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11 JULY (Cont'd)

357th Inf in column of companies through its left to give added drive to the bogged down attack.

2nd Bn went into action at 1500, passing through the left company of the 2nd Bn 359th Inf. Despite its canalization and the stubborn fight put up by superbly dug-in Germans, the battalion drove ahead and by dark had reached the far end of the corridor and had gained for itself the maneuver room necessary for the development of its full offensive strength.

359th Inf:

The few available hours of darkness had been inadequate to effect re-supply and establish communication to and within the assault battalions; it was nearly noon before the battalions were in proper shape for a continuation of the attack.

At 1400 the 3rd Bn 359th Inf and 2nd Bn 358th Inf moved forward, advancing to the EW road just S of the FORET. At this point they came under extremely heavy fire from Hill 92 to their immediate front. To give renewed momentum to the attack, 1st Bn 359th Inf was moved through the woods to the left rear of 3rd Bn. At 1930 1st Bn, in a coordinated effort with 3rd Bn 358th Inf, attacked out of the FORET and advanced to the town of LASTELLE.

12 JULY 44

During the early morning hours the Boche withdrew to a position, which was subsequently discovered to be some 3000 meters rearward. The battle of the FORET DE MONT CASTRE had been won. Blood, guts and superior equipment had finally broken the Mahlman Line. The cost to the 90th Div had been high; some 5000 had been killed, wounded or captured. But the German losses were heavier. The 90th Div, drained as it was of key officers and non-commissioned officers had undisputedly proven its combat effectiveness. For 9 continuous days and nights it had fought without respite against a seasoned and entrenched enemy, and its wounds notwithstanding, emerged from the fight victorious and high spirited.

357th Inf:

The 2nd Bn attacked at 0800 and meeting practically no resistance, advanced rapidly to LE PLESSIS. After mopping up the Boche stragglers in that area it was redirected S along the W edge of the swamp in conformity with Division orders. The movement of the 1st Bn 358th Inf obliquely across its front in the vicinity of LA COUTRIE stopped

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12 JULY (Cont'd)

further progress. Although every effort was made to shift the 1st Bn 358th Inf to the right into its proper Z of action, this was not accomplished until well after dark and the 2nd Bn could but remain where it first halted. Under cover of darkness it moved forward and outposted the left of the 1st Bn 358th Inf while that latter unit side-slipped to the right.

While the 2nd Bn was investigating LE PLESSIS, the 1st and 3rd Bns now reorganized, moved forward over the bitterly contested ground of the preceding few days, assembled in vicinity of BEAU COUDRAY as Division Reserve.

358th Inf:

Shortly after midnight the 1st Bn, previously regimental reserve, initiated relief of the 2nd Bn 359th Inf. Upon completion of the relief, the 2nd Bn 359th Inf assembled just N of the "NOSE" and when closed was detached from the 358th Inf and passed to division control

At 0800 the 1st Bn on the left and the 3rd Bn on the right, moved rapidly SE against negligible resistance.

By 1400 the 1st Bn had reached the stream line just N of GORGES with its left at the swamp and its right opposite the town. Patrols which attempted to cross the stream drew heavy fire from the buildings lining the far bank and the battalion was soon engaged in a hot fire fight. All efforts to force the stream line were repulsed, and the battalion secured for the night on the positions it had won by mid-afternoon. Under cover of darkness, it side-slipped to the right to conform to the new Regtl Z and to permit the employment of the 2nd Bn 357th Inf.

3rd Bn on the regimental right, advanced abreast of the 1st Bn 359th Inf from LASTELLE through LA SALMONNERIE with the objective of seizing the main crossroad at ST GERMAIN. This Bn had been so greatly decimated in the preceding few days that its rifle elements consisting of but 4 officers and 122 EM were organized into a single battle group. It reached the crossroads without difficulty but was ambushed by flanking MG and Tank fire as it moved to the ground beyond. In the ensuing fight it sustained approximately 40 additional casualties including 4 officers. By late evening the remnants had routed the Boche and, reinforced by 2 AT Platoons, had organized the crossroads for defense. Contact could not be established with the 1st Bn on the left.

