

## PART I

### SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

#### 1-5 January 1945

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

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

#### 6 January 1945

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

It developed the mission of the 90th was to cut off an enemy penetration Southeast of BASTOGNE and entrap and destroy the enemy forces which were being contained by 26th, 35th Infantry and 6th Armored Divisions. The units of III Corps had forced back the enemy and had fought for several weeks. Now they were thinly spread and lacking in force to make the necessary drive. By regroupment and introduction of another division it was felt the job could be quickly accomplished and the threatening salient cut off at its base. [Page 1]

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

Meanwhile 357th Infantry was ordered to move without yet knowing their destination. But they were directed to pick up III Corps guides at SAUEL in LUXEMBOURG and the CT cleared the

Division area at 1630. 712th Tank, 773rd TD and 345th FA Battalions made night moves, halting generally in vicinity of SAUEL and beyond. III Corps had anticipated the 90th would attack through the 35th from the Southwest. The 90th Division Commander, however, asked for and received permission to directly assault the salient from the Southeast. This change threw away the Corp plans for assembling the troops but readjustments were quickly made by unit commanders while the convoy was in route to the area. CT 357 halted vicinity of BIGONVILLE-RAMBROUCH-HUSTERT-NOERDANGE.

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

43rd Cavalry Squadron relieved 359th by 2000 and 358th made preparations for relief by the 94th Infantry Division, establishing guides for the incoming troops.

#### 7 January 1945

##### 357th Infantry:

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

##### 358th Infantry:

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

##### 359th Infantry:

Preceded by 344th and 915th FA [Page 2] Battalions, the regiment initiated move at 0800 and closed vicinity BSCHDORF-WARL at 1530.

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

#### 8 January 1945:

35th and 26th Infantry Divisions completed their planned readjustments. 26th Division held the front through which the 90th would attack, with TASK FORCE SCOTT (101st Infantry Regiment reinforced) holding the sector immediately adjacent to the 90th proposed left.

Beyond them was TASK FORCE FICKETT (6th Cavalry Group reinforced) and then 35th Division (-2 Battalions, 320th Infantry on loan to 6th Armored Division as reserve) holding the line to South of BASTOGNE were 6th Armored Division held the American reentrant East and

Northeast of the town. The III Corps plan prescribed a simultaneous attack by all units with 90th Division making the main effort.

Division CP opened at BONNAL in the former CP of 26th Division. At 1000 TK and TD Battalion Commanders were oriented and one company assigned to each of the assaulting regiments. The remainder were staggered forward to vicinity BOULAIDE. All FA Battalions displaced to position areas North of the SURE River except 345th FA Battalion which was located vicinity BONNAL. [Page 4] [image 1445 map]

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

#### 357th Infantry:

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

#### 359th Infantry:

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

#### 358th Infantry:

Remained in initial location.

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

Prisoners taken by the 26th Division were interrogated for late enemy information. 1/10,000 scale maps were prepared for platoon leaders and the wooded areas on a 1/25,000 scale map

were corrected by photo interpretation, for the terrain, admirably suited for delaying action, was as much of an obstacle as the enemy. [Page 5]

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

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

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

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

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

#### 9 January 1945

##### 357th Infantry:

Attacked at 0950 with two Battalions abreast, Companies F, E and A in assault from left to right. Initial resistance was light as the surprised enemy was overrun by what PWs later stated was thought to be a strong patrol action. South of BERLE the enemy in Prepared [Page 6] positions stiffened his resistance. Following a 10 minute artillery preparation by 343rd, 344th and 345th FA Battalions, Company A assaulted across the open ground from the South while a task force composed of one platoon Company E, one platoon tanks and one platoon TDs flanked from the direction of BAVIGNE. Company B supported by fire. By dark BERLE and 80 PWs were captured including the Battalion CP of 929th Bicycle Battalion.

##### 359th Infantry:

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

3rd Platoon, Company D, 712 Tank Battalion assigned to protect 2nd Battalion forward CP fired on two columns of German infantry as they approached the CP about 1730. An undetermined number were killed but 27 were captured.

