

INTRODUCTION

March began quietly. The 90th Divisions still sat in SHAEF Reserve just inside the German border vicinity WINTERSPELT after having punched through the SEIGFRIED LINE. The rehabilitation of the troops who had fought so hard was underway. The Division CP remained at WINTERSPELT.

On the VIII Corps front, the units were continuing to attack toward the KYLL River. After the collapse of the West Wall it was expected that the next German major defense line would be along this river.

6th Armored Division and 6th Cavalry Group were across the PRUM River. Though they were meeting delaying forces there was nothing to indicate immediate employment of the 90th Division. Certainly, there was no harbinger of the almost incredible mileage that was to be covered by the 90th within the days ahead.

The operations for the month fall naturally into four phases:

Phase I -- through the Hills of EIFEL.

Phase II -- from the MOSELLE to the RHINE.

Phase III -- from the RHINE to the MAIN.

Phase IV -- through the Hills of HESSEN.

[Page 1]

PHASE I

THROUGH THE HILLS OF EIFEL

1-2 March 1945

Reorganization continued and the major Division activity was experimentation with the use of searchlights for artificial ground illumination on nights without a moon. This continued work began on the last night of February. For the next several days Infantry and Engineers busied themselves with the lights and found them practicable.

As of 021200A, Major General LOWELL W. ROOKS relinquished command of the Division to Brigadier General HERBERT L. EARNEST. General ROOKS went to assignment with SHAEF G-3.

In early morning of 2 March, VIII Corps gave warning that 90th Division would probably revert to its control and move through the 6th Armored Division. Corps Operations Memo Number 27

confirmed this and gave the day of attack as 4 March and the mission to seize a crossing over the KYLL River at MURLENBACH and clear enemy in zone.

Plans were made, a Field Order roughed out and discussed with unit commanders at a meeting at 2000. 357th and 359th Infantry were alerted to make the relief and commanders initiated reconnaissance. Corps set the Division main supply route on the HABSCHEID-PRONSFELD axis. Two bridges were needed at the latter town to make the road usable. 315th Engineers were alerted and began immediate work.

3 March 1945

They rushed to completion a 60 foot Bailey bridge by 0150 and a 90 foot Bailey by 0640 to open the road.

Division Field Order Number 57 was issued at 0750 and directed movement to new assembly areas 3 March, relief of 6th Armored Division night of 3-4 March and attack East at H-Hour 4 March to secure bridgehead across the KYLL River, prepared to continue East on order.

Plans for the relief were necessarily flexible as the 6th Armored Division was still moving and the exact point at which the relief would be accomplished could not be determined beforehand. Definitely established [Page 3] was that the frontline held by the armor would be the line of departure for the attack.

90th Division artillery moved in late morning to new positions while the two grants that Infantry Regiments -- 357th and 359th -- proceeded to their assembly areas East of the PRUM River in the afternoon. Numerous enemy mines of all types -- particularly plastic -- were encountered in the new areas. Several vehicles were damaged and some troops became casualties.

The Division plan was to use 357 on the left, 359 on the right and 358 (initially in its present location) in reserve. A TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY composed of Headquarters and Company D 712th Tank Battalion, Reconnaissance Company 773rd TD Battalion and 90th Reconnaissance Troop was organized and attached to 359th Infantry.

Since the relief would be made at night it was expected that commanders would ask for time for daylight reconnaissance the following morning before moving out in attack. Instead they desired at an early hour in order to gain the high ground beyond the NIMS River before daylight. On this high ground the Germans had several high velocity guns which controlled avenues of approach. It was hoped these positions could be gained before the gun crews could see for effective fire. Accordingly, H-Hour was set for 040600A.

Division Command Post moved to PRONSFELD in the afternoon, opening at 1600.

Relief of CCB 6th Armored Division by 357 began after dark and was completed by midnight. 3rd Battalion occupied the left of the zone while the 1st Battalion took the right side. The regimental plan gave the 3rd Battalion the mission of securing GIESDORF and blocking to the North while the 1st Battalion moved from SCHONECKEN through NIEDER and OBER

HERSDORF to the Northeast. 2nd Battalion would follow the 1st ready to secure key points along the regimental right flank.

Meanwhile, CCA 6ta Armored Division had broken loose, crossed troops over the NIMS River on the right and were on the high ground on the far side. 359th Infantry therefore decided not to relieve but to pass through this section of the front beginning at 0600. As a result they assembled in forward areas on the near side of the NIMS. 3rd Battalion settled at WETTELDORF and 2nd Battalion at HEISDORF. [Page 4]

359th's plan was to send TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY along two routes forward to secure crossings over the KYLL River at MURLENBACH and DENSBOREN since the sudden spurt of 6ta Armored Division indicated a possible enemy withdrawal. Two infantry Battalions with their attachments would follow to sweep the area. 3rd Battalion would move on the left to secure MURLENBACH while 2nd Battalion on the right would secure DENSBOREN. 1st Battalion was to wait in reserve at DACKSCHEID with one company prepared to move on trucks in event the situation broke rapidly.

During the night, 315th Engineers put in a footbridge and Treadway bridge near SCHMERSSTHAL for use by 2nd Battalion 359 and artillery units. 6th Armored Division had already captured several bridges as SCHONECKEN which the 357 could use.

4 March 1945

100600 the attack jumped off without artillery preparation and at this time responsibility for the zone passed to 90th Division. Light resistance faced the units with the hilly, densely-wooded country more of an obstacle than the Germans.

359th Infantry -- TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY was augmented by 2nd Platoon, Company C 773rd TD Battalion, 2 Rifle Platoons and 2 mine-sweeping units from Antitank Company. This Force was then subdivided into two smaller forces:

TASK FORCE KELLY contained the Reconnaissance Company 773rd TD Battalion, 3rd Platoon Company B 712th Tank Battalion, and 1 Section 2nd Platoon Company C 773rd TD Battalion.

TASK FORCE DYE had the 90th Reconnaissance Troop, 1 Section 3rd Platoon Company C 773rd TD Battalion, Assault Gun Platoon 712th Tank Battalion and 2nd Platoon Company D 712th Tank Battalion.

TASK FORCE DYE on the South got off to a late start at 0630 but moved without trouble to SEIWERATH. They left this town with Company L. 700 yards beyond the town, German infantry supported by one tank were still erecting a roadblock. The tank crew, however, were caught dismounted. 50 Caliber machine gun fire from the Task Force dispersed the enemy personnel and flushed 25 PWs from the surrounding woods. A tank destroyer and assault gun demolished the roadblock. [Page 5]

The Task Force continued to DURBACH, then left the infantry company and turned South to NEUSTRASSBURG. Here the enemy opened up with small arms and a flat trajectory weapon, possibly a tank. TD guns and tanks responded in kind, driving off the enemy weapon. An artillery and mortar barrage immediately hit the Task Force, who directed counterbattery fire which silenced the enemy guns. The town was then captured as well as 15 PWs. Beyond the town was a 200 yard roadblock of felled trees interspersed with rounds of live ammunition. No bypass was available and the Task Force returned to NEUSTRASSBURG and outposted it, contacting 6th Cavalry Group who were moving on the 90th's right flank.

As TASK FORCE KELLY on the North approached JAKOBKNOPP at 0650 they received enemy fire from a self-propelled gun on the ridge to the Southwest and the small arms fire to their front. They assaulted the settlement and took 19 prisoners.

2 miles beyond the town in early afternoon the Task Force met a roadblock commanded by a 150 mm gun emplaced in the center. TDs' accurate fire smashed the gun and destroyed the block. The tanks swung around the block only to receive machine gun fire. Firing their guns in rebuttal, they captured the two Germans manning the gun.

The Force continued to a bend in the road and found themselves in the line of fire of another enemy self-propelled gun in position. Two shots by the TDs brought three rounds in prompt answer. Attempts to outflank his gun failed because of heavy woods and continued fire from the gun, which covered all approaches. Retracing their rounds and detouring around SEIWERATH to try a new approach from the East, the Task Force made contact with Company K 359 but was again stopped. This time it was two Mark IV tanks hiding in the woods to protect the same crossroads which the Force failed to reach from the North. No suitable firing positions could be found to engage the enemy tanks, so artillery was placed on them. They withdrew during the night.

Meanwhile the infantry plodded on through the thick forests and up steep slopes, finding little to face them. The ground favored a strong delaying action, but there was little aside from numerous roadblocks. The enemy, pressured all along the Third Army front, was apparently bending all his efforts to get East of the KYLL River. [Page 6]

359 Infantry moved out with 2nd Battalion on right and 3rd Battalion on left. K Company reached SEIWERATH and 0700 and were passed through by Company L who moved on with TASK FORCE DYE. At 0830 I passed through Company L and continued two miles East and slightly South of SEIWERATH at which point patrols hit an enemy strong point. K Company, which had been ordered to pass through I Company on TDs came forward after three roadblocks had been removed from behind I Company, reduced the strong point and continued on to capture the crossroad beyond. Two enemy tanks opened fire. TASK FORCE KELLY closed behind Company K and Company L came up on the right.

2nd Battalion after toiling across the wooded ridges South of SEIWERATH was directed to turn down the road in the path of TASK FORCE DYE and seize the crossroad about one and a quarter miles Northeast of NEUSTRASSBURG. About 500 yards West of the crossroad, B

Company engaged in a firefight which they cleaned up at 1900. By 1930 both E and G Companies were on the crossroad and the Battalion halted for the night.

Company A was kept motorized staged forward to SEIWERATH in late morning. In midafternoon, 1st Battalion was ordered to pass through 3rd Battalion and turn South to contact 2nd Battalion at the crossroad Northeast of NEUSTRASSBURG, prepared to continue East to seize DENSBOREN. Company C moved on tanks, Company A stayed on trucks and Company B trailed on foot. The Battalion met scattered resistance and roadblocks which got so numerous that they dismounted and continued on foot. Made contact with 2nd Battalion at crossroad at 2020.

Engineers began work on the roadblock in front of TASK FORCE DYE who was to be attached to 1st Battalion in the morning. TASK FORCE KELLY was to be attached to 3rd Battalion.

357th Infantry -- The regiment moved virtually unopposed. 1st Battalion gathered up 33 PWs and some 120 mm mortars at NIEDER HERSDORF and continued on with Company B to OBER HERSDORF where a short fight was encountered. As the Battalion pressed on through the wooded area Northeast of OBER HERSDORF many small fights occurred with enemy forced into the sector by advance of 11th Armored Division on left.

3rd Battalion captured the high ground East of GIESDORF in early morning, assembled and moved to NIEDER HERSDORF in regimental reserve. Company I was sent to clear LOCH in the afternoon and contact 4th Division at WALLERSHEIM. [Page 7]

2nd Battalion moved at 0730 generally along the road to the South with advance impeded by roadblocks, but by nightfall captured KOPP. 1st Battalion closed and both Battalions prepared to advance during the night to seize positions overlooking the KYLL River.

358th Infantry -- moved by shuttle march from West of PRUM River to new assembly area East of the river in vicinity of ORLENBACH-WINRINGEN-MATZERATH. Remained in Division Reserve.

Division Command Post left PRONSFELD and opened at SCHONECKEN at 1600.

5 March 1945

VIII Corps issued FO #14 which extended the attack to the Northeast and gave as long range objectives the West bank of the RHINE between ANDERMACH and SINZIG.

90th Division was directed to cross the KYLL River and follow 11th Armored Division on the right of the Corps, protecting that flank.

New boundaries were established, giving the 90th more ground on the left and including GEROLSTEIN. This shift caused a change of effort of the Division from the MURLENBACH area to the BIRRESBORN-LISSINGEN area.

Accordingly, the 359th was directed to halt on the West bank of the KYLL River. TF KEDROVSKY was detached and given to 357 with the mission of relieving elements of the 11th Armored Division and 4th Infantry Division in the newly acquired territory on the left. 357 was told to force a crossing while 358 was alerted to move forward to an assembly area vicinity KOPP or vicinity WALLERSHEIM. Defendant upon the situation, the regiment was to be prepared to attack through the 357 or on the Division left to seize GEROLSTEIN.

357 Infantry -- During the night both 1st and 2nd Battalions moved out to occupy the high ground overlooking the river. In early morning Companies G and F descended to BIRRESBORN and cleared the town shortly after dawn. Company A took MINERALBRUNNER. Both Battalions then prepared to cross later in the day. From the far bank the enemy sniped with small arms and shot artillery and nevelwerfer fire into BIRRESBORN and MINERALBRUNNER as well as the high ground above. [Page 8]

The crossing looked like a difficult job. All bridges were blown and directly across the river the ground rose sharply for several hundred feet of thickly forested slope. Some enemy Earth entrenchments could be seen and it was obvious there were many more that could not be observed. The Germans also had the observation and good fields of fire. But the Division had two things in its favor: first, the enemy in his panic-stricken flight was badly disorganized and might be unable to defend as well as it should. As it turned out, this assumption proved correct. Second, heavy rains had made some prepared positions untenable, flooding them with water.