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359th Inf:

1st Bn moved from vicinity LASTELLE at 0800 on the right rear of the 3rd Bn 358th Inf. After an uninterrupted advance of 2 Kms it encountered a heavily defended strong-point in a sunken road midway between LA SALMONNERIE and ST GERMAIN. Although reinforced by tanks, it was unable to reduce this pocket of resistance. With the advance thus effectively blocked, the Bn Comdr left 1 Co in place to contain frontly and swung the remainder of the Bn left into the Z of the 358th Inf to tie in with the 3rd Bn 358th Inf for the night.

2nd Bn 358th Inf from its position on the S slopes of the FORET advanced due E towards LASTELLE avoiding Hill 92. From LASTELLE it moved S and secured LA BAGOTTERIE thence SE abreast of 1st Bn 359th Inf. The contour of the enemy's new delaying position was definitely established when this Bn hit determined resistance a short distance S of PIERREPORT. This Bn could advance no further. In addition to the enemy position immediately to its front, its left flank had been exposed by the divergent maneuver of the 1st Bn 359th Inf.

The 3rd Bn now in regimental reserve, moved throughout the day, echeloned to the right rear of 2nd Bn 358th Inf. Closing for the night in an assembly area SE of LA BAGOTTERIE. As a matter of interest, this Bn was forced to fight for its night assembly position.

2nd Bn 359th Inf, Division Reserve, was ordered forward at 1400 and marched to assembly area at the crossroads at LA BAGOTTERIE.

90th Rcn Tr, returning to action after a brief rest, moved to LASTELLE and with dismounted patrols, maintained contact with the 8th Inf Division.

315th Engr Bn which had for the past 5 days operated almost exclusively as a combat unit, was relieved at daylight from its position atop the FORET and returned to much neglected Engr work.

* * * * *

The entire Corps front on this day advanced a comparable distance. The 8th Infantry Division on our immediate right moved rapidly til encountering the reverse slope position of Hill 92. The 79th Infantry Division on the Corps right remained abreast of the 8th Infantry Division. On our left the 4th Infantry Division maneuvering deliberately through difficult swampy terrain made excellent progress.

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13 JULY 44

The Division plan for the resumption of the attack called for simultaneous jump off of all 3 regiments at 0645. However because the 8th Infantry Division had been held a considerable distance to our right rear, the attack with the 359th Inf was postponed until that Division should come abreast.

357th Inf:

2nd Bn had moved 1 company forward under cover of darkness to outpost its LD generally along the line vacated by the 1st Bn 358th Inf in its sideslip to the right. The lateral movement of the 1st Bn 358th Inf was not completed during the night, and consequently at daybreak elements of the 2 Bns were intermingled. Completion of readjustment, slowed by the harassing fire of the enemy S of the stream, consumed a considerable portion of the morning and the 2nd Bn 357th Inf did not cross its LD until 1030. E Company, the assault unit, met heavy MG fire from the houses fringing the S bank of the stream immediately as it had started its forward movement. Unable to silence this fire with either mortars or artillery, E Company rose to the man and charged across the stream, overrunning the German positions. A second line of resistance was encountered a few hundred yards S of the stream but the bridgehead established was sufficient to permit the crossing by infiltration of F Company, which swung into action to the left rear of E Company. G Company, in Battalion Reserve, moved to the right, N of the stream, to assist the 1st Bn 358th Inf in its attack against GORGES. After the seizure of GORGES by the 1st Bn, 358th Inf, G Company returned to its own Z, crossed the stream and split to protect the flanks of the battalion in the positions it organized for the night. The action of this battalion, although its gains measured in yards were negligible, unhinged the right flank of the enemy's defense position, forcing him into a general withdrawal.

The remainder of the regiment remained at BEAU COUDRAY training replacements and continuing reorganization.

358th Inf:

The 1st Bn on the regimental left, attacked at 0645. During the preceding night the enemy returned in force to the N bank of the stream and from hastily prepared positions stoutly resisted the advance of the battalion. It required a half day to eliminate these surprise positions. At 1900 leading elements of the battalion forced the stream and entered GORGES. By 2100 the town had been mopped up, battalion perimeter established and contact firmed with 2nd Bn 357th Inf on the left. 3rd Bn held in place throughout the day reorganizing. 2nd Bn 358th Inf by Division order was scheduled to revert

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to regimental control at such time as it should be passed through by the advance of the 2nd Bn 359th Inf.

