

HEADQUARTERS 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
APO 90, U.S. ARMY

INTRODUCTION:

As of 1 June 1944, the 90th Infantry Division was disposed in marshaling areas as follows: The main body of the Division was stationed in the XXIX District, Western Base Section, located generally north and east of the cities of Cardiff and Newport, Wales. The Division's residual elements were located at Bournemouth, England while Group A (composed of foot elements of the first and third Battalions 359th Infantry Regiment and forty vehicles) was located at Camp Syon Abbey in Devonshire, England, and attached to the 4th Infantry Division. The 358th Infantry Regiment was stationed at Camp Llangattock, Wales; the RCT 9 (-) and the 90th Reconnaissance Troop at Camp Court-Y-Gollen, Wales; the RCT 7, 344th FA Battalion, Company B, 315th Medical Battalion and Company B 315th, Engineer Battalion at Camp Chepstow, Wales; and Division Headquarters, Division Artillery Headquarters, 345th FA Battalion, Special Troops at Heath Camp, Cardiff, Wales; and 315th Engineer and 315th Medical Battalion (less 3 Companies) also at Heath Camp.

The Division had completed its preparation for overseas movement to the coast of France and was in the midst of loading vehicles aboard motor transport ships.

OPERATIONS:

1 June (D-5): The main elements of the Division were loaded on 9 Motor Transport ships at Cardiff and Newport, Wales. Group A initiated embarkation at Dartmouth, England. The 24th Cavalry Squadron was attached to the 90th Infantry Division through Corps order to take effect D+5.

2 June (D-4): The detachment accompanying the vehicles of Combat Team 9 (- Group A) embarked as per schedule during the day. The remainder of the Division completed last minute preparations for movement. Group A completed embarkation at Dartmouth.

3 June (D-3): The personnel accompanying the 9 motor transport ships went aboard their assigned craft. Combat Team 9 (-Group A) and Division advance detachment went aboard the personnel ship, the Susan B. Anthony, and moved into the Bristol Channel at 1800. Group A moved to or remained at Anchorage in Dartmouth-Salcombe Bay and the English Channel.

4 June 9 (D-2): The remainder of the Division, less residual elements, went aboard transports as follows: one-half Division Headquarters and Combat Team 8 (less 3rd Battalion) on the Excelsior at Newport. Combat Team 7 (less 3rd Battalion) on the Explorer at Cardiff. One half Division Headquarters, plus the 3rd Battalions of the 357 and 358, and Division troops on the Bienville at Cardiff. Group A still at anchorage, conducted briefing. [Page 1]

5 June (D-1): All units remained at anchorage until late in the evening when Group A, joined convoy and initiated the Channel crossing.

6 June (D-Day): The main body of the Division sailed from the Bristol Channel for the coast of France. Group A landed on Utah Beach at 1000-1600 and moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of St. Marten Verreville (404983) as part of the 4th Infantry Division's Reserve.

7 June (D+1) Group A moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Reuville (380968). The Susan B. Anthony, which carried the Division's advance detachment and CT 9 (-Group A), struck a mine off Utah Beach at midmorning and sank in approximately two hours. All men were saved, but the bulk of the equipment other than individual was lost. Elements of CT 9 (-Group A) assembled at Reuville by nightfall. The remainder of the Division sailed eastward along the coast of England.

8 June (D+2): The main body of the Division arrived off Utah Beach at midmorning and began debarkation from all three transports simultaneously at 1200. By midnight, all foot elements had closed into allocated positions in the Division's Assembly Area -- Turqueville-Reuville-Audonville-La Hubert-Ecoqueneauville -- with the Division CP set up at the village of Loutres. Only 5% of the Division's transport vehicles were available because MT ship unloading was far behind schedule. The Division Commander received warning orders that the 90th Infantry Division would attack across the Merderet River through the lines of the 82nd airborne Division with a view to cutting off the Peninsula. The RCT 9 moved by battalion to the vicinity of Bandienville, still part of the 4th Infantry Division's Reserve.