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

#### 358th Infantry:

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

#### 10 January 1945

#### 357th Infantry:

Renewing the attack at 0720A, the 1st Battalion (-Company A which remained at BERLE) pushed on through the deep snow and woods to the high ground overlooking DONCOLS. Movement was tortuously slow -- [Page 7] a mile in an hour and a half.

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

Artillery also smashed a counterattack of 200-300 Germans as the Cayman Southeast down a draw on the Regimental left to attack 2nd Battalion. The Battalion continued along the draw and halted abreast of at halftime A1 is and very early the 1st Battalion.

90th Reconnaissance Troop, screening the Division left, encountered enemy MG's vicinity RJ [Road Junction?] 1200 yards Southwest of BERLE. Two medium tanks were sent to reduce this

resistance. One mired, was hit by enemy fire had to be destroyed and abandoned. 3rd Battalions shifted to regimental left to forestall further threats on the exposed flank as a result of slow progress by adjacent units who fought their way through thickly wooded and mined areas. Company A sent one platoon forward from BERLE to keep contact with 1st Battalion.

#### 359th Infantry:

3rd Battalion had attacked TRENTELHOF at 0720A but made little headway against this enemy strongpoint, which included numeral four enemy tanks and 2 SP guns. Artillery and high velocity fire increased as the Germans tried to stall the advance. One TD was knocked out after he fired 12 rounds into TRENTELHOF. At 0900 1st Battalions swung past the right of 3rd Battalion to maneuver around it and cut off TRENTELHOF. From the high ground Northeast of the WILTZ River the Germans with good observation directeb mortar and artillery fire, disrupting the Battalion and blunting its attack. Closer in, enemy infantry, dug in the woods, controled the open ground with MG's and small arms.

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

2nd Battalion cleared out a pocket of Germans behind the 3rd Battalion, capturing 40, including the Battalion Commander of a II Battalion, 36 Regiment, 9th Volksgrenadier Division. Although well-equipped and dug in, this enemy Battalion had suffered heavily with almost all officers killed or captured. [Page 8]

359's 2nd Battalion than cut between the stalled the Battalions at 1600 but was itself halted abreast of the 3rd Battalion.

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

#### 358th Infantry:

Remained in Division Reserve at ARSDORF-RAMBROUCH area.

#### 11 January 1945

#### 359th Infantry:

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

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

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

In the afternoon Companies I and L seized Hill 510 to the Northeast driving off enemy resistance. Company K remained at the CR tied in with 357 on the left. 1st Battalion assembled vicinity TRENTELHOF. 380 PWs were taken in the night attack and subsequent blocking action during the day.

#### 357th Infantry:

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

2nd Battalion attacked SONLEZ surprising and capturing 65 PWs at a mill South of the town. This proved to be a Regimental CP and numerous documents of value were captured. Continuing on at 1430, Companies G and E met very [Page 9] stubborn resistance which continued until Company E outflanked the town from the Northeast after dark. SONLEZ was entered at 2200 and several hundred more PWs were gathered up as the battalion fought groups of bewildered enemy trying to escape through the town. Not until 1130 the next day was SONLEZ completely cleared. After agreement with Task Force Scott established a temporary boundary, 3rd Battalion attacked in 1330 toward the high ground on the regimental left to secure a passageway for commitment of the 358. Company K moved toward the North hill and Company L the South. Again the enemy fought dislodgment from prepared positions until at last pressured by Task Force Scott from the Southwest and 3rd Battalion from the Southeast the Germans gave ground, losing 53 prisoners to Company L and 150 to Company K.

90th Reconnaissance Troop was detached from 357 at 1545 and Troop assemble at BOULAIDE as Division Reserve.

