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Authority NND 735017

By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01

90TH INFANTRY DIVISION

REPORT OF OPERATIONS

FOR MONTH

OF

FEBRUARY 1945

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PART I

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

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February began with the 90th Div attacking toward the SIEGFRIED West Wall, carrying out its assigned role of protecting the right of VIII Corps as it attacked to the NE.

Following a crossing of the ice-covered OUR River in bitter winter weather, the Div had driven four miles into Germany and now was preparing to completely secure and consolidate its final objective - the high ground SW of SCHNEE-EIFEL.

The three infantry regiments were positioned on an 18,000 yard front with the 357th anchored at LEILER and astride the OUR River to DER LOCH WALD where it connected with 358th Inf. The latter continued the line to the NE and tied in with 359th rear.

359th, making the final drive in the containing arc, held WALLMERATH, WINTERSPELT and EIGELSCHEID. On the Div right; 90th Rcn Tr reinforced, with Co D, 712th Tank Bn, defended the 2000 additional yards S from LEILER to the 6th Armored Div at KALTBORN. The Div Command Post was still at WILWERDANGE, LUXEMBOURG.

On the Div's left, 4th Inf Div's 12th Inf Regiment had pulled abreast of the 359th near GROSSLANGENFELD. The remainder of the Div was advancing slowly to circle toward BRANDSCHEID in the heart of the SIEGFRIED LINE where the 4th had been before its relief some weeks before. Above the 4th was the 87th Inf Div, making the Corps main effort, which raced toward GERMANY on trucks as it found its blows striking thin air. This unit had not yet contacted the SIEGFRIED barrier.

1 February 1945

Action during the morning was confined to patrols as the regiments felt out the enemy defenses. Fighting again on home soil, the enemy used all their knowledge of the terrain and the support of the SIEGFRIED guns to delay and obstruct our advance.

In the afternoon the two left regiments thrust again. Using all three Bns, 358th Inf over-rode the resolute enemy to capture HECKUSCHEID and the adjacent ground. B and C Cos captured the town and 70 prisoners by 2000. Co A remained at HECKHALENFELD and covered the lateral gap on the regimental left. All units received heavy mortar fire.

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During the morning a 359th patrol scouted GROSSLANG-ENFELD to see if the Germans intended to fight for the town. They did, and fired machine guns at the investigators. Forewarned therefore, the 2d Bn launched an attack at 1500 in the afternoon across the rugged country and wrested the town from enemy hands. 3d Bn came up from AUDEL to relieve the 1st Bn who moved to positions at WINTERSELT, WALLMERATH and AUDEL.

357th Inf continued to harass the enemy with combat patrols.

Rains and warmer weather of the past two days started the snow to melt. The ground softened and streams were over-burdened with excess water. The bridge at OBERHAUSEN washed out and 315th Engr Bn installed an assault boat ferry in its stead over the OUR River, which spread from six to one hundred feet in width.

Corps reported that units on the left were out of contact with the enemy. Accordingly, Div Field Message Number 28, issued at 2010, directed that on 2d February the regimental zones be cleared of enemy SE to the previously established patrol line. Present positions were to be consolidated, and aggressive patrols were to maintain enemy contact. Any indications of enemy withdrawal were to be immediately reported.

On this day Div lost to a higher command Major General JAMES A. VAN FLEET, who had guided the 90th in its MOSELLE and SAAR River crossings, in its role in puncturing the BASTOGNE bulge and on across the OUR River into GERMANY. Major General LOWELL H. ROOKS assumed command.

The Div CP remained at WILWERDANGE.

2 February 1945

Aside from vigorous patrolling and occasional clashes, the day was relatively inactive though still punctuated by enemy mortar and artillery fire.

Since all objectives had been attained, it was now desired to free some of the committed units from the line to gain reserves and allow the rotation and rest of the troops. Until such time as the area W of the OUR River could be sloughed off, it was decided to hold this 5000 yard front with a task force (Task Force

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DE PUY) consisting of 1st Bn 357th Inf, 90th Rcn Tr, Co D 712th Tank Bn, and one Plat Co A, 315th Med Bn. The area E of the OUR River was reallocated to the 358th Inf and 359th Inf. 357th Inf (-) was to move into reserve in the area WEISWAMPACH-LEITHUM. Div Field Order Number 52 directed these changes and the organization of the ground.

3 February 1945

The road situation was fast becoming critical. Abnormally heavy traffic of military vehicles over the constricted road net, already softened by thaw, caused the road beds to cave and buckle like wet cardboard. Vehicles ground hub-deep, straining their motors to get through washed-out areas.

The OUR River ice had broken into floes which piled and jammed, threatening bridges until demolished by 315th Engrs.

During the night a patrol from 358th Inf surprised and captured 16 enemy at BERG without firing a shot. A patrol from 359th Inf went to a house at 934495, fought a sharp engagement, and returned with 11 prisoners. Patrolling continued throughout the day as 358th and 359th Infs assumed control of their new areas. In both regiments, 2d and 3d Bns remained on line.

Task Force DE PUY relieved 357th Inf W of the River, completing the relief by 0800. 357th 2d Bn, relieved by 358th Inf, moved to LEITHUM. 3d Bn assembled at WEISWAMPACH and the regiment in Div Reserve submitted its plans for counterattack. 359th planned a demonstration to assist 4th Inf Div's attack on BRANDSCHEID.

The turned earth from newly dug-in positions was hardly cold when Corps warned the Div to expect relief in part by 11th Armored Div, at present in Corps Reserve, and 6th Armored Div, so that the 90th could continue to attack to the SE in conjunction with the rest of the VIII Corps.

4 February 1945

Corps Field Order Number 8, confirming the above, was received at 1250 and directed the 11th Armored Div to relieve elements of the 90th Div 052400. The entire Corps then would attack through the SIEGFRIED LINE at H-Hour D-Day. The 90th's mission was to go through elements of the 4th Inf Div vicinity BRANDSCHEID to seize PRONSFELD while the 4th aimed for PRUM.

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Several difficulties now loomed to make it appear that relief would be delayed. Incessant drizzles had reduced roads to an impasse. The main road through BURG-REULAND was canalized into a narrow, muddy bottleneck that taxed engineers and military police alike to keep open to traffic. The heavy vehicles of the 11th Armored Div, crawling through STEFFESHAUSEN, stalled on the slippery slopes just beyond and armor stretched bumper-to-bumper as far back as WILWERDANGE.

