

On 1 July 1944, the 29th Div, with a strength of 807 officers and 11,290 M, and attached: 78th Tank Bn, 621st TD Bn, 623rd TD Bn, 459th AAA Bn, had occupied the line LA FORTERIE - LA BOUTERIE - 500 yds E OF LES MALLS BOUKELIA - LA FOUSSARDIERE - 500 yds North of ST ANNE DE L'EPINE, a frontage of about 12,000 yds: the 175th Inf, with two bns in the line, on the right; 115th Inf, with all three bns in the line, in the center; and 116th Inf, with two bns, on the left, all engaged in active defense and aggressive patrolling. On 2 July, the 115th Inf was able to withdraw one bn to a reserve position behind the front line.

During the period 1 - 9 July, units continued strengthening their defensive positions. Active patrolling was conducted continuously to the front and flanks. Several minor skirmishes developed during this time, but no significant changes in the front lines occurred. Frontline battalions were rotated to reserve positions, with each regiment having one bn in reserve at all times. Training was conducted, and replacements were absorbed in the reserve areas by these units. During this period a system was worked out to enable infantry reinforced with tanks to advance against the German "Widgerow" defenses."

On 4 July, at 1200 hrs, all guns of the Div and attached units that could be fired into enemy lines, fired one round as an Independence Day salute. This firing was done in conjunction with all other units on the Normandy Beachhead.

On 10 July, the 175th Inf was relieved of its defensive positions by the 35th Inf Div, and moved to an assembly area, in Div Res, vicinity ST CLAIR-SUR-MER. The 115th and 116th Infs continued to occupy and defend their positions.

At 0130 hours, 11 July, the 1st Bn, 115th Inf, received an attack by a strong raiding party. This attack was beaten off, and the original positions restored by 1100 hours. The 29th Div attacked at 0600 hours with regiments abreast: the 115th Inf on the right and the 116th Inf on left, making its main effort on the left, direction ST LO. The 2nd Bn, 175th Inf, was attached to the 116th Inf to secure the gap on the left of the Division. The other two bns of the 175th Inf met heavy resistance, and at nightfall, the 2nd Bn, on the right, had been able to advance but 200 yds; the remaining two bns being able to advance about 500 yds, to vicinity BELLE FONTAINE. The 116th Inf, making its main effort on its left, attacked with the 2nd and 3rd Bns, swinging wide on the left and changing direction to the southwest, south of ST ANNE DE L'EPINE, astride the road ST LO - BACQUE. At nightfall they had occupied positions 1200 yds northwest LA BOUTERIE, using the attached 2nd Bn from the 175th Inf to occupy positions at the R. vicinity LA CALVAINE. The 116th Inf had gained approximately 3000 yds during the day.

The 116th Inf continued the attack, with limited success, due to determined enemy resistance during the night and throughout the next day (12 July). By 2200 hours, this regiment had occupied positions on the high ground north and south of ST LO - BACQUE road in vicinity LA BOUTERIE. The 115th Inf resumed the attack at 0600 hours, 12 July. During the morning it made no progress due to heavy small-arms, artillery, and mortar fire. The 175th Inf (less 1st Bn, Div Res) attacked south towards the high ground LA BOUTERIE - BELLE FONTAINE, but after progressing 300 yds, was stopped by heavy small-arms and observed artillery and mortar fire. The 1st Bn, 175th Inf, remained in Div Res, vicinity BOUTERIE.

The Div resumed the attack at 0600 hours, 13 July, with the 115th Inf on the right, the 175th Inf on the left, the 175th Inf attacking through the 116th Inf. The 115th Inf met heavy resistance initially, and was stopped, but resumed the attack at 1500 hours, made slight gains on its left and captured LA BOUTERIE. The 1st Bn, 175th Inf, was released to the 175th Inf from Div Res at 0600 hours. The regiment attacked at 0600 hours through positions of the 116th Inf, meeting heavy small-arms fire and intense observed artillery and mortar fire, and was unable to advance any appreciable distance. The 1st Bn was left in the vicinity LA CALVAINE to protect the left flank of the Div. The 116th Inf held its positions until 1700 hours, at which time it attacked and immediately encountered heavy resistance. The attack was stopped at 1810 hours without appreciable gain.