359TH INF:

Maintained its positions prepared to attack when the 121st Inf on its right came abreast. 121st Inf did not come abreast and consequently no attack was made. The only offensive action on the part of the regiment was the elimination by the 1st Bn of the strong point which had checked its advance the previous day.

14 JULY 44357TH INFANTRY:

2nd Bn advanced at 1000 meeting no resistance. By 1145 the I and R Plat was operating to the front and to the left of the Bn. By mid-afternoon the Bn had completely cleared the regimental zone to the N and to the E of Boche stragglers and had assembled in the vicinity of LA CELLERIE awaiting regimental orders. Remainder of the regiment was staged forward to the vicinity of GORGES preparatory to the relief of the 358th Infantry.

358TH INFANTRY:

1st and 3rd Bns advancing abreast moved on the general axis GORGES - GONFREVILLE, against slight resistance. DURAUVILLE and GONFREVILLE, and the crossing E of the latter town were seized without incident and the regimental front advanced to the high ground overlooking the SEVES RIVER from NAY inclusive westward to contact the 359th Infantry. Patrols crossing the SEVES RIVER drew heavy fire from the ground to the S, which in the ensuing days was to become so well known as the "ISLAND".

2nd Bn upon being covered by the advance of the 359th Inf sideslipped to the left and assembled S of GORGES as regimental reserve. F Co was attached to the 3rd Bn in position to back up the greatly reduced latter unit.

359TH INFANTRY:

1st Bn advancing without resistance moved rapidly within its Zone and by mid-afternoon had secured the CRs N of SEVES. The Boche outposts N of the RIVER were quickly overrun and one platoon was pushed toward SEVES to secure the stream-crossings. It proved inadequate for the job and since a general engagement was not indicated at this time the attack was abandoned.

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14 JULY 44 (Cont'd)

2nd Bn, passing to the right of the 2nd Bn 358th Inf, advanced on the right rear of the 1st Bn, seized LA COMMUNE and continued to the RIVER to establish contact with the 1st Bn on its left, and shortly before dark with the 121st Infantry on its right.

3d Bn followed by bounds in trace of the 2nd Bn and assembled E of HAU PERREY.

90th Rcn Tr:

Alerted immediately the enemy's general withdrawal had become apparent, the troop went into action at 1200. One (1) platoon assisted the 357th Infantry in mop up of its area. Remainder of Troop moved to GONFREVILLE, from that point NE on to the neck of land leading to the Z of the 4th Inf Div. By 1600 it had cleared the area of German resistance taking numerous prisoners, and established contact with 4th Rcn Tr and had organized its outposts.

* * * * *

90th Inf Div had reached its assigned objectives and with them secure the 1st Phase of the VIII Corps offensive ended. Army strategy dictated that the Corps hold in place for the time being, pending development in other areas. This announcement was not disappointing for while the Division still possessed the capacity for continued offensive action, the opportunity to reorganize was an unmitigated blessing.

15 JULY 44357th Inf:

Immediately after midnight, 1st Bn on the right and 2nd Bn on the left, relieved 358th Inf in place. The 3rd Bn assembled in Regimental Reserve N of GONFREVILLE. Throughout the day positions were readjusted and improved without molestation from the enemy on the far side of the SEVES R.

358th Inf:

Upon relief, assembled all units of regiment in the general area of GORGES.

359th Inf:

Firmed its position on the Division right and instituted an effective harrassing fire plan directed at the Boche confronting them.

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15 JULY 44 (Cont'd)90th Rcn Tr:

Was assigned continued responsibility for the spit of land on the Division left and maintenance of contact with the 4th Inf Div.

Given thus a breathing spell, the Division entered upon an extensive program of reorganization, rehabilitation and training. Particular attention was given to the integration of replacements and the bathing, re-equipping and reclothing of combat units.

16 - 18 JULY 44

During this period 357th and 359th Infs maintained their positions overlooking the SEVES R, harassing the enemy on the ISLAND with fire of all types. Because of the open nature of the ground to the immediate front, patrol activity was limited to night work.

The entire VIII Corps was inactive, its resumption of the offensive to the S being contingent upon the initial success of the strong effort planned by the VII Corps in the area NW of ST LO. The VIII Corps follow-up attack contemplated a straight push with 4 Division abreast (in order from right to left, 79th, 8th, 90th 83rd) to seize the high ground vicinity COUTANCES. The axis of the 90th Division attack was the PERIERS - ST SAUVEUR LENDELIN Road.