Further, W of the OUR, VIII Corps had parceled out part of its area to 6th Armored Div. The latter, still in III Corps, had as yet no orders for taking over the new sector.

Nonetheless, the reliefs were accomplished in good time. By sundown CCR, 11th Armored Div had relieved 3d Bn 359th and 358th Inf's. This latter regiment assembled its 1st Bn at HECKHALENFELD, 2d Bn at STUPBACH and 3d Bn at WILWERDANGE.

At 1500, 6th Armored Div received its instructions and immediately relieved 90th Rcn Tr and Co B 357th Inf, completing it by 1730. This left only Co C to be relieved by 41st Cav Sq of 11th Armored Div. One platoon was relieved after dark and the rest of the company the following morning. 90th Rcn Tr assembled at HOLLER in Div Reserve.

Div Command Post moved by infiltration from WILWERDANGE, LUXEMBOURG to BURG-REULAND, BELGIUM, where it opened at 1530.

Div Field Order Number 53 was issued at 1600 and detailed the continuation of the attack. It confirmed the reliefs already in progress and ordered 359th Inf to assist the attack of 4th Inf Div against BRANDSCHEID on 5 February by fire (and maneuver if indicated). The regiment further would attack to secure HABSCHIED and the high ground to the SW in coordination with the 11th Armored Div. Lastly, the regiment was to protect the Div's right flank.

357th Inf, earmarked for Div Reserve, was directed to assemble vicinity WINTERSPELT, prepared to pass through 359th Inf and continue the attack.

358th Inf was to relieve elements 4th Inf Div after

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capture of BRANDSCHEID and continue attack to PRONSFELD.

At 1700 3d Bn 357th Inf closed at HEMMERES.

5 February 1945

The morning opened with 359th's demonstration against HABSCHIED and HOLLNICH to assist the 4th Inf Div's attack at 0800. Using every means to predicate an attack, the regiment before dawn moved vehicles and armor freely in the front line area. Mortar fire was increased and patrolling stepped up.

At 0745 915th FA Bn smothered the two towns with a four Bn TOT (Time On Target). Then followed two Bns of medium guns on each town every five minutes for a half hour. Two Bns of light artillery fired S and E of those towns. All roads in the area were interdicted at two minute intervals. Smoke was limited and, since visibility was poor, none was fired.

Co B 712th Tank Bn made a limited sortee against HABSCHIED and fired on pillboxes in the area.

To all of this the enemy was strangely silent.

The rest of the day was devoted to preparation for the attack as D-Day H-Hour was announced as 060400A February. The artillery Bns moved from the W bank of the OUR River to new positions from which to support the attack. 3d Bn 357th Inf staged forward to EIGELSCHEID. 358th Inf assembled in late afternoon and evening in the vicinity of WINTERSCHIED.

As road tie-ups greatly delayed the movement of the 3d Bn from WILWERDANGE, the 358th was instructed to relieve 22nd Inf 3d Bn by 0700 in the morning, but not to attack until completely set. Attached tanks and tank destroyers had not arrived but the 22nd Inf's tanks with their 3d Bn were to remain until they did.

By late afternoon 4th Inf Div had secured stoutly defended BRANDSCHEID, taking 150 Psw. On 90th Div right 11th Armored Div finished its preparation for attack at the same time as the 90th.

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At 0400 the attack began. Three Bns of the 359th Inf moved off together, 2d, 1st, 3d, left to right. In the black night they moved undetected through the maze of dragon's teeth, barbed wire, minefields and pillboxes. First enemy reaction came at 0600 as a machine gun opened fire at 3d Bn. By daylight, however, all assault Cos were in HABSCHIED.

A and L Cos, both in reserve, were stopped at a road block which the engineers prepared for demolition. Unwittingly, the road ahead was left to be swept later. The explosion, about daylight, startled the enemy into wakefulness and bypassed pillboxes to the right rear, covering the block, stirred into action. Enemy machine guns and small arms raked the road, nullifying any further advance by A or L or attempts by engineers to sweep the road. Enemy artillery, nebelwerfer, mortar and high velocity fire shook the town and splashed along the roads leading into town.

With all of its Bns hemmed into HABSCHIED the regiment had no recourse but to clear up within the area so that supporting tanks and tank destroyers could be brought forward to bolster the attack. Particularly troublesome were the boxes covering the road block and Cos A and L were assigned to reduce these.

Open terrain and grazing fire denied maneuver and it was not until a supporting 155mm self-propelled gun jockeyed into position at 1530 and opened up direct fire that the Germans fled their cover and the bottleneck was broken. Other obstacles were removed and tanks and tank destroyers moved forward after dark to their Bns. 3d Bn was directed to make a night attack. Contact by Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon with 11th Armored Div was arranged.

358th Inf walked into a hornet's nest at BRANDSCHIED as 1st Bn began to relieve 3d Bn 22nd Inf at 0445. One company was relieved and the other two were in process when approximately 450 Germans, supported by three assault guns, counterattacked at 0600. Both units turned to and some hours of confused fighting followed. About midday the attack was quelled and 170 Germans were prisoners. Both B Co 358th and K Co 22nd Inf had elements cut-off. 2d Bn passed two companies through 1st Bn to secure a line of departure. Then Co I relieved Co A 1st Bn on left and maintained contact with 4th Inf Div.

An indication of the enemy's desperate efforts to

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block penetrations of the SIEGFRIED LINE came from interrogation of the PsW taken in the counterattack. The attacking unit, known as Task Force GERLAND (after its Lt-Col Comdr) consisted of two Kampfgruppe and was given the mission of retaking and holding BRANDSCHEID. One group had approximately 220 men from I and III Bns 14th Nebelwerfer Regiment. Neither officers nor men had been used as Infantry before. The second KG consisted of artillerymen and had a strength of 150-170 men. At the last moment 1st Co 276th Engr Bn of 60 men was ordered to participate in the attack. All units suffered heavy casualties as well as prisoner losses.

357th Inf moved 1st and 2d Bns by way of ST VITH to WINTERSPELT and WALLMERATH respectively, closing in late morning. 3d Bn jumped forward to EIGELSCHEID. The Regiment made plans to move 1st and 3d Bns through 359th at HABSCHIED at 0130 the following morning to seize the two hills beyond the town. 2d Bn was allocated as Div Res.

On the right 11th Armored had reportedly reached their objective where they sustained a counterattack of company strength in early morning. On our left 4th Div has seized HONTHEIM, SELLERICH and HERSCHIED.