On the night 13-14 July, the relief of the 1st and 2nd Bns, 115th Inf, was started by the 35th Inf Div, and was completed by 1000 hours, 14 July. The Division boundary changed to the ST LO - MOON-SUN-ELLE Highway, which considerably narrowed the Division frontage. These two bns, 1st and 2nd of 115th Inf, completed move to assembly positions in the vicinity of LA FOSSARDIERE by 1130 hours, leaving the 3rd Bn in contact with the enemy in the vicinity LA LUZERNE. The 3rd Bn continued to occupy and defend this position. The 175th Inf and the 116th Inf completed occupation of ground gained and consolidated their positions.

On 15 July, the Division attacked at 0515 hours. The 115th Inf on the right attacked in column of bns in the order: 1st, 2nd Bns through the position held by the 3rd Bn. After an advance of 400 yds, the 1st Bn was pinned down. The 2nd Bn was committed at 1200 hours to outflank enemy from the left but was stopped when it came abreast of the 1st Bn. The 116th Inf attacked in column of bns, with their 3rd Bn passing through positions held by the 1st Bn. This Bn advanced 400 yards beyond the LD and was stopped. The 1st Bn was committed around the left flank of the regiment and advanced approximately 500 yds, at which time the attack was halted. The 175th Inf continued to defend the south and east flank of the Division with two bns in line, the 3rd Bn being withdrawn to Division Reserve south of ST ANDRE DE L'EPINE. Their 2nd Bn, on the right flank, attacked southwest at 1430 hours, encountered heavy enemy fire but advanced 400 yds before being stopped. At dark, 15 July, the 29th Div occupied the line: 600 yds southwest LA LUZERNE to 600 yds east of LA BOULAYE to stream north of LA BARRE-DE-SEMILLY to LA CALVAIRE.

During the night 15-16 July, the 2nd Bn, 116th Inf, advanced to the western slopes of the hill south of the stream junction at STE GONIX DE ST LO and dug in, organizing the hill for defense. It remained cut off from the remainder of the regiment until the following day. Casualties in this action were comparatively high. Div Arty planes were used to drop blood plasma for the 35 wounded men with the Bn. The 1st and 3rd Bns, 116th Inf, organized and defended positions gained the day before.

An attack was received by the 1st and 3rd Bns at 1110 hours, 16 July, by force estimated to be 100 infantrymen, SP guns and flamethrowers; but the enemy was thrown back with considerable loss of personnel and weapons. A second attack was made at 2150 hours by enemy infantry and SP guns against these same two bns but was again beaten off before penetration was made. Enemy artillery and mortar fire continued to fall on all positions throughout the day. The 2nd Bn, 115th Inf, attacked at 0600 hours on the left of the regimental sector and encountered strong enemy resistance. The 1st Bn attacked on the right of the regimental sector at approximately 1100 hours to assist the advance of the 2nd Bn. Strong enemy resistance was encountered from the outset by this Bn also, and both bns were forced to take up defensive positions at about 1430 hours after a gain of but 300 yds. The 175th Inf occupied defensive positions on the south and east of the Division sector. An enemy attack was received at 2115 hours in the area of the 2nd Bn, 175th Inf. The attack was beaten off by fire and no penetration was made.

The Division continued the attack on the following day, 17 July. The 3rd Bn, 115th Inf, attacked at 0500 hours through the line held by the 2nd Bn, 115th Inf, met heavy resistance and was stopped without material gain. The 1st Bn, 115th Inf, attacked at 0700 hours on the right flank of the Division and was stopped after a short gain. The 2nd Bn then made a wide envelopment around the left (east) flank of the regiment, attacking southwest through MARTINVILLE, reaching a line generally 300 yards west of MARTINVILLE by nightfall. The 116th Inf attacked with its 3rd Bn at 0430 hours, direction southwest towards ST LO, and reached the high ground south of MARTINVILLE at 0530 hours, to occupy the ground jointly with the 2nd Bn, 116th Inf, which had been on that position, cut off from the rest of the regiment for 24 hours. At 1045 hours, this Bn continued the attack and gained a position on the outskirts of ST LO at 1100 hours. A strong enemy counterattack with armor was directed against this Bn. At 2000 hours, the CO, 116th Inf, requested air support against the enemy counterattack. G-3 and the Air Support Officer requested of First U. S. Army, by telephone, through XIX Corps Air Support Officer, that a mission be flown against the counterattack.

The 506th Fighter Bomber Squadron was ordered out and instructed to check in with the Div Air Support Officer for final briefing in the air, which was done by radio at 2105 hours. The only rapid communications with the 3rd Bn was the Div Arty radio link.