357's first intention was to cross the 2nd Battalion in 1600. But as the enemy fire developed throughout the day and smoke cover appeared insufficient this plan was abandoned and crossing after dark was planned. However, our own artillery softened the enemy positions with particularly effective fires throughout the latter part of the day. Two fords were selected, one North of BIRRESBORN and one North of MINERALBRUNNER. These were for both foot troops and armor.

Two platoons of Company A pursuing the enemy from MINERALBRUNNER, probed into LISSINGEN at 1600 and found only one enemy. The units squatted in the Southwest part of town until relieved after dark by elements of TF KEDROVSKY.

This unit was attached to 357 at 051000A March. The platoon of TDs from C Company 773rd was replaced by a platoon from A Company which was attached to 357. The TASK FORCE assembled at WALLERSHEIM. Then the TD Reconnaissance Company and 3rd Platoon Company D 712th Tank Battalion moved forward to relieve 11th Armored Reconnaissance Troop at 1500 and occupy HINTERHAUSEN. Later they moved into LISSINGEN and cleared the rest of the town about midnight, capturing 25 PWs.

As the arc of the proposed bridgehead covered some five miles, the 357 planned to employ all three Battalions on line. 1st would take the left and use the North ford. 2nd Battalion would secure the ground on the right and 3rd Battalion would attack the center, crossing after 2nd Battalion. In the actual crossing this order was reversed as 2nd Battalion waited for a footbridge which they finally decided to do without. At 2300 3rd Battalions started Company L to ford the [Page 9] River. 1st Battalion started crossing at MINERALBRUNNER.

359th Infantry -- At 0600, Company K sent a platoon to the main crossroad about 2 1/3 miles West of MURLENBACH which had been such a sensitive spot the previous night. The enemy of were gone by a large roadblock effectively prevented any armor or wheeled vehicle from getting by. The entire Company and engineers went to work to remove the block. At 0730 Companies I and L moved through to reach MURLENBACH without resistance. There they received fire from across the river.

1st Battalion attacked 0700 and likewise found the enemy gone. The Battalion moved to the West Bank across from DENSBORN where they received high velocity and small arms fire from across the way. Road craters prevented supporting armor from getting down to the unit.

915th FA Battalion picked up the supporting job and secured hits on the enemy armor at DENSBORN, knocking out one tank. Other elements Division Artillery silenced German nebelwerfers located Southeast of MURLENBACH and Northwest of SALM.

359 now was given verbal orders to defend the sector with one Battalion, assembling the others in the rear prepared to cross through the 357. 1st Battalion was designated and it relieved 3rd Battalion with Company C and Antitank Company beginning at 1900 and completing a 2305. Contact was maintained with 80th Infantry Division on the 90th's right in vicinity of ALTENHOF.

2nd Battalion assembled vicinity NEUSTRASSBURG while the 3rd Battalion assembled about three miles West of MURLENBACH in vicinity of DURBACH. 1st Battalion prepared to send patrols across the river.

358th Infantry -- Alerted to shuttle forward in afternoon, the regiment actually began to move about 1430. 161st Chemical Company (Smoke Generator) was attached to the Division and 25 trucks of this unit were allocated to 358. They were considerably late in arriving, however, having had to drop their load at PRONSFELD and midnight found the regiment still on the road enroute to NEIDER and OBER HERSDORF and WALLERSHEIM.

On the Division left flank, 11th Armored Division met stiffened resistance and 4th Infantry Division gathered its forces to [Page 10] secured a bridgehead for the armor. On 90th Division right, 6th Cavalry Group was pinched out by the juncture of 90th and 80th Divisions at the KYLL and the Group assembled to move up on the Corps left.

6 March 1945

357th Infantry -- 3rd Battalion continued to cross against small arms fire. About 0200 2nd Battalion likewise began to ford. At MINERALBRUNNER: 1st Battalion crossed B, C and A in that order. They, too, received a flurry of small arms fire but pushed on through intending to clean out at daylife. Company C turned North. Company A went East while Company B cut between. Both flank Companies were soon engaged in firefights. 315th Engineers began to construct a footbridge at BIRRESBORN, which Company I used in crossing, and tanks and TDs forded across to support the attack.

Daylight found the units still receiving scattered small arms fire as they struggled up the steep hillsides. Company A had disengaged and turned to follow Company B. The rear of A Company's column was ambushed and captured in the pitch black by enemy who came from the South. As light filtered down the thickly wooded draws, other bypassed enemy opened up on B and A Companies. Company K was ordered back to assist the tanks and TDs were sent up. After several hours hard fighting, the enemy pocket was overcome. 40 prisoners were taken and the Americans captured earlier were rescued. Company A then seized NEIDEREICH.

3rd Battalion continued East and captured MICHELBAACH and BUSCHEICH. 2nd Battalion swung up to the Southeast. TF KEDROVSKY was detached at 0820 and put under control of 358.

During the day several hundred prisoners were totaled up as the regiment secured the high ground dominating the crossing area. By midafternoon the objectives were taken and the regiment was halted to let 359 go through.

Supporting engineers immediately began construction of an infantry support bridge and Bailey bridge at BIRRESBORN.

After the 359 passed through, the regiment assembled within its area minus blocking elements from 2nd Battalion [Page] who covered the approaches from the South. 1st Battalion assembled in MINERALBRUNNER, 2nd Battalion (-) in BIRRESBORN and 3rd Battalion in MICHELBAACH and BUSCHEICH. Dry clothes and socks were issued to the water-soaked infantrymen.

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Examination of the defenses along the river showed that had the Germans manned them fully and chosen to resist in force the fighting would have been most bloody. Positions were cunningly camouflaged and one had to approach to within several yards before seeing some of them. Outposts on the flat ground adjacent to the river were connected to the battle positions several hundred yards back on the higher ground by covered and carefully sodded communication trenches so that only the exit holes were visible and those only after careful survey. Foxholes, too, were well dug with all spoil removed, leaving only a hole level with the ground. But the rain had rendered many of them unusable. Several AT guns subsequently captured were adroitly concealed. The work was strongly reminiscent of the carefully prepared positions met in NORMANDY.

358th Infantry -- The zone held by TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY now became the zone of the 358th and the regiment was ordered to capture GEROLSTEIN. Using organic motors the regiment shuttled 1st and 3rd Battalions to LISSINGEN. Progress was slow as the roads were heavily cratered and all available engineers were put to work filling these. Bridging and engineer help were requested from 11th Armored Division.

GEROLSTEIN, once a prominent marshaling yard and American PW camp, was surrounded by numerous entrenchments and fortifications, which were reportedly manned. But the chief obstacles encountered were an AT ditch, road craters and high velocity fire from six tanks, one of which was concealed in a cave.

At 1340 two platoons of 90th Reconnaissance Troop and one platoon 773rd TDs, all dismounted, crossed the river. Artillery and one platoon Company D, 712th Tank Battalion, supported the action by fire. By 1500 they had seized the town despite scattered small arms fire. Four PWs were taken and the TASK FORCE returned to LISSINGEN after 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry passed through at 1530 two complete the [Page 12] round up for a total of 17 prisoners in all. By 1700 GEROLSTEIN was clear. The enemy tanks withdrew to PELM and 3rd Battalion prepared to attack that town.

2nd Battalion advanced to the high ground North of GEROLSTEIN and 1st Battalion entered GEES from the West as 359th Infantry entered from the South.

359th Infantry -- The regiment (-1st Battalion) was directed to move initially to vicinity of BIRRESBORN and then to pass through 357th Infantry and continue the attack. In the event 358th Infantry encountered heavy resistance at GEROLSTEIN, the 359th Infantry was to be prepared to take this objective and PELM. Both 3rd and 2nd Battalions began to move in morning using organic transportation.

3rd Battalion crossed first on the footbridge and infantry support bridge at BIRRESBORN and attacked Northeast through 357th's right to capture GEES. Battalion entered the town in late afternoon making contact there with 358th, 1st Battalion.

2nd Battalion, 359th Infantry followed the 3rd Battalion across then turned North through 357th's left to capture the high ground above GEROLSTEIN. 40 disorganized Germans were encountered in the woods there. 15 were captured in the rest killed or dispersed. Combat patrols left to contact 358th at GEROLSTEIN.

1st Battalion captured PWs who told of Germans withdrawing from DENSBOREN. A and B Companies were therefore dispatched to capture the town and the high ground beyond. C Company crossed to take the rest of MURLENBACH. All crossings were made on debris of partially blown bridges. 34 stragglers were picked up in both towns. Both battalions then sent patrols East and captured 3-120 mm mortars, an antitank gun and crew of six men and an artillery Major. Units then consolidated their gains.

Division CP moved from SCHONECKEN and opened at 1800 at KOPP.

Engineers continued to work throughout the night on bridges. The two searchlights from 226th AAA Battalion (S/L) were set up at KOPP and illuminated the construction work at BIRRESBORN until that bridge was completed at 2300. Then the lights were beamed over LISSINGEN where a bridge was started for 358th Infantry. A light mist was following which changed later to heavy snow. [Page 13]

The infantry as well as the Engineers were enthusiastic over the illumination of afforded by the searchlights which had helped speed the ridges to completion. Infantry patrols, working the area towards PELM, had high praise for the lights.

7 March 1945

11th Armored Division was previously ordered to pass through either 4th and/or 90th Infantry Division and range out ahead. CCA was designated cross in the 90th's zone as soon as the bridge at LISSINGEN was completed.

358th Infantry -- As fast as possible the area was prepared for passage of the 11th Armored Division. AT ditches were filled in at GEROLSTEIN and later at PELM and debris was swept aside from the road through the former town.

Following an artillery TOT on PELM, Company L entered the town at 0700 to find the enemy gone. 3rd Battalion then moved on to the high ground East of the town to hold the shoulders of the exit for debouchement of the armor.

At 1040 the LISSINGEN bridge was finished and at 1045 the 11th Armored began to roll across, pushing on through the 8 km bridgehead established by the 90th.

Instructed to advance to DRIES and OBER EHE, 3rd Battalion on left and 1st Battalion on right moved out to Northeast.

Company K captured the high ground South of ROCKESKYLL and got involved with enemy in the town, so captured it to press on, although it was out for the Division boundary. Arrangements were made with 4th Infantry Division to remain in the town overnight.

Company L moved to HOHENFELS and later to BETTLEDORF which they captured after eliminating some resistance.

Company I seized ESSINGEN where they caught 8 prisoners -- a demolition crew with truck and explosives.

1st Battalion captured BERLINGEN; then moved Company A HOHENFELS to replace Company L. [Page 14]

2nd Battalion began to assemble in GEROLSTEIN with Company G left on the high ground North of the town to assist by fire the 4th Infantry Division who were meeting strong resistance all along the line.

By this time the road was a continuous conveyor belt of armor and with CCR and CCB 11th Armored, ordered to follow CCA, because of resistance in 4th Infantry Division's zone, the 358th abandoned all further efforts to move forward.

TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY remained in LISSINGEN less of the 90th Reconnaissance Troop which was detached and attached to 359th Infantry at 070700A.

359th Infantry -- The 90th Reconnaissance Troop was attached for the purpose of combing out the large SALMWALD area as directed by Corps. 2nd section, 3rd Platoon, 773rd TD Battalion was attached by the regiment to the Troop and the unit moved from BIRRESBORN at 0900 with the mission as stated plus that of making contact with 1st Battalion at MURLENBACH and DENSBORN. The Troop moved toward SALM then turned West and searched the woods back to the KYLL. Two stragglers were picked up but no opposition was encountered. 5 tanks and numerous field pieces were found abandoned. Having made contact with 1st Battalion at 1500 the Troop headed for its assembly point has NEROTH.

Objectives for the 359th were KIRCHWEILER, HINTERWEILER and NEROTH. 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved out at 0700. 3rd moved by way of GEE with K followed by I approaching from the West while L entered the town from the South. No resistance was met and KIRCHWEILER was secured a 1330.

2nd Battalion moved from BUSCHEICH on tanks, TDs and vehicles until they encountered a roadblock that defied immediate removal. The troops dismounted and covered the remaining 2000 yards on foot. No resistance was offered. One enemy tank in the town withdrew.

New orders awaited both battalions: 3rd was to continue to DOCKWEILER. 2nd was to capture and block at WALDKONIGEN. 3rd Battalion accomplished its mission but returned to HINTERWEILER as DOCKWEILER was full of 11th Armored troops.

2nd Battalion reached the edge of WALDKONIGEN without being seen since the terrain afforded well covered routes of approach. They saw many soldiers in the town and others leaving the edge. The Battalion opened fire on the town and directed artillery on the retreating columns. [Page 15]

The enemy force numbered about 200 and were part of a strong rear guard led to block further advance to the North. Cornered, the Germans turned and fought a savage house-to-house battle. The fight began at 1830 and lasted well into the night. An enemy tank East of the town opened fire and was itself fired upon by the TDs following the troops. The tank was destroyed. At 2200 the Battalion had the town but spent most of the night cleaning it out. 90 prisoners were taken.

