART III

#### SEES to REIMS

#### 23 AUGUST

The Division spent this day in rehabilitation of personnel and equipment, while outposting its sector of the Corps assembly area with a minimum of force. V Corps Hq initiated its displacement to the PARIS area to take command of the troops designated to liberate PARIS.

#### 24 AUGUST

Division remained in assembly area continuing rehabilitation and training. At 1200, Division was alerted to send an advance party to XX Corps Hq in anticipation of movement to their control on or about 26 August. Representative of Division Hq proceeded to MILLY to make preparatory arrangements with XX Corps.

## 25 AUGUST

Advance party left at 1000 for the XX Corps area. 166 trucks reported to the Division for this movement. Further instructions from higher headcuarters indicated that Division would pass to the control of Third Army at IA FERTE BURNARD and continue movement E to an assembly area in the vicinity of FONTALLELAU. The day was spent on completion of all preparations for the movement the following morning.

#### 26 AUGUST

Division initiated movement to FONTAINBLEAU. Division with its normal attachments crossed IP at SEES at 0600. March Group I crossed IP at 0600. March Group II crossed IP at 0631. March Group III crossed IP at 1000. March Group IV crossed IP at 1203. March Group V crossed IP at 1420. March Group VI crossed IP at 1550. March Group VII crossed IP at 1800. Insufficient trucks available to motorize more than 2 Combat Teams, and consequently CT 9 initiated its movement by shuttling. 2nd Bn was moved on the 712th Tk Bn as far as MONTAIRAL while the 3rd Bn moved on the organic kitchen trucks. By midnight, March Groups I, II, III and IV had closed in assembly area. March Group V was still en route. March Group VI had closed in temporary assembly W of CHATEAUDUN while CT 9 had closed all but the 1st Bn in assembly area vicinity MONTMIRAIL. 1st Bn awaiting transportation remained in original location. CT 8 (March Group II) after closing was ordered by Corps to move N across SEINE R to establish bridgehead for the crossing at FONTAINELEAU and MONTERAU.

#### 27 AUGUST

At 0100, 90th Div received instructions to move early on 27 Aug to assembly position in the area MAISON - ROUGE CHENOISE - JOUY - LECHATEL - GASTINS leaving bridgehead force over the SEINE R crossing until relieved by XX Corps Hq. Div was further alerted for an attack to the NE late 27 Aug. Instructions were issued to CT 7 reinforced by the 345th FA Bn to move by motor at 0800 to outpost Div assembly area. CO 712th Tk Bn was ordered to assume command of force consisted of Co D of his unit, 90th Rcn unit to precede CT to screen its movement. (While columns of 7th Armd had traversed portion of this area, the extent to which it had been cleared was not known).

March Group V closed assembly area at 0330. Screening force and UT 7 initiated their movement per schedule but were considerably delayed because of change of priorities on the bridge at FONTAINBLEA At 1015, the Div was directed to send a force to DONNEHARIE to wipe out pocket of resistance reported in that area. 3rd Bn 358th Inf, which was bridgeheading MONTERAU, was designated for this task while 1 Co of 2nd Bn was dispatched to replace them. CT 7 and 3rd Bn 358th Inf had accomplished their mission without incident by 1600. March Group VI closed FONTAINBLEAU at 1430. It was regassed and was redirected to move to Div assembly area. At 1645, Div directed that 1 Bn 358th Inf be retained as bridgehead force over the 4 crossings and the remainder of the Regt move to its assigned portion of assembly area. It closed these locations at 2200.

Entire Div, less 2nd and 3rd Bn 358th Inf, closed in assembly area at 280200. 2nd Bn 358th Inf was released to the Div at 272200 and was scheduled for movement to the Div area at daylight 28 Aug. 3rd Bn 358th Inf was retained at DONNEMARIE under Corps control.