#### 358th Infantry:

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

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

In addition, confirmation was gained at the Division's original attack on the 9th was in fact a surprise. Paragraph 2 of a directive issued by 13th Parachute Regiment on 10 January at 2015 hrs reads as follows:

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

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

The following units were considered totally wiped out: I and II Battalions, 36th Regiment. The Fusilier Battalion of the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade [FGB]. The Grenadier Battalion of the FGB. The Begleits (Escort) Company of the FGB. The 929th Bicycle Battalion attached to the FGB. The 13th Regiment of the 5th Parachute Division. The 5th Mortar Battalion of the 5th Parachute Division. It was believed that most of the units of the 5th Parachute Division could no longer operate as such, even if not completely destroyed. [Page 10]

#### 12 January 1945

##### 357th Infantry:

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

##### 358th Infantry:

0730 the regiment attacked in column of Battalions -- 1st, 2nd and 3rd -- up the draw on regimental left. Initial resistance was light and 1st Battalion quickly seized its objective containing to the West as the 35th Infantry Division drove in from that direction.

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

##### 359th Infantry:



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

#### 90th Reconnaissance Troop:

Traveling around Division left flank, the Troop made contact with elements 35th Infantry Division who were on the high ground Southwest of BRAS, the 6th Armored Division who were 12-1400 yards Northwest of BRAS, and the 358th Infantry, 1st Battalion.

#### 13 January 1945

#### 358th Infantry:

At 0400, having brought up its own tanks and TDs, the 2nd Battalion attacked upper BRAS again, hitting the enemy on the flank as he faced West to counter 6th Armored Division's push vicinity of WARDIN. The [Page 11] Germans had reinforced the position with SS troops and halted the battalion's attack with tank fire. A coordinated attack with 3rd Battalion was planned for 0700. After the jumpoff, Companies F and G pushed through the town, leaving Company E to mop up and the Battalion slowly forced the Germans back across the road, up onto the high ground beyond and into the woods. Further advance was stopped by tank or SP fire from the North and mortar and artillery fire from the East.

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

#### 357th Infantry:

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

#### 359th Infantry:

Prepared for relief by 357th Infantry and elements 26th Infantry Division as new Division boundaries were assigned. The 26th Division had been given the mission of organizing and holding its position on the high ground overlooking WILTZ. 2nd Battalion, therefore, was relieved by 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry, at 1515 and the Battalion closed in BOULAIDE at 1815. 3rd Battalion, relieved by 357, moved to BAASCHLEIDEN, closing at 1715.

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

90th Reconnaissance Troop continued to maintain contact between 358th Infantry and 6th Armored Division.

14 January 1945

Division had joined hands with the 6th Armored Division and 35th Infantry Division attacking from the West. The salient was sheared off and Corps now called for resumption of attack to the Northeast. Redisposition of units was accomplished as Division sideslipped into its new sector with 6th Armored division on its left, 26th holding on the right and 35th Division in Corps reserve. [Page 12]

#### 358th Infantry:

Patrols to the front kept enemy contact and brought back several prisoners. Contact patrols between 2nd and 3rd Battalion gathered up 14 more PWs. In the morning 2nd Battalion joined 3rd Battalion on Hill 530. Both 2nd and 3rd Battalions attacked in the afternoon toward their new objective vicinity NEIDERWAMPACH. 2nd Battalion cleared to the railroad tracks but as it crossed received intense fire from tanks, SP guns, and infantry. One TD and one tank were knocked out and leaving one platoon of Company E across the tracks, the remainder of the Battalion disposed generally just South of the tracks. Captured 32 PWs in a building at vP626575. 3rd Battalion became heavily engaged and fought every yard of the way through the thick woods. As the enemy were forced back, they shelled the Battalion areas unceasingly. By dark 3rd Battalion was echeloned to the right rear of 2nd Battalion and still fighting on into the night.

