

Authority **NND 735017**
 By **13r** NARA Date **12/9**

358th Infantry - History -

11 December 1944

Like the preceding month, December was to embrace another remarkable episode in the history of the 358th Infantry Regiment. The successful crossing of the Moselle River was to prove but a prelude to the even more mighty operation of crossing the Saar River. Though each operation will be well marked in the annals of American Military Operations, the latter will be characterized by a terrain most favorable to the enemy and by the determined fighting of companies, depleted in strength, against the fortifications of the Siegfried Line.

The first day in the month of December found the Regiment assembled in the vicinity of Veckering, France, and billeted in several German barracks. A few days previous, the Regiment had been relieved from attachment to the 10th Armored Division and its mission in that sector. Arrival at Veckering Barracks began an intensive program of training and of rehabilitation of troops. The prospect of replacements before the Saar Operation were not good, and so the existing fighting power had to be trained to its maximum effectiveness.

In accordance with the particular needs of each unit, training programs were initiated by the Battalions to encompass all of the requirements of the future operations. The men were given the opportunity of firing their basic and primary weapons on makeshift ranges. Along with the training there was an entertainment program, arranged by 1st Lt. Ackel, SSO. The Chaplains conducted religious services in all areas.

Since the Moselle Operation and the succeeding attachment to the 10th Arm'd Div., some changes in command had taken place. Col. Christian H. Clarke, Jr. the Regimental Commanding Officer, because of illness, was evacuated, and Lt. Col. Frederick H. Loomis, the Reg'l Ex. O. assumed command. The following is the status of command on 1 December 1944:

	<u>REGIMENT</u>	<u>1st BN</u>	<u>2nd BN</u>	<u>3rd BN</u>
Cmdg Officer	Lt Col Loomis	Maj Nichols	Maj Wallace	Maj Spivey
Ex. Officer	Lt Col Schultz	Maj Caldecott	Capt Morrison	Capt Shipe
S-3	Capt Stotler	Lt. Aughtry	Lt. Smith	Lt. Elwell
S-2	Maj Falvey	Lt. Petsche	Lt. Anderson	Lt. Rudes
S-4	Maj Olson	Lt. Martin	Lt. Utterbeck	Lt. Goodman
<u>1st Battalion</u>		<u>2nd Battalion</u>		<u>3rd Battalion</u>
Co. A CO	Lt. Neil	Co E CO	Capt Newcombe	Co I CO
B	Lt. Campbell	F	Lt. Platter	K
C	Lt. Brown	G	Capt Rust	L
D	Capt Wright	H	Lt. Helle	M
				Capt Collier
				Lt. Shortridge
				Capt. Bryan
				Benedict
<u>First Sergeants</u>				
Co. A	Ohlson	Co E	Gray	Co I
B	Blakley	F	Langley	K
C	Cappa	G	Murphy	L
D	Lewis	H	Miller	M
				Howe
				Hesse
				Kroyak
				Inman

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2 December 1944

Still no definite plans were made for the forthcoming crossing of the Saar River. The way was devoted to further rehabilitation of the troops. Word was received from the Division G-3 that the Regiment would probably not move until the 4th of December. However, twenty-five 50 Cal. gun crews were alerted for movement to the sector along the Saar occupied by the 358th Infantry - for the purpose of supplying long range harrassing fire across the river. Movement of the crews was postponed, however, and eventually cancelled entirely.

The 358th Infantry organized a provisional battalion to parade in the streets of Metz. The battalion, under the command of Major James S. Spivey, the 3rd Bn CO, attired in new uniforms, was among the many representatives to march in the historic city and to receive the ovations of the population. At the ceremony, several individuals were presented with the coveted Croix de Guerre by the French Army.

358TH INFANTRY REGIMENT - HISTORY -

3 December 1944

General Van Fleet, the Division CO, called a meeting in the Regimental area of all Company Commanders and Regimental and Battalion Staff Officers to orient them on the action in which the Regiment would be involved shortly. It became quite certain that the 358th Infantry would have an important mission in the coming operation. The experiences derived from the Mosselle Crossing promised to be of material value in establishing a bridgehead over the Saar River.

At 2100 the Regiment was alerted for movement on the following day to an assembly area along the Saar River, in preparation for an assault crossing in the vicinity of Pachten and Dillingen. Directly following the Alert, the Division Field Message number 4, which follows in part, was received:

3. 358TH INFANTRY

- a. 358th moves from present location to assy area indicated on overlay, closing prior to 041600. Route: MONNEREN, LACROIX, BIBICHE, BOUZONVILLE, HEDDENDORF, RAUENFACHEN AND GISINGEN. Div MP's will provide traffic control and mark route. 50 2 1/2 ton trucks will report to Vehicleing Barrack's at 040900.
- b. Push rcn to and outpost river line within Z at earliest practicable moment.
- c. Regimental CP - Gisingen.
- d. Both Regiments (357 & 358) will, within Z, rcn for possible crossing sites, and positions for direct fire weapons, including tanks and TD's. OP's will be established early to allow rapid buildup of detailed enemy information.

Following the receipt of the Division Order, S-3 Stotler informed the Bns of the scheduled move - and began work on the regimental order for the movement to the new area.

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December 1944

The following order was issued during the early hours of the 4th December:

358 Inf
4 Dec 44

1. a. 358th Inf moves from present location to assembly area indicated on overlay beginning at 040800 Dec closing prior to 041600 Dec.
 - b. Route: MONNEREN - LACROIX - BIBICHE - BOUZONVILLE - NIEDALTDORF - RAMMELFANGEN - GISINGEN. Div. MP's will provide Traffic control and mark route.
 - c. Regimental CP opens Gisingen 041100 Dec.
2. a. FIRST BATTALION
Departs present area at 0930 in 25 2½ ton trucks and organic trans. - arrive detrucking area at 1130, to close in assembly area 1230. Push rcn to outpost river line within Z prior to 1400.
 - b. SECOND BATTALION
Departs from present area in twenty-three (23) 2½ ton trucks and organic trans at 1400, to arrive detrucking area at 1600, closing in assembly area prior to 1630.
 - c. THIRD BATTALION
Departs present area at 1000 in 25 2½ ton trucks and organic trans., arriving detrucking area at 1200, to close in assembly area 1300. Push rcn to and outpost river line within Z prior to 1430.
 - d. CANNON CO.
Departs present area at 1015 to arrive in vic GISINGEN at 1215. Moving into gun positions vic (231826) to support within Regimental Zone.
 - e. ANTI-TANK CO.
Departs present area at 1030 to arrive GISINGEN at 1230. Place one platoon in support each 1st and 3rd Bns; one (1) platoon in depth within Regimental Zone.
 - f. CO. B 315 MED BN
Departs Veckering 1415 to arrive IHN 1600.
 - g. SERVICE CO. Departs present area 1345 to arrive IHN 1530.
 - h. REG'T'L HQ CO: Departs with fwd ech at 0800 to close GISINGEN AT 1000. Departs rear ech at 1530 to close GISINGEN t 1550.
3. a. All Bns and Regt I & R Platoons will establish OP's within Reg'T'L Z on river line at earliest practicable moment. Reports will be made to this Hq by 1800.
 - ba 1st and 3rd Bns will rcn within Z for possible crossing sites and positions for direct fire weapons, including tanks and TD's.
4. a. Bn CO will designate march units of not to exceed 25 vehicles. Each march unit will have a control and tail officer.
 - b. Control speed: 20 MPH
Maximum Speed: 30 "
Minimum Speed:
Minimum distance between vehicles - 50 yards.

LOOMIS
CMDG

OFFICIAL:

STOTLER
S-3

Movement of the Regiment occupied most of the day, the movement beginning with the First Battalion at 0930 and completing with the Second Battalion closing in its assembly area around 1700. The new Regimental CP opened in the town of GISINGEN at 1230. The move to the assembly area was without incident except for last march units in the column. As the remainder of the Hq Co vehicles approached the town of Gisingen, direct, high velocity fire was received from across the river causing the injury of one man from the Company. As the Second Battalion detrucked to continue it's march to the assembly area at Gisingen, the column was again fired upon by a direct fire weapon causing the death of one man and the injury of three others.