After contact by 90th Reconnaissance was made, 1st Battalion was relieved of its mission and assembled at BIRRESBORN.

357th Infantry -- The regiment remained in Division Reserve. Its blocking force was relieved after 90th Reconnaissance cleaned SALM WALD. Corps allocated two truck companies to the Division and these were assigned to 357th to prepare them to move as a motorized RCT, through either 358th or 359th Infantry.

At 1000 Division CP opened at KIRCHWEILER. At 1850 Division issued #40 which detached the 90th Reconnaissance Troop from 359th as of 072000. Troop reverted to Division control with mission of reconnoitering routes forward on 8 March.

Though 358th and 359th were instructed to hold present positions until the armor had cleared and then be prepared to move Northeast. One motorized Battalion was to be maintained by each regiment to assist 11th Armored if necessary.

357th was to remain in Division Reserve, motorized as stated.

On the right of the 90th elements of 5th Infantry Division were at SALM as they cleaned up behind the meteoric advance of the 4th Armored Division.

8 March 1945

Aside from 90th Reconnaissance and elements of the 359th Infantry, Division units remained generally fixed during the day, limiting activity to patrolling, road reconnaissance and movement of the 1st Battalion 359th to DOCKWEILER in early morning.

2nd Battalion 359th Infantry sent E Company South to STEINBORN to see if it was clear. No enemy were found and Company returned to WALDKONIGEN. AT and Cannon Company occupied STEINBORN. [Page 16]

The Reconnaissance Troop reconnoitered as far as KELBERG and HEIROTH, clearing out OBER EHE, BRUCK, BEINHAUSEN, NEICHEN and KRADENBACH on the way. 30 PWs were captured, 40 enemy infantryman and a tracked vehicle were seen in HEIROTH and the troops directed a barrage of 345th FA Battalion on the town.

Priority of work went on road repair. These narrow thoroughfares were in bad shape from German crater holes and eight continuous days of drizzling rain. The S/L section continued as in days past to supply illumination for Engineers working on the roads at night.

11th Armored Division continued to roll, however, and were reported beyond MAYEN at midnight and still moving. As this indicated rapid follow-up, the Division formed the regiments in normal combat teams and prepared to go on radio for communication.

9 March 1945

The day was marked by complete disintegration of the German defenses within the Corps Zone. 11th Armored's rush to the RHINE netted them about 6000 prisoners, including some displaced persons. They left behind confused and bewildered groups of enemy who offered little or no resistance. In some villages which the 90th Reconnaissance group entered, the German townspeople waved white flags and offered to surrender the German soldiers, if their town was not fired upon. In others German soldiers were chased from the village to fight in the woods. Nearly every town was a babble of polyglot nationalities -- Russians, French, Belgians, Poles,

Czechs, Yugoslavs, Italians and others impressed as laborers or captured as German PWs, and Civil Affairs resources were strained to the limit to provide food and water for these wanderers.

Organized as combat teams, the 90th Division advanced by foot and motor with CT 358 on left and CT 359 on right to march objectives just West and Northwest of KELBERG, which was the forward limit prescribed by Corps. CT 357 moved motorized at 0630 directly to KELBERG following guides furnished by 359th Infantry from NEROTH.

Enroute, the 357th was ordered to continue to MAYEN, in accordance with latter instructions from Corps, and to protect the route thereto with troops at key points. [Page 17]

3rd and 1st Battalions proceeded to MAYEN while 2nd Battalion detrucked at B00S to set up roadblocks and outposts. 178 prisoners were gathered up in the day's operation.

On the Division left flank, 90th Reconnaissance Troop augmented with 1 Platoon light tanks from 712th tank Battalion, swept through a large area from HEIROTH to JAMMELSHOFEN and contacted first TASK FORCE RHINO (4th Division TF) on the left and later 6th Cavalry Group after they relieved 4th Infantry Division, which assembled and awaited orders. 90th Reconnaissance Troop gathered some 234 prisoners.

Pressed by more PWs than they could handle, 11th Armored Division turned to the 90th for aid in evacuation. The Reconnaissance Company of 773rd TD Battalion was dispatched to assist the round-up. With darkness approaching in 2000 prisoners and displaced persons on hand, the unit herded the group into a bowl-shape valley around the rim of which they placed jeeps with headlights on, flooding the group, Canon Company of 359th Infantry was sent to help guard until evacuation could begin. Throughout the night Germans in groups of two or three appeared like moths out of the dark and headed for the light to turn themselves in.

At 1400 Division CP moved to KELBERG, closing at 1630.

At 2130 Division issued FM #42. It directed CT 357 to assemble the battalion deployed between KELBERG and MAYEN, to mop up Zone with not more than one battalion and to maintain present roadblocks.

CT 358 (less TASK FORCE KEDROVSKY), CT 359, and 90th Reconnaissance Troop were all given areas to clean up behind the restraining line which was the main road running Northwest from MAYEN. Assembled in these areas after the mop up, they would be ready to relieve the 11th Armored Division as soon as it cleared out its Zone.

10 March 1945

Mopping up operations were completed by late afternoon. No organized resistance was encountered, but several hundred prisoners were picked up, many in civilian clothes.

Corps boundaries were changed and Division right boundary was set almost due East from MAYEN. This placed [Page 18] part of the 4th Armored within the new Division sector and

they were to be relieved as well as elements of 11th Armored Division. All units were notified to be ready to move on one hour's notice any time after 0800. A meeting of commanders of 358 and 359, who were to be on line, and all of Division Artillery was set for 0730 at MAYEN to discuss plans and make reconnaissance of new areas.

343rd FA Battalion in registering its guns fired the first shot of the Division East of the RHINE River.

11 March 1945

With all the machinery set in motion, a "stop order" came from VIII Corps. Previous instructions were rescinded and the 90th Division was transferred at once to XII Corps. Although artillery and some infantry had already moved, the relief was halted and commanders met at Division CP at 2000 to discuss the new plan. XII Corps Operations Directive #86 told the 90th Division to relieve the 4th Armored in its missions. Under the new boundary this sector was just South of where the Division was. Further, the 90th was to protect Corps North flying and be prepared to attack South across the MOSELLE River with 5th Infantry Division to seize a bridgehead on Corps order.

This altered the position but not the role of the regiments. The plan was to use 357th Infantry on the left of the new sector instead of the right and 359th on the right instead of the left. 358th Infantry would remain in reserve. [Page 19]

PHASE II

MOSELLE TO RHINE

12 March 1945

New march tables were set up and units began their move to new assembly areas in the early morning. FO #16 was received from XII Corps. The Corps mission was to cross the MOSELLE River vicinity TREIS and HATZENPORT to secure a bridgehead, prepared the continue attack to Southeast and seize a bridgehead across NAHE River vicinity BAD KREUZNACH. The mission of the 90th Division was to cross the MOSELLE within zone and be prepared for advance to Southeast to seize a bridgehead across the NAHE River between BAD KREUZNACH and BINGEN. Lastly it was to protect the left flank of Corps.

Preparatory plans were drawn up and Division CP opened as POLCH at 1200A.

359th Infantry -- Moved to new area beginning at 0900. 1st Battalion set up in MUNSTERMAIFELD. 2nd Battalion in METTERNICH. 3rd Battalion at WIERSCHEM. Regimental CP opened that MUNSTERMAIFELD. Regiment directed 2nd Battalion to make the necessary relief, hold the line with two companies, keeping one in reserve, and patrol the North bank of the River. 1st and 3rd Battalions were to send combat patrols across the River.

2nd Battalion placed Company E in HATZENPORT and Company G in LASSBERG. The enemy harassed this town with sporadic rounds of 75 mm gunfire. Regiment closed at 1645 and made plans to conduct training in assault boat handling on 13 March.

The swift MOSELLE current overturned the light rubber boats used by the patrols to cross after dark and the patrols were forced back. They then patrolled the near bank of the river and observed lights and movement on the far side. Contact was established with the 5th Infantry Division at MOSELKERN.

357th Infantry -- Starting at 1100, 357th Infantry moved 2nd Battalion (-) to MORZ and 1st and 3rd Battalions to KALT. Regimental CP opened at KUTTIG. Here too, 2nd Battalion was designated to occupy the line and Company E went to LOF while Company F set up a platoon at KATTENES. Although LOF had been cleared by the Cavalry with 4th Armored Division, enemy had infiltrated back and Company E had to fight his way into the town. [Page 21]

Full possession was not gained until 0500 the next morning.

358th Infantry -- Remained in present location with plans to move on 13th.

For the 1st day since the start of the month, no rain fell and the weather held promise of clearing.

13 March 1945

Plans were completed for the crossing and FO #58 issued at 1100. Division objectives were the high ground and road net vicinity HALSENBAACH, EMMELSHAUSEN, BICKENBAACH and BRAUNSHORN. For the crossing 315th Engineer Battalion would support the 359th Infantry while 166th Engineer Battalion would support the 357th Infantry. Three bridges were indicated by Corps in the bridgehead. One at HATZENPORT, one at MOSSLKERN on the Division right boundary and one in the 5th Division vision area. 1135th Engineers were to construct the M-2 treadway at HATZENPORT. Five traffic control posts were established by the 90th to insure flow of vehicles over the narrow roads after the bridge was built.

Searchlights were placed in position to be used on call for the regimental commanders. H-hour was 140200A.

90th Reconnaissance Troop was ordered to take over the front from KATTENES to Division left boundary, screening the latter from the MOSELLE River to DRECKENACH. After 2nd Battalion 357th Infantry began to assemble prior to crossing, the troop was to include KATTENES as well.

4th Armored Division asked for and received permission to assemble CCA in an unused area on the Division left flank within our zone.

358th Infantry moved at 0900 to its assembly area putting 1st Battalion at KOLLIG, 2nd Battalion at GERING and 3rd Battalion at EINIG. Regimental CP was located at MERTLOCH.

359th Infantry changed their right crossing site from LASSBERG to MOSELKERN in order to get their boats closer to the water and avoid an 800 yard hand carry necessary at LASSBERG. The far bank was very steep and every effort was made to spare the assault troops unnecessary drain on endurance, which was to be [Page 22] severely tested.

14 March 1945

By 0130 all troops were ready to go except Company K 359 who were delayed. And 0200 the attack began, achieving a measure of surprise according to PWs reports even though a crossing was expected. Sporadic small arms and machine gun fire sprayed the crossing areas, but enemy resistance did not build up until along toward daylight. Thirty minutes after the crossings began, Division Artillery interdicted roads and routes of approach to intercept any reinforcement of the river line.

357th Infantry -- 1st Battalion crossed just South of LOF and in less than an hour were all on the far bank. C Company turned South to clear out BRODENBACH and were heavily engaged with 200 enemy troops in the town. At daylight Company A moved around Company C's left flank to assist. The town was not cleared until noon. B Company meanwhile was working up to the high ground Southwest of BRODENBACH and gained the hilltop shortly after daylight. Following capture of BRODENBACH, 1st Battalion advanced to seize HERSCHWIESEN and OPPENHAUSEN where they remained for the night.

3rd Battalion crossed just South of KATTENES and met sporadic small arms fire. Company K leading, turned North to ALKEN while Companies I and L continued East to capture the high ground, which was to be an assembly area for 2nd Battalion. Troops of 6th SS Mountain Division Reconnaissance Battalion put up a strong resistance and ALKEN did not fall until midafternoon. 31 PWs were captured, some in American fatigues and combat boots which were captured in the ARDENNES Bulge. Companies I and L gained their objective by 0500.

With the immediate hill masses secured, 2nd Battalion crossed 0600 and pushed through the 3rd Battalion to capture UDENHAUSEN after dark, Company F taking the town. Company E's efforts to grasp PFAFFENHECK were repulsed by enemy infantry and heavy flak gunfire. With both flanks exposed by a 500 yard advance, the Battalion had been ordered to go no further until tanks and TDs could be crossed.

359th Infantry -- 1st Battalion crossed at HATZENPORT. Brushing aside some light resistance the troops climbed to the high ground and advanced over the rough terrain some 4 km. Enroute, Company B met dug-in enemy [Page 23] infantry in a draw about 2000 yards inland. A Company began to outflank the position around B Company's right but artillery smashed the resistance and both Companies continued forward. 56 PWs were taken and 3 80 mm mortars captured. Reaching MORSHAUSEN at 1600, they entered the town, found Germans in it and pulled back from town to fire artillery on it. A and B went to the woods West of the town, while C came back to the North. At 1840, A and B Companies assaulted the town again and gained one third of it.

The enemy troops in the town included some who had been forced out of BRODENBACH in the early morning by 357th Infantry and some previously encountered by Company B. All were from 1211 Regiment of 159 Volksgrenadier Division. Added to these were 57 laborers from a construction Battalion drafted as infantry by an officer of the 1211. Two enemy tanks and an armored car entered the town from the South in time to support the defense.

Since the bridge was not in, our home tanks and TDs were unavailable and the Battalion shot up its bazooka rounds in trying to hold off the enemy armor. After the bridge was in a section of tanks and one of TDs were rushed up to 1st Battalion. The enemy tanks withdrew.