On the 18th of July the 4th Armd Div, available for employment in a defensive role only, replaced the 4th Inf Div in the interval between the 90th and 83rd Divs.

The immediate stumbling block within the 90th Division zone was the passage across the ISLAND, the approaches to which were devoid of cover and swept by enemy fire. It was felt that the ISLAND should be captured and held as a preliminary operation to provide the Division with a better LD. VIII Corps agreed to this plan and preparations were immediately initiated for a dawn attack by the 358th Inf on 19 July.

All units continued training and rehabilitation. Particular stress was placed on Infantry-Tank training, familiarization firing with all weapons and the indoctrination of infantry officers in field artillery forward observer methods.

19 JULY 44

The attack of the 358th Inf was postponed 24 hours by Corps direction to permit the acquisition of the artillery ammunitions necessary for the support of the operations.

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19 JULY 44 (Cont'd)

Through inexplicable circumstances elements of the 4th Armd Div launched a limited objective attack to seize NAY, a locality which had been held by our troops for a period of five days. The attack was eventually stopped, after several casualties had been inflicted on the 3rd Bn 357th Inf.

Late in the day information was received of the indefinite postponement of the projected attack of the 358th Inf. However, 3rd Bn 358th Inf effected relief of 3rd Bn 359th Inf to place the attack LD under Regtl control.

20 - 21 JULY 44

Corps and Division awaited the jump off of the VII Corps which had been daily postponed because of unfavorable weather. During the lull thus afforded Division continued to fully utilize the available time to bring the units to fullest possible combat efficiency.

358th's attack was finally and definitely set up for 220600.

22 JULY 44

1st and 2nd Bns 358th Inf initiated movement at 0100 from vicinity GORGES to forward assembly areas designated for the attack, closing thereat 0400 hours.

At 0628 when the preparation started, both battalions were rearward of the prescribed LD. Immediately the preparation lifted at 0630 the Boche began the most intense and sustained counterpreparation fire that the Division had experienced to date. Whether the Boche were forewarned of the impending attack or whether the inactivity on the remainder of the Corps front permitted him to concentrate all available artillery on the attack area has never been accurately determined; the bitter fact remains that the heavy artillery fire which began at H-Hour and continued throughout the day from the outset disrupted and disorganized the assault echelons and foredoomed to failure the well planned and the well coordinated attack.

The entire attack plan had been premised upon the rapid movement of the leading waves across the barren approaches to the "ISLAND" and the quick overrunning of its first line of defense. Because of tardiness in reaching the LD and more especially because of the heavy barrage sustained at the jump off time, the assault as conceived was never launched. Once aware of the point of our attack, the enemy shifted more troops to the S bank of the stream to oppose us and began mortaring and machine-gunning the deployed troops. The assault companies, abhorrent as the phrase may be, were "pinned to the ground" and notwithstanding the heroic actions of their leaders, remained immobile throughout the forenoon.

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Finally at 1100, elements of F Co pushed across the stream W of SEVES and secured a lodgment but no additional 2nd Bn troops effected a crossing. These troops subsequently withdrew to allow tanks to fire into the buildings in SEVES.

At 1300, C and B Cos ignoring flanking machine gun fire jumped to the "ISLAND" and overcoming the immediate resistance advanced S about 1 Ym. They were, however, unable to expand their bridgehead W sufficiently to uncover the S approach to the only road onto the "ISLAND".

Bn halted forward motion after cutting main lateral road on "ISLAND" awaiting armored and antitank support. Elements of A and D Cos crossed at 1800. Behind them, enemy mortar, artillery and enfilade machine gun fire blocked all efforts of the engineers to provide a vehicular crossing. The existing road to the ISLAND was denied by the Boche infantry, supported by SP guns, who held the far approach.

In an attempt to exploit the momentary success of the 1st Bn, the 2nd Bn was directed to cross in the former's wake and then attack E. But disorganization in the battalion was so widespread that only G Co was able to cross. It remained in a position of readiness immediately rearward of the 1st Bn.

At 2000, German paratroopers and tanks struck the E flank of 1st Bn in two company strength under the cover of an intense artillery preparation. The attack was firmly repulsed at dusk but its weight and fury had delimited the bridgehead to a scant 300 yards depth S of the stream. An all around defense was established, covered by all available artillery, pending the arrival of reinforcements in men and equipment.