7 February 1945

Starting at 0130 as planned, 357th moved in column of companies through HABSCHIED with 3d Bn leading. This battalion was to bypass the first hill (510) and seize the one beyond (511). 1st Bn was to capture Hill 510.

Covering darkness made control difficult and the column moved slowly. Beyond the town 1st Bn sent Co A to the E while B and C followed Co K to SE at rear of 3d Bn. The enemy on Hill 510 opened fire on this group and split Co K. One part of K and one platoon of C continued on. Co A tried to swing onto Hill 510 from the NE but made no headway against the enemy fire. Supporting tanks came up. The lead tank hit mines and was disabled.

In the morning the 3d Bn (-) with part of Co C was in the saddle between the two hills. Co B and balance of Cos C and K were just SE of HABSCHIED.

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359th's advance was temporarily stymied by elements of 357th still intermingled. 1st Bn moved at 0645 almost immediately running into trouble from pillboxes to their front. 3d Bn got underway at 0830 moving S out of HABSCHIED. Advance was from pillbox to pillbox as the Germans countered with high velocity, nebelwerfer and machine gun fire. Again enlisting the aid of the 155mm self-propelled gun, Cos I and K worked over the area. Men from antitank Co occupied the boxes as captured to enable the assault elements to continue.

Overcoming the initial resistance, 1st Bn 359th worked slowly along the draw SW out of HABSCHIED. Co C captured HOLLNICH at midday. Co A pushed on down the nose above HOLLNICH while Co B proceeded to the next nose where it made contact with 357th. 15 pillboxes were reduced. Co L moved out at 1150 along the road SW out of HABSCHIED with two tanks and two tank destroyers. Co I mopped up behind for a Bn total of 40 pillboxes for the two days.

In midafternoon 2d Bn began to canvass the pillboxes NE of HABSCHIED. By dark they were just out of HABSCHIEDER MILL and had taken out 30 boxes since the operation began. 85 PsW total were captured by the regiment.

In 358, 1st Bn began a methodical mop-up of pillboxes on the ridge to the SW. Co C led off and used tanks and tank destroyers as a base of fire to knock out pillboxes one by one. The method was so successful that assault teams moved right on without much leap-frogging. High velocity and mortar fire came from the right flank. Artillery blinded with smoke Hill 519 where it was thought the enemy had observation. The fire lessened considerably. 10 pillboxes and over 80 prisoners were taken before the Bn was ordered to halt for the night after an advance of 900 yards.

2d Bn jumped off also at 0530, encountering artillery, mortar and small arms fire. They advanced deliberately 800 yards but were harassed by mortar fire. Artillery smoked Hill 521 and fired 1350 rounds of ammunition to search out the troublesome mortars.

3d Bn made its attack at 0630. Having no pillboxes, the Bn advanced rapidly despite enemy mine fields which took 16 casualties. They overran a mortar position, capturing 15 surprised Germans and three emplaced mortars. The Bn was ordered to halt on Hill 521 after an

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advance of 2000 yards. Cooks, bakers, and antitank men formed a Task Force GRUBBS, which was sent to relieve the 3d Bn so it could attack Hill 519 in the morning.

90th Rcn Tr, attached to the 358th Inf, maintained contact with 4th Inf Div on left. 110 PsW total were captured by the 358th, while it suffered 50 battle casualties.

Meanwhile, with open ground all around, 3d Bn 357th was hard hit by enemy mortar, nebelwerfer and artillery fire which came from three sides. The Bn dug in while awaiting further support.

At 1800 1st Bn swept forward and gained contact with 3d Bn. Both Bns consolidated for the night. Cos I and L faced S on Hill 511 while Co K occupied a pillbox and the area to the immediate N.

On the Div left 4th Armored beat off several counterattacks. 11th Armored Div on the right held its positions.

8 February 1945

At 0500 several hundred Germans with assault guns and tanks counterattacked Co K 357th in attempt to regain Hill 511. The pillbox on the hill changed hands three times in the severe fighting which continued throughout the day. Supporting tanks moved up to help repel the attack only to be knocked out by enemy high velocity and artillery fire as they moved down the forward slope. At length the attack was beaten off with 15 men captured by the Germans. 50 PsW were taken. Enemy artillery pounded the position relentlessly throughout the day. No further advance was attempted. Co F was moved from WINTERSPELT to occupy pillboxes. 1st Bn was directed to seize the high ground N of MASTHORN.

Despite heavy mortar fire 1st Bn 358th continued to reduce pillboxes SW of BRANDSCHEID. By dark 55 pillboxes were captured, 1800 yards gained and contact with 359 established vicinity of HABSCHIEDER MILL.

In the center, 2d Bn set its sights on Hill 519 but gained only 500 yards and some 25 PsW from 6 pillboxes.

In this area a squad of B Co 358th and one of K Co 22nd Inf were recaptured. These were the men isolated during the attack early 6 Feb. They assisted by fire the attack of 1st Bn on the 7th although unable to get out

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until overrun.

During the night 3d Bn 358th on the left sent a task force towards Hill 519 but it was driven back by small arms and intense mortar fire and returned at 0230. This fire continued all day and nullified attempts of I and K Cos to advance on the hill.

359th's 1st Bn turned W to attack the high ground, coordinating their move with 3d Bn which had Co L reducing the pillboxes in the area. By nightfall, both battalions had cleared almost to the Div rear boundary. 2d Bn captured HABSCHIEDER MILL at 1330 and continued to reduce boxes to the Div left boundary despite considerable fire from across the river. In all, 25 boxes and 93 Psw were taken by the regiment.

Div Command Post moved to WINTERSPELT, GERMANY.

In the Div area enemy TOT's increased during the day and hit heavily traveled roads as well as targets of opportunity. Single guns fired throughout the area and high velocity fire picked up and was very accurate. Mortar fire was heavy but troops took cover in pillboxes and received few casualties.

4th Div continued its advance but fought off repeated counterattacks as they closed on PRUM. 11th Armd Div still made no move forward.

9 February 1945

358th captured Hill 519 by midmorning after 2d and 3d Bns attacked together at 0800. Leaving only a few men per box, the bulk of the enemy forces had withdrawn and the regiment advanced 2000 yards, capturing 12 boxes and 18 Psw. Task Force GRUBBS was disbanded at 1510 after having reported contact with 4th Inf Div and no enemy between the forces.