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December 1944 (cont)

Darkness found the 1st Bn assembled in Ste. Barbara, the 2nd Bn in Guisengen and the 3rd Bn in Oberlimberg. The 1st and 3rd Bns maintained OP's along the river line. By darkness, Major Nichols and Major Spivey, 60's of the 1st and 3rd Bns., respectively, had reconnoitered the river bank in company with the Bn S-3's. The attached TD's had reconnoitered the high ground overlooking the river for the purpose of finding suitable positions from which to effectively support the river crossing with direct fire. Meanwhile, a self-propelled 155mm gun was made available as another direct fire weapon - and arrangements were made with Company B of the 315th Engr's to clear a field of fire for the SP. Co B of the 81st Cml Bn was also made available to the Regiment for the purpose of screening the daylight operations on the river with smoke and to support the assaulting battalions with fire.

The Regimental I & R Platoon played an important role from the very beginning of the operation by manning two OP's on the west side of the river. Lt. Payne's men were to become of further assistance later on by assisting in the maintenance of contact with the Battalions after they crossed the river.

During the night of the fourth, the engineers worked on the river road that was to become the main supply route. While the platoon, headed by Lt. Denbargh, was engaged in sweeping the road, it drew considerable small arms and mortar fire from across the river and was forced to disperse. All but a small section of the river road was swept this night. The remainder was swept just prior to the assault crossing.

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358th Infantry - History -

5 December 1944

The fifth of December began the final day of planning before the Regiment was to make it's assault crossing of the Saar River. The written Division Order was not expected until later in the day, but all concerned were oriented verbally by the Regimental Commander, Lt. Col. Loomis and the Regimental S-3, Capt Stotler. For the crossing the Regiment was to be assisted by the 206th Engineer Battalion, Commanded by Lt. Col. Prong. The three Battalions spent the entire day perfecting their plans for the crossing, making further reconnaissance of the crossing areas and briefing the troops on the details of the operation. Among the details in the plan, were the arrangements with the 206th Engrs for the crossing of the assault Bns. Some 80 boats were made available - while 68 could be manned for the first wave. Just after the assault waves had crossed, Co B of the 315th Engr Bn was to begin work on a foot bridge - to be completed prior to dawn and in operation by daylight. All daylight operations along the river site were to be screened with smoke, from a Corps Chemical Smoke Unit, assisted by the 4.2 Mortars.

In the early afternoon, the Division Commander, General Van Fleet, conferred at the Regimental CP with Lt. Col. Prong and Lt. Col. Loomis. A map reconnaissance was initiated for the purpose of determining the best crossing sites, considering the enemy fields of fire, commanding terrain and the condition of the river and its banks. A ground reconnaissance was then made by all commanders concerned.

Part of the general plan was that the 90th Div forces would contact the forces of the 95th Div on the far side of the river, on the 90th's right. Liaison was constantly maintained with this unit. Liaison was also established with the 357th Inf which was to assault on the 358th's left.

During the day, the Regiment received the Division FO #42, and from this order, made it's FO #27, which follows:

358th Inf
051930 Dec 44

F.O. #27

1. A. Annex No. 1 - Intelligence.B. (1) XX Corps continues the atk to force brhd over the Saar River.

(2) 5th Inf Div completes mop-up of SE portion of Corps Z, W of Saar, prepared to exploit brhd of 95th Inf Div.

(3) 95th Inf Div continues expansion of present brhd.

(4) 10th AD continues demonstration in Merzig, area prepared to cross Saar within Brhd and continue atk to the E.

(5) 90th Div will force crossing of Saar River within Z with Regts abreast in order from R to L: 358th, 060415A; 357 Inf 060415A. 359th on N exerts pressure to front by fire and prepares to cross within Z of other Regts preparatory to commitment in a NE direction, or to assault hill mass to immediate front from present pos.

2. 358th Inf -Atchd: Co. A 712th Tk Bn

Co. B 315th Engr Bn

Co. B 81st Cml Bn

Co. B 315th Med Bn

Support: 206th Engr Bn

344th FA Bn

Co B 773rd TD Bn

a. Forces crossing of Saar River within Z at 060415A Dec with 1st Bn on R S, 3rd Bn on L, N.b. Captures Pachten and Dillingen.c. Continues atk to secure Div Obj, high ground NE Piesbach.3. 1st Bn -Atchd: 1 Plat Co B 315th EngrSupport: Co C 206th Engr Bn

1 Plat Co A 712 Tk Bn

1 Plat Co B 773 TD Bn

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5 December 1944 (cont)

- (1) Force assault crossing Saar River at site indicated at 060415A Dec.
- (2) Drive rapidly to reach P11 prior to daylight.
- (3) At daylight continue atk to capture that portion of Dillingen within Z.
- (4) Maintain contact with 3rd Bn on left.
- (5) With Right on Prims River protect Regl R until elements 95th Div are contacted.
- (6) Continue atk to secure Objs A and B within Z.

b. 3rd Bn -

Atchd: 1 Plat Co B 315th Engr Bn

Support: Co B 206th Engr Bn
1 Plat Co A 712 Tk Bn
1 Plat Co B 773 TD Bn

- (1) Force assault crossing Saar River at site indicated at 060415A Dec.
- (2) Atk to secure all portions Pachten possible prior to daylight.
- (3) At daylight continue atk to reach P11 and capture that portion of Dillingen within Z.

(4) Maintain contact with 2nd Bn 357th Inf on left.

(5) ~~With Right on~~ Continue atk to secure Objs A and B within Z.c. 2nd Bn -

- (1) Close Bn in fwd assy area vic Oberlimberg at 060400 Dec.
- (2) Establish liaison with 3rd Bn, prepared to cross Saar River on Regl Order following 3rd Bn either on assault boats or foot bridge, mopping-up Pachten at daylight.

(3) Be prepared to cross in 1st Bn Z on Regl Order in event crossing at N site is not practicable.

(4) Be prepared to repel counter-attack within Regl Z.

(5) Prepare to mop-up within Regl Z behind assault Bns.

d. Cannon Co -

(1) Initially, from positions vic 236834, support assault crossing on call Bn CO's.

(2) Be prepared to cross Saar River on Regl Order to provide close support within Regl Z.

e. Anti-Tank Co -

- (1) Initially, from positions W bank Saar River, support assault crossings.
- (2) Cross 1 Plat each assault Bn to provide AT protection on far shore.
- (3) Atch AT mine Plat to 2nd Bn for mine clearance and removal, and demolition work on far shore.

f. Co. B 315th Engr Bn -

(1) Atch 1 Plat each assault Bn for brhd clearing and demolition work on far shore.

(2) Construct and maintain 1 footbridge on site indicated as soon as practicable.

(3) Construct necessary approaches and exits for operation of L V T (A)s and DUKW S.

g. Co A 712th Tk Bn -

(1) Initially place 2 plats on W bank Saar River to support crossing.

(2) Be prepared to cross Saar River on Regl Order.

(3) On crossing place 1 plat in support each assault Bn.

h. Co B 81st Cml Bn -

(1) Initially, from positions vic 257819, support crossings on call of Bn CO's.

(2) Be prepared to cross on Regl Order to support adv within Regl Z.

i. Field Artillery -

Support: 344th FA Bn, 177th FA Bn, 345th FA Bn (reinf fires 344th FA Bn)

(1) Fires prior to H-Hour.

(a) Preparation - None

(b) Close support planned concentrations on call of Bn CO's.

(2) Fires subsequent to H-Hour - on call.