357th and 359th Infs holding in place, supported the attack by fire and drew in turn considerable enemy reaction. Added to all other difficulties, a dense fog overhung the Division area rendering the much depended upon liaison planes useless.

23 JULY 44

During the early morning hours the SEVES R overflowed its banks and became unfordable in most spots. This situation together with fire which continued to fall on both banks accentuated the difficulties attendant upon resupply of ammunition to the 1st Bn and G Co. At first light there was still no tank crossing and only a handful of ammunition had reached the assault troops. No additional troops of the 2nd Bn had joined G Co.

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At 0830 mortar and artillery fire in the 1st Bn area increased perceptibly and shortly after 0900 the Boche attacked both flanks of the Bn in considerable strength. Tanks operating with both attacking groups made deep penetrations as bazooka team after team was picked off by the supporting enemy infantry. Worn by fatigue, decimated in strength and bewildered by the success of the German attack, the Bn broke and began withdrawing to the N bank of the River. Many men swam the water gap and reached our lines safely but 11 officers and approximately 200 men were cut off and captured. By 1030 all fighting on the "ISLAND" had ceased and the Boche was in firm control of the S bank.

The stragglers from the 1st and 2nd Bns were quickly reformed and placed on the left of the 3rd Bn which throughout the attack had maintained its positions to counter any possible German breakthrough. Division ordered the 357th Inf to extend its 1st Bn to the right to contact with the left of the 3rd Bn 358th Inf. Coincidental with this readjustment, 1st and 2nd Bn 358th Inf were withdrawn to rear assembly areas in vicinity of the Regtl CP at GONFREVILLE.

The battle of the "ISLAND" had been a costly failure, shattering as it had 2 battalions of infantry. In the eyes of higher headquarters the Division setback was inexplicable but in vindication of the officers and men who had fought, bled and died in a heroic attempt to make the attack a success it must be stated that a curious series of cumulative circumstances had combined to deny success.

(1) Except in the narrow zone of the attack, the entire Army front was inactive and the Boche was able to give undivided attention to this sole threat to the integrity of his front. While its infantry strength could not be diverted to the extent of opposing us with numerical superiority, all artillery within range could be and was directed against us.

(2) During both days of the attack weather conditions deprived us of air support and, of more immediate concern, prevented the use of artillery liaison planes to find and adjust on counterbattery targets.

(3) The success of the attack was contingent upon the element of surprise to the extent of rushing the open ground N of the "ISLAND" before the Boche could react to the sudden pressure. However, the infantry was not at the LD at the prescribed hour and the preparation fires were not followed up. The enemy emerging from cover after the completion of the preparation and not finding himself attacked at close quarters was alerted to and ready for the attack when finally launched.

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(4) Although Regt entered the battle at full strength, well over 50% of its Bn strengths were replacements for whom this was their first fight. Caught at the LD by heavy enemy fire, and unable to fight back effectively, they could not be expected to react like seasoned veterans. The instinct for self-preservation outweighed obedience to orders and posed insurmountable obstacles to rapid reorganization.

(5) The inability to cross supporting weapons to effectively engage enemy tanks had a definite psychological reaction on the infantry men up front.

24 JULY 44 (PLATE III).

The experience of the last two days indicated that now that the enemy was aware of our intentions, any further attempts to assault the "ISLAND" frontally when the Corps moved forward held scant chance of success. Consequently the Division attack plan was radically revised. 359th Inf's effort remained unchanged, their attack being directed S toward PERIERS along the Division right boundary. The 358th Inf, extending to the left (E), 90th Rcn Tr extending to the S would relieve the 357th Inf and initially contain the "ISLAND". RCT 357, upon relief would move to a LD along the existing boundary between the 4th Armd Div and the 83rd Inf Div. From this position in a coordinated effort with the right Regt of the 83rd Inf Div, (329th Inf), RCT 357 would attack SW along the CARENTAN - PERIERS Road, cutting off the "ISLAND" and making contact with 359th Inf N of PERIERS. When this maneuver had developed sufficiently, 358th Inf would mop up the ISLAND and assemble thereon as Div Reserve.