In a 3rd Battalion, Company I crossed that MOSELKERN first and moved Northeast up the river road then East onto the high ground in the HOLENHAU woods without meeting resistance. Company L reached the outskirts of BURGEN at 0500 where they stopped by fire from a Battalion of enemy infantry (200-250 men) in and around the town. By 0700 Company L had gained only a third of the town. Company E then moved on the town from the North and this added pressure broke the resistance. The town was cleared at 0830 and Company L had 35 prisoners.

Company K crossed the river at 0635 and joined in Company I on the high ground. The Battalion continued forward at 1300 toward MACKEN without meeting for the resistance. Patrols to MACKEN drew fire. Artillery was laid on the town and Companies L and K occupied the town in part.

2nd Battalion began to cross at HATZENPORT at 0600 in assault boats as footbridges were not in. Directed to assemble in Regimental Reserve at BURGEN, the Battalion moved in after Company L cleared the town. They were completely closed by 1000. [Page 24]

358th Infantry -- Regiment staged forward to vicinity METTERNICH. Closed at 1100A. At about 1730 began to cross MOSELLE River in assault boats and infantry support raft at HATZENPORT. Assembled in Division Reserve at BRODENBACH and guarded bridge upon completion. Crossing was completed in about two hours.

Enemy shelling harassed the bridge site, but did little damage as the early morning fog and later a smokescreen concealed the site from enemy observation. But the swift current of the MOSELLE gave the engineers some trouble. The cable broke on the footbridge above HATZENPORT as it neared completion and swept downstream, where it smashed into the floating treadway under construction below the town. The bridge was knocked out of line and was delayed several hours. The cable also broke on the footbridge in 357 area and finally both projects were ordered abandoned with attention directed to rafts and ferry. To light ferries were installed by noon but worked only intermittently because of motor trouble. A Heavy raft (M-2 floating treadway) was assembled around 1400, however, and vehicles were moved across in good order.

The heavy pontoon bridge at MOSELKERN was finished at 1055 and the HATZENPORT bridge a few minutes later and traffic immediately flowed over both bridges.

The assembly area used by 358th vicinity KOLLIG was set aside for 2nd Cavalry Group (-2nd Cavalry Squadron), which began assembly in the afternoon. On the Division right flank, 5th Division crossed and gained initial objectives with little resistance encountered. On Division left flank 87th Infantry Division occupied the West Bank of the MOSELLE.

15 March 1945

The attack was resumed at 0700. It was characterized by stiffened resistance and counterattacks on the Division left (North) flying, while on the right enemy forces fell away in the face of our advance.

2nd Cavalry Group (-2nd Squadron) crossed the HATZENPORT bridge at 0900 to assume protection of Corps left flank and begin relief of 357th Infantry who were blocking in that direction. [Page 25]

4th Armored Division was alerted to pass through with the CC's abreast in zone of 90th in 5th Infantry Divisions and CCA began to cross the HATZENPORT bridge at 1200.

357th Infantry -- At 0600 Company B was counterattacked by estimated 150 enemy and 2 tanks from the draw to the Northeast of HERSCHWIESEN. Artillery repulsed the attack. Company B mopped up area until relieved by Company A 358th Infantry. A and C Companies continued to advance with Company A capturing WINDHAUSEN and Company C driving for BUCHHOLZ which it captured in late afternoon after bitter fighting. The area was defended by infantry supported by flak guns.

On the left flank of the regiment the enemy infiltrated and counterattacked and was most aggressive. 50 SS troops from 11 SS Regiment (6th SS Mountain Division) slipped in around Company L at NORTERSHAUSEN but were repulsed. 42nd Cavalry in process of relieving 357th Infantry 3rd Battalion joined the encounter with its light tanks and the two units worked throughout the day to clear the area so the relief could be completed. In late afternoon 2nd Battalion 358th was attached to help hold this flank as resistance continued.

2nd Battalion 357th Infantry continued to find trouble as PFAFFENHECK as 100 SS troopers and a tank fought furiously to hold the road to BOPPARD. One platoon Company E forced an entrance in the early morning and then were cut off before reinforcements could reach it. No gains were made during the period. With 357th Infantry committed to let the Andy the resistance along the left flank, Division now ordered the 358th forward to expand the bridgehead to the East.

358th Infantry -- At 0700 the regiment staged 1st and 2nd Battalions forward to HERSCHWIESEN and OPPENHAUSEN respectively. 2nd Battalion remained at BRODENBACH in Division Reserve until attached to 357th Infantry at 1740 to help clear up the left flank.

Company A relieved Company B 357th Infantry and Company A proceeded down the draw Northeast of HERSCHWIESEN finding a sizable force of enemy still holding out there.

3rd Battalion advanced to Southeast to capture DIELER, NEY, HALSENBACH and KRATZENBURG before stopping for the night. At HALSENBACH they captured a flak Battalion Headquarters and 30 prisoners. [Page 26]

359th Infantry -- MORSHAUSEN was cleared in early morning and 1st Battalion remained assembled there while 2nd Battalion (-) rolled through on trucks. Company G followed on foot. In short order 2nd Battalion took BEULICH, then continued to capture OBER GONDERSHAUSEN at 1245 and NIEDER GONDERSHAUSEN a short time later. Company F turned Northeast to MERMUTH. 1st and 3rd Battalions began a mop-up of adjacent woods and the entire regiment prepared to move with the 4th Armored Division as a motorized CT following final clearing up of zone to Division objective in the morning. 106 PWs were captured throughout the day.

Division CP displaced from POLCH to MUNSTERMAIFELD, opening in the new location at 1010.

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Ahead of the 90th Division, 4th Armored Division cut a swath through the enemy rear areas. CCA captured LIESENFELD while CCB which had passed through 5th Division zone, captured SIMMERN. Their swift and unexpected movement flushed out many enemy vehicles who began to scurry East to the RHINE.

The day was clear and sunny and Division Air OP's adjusted the fire of organic and Corps units on these enemy columns. The fire of 8" howitzers and Long Toms were laid on one column passing through KARBACH. The resulting concentrations tossed horses on housetops, smashed vehicles to rubble and caused heavy casualties to the fleeing Germans.

Air OP's picked up a long enemy column, moving East out of GONDERSHAUSEN and fighter-bombers worked over this remunerative target.

Reluctant to pass up any opportunities to liquidate enemy columns, one Cup plane stayed in the air until after dark searching out targets and had to land by the light of burning powder bags when it finally turned home.

16 March 1945

To expedite clearance of the Division zone the area to the RHINE was subdivided into sections to be mopped up by the regiments and TASK FORCE SPIESS who was formed on the morning of the 16th. [Page 27]

357th Infantry -- 3rd Battalion 357th Infantry and 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry on the right jumped off at 0600 to clear to the Division North boundary. 3rd Battalion found the enemy withdrawn from his reverse slope positions East of ALKEN to new positions along the road East from OBERFELL. Heavy fighting resumed but by early afternoon 3rd Battalion had killed,

captured or dispersed the enemy. 2nd Cavalry completed relief of 3rd Battalion. The Battalion moved by motor to HERSCHWIESEN at 1845.

2nd Battalion 358th Infantry moved for the high ground Northwest of PFAFFENHECK just as five SS companies struck Southeast in a counterattack aimed at 2nd Battalion 357th Infantry. The two forces were locked in combat throughout the day. The enemy casualties were reportedly heavy.

2nd Battalion 357th Infantry renewed its attack that PFAFFENHECK with Companies G and E (-). The battle mounted in fury as the enemy refused to give ground and turned flak and SP guns on the unit. Three US tanks and one TD were set afire by enemy action.

The 1st Battalion attacking from the crossroad Northeast of BUCHHOLZ encountered much of the same and fought an 800 yard slugging match against SS troops in a position covered with flak guns and 88's. One US tank was knocked out. 48-20 mm, 4-40 mm and 8-88 mm guns were captured or destroyed by tank and infantry action in the encounters by 1st and 2nd Battalions.

The fighting slowed at dark and during the night the enemy withdrew.

358th Infantry -- Company L cleared EHR in early morning. 3rd Battalion then turned Northeast to tie in with 357th Infantry. Company I encountered a nest of SS troops, who dug in, refused to give way. Company K was brought up on the left to aid in reducing the strong point which was wiped out. 70 Germans were killed, 9 captured and several 88's taken intact.

Friendly planes strafed 3rd Battalion at HALSENBACH in early morning causing some casualties.

Company A finished mopping of the draw Northeast of HERSCHWIESEN to the road. 1st Battalion then assembled at DIELER and NEY and moved by motor to vicinity LANSCHHEID, LEININGEN and NORATH. [Page 28]

359th Infantry -- Only stragglers were encountered as the regiment mopped up its area in early morning. At 1050 the regiment was organized as a combat team and attached to 4th Armored Division. Moved at 1545 to SIMMERN, closing at 1900. 1st Battalion was directed to relieve CCR on outpost at SIMMERN at 170600.

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- This force consisted of 773rd TD Battalion Headquarters, Reconnaissance Company 773rd TD Battalion, Company C 773rd TD Battalion, Company D 712th Tank Battalion, and 90th Reconnaissance Troop. The various elements crossed at HATZENPORT in the early morning and assembled in vicinity EHR. Its mission was to clear out enemy in the area along the RHINE from BOPPARD (exclusive) to ST GOAR. The Task Force was broken down into three sub-units: TASK FORCE DYE on the North, TASK FORCE KELLY on the South and a reserve the CP. Speed was their keynote.

TASK FORCE KELLY drove rapidly to the RHINE after jumping off at 1240 and reached the river within two hours. In rapid succession the unit cleared RHEINBAY, HIRZENACH, KARBACH, HOLZFELD, WERLAU and HUNCENROTH. 55 prisoners were captured, 15 enemy killed, 12 German vehicles and 2-20 mm AA guns destroyed.

TASK FORCE DYE on the North was embroiled in heavy fighting with the SS troops blocking the road to BOPPARD. Part of the unit moved around to capture WEILER after a defended roadblock was met at L884764, 1 mile Northeast of EHR. Another platoon of TD's was brought up from the reserve at EHR. One TD hit a mine just short of the block. A second TD maneuvered to blow out the road block. As it did so it received a direct hit through the sight from an enemy 75 mm AT gun. After the block was reduced one section of TD's helped 358th 3rd Battalion in its attack. The section was released from this attachment at 2100 and returned to EHR.

Division Artillery -- Continued to hit enemy groups attempting to evacuate East of the RHINE. Air OP's adjusted fire on traffic plying back and forth across the river. Three steamers and five barges with enemy equipment were smashed. Enemy antiaircraft fire near BUCHHOLZ downed one liaison plane killing both occupants, while a second Cub crashed, the pilot escaping serious injury.

Division CP moved to BEULICH and opened at 1700.

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On the Division North flank the 87th Infantry Division crossed the [Page 29] MOSELLE starting at 0300 and advanced to the Southeast in a drive to cut off and reduce COBLENZ.

4th Armored Division continued its rapid pace and encircled BAD KREUZNACH.

The Germans, now thoroughly disorganized, were no longer trying to hold defensive positions on terrain features but rather were trying to resist locally from town to town. They threw what roadblocks they could be and our path to delay but many times the onrushing troops aided by good roads were past the blocks before they could be completed.

17 March 1945

357th Infantry -- After midnight 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry was relieved by 42nd Cavalry Squadron and detached from the regiment. Battalion reverted to Division Reserve and assembled at NORTERSHAUSEN.

1st Battalion 357th Infantry and 2nd Battalion 357th Infantry attacked to the East to capture BOPPARD. Only roadblocks and scattered enemy small arms hindered the advance. BOPPARD was entered and cleared against light resistance in late morning. 42nd Cavalry Squadron moved up and relieved 1st and 2nd Battalions late in the day and these units assembled at HERSCHWIESEN and OPPENHAUSEN respectively. Company G remained at UDENHAUSEN to reinforce the cavalry screen.

3rd Battalion moved to BUCHHOLZ and became Division Reserve in late morning.

358th Infantry -- 1st Battalion attacked East and cleared ST GOARER STADT-WALD without much resistance. Reassembled at BADENHARD after relief by 2nd Cavalry Squadron. 3rd Battalion motor-marched to DAXWEILER and SEIBERSBACH while 2nd Battalion convoyed to RHEINBOLLEN.

359th Infantry -- Remained attached to 4th Armored Division. 1st Battalion relieved armored outposts at SIMMERN at 0630 then turned over the mission to Cannon Company as the Battalion was ordered to block at NICKWEILER, NANNHAUSEN, and OHLWEILER. In the afternoon the CT was directed to follow CCR to assembly area vicinity ROXHEIM. 1st Battalion moved to ROXHEIM, 2nd Battalion to HARGESHEIM and 3rd Battalion to GUTENBERG.