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6 December 1944

358th Infantry - History

The first Battalion began marching from its assembly area at Ste Barbara at 0300 to a forward assembly area along the Saar River in the vicinity of Wallerfangen, once the home of Franz von Papen, the former German ambassador to Turkey. At 0415 the Battalion began the crossing with companies B and C leading, followed by companies A and D, and Battalion Headquarters. After eminently successful crossings, the assault companies pushed forward without heavy opposition until phase line one, the Dillingen Railroad Tracks, was reached. The crossing of the First Battalion came as a complete surprise to the enemy. Before daylight the First Battalion blew out one pillbox and took nine prisoners. The Battalion CP was established in a large chateau along the main road between the river and the railroad tracks. After dawn, the Battalion reorganized and further secured its foothold in Dillingen, waiting, meanwhile, to tie in with the Third Battalion on the left, and the 95th Division on the right. On the right flank of the Battalion flowed the Prims River, and across the Prims the terrain was dotted with several pillboxes, one of which contained a machine gun that continually harassed even the Battalion CP and the assault troops, especially in the later assault on the slaughter house. The slaughter house, on the extreme right flank of the Battalion was not included in the operations of the first day - due to its vulnerability to fire from across the Prims River. However, the eventual capture of it proved not only a commendable military feat - but a boon to the assault forces across the river. Throughout the day, the area occupied by the First Battalion was subjected to extremely heavy mortar and artillery fire. Casualties inflicted by the artillery and by other means numbered ten while the prisoner catch for the day was fifty-one. At the close of the day, Company A occupied a sector on the right of the Battalion, outposting the Prims River, while Companies C and B remained on line along the tracks.

Meanwhile, the Third Battalion prepared to negotiate its crossing of the Saar River. At 0250 on the morning of the 6th of December, the troops of the Battalion moved out of the town of Oberlimberg and proceeded through the woods between Oberlimberg and the river bank and then scrambling down the almost vertical cliff overlooking the river. This preliminary operation proved equally as difficult as it had been anticipated. Control became the greatest problem as the men reached the bottom of the cliff and dispersed to the boats waiting at the waters edge.

The entire Third Battalion effected its crossing without mishap and without receiving fire. No fire was received until the assault elements were well on their way over the exposed ground to the town of Pachten. Company L proceeded on the left with Company I on its right. For the assault crossing, the first platoon of Company M was attached to Company L and the second platoon of heavy machine guns was attached to Company K. The mortar platoon remained initially on the west side of the river with the observers accompanying the assault elements of the Battalion. An eerie atmosphere prevailed the reorganization on the east bank, as an enemy plane swooped low and dropped several flares.

With the Battalion deposed in the same formation - two Companies abreast, Company I on the right and Company L on the left - the Battalion began its trek into the town. Progress was slow and extremely hazardous due to the flooded condition of the east bank which was potted with shell holes and trenches that dropped several men into the cold water and mud. As Company I approached the town it drew the fire of two pillboxes. The Company by-passed the strong-points initially, however, and returned later in the day to knock them out with the assistance of the Engineers. Company L followed the same procedure when it drew the cross-fire of several automatic weapons along with mortar and bazooka fire. The Company secured

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358th Infantry - History -

December 1944 (cont)

the first six houses and then reorganized and planned a systematic procedure to clean out the remainder of the street. The Engineer assault team of Co. B., 315th Engrs blew up one pillbox on the right flank of Company L as the first and second platoons of the rifle company moved forward to clear up the remaining resistance in the area. Seven Germans were found hidden in one basement who fired American M1 rifles as the Company advanced. Three of this group was captured and the rest killed or wounded. During this action the Company lost, among others, T/Sgt Pinelli who was killed instantly when a German refused to heed the call to surrender and whelled about and shot Pinelli. A civilian of Luxembourg proved of great value by pointing out the precise location of a well hidden pillbox, which the Company then knocked out.

The Second Battalion was originally ordered to cross in the area of the First Battalion, but shortly after 0600 on the morning of the 6th, the order was to cross in the site used by the Third Battalion. By 0800 the 315th Engineers had completed construction of a footbridge near the crossing site of the Third Battalion. Immediately the Second Battalion, with Company E leading began to cross on it. Throughout the day the footbridge became subjected to intense enemy machine gun and mortar fire, which made the operation a difficult one. Several times during the crossing the troops were pinned down. However, by 1500 all three rifle companies and a part of Company H were across.

In crossing the Second Battalion experienced great difficulty due to the lack of smoke along the river, thus affording the enemy clear observation from the high ground north of Pachten.

By mid-afternoon the situation looked better than it had since the start of the operation. The harassing small-arms fire on the bridge site had been eliminated, and the approaches to the bridge site were ready for use. Consultation between Infantry and Engineer Staff Officers concluded that in twelve hours a 400 foot span would be completed.

As the Battalions concentrated on securing their positions for the night, with the Third Battalion just short of the railroad on the Regimental Left Flank, and the First Battalion on the railroad on the extreme Right Flank along the Prims River, and the Second Battalion in reserve behind the Third Battalion, the Regimental and Battalion Supply crews began their nerve wracking business of ferrying supplies and ammunition across the river.

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7 December 1944

Because of the heavy enemy shelling during the early hours of the morning, the Engineers abandoned work on the bridge. Shells were landing approximately one every 30 seconds. A miscellaneous, but thoroughly capable organization, comprised mostly of cooks, drivers and other ordinarily non-front line troops, kept the supplies flowing during the night by ferrying them across the river and hand-carrying them over long, hazardous routes to the Battalion and Company Supply Depots. They were constantly harrassed by enemy fire. The boat, returning to the west bank carried, under guidance of Medics and MP's, the wounded and the prisoners.

Daylight found the Battalions well supplied and in well linked defensive positions along the west side of the railroad tracks. The strategically placed and well manned pillboxes facing them from the east side of the tracks, however, made any appreciably advance impossible. The town itself was **not** held by a great number of Germans, but the pillboxes and camouflaged houses, supported by roving tanks, covered all movement that might be attempted.

The Companies concentrated their efforts on clearing the houses and resistance on the west side of the tracks, from the Prims River through the entire Regimental front.

At 1500, Captain Stotler, the Regimental S-3, issued Field Message #2, which ordered the Battalions to continue their attack, neutralize pillboxes and strongpoints and to maintain contact with units on the right and left.

Communications, due to the commendable efforts of the wire crews on both sides of the river, were excellent. The crew on the far side of the Saar deliberately exposed themselves to fire of the enemy as they kept a constant patrol checking their lines.

From information gleaned from the assault companies, Infantry and Artillery S-2's and S-3's planned for targets to be fired during the night. The Regimental S-4 completed arrangements to have at least one vehicle per Battalion "Allegatored" across after dark. The Division Supply promised a supply of smoke pots.

During the day, the Regiment learned, with considerable regret, that the well liked and thoroughly efficient Lt. Col. Munson, CO 344th FA had been wounded and evacuated. He was with a tank-mounted 155 when an 88 made a direct hit. A "76" tank was now replacing the 155.

Darkness found the Battalions consolidating their won positions, and also saw the supply crews, once again, hard at the all night task of getting supplies and equipment to the Battling Battalions.

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8 December 1944

During the past 24 hours the Saar has risen two feet and four inches, causing more difficulties for the Supply and Evacuation personnel. The Engineers were constantly delayed by heavy shelling.

The Battalions across the river were unable to advance appreciably due to the uncertainty of supplies, the lack of armor and AT Equipment and by the stubborn resistance of the enemy in houses, pillboxes and tanks. The Battalion positions were under constant fire. The Third Battalion received three counter-attacks from Infantry which was supported by tanks. And three times the attacks were repulsed.

However, pillboxes and houses were cleared up to the RR tracks and, though the casualties were fairly heavy, many strategic enemy strong-points were reduced and many prisoners were captured. And many heroic actions marked the days progress. The First Battalion jumped-off at 0820 and immediately became engaged in a hot fight across the tracks. Company B platoon, lead by Lt. Wm. Fablinger, captured an armored OP that had been by-passed and was operating in the rear. It had three stories, steel turret, stood three feet above the ground and was expertly camouflaged by natural grass. This OP was equipped with fire control instruments and an operating communication system. One officer and eleven enlisted men were netted here.