9 June (D+3): Infantry and Engineer reconnaissance parties were dispatched by the Division to reconnoiter possible crossing sites along the Merderet River within the contemplated zone of action. Particular attention was paid to the bridges opposite the towns of Chef du Pont (330938) Les Dupres (330933), and Grainville (315997). Corps order gave the Division the mission of attacking to the west on 10 June to seize the high ground East of St Sauveur le Vicomte to deepen the corps bridgehead. CT 9 was still to remain attached to the 4th Infantry Division. During the day, the 82nd Airborne Division, supported by the 345th Field Artillery Battalion of the 90th Infantry Division drove a bridgehead across the Merderet River at 308910. It was determined that the crossing at Chef du Pont was lightly held. The situation in the vicinity of Grainville remained obscure. By 1800 the bulk of the Division's equipment had been put ashore, and shortly [Page 2] before dark, the 90th Division was set in motion towards jump off positions for the morning. A new CP was chosen at 2200. In the meantime, elements of CT 9 were employed by the 4th Infantry Division to mop up bypassed resistance, and to make a reconnaissance in force within its sector. The second Battalion was only 50% equipped as a result of a loss during the sinking.

10 June (D+4): Upon order of Corps, the Division attacked on 10 June 1944 with the object of seizing the high ground east of the Douve River. Plans called for two regiments to attack abreast, take an intermediate objective and then push on to the final goal. The 357th Infantry was assigned to the left [right] sector of the drive and the 358th Infantry to right [left] sector. The remainder of the 358th was placed in Division Reserve to be prepared to advance in either of the regimental zones. The Division Artillery was ordered to prepare to mass its fires in either of the regimental zones, while the normal support battalions were to render support to their respective Infantry Regiments. CT 9 remained attached to the 4th Infantry Division. Both Infantry Regiments crossed the LD at the prescribed time (the 358th at 0400 and a 357th at 0515). The 358th successfully crossed the Merderet River and after severe resistance reduced a château which was occupied by the Germans. The 357th advanced in its zone of action and encountered enemy

resistance in the vicinity of the town of Amfreville. The 358th's elements made an attempt to capture Etienville [Pont l'Abbe], but a strong German counter-attack forced a platoon, which had entered the town to withdraw. Fighting slowed down at 2300. Verbal orders were given to continue the attack the following day.

11 June (D+5): Both Regiments supported by affective Artillery barrage continued to press the attack in their respective sectors during the day. The 358th, with two Battalions abreast, made an assault against the town of Pont l'Abbe (Etienville) from the East. One Battalion served as a holding force on the Northwest side of town. The Division Artillery supported this attack. The 359th (-1 Battalion) was released from assignment to the 4th Infantry Division and reverted to the control of the 90th Division on 10 June. It moved to an alert area and was committed to action in the vicinity of Picaucville to the East of Pont l'Abbe. Units of the Regiment received a severe shelling during the move to that sector. By nightfall, the entire Regiment had been committed. Elsewhere, the units adjusted their lines and made preparation for a continuation of the attack on the morrow. [Page 3]

12 June (D+6): The two regiments continued to push forward upon the opening of the new day. The 357th Infantry pressed its attack at 0800 with the mission of capturing the high ground in the vicinity of Amfreville. It then planned to reorganize and attack in the general direction of Gourbesville. The 358th Infantry continued its attack upon Pont l'Abbe with the plan of eventually pushing on to occupy the high ground beyond town. The 359th Infantry was ordered to continue its offensive in the vicinity of Picaucville. The 1st Battalion, 359th Infantry was kept in readiness for Division Reserve. The 357th Infantry fought fiercely throughout the day, but due to the ferocity of the enemy, they were able to make very little gain. The 359th Infantry encountered severe resistance in its sector and was forced to press the enemy back in hedgerow-to-hedgerow combat. American planes bombed Pont l'Abbe at 1700. Their attack was very effective. It greatly aided the 358th Infantry in its approach to Pont l'Abbe. A coordinated attack preceded by the support of all available artillery was launched on the town at 1900. By 2030, patrols of the 1st and 2nd Battalions had entered the town. By 2130, the two Battalions had mopped it up completely and had begun the move to occupy the high ground to the north and northwest. At nightfall, and under the cover of darkness, unit commanders regrouped their forces in preparation for the continuation of the attack on 13 June. Major General Eugène M. Landrum assumed command of this Division on this day.