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- Completed mop-up of area by clearing to BOPPARD with elements 3rd Battalion 358th and by attacking BAD SALZIG. There was little opposition and four [Page 30 image 1546] severely wounded men from 357th Infantry captured at PFAFFENHECK were recovered by troops taking BAD SALZIG. Their mission completed about 0930, the Task Force remained in position along the West bank of the RHINE and fired across at enemy movement on the East bank. The city commandant of ST GOAR surrendered that town to the Task Force.

At 2000 2nd Cavalry Group relieved the unit in all its positions in the Task Force moved to vicinity LIEBSHAUSEN.

2nd Cavalry Group -- Relieved the 90th Infantry Division in the area from Division left boundary to OBERWESEL and maintained contact with 87th Infantry Division on North. 2nd Cavalry Squadron joined the Group early in the day and cleared HOCH-WALD on right of 1st Battalion 358th Infantry and then relieved them. The Group was attached to 90th Division at 1840 as a TWX from Corps directed the Division to hold you West Bank of the RHINE from BOPPARD to BINGEN.

18 March 1945

The area not yet cleared was divided between TASK FORCE SPIESS and 358th Infantry with the former covering the zone from OBERWESEL to NIEDER HEIMBACH. The latter took from this town to BINGERBRUCK. 357th Infantry became Division Reserve, while 2nd Cavalry Group held its present area.

358th Infantry -- 1st Battalion moved by motor to vicinity STROMBERG. Regiment attacked in early morning with 2nd Battalion on left, 3rd Battalion in center, and 1st Battalion on right and cleared to RHINE and NAHE Rivers. There was little opposition. 1st Battalion captured 25 PWs at ROTH. All Battalions were on the river by dark. Company I in BINGERBRUCK received sniper fire from across the NAHE River in BINGEN.

357th Infantry -- Regiment assembled as Division Reserve with 3rd Battalion at EMMELSHAUSEN and a 1st Battalion at WIEBELSHEIN established roadblocks along Division West flank. 2nd Battalion remained at OPPENHAUSEN and Company G at UDENHAUSEN.

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- Mop up to the river between OBERWESEL and NIEDER HEIMBACH without opposition. 20 PWs were gathered up in the morning's work. While first plans were to relieve the Task Force with 358th it was subsequently decided to let it remain on line to help 358th hold its assigned 19-mile front. [Page 31]

2nd Cavalry Group -- Continued to hold positions.

359th Infantry -- Regiment closed in assembly areas in early hours of morning. CT was directed to clear up any remaining resistance in BAD KREUZNACH in the morning and seize a bridgehead across NAHE River. At 2400 regiment was released to 90th Division control. Mission remained unchanged.

Division CP moved to KISSELBACH and opened at 1100.

As Division was ordered to hold another combat team in reserve to follow 4th Armored Division, 358th Infantry had been ordered to make plans to hold the Division sector with 90th Reconnaissance Troop attached and 2nd Cavalry Group on the left. Accordingly, plans were made to relieve Task Force SPIESS with 2nd Battalion after 3rd Battalion had taken over 2nd Battalion's area. 90th Reconnaissance Troop and AT Company were to relieve 1st Battalion for regimental reserve. Later when it was decided to attach Task Force SPIESS to 358th Infantry, these plans were altered to have 2nd Battalion takeover from 3rd, and 1st Battalion to occupy the area assigned 90th Reconnaissance Troop. 3rd Battalion was to assemble at STROMBERG in Reserve.

These plans were hardly formulated when Corps gave the 90th a new mission, to capture MAINZ, which changed the whole picture. Now 358th Infantry was to be relieved as soon as possible by 2nd Cavalry Group with Task Force SPIESS attached. The Cavalry would be freed by arrival of the new Division in VIII Corps to take over part of the Division's last sector. CT 359 was to be released back to the Division. Accordingly, the Division plan called for attack with 358th on the left and 359th on the right, 357th in reserve. Division was to assemble West of NAHE River while both assault regiments would secure a bridgehead over NAHE River early 19 March, prepared to continue East on order.

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In the "Big Picture" KOBLENZ was captured by 87th Division and 4th Armored Division was directed to head for WORMS.

19 March 1945

358th Infantry -- 1st Battalion crossed NAHE River at BRETZENHEIM (1142) on trucks, tanks and TD's. Initially little resistance was encountered and Battalion pushed out to DROMERSHEIM and ASPISHEIM by dark. [Page 32]

3rd Battalion was relieved by 2nd Cavalry Group and elements Company K crossed NAHE River to block the regimental left flank. Battalion (-) assembled at HEDDESHEIM.

2nd Battalion was relieved by 2nd Cavalry Group and assigned the right half of the regimental bridgehead. Battalion moved to vicinity WELGESHEIM where they outposted the town and area to the East.

359th Infantry -- Regiment cleared BAD KREUZNACH at 0830, taking 80 PWs, and continued across River to form the right half of the bridgehead. By dark, 1st Battalion extended from HACKENHEIM to VOLXHEIM and patrolled to SPRENDLINGEN. 2nd Battalion was located at SPRENDLINGEN and outpost 208395. 3rd Battalion occupied ST JOHANN, WOLFSHEIM, and VENDERSHEIM.

357th Infantry -- Regiment assembled in vicinity of SCHWEPPENHAUSEN, initiating their move at 1300.

2nd Cavalry Group -- Relieved 358th Infantry and TASK FORCE SPIESS and held the area from OBERWESEL to BINGERBRUCK. 42nd Cavalry Squadron was relieved by CT 385 of 76th Infantry Division and the squadron prepared to attack BINGEN.

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- Attached to 2nd Cavalry until relieved. Company C 773rd TD Battalion was detached and returned to 359th Infantry. Company A 773rd TD Battalion was picked up from 357th Infantry as Task Force was given mission of reconnoitering to Division front starting in morning. Upon relief, Task Force crossed the BRETZENHEIM bridge and assembled vicinity WOLFSHEIM and VENDERSHEIM.

Gains for the day were very satisfactory. The Division now held a bridgehead 6 miles deep across the NAHE River and were redispersed to press the offensive. Enemy aircraft looked over the area several times during the day but made no attacks.

Division CP moved to WINDESHEIM where it opened at 1530.

FO #59 was published at KISSELBACH and issued at WINDESHEIM following a conference with commanders at 1700. It directed the attack to continue to MAINZ.

20 March 1945

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- The Task Force again was divided into three sub-units: [Page 33]

TF KELLY (to operate on the North)

1st and 3rd Reconnaissance Platoons 773rd TD Battalion

3rd Platoon Company D 712th Tank Battalion
1st Platoon Company A 773rd TD Battalion (2 TD's)

TF WAGNON (to operate in the center)

2nd Platoon Reconnaissance Company 773rd TD Battalion
1st Platoon Company D 712th Tank Battalion
2nd Platoon Company A 773rd TD Battalion (2 TD's)
Assault Gun Platoon 712th Tank Battalion

TF DYE (to operate on the South)

90th Reconnaissance Troop
2nd Platoon Company D 712th Tank Battalion
3rd Platoon Company A 773rd TD Battalion (4 TD's)

Starting at 0600 at first light, the three columns sped toward the River encountering roadblocks and three minefields. By noon, however, they were 10 miles out. Sixteen towns had been cleared and leading elements were only three miles from MAINZ.

TF KELLY on the North move through NDR HILBERSHEIM, ENGELSTADT, BUBENHEIM, SCHWABEHEIM to ELSHEIM where a roadblock temporarily halted the advance. Detouring around the block they took ESSENHEIM and 17 PWs and were stopped by a mile-long stretch of mined road. A few enemy dug in near the crossroad were fired upon and 13 captured. The road was cleared of mines and the TF continued to within 3 miles of MAINZ where they drew heavy fire. Moving back to the crossroads Southeast of OBER OLMER WALD they set up to defend this position until the infantry caught up and relieved them.

Short of NIEDER OLM along a railroad track, TF WAGNON -- the center force, met enemy dug in, supported by heavy mortars, AT guns and numerous flak guns. The town rested in a valley and the enemy positions were on reverse slopes of the surrounding hills and around the town itself. As the Task Force approached from the Southwest they fired at trucks vanishing over the hill they moved up TDs and assault guns to shoot into the town. Other enemy vehicles, apparently urged out by the fire, were cut down as they tried to leave NIEDER OLM. Fighter-bombers struck the town at the same time. Their bombs and strafing set many of the vehicles on fire. Two tanks, the platoon of Reconnaissance and 1 TD started to flank the town from the North but found the [Page 34] enemy dug in. Twelve machine gun nests were knocked out in 5 PWs captured. White flags appeared in part of the town, and the attackers thought it had given up. Led by two TD's the Task Force moved up to the crest of the hill. Just as they were silhouetted, the Germans opened up with 20 mm guns and concealed 88 guns which tore through two M10's before the force could effect a withdrawal. Artillery was immediately called for and laid a TOT on the enemy positions. Infantry took over the task of clearing the town. Over 500 PWs were taken by TASK FORCE WAGNON during their day's work which included clearing PARTNEHIM, JUGENHEIM, OBER SAULHEIM and NIEDER SAULHEIM.

TF DYE on the South moved through WORRSTADT to SCHORNSHEIM to UDENHEIM. Just beyond the town enemy artillery began to fall. The forward observer with TF DYE quickly placed counter-battery fire and silenced the enemy guns. At KONGERNHEIM another roadblock intruded. Three Panzerfausts whizzed by the tanks. The TD's cleared the block with fire. Five prisoners were captured. The unit then moved to SELEEN and MOMMENHEIM where they stayed the night.

TF SPIESS had done its spade work well. For the Infantry the 10-mile thrust was cheering news. It eased their job, localized the enemy resistance and made known where to put pressure.

As the Infantry units caught up, the TF was directed to block the Southeast flank which was the area of greatest threat since the gap between the 90th and 4th Armored Divisions was steadily being enlarged as the latter moved Southeast toward WORMS while the Division turned Northeast to MAINZ. Accordingly, elements of the TF were redisposed in late day. TF KELLY assembled at SCHORNSHEIM. TF WAGNON moved troops to SELEEN and MOMMENHEIM.

358th Infantry -- Regiment jumped off at 0700 and moved rapidly forward. Light resistance from scattered small arms and automatic weapons continued until late afternoon when 3rd Battalion encountered SP or AA guns and heavy mortar fire from vicinity of BRETSSENHEIM (M3653). 3rd Battalion stopped astride the road to MAINZ with Company K on the left and Company I on the right at the Northeast edge of OBER OLMER WALD. Company L held the crossroads just in rear.

1st Battalion captured NIEDER and OBER INGELHEIM by dark and A Company continued to capture WACKERNHEIM. For this purpose TF GRUBBS (AT Company, cooks, etc.) relieved Company A at GAU ALGESHEIM. [Page 35]

2nd Battalion occupied the airfield five miles Southwest of MAINZ at (M2952).

359th Infantry -- Regiment moved out at 0700 with 3rd Battalion on left, 2nd Battalion on right and 1st Battalion in reserve. 2nd Battalion continued through SORGENLOCH and ZORNHEIM to EBERSHEIM where it halted for the night.

At midday, 3rd Battalion was approaching NIEDER OLM following TF WAGNON. Company I was leading, followed by Company K. L Company was in reserve at NIEDER SAULHEIM. As they moved to assist the Task Force, Company I entered a heavy firefight just forward of the high ground North of the RR underpass. A clump of flak guns (eight in all) and three 88's covered the underpass and adjacent grounds from positions about one-half mile to the North where the highway crossed the stream. Attempts of the Company to work forward met increased fire from these weapons as well as small arms fire. By mid-afternoon, as result of artillery fire, three of the ack-ack guns and two AT guns were knocked out. Further advance was still not possible. Company K, therefore flanked the position by going to the right and coming in on the town from the East. This maneuver broke the resistance and the German soldiers turned and ran to the Northeast. Every available weapon was swung onto the fleeing enemy and Company I advanced rapidly into town, to mop up with Company K. Following capture of the

town, the Battalion was ordered to occupy KLEIN WINTERNHEIM and to contact 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry on the left. This was done.

At 1000 1st Battalion staged forward to NIEDER SAULHEIM where it remained overnight.

357th Infantry -- Entrucked at SCHMEPPENHAUSEN and crossed the NAHE River in early morning to an assembly area at PLANIG, BOSENHEIM and PFAFFEN-SCHWABENHEIM. In late morning, regiment again moved forward to vicinity of PARTENHEIM, WOLFSHEIM and VENDERSHEIM.

2nd Cavalry Group -- 42nd Cavalry Squadron crossed NAHE at 1200 and attacked BINGEN. They made short shrift of BUDESHEIN, where they captured 200 PWs, and of OCKENHEIN, KEMPTEN and GAULSHEIM. By night they were in BINGEN. Final mop-up was left to morning. Over 500 PWs were taken. 2nd Squadron remained on the West bank of the NAHE River in process of being relieved by elements of 76th Infantry Division. [Page 36]

Division CP moved to SPRENDLINGEN to keep pace with the rapid advance. Opened at 1340.