The Second Battalion continued its cleaning-up operations and was unsuccessfully counter-attacked. They were in receipt of constant fire during the whole day. The Third Battalion, like the First and Second Battalions, made little progress, other than clearing-up. They did, however, discover evidences of dug-up mine fields.

Regiment learned through its inexhaustible sources, that the pillboxes to the front were manned by six to ten men, one or two MG's, 1 20mm. It also learned that some of these boxes were all direction boxes, some of which had 75mm guns outside them.

The Third Battalion captured a 75mm gun and scouted around for ammunition to feed it. It was their only AT defense.

Patrols and OP's reported that there were heavy enemy troop concentrations on the roads between Dillingen and Diefflen. Germans were concentrating in Diefflen. The Air Corps visited Dillingen during the day and left its mark. The vibrations were felt by the Battalions in Pachten. The enemy retaliated by even heavier shelling than before, and the river was well screened with smoke, the shelling caused damage and casualties. Telephone communications were frequently interrupted, but Radio took its place.

General Van Fleet, the Division Commander, ordered that an attempt be made this night to get AT and Armor across to support the beleaguered troops.

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December 1944

The Regiment still received counter-thrusts in all its sectors, none of which, however, were effective. The Battalion Commanders and Company CO's were cheered by the news that replacements would soon arrive, and in the meantime they put cooks, drivers and non-essential men on the line. Overhead observation planes sought out the hidden German guns and reported to the artillery.

The troops were still faced with the formidable boxes across the tracks and their supporting tanks. The 2nd Bn and 2rd Bn jumped off at daylight, the 1st Bn protected the right flank. The advance was slow. Each box had to receive individual treatment, and the attackers were always under fire from a supporting box.

The 3rd Bn, in its attack, pressed the captured 75mm gun into service and got desired results. During the day the Bns methodically moved forward and reduced houses and boxes within their advance. The enemy was stubborn and progress was slow. It was flesh against roaming armor and hidden guns, but the troops doggedly fought ahead and successfully cleared several town blocks. The boxes and houses that would have held up the advance and endangered the flank units, were bypassed and cleaned up later by the 1st Bn. The Regiment received heavy casualties but also took many prisoners and its toll of enemy dead.

In the 2nd Bn area, after reducing a box and capturing its defenders, Lts Cloutman and Gorse, with some 8 enlisted men, occupied the box. An enemy tank staged a counter-attack and after desperate and frantic fight, the Americans were forced to surrender.

Special mention to T/Sgt. James L. Yates, of D Co, who after discovering that the personnel of a mortar OP had been wounded, made his way thru small arms and MG fire and manned the weapon, and because of his expert firing, broke up a possible counter-offensive forming nearby.

The TD's and the 155's were now engaging the enemy and their forceful support was highly praised by the Bn CO's. The wire crews again demonstrated their courage and ability and kept the wires open. Cannon Co., under Capt Charles Wise, threw its guns into the fray and supported all Bns with "stuff that Heinies don't like!"

At 2230 it was known that four tanks were across the river, and a TD Platoon for the 1st Bn on the way. The regiment was allotted 1000 rounds of 8 inch ammunition, estimated at \$250. per round. A disturbing element was now introduced. The enemy had infiltrated back in some sectors and were occupying boxes that had previously surrendered. From now on, all boxes would be rendered unusable.

During the night supplies and equipment were again ferried over, still by the same crews, and still under the same dangerous harassment.

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358th Infantry - History -

10 December 1944

At 0900 hours Lt. Col. Jacob W. Bealke, Jr. assumed command of the 358th Infantry Regiment, succeeding Col. Frederick H. Loomis, who acted as Commander since the evacuation of Colonel Christian H. Clarke, Jr., the Regimental Commanding Officer.

Heavy enemy shelling continued to harass the Bns during the night 9-10 December. The supply crews, assisted by the Engineers put supplies across the river, into the hands of the waiting hand-carrying supply parties. Counter-attacks were attempted in the 1st and 2nd Bn areas, but were repulsed without loss of ground. Company "A" received a severe counter-offensive in the morning that was preceded by the heaviest artillery barrage the Battalion had yet encountered. The 344th FA liaison officer with the Bn, called for heavy defensive fire. With this support and the support of TD's and tanks, the Infantry beat off the thrust without yielding ground.

The 3rd Battalion also received a counter-offensive in Co. L's area, which was quickly repulsed. In this action, the Company Commander, Capt. Bryan was wounded, but was not evacuated. Capt Hutchenson, also of L Company, was wounded and evacuated. The Company boasted five enemy tanks destroyed. They placed these tanks under guard to prevent their removal by the enemy.

During the afternoon Company A launched an attack on a fortified Slaughter-House located in the NW corner of the Bns sector. The S-H was further protected by three pillboxes, one of which harassed the river operations. The attack, supported by Cannon Co. and mortars and a squad of 315th Engineers, quickly won the S-H and, after considerable fighting, the Engineers placed C2 charges and reduced the boxes. The company then attacked through the rear and across a cemetery, where a counter-attack was forming. Once the cemetery was gained, they swept on and into a church which concealed a strong-point. This operation considerably lessened the obstacle of a future attack across the RR tracks.

Battalions reported that the enemy shelling was still the heaviest ever received. The river sites were constantly shelled, but the ferry and the allegator managed to get jeeps, TD's and tanks across, together with ammunition and supplies. By nightfall the shelling had punctured all of the rubber boats. The Regimental S-4 ordered that small boats be used, and under cover of darkness, these small craft carried supplies over and wounded back.

During the day, due to the shelling, communications were frequently interrupted, but the vigilant wire patrols maintained fairly constant communications. While wire was out, contact was efficiently maintained by Radio. And at night, bright fires could be seen raging in Dillingen---a tribute to the efficiency of the Artillery.

Authority NND 735017By 43r NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - 11 December 1944 - History

At 0001 the following message was dispatched to the CO, 3rd Bn:

FIELD MESSAGE # 3

MISSION FOR 11 DECEMBER 1944

1. Secure present positions while the 3rd Bn, ~~358~~ 359 Inf attempts to link up with you at your present North Flank.
2. CO, Col. Smith, 300 Radio Channel is "39".
3. When Joined, coordinate efforts will be made to clear pillbox in rear area.

STOTLER-S-3

BEALKE, Cmdg.

Shortly after midnight two enemy tanks fired on the 3rd Bn, but were beaten off, undamaged, by Cannon and Artillery fire. The enemy shelling, though lessened, continued to harass the troops.

The small boats continued throughout the night to carry supplies and by 0330 had the tank ammunition across. Progress was slow, but through the efforts of the miscellaneous supply crews, the Battalions were supplied for another day.

The Regiment was considerably under strength. The Battalion Commanders again requested replacements. The much needed reinforcements had been promised but as yet had not materialized.

Five "F" Co. men and three AT men returned after hiding behind the enemy lines. They reported that the enemy supplied the boxes by tank. Also stated that there were no enemy on the streets of Dillingen--they were all in boxes or in fortified houses. They also claimed that the American artillery had been "terrific".

And again, under enemy shell fire, the supply and evacuation continued. A plan to change the crossing sites was now under advisement.

Authority NND 735017

By 13r NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History -

12 December 1944

At 0200 the supply section reported that one-and-one-half days supplies were across the river. Heavy shelling now fell on the sites, and further attempts at supply were abandoned. At dawn, the river was smoked and the ferry was repaired, at 1115 it ferried two platoons of armor across. One platoon for the 2nd Bn and one for the 3rd Bn.

The 3rd Bn received an order to reduce pillboxes on the east side of the tracks in front of their position. Pfc Eugene Robison, Co. L, suggested using civilians to tell the boxes to surrender. His CO, Capt. Bryan, thinking this to be a good idea, asked the Bn CO for approval. Approval was granted. A citizen of Luxembourg was chosen and was promptly nicknamed "The Old Kraut". The "Old Kraut" under a white flag, advanced to each of the pillboxes and delivered the ultimatum, which was "give up or be blown up!" An Artillery observer radioed the progress of the "Old Kraut" to the Company, a play-by-play, who in turn relayed it by wire to Battalion, Regiment, Division and Artillery. A real broadcast! One officer and thirty-four enlisted men surrendered. One box, however, refused to surrender to a civilian, so Sgt. Martin Murray proceeded to the box, which then surrendered.