13 June (D+7): At 0500 the Division continued its attack, concentrating on the capture of the town of Gourbesville. The main attack was preceded by the attempts on the part of a task force consisting of an Engineer Company to capture the town. This failed to materialize due to the severity of the enemy resistance. The 357th Infantry then attempted to force their way forward only to meet strong resistance, which lasted throughout the rest of the day. In the 358th's sector, the Division's units were successful in capturing and occupying the high ground to the north and west of Pont l'Abbe. Effective patrolling was conducted by the 359th Infantry covering a three-mile sector.

14 June (D+8): Corps order called for elements of the 82nd Airborne Division and the newly arrived 9th Infantry Division to pass through the 90th Division and secure the line Douve River in our zone. The 358th Infantry was ordered to make a limited attack in order to mask the move.

After elements of the 82nd Airborne Division had passed through satisfactorily, 358th Infantry [Page 4] assembled in the vicinity of Pont l'Abbe to await further orders. The 357th Infantry continued its attack on Gourbesville, while the 359th Infantry was ordered to resume the attack on Orglandes to the Northwest. Elements of the 3rd Battalion of the 357th Infantry fought their way into Gourbesville at 2020 and held their control of the town until the next morning.

15 June (D+9): Corps order assigned a new mission to the 90th Division. The Division was ordered to seize and hold a line running from the railroad station (288024) to Terre de Beavual (2901). Accordingly, the 357th Infantry was given the task of seizing and holding the line from Gourbesville to Beavual, while the 359th went the task of holding that part of the line which ran from Ravan (225012) to Hau David (208012). The 358th Infantry was ordered to move into an assembly area approximately 1000 yards to the east of Gourbesville. Because of the severity of the fighting in the vicinity of the town, the 3rd Battalion of the 357th was forced to withdraw from Gourbesville. The Battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Kilday reorganized his men and then laid the foundation of plans which resulted in the recapture of the town. At 2240 elements of the Battalion again entered the town, and by 2330, Gourbesville had passed completely into the possession of the 3rd Battalion of the 357th Infantry.

16 June (D+10): Elements of the Division in conformity with Corps order continued their efforts to secure their new defensive line. The 358th took over the mission of the 357th. The 357th reverted to Division Reserve in the vicinity of Gourbesville. The swamp to its immediate front caused of the 358th to experience great difficulty in its advance. Plans were made to bypass the swamp and the towns of Le Calais and Reuville in the process of advance. Resistance continued to be severe throughout the day. The 359th Infantry was attached temporarily to the 9th Infantry Division for part of the day, but reverted to Division control at 2100.

17 June (D+11): The Division continued its efforts to seize its assigned defensive line throughout the day, and by the latter part of the afternoon, units of the Division occupied the desired defensive position, thus affording the necessary protection for the VII Corps from Terre de Beavual to the railroad station at 288024. [Page 5]

18 June (D+12): The Division's units continued to occupy their defensive sectors. CT 7 was motorized and moved to take over the defensive positions formally occupied by the 47th infantry of the 9th Infantry Division in the vicinity of Portbail. This Division came under control of the VIII Corps.

19 June (D+13): During the day, the Division maintained its defensive sector while elements of the newly arrived 79th Infantry Division passed through its lines. CT 7 continued its mission to prevent enemy movement either from the North to the South or from the South to the North between the two cities of St Saveuer de Pierre Pont and Portbail. After the passage of the units of the 79th, the Division's two assault Regiments (358 and 359) assembled in place to await further orders. In the meantime, the Division's Artillery supported the units of the 79th Division until it passed out of range of effective Artillery coverage.