#### 357th Infantry:

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

#### 359th Infantry:

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

15 January 1945

#### 358th Infantry:

The attack to the Northeast was resumed at 0800. 2nd Battalion, with so much open ground on its left covered by a assault gunfire, did not venture more than a platoon beyond the railroad

tracks. Resistance in front of the 3rd Battalion proved unexpectedly strong, the enemy having reinforced during the night. Caught in a heavy crossfire of MGs, and enemy artillery TOT and intense small arms fire from enemy entrenched on the reverse slope, the battalion finally fell back slowly some 500 yards where it halted and resisted all further attempts to drive it back. One tank pushed to the railroad track only to be hit from the rear by an AT gun. A second tank forced his way across the railroad tracks where it met a similar fate from an 88 gun and other AT guns. The battalion's casualties were heavy (about 46 men killed and wounded including [Page 13] 6 officers). 1st Battalion had started in the trace of 2nd Battalion but enroute met small arms from the Northeast. Five men, including one Company Commander, were wounded as Company A cleared the pocket. Then came orders from Regiment directing the 2nd and 3rd Battalions to hold in place while 1st Battalion made a forced march around the Division left in the sector of the advancing 6th Armored Division to attack NEIDERWAMPACH from the vicinity of BENONCHAMPS. At 1700, 14 battalions of Field Artillery dropped a 2-round TOT on NEIDERWAMPACH. Too stunned to withdraw, 302 Germans after a brief fight quickly surrendered to the 1st Battalion as it closed in from the Northwest. Only four casualties resulted to the attacking Battalion during its brilliant maneuver which outflanked the enemy line. An enemy SP gun was knocked out by tankers from the 712ta Tank Battalion as the town was entered.

#### 357th Infantry:

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

#### 359th Infantry:

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

#### 16 January 1945

#### 359th Infantry:

1st Battalion moved by motor from BOULAIDE to BENONCHAMPS, arriving at 1100. 3rd Battalion moved by motor from BOULAIDE at 0850 and closed in WARDIN at 1042. At 1000 2nd Battalion attacked with Company E on the left and Company G on the right, Company F in reserve, in coordination with 6th Armored Division to capture the high ground East of LONGVILLY. The infantry mopped up the town and proceeded to their objective against light opposition. Moving onto the forward slope Companies E and G received heavy small arms, MG and SP fire and pulled back to the reversal slope. Company F captured the BOURCY-LONGVILLY road junction and physical contact with 6ta Armored Division. 1st Battalion followed along the high ground and tied in for the night between Company F and 1st Battalion,

358th Infantry. Companies E and F returned to LONGVILLY. 3rd Battalion marched to BENONCHAMPS, closing at 1500. Patrols of 2nd Battalion went East toward the high ground at (vP665698) and drew small arms fire from [Page 14] the woods at (vP6750) and high velocity fire from the Northeast.

358th Infantry:

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

1st Battalion mopped up that NEIDERWAMPACH and gathered up 60 more PWs. In nearly morning Company F moved around the Division left flank and occupied the nose at (vP638584). The rest of the Battalion marched later in the morning and the unit assembled at NEIDERWAMPACH.

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

At 1500 2nd Battalion attacked Southeast to secure the wooded area at (vP645578). 1st Battalion attacked at east sending Company A to SHIMPACH and Companies B and C to capture OBERWAMPACH. Both 3rd Battalions, moving Northeast, swept out the woods South of the railroad tracks. Despite enemy artillery and mortar fire and small arms fire from the high ground Southeast of SHIMPACH and OBERWAMPACH, all units were on their objectives by dark and tied in together in a firm line facing East. Approximately 100 PWs were captured in these operations. At 2050 a halftrack with SS mortar men entered OBERWAMPACH and were captured. At 2355 two tanks attacked Company C and were repulsed. Heavy mortar fire hit 2nd Battalion at NEIDERWAMPACH throughout the hours of darkness.