The TAC completed a bombing mission during the afternoon on the area to the front of the 1st Bn. They were also active over the main roads to and about Dillingen.

The Saar River was now rising two feet per hour. This endangered the smoke generators and considerable effort was involved in shifting them. However, by 1500 all armor except 3 TD's and 1 tank was across. On the far side of the river 2 tanks and 3 TD's worked over the roads to make safe passage for vehicles, and by 2000 hours and completed the mission.

The 4.2 Cml Mortars fired today 2500 rounds of W/P on the town of Dillingen, which was now burning brightly.

Authority NND 735017By 13r NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History -

13 December 1944

Under cover of darkness supplies were ferried to the far shore and handcarried to the companies. However, the operations were cut short due to punctured pontoons. Early in the morning, propaganda shells were fired at the enemy, under direction of Major Wm. J. Falvey, S-2.

The Battalions, still under harassing fire, continued to KO boxes and repel counter-thrusts. Even under these conditions, the troops managed to be well fed with supplies from abandoned German stores. Steak and French Fry's were no longer a rarity.

The ferry was again operating at 1100 and carried eight TD's and one jeep across during the morning, and returned with wounded and PW's. The operations across the river during the day were fairly constant.

At 1500 hours, the Regimental Operations Officer, Capt Stotler, issued the Plan "A" to the Bn CO's to study with a view to making an attack on the 15th. (Plan "A" is attached)

Dusk found the faithful supply crews on both sides of the river waiting for the all night haul. As darkness fell, the supplies began to flow across once more.

358th Infantry - History -14 December 1944

Supplies were ferried again in small boats and shortly after midnight the supplying was completed. Other than intermittent shelling, the situation in the 358th sector was generally quiet.

The 3rd Bn, with the mission of securing a group of pillboxes east of the RR, crossed the tracks at 0730, supported by tanks. The immediately met stubborn resistance. By 0830 4 PB's had been KO'd and 66 PW's taken, and the objective reached. Co's I and L tied in together, and with the 3rd Bn, 359, who were prepared to take over the positions. Major Spivey, 3rd Bn CO, reported that the artillery coordination was perfect.

Composition 2 was used to completely demolish captured pb's to prevent re-occupation. Previous experience had taught the Regt the value of such a move. At noon the enemy again commenced to heavily shell the river. The concentrations were so heavy that the 206th Engrs were ordered to quit their operations. During this shelling Capt. Lee, 206th Engrs, lost his life.

The 3rd Bn was relieved by elements of the 359th Inf and withdrew to Pachten as Regimental Reserve. The 1st and 2nd Bns maintained their positions.

Heavy shelling continued throughout the day, harassing troops and hampering river operations. The "Old Kraut" was again pressed into service, but this time he got no results - only threats.

At 2300 the shelling on the river let up somewhat and ferrying operations once again were under way. Because of the late start, the re-supplying operations continued until daylight.

This night was marked with tenseness, expectancy and confidence - dawn would bring the all important attack.

Authority **NND 735017**By **for** NARA Date **12/19**

358th Infantry - History

December 1944

STATUS OF COMMAND:

Lt. Col. Jacob W. Bealke, Jr.	- Cmdg Officer, 358th Inf.
Lt. Col. Frederick H. Loomis	- Executive Officer
Major William Falvey	- Intelligence Officer (S-2)
Captain Howard Stotler	- Operations Officer (S-3)
Major Arthur L Nichols, Jr	- CO, 1st Bn
Major Thomas Caldecott	- Ex. O., 1st Bn
Lt. Col. Schultz	- CO, 2nd Bn.
Major William Wallace	- Ex. O., 2nd Bn
M Major James Spivey	- CO, 3rd Bn
Capt. William R. Shipe	- Ex. O., 3rd Bn

ATTACHMENTS:

Co "A", 712th Tank Bn
 Co. "B", 81st Cml Bn
 Co. "B", 315th Engr Bn

SUPPORT

Co. "B", 773TD Bn
 344th F.A. Bn

LINE OF DEPARTURE

RR Tracks - Regimental front generally 1200m long.
 1st Bn LD - generally 600 m NE along RR from Prims River
 2nd Bn LD - generally 600m NE along RR joining from the 1st Bn.

ASSAULT FORMATION

Two Battalions abreast - 1st Bn on R; 2nd Bn on L.

REGIMENTAL RESERVE 3rd Battalion, to protect Regimental Right flank.

PHASE LINE 1 AND INITIAL OBJECTIVE:

1st Bn: Straight line running parallel with RR approx 250 m NE of LD., containing factories and several city blocks.
 2nd Bn: Straight line running parallel with RR, joining 1st Bn's, approx. 250m NE of LD, containing factories and several city blocks.

The Objective actually includes area about 50m NE of Phase Line 1.

ELEMENTS OF THE ENEMY KNOWN TO BE IN FRONT OF THE 90TH DIVISION ON THE MORNING OF 15 DECEMBER 1944:

719th Inf Div	155 Arty Regt (1 btry)
723 Regt (6 Co's & Bn Hqs)	19 Inf Div.
743 Regt (3 Co's, Regt & Bn Hqs)	59 Regt (Medics)
719 Engr Bn (1 Co.)	119 Engr Bn (1 Co)
21 Pz Div	668 Engr Bn, GHQ (2 Co's)
125 Regt (1 Co)	Para Tng and Repl Bn (1 Co)

The 2nd Bn jumped off on time. The 1st Bn, due to difficulty in placing TD's was delayed, but finally jumped off without them. At 0800 1st Bn had 2 companies and 2 tanks across the tracks and here encountered heavy resistance. By 0900 the TD's were in position and were giving perfect support in KOing boxes. Co. "B" on L and "C" on R, supported by armor, smashed through the fortified enemy and reached the first phase line at 0940.

Authority NND 735017

By 13r NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History -

25 December 1944 (cont)

After jumping off, the 2nd Bn was hampered by their exposed positions. Major Wallace called for screening smoke to cover their actions. The 4.2 Cml Mortars provided the screen, and under its protective cover, the 2nd Bn pushed ahead, reducing resistance and neutralizing fortifications in their path. The Bn CO was informed of the Regimental Order that he secure the phase line and coordinate with the 1st Bn before resuming the attack.

At 1000 hours both assault battalions were on the first phase line and were securing it. TD's were brought forward and used against pillboxes. Tanks supported the attackers on strongpoints. The entire attack was progressing favorably and the casualties were fairly light. Lt. Col. Bealke ordered that the line be secured and the attack resumed at 1300 hours.

At 1200 hours "F" Co. was committed and placed on the left of Co. "G", and at 1300 hours the 1st Bn jumped off, followed, at 1330, by the 2nd Bn. The two attacking battalions pushed ahead, inflicting heavy casualties and losses on the enemy. TD hits on pillboxes convinced many of the defenders to surrender.

1400 hours found the 1st Battalion on a line half way to the objective. Here Major Nichols, Bn CO, reported a gap between his Bn and the 2nd Bn. The Regimental CO ordered that the Battalions secure this line and tie-in for the night. The 3rd Bn would guard the Regimental Flank Tonight. He also informed them that tomorrow's operations would be just mopping up.

During the day the Division CG came to the CP and viewed the situation. Enemy artillery was light on the river and the Engineers made rapid progress. P-47's scouted the roads near Diefflen and then concentrated on the SE section of Dillingen.

Major Falvey, (S-2) reviewed all information gleaned from prisoners, and after the process of evaluating, compiled valuable reports for the Regiment and for the Division as a whole.

After dark, ammunition, food and equipment was ferried across the river to the waiting supply crews. The hand-carrying parties took up the lead from there and re-supplied the Battalions.