20 June (D+14): All units of the Division maintained their respective positions. The 357th Infantry occupied its defensive sector. The 2nd Battalion of the 359th Infantry occupied a

defensive sector to the left of that of the 358th Infantry. The 359th (-) remained in Division Reserve. Division Artillery made preparations to move into a new assembly area. On two occasions during the day, German tanks appeared in the area of the 357th Infantry.

21 June (D+15): Operations memorandum covering the subjects of rehabilitation, housekeeping and Tank-Infantry training was drawn up and put into effect immediately. German mines were issued to all units for training purposes. The Division's Regiments continued to hold their positions. The 2nd Battalion of the 359th was relieved of its assignment and rejoined the rest of the 359th. Several times throughout the day, the 357th was attacked by enemy Infantry and tanks, but all enemy efforts were beaten back. Enemy Artillery was active in the 357th Infantry area.

22 June (D+16): All three Regiments continued to organize their defensive positions. The 2nd Battalion of the 357th launched an attack of a limited nature in order to strengthen its position. The attack was successful. A reinforced Battalion of the 359th proceeded to the vicinity of the 357th. This Battalion was attached to the 357th. Necessary readjustments were made by the 358th and the 359th so that they might tie in with the defensive positions of the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. [Page 6]

23 June (D+17): The 358th and 359th Infantries relieved the 507th Parachute Regiment in the area south of the Douve River. The 357th conducted mop-up operations in the town of Portbail. Along the entire front aggressive patrolling was conducted by the respective units in their defensive sectors.

24 June (D+18): Corps order directed active patrolling by the 359th from their sector down to the river line with the mission of eliminating all German resistance in that pocket. The mission was completed and no Germans were found. Throughout the night, German patrols made contact with the 90th front lines.

25 June (D+19): The activities of the 90th remained unchanged. The various Regiments continued defending their respective sectors. Civilian report of an impending attack against the 357th Infantry was found to be inaccurate. Nevertheless, the 358th was ordered to motorize one battalion and to hold it on call. The VIII Corps directed all Artillery in the Corps to fire one-sixth of a unit of fire to represent the simulated attack.

26 June (D+20): The mission of the Division remained unchanged. The units continued to improve their defensive positions. During the night of the 25th and the morning of the 26th, an enemy patrol struck in force in the area of the OPLR of the 357th and made slight penetration. Hand grenades were used extensively between our units and the enemy patrols. The enemy was destroyed or taken prisoner. The 357th's lines were restored. 40 prisoners including one Regimental Commander and two Lieutenants were taken. 357th suffered 13 casualties.

27 June (D+21): The Division's units continued to hold their defensive sectors, and to await further orders from Corps.

28 June (D+22): The mission for the Division remained unchanged. An air mission made on Vesley to knock out Artillery and Command Posts was very successful. Preparations for the relief of the 357th Infantry were made with representatives of the 79th Division.

29 June (D+23): Plans were made for the 79th Infantry Division to initiate relief of the 357th Infantry. It was planned to move one Battalion by motor immediately upon their release.

30 June (D+24): The 358th and 359th Infantries continued to defend their sectors. The 357th Infantry upon being relieved by the 79th Infantry Division reverted to Division Reserve. [Page 7]

REPORT OF OPERATIONS - NORTHWEST FRANCE  
PART IV - MONTH OF JUNE  
REPORT ON SUPPLY AND EVACUATION

1 - SUPPLY:

a. Numerous problems in supply were encountered throughout this period. A serious problem arose when we first arrived on Utah Beach as the 2nd Battalion of the 359th Infantry landed without the majority of its guns and equipment, as a result of the sinking of their troop ship. The heavy fighting also resulted in continuous losses of weapons and equipment and placed a heavy strain on all supply personnel. The manner in which all obstacles were overcome and the methods used in devising substitutes and improvising new weapons reflect credit on the Division supply personnel.

b. Class I:

(1) From June 6 through June 9 '44 units drew direct from the dumps. Truckhead distribution was made to all units for the remainder of the month. Supplies were distributed on the following basis:

"C"	20.116	6.4%
"D"	16.056	5.1%
"K"	125.684	40.4%
"10-1"	148.256	47.6%
"Hospital Ration"	1.405	0.44%
"5-1"	.205	.06%
TOTAL	311.722	100.00%

(2) "10-1" rations were available commencing with the June 15 issue.