357th Infantry:

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

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On every hand now were evidences of a German withdrawal. Scattered enemy units were thrown together in hastily formed groups to resist the cutting of eastbound exits. Forsaking the protective cover of night, the Germans crowded the roads in daylight with traffic of all kinds. The withdrawal was comparatively orderly, but the delaying forces turned on attacking troops with fury of cornered animals. [Page 15]

For artillery and Air Corps it was a fete. Visibility was unlimited as skies cleared of snow. P47s strafed enemy columns and directed artillery concentrations when their ammunition ran out. Troop and tank concentrations Northeast of ALLERBORN were trapped and pummeled. Enemy columns traveling North and East were victims of prolonged concentrations. All routes, assembly points and enemy towns were interdicted.

17 January 1945

359th Infantry:

3rd Battalion moved from BENONCHAMPS in the great morning hours prepared to attack through the 2nd Battalion and seize the nose and woods at (vP664598). Upon capture of this objective it was intended that 2nd Battalion would take over and 3rd Battalion would continue on to cut the road.

The 3rd Battalion closed at OBERWAMPACH at 0800 and sent patrols to the front. At the old mill (vP661598) one patrol caught 4 PWs and drew fire from the woods beyond. The attack was planned for late morning that was postponed as enemy activity sharply increased in the form of heavy vehicular movement and counterattacks in vicinity OBERWAMPACH.

358th Infantry:

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

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

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

At 0900 the enemy attacked again from the Northeast with tanks and infantry. A TOT of 14 battalions of artillery had been prepared [Page 16] for 359th's debouchment to the high ground. This fire was immediately called for and crushed the attack as it moved in. The tanks withdrew and the infantry fled to the woods.

Another attack followed at 1030 to receive similar treatment. In 1300 elements of the 2nd Panzer Division, formed into KG GUTMAN, attacked OBERWAMPACH from the North with the mission of seizing the village, holding it and establishing 3 75 mm AT guns and 5 120 mm

mortars in the town. The force comprised about 150 infantry, 2 Panther tanks, 11 Mark IV tanks, 3 75 mm of assault guns SP and 4 armored scout cars. Their attack was preceded by a preparation of artillery and mortar fire.

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

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

#### 357 Infantry:

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

#### 18 January 1945

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

#### 358th Infantry:

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

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

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

\* \* \* \* \*

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

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

The enemy also lost 19 tanks: six by 712th tankers, eight by 773rd TD gunners, five by artillery fire. [Page 18]

359th Infantry:

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

357th Infantry:

The regiment remained in Division reserve at BOULAIDE-BASSCHLEIDEN except for 3rd Battalion which continue on the to sweep out its area, gathering up 15 tired and hungry NAZIS. The Battalion harassed the railroad station at (vP654563) with 81 mm mortar and 105 fire as well as 28 rounds TD fire but evoked no enemy reaction.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

19 January 1945

358ta Infantry:

Companies A and L attacked to secure an outpost line on the high ground South and East of OBERWAMPACH. Company L took its objective without difficulty. Company A moving up the draw toward DERENBACH was surprised by fire from the woods on their left rear and pinned to the open snow. At the same time the Company received fire from the high ground along the DERENBACH Road. The Command Group and one platoon engaged the left flank force. The two forward platoons, decimated by heavy enemy fire, assaulted and captured several buildings along the road where they continued to fight, cut off and out of communication until 1800 when the survivors were overwhelmed. [Page 19]

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

359ta Infantry:

The 2nd Battalion attacked and captured ALLERBORN, taking 11 PWs. Companies E and G remained in the town.

357th Infantry:

Remained in Division Reserved.

90th Reconnaissance Troop:

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

21 January 1945

III Corps resumed the attack to the Northeast.

358th Infantry:

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

359th Infantry:

Attacking in order, 2nd, 1st and 3rd Battalions at 0830, the Regiment found only deep snow and occasional stragglers to impede their advance. Hill 520, HAMIVILLE and WINCRANGE were all taken in the day's move. 6th Armored Division on the left, without adequate roads for their CCA, turned into the 359th's zone. Their vehicles located a minefield at WINCRANGE and at LULLANGE had a short skirmish with enemy entrenched beyond the town. 359th Infantry



closed up and the two units settled together for the night. 2nd Battalion remained at WINCRANGE, 1st Battalion at LULLANGE and 3rd Battalion vicinity Road junction vE111648. Patrols to the front contacted enemy outposts.