Night found the assault Bns through the defensive ring of pillboxes that protected Dillingen, and in possession of approximately 13 city blocks. Enemy infiltration, however, caused some companies to retrace steps and beat them off.

Authority NND 735017By 135 NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History -

December 1944

Shelling was light on the river. The 4.2 Cml Officer was notified that the smoke mission would be the same as the previous day. Before dawn the Bns reported that their supplies were safely across.

The assault Bns continued to flush out houses and basements. Flashlights were collected from the rear elements to aid this task. Many Germans were found hiding in dark holes beneath houses and barns.

At 1300 hours the 2nd Battalion moved forward and secured a new line. When the line was secured the 1st Bn swung Co "C" up to join the 2nd Bn. This move was made without resistance and netted the battalions more blocks and 20 more PW's.

Discussions were under way to reorganize the Battalions, using men from mortar platoons, AT platoons and Bn Hq Co's. Bn CO's protested and gave their views. The men from these platoons would be sent to a school in the rear and given a two-week course on Infantry Tactics and then be assigned to rifle companies.

Division informed the Regiment that its quota in the future for V/P would be about one-seventh of its present quota. The Regiment had used a tremendous amount of this explosive during the Saar Operation thus far.

During the clearing operations 104 civilians were rounded up and put into a basement for protection. Some were old people who just wouldn't move from their homes.

At midnight all Battalions reported the situation as quiet.

358th Infantry - History -

17 December 1944

Supply operations across the river went smoothly during the night. Some shelling fell on the river, but only infrequently. At 0930 the 1st Bn and the 3rd Bn reported that all was quiet in their sectors, but the 2nd Bn reported vehicular movement at a cross-road on the northern edge of town. Artillery was immediately placed, and the movement ceased. The enemy dropped shells in Wallerfangen that swept up the main street. No casualties, however, were reported.

The TD outfit reported the loss of four TD's. Two were hit by artillery; one ran over a mine and the fourth had mechanical failure.

The Commanding General of the Division and the G-3 directed Lt. Col. Bealke to make a cautious attack tomorrow, and to shy away from the river and the factory area. No aggressive action in those quarters was wanted until the 5th Div came abreast. With this message in mind, the Regiment issued FM #5 at 1900. In brief the order stated that the 2nd Bn, with the 359th Inf, would attack at 180800 Dec and complete the capture of the town of Dillingen, less the Steel Mill. 359th would be on the L, and the 2nd Bn 358 would be on the R. The 1st and 3rd Bns would be prepared to relieve the present positions of the 2nd Bn.

The Regiment was ordered to furnish one officer and four NCO's to assist in the instruction of recruits at the Division Training Camp. Darkness and the lack of shelling made the ferrying of supplies, this night, a fast moving operation, and by midnight re-supply was nearly complete.

Authority NNDT 35017By 13r NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History -

18 December 1944
(page # 1)

The 90th Infantry Division was in dire need of reinforcements at this time and stage of the campaign. The 358th Infantry was fighting in the streets of Dillingen, Germany, in the Siegfried Line. After several plans had been drafted at Division Headquarters, Major General Van Fleet, then Brigadier General, directed that all three Regimental Cannon Companies and the Battalion Anti-tank Platoons be disbanded, and personnel sent to an already set-up Infantry Training School in the rear Division areas. Fighting was so severe and bitter-contested by the enemy that the Battalion Commanders had already employed their drivers and Military Police Detachments in the line as riflemen.

Captain Charles E. Wise, Cannon Company Commander, was given command of Company "H", a heavy weapons company, and his men were distributed throughout the Regiment as front line "doughboys". No finer tribute could be made to the Cannon Company than to say that they "saved the day" on numerous occasions when it's fire halted numerous enemy counter-attacks. Cannon Company was always ready to fire for the front-line companies.

Authority NND 735017By 13r NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History

18 December 1944

During the night the 90th Division was alerted by Corps for a possible paratroop attack. All Battalions were notified. This was the result of the meager news infiltrating down from the north. It was known that enemy paratroopers had landed to our north, and due to considerable air activity, it was presumed that some might have landed in our immediate vicinity.

At 0700 all Battalions were prepared to take action ordered in FM #5, and at 0800 the 2nd Battalion, Co's "F" on L and "G" on R, jumped off. Directly after the jump off, Major Wallace ordered all artillery in his sector lifted. The Battalion moved forward cautiously and searched every house. At 0900 the Battalion was instructed not to halt on the 1st phase line because 359's "K" and "L" companies were already on their objective. At 0905 the 2nd Battalion was on its way to phase line 2, and at 1400 was on the objective. 359's 3rd Battalion now tied-in with 358's 2nd Battalion and a contact point was established. At 1900 a small enemy force was spotted at the contact point and was quickly dispersed by grenades. The 2nd Battalion received no casualties during the days operation. It did, however, take eight prisoners. The Battalion now awaited for further orders.

At 2330 the Regimental S-3 issued the Regimental FO #28, which briefed, is as follows:

358TH INFANTRY CONTINUES THE ATK WITHIN Z ON D-DAY H-HOUR TO COMPLETE CAPTURE OF DILLINGEN FACTORY AREA AND SEIZE OBJ AS INDICATED. ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH 11TH INF WHEN THAT UNIT COMES ABBREAST. BE PREPARED FOR FURTHER ORDERS TO N.E. ON ORDER.

During the day nine TD's were in operation and the 10th one was taken a cross. One TD which was stuck in the mud was still able to lend supporting fire. The ferry operated after dark without any harassment. Supplies were taken over and prisoners and wounded were brought back.

358th Infantry - History -19 December 1944

G-3 ordered the Regiment to destroy anything across the Saar that could be of any possible use to the enemy in the event that they should infiltrate back or come back. He also ordered that all non-essential vehicles be returned to this side of the river.

During the day Battalions sent out patrols to determine the enemy strength and disposition to the Regimental front, but up to midnight, no reports had been received. The Battalions remained in their defensive positions and continued to clear up their areas. Harassing artillery was received all day, but only in isolated cases was the shelling heavy.

All units were alerted to be especially watchful for Germans dressed as American soldiers up to the rank of Major and driving American jeeps. These Germans had complete identification on them, including dog tags!

Authority **NND 735017**
 By **13r** NARA Date **12/19**

Hq, 358th Inf
 182100 Dec 44

FO # 28

Maps: Germany GSGS 44114 1/25000
 Spec Map 1/12500
 Town Plan of Dillingen

1. A. Issued separately.
 - B. (1) XX atks NE 18 Dec to complete breach Seifgried Line and seize the high ground vic Frieses. (6406)
 - (2) 95th Inf Div with 378th Inf in the assault continues expansion of Enseldorf brhd.
 - (3) 5th Inf Div completing relief of elements of 95th Inf Div in Saarlautern-Roden-Fraulautern area night 17-18 Dec. Atk NE 18 December making main effort on the left.
 - (4) 3rd Cav GP reinforced continues protection of Corps N Flank W of Saar. Prepare for execution of similiar mission E of Saar River.
 - (5) XI X Tac supports attacks of the XX Corps.
 - (6) 90th Div continues atk at H-Hour D-Day within Z making main effort on Right S. Continuation of atk will contingent upon seizure of 11th Inf Obj on Prims River.

2. 358th Inf.

Atchmts: No change.

 - a. Continues atk within Z on D-Day H-Hour to complete capture of Dillingen Factory area, and seize obj as indicated.
 - b. Establish and maintain contact with 11th Inf. when that unit comes abreast.
 - c. Be prepared for further orders to NE on order.

3. a. 1st Battalion

Atchmts: No change.

 - (1) Continues atk on D-Day H-Hour to complete mop-up of Dillingen Factory area within Z indicated on overlay.
 - (2) Establish and maintain contact with 11th Inf when that unit comes abreast.
 - (3) Halt on PL 1 to revert to Regimental Res.

b. 2nd Battalion

Atchmts: No change.