Enemy air came to life and the Luftwaffe flew 44 sorties during the day with jet propelled planes, FW 190s and ME 109s. The East-West road at SPRENDLINGEN was strafed and bombed six times and bridges at BRETZENHEIM and BAD KREUZNACH were enemy targets. A few butterfly bombs were dropped at GENSINGEN. But friendly anti-aircraft guns kept the planes at maximum range of 40 mm guns and little damage resulted from the attacks. Three enemy planes were shot down.

21 March 1945

The night was fraught with activity. In the 358th's area, enemy patrols left their hiding place in OBER OLMER WALD and prowled around Company L before launching a small counterattack at 0130. And as HAHNHEIM an encircled enemy garrison of 200 men, well-equipped, stubbornly refused all demands for surrender and were virtually eliminated en toto without a single American casualty.

In the 358th action, the enemy patrol first appeared at 2300 but was driven off. It returned at 0030 and was again discovered. Then at 0130 a group of 50 Germans infiltrated the area held by the tanks and TD's near the CR at (M326503). They were supported by a tank or SP gun which blew in the wall of a house at the CRs. The attack was repulsed but not before the raiders set afire and an munition Jeep bearing 4.2 mortar shells. And another audacious enemy shoved a hand grenade down the gun barrel of a 75 mm gun, blowing one tanker's arm almost off and destroying the tank.

At HAHNHEIM, the previous day's action had flowed around it without anyone being aware the town was a German strong point. Two jeeps of 359th Infantry going toward their unit approached the town and were pinned down and occupants captured. An M10 taking the wrong road from ZORNHEIM was knocked out by an 88 gun, three of the crew killed and the fourth man captured after his ammunition ran.

TASK FORCE SPIESS demanded the surrender of the enemy unit. The Germans elected to fight it out. This was a costly decision. [Page 37]

2nd Battalion of 357th was ordered to help take the town and moved to KONGERNHEIM late on the night of the 20th. The road from there to SELZEN was under heavy 20 mm fire from HAHNHEIM. Before 2nd Battalion could get to the town, the Germans had established a roadblock Northwest of SELZEN and infiltrated into SELZEN to attack the CP of TASK FORCE DYE. This action was apparently designed to cover their withdrawal from HAHNHEIM. The CP fought off the attack and called for artillery. The Division guns and Corps 8" howitzers smothered the town with TOT's and interdiction fires beginning at midnight. These terrific fires did the work. When F Company 357th entered the town in pre-dawn hours, the survivors gladly surrendered. Ten enemy were dead in the town, 17 were wounded. 100 prisoners (including five officers) were captured. In the woods North of town where they had tried to get out another 60 enemy were unable to surrender. They were dead. Captured in position where 8-88 mm guns, 20-20 mm guns and 30 vehicles. Best of all, the 11 Americans who were taken PWs were recaptured. No casualties were suffered by our troops.

358th Infantry -- At 0530, 2nd Battalion jumped off to capture FINTHEN and DRAIS which was speedily accomplished. The Battalion then pushed on to capture and clear MOMBACH at 2330 taking numerous prisoners, despite heavy enemy fire.

3rd Battalion attacked at 0555 and moved rapidly without initial resistance until they reached BRETZENHEIM at 0700 where a house-to-house battle began which lasted all day. Finally, only a few snipers remained to be rounded up.

1st Battalion, relieved by the arrival of 2nd Cavalry Squadron, turned East to follow 2nd Battalion, and was committed on the right at MAMBACH.

359th Infantry -- At 0400, 3rd Battalion attacked to capture MARIENBORN which fell after it was squeezed from the Southwest and Southeast. High velocity fire into the town slowed the capture. From MARIENBORN K and L Companies advanced to BRETZENHEIM arriving there at 1435. They spent the rest of the day cleaning out the town with 3rd Battalion 358th Infantry.

1st Battalion motored to EBERSHEIM at 0400; then advanced on foot to capture HECHTSHEIM which fell in midmorning. North and Northeast of HECHTSHEIM, however, the enemy held firm and with small arms and SP gun fire resisted efforts [Page 38] to dislodge them. 2nd Battalion joined the 1st at HECHTSHEIM in late morning. The two Battalions together broke the resistance and took 300 PWs. 2nd Battalion then moved North along the main road while the 1st Battalion turned up toward WEISENAU. Company A occupied the high ground Northeast of HECHTSHEIM while Company C moved through to seize the town. Considerable small arms and SP fire somewhat disrupted the attack and the entire Battalion settled down for the night on the high ground.

2nd Battalion continued toward MAINZ but were receiving fire from the barracks just South of MAINZ. Friendly air was called for and fighter-bombers hit the target. 80 prisoners were captured when the barracks were finally overrun in late afternoon. 2nd Battalion buttoned up for the night in this vicinity.

357th Infantry -- 1st and 3rd Battalions moved to UDENHEIM and ZORNHEIM with 1st Battalion prepared to move on to EBERSHEIM for employment on Division right flank.

2nd Battalion cleaned up at HAHNHEIM.

1st Battalion reached EBERSHEIM at 1415 and moved out on foot to clear GAU BISHOSHEIM in the woods to the Northeast. Company A moved to BODENHEIM after arrival at 1600 while B and C Companies beat out the woods to LAUBENHEIM. On Hill 197 West of LAUBENHEIM, Company C ran into a fight with entrenched enemy and captured an 80 mm and a 20 mm gun.

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- In the early morning TASK FORCE KELLY shot down a German plane at SCHORNSHEIM.

The entire TASK FORCE SPIESS was set to clearing East to the RHINE and North to MAINZ on the Division right flank. DEXHEIM was lightly held but heavily mined. 2 PWs were taken. TASK FORCE DYE moved up toward LOR[?]EILER where they knocked out two enemy trucks, captured 4 more and 12 prisoners. The unit then captured NACKENHEIM and 15 prisoners. In mid-evening 10 Germans in a boat tried to cross the RHINE at NACKENHEIM. Artillery was fired on it and the boat sank.

2nd Cavalry Group -- 2nd Cavalry Squadron crossed NAHE River and relieved elements 358th Infantry. The 42nd Squadron fanned out to the East on left flank of 358th Infantry.

Division CP opened at NIEDER SAULHEIM at 1100. [Page 39]

A conference with commanders was held in early evening to establish plans for taking MAINZ. It was decided to use 358th Infantry and 359th Infantry, letting 1st Battalion 357th Infantry take WEISENAU. The 358th and 359th (-1st Battalion) would attack at 0600 following a 15-minute artillery preparation. 1st Battalions 359th and 357th Infantry would attack at 0530 without preparation. One Company 357th Infantry was to reinforce Company A at BODELHEIM that night. One Battalion would move to BODENHEIM in morning, relieving Company A, while another Battalion was to proceed to NIEDER OLM and remain motorized. 2nd Cavalry Group was to relieve 358th Infantry to include MOMBACH. These orders were issued verbally.

Enemy air was again active over the area. 10 sorties were flown. 3 enemy planes were downed.

* * * * *

On the Army front things were happening. XX Corps was coming up rapidly from the South. 4th Armored Division had WORMS. 5th Division was alerted to cross the RHINE vicinity OPPENHEIM and was regrouping troops in the area.

22 March 1945

The attack on MAINZ began as scheduled. Six infantry Battalions converged on the city from every side in a perfectly coordinated assault.

For the Germans it was a sorry day. Proud MAINZ was falling and falling fast in spite of repeated assertions that the city would be defended to the last man and the last round of ammunition.

For the Americans, after the all-out, house-two-house defense of the suburbs, the ease with which MAINZ itself was taken was an anti-climax.

Neither threats nor pleadings could evoke the will to resist in more than a handful of the miscellany who were the city's defenders. After the previous day's desperate battles failed to stop the encroaching Americans, a feeling of hopelessness pervaded the city.

Its heart was gone with its buildings. Allied bombers in off-repeated raids had done their work well. Now [Page 40] the civilians huddled for the last time in their underground shelters. Braver ones on the streets stared apathetically as their soldiers surrendered by the hundreds.

There was fighting -- on the outer edges and in the green parks. But the Citadel, moss-covered underground fortress defiantly barring the South entrance to the City was taken without fanfare, and when the railroad tracks which bound the City's girth were crossed, resistance became sporadic and uncoordinated, confined to small groups of die-hards. Finally it stopped altogether. The City's radio station was taken intact. Colonel Weiss, the City Commandant, surrendered. Greatest delay was getting the prisoners out and to the rear. By nightfall MAINZ was captured.

358th Infantry Regiment attacked with three Battalions -- 2nd on left, 1st in center and 3rd on right. By 0930 2nd Battalion had cleared its area and prepared for relief by 2nd Cavalry Group. 1st and 3rd Battalions were along the railroad tracks receiving some long-range artillery, mortar and small arms fire. L Company lost a TD from 88 gunfire. The remaining TD promptly knocked out the gun and half-track carrying a 40 mm AA gun in addition. Resistance became scattered and regiment cleared to the RHINE without difficulty, gathering up 1121 prisoners.

Following relief by 2nd Cavalry Group in late afternoon, 2nd Battalion assembled in reserve in MAINZ. 1st 3rd Battalions remained online, each with two Companies forward and one back. A and I Companies took the reserve positions.

359th Infantry -- All three Battalions attacked in order, 3rd, 2nd, 1st from left to right with the 1st Battalion moving 30 minutes before the others at 0530 without artillery preparation. 2nd 3rd Battalions attacked at 0600 following the 15-minute artillery concentration established in the plan.

By late morning you City itself was penetrated and the left Battalion moved against scattered small arms and some SP gunfire. 1st Battalion met considerable opposition from the dug-in Infantry in the park, but after clearing that moved against light resistance. 2nd Battalion captured the Citadel. Artillery from across the RHINE continued to harass the advance. [Page 41]

Some mines and booby traps were encountered mostly near the waterfront. In some instances civilians led soldiers through mined areas. By mid-afternoon 315th Engineers had six platoons at work clearing debris and obstacles from the main roads in the City.

By 1800 all of the 359th was at the water's edge and Battalions redispersed to hold for the night. Companies K, F and A assembled in rear of their Battalions in reserve. The regiment had captured over 2000 prisoners.

357th Infantry -- At 0030 Company K reinforced Company A at BODENHEIM and the rest of 3rd Battalion joined it in the morning. Later in the day I Company moved to LAUBENHEIM to protect the MSR [Main Supply Route].

A and C Companies attacked and captured WEISENAU by 0930. 2 tanks were knocked out by enemy bazooka fire. 150 PWs were captured. One platoon Company C went along the RHINE West bank to contact 359th at MAINZ. Encountered a brief firefight at the railroad bridge but successfully made contact.

2nd Battalion moved to SCHWABENHEIM.

25 men were requisitioned from AT Company to help guard the 4000 prisoners gathered by the Division in the past day.

TASK FORCE SPIESS held positions until relieved by 5th Division Reconnaissance Troop at 2100. Because the relieving force was so small, the Task Force remained in position for the night, although dissolved upon completion of the relief.

2nd Cavalry Group -- Relieved 2nd Battalion 358th and made plans to mop up INGELHEIMER AUE. Prepared to simulate crossing of the RHINE Northwest of MAINZ.

* * * * *

During the day Division received three directives from Corps covering future operations.

First 0900 was a plan for crossing the RHINE River which directed units to prepare plans on two conditions: [Page 42]

a. If resistance is weak

(1) 5th Infantry Division secure bridgehead.

- (2) 4th Armored Division or 11th Armored pass through bridgehead.
- (3) 89th Infantry Division followed by 90th Infantry Division cross through 5th Infantry Division bridgehead.

b. If resistance is strong

- (1) 5th Infantry Division secure bridgehead.
- (2) 89th Infantry Division cross River to expand bridgehead.
- (3) 90th Infantry Division crosses River to expand bridgehead.
- (4) 4th Armored Division or 11th Armored Division exploit any weakness found.

The second document at 0900 was Corps Operational Directive yellow enough of a bouquet of the art and I've have quality with the Number 92:

1. XII Corps regroups prepared to attack across RHINE River.
2. 5th Infantry Division moves to new zone and relieves elements 90th Infantry Division and 4th Armored Division prepared to cross RHINE River.
3. 90th Infantry Division: Attached -- 2nd Cavalry Group
 - (1) Complete clearing of sector.
 - (2) Simulate preparation for river crossing Northwest of MAINZ on Corps order.
 - (3) Protect left flank of Corps.
 - (4) Maintain contact with VIII Corps.

Third was Corps Field Order Number 17 at 1830 which gave the mission of the Corps:

XII Corps attacks across RHINE River, D-Day, H-Hour to seize bridgehead vicinity OPPENHEIM (M-4439), advance rapidly to Northeast, seize bridgehead over MAIN River vicinity HANAU (M-8470) and continue advance North in direction GIESSEN (G-6620). [Page 43]

Mission of the 90th:

- a. Protect left flank of Corps along RHINE River.
- b. Maintain contact with VIII Corps.
- c. Be prepared to move through 5th Infantry Division bridgehead following 89th Infantry Division to expand bridgehead or exploit the Northeast on right of 89th Infantry Division.