D-Day for the big drive had been announced as 25 July. With time at a premium, arrangements for the movement of RCT 357 and coordination of plans with the 83rd Inf Div were pushed with all vigor. Fortunately, D-Day was postponed for a minimum of 24 hours by unfavorable weather.

25 JULY 44357th Inf:

2nd Bn moved by marching at 1300 via GONFREVILLE - BLEHOW - SAINTENY to forward assembly NE of RAIDS. 1st and 3rd Bns moved at 1700 and 1800 respectively after their relief by elements of 358th Inf. By 2145, the regiment was completely closed in its new area SW of SAINTENY. Relief and movement were made without enemy interference.

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Regimental plan called for an attack in column of battalions. through the right of the 329th Inf, in order 2nd, 1st, 3rd. 329th Inf with its left Bn on the assault was to attack simultaneously to seize a parallel objective. 7th Armd Div on the right while holding in place was to support the attack with all available artillery.

358th Inf:

2nd Bn initiated relief of 3rd Bn and elements of 1st B, 357th Inf at 1500 while 3rd Bn extended to the left to equalize sectors relief was completed and sector responsibility passed to CO 358th Inf at 1800. 1st Bn, deep in reorganization remained vicinity GONPREVILLE as Regtl Reserve.

By dark, Regiment had completely readjusted and had positioned all weapons to support the attacks of 357th and 359th Infs by fire.

359th Inf:

Maintained its positions and completed preparation for its attack on the Division right. 2nd Bn moved to forward assembly positions on the right rear of 1st Bn.

* * * * *

At 251100, under cover of a tremendous bombardment, VII Corps initiated its assault from position W of ST LO. VIII Corps H-Hour was finally set at 260530.

26 JULY 44

The entire VIII Corps front flamed into action at 0530.

357th Inf:

2nd Bn attacking on a narrow front which permitted the employment of only 1 Co encountered heavy resistance almost at the LD. The entrenched enemy although buffeted by heavy mortar and artillery concentrations could not be unloosened. On the left the 329th Inf was stopped for no gain. By noon it had become obvious that the stalemate would not be immediately broken and plans were initiated, in conjunction with 329th Inf, for that latter unit to sideslip to the left, punching at a new point and giving the 357th Inf some maneuver room on the left of the 2nd Bn; both Regtl attacks to be renewed at 1900.

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329th Inf experienced great difficulty repositioning its troops and late in the afternoon decided to postpone the effort until the following morning. 357th Inf followed suit and spent the remaining hours of daylight in preparation for a dawn attack.

359th Inf attacked in column of battalions at 0530 with the 2nd Bn leading. As was the case in the 358th Inf attack a few days previously, the Regiment was faced with the SEVES R as an immediate obstacle.

G Co crossed the River without difficulty and overran the first German entrenchments. 200 yards beyond however, they were stopped by heavy fire. F Co followed and was committed on G Co's left. At 0900 an enemy counterattack supported by tanks and artillery struck between the 2 Cos and forced them back into the first German entrenchments from which point they successfully repulsed the Boche. Heavy enemy fire, both artillery and flat trajectory, continued to rain upon the only vehicular approach route and thwarted all efforts of engineers to construct a ford for the passage of tanks.

Enemy tanks from well defiladed positions on the flanks of the 2nd Bn, harassed the infantry and prevented their advance. By 1300 two additional counterattacks by the enemy had been launched and repulsed. At 1430 Co E was committed to fill the gap which had developed between the two assault Cos after the first counterattack; it came into the line in time to meet squarely another counterattack which developed into a hand grenade fight. Bazooka teams tried valiantly to dislodge the enemy tanks but one by one fell to enemy fire. By 2000 2nd Bn, fighting heroically to maintain its position, had repulsed three additional tank and infantry attacks. All in all five Boche tanks had been put out of action - 3 by bazookas and 2 by artillery. But more were available and caused particular havoc by enfilading our lines at ranges sometime as small as 100 yards.

3rd Bn, at midafternoon, had removed to position immediately behind 2nd Bn to counter any possible German thrust across the River. This battalion was ordered to effect relief after dark of the 2nd Bn which by this time had suffered heavy casualties.

1st Bn throughout the day maintained its positions protecting the left of Regiment.

358th Inf, from its position N of the "ISLAND" fired throughout the day in support of the 359th Inf.

90th Ren Tr moved from its position on the Div left flank to maintain contact with the 121st Inf on the Div right.