357th Infantry:

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

90th Reconnaissance Troop:

Shifted to right flank to maintain contact between and 1st Battalion, 358 Peltier Infantry, and 359th Infantry. [Page 20]

22 January 1945

359th Infantry:

The Regiment swung fan-wise to clear and occupy STOCKEM, RUMLANGE, DONNANGE and DEIFELT. 1st and 3rd Battalions patrolled to the East, maintaining enemy contact.

358th Infantry:

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

357th Infantry:

Moving by motor, 1st Battalions staged to vicinity HAMIVILLE where it detrucked, continuing to the Northeast on foot. By dark 1st Battalion was at ASSELBORN, Companies B and C continuing to SASSEL.

2nd Battalion motored to vicinity ASSELBORN, then marched Southeast to BOXHORN where G and F Companies remain to lead the. Company E secured and occupied the woods at vP767677, following a brisk fire fight with a small enemy group. Division CP crossed the border and occupied WARDIN, BELGIUM at 1100.

23 January 1945

359th Infantry:

Attack at 0900 to seize the high ground in the BISCHENT WOODS and hold until relieved by 6th Cavalry Group who were moving up on the Division right to pinch out the 26th Infantry Division. Company K occupied the objective at 1500.

### 358th Infantry:

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

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

### 357th Infantry:

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

Supporting armor began its move across the river but the first 3 Medium tanks bogged down, blocking the road. One platoon, [Page 21] Company D, 712th Tank Battalion was attached in an effort to get some AT guns up to the 1st Battalion without success. 12 bazooka teams from AT company were rushed forward to 1st Battalion instead.

To keep pace with the fast-moving situation, Division CP move to HAMIVILLE.

### 24 January 1945

### 357th Infantry:

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

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

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

The Regiment therefore sent patrols toward OBERSTENWALD following with 2nd Battalion on left and 3rd Battalion on right. Following reduction of an enemy's strong point at the CLERF

River OBERSTENWALD was taken after dark and 3rd Battalion tied in echeloned to the right rear. Division ordered the halt as adjacent units failed to come up. About 2130 a party of 25-30 Germans came to reoccupy positions in OBERSTENWALD. They came in through 3rd Battalion who remained quiet until the Germans were in their area, then encompassed them. Two Germans were killed and 25 captured.

#### 359th Infantry:

The change of boundaries necessitated reemployment of 359th Infantry in the attack. Accordingly, 1st and 2nd Battalions moved to forward assembly areas in early morning and attacked after midday. 3rd Battalion remained in place is supported by fire. 2nd Battalion crossed the CLERF after overcoming resistance along the railroad track. 1st Battalion, faced with entrenched enemy on the far shore, made little headway until late afternoon when the Battalion swung in trace of 2nd Battalion and crossed in their zone to outflank the position. The enemy withdrew. 3rd Battalion assembled for a night attack to seize HUPPERDANGE. [Page 22]

#### 358th Infantry:

Remained in Division Reserve.

25 January 1945

#### 357th Infantry:

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

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

#### 359th Infantry:

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

#### 358th Infantry:

Remained in Division Reserve.

### 26 January 1945

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

Traffic continued to be the principal problem for the next several days as the limited road at was strained to bursting point with foot troops, motors and armor. [Page 23]

### 357th Infantry:

Patrolled toward OUR RIVER. 1st Battalion relieved 2nd Battalion who assembled at HOLLER. In the afternoon having found the area clear, 1st Battalion occupied LEILER with Company B at 2000. 3rd Battalion sidesliped north, returned to attack the next morning to seize the high ground 3 km East of WEISWAMPACH.

### 358th Infantry:

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

### 359th Infantry:

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

The Division CP opened at ASSELBORN at 0945.