The enemy pocketed between 11th Armd Div and 359th showed no inclination to withdraw and in fact fought stubbornly to prevent the area from being taken. Contact between 11th Armd and 359th Inf still was by rear roads. K Co, attacking toward WEITERORDER, encountered 50 - 60 Germans and considerable high velocity and mortar fire. By dark the Co was still 200 yards short of the settlement. Co L cleared all but one pillbox in its area. 2d Bn assembled and moved to BRANDSCHEID in

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Div Reserve, closing at 1515.

1st Bn 357th moved at midnight, but the extreme darkness and thickly wooded draw made progress slow. Not until 1000 did Co B in the lead reach the specified line. Co C echeloned to the left rear and contacted 3d Bn. Co A closed on B Co's right and reached out to contact the left flank of 359th. This was accomplished by 1530. No further advance was made.

2d Bn 357th was released to the regiment and moved to join Co F at HABSCHEID. 3d Bn stayed in place except for patrols from Co L who found pillboxes to their front to be occupied.

On the far left 4th Inf Div was through the line, found light opposition and seized a bridge over the PRUM at HERMESPAND. Next to the 90th however, they continued to gain ground slowly.

10 February 1945

The main crust of the SIEGFRIED LINE was now broken and there remained only a thin -- but tough -- inner shell to be pierced before the breach was complete. To this end the Div pressed its attack. The enemy countered with increased shelling from mortars, artillery and tanks.

At this time Corps issued its Field Order Number 9 which directed that upon seizure of the PRUM River line and capture of PRUM, VIII Corps would defend upon line LOSHEIM - PRUM - NUENDORF - OUR River.

The 90th Div was ordered to relieve elements of 11th Armd Div within a new zone extending from WATZERATH to the OUR River after seizure of PRUM River line and capture of MASTHORN. For this purpose 41st Cavalry Squadron was to be attached at the time responsibility was transferred.

Accordingly, 2d Bn 357 was halted shortly after it jumped off and battalion assembled at HOLLNICH. The regimental commander decided to let both 1st and 3d Bns clear their zone first and then have 2d Bn relieve and defend the entire front.

358th launched an attack with three battalions abreast and gained some 800 yards on the left and center. 1st

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Bn moved several hundred yards to its objective and halted as ordered. From their positions all battalions could see the FRUH River and the towns of WEINFELD and WATZERATH. At 1430A 100 enemy launched a counterattack N of PRONSFELD which artillery repulsed without loss of ground. Tank destroyers and artillery destroyed three tanks and one self-propelled gun.

The mission of 359th was almost complete and the regiment finished its task by clearing out three pillboxes on the right flank and patrolling to the front.

11 February 1945

Limited objective attacks marked the day's effort. 357th moved shortly after midnight to secure a line just N of MASTHORN. K Co was on its objective by 0015. Co I by 0500 had secured the forward edge of the wooded area on the W side of the ridge. Co L made no headway against the pillboxes to its front which proved to be heavily guarded.

These boxes on the reverse slope covered the wide draw running down to PRONSFELD and in conjunction with positions on the reverse slope of the bald hill across the draw in the area of 358th 1st Bn, they controlled this avenue of approach. Both areas were mutually supporting, covered by artillery and mortar fire and being on naked ground on a slope facing toward the enemy were virtually unapproachable during daylight. Once gained it was questionable if the positions would be tenable because of the fire that could be laid upon it from the S.

358th was having its troubles too. Co I made three attempts during the night to enter WATZERATH but were stopped each time by cleverly concealed machine gun fire.

At daylight a coordinated attack by all three battalions of 358th was launched. It moved easily on the left but on the right the enemy in front of 1st Bn 358th fought tenaciously to hold the high ground and ridge N of PRONSFELD. The battalion forced the attack, however, and flanked an extended communication trench, rolling it up from the NE. Attempts to gain the bald knob beyond drew such heavy fire from the right flank and across the river that this objective was temporarily abandoned as not being worth the cost to take and to hold. By slowing

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the attack on the ridge just captured, the enemy had apparently accomplished his objective: to cover the withdrawal of troops to the far side of the PRUM, from the WATZERATH - WEINSFELD area by way of PITTENBACH. Air OPs could see heavy vehicular movement in enemy rear areas, generally eastward, toward the PRONSFELD - LUNEBACH road.

Co I, slowed initially by delaying forces at WATZERATH, gained entrance to the town at 1015 and cleared it by 1100. At this point they gained a small bridgehead over the PRUM River which here was a rather insignificant stream a bare 20 feet wide. Part of the town overlapped the river and the Company executing its mission cleared the E bank as well. This fact was not evident until night at which time the Company was ordered back to comply with instructions from higher headquarters.

Co G 358th bore down from the high ground NW of WEINSFELD to capture the town and 10 PsW at 0910. Cos E and F followed into the town.

At noon a planning conference of regimental commanders was held to establish the defense of the Div area within its readjusted boundaries. The main line of resistance was set along the present front line to take advantage of the high ground. Corps had modified its plan so that 41st Cavalry Squadron remained under control of its own Group and the Div defense area was consequently reduced. Div Field Order No. 54 at 1615 recorded the plan but action was begun immediately following the conference.

357th Inf with 90th Rcn Tr attached was directed to relieve elements 11th Armd Div and 359th Inf prior to 120800A and 130800A respectively and then to defend the Div rear area.

358th Inf was to relieve elements 357th within sector prior to 130800A and to take over defense of Div left area. 2d Bn was to remain in place until relieved by 4th Inf Div.

359th Inf was ordered to assemble as Div Reserve.

To accomplish the above, 1st Bn 358 relieved 3d Bn after dark and the latter moved to vicinity BRANDSCHEID preparatory to relieving 357th. 4th Inf Div took over from 2d Bn 358, completing relief at 1845 and the battalion

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moved at 2100 to HABSCHEID in regimental reserve, closing by 2400.

2d Bn 357 began relief of the Armd Inf on the right shortly after dusk and completed the change-over at 0100 in the morning.

3d Bn 357 made another attempt to clear its area before its relief the following night. At 2030 Co L sent two platoons to clear out the pillboxes which were causing so much trouble.

12 February 1945

At first this attack went well. One pillbox was captured and occupied. From a PsW later came the rest of the story. The Germans counterattacked, isolating the box with machine gun fire and preventing outside protection from being effected. A demand for surrender was refused. The enemy then blew the box with demolitions, wounding seven men and an officer. Further resistance was ineffectual and the occupants capitulated. 29 men were taken prisoner. As if to prevent any further forays, the Germans heavily shelled the 3d Bn area with high velocity fire during the afternoon. Then the sector fell strangely silent.