In view of the above it was decided to redispense the Division with 358th covering all of MAINZ, 357th to occupy from MAINZ South to 5th Division boundary and 359th to assemble in Division Reserve. 2nd Cavalry Group was to protect the North flank, maintain contact with VIII Corps and execute the required simulation for crossing Northwest of MAINZ. 161st Chemical Group (SG) was placed in direct support for this purpose.

Redispositions where he began in early morning.

5th Division's target date was set at 222200A. [Page 44]

PHASE III

FROM THE RHINE TO THE MAIN

23 MARCH 1945

During the night 2nd Cavalry moved vehicles freely and at 0600 fired artillery and began to smoke two sites at 0600 in simulated crossing. Smoke was continued until 1000.

The planned redisposition began in early morning. 2nd Battalion, 358th Infantry, moved to relieve 359th in its half of the city. 3rd Battalion, 358th, started to assemble at BRETZENHEIM in regimental reserve. 357th's 3rd Battalion prepared to take over from 1st Battalion at dusk, while 2nd Battalion began to move to new assembly area. 359th had some units on trucks ready to move by shuttling.

Then at 0925 orders were changed abruptly. Corps telephoned: "Assemble two regiments in reserve at once prepared to cross RHINE tonight."

5th Division had already crossed the long anticipated barrier with ease, starting at 2200 on 22nd March. Hardly a shot was fired in the initial phase and by 0700 leading elements were out some 3000 yards. The enemy was beginning to react vigorously with considerable artillery fire and a counter-attack. A bridge was under construction to be followed by two more.

Rapid adjustments were made to conform to the new orders. It was decided to free 357th as well as 359th and 90th Reconnaissance Troop was directed to take over immediately from this unit. G-4 gathered trucks from everywhere to motorize two Battalions of 357th Infantry. New assembly areas were given to the 357th and 359th and units were started moving toward them.

Further changes flooded in. The 80th Infantry Division was to relieve the 90th. Now it would not arrive. 26th Infantry division, itself not yet relieved to the South, was to relieve the 90th. 357th Infantry was organized as a combat team and attached to 5th Division until the balance of the 90th could cross the RHINE. The CT was ordered to cross and cover the 5th Division's right flank as soon as possible. 357th Infantry assembled vicinity DEXHEIM and foot elements crossed by a bridge at 1730 except 3rd Battalion which missed its scheduled time and crossed on boats, completing at 1900. Six enemy aircraft attacked during [Page 45] the crossing, but no damage resulted. One plane was shot down. Vehicles started at 1800 and were all across by midnight. 2nd Battalion moved to ERFELDEN to relieve 2nd Battalion, 10th Infantry, 5th Division. 3rd Battalion moved to LEEHEIM and 1st Battalion just South of LEEHEIM. As 3rd moved into town, enemy artillery caused 19 casualties in Company L.

The German Air Force continued its activity throughout the night and bombed and strafed roads from LEEHEIM to the bridge. The combined artillery and air blows damaged some 20-odd vehicles of units other than the 90th.

Division Field Message Number 53 at 1330 fixed the flurry of orders on paper:

The 90th Division would cross the RHINE and attack Northeast. CT 357 attached to 5th Division until arrival of rest of Division. 359th and 358th Infantries, upon relief, were to assemble prepared to cross following 357th. All other units to assemble after relief and await orders to cross. At 1800 2nd Cavalry Group was detached and attached 26th Infantry Division with the same mission of protecting Corps left and maintaining contact with VIII Corps.

The late arrival of the relieving force of the 26th precluded relief being completed before dark. The regiment was therefore directed to move to its new area in the morning.

Division CP moved to KONGERHEIM where it opened at 1930.

24 March 1945

357th Infantry -- Before completing the relief of 2nd Battalion, 10th Infantry, 5th Division at ERFELDEN, 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry was counterattacked shortly before midnight, 23 March, by the 1121 Regiment, 553 Division. The enemy force, some 350 in number, struck directly at the Battalion CP and aid station, which were exposed by not all of the Battalion being in position. After a long stiff fight the enemy attack was overcome and 250 Germans were taken prisoner. The Battalion lost 20 men captured, mostly medical personnel. Following the collapse of resistance at ERFELDEN, 2nd Battalion sent Company F to sweep out the Island formed by the horseshoe course of the ALT RHINE from [Page 46] the main RHINE. 230 PWs were gathered up here without a fight as they were badly disorganized.

3rd Battalion attacked East from LEEHEIM. In the woods beyond Company L met strong resistance from 120 policemen rushed from FRANKFURT during the night, and lost 13 men killed. The enemy force was supported by 3 towed 88 mm guns, which were captured intact. 80 prisoners were taken. Company I meanwhile was mounted on tanks and sent North of the woods to swing down on WOLFSKEHLEN. Another fight resulted but the town was cleared at 1300.

1st Battalion attacked on right of 3rd Battalion and captured GODDELAU with B Company mounted on tanks. At 1430 3rd Battalion crossed a waste-deep creek bordered by marshland while 1st Battalion moved up from the South in late afternoon. Approach of the 1st Battalion with three Companies abreast drove the enemy back through the town into Company K who were coming from the Northwest. In the fight which followed Company K was pushed back to the edge of town. They immediately reorganized and assaulted the town again from the West to strike the enemy in the flank. Meanwhile 1st Battalion penetrated the town and cleared it by 2300. 150 PWs were taken. Both Battalions halted there for the night. 2nd Battalion remained at ERFELDEN. Approximately 550 prisoners total were captured during the day.

Regiment reverted to Division control at 1200A.

359th Infantry -- Starting about midnight the regiment crossed its transportation via 5th Division bridge and assembled in vicinity LEEHEIM. Foot troops crossed in order, 1st, 2nd, 3rd Battalions at 0600, clearing the bridge by 0730. Continued East to relieve 10th Infantry elements at DORNHEIM, which was accomplished without incident after 1st Battalion cleared a pocket of resistance Southeast of DORNHEIM. 1st Battalion then continued Northeast toward BUTTELBORN, which they took without resistance. 2nd Battalion followed the 1st initially then continued East toward BUTTELBORN WALD. They met no resistance until they reached WEILER HOF, a farmhouse, which they cleaned out. The dense woods beyond afforded some trouble and the Battalion halted for the night just short of the road 3 km Southeast of BUTTELBORN.

3rd Battalion moved from LEEHEIM to DORNHEIM in regimental reserve.[Page 47]

358th Infantry -- Relieved by 328th Infantry in MAINZ during the night 23-24 March. Moved by motor to assembly area vicinity SELZEN and MOMMENHEIM. Closed at noon. At 1400 the regiment moved their organic transportation over the bridge following with foot troops. 1st Battalion closed at WOLFSKEHLEN and patrolled to GODDELAU. 2nd and 3rd Battalions assembled vicinity LEEHEIM.

Division Artillery fires destroyed four 88 millimeter guns, nine 20 mm AA guns and two vehicles.

Two of Division Artillery Cub planes were damaged by enemy fire. One had its wing ripped off by an 80 mm shell. The other had a wing shot full of 20 mm gun holes. Both planes reached their home fields safely.

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The Luftwaffe continued its attempts to knock out the bridges and to prevent expansion of the bridgehead. During the day the enemy flew eighteen sorties in small groups or single planes and continued bombing throughout the night. Four planes were destroyed.

4th Armored Division was ordered across the RHINE at 1200A and began to uncoil another of its superb drives -- this time for the MAIN River -- through the portion of the bridgehead held by the 90th Division.

25 March 1945

No enemy frontline existed. Rapid advances against lightened resistance keynoted the day. Forward elements covered 10 miles in the day's move. Division CP itself, crossing the RHINE River on the third anniversary of its activation, traveled 35 km as it displaced first to DORNHEIM at 1100 and then to GRAFENHAUSEN at 1800.

359th Infantry -- 2nd Battalion cut the road to its front at 0600. 1st the 3rd Battalions continued the attack at 0600 and by noon had captured BRAUNSHARDT, not WORFELDEN,

SCHEPPENHAUSEN and GRAFENHAUSEN. 1st Battalion, then continued to the Autobahn where it stayed overnight, while 3rd Battalion advanced Northeast to LANGEN. Here they were fired on. All three companies moved into the town and cleared the West end by shortly after midnight. 30 prisoners were captured. [Page 48]

2nd Battalion moved to ERZHAUSEN.

The 915th Field Artillery Battalion supporting 359th found itself in a firefight as it occupied positions in an area near the woods Northeast of KLEIN GERAU. As one battery moved into position, German AA guns opened up from the woods. The gun crew leveled their howitzers in direct fire and killed five Germans. Four more surrendered. One 915th soldier was wounded in the action.

358th Infantry -- Passing through 357th, the regiment attacked at 0600 and captured all initial objectives without resistance. 3rd Battalion occupied WEITERSTADT while 2nd Battalion cut the Autobahn to the Southeast. 1st Battalion was motorized and started forward.

2nd and 3rd Battalions continued meeting scattered resistance. 3rd Battalion entered LANGEN at 1930 and cleared the East end of town. There they stayed the night. 2nd Battalion moved to EGELSBACH and blocked roads to the East. 1st Battalion refused the right flank East of LANGEN.

357th Infantry -- 1st Battalion moved to the Autobahn West of DARMSTADT and remained at that crossroad.

2nd and 3rd Battalions moved motorized to new positions on Division right flank, blocking to East from WIXHAUSEN to Northwest of DARMSTADT.

Twenty men, including Medics and Chaplain, who were captured at ERFELDEN were recaptured and freed by 4th Armored Division at BABENHAUSEN.

Task Force SPIESS -- Reformed in early morning the Task Force had its mission changed from reconnaissance of the front and blocking to the right flank. Its job now was to clear DARMSTADT which was thought to be reasonably free of enemy despite its huge size.

90th Reconnaissance Troop was detached before the Task Force got underway. One platoon of light tanks was also ordered away to 359th, but were already committed when the order arrived and could not be released.

The Task Force standard DARMSTADT from the West, and Southwest as elements 4th Armored Division entered from the East. Very little resistance was encountered. One roadblock West of the [Page 49] city was defended and there was a short skirmish there. On the Northeast side the 2nd Platoon, 773rd TD Reconnaissance Company, was patrolling the woods. One jeep was knocked out by enemy Panzerfaust and machine gun fire. Three soldiers were injured and one was captured to be retaken by friendly troops a few days later. 130 prisoners were taken and DARMSTADT which was completely cleared by 1600.

Elements 4th Armored Division withdrew to accompany their force after making contact with Task Force SPIESS. The latter was ordered to remain until relieved by elements 26th Division, which was accomplished by 2000. The force remained in the city overnight.

90th Reconnaissance Troop -- Detached from Task Force SPIESS in midmorning, the Troop reconnoitered the Division front. Captured WIXHAUSEN and maintained contact with 6th Armored Division.

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The overall situation looked favorable. 4th Armored Division had reached the MAIN River. CCB seized a railroad bridge and crossed infantry to hold it. CCA was all along the river below HANAU. 5th Infantry Division had cleared to the MAIN River on the North. 6 Armored Division which had crossed in early morning and passed through 5th Division was gaining momentum slowly. On the 90th's immediate right, 26th Infantry Division was coming up fast.

Both friendly and enemy air were again active during the day. The German Air Force bombed throughout the Division area and lighted the bridge sites across the RHINE After Dark with parachute flares.

26 March 1945

Despite areas of resistance at crossroads and villages the Division mopped up rapidly between 6th Armored and 4th Armored Divisions and on the left reached the MAIN. 900 prisoners were captured.

359th Infantry -- 2nd and 3rd Battalions attacked at 0800. 2nd Battalion entered SPRENDLINGEN at 0845 and continued to the woods Northeast of the town where resistance picked up as all types of fire were received. Artillery destroyed a SP gun. This opposition was cracked at 1300 and the Battalion moved rapidly to HEUSENSTAMM, BIEBER and then to MUHLHEIM. [Page 50]

3rd Battalion tangled with enemy infantry dug in around BUCHSCHLAG. Over a hundred prisoners were taken after heavy fighting. One tank supported the enemy infantry but later withdrew. Company L was left to block the left flank.

1st Battalion started at 0920 to comb out the woods to the vicinity of LANGEN. Here they entrucked and moved without opposition to South of OFFENBACH. Receiving orders to go to BURGEL and RUMPENHEIM the Battalion dispatched Company A to the latter while B and C Companies occupied BURGEL. By 2300 the 359th was on the banks of the MAIN River.

Captured enemy matériel included a chemical plant at NEU-ISENBURG, and eighteen carloads of war matériel at BUCHSCHLAG.

358th Infantry -- 3rd and 1st Battalions attacked at 0800. 3rd Battalion was motorized and moved to the crossroad a half-mile North of DREIECHENHAIN where they detrucked to engage some resistance. Clearing this at 1015 they proceeded on, meeting resistance again at HEUSENSTAMM where they captured 200 prisoners. 1st Battalion cleared GOTZENHAIN, but met stiffer resistance at DIETZENBACH where they knocked out to AT guns and captured 60 prisoners.