#### 28 AUGUST

Present Corps mission was the establishment of the bridgehead centered around RELLS and the seizure of crossings over the AISNE R further to the N. 7th Armd Div operating in multiple columns over the entire Corps zone initiated its movement N at 271400, to seize crossings of the MARNE and AISNE R respectively. 5th Inf Div was to closely follow the 7th Armd Div on the right of the Corps, capture AEIMS and occupy its portion of its bridgehead line. 90th Div assigned the mission of closely following 7th Armd Div on the left of the Corps, assist the 5th Inf Div in the capture of REIMS and finally occupy its portion of the bridgehead line. At 0300, Div FO for the execution of the Corps mission was issued to subordinate units. The plan in brief was as follows: CT 7, providing the left flank security of the Div was to move by shuttling in two columns. CT 9 on the right to move by shuttling in one column, followed by CT 8. Remainder of Div Trs to displace on order by all available routes. Units initiated their movement at 1000 and by midafternoon had closed upon the 7th Armd Div. 3rd Bn 357th Inf crossed the

# 28 AUGUST (Cont'd)

MARNE at CHATEAU THIERRY and relieved units of the 7th Armd Div guarding the bridge thereat. CT 9 closed vicinity DORMANS and made preliminary preparation for construction of a bridge at that location. All units of the Div closed N of MONTMIRAIL - VIELS - MAISON by dark. Orders were issued for the continuation of the advance on 29 Aug.

One Combat Command of the 7th Armd Div was across the MARNE R N of CHATEAU THIERRY. Elements of the Armored on other routes were blocked for want of bridges. 5th Inf Div was at the line of the MARNE with its advance temporarily stopped because of absence of crossing sites. 9th Inf Div on the right flank of the adjacent VII Corps, was one day's march behind.

#### 29 AUGUST

MARNE R at the CHATEAU THIERRY - MAZY bridges respectively. The advance of CT 9 was to be initiated upon completion by the Engrs of an infantry support bridge at DORMANS. This bridge was completed at 1430. The advance of all elements of the Div was slowed by 7th Armd columns to the front. 357th Inf by passing the armor rolled Northward to occupy march objectives at EISMES - PONTAVERT and GUIGNICOURT on the final bridgehead line. Their march on this day was a model of aggressiveness. 358th Inf, moved by organic transportation only, had reached their march objective vicinity of TRIGNY by nightfall. CT 9 considerably delayed by bridging activity over the MARNE, closed in vicinity of CUEUX by dark. Meanwhile 7th Armd Civ reached the AISNE R on the left of the Corps zone and had partly encircled REIIS, while one CT of the 5th Inf Div reached Southern outskirts of REIMS.

#### 30 AUGUST

At 0200 XX Corps issued warning order for movement eastward from REINS to secure VERDUN and bridgehead over the MEUSE R. Advance was to be made by the 7th Armd Div followed by 5th Inf Div, while the 90th Inf Div, pending its reversion to XV Corps, was to occupy and protect the REIMS bridgehead line. CT 9 initiated movement by marching and shuttling to occupy the line NEUFCHATEL - ST LOUPE and reached these positions at 1300. 358th Inf moved to assembly area vicinity VILLERS - FRANQUEUX. Div CP displaced to FORT BRIMONT, opening there at 1500. Occupation of REIMS bridgehead was completed at 1500. At 2100, 90th Div took control of REIMS and made plans for redisposition the following day for the occupation of the complete bridgehead line.

### 31 AUGUST

358th Inf was moved by marching to a position NE of REILS and occupied that portion of the bridgehead line formerly in the zone of the 5th Inf Div. The advance of the 9th Inf Div to the NE covered

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# 31 AUGUST (Cont'd)

the zone of the 357th Inf and that Regt was alerted for movement 1 Sept to reserve position in rear of the 358th Inf. CT 7 was placed on 2 hours alert status for movement to the E as Corps Res.

To definite instructions reached Div concerning reversion to XV Corps and contingent plans were laid for movement to rejoin the XX Corps. —eanwhile Div entered on a limited training and rehabilitation program.

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