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Boche blocking detachment on that road. The presence of Boche tanks on the one side and the inability to move AT or TD weapons in position to oppose them on the other resulted in a stalemate until dark.

1st Bn advancing S encountered comparable resistance and eventually halted for the night a few hundred yards to the left front of the 3rd Bn.

2nd Bn moved from its original position at 1600 and completed the mop up of PERIERS occupying that town for the night.

358th Inf:

At midmorning 3rd Bn patrols reported the town of SEVES clear of enemy. Acting on Division instruction Cos of the 2nd and 3rd Bns began a systematic search of the "ISLAND" while remainder of Regiment was alerted for immediate movement. The "ISLAND" was soon reported devoid of Boche but littered with mines.

By 2000 two routes across the "ISLAND" had been cleared by the Engineers and the Regiment moved S to an assembly area vicinity GRUCHY.

90th Rcn Tr was alerted at 1000 and given the mission to proceed S through PERIERS to contact the enemy. Delayed by bridge construction and mines on the main road to PERIERS the Troop did not initiate its movement until 1330. Moving for the most part dismounted, it reached PERIERS at 1530, passed through town and continued S in the direction of ST SAUVEUR LENDELIN. 1 Km S of PERIERS it encountered enemy infantry and tanks. The limited road net did not permit the Troop to bypass this resistance and it made no additional progress during the day. 1 Plat was eventually diverted E of PERIERS and contacted 3rd Bn 357th Inf.

* * * * *

The entire VIII Corps had surged forward and the proportions of the breakthrough were now plain to all. It was consequently directed that the 4th and 6th Armd Divs pass through the 90th and 79th Inf Div respectively and drive towards COUTANCES and points to the S. During the night the Div staff completed necessary arrangements for the passage of the armor while the engineers worked with feverish speed to demine the CARENTAN - PERIERS Road and provide a passable route through the demolished town itself.

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28 JULY 44

At 0600 357th and 359th Infs resumed their advance to the S keeping entirely clear of the PERIERS - COUTANCES ROAD. At 0800 the head of the 4th Armd Div column passed through PERIERS and rolled unopposed southward to ST SAUVEUR LENDELIN.

Hampered only by mines and the inadequacy of routes, the leading regiments advanced rapidly, initially deployed and subsequently, in route column. By 1300 all leading elements had reached the ST SAUVEUR LENDELIN - MARIGNY ROAD. Some 3 Kms S thereof, vicinity of BUCHEUX, the 357th Inf was stopped by contact with elements of the 1st Inf Div moving W directly across our front. 359th Inf halted on Division order on the general line from LA HOUSSAYE (269622) - HAUTE CAPALIN (300625). Both regiments secured their positions and gained firm lateral contact to prevent the infiltration southward of by-passed enemy elements. The only enemy contact during the day had been Boche stragglers who had been overrun by the rapidity of the advance.

By dark the entire Division together with supporting units had crossed S of the PERIERS - ST LO ROAD. 358th Inf assembled in vicinity of CATHELMAIS while the Division opened at CHATEAU PERRON (284697).

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Late that day the 8th and 79th Inf Divs were ordered to follow by marching and motor the 4th and 6th Armd Divs respectively, clearing the W half of the NORMANDY PENINSULA and driving on AVRANCHES. The 90th and 83rd Inf Divs, still abreast, were directed to maintain positions and await future orders.

29 . 31 JULY 44

While the VII Corps smashed the encircled Boche in the trap its maneuver had sprung and VIII Corps drove S through AVRANCHES, 90th Inf Div remained in the general area secured 28 July welcoming its first breathing spell since D-Day. Reorganization, rehabilitation and training were prosecuted with vigor in preparation for imminent future operations. Preliminary plans were discussed with representative of XV Corps, the unit to which the Div was earmarked for attachment, and route reconnaissance southward as far as GAVRAY instituted by responsible agencies.

The first phase of the battle for FRANCE had ended. During it the 90th Inf Div played a vitally important part. It had met the best

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the German could offer by way of resistance and although bloodied, had bested him. It had developed battle experience and equally important, battle confidence. And the brief respite afforded in the last few days of July had permitted revitalization of both individuals and units. Thus on the eve of August the 90th Div was spiritually and physically ready for the stellar role it was about to be given.

McLAIN
COMDG


STILWELL
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