The regiment stopped for the night at HAUSEN, OBERHAUSEN and HEUSENSTAMM.

357th Infantry -- Followed by bounds in Zone of 358th and continued to block to the East on the Division right flank.

90th Reconnaissance Troop -- Reconnoitered Division from and patrolled South bank of MAIN River until relieved in the morning by 358th and 359th Infantry.

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- Continued along the Division right flank, clearing OFFENTHAL and small unorganized groups of enemy resistance.

Division CP moved to SPRENDLINGEN, opening at 1900.

27 March 1945

All organized resistance on the near bank of the MAIN River was ended as Division mopped up to the river. Some 400 additional prisoners were rounded up. Reconnaissance for crossing and ferry sites was conducted in the area from OFFENBACH to HANAU exclusive. [Page 51]

Division published Field Order Number 60 and 1900. The plan was for 90th to force a crossing West of HANAU in vicinity DOERNIGHEIM commencing at 280300A to secure a bridgehead for 6th Armored and 4th Armored Divisions to go through. The Division would then follow the 4th Armored Division.

Formation for the assault crossing was for the 357th on left, 358th on right and 359th in Division Reserve.

In preparation for crossing the 357th moved to an assembly area at BIEBER.

Division CP moved to HEUSENSTAMM, where it opened at 1430. [Page 52)

PHASE IV

THROUGH THE HILLS OF HESSEN

28 March 1945

Zero hour for the crossing was 0300. There was little hope for surprise. The night was bright with moonlight. Our troops had been on the bank for the previous day and night. Indeed during the day when Germans were observed digging in along the far bank, mortars were fired at them. Shortly thereafter six of them entered a boat and rowed across to surrender to 359th's outpost.

It was not all to be so easy, however. As later interrogation showed, the defenders here were a Battalion of fanatical Hitler Youth graduates led by veteran officers and NCOs who served as instructors in the OCS school. But they were stretched in a rather thin line from FECHENHEIM to DOERNIGHEIM. 2nd Company, 9th OCS was in and around DOERNIGHEIM with a platoon and detached under Battalion control. 3rd Company was farther East. 1st Company was in Battalion Reserve in the woods East of HOCHSTADT. 4th Company was attached in part to the rifle Companies and the rest were under Battalion control. Strength of the companies was 120-140 men.

Promptly and 0300 the leading assault boat slid into the water and struck out for the far shore. 358th Infantry, crossing on the right in vicinity of HANAU and DOERNIGHEIM, struck at thin air as 2nd Company, 9th OCS had withdrawn two platoons before relieving troops arrived. The sector was wide open, and the assault Battalions landed without enemy action.

On the Division left, 357th Infantry had scarcely landed its first wave when burp guns and small arms broke the silence. The firing rose in crescendo as assault elements pushed inland. 3rd Battalion on the regiment left was soon in a hot fight with OCS students who centered their line at BISCHOFSCHEIM. 357th directed artillery fire on the town and 3rd Battalion closed as fires were lifted. The town was captured in 1000. 1st Battalion pushed on to capture HOCHSTADT, WACHENBUCHEN and later the high ground (Hill 188) 2000 yards North of WACHENBUCHEN. 2nd Battalion crossed and seized Hill 205, the main crossroad 2500 yards Northwest of HOCHSTADT.

358th in quick succession cleared DOERNIGHEIM, WILHELMSBAD, KURZIGHEIMERHOF, BRUCKKOBEL and MITTELBUCHEN. [Page 53]

Work was begun on foot bridges, ferry and bridges for vehicles.

359th crossed in early morning and assembled vicinity HOCHSTADT minus 3rd Battalion which relieved 3rd Battalion 357th at BISCHOFSCHEIM. The latter moved to WACHENBUCHEN.

The footbridge and ferry were completed in mid-morning and light vehicles began to cross. From the West the Germans directed artillery fire in search for the bridging area.

By noon all objectives were attained in the 90th Division held a 5-6 mile bridgehead for the debouchment of two armored Divisions. The 4th Armored Division came from HANAU while the 6th Armored Division crossed the bridge which was completed at 1248.

At 1920 the bridge priority of 6th Armored Division ceased and Division completed crossing the bulk of its equipment. By midnight all of the Infantry Regiments, the Headquarters, and all

supporting artillery, tanks, and TDs were across. Only part of 315th Engineers in Division Headquarters itself remained to cross.

It was a profitable day: a 400 yard water barrier lay behind the Division. It had established a firm bridgehead, and covered the debouchment of two armored Divisions in the space of 9 hours. 2 OCS Companies had been badly bloodied. Some 400 Germans were captured. Sending the Division PWs over the 40,000 mark.

29 March 1945

357th Infantry -- Continued advance against negligible resistance. By late afternoon 1st Battalion was at KAICHEN, 2nd Battalion at GROSS KARBEN and 3rd Battalion 359 was attached for operational control in 1000A while it searched out the wooded area North of FECHENHEIM.

358th Infantry -- Starting after noon, 1st Battalion moved to HEIDENBERGEN, 2nd Battalion to ROSSDORF and 3rd Battalion to KILIANSTADTEN. I and R Platoon reconnoitered to South edge of PREUSSEN Woods and captured 30 PWs.

359th Infantry -- At 1000A 359th Infantry (-3rd Battalion) was attached to 4th Armored Division and organized as a CT. It moved motorized in the afternoon at 1300A with 2nd Battalion furnishing the advance guard. At STOCKHEIM the advance [Page 54] guard encountered opposition and remainder of Battalion detrucked and worked into the town. After clearing STOCKHEIM at 1800, 2nd Battalion moved on to SELTERS where they again met resistance. One platoon Company E and two tanks went East to BLEICHENBACH, found nothing and unaware of the situation, returned and entered SELTERS from the North. German troops surrounded them and knocked out two tanks with bazooka fire. Company G and rest of E were still fighting to get into town to contact the platoon of E. Company G made a penetration was itself cut off from contact with the Battalion except by radio. Extreme darkness made further operations so uncertain that action was suspended until morning when it was planned to relieve the beleaguered units with Company F who was at EFFOLDERBACH and 1st Battalion who had gone to STOCKHEIM and BLEICHENBACH.

3rd Battalion, after accomplishing its mission for 357th Infantry, and contacting elements 5th Infantry Division at FECHENHEIM reverted to Division control as Division Reserve at 1430. Battalion remained in the area blocking Division left flank.

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- Reformed again, the Task Force was composed of Headquarters 773rd TD Battalion, Reconnaissance Company 773rd TD Battalion, Company D 712th Tank Battalion and 1 Platoon Company C 773rd TD Battalion. At 0600 the Task Force struck out on its mission of reconnoitering and blocking the Division right flank as the Division zone flared out from the bridgehead. Within 2 1/2 hours, the Task Force had covered 10 km reaching LANGENBERGHEIM. At that point they halted, since units on the right were meeting stiff resistance. The Division sector was changed to North, and then Northeast so the Task Force changed direction to Northwest and cleared and occupied the area HEIDENBERGEN, ALTENSTADT and NIEDER FLORSTADT. 110 prisoners were taken throughout the day.

90th Reconnaissance Troop -- Reconnoitered Division front. Late in the day reverted to XII Corps control to guard PWs from the spearheading armored units.

Division CP opened in its new location at WACHENBUCHEN at 1430A.

30 March 1945

Using trucks borrowed from the Artillery and 537th AAA (AW) Battalion as well as their own organic and attached vehicles (Tanks and TDs), the regiment moved motorized at 0700. [Page 55]

357th Infantry -- By 1220, 357th Infantry had rolled 30 miles. It stopped for the night with 1st Battalion at BREUNGESHAIN, 2nd Battalion at ESCHENROD and 3rd Battalion at RUDINGSHAIN.

358th Infantry -- The regiment was instructed to proceed with all possible speed to help 359th Infantry at SELTERS if necessary as the extent of the resistance was not known at the time. 1st Battalion moved out but an arrival found SELTERS cleared by 359th Infantry. Preceded by PAST FORCE SPIESS the regiment moved on. At USENBORN an estimated 120 Germans halted the TASK FORCE, who then circled around the opposition to WENINGS. 2nd Battalion 358th Infantry engaged the enemy force and drove it back toward GEINHAAR, which the Battalion then cleared. 2nd Battalion went on to WENINGS and established roadblocks to the Southeast from OBER SEEMEN to GEINHAAR.

3rd Battalion, moving on the outside to cover the flank, encountered enemy infantry, 2 tanks and an assault gun at BINDSACHSEN. Artillery fire drove off the enemy force who withdrew East, pursued by our shelling. 3rd Battalion then assembled at GEDERN, outposting that area.

1st Battalion, moving up an inside route, reached the day's objectives without meeting organized resistance. Company A stopped at KAULSTOSS, Company B at SICHENHAUSEN with a platoon at HIRCHENHAIN, and Company C at BURKHARDS.

359th Infantry -- Company F left EFFOLDERBACH at 0615 to attack SELTERS from the Southwest. 1st Battalion in order A, B and C Companies approached from the Southeast by way of BLEICHENBACH.

By 0730 Company F had contacted and passed through Company G and the platoon of E and mopped up the town. 60 prisoners from XV Replacement and Training Battalion were captured.

After clearing SELTERS the regiment moved out with 1st Battalion on left, and 2nd Battalion on right on foot until LISSBERG when troops were motorized and moved to QUECK (1st Battalion) and SANDLOFS (2nd Battalion). 3rd Battalion remained in Division Reserve and moved after Division CP. Established roadblocks vicinity Division CP, putting Company L at MERKENFRITZ, Company I at HIRZENHAIN and Company K Northwest of STEINBERG.

TASK FORCE SPIESS -- Given the mission of reconnoitering Division front through the area bypassed by 4th Armored Division which had sped up on the left and cut back some distance above. TASK FORCE SPIESS hit the road at 0600, and cleared town after town as it moved forward. 96 PWs were captured and a number of [Page 56] enemy killed and wounded as firefights were had at BOBENHAUSEN, BERGHEIM, HIRZENHAIN and USENBORN. At USENBORN one M10 was knocked out by an enemy AT gun while another enemy AT gun was in turn destroyed by the 2nd Platoon 773rd Reconnaissance Company.

Division CP traveled 21 miles to open at STEINBERG at 1600.

31 March 1945

Only spotty small arms fire was encountered as 90th Division raced 25 more miles on the trail of 4th Armored Division. Prisoners still collected by the hundreds as towns were cleared by passage of troops through them. By night forward elements were on a general line.

Division CP displaced twice, first to HERBSTEIN (18 miles), then to BERNSHAUSEN (14 miles). TASK FORCE SPIESS was dissolved in late afternoon as roads forward were now jammed with armored elements, eliminating the need for the Force.

The 359th Infantry remained attached to the 4th Armored Division and 90th Reconnaissance Troop was still guarding prisoners under Corps control.

The onrushing troops swept past incalculable enemy matériel whose mounting proportions were later on to present problems for guard details. 25 locomotives, 500 assorted flat and boxcars, 50 airplane engines (ME 109s and FW 190s), estimated 2500 HMGs [heavy machine guns], estimated 3000 rifles, estimated 3000 bayonets and 25 quadruple 20 mm AA guns were some of the equipment captured in the final day's efforts.

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The 90th Division which had entered March so quietly now roared out like the proverbial lion. March was a month of swift movement, rapid changes. A month so fluid that orders were out of date before issue. Map sheets were scarcely pasted together before they were old as yesterday's newspaper. Almost the entire month was one of pursuit as the 90th sped 250 miles into Germany.[Page 57]

Four principal rivers were crossed: the KYLL, MOSELLE (for the second time), the RHINE -- once dreaded barrier; yet easiest crossed of all -- and the MAIN. From the hills of EIFEL to the hills of HESSEN the Division had moved at will against an enemy in chaotic rout.

For the Wehrmacht it was an ignominious month. The German's hastily deployed forces were overwhelmed, their strong points destroyed. In desperation, the enemy leveled flak guns in profligate numbers for direct ground fire. Gone were the cities and the industries they once protected. Now their chief use was to delay and harass. But nothing it seemed could stop the thundering forces which broke like a tidal wave over the West Wall and engulfed the heart of

German industry. At last even the German civilians were turning against their own soldiers, driving them from their towns and hanging out the white flags of surrender. Prisoners came by the hundreds and 13,365 were gathered up to raise the Division totaled to 41,859. Seven tanks and twelve SP guns boosted the Division record of enemy armor destroyed or captured to 473 tanks and 181 SP guns. Innumerable flak guns were overrun and destroyed and 11 German airplanes were definitely downed by Division units with 10 other probably destroyed.

Two principal cities -- MAINZ and DARMSTADT were captured as well as countless smaller towns and villages. Now the Division was poised to continue its history-making mission -- the slicing of Germany in two parts across its middle.

EARNEST
COMMANDING
BOOTH
G-3
[Page 58]