Throughout the day Division artillery battalions, operating on call of air observers, beat a steady tattoo on enemy traffic across the OUR RIVER. Near DAHNEN (vP865653) traffic became hopelessly snarled as all roads were interdicted. Vehicles, bumper to bumper, were pounded to rubble by the incessant fires of the Division and supporting artillery guns. For enemy 88's trained their sights on the Cub planes in desperate efforts to stop the carnage but were themselves flattened by Battalion concentrations.

### 27 January 1945

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

357th Infantry:

3rd Battalion attacked to the northeast with Company L on the left and Company K on the right and secured the high ground overlooking the OUR RIVER [Page 24] at 1200. Enemy infantry and one tank counterattacked Company K from a Northeast but were driven off.

358th Infantry:

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

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

359th Infantry:

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

90th Reconnaissance Troop:

Maintained contact between 87th Division and 358th Infantry.

\* \* \* \* \*

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

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

28 January 1945

The Winter fury increased and heavy snows seriously hampered military operation. 315th Engineers work to be worked 'round-the-clock with limited equipment to keep roads open. [Page 25]

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

359th Infantry, on the Division left, would cross through an initial narrow zone, capture STEFFESHAUSEN and AUDEL and then fan out to seize WINTERSPELT and the high ground South of EIGELSCHEID.

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

357th Infantry:

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

358th Infantry:

Patrols encountered enemy in the vicinity of STOUBACH (vP865765) and at vP864743. Combat patrols were sent out in early morning to clean out the enemy to the front, followed by larger units later in the day to secure crossing sites. By dark Company I had captured WEWELER after a brief fight and Companies L and K were poised on the high ground to the South-East.

1st Battalion displaced forward to the wooded area 1200 yards Northeast of LEITHUM.

Companies F and G occupied STOUBACH by midnight. Company E remained at the crossroads 600 yards Northeast of LEITHUM. Enemy were heard digging in across the OUR RIVER.

359th Infantry:

Remained in Division Reserve at TROISVIERGES. [Page 26\*\* image 1468]

### 90th Reconnaissance Troop:

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

### 29 January 1945

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

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

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

On the West Bank of the OUR, the Regiment's right boundary was changed and 90th Reconnaissance took over the area South from LEILER to the Division boundary. 1st Battalion, relieved thereby, left one platoon, Company B on the line while the Battalion (-) assembled at WEISWAMPACH as regimental reserve. Company K also remained in WEISWAMPACH. The rest of the 3rd Battalion was spread along the West Bank of the OUR.

### 358th Infantry:

As light came, the Germans fired mortar, artillery, small arms and high velocity fire from across the river into WEWELER and STOUBACH. Because of bad communications, the smoke which 3rd Battalion had planned to cover their crossing was not fired and left [Page 27] the crossing site exposed to the murderous fire of the enemy. With communication restored, the smoke was fired in 1420 and Company I started across but was immediately engaged in a heavy firefight. On regimental order the crossing was halted and the Battalion waited further orders.

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

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

Company I was left to contain at WEWELER while the rest of 3rd Battalion was brought South to cross in trace of the 2nd Battalion.

#### 359th Infantry:

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

In the afternoon, 1st Battalion moved to WILWERGANGE at 1430.

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

#### 30 January 1945

#### 357th Infantry:

315th Engineer Battalion worked all night to make a passable ford at [Page 28]WELCHENHAUSEN. They hauled rocks and removed mines from the approaches and the water itself despite artillery and mortar fire. Shortly after daylight three tanks crossed, which tore up the bottom so that further crossings of armor had to be postponed.

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



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

#### 358th Infantry:

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

1st and 2nd Battalions continue their attack, securing STEIN-KOPF by dark. About 75 PWs were taken in the drive. Company C set up an ambush and captured 35 prisoners, killed 6 and wounded 4. At 1730, 80 enemy infantry counterattacked Company C in an effort to regain the high ground, artillery dissolved the attack before it gained contact. Company I rejoined its Battalion which was poised in center of regimental zone in regimental reserve.