 - (1) Continues atk on D-Day, H-Hour to secure additional portion of Dillingen indicated on overlay.
 - (2) Halt and reorg on PL 1
 - (3) Continue attack on Regl Order to capture Sportplatz and secure high grd to N E.
 - (4) Establish and maintain contact with 3rd Bn on R.
 - (5) Be prepared to continue atk to N E on Regl Order.

c. 3rd Battalion

 - (1) Assemble Bn within Z on Regl Order, relieving elements of Co "B" between Ch Pts 72 and 64. Ref Dillingen Town Plan.
 - (2) Atk D-Day, H-Hour mopping up portion of Dillingen Factory area, indicated on overlay.
 - (3) Halt and reorg on PL 1
 - (4) Continue atk within Z indicated to complete mop-up of factory area and secure portion of Regl Obj indicated.
 - (5) Prior to reaching PL 1 establish and maintain contact with 1st Bn thereafter contact elements of 5th Div.

Authority NNDT 35017
 By 13r NARA Date 12/9

FO #28 (cont)

- d. Cannon Co.
 (1) Continue close support on call of Bn CO's from present positions.
 (2) Be prepared to cross Saar River on Regl Order, to provide close support within Regl Z of action.
- e. Anti-Tank Co.
 (1) Cross remaining plat to far side of river.
 (2) Place one (1) AT plat to support each assault Bn.
 (3) Atch one (1) Sq AT Mine plat to each Bn for mine clearance and removal.
- f. Co. B 315th Engr Bn
 Atch one (1) plat to each Bn for demolition and assault of P B fortifications.
- g. Co A 712th Tk Bn
 Continue present mission with one (1) plat ~~of~~ in support each Bn.
- h. Co. B 773 TD Bn
 Continue present mission with one (1) plat in support each Bn.
- i. Co. B. 81st Cml Bn
 Rcn for positions E side of Saar River. Cross Saar River on Regl order, and provide support on call Bn Cmdrs.
- j. Field Artillery
 Support: 344th FA Bn
 345th FA Bn (Rein fires 344th FA Bn)
 Close support planned concentration on call Bn Cmdrs.
- x. (1) PB's not needed for own occupancy will be rendered unusable as fighting compartment by demolition, by welding and/or bulldozing.
 (2) All civilians will be impounded.
4. No change.
5. a. SOI - 01-32
 b. CPs - No change
 Ax Sig Com - see opns overlay

BEALKE
 CMDG

OFFICIAL:

STOTLER
 Capt. S-3

Authority NNDT35017
 By 131 NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History

20 December 1944

Lt. Col. Bealke conferred with the Division CG at Division Headquarters, and ordered his Staff and the Battalion CO's to meet him at the 3rd Battalion CP when he returned. Captain Steckla, Regimental S-1 ordered all Headquarters Personnel across the river, except the I & R Platoon and the Switchboard operators to be returned at once. Co. "B", 81st Cml Mortars was ordered to fire W/P on the Steel Mill in Dillingen and burn it down. Captain Sims, 315th Engineers, was ordered to completely destroy or render unusable all fortifications in Dillingen. Bn S-1's and Captain Pyes, Hq Co. CO, were notified that they would go on a reconnaissance at 0800 in the morning with Lt. Col. Loomis, Regimental Ex. O. to find new locations for Regimental and Battalion areas. The locations were to be on the West side of the Saar. Battalions were further notified to make no further plans for action, and at 2400 hours the Regimental Field Message #1, which follows, was issued:

358TH INF
 202300 DEC 44

FIELD MESSAGE NO. 1

3RD BATTALION

a. Assembles in Pachten after dark 20 Dec. to cross Saar by foot-bridge or ferry at site "B" following 1st Battalion, 357th Inf and moves by marching in Wallerfangen.

b. Outposts west bank of Saar River within Z indicated by 1700, 21 Dec 44 until relieved by elements of the 95th Inf Div.

c. Move on Regimental Order to occupy assembly area in Guisingen with remainder Bn.

1ST BATTALION

a. Initiates withdrawal, less covering shell, at 211900 crossing Saar River by foot-bridge and/or assault boat at site "B" following 3rd Bn 359th Inf and 2nd Bn 358th Inf.

b. Assemble Bn in Rammelfangen moving along route indicated.

2ND BATTALION

a. Bn less covering shell, initiates withdrawal at 211900 crossing Saar River by foot-bridge and/or assault boat at site "B", following 3rd Bn 359th Inf.

b. Assemble Bn in Ihn, moving along route indicated.

COVERING SHELL

a. 1st & 2nd Bns will leave a covering shell of one (1) reinf. rifle company emplaced along the line indicated on overlay. Strength of security dets. to cover withdrawal into shell will be as determined by Bn Cmdr.

b. Shell will initiate withdrawal at 220400, completing assault boat crossing at site "B" at 220600.

c. Major Caldecott is designated as Officer in Command of Reg't'l Shell.

MISCELLANEOUS

(1) Maximum activity will be maintained by patrols and fire until 211900.

(2) Maximum destruction of enemy installations (to include civilian) will be effected prior to and during withdrawal. Destruction and demolition will proceed in the following priority:

a-Overpasses & Underpasses. b-Locomotives. c-Pillboxes. d-Communications. e-Industrial Equipment. f-Supplies and rolling stock. g-Every building and dwelling to be razed. (Burn to the ground.)

(3) Order of withdrawal:

(1) 19-20 Dec: Bulk of armor.

(2) 20-21 Dec: Wheeled trans. (less essential minimum), One Bn ea Regt, Regt CP 357, Excess supplies, U.S. Dead.

(3) 21-22 Dec: All remaining, incl. Engr Equip onR, in the following order:
 a-Remaining armor and wheeled trans. b-Bulk of Trs. c-Shell.
 d-Engr equipment.

BEALKE
 cmdg

OFFICIAL:

STUELLER, S-3

Authority NNDT35017
 By 13r NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History -

21 December 1944

By 0200 the 3rd Bn had withdrawn across the Saar and closed-in in Wallerfangen for the balance of the night. In the morning the Battalion moved by motor to the vicinity of Oberlimberg.

During the day most of the vehicles were withdrawn across the river. Utmost care was taken to conceal all movements. Battalions were cautioned to keep a maximum of patrolling in progress and a minimum amount of vehicles working. During the morning Wallerfangen was shelled, but no casualties were incurred. At the same time the enemy broadcast through loud speakers, propaganda in the same vein as usual.

At 1900 the 2nd Battalion began its withdrawal across the foot-bridge, and the 1st Battalion was ready to follow. At 2045 all that remained of these Battalions across the river were their covering shells. These shells would withdraw at 0400 and cross the river in assault boats.

The secrecy surrounding the withdrawals and the workability of the withdrawal plans, made the movement a commendable one. Midnight found the 1st Battalion in St. Barbara and Guisengen and the 2nd Bn in Eiff. They were alerted to move at 0800 in the morning to relieve the 43rd Cal. and take over their defensive positions. The entire withdrawal was expertly executed and it drew no fire whatsoever.

358th Infantry - History -

22 December 1944

The 358th Inf Regiment issued its FO No. 29, which ordered the battalions and Separate Companies to effect the relief of elements of the 43rd Cav and 3rd Cav in their sectors by 030800 Dec 1944. It further ordered the organization of defenses in each assigned sector and that contact at limiting points be maintained with the 3rd Cav. Attached to the Regiment were: Co. A, 712th Tk Bn; Co. B, 81st Cml Bn; Co. B 315th Med Bn; and a Co of the 773 TD Bn.

Captain Hugo Pyes, the Regt Hq Co. CO was instructed to move the Regimental CP to Remeling, France, at 0800. This area had previously been reconnoitered.