90th Rcn Tr was placed on the right flank of 2d Bn 357 to maintain contact with 11th Armored Div. 1st Bn 357 completely relieved 359 at 1830 and 1st Bn 359 assembled at HOLLNICH while 3d Bn 359 moved to HECKHALENFELD. 3d Bn 358 began relief of 3d Bn 357 after dark, completing at 2355 without incident.

On Div left, 4th Inf Div had overrun resistance to capture PRUM and held the near bank of the river within their sector. Some enemy remained yet to be cleared.

13 - 14 - 15 February 1945

Consolidation, rehabilitation and rotation of troops characterized these three days of relative quiet. The break was opportune for a wave of diarrhea from undetermined sources spread through the command to augment the already sizeable figure of men ill with colds received from continued exposure to wet weather. All possible counter-measures were instituted and after several days the attacks ceased as suddenly as they came.

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Minor repositions were made within units and police of the area instituted. This activity ceased after five men were killed and three wounded when a policing party of 358th 2d Bn hit a German minefield in the rear area.

Road conditions continued critical and Corps pressed all non-firing artillerymen, tank destroyer and tank men into road maintenance. Partly for this reason and partly for experiment, the 4th Inf Div on our left was supplied by parachute as wave after wave of C-47s hummed over 90th Div to drop their load in the area outlined by Pathfinder personnel and red smoke.

With a change of weather to clear skys and unlimited ceiling, our own air became active again and fighter bombers began to work over the area in front of the Div with good results.

As the period closed preparations were underway to resume the attack on 18 February in accordance with Field Order Number 11 from VIII Corps. Some 30 miles to the S, XII Corps had also breached the SIEGFRIED LINE and the attack was planned to effect a junction of these two forces at MAUEL (LO40647) and to clear the enemy from W of the PRUM River. For the Div this meant initially an attack toward the S down the flank of the West Wall, then a change of direction to the E.

359th Inf had been directed to relieve 358th Inf but this Corps order brought cancellation as Div planned to use 358th in the attack and then pinch them out. 359th, therefore, was ordered to relieve the 357th after dark the night of 16 February.

16 February 1945

357th patrols reported some of the pillboxes to their front were now empty but the enemy apparently was only repositioning for there were no indications of a withdrawal along the immediate front.

Div Field Order Number 55 outlined the plan of attack for the 18th:

358th with 90th Rcn Tr attached, relieve elements of 357th within zone and capture MASTHORN and

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high ground N of PRONSFELD.

359th on Div right, relieve elements 357th within zone and capture road net at NDR and OBR UTTFELD then turn E to seize the high ground overlooking LUNEBACH.

357th assemble in Div Reserve after relief vicinity WINTERSCHEID, HECKUSCHEID, and HECKHALENFELD, prepared to pass thru 359th and capture LICHTENBORN and KOPSCHIED.

The scheduled reliefs were accomplished without incident except for 2d Bn 357th which received casualties from shelling during its shift from the line. 3d Bn 359 relieved 2d Bn 357 while 2d Bn 359 relieved C Co 357.

358th used 90th Rcn Tr to relieve Co B 357 and reformed Task Force GRUBBS to free its own Co C.

17 February 1945

Preparations for the attack were concluded on this quiet day which saw little enemy activity. Our 8" guns harassed the bridge at PRONSFELD. After dark Co L 359 occupied three pillboxes vacated by the enemy and then captured the six former occupants when they came back later in the evening.

18 February 1945

Launched as planned, without preparatory fires 359th's attack literally caught the Germans napping. Included in the 400 prisoners taken during the day were the regimental commander and staff and two battalion commanders and their staffs of 331st and 339th Regiments who were all taken in their pillboxes sound asleep. Two companies were taken PW almost intact and the rest were almost wholly destroyed. Numerous maps and documents of value were captured. Headed for KESFELD, Co I 359 bypassed pillboxes and raced into the town at 0530. After a short fire fight, the town was clear. 2d Bn 359th moved initially without resistance and F Co occupied the high ground 1000 yards SE of WETTER-ORDER at 0705. Startled Germans, awakening to find themselves overrun, turned their weapons on reserve elements who began a methodical mop-up that lasted

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most of the day. In all 48 pillboxes were taken by the two Bns. 1st Bn in column, A, C, B, passed thru Co E at 1310 to attack OBR and NDR UTTFELD. Although they met no resistance they halted on order E of the main road 1000 yards E of KESFELD.

358th's 1st Bn secured the hill N of PRONSFELD without trouble and lost only one man as casualty. 4 pillboxes and 33 Psw were captured in the area. A patrol to PRONSFELD drew heavy small arms and mortar fire. One platoon Co C and 2 tanks sortied toward PITTENBACH to clear the buildings on the near side of the river across from the town. A strong enemy force intervened and harried the task force until it was relieved by 12th Inf, 4th Div, who now took over from 1st Bn and Task Force GRUBBS as of 2000. 1st Bn moved to HABSCHIED and Task Force GRUBBS to NDR HABSCHIED.

2d Bn 358 found the going rougher. Cos F and G had scarcely reached the top of pillboxes to their immediate front when they were blanketed by enemy artillery and machine gun fire. The attack was stymied until daylight. Then by fire and maneuver all the boxes were reduced and 75 Psw taken from them. At 1300 2d Bn continued attack but gained only about 1000 yards.

3d Bn attacked thru 90th Rcn Tr at 1400 to capture MASTHORN. They encountered road blocks, mines and booby traps as well as artillery and mortar fire which retarded progress. By night they were still N of MASTHORN.

357 continued in Div Reserve. 2d Bn moved from EIGELSCHEID to HECKHUSCHEID while 3d Bn staged forward from WINTERSCHIED to EIGELSCHEID.

Attacking one and a half hours after 90th Div, 11th Armored Div moved rapidly and captured LUTZHAMFEN and LIEDENBORN.

19 February 1945

Resistance slackened perceptibly as the attack resumed in early morning hours. Within an hour 3d Bn 358 had seized MASTHORN and a second hour placed 2d Bn 358 atop Hill 477 W of PRONSFELD. Then furious at being forced back, the Germans laid concentration after concentration

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on both positions. But battlewise, neither unit suffered a casualty.