#### 359th Infantry:

3rd Battalion planned to cross the OUR with Company L on left in Company K on right following a 10 minute artillery preparation. The preparation appeared to alert the enemy and at the river's edge the assault companies received mortar, small arms and machine gun fire. Company L searched for a new crossing site which they found several hundred yards away. Entering STEFFESHAUSEN, they engaged in a small arms and machine gun fight. Company I crossed immediately to assist. By 1200 the town was secured but mop up of the outskirts continued.

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

1st Battalion stage of the from WILWERDANGE to BURG-REULAND then crossed the ice to attack through 3rd Battalion and capture AUDEL. This mission was [Page 29] accomplished by 1800 despite difficult terrain and enemy resistance. Battalion contacted 358th on the right.

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

Divisions CP opened at WILWERDANGE, LUXEMBOURG, at 1400.

#### 31 January 1945

#### 357th Infantry:

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

#### 358th Infantry:

All three battalions continued the attack meeting considerable resistance as they crossed the German border. Artillery and armor support greatly aided the advance. Company A, driving on, captured the high ground South and East of HECKHALENFELD while B Company seized the town and 30 prisoners. 3rd Battalion seized the objective despite frequent machine gun fire from the flank. 2nd Battalion drove the enemy from the woods and tied in with 357th Infantry on the right. 1st Battalion linked with 359th Infantry on the left.

359th Infantry:

Plowing on through deep snow, 1st Battalion seized the high ground West of WINTERSPELT then advanced in the afternoon to cut and block the road Southeast of WINTERSPELT.

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

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

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

\* \* \* \* \*

In summing up, January was marked by change from a relatively static position astride the German border in the SAAR to an [Page 30] unheralded drive through LUXEMBOURG where the 90th sheared off the enemy salient near BASTOGNE. Climaxing the month was the return to GERMANY through BELGIUM and LUXEMBOURG as the Division spearheaded VIII Corps' crossing of the OUR RIVER.

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

Again the infantry had done its part magnificently and born the brunt of the Division effort. Gradually "winterizev" as, first, captured German underwear, and later, snow garments were issued, followed by shoepacs and a trigger modification on the M-1 rifle for firing with gloves

on, they had carried out their assigned missions across the steep slopes, through waist-deep snow and icy water, through dark nights and biting cold days. Theirs the credit and theirs the victory. Not without its price, however, as the bitter cold, deep snow and stiff resistance exhausted troops and exacted casualties.

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

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

VAN FLEET  
COMMANDING  
STILWELL  
G-3  
[Page 31]

## PART II

HEADQUARTERS XX CORPS  
APO 340 US ARMY

SUBJECT: Commendation.

TO : Major General James A. Van Fleet, Commanding General, 90th Infantry Division, APO old 90, US Army

THRU : Commanding General, Third United States Army, APO 403, US Army.

1. I desire to commend you and your command for the superior manner in which you and they have accomplished all your missions while a part of the XX Corps. The drive across France, the capture and development of your bridgehead over the Moselle River, the vital part that you and your division played in the capture of the heretofore impregnable city of Metz, and the crossing of the Saar River into the Seigfried Lines are but a few of the many and difficult missions which your command has undertaken and completed in a superior manner.

2. The aggressive and efficient manner in which you carried out your pointed tasks reflects great credit upon your division and upon you as its Commanding General. Your sound judgment, untiring efforts and the highly efficient manner in which you employed your division and attached troops contributed materially to the operational success of the XX Corps. Your immediate and accurate appraisal of every situation, and the complete cooperation tendered by

you, together with the vigor with which your troops undertook these missions has been most noteworthy.

3. I extend my personal thanks and those of the XX Corps to you and to your officers and warrant officers and enlisted men for a splendid example of cheerfulness, indomitable spirit and courage under trying battle conditions.

WALTON H. WALKER  
Major General, United States Army  
Commanding

[Page 1]