At 0400 hours Co A, the 1st Battalion Shell, rejoined the Battalion, and shortly after the Battalion entrucked and moved to the vicinity of Launsdorf, France, where they became the Regimental Reserve. At 0830, the 3rd Battalion left Rammelfangen by truck and detrucked at Waldwisse at 1130. Following a reconnaissance, troops took up positions with a MLR running through Wellingene Budingen and an OPLR along the river's edge. The Battalion CP was established in Flatten. The MLR was in Germany and the Battalion CP was in France. Co E, the 2nd Battalion Shell, rejoined the Battalion at 0600. The Battalion moved by truck at 1100 to the vicinity of Launsdorf, France, where a rear CP was established, and later established a forward CP in Wehingen. The Intelligence Section immediately set up an OP and the Companies established and maintained outposts. Relief of the Cav. units was effected without incident.

Major Davis, CAO, assisted by the Regimental MP's and furnished with trucks, began the wearisome task of evacuating the civilians from the CP towns. In his capable hands, however, this mission proceeded in a well ordered fashion.

At 2100 hours Division G-3 was informed that the entire Regiment had closed in.

Authority NNDT 735017By JBR NARA Date 12/19358 Infantry - History23 December 1944

The entire Regimental area had been reconnoitered and the plans of its defense were drawn up. Troops dug positions at strategic points in the frozen ground. A & P groups placed demolition charges as bridge and tree obstacles. Road blocks were put into position and AT Defenses were set up. Patrol routes and OP sites were chosen and established. While this work was in progress General Van Fleet, the Division Commander, inspected the area. The Engineers furnished tools and hasty field fortifications were dug throughout the Regimental Sector.

During the day the AT Platoons were reformed with the men who previously comprised them. The Regimental Comm. O, Captain Lampo, layed wire to the adjacent units. The Regiment was well on its way to being completely buttoned-up. Night activity was initiated with a patrol of the I & R, whose mission was to capture a prisoner. Midnight all units reported their areas as quiet.

358th Infantry - History -24 December 1944

During the night enemy planes flew over the area, and the OP's duly reported numerous flares. Further reports from OP's and patrols, and information received from G-3, indicated that the enemy activity along the entire front had increased. All Battalions were alerted and given this information. The 344th FA reported that they were waiting with one hand on the lanyard.

During the day the troops continued on their digging operations. Patrols to contact adjacent units were initiated. The 1st Battalion, the Regimental Res., was furnished entertainment in the form of a Red Cross Clubmobile. Kitchens moved forward and once again the troops were served hot meals. Church services were held in each Battalion and at the Regimental CP. Company "E"'s farthers outpost received 88 fire at 2220, but no damage was reported.

This was Christmas Eve, and the Regiment found the situation fairly quiet, but its vigilance was not let down.

358th Infantry - History -25 December 1944

Christmas Day - found heavily attended church services throughout the Regiment. A real New England Turkey Dinner was served, and to those on outpost duty, it was carried out--hot.

The Good Will to Men Spirit was blighted when a 3rd Battalion jeep was strafed by an enemy plane. One enlisted man was wounded. Each Battalion sent an enlisted man each to the Division Public Relations Officer at Division, with the view of being interviewed by the Press on the happenings across the Saar.

Christmas Trees, with improvised trimmings were set up in many a room and barn by men who just wouldn't let a home tradition lax. Packages were brought to light, and for a split second, home was brought across the sea. All considered, the day passed fairly quiet.

Authority NND 735017By 13r NARA Date 12/19

358th Infantry - History

26 December 1944

The night passed quietly, with the exception of occasional flares and enemy planes. Alert OP's and patrols scouted the woods and lonely outposts. Throughout the day the 3rd Battalion received frequent artillery fire. The fire, however, caused no damage other than harassment. The 2nd Battalion received replacements and were given the opportunity to take hot showers at Halstroff. During the day recreation was furnished them by the SSO, Lt. Ackel, in the form of Baseball Top-notchers and also movies.

In the Company "E" sector an Artillery Observer jeep was ambushed. The ambush party numbered five. One Artillery man was killed and two were wounded. The party carried no official papers. One man, who feigned dead, escaped to the Company "E" CP and made the report. A patrol was immediately organized to search out the enemy. They had made good their escape, however.

An order, through channels, was received by the Regimental Commander from the Army Commanding General. It was--to keep the Germans occupied, so that none of them would pull out and support the enemy to the north.

The Battalion and Regimental Defenses were now firmly established and well manned. Numerous patrols were seeking information and prisoners, and the OP's and outposts kept the Regimental CP informed of all activities, however slight.

358TH Infantry - History -27 December 1944

Widely seperated mortar fell on the 3rd Battalion. During the day the Regiment experienced more enemy planes and more strafing. Many enemy planes operated over the Regimental Sector.

Early in the evening the Battalions were alerted when 359th Infantry reported a small enemy patrol heading toward the 358th lines. The 1st Battalion was ordered to organize an assault platoon to attack a pillbox at 0300 28 December, with the mission of taking prisoners. Before the night darkness the leaders were flown over the pillbox area to familiarize them with the terrain over which they would attack. A platoon of the 2nd Battalion was to advance at 2400 hours and secure a LD for the attacking platoon. The line was secured, but the platoon surprised an enemy patrol and fired upon them. The enemy patrol fled, but the firing warned the pillbox that the Americans were there. Consequently, when the 1st Battalion patrol arrived they were greeted with the fire of small arms, machine-guns and bazookas from the three sides of the box. The mission failed.

Authority NNDT 735017By 13r NARA Date 12/19

358th Infantry - Histc

December 1944

During the day non-essential road blocks were ordered blown. Battalions were authorized to take such action as was deemed necessary. Intermittent shelling harassed the 2nd Battalion troops.

The policy of patrolling was maintained and a patrol was dispatched to Driesbach to check if any civilians or Germans were in the town, and to take prisoners if possible. The patrol's report was negative. Company "E" established an ambush, also with the mission of taking a prisoner, and their efforts brought a negativereport.

The Battalions adopted the policy of keeping the enemy occupied. Trucks and vehicles were run about respective areas with plenty of motor gunning. One effort in the 3rd Battalion area was so successful that it drew 88 fire.

The Regimental training program to the rear was progressing favorably and replacements were still being received. The Regiment was now nearly up to full strength.

358TH Infantry - History -29 December 1944

Battalions practiced firing in their respective areas. They fired all weapons from rifles to bazooks. A 3rd Battalion patrol encountered a counter-patrol and exchanged shots. The enemy escaped, but it was known that some of them were wounded.

And now came the real highlight of the day. At 2130, Lt. Anderson, 2nd Battalion, reported that he had two prisoners. These were the first of the elusive enemy to be captured during this present operation. At 2230 they were brought to the Regimental Cage for interrogation. The mission of the prisoners had been to gather information concerning tanks and artillery positions, and they had completed their mission and were returning to their lines when captured. They were not the fanatical Nazi, but rather a cool, calm soldier.

358th Infantry - History -30 December 1944

The 1st Battalion jumped off at 0830 with the mission to comb the woods and area in the Regimental Sector. They saw no enemy, but did see evidences of recent occupation and traces of vehicular movement. On the return trip, a mine was set off, sounding 1st Lt. Petsche and two enlisted men.

The Regiment received the Corps Defensive Fire Plan. It was instructed that it could order defense on this Plan, but that it would not be observed fire. Aggressive patrolling was continued during the day and night, but most of their reports were negative or routine.

Authority NND 735017

By 43r NARA Date 12/9

358th Infantry - History -

31 December 1944

A thirty-two man aggressive patrol of Company "F", led by Lt. Davis, jumped off at 0815. They quickly reached their limited objective - three houses. Two of the houses were vacant, but the third yielded 13 Germans and 3 civilians. There were no casualties. The I & R Patrol returned without prisoners. Their progress had been slow due to mine fields and because of the slowness of their advance, any Germans in their vicinity would have time to hide or retreat.

Enemy planes continued to operate over the Regimental Area. The OP's continued to make their frequent reports. Alert men manned their lonely OP's and outposts.

The year's end saw the Regimental and Battalion Staff Officers hard at work making plans that would make the coming year the year of Peace---and the last year for men to be away from their homes.