Using 1st Bn in attack and 2d Bn to mop up to Div right boundary 359 hopped off against light resistance. At 1050 Co A was in OBR UTTFELD while Co C had NDR UTTFELD. Both Cos began cleaning out pillboxes in the vicinity. Intense high velocity, 20mm and artillery fire formed an effective barrier to progress to the woods E of the two towns. One patrol from 1st Bn ran the gauntlet of fire only to be pinned down by cross-firing machine guns until dark when the patrol made its way back. L and K Cos moved in on 1st Bn's left prepared to continue to the E. 2d Bn reverted to regimental reserve.

357th was now committed to pass thru 359's right flank and wheel E to the River. Accordingly, 2d Bn moved off at 1350 from NDR UTTFELD with Co F out front with their objective the Hill just N of HOUF.

The Germans had the advantage of position here, looking down a long open slope from LICHTENBORN and the enemy made the most of it. From this dominant seat he could unroll a carpet of artillery fire in the path of the approaching troops. Supplementing this fire were two 40mm AA guns in pillboxes that covered the town and road into town. F Co exploited the limited maneuver by attempting to outflank the objective. Progress was slow and was finally halted while E and G Cos were infiltrated forward to give additional support. Darkness fell as the movement was in progress and ended further advance. Co D 712th Tank Bn and 90th Rcn Tr were combined as Task Force GASSMAN and attached to 357 to cover regimental right flank. Given the mission of seizing BINSCHIED, the Task Force approached the town from two directions. As this proved to be too big a bite to swallow without infantry help, the Task Force was ordered back to a point 1000 yards E of LEIDENBORN on the regimental right boundary. 1st Bn 357 moved to HECKHUSCHIED.

Div plan called for 358 to drive past 357 as it turned and continue S then swing E to make the actual contact at MAUEL. 2d Bn 358 therefore relieved 3d Bn 358 at MASTHORN after dark and occupied the entire zone. Next day 2d Bn was to be attached to 359. 3d Bn 358 assembled at HABSCHIED while 1st Bn proceeded to HECKHALENFELD to await forthcoming action.

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Once again the Germans strove desperately to hold their ground. But their positions were as shifting sand as the Div ground relentlessly forward. The enemy threw in everything he had to gain time. Delay. Delay. He fought from strongpoints and log bunkers until blown out by tank fire at point-blank range. He brought his own tanks and self-propelled guns to counter fire. But while he slowed, he could not stop the advance. He backed off fighting.

359 broke thru the crust of resistance at the near edge of the woods E of OER and NDR UTTFELD, then moved easily thru the thick trees to consolidate on the eastern edge in late afternoon prepared to attack to the FRUM River in the morning.

357 gained HOUF and the hill to the N after hard fighting by 2d Bn. To avoid a suicidal frontal attack over the open ground to LICHTENBORN, 3d Bn assembled N of the railroad tracks NW of STALBACH. At midnight the Bn would attack the high ground above LICHTENBORN with assault Cos bypassing STALBACH, leaving it to the reserve Co. Attempts by Task Force GASSMAN and Co A to take BINSCHIED were repulsed.

358 rested easily in Div Reserve as it was yet too early for their commitment. 2d Bn remained attached to avoid burdening 359 before it took its final objectives.

Fighter bombers attacked a convoy moving into WAXWEILER at 1215A in support of the Div and reported destruction of 38 motor trucks, 5 horse-drawn vehicles and 1 tank damaged. 4 guns were strafed and silenced.

21 February 1945

Resistance in front of 3d Bn 357 was light initially as it moved out in attack at midnight. One platoon Co K pulled away from the others and slimed to vicinity of objective capturing 16 PsW. Then contact with it was lost. Firing from pillboxes along the edge of the woods near LICHTENBORN, the Germans held off K and L Cos for most of the day while Co I cleared STALBACH. With the 3d Bn reserve tied up, C and B Cos were brought up on 3d Bn's left and the additional pressure aided by air support slackened the resistance in front of 3d Bn. Fighter bombers knocked out an enemy gun and strafed enemy troops at LICHTENBORN.

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Both Bns pushed forward while 2d Bn continued attacking S and SE. By dark, the high ground was gained and 1st and 3d Bns joined on it. The missing platoon was contacted none the worse for its 15 hours of isolation. Meanwhile Task Force GASSMAN and Co A attacked and captured BINSCHIED at 1700, taking 50 Psw.

The Task Force then passed to control of 358 as it went thru the town while Co A reverted to control of 1st Bn.

359's attack at 0700 turned into a series of short jabs as movement over the open ground toward EUSCHIED and STRICKSCHEID drew machine gun, mortar and high velocity fire. Co A worked its way just short of EUSCHIED but could advance no further. Co I moved slowly down the road toward STRICKSCHEID after taking a pillbox at HOFSWALD. At 1000 1st Bn was directed to relieve pressure on Co A by attacking high ground 1000 yards S of EUSCHIED. B Co moved toward this objective. Co L also ordered forward, moved on left of Co A. Under cover of smoke and using artillery to flush the Germans from hiding, Co I entered and cleared STRICKSCHEID in early afternoon. They threw back a small counterattack at 1410 with artillery fire then captured the high ground NE of town at 2100. Co B now was getting fire from Hill 502 (ENKELS BOIS). Co C therefore attacked the Hill, captured it, then moved on to seize EUSCHIED at 2050. Co B continued to its objective while Co A cleared the area up to EUSCHIED.

2d Bn 358 had been attached at noon. 359 now was notified to relieve it and release it to 358. Co K and Antitank Co were dispatched to accomplish this.

The time was ripe to use 358 and Div at 1300 ordered the regiment to clear out by dark the draw between HICKESHAUSEN and HALENBACH. 3d Bn was alerted at 1310, moved six miles by motor, organized and launched its attack. This decisive action came as a surprise to the Germans who could offer only light resistance. By 2000 Co I had captured HICKESHAUSEN and Co L secured HALENBACH. The cost: 4 casualties. These gains added impetus to the crumbling German defense.

Div ordered Task Force SPIESS to be formed by daylight and attached to 358. This unit was composed of

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Headquarters 773rd Tank Destroyer Bn(-); 1 Platoon Co C, 773rd Tank Destroyer Bn, 90th Rcn Tr, Co D 712th Tank Bn, 1 Platoon Co B 315th Engr Bn, Co C 358th Inf and Antitank Co 358th Inf. The unit would form at HOUF for employment on the right flank.