(3) Bread, fresh beef and laundry soap were not available for issue during the month of June.

(4) One seven (7) Day issue of PX ration was made to the Division for the month of June. However there was no shortage of these items as all units landed with an adequate supply.

(5) Water was abundant and an adequate supply was maintained at all times.

Class II:

(1) Clothing and equipment were available for issue in limited quantities during this period.

(2) Clothing and equipment lost by the 2nd Battalion, 359th Infantry through the sinking of their ship was secured from various sources including service troops on the beach, adjacent units and salvage from beach hospitals. The amount obtained from beach dumps was negligible as they were just beginning to operate at this time. [Page 1]

d. Class III:

(1) Gasoline, oil and lubricants were issued to all units from beach dumps, which were located close to units throughout the period. This simplified the supply problem during the early part of the month as many of the QM trucks had not arrived in France before June 21. For the above reason, no records of gas consumption for the Division are available.

e. Class IV:

(1) All units of the Division arrived on the Continent with a 30-day supply of Class IV items and no issue was necessary.

f. Personal Effects:

(1) Personal effects of officers and enlisted men were turned over to the personnel sections of each organization when they arrived on the continent on June 19.

g. Graves Registration:

(1) The Division QM opened the cemetery at Ste Mere Eglise on 10 June '44 with the assistance of the 3rd Platoon of the 603rd Graves Registration Company. The Division QM supervised the operations of the cemetery until June 26 when it was taken over by VII Corps.

h. Remarks:

(1) All units of the Division were hampered during most of this period by a lack of transportation. Captured German vehicles were pressed into service to move supplies and ammunition. Organic vehicles were de-waterproofed and put into service as rapidly as possible after they arrived on the beaches.

(2) Impregnated clothing was issued to all troops prior to embarkation and proved invaluable in providing protection against the cold and dampness during this period.

i. Ammunition:

(1) Ammunition expended for the period was 1147 tons. The following calculation based on ETOUSA U/F dated 10 December '43, is a breakdown of the above tonnage:

<u>Small Arms</u>	<u>Number of Rounds</u>	<u>Percentage U/F</u>
Carbine	154415	1.43
Caliber 30 5/clip	84740	2.69
Caliber 30 8/clip	348184	2.27
Caliber 30 MG	402250	9.57
Caliber 45	100400	3.84

Caliber 50	20159	0.33
Rocket AT 2.36"	2009	2.59

Mortar:

60mm Mortar	7292	1.33
81mm Mortar	10257	2.52

57mm:

57mm Gun	138	.06
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<u>Artillery:</u>	<u>Number of Grounds</u>	<u>Percentage U/F</u>
105mm M3 How (all types)	2583	2.39
105mm M2 How (all types)	24172	5.37
155mm M1 How (all types)	5483	6.09

(2) Critical items of ammunition during this period were as follows 105mm How M2; 155 How M1; Grenade, rifle, M17. The supply of ammunition during the early stages was direct from beach dumps to using units. At times the ammo carried in by the DUKW (ducks) was unloaded into unit ammunition trucks. As soon as the ASP was established in the beach maintenance area the ammunition supply operated normally.

II - ORDNANCE MAINTENANCE:

a. Third echelon maintenance of motor vehicles was extremely light which was due primarily to the very limited use of roads as the area occupied by our troops was relatively close to the beach at this time. When the tactical situation permitted, vehicles were inspected for completeness of de-waterproofing.

b. Recovery teams were in daily contact with all units to evacuate all unserviceable American and captured enemy ordnance equipment.

c. The following items were critical during the period: binoculars; rifle auto Browning caliber 30, 1918A2; launcher grenade M-7; launcher, rocket, 2.36"; gun MG, 1917A1; Mount, tripod, caliber 30 1917A1; Gun MG 1919A4; Mount tripod, caliber 30, M2 and; 60mm mortar, complete; 81 mm mortar, complete; watch, wrist.