22 February 1945

Disintegration of the German defenses was evident as 358 and Task Force SPIESS ran rampant over 5000 yards of enemy territory, capturing four towns, 300 PsW, 4 self-propelled guns, one tank and many horse-drawn artillery pieces.

1st Bn 358th Inf made a night motor march from HECKHALENFELD to vicinity of BINSCHIED from where they launched an attack to capture HOLZCHEN and high ground 1000 yards E of town, bypassing ARZFELD enroute. They hit resistance a mile beyond HALENBACH. Co A eliminated this, capturing 2 officers and 40 men. The attack then moved rapidly to HOLZCHEN which was taken about 2030 and final objective was seized at 2200. One squad of Co A caught some 100 PsW, mostly artillerymen, on the high ground E of HOLZCHEN as they tried frantically to hitch their horses and escape. PsW stated our troops had overrun all their positions.

3d Bn 358th Inf set out to capture ARZFELD which they did in late morning after applying artillery to some tanks which delayed the advance. Here they overran a mortar platoon. Having used plenty of fire power, the unit halted to replenish ammunition. Resupplied at 1700 they jumped off again for WINDHAUSEN taking that town at 2030.

Task Force SPIESS swept along the right flank of the regiment capturing the high ground from SW of HECKHAUSEN to SE of NEURATH. They seized a mortar platoon and 4 self-propelled guns intact. As Task Force SPIESS was unable to occupy such an extended area (some 5000 yards), 2d Bn 358th was brought to take over the high ground closest in.

At 0700 1st Bn 357th Inf attacked LICHTENBORN. 5 enemy tanks opposed this advance. One tank was knocked out and the other four withdrew. Cos B and C then moved into the town occupying it by 0900.

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From the ridge line S of the town several self-propelled guns opened up and 3d Bn was ordered to capture this point. Their advance met Inf and tanks but by midafternoon they had pushed to the "Y" fork S of LICHTENBORN. Here they turned E and attacked in conjunction with 1st Bn. Enemy "Tiger Royal" tanks stopped both Bns until darkness. At 2000 the offensive was renewed just as enemy Inf counterattacked 1st Bn. Artillery fire dissipated the attack. Both Bns continued meeting resistance.

359th cleared their area without much opposition and consolidated their positions. 2d Bn relieved 1st Bn which assembled at KESFELD. Patrols to LUNEBACH found the bridge blown and dug-in positions empty. No enemy activity was heard.

90th Div Arty with perfect visibility for air OP's, fired 43 air-observed missions. As a result during the day 7 enemy tanks were knocked out and 4 others probably knocked out. 3 self-propelled or assault guns were destroyed as well as 6 antitank guns, 2 - 88's and 15 vehicles.

11th Armored Div captured ESCHFELD and REIFF and mopped up its area maintaining contact with our right flank units. 6th Armored Div and 6th Cavalry Group which had attacked across the OUR River two days before were driving fast to the E.

23 February 1945

The Germans made a determined stand with tanks and Inf at KOPSCHIED as 1st Bn 357th approached the town and exhaustive fighting continued throughout the night. At daylight the Bn gained a foothold in the town and finally cleared it at 0940. One of our tanks was knocked out in this fight. Co A then went on to capture KINZENBURG.

3d Bn 357th meanwhile was concerned with 4 enemy tanks rattling around in their rear. All available weapons were used on them without result. Finally K and I Cos bypassed the tanks leaving them for Co L. Before L Co could close with them the tanks withdrew.

K and L moved onto the ridge line W of MANDERSCHIED at daylight intending to attack the town later in the

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day. At 1100 they were ordered to stand fast while a run was made to seize the bridge at WAXWEILER.

2d Bn 357th drew this assignment and reached the town just after dark. Some fighting took place to clear the W bank. Co F deployed along the W bank to gain the bridge. The Germans blew it at 2345. Without a bridge, a crossing was not desired and the Bn withdrew to an assembly area S of LICHTENBORN. The area was turned over to 358th Inf.

In the interim Co I was ordered into MANDERSCHEID and the unit occupied the town at 1730. B Co thereupon relieved Co I and 1st Bn took the entire front of the regimental zone.

358th and Task Force SPIESS augmented by B Co 602nd Tank Destroyer Bn swooped through enemy rear areas not giving the Germans time to dig-in. This incessant pressure added 4000 more yards of ground gained, 4 enemy tanks and 5 self-propelled guns knocked out or captured as well as two hundred prisoners taken.

Like 357th, 1st Bn 358 was harassed by two stray enemy tanks in the hours after midnight. The tanks finally withdrew to the E. 1st Bn moved out at 0730, knocked out one tank and 2 self-propelled guns, captured 80 PsW and rode on to their objective (LAUPERTATH and Vic) on tank destroyer's without further resistance. At this point they received orders to capture the bridge at WAXWEILER and moved off at 1730. 357th beat them to the town, however, and the Bn held up organizing the high ground W of the River. Co E was attached to outpost the area vacated by 2d Bn 357th.

3d Bn captured KRAUTSCHEID in late morning and were held there with orders to capture BELLSCHEID; in late afternoon. These orders were cancelled and the Bn held its position, having already a fair catch: 2 tanks; 100 PsW, 4 motorcycles, 1 150mm gun with prime-mover, 1 staff car, 2 self-propelled guns and several horses with saddles.

2d Bn 358th moved in regimental reserve to HOLZCHEN in midafternoon.

Task Force SPIESS cleared HEILBACH, UPPERSHAUSEN and BERKOTH capturing a reported 89 PsW. The enemy shelled

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BERKOTH heavily, then slacked off during the night.

359th Inf held its positions patrolling toward LUNEBACH.

The air force flew 13 missions in front of the 90th in the general vicinity NEUERBURG - PHILIPPSWEILER - WAXWEILER and a 5 mile radius E of the FRUM. They estimated the following destroyed or damaged: 75 tanks, 90 motor trucks, 90 armored vehicles, 1 supply dump and several mobile guns. Troop concentrations also were hit.

24 February 1945

357, 359 and 1st and 2d Bns 358 remained in their areas while 3d Bn 358th made the final offensive on the Div right. Moving out at 0800, the battalion seized BELLSCHIED, RINGHUSCHIED, OBERPIERSCHIED and NDR PIERSCHIED in just one and three quarters hours. The battalion took two casualties and captured 25 PsW. Task Force SPIESS seized the high ground a few hundred yards W of PHILIPPSWEILER. Permission to enter the town was refused by Corps since it was out of our area.

Fighter-bombers flew 7 missions around PHILIPPSWEILER, OBERWEILER, OBERLAUCH, PLUTSCHIED, DACKSCHIED and LASCHEID and hit tanks, vehicles, CPs and troop concentrations.

1st Bn 359th reverted to its regiment as Div received word it would assemble in Corps Reserve after relief by 6th Armd Div and 6th Cav Gp. These units had made contact with each other and with the 80th Div moving up from the S. The 30 mile pincer was fast closing. Aside from 87th Div which was to attack on 27 February on the Corps N flank, VIII Corps was temporarily taking a defensive position along the FRUM.

The German's uncanny ability to recover crippled tanks again manifested itself. The day before, 8" guns had knocked the turret off a "Tiger Royal". Now only the turret and useless gun remained, torn from the hull. Examination of the tracks showed the headless vehicle had moved off apparently under its own power.

The reliefs by 6th Armd Div and 6th Cav Gp were accomplished without event and the units assembled in their new areas.

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25 - 28 February 1945

It would have been difficult to get less suitable space for a unit supposed to get a rest. The area assigned was already crowded with Corps troops, who could not be moved since they were supporting the front, and by the rear elements of the units on line. The ground had been thoroughly fought over and villages laid waste by artillery, tank, tank destroyer, mortar and air power. Those pillboxes not burst open by tank and tank destroyer fire were split asunder by explosives. Dead animals were everywhere. In the warming days, their fetid stench was increasingly nauseating. The men of the Div collected and buried the dead animals and improvised shelters. Pyramidal tents were requisitioned and used.

The units settled down to brief training schedules and recreation and rehabilitation of personnel. Thus a month of hard slugging ended quietly as 90th Div slipped from Corps to SHARP Reserve.

VIII Corps however, jumped off in attack to capture the high ground W of the KYLL River to effect a junction with XII Corps vicinity DEMSBORN (L-1870).

* * * * *

In the summing up, February was a month of conquest - conquest of dirty weather, of concrete and barbed wire, of stubborn enemy groups committed to a "do-or-die" effort to hold the West Wall.

This much touted barrier itself proved no match for the skill and courage and the mode of attack shown by our troops. Everywhere it crumpled - crushed and ground to bits by the inexorable force of the American onslaught. Notwithstanding its thinly-manned but stubborn defense, the West Wall's speedy reduction is a tribute to the drive and fighting qualities of the American soldier and the men of the 90th and attached units. Over 500 pillboxes and log bunkers had to be captured and destroyed. 5195 prisoners were taken. 25 tanks and 13 self-propelled guns were captured or knocked out, besides a cornucopia of other enemy materiel.

The Reich was entered; the West Wall broken. Now the Div looked E - to the blue RHINE, the next most formidable barrier.

Booth
 BOOTH
 G-3

ROOKS
 COMDG

Authority NND 735017
By WDP NARA Date 11/10/01BREACHING THE SIEGFRIED LINE

What were the factors in the 90th's successful reduction of the Siegfried Line? At first it looked like an insurmountable problem. The ground was hub-deep with mud, streams were thaw-flooded and the incessant rains made air cover something to wish for. After initial contact it was found that pillboxes were far more numerous than shown on defense overprints. Some were adeptly camouflaged. The enemy usually fought stubbornly until completely surrounded. Lastly, in spite of ammunition shortages, the enemy supported his positions with some artillery, considerable deadly nebelwerfer and mortar fire, high velocity fire from gasless tanks dug-in as artillery, as well as some roving tanks and self-propelled guns.

But in actual fact, the West Wall, though formidable, was far from impregnable as had been supposed. In the States the Div had trained on attacking the perfect defensive position. But the real thing was far from perfect as the Div had experienced at DILLINGEN and TETTINGEN. It could be cracked.

Here, the dragon's teeth were largely ineffective. Mines and barbed wire, though plentiful, were still not as profuse as anticipated. The pillboxes themselves -- contrary to those at DILLINGEN -- served more as troop shelters and the fighting was done mainly from around and outside of them. While this gave the enemy better fields of fire -- since many of the boxes were on reverse slopes -- they similarly made him more vulnerable to our artillery and mortar fire. Further, in each area was a key box whose reduction left the others easy prey. Quick to learn this, our units directed their efforts to establishing this key and reducing it first, thus unlocking the defense of that area. In general this was done, though not as easily as the writing of it.

Other factors contributing to the Div's success include:

Timing, since the Div attacked as part of a large-scale assault when the enemy was most harried. The Russian drive from the E was gaining sledge-hammer momentum. The Germans were not yet recovered from the Ardennes disaster.

The enemy troops were insufficient in number, lacking

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in weapons (most pillboxes had only machine guns and an occasional bazooka) and were low in morale. They were motley groups thrown together, hodge-podge, from every kind of unit -- inf, engr, artillery, air force, service troops, etc. Some were first-rate soldiers who fought hard and well. But too many were a raggle-taggle of scraps. Some had no infantry training at all. Many did not even know the units to which they were assigned. As a result, the Germans' favored defense -- the counterattack -- was almost nullified. The enemy soldier's morale suffered when they learned from our propaganda, our news leaflets, and our overwhelming their positions that they had been sold down the river by their top commanders. When they realized they were just bodies with trigger fingers placed in the path of a Juggernaut, many became disillusioned and gave up. Our troops took more prisoners each day than the enemy could replace in a week.

The successful application of fundamental training doctrines as originally learned in the States by key personnel still with the Div and developed by experience with the Maginot Forts and previous Siegfried Line encounters was another item. Positions were outflanked whenever possible.

The aggressiveness and skill of the units making the attacks counted a lot. Veteran soldiers and officers among the Psw remarked repeatedly and favorably upon the control, discipline and skillful approach of our troops in the attack.

Thoroughness of execution helped. Bitter experience at DILLINGEN had taught the dangers of enemy infiltration and the inadvisability of skipping pillboxes. Consequently, each one was mopped up and either occupied or demolished after capture. For this purpose, since assault troops were at a premium, special unit troops -- Antitank Co, Cannon Co, etc -- were pressed into service. While this mop-up slowed the advance, it saved re-doing an area.

Development of a relatively simple technique aided the advance. All units eventually boiled down their attack on pillboxes to a simple form: Button up the box with tank, tank destroyer or machine gun fire, and assault with a small force of 8-10 infantrymen and 2 engineers with demolitions to knock out the box. On the more obdurate strongholds, direct fire of the 155 self-propelled gun softened the resistance.