d. The refitting of a Battalion of Infantry, which landed on the beach without weapons or equipment created a serious problem. Every possible source was used to re-equip these troops. Weapons left by the airborne troops were recovered, hospitals were checked several times a day as were beach dumps. Quantities of small arms were secured from service troops and from the 4th Division Clearing Station.

e. As a result of the high mortality of BARs and a lack of replacements for these weapons, it became necessary to substitute light machine guns to keep up the volume of automatic fire necessary for the successful assault of hedgerows. This weapon as designed was not satisfactory



for hedgerow fighting due to the tripod standing too high and being extremely hard to set up in hedgerows when the weapon was emplaced. When the weapon was used for marching fire, the barrel became hot and the ammo belt was cumbersome to feed. A "spike mount" was designed by 1st Lt. Daniel L. Donnelly of I Company 358th Infantry which gave the gunner both a hand hold and ammunition box and carrier when the weapon was used for marching fire and a very compact mount for the weapon to sit on when it was emplaced in hedgerows. After the design was perfected, the 790th Ordinance Company produced approximately 200 spike mounts and all light machine guns in the Division were equipped with this new mount.

### III - EVACUATION:

a. The work of the medical department in the care and evacuation of casualties has been gratifying. The personnel, both officer and enlisted, who were inexperienced in combat, distinguished themselves by their display of courage and devotion to duty. [Page 3]

b. The administration of blood plasma in Battalion Aid Stations has produced spectacular results in many instances and the benefits derived from its use cannot be emphasized too much. Jeeps equipped to carry litters proved invaluable in evacuating wounded from the front lines. Evacuation was very rapid during this period as the cover afforded by hedgerows permitted the litter carrying jeeps to operate very close to the front lines.

c. The report of casualties evacuated for the period 8 June to 30 June '44 inclusive is as follows:

	<u>Wounded</u>	<u>Disease</u>		<u>Injury</u>	<u>Exhaustion</u>	<u>Total</u>
Division Total	2072	426	26	283	2807	
Evacuated	2069	386	24	258	2737	
Returned to duty	3	40	2	25	70	
Allies total	182	55	21	6	264	
Evacuated	181	55	18	4	258	
Returned to duty	1	0	3	2	6	
Civilian total	58	4	1	9	72	
Evacuated	53	3	0	9	65	
Discharged	5	1	1	0	7	
Prisoners total	70	0	1	0	71	
Evacuated	70	0	1	0	71	
Returned to duty	0	0	0	0	0	
Grand total	2382	485	49	298	3214	

### IV - BURIAL:

The Division dead were evacuated to the Division Cemetery at Ste. Mere Eglise. VII Corps took over the operation of this cemetery on June 26. During the period the Ste. Mere Eglise cemetery was operated by the 90th Division, it was necessary to hire French civilians and use prisoners to dig graves.

V - SALVAGE AND CAPTURED MATÉRIEL:

a. The following quantities of captured and destroyed enemy matériel were reported during this period:

(1)	<u>Weapons</u>	<u>Total</u>
	Self-propelled guns	11
	Artillery (all types)	16
	Tanks (all types)	23
	Antitank guns	9
	Machine guns	9
	Mortars	11
	Bicycles	153
	Motorcycles	9 [Page 4]

(2) Field hospital with miscellaneous medical supplies at Orglandes.

(3) Ammo dumps containing large supplies of small arms and all types of ammo, including four loaded trucks.

(4) Warehouse containing large quantity of French cheese.

(5) German ration dump containing sugar, coffee, cheese, bread and individual canned rations, located in a château near Amfreville.

VI - TRAFFIC:

a. Main supply roads were adequate and kept in a fairly good state of repair. All other roads were narrow with clay services, forcing traffic to move at a slow rate of speed. In few instances was a circulation plan necessary as the units were spread over a wide front and the amount of traffic on any one secondary road was light.

VII - SERVICE TROOPS AND TRAINS:

a. Service troops and trains functioned smoothly throughout the period.

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