The 3rd Bn, 116th Inf, through Div Arty radio, was instructed to mark their front lines with red panels from the AP-50 panel set and undershirts, which was done. Sufficient markers were located by the pilots to enable them to determine frontline positions, and the German forces were hit. The close-support air attack was completed at 2145 hours. The CO, 116th Inf, reported that the air attack was a success, having completely disorganized the German attack.

The Bn then occupied a position ~~across~~ the ST LO - BAYENI highway north of LA BOUAYE. The 1st and 2nd Bns, 116th Inf, continued to occupy and defend their original positions. The 175th Inf attacked to the south with the 1st and 2nd Bns at 0430 hours, making no appreciable progress. The 3rd Bn, after being released from Division Reserve, attacked southwest but made no major advance; and at 1300 hours, the regiment ordered to organize for defense. At this time the capture of ST LO seemed imminent, and a Task Force, commanded by the Asst Division Commander, was organized. The Task Force consisted of: 29th Cav Bn (less platoon); Platoon of 747th Tk Bn; Platoon of Cn Co, 175th Inf; Platoon of AT Co, 175th Inf; Det 29th SF Plat; Civil Affairs Section; Platoon of 121st Ingr C Bn; Det of 621st TD Bn; Co B, 803rd ~~Inf~~ Bn. This Force was ordered to be prepared to assemble and move on ST LO on three hours' notice.

On the night 17-18 July, the 2nd Bn, 115th Inf, made a wide envelopment around the east of STE CROIX DE ST LO and occupied the high ground at 0230 hours, 18 July. The 1st Bn, 115th Inf, advanced rapidly during the morning and seized the ~~high~~ ground south of ST GEORGES MONTECOU at 1215 hours, established road ~~blocks~~ at crossings of the stream running east of ST LO and patrolled into ST LO. The 3rd Bn, 115th Inf, moved to occupy the high ground vicinity MARTINVILLE. The 116th Inf consolidated positions south of MARTINVILLE, which they had occupied the previous day. The 1st Bn organized carrying parties to supply the 2nd and 3rd Bns, which had been isolated; but by 1200 hours, this became unnecessary. The 1st Bn organized a defensive position north of LA BOUAYE.

Task Force "C", organized the previous day, was alerted at 1200 hours to move into and secure the city of ST LO. The Force passed through the forward elements of the 115th Inf at 1500 hours, at which point the 1st Bn of the 115th Inf was attached. After severe fighting within the city, during which the Task Force Commander was wounded, ST LO was occupied at 1900 hours. The Commanding General of the Division reported to the XII Corps Commander: "I have the honor to announce to the Corps Commander that Task Force 'C' of the 29th Infantry Division has secured the city of ST LO after forty-two days of continuous combat from Omaha Beach to ST LO." As of 2100 hours that night, the strength of the Division stood at 687 officers and 12,099 enlisted men. During the preceding ten days, 120 officers and 2200 enlisted men were casualties in action.

On 19 July, the Division consolidated its gains. At 2100 hours the preceding evening, the Task Force (less det.s) had been attached to the 115th Inf. The 1st Bn, 115th Inf, continued the occupation of ST LO. Throughout the period of occupation it received heavy artillery fire and was bombed and strafed. The 2nd Bn, 115th Inf, relieved the 2nd and 3rd Bns, 116th Inf, in their positions; and the 3rd Bn, 115th Inf, continued to occupy positions east of ST LO. The 116th Inf, upon its relief by elements of the 115th Inf, withdrew to positions in Corps Reserve, south of ST CLAUDE SUR L'ELIE. The 175th Inf continued to occupy its positions on the east flank of the Division, conducting combat patrols to mop up areas in the rear of the positions that the 116th Inf had held before its relief.

For forty-two consecutive days, since the assault on OMAHA Beach on 6 June, the 29th Infantry Division had been in constant contact with the enemy. This drive culminated in the capture and occupation of the city of ST LO and ended the Fifth Phase of operations for the Division.

By 0830 hours on 20 July, elements of the 35th Inf Div had completed relief of the 115th Inf in position. Relief of the 175th Inf was effected by 0915 hours. These two regiments moved by motor and marching to an assembly area in Corps Reserve south of ST CLAIR SUR L'ELLE. The 116th Inf was already situated there. The 823rd TD Bn was detached from the 29th Inf Div at 1200 hours. The 35th Inf Div then assumed responsibility for the defense of entire Corps sector. The Division Artillery, in position with 821st TD Bn, 967th FA Bn, 459th AAA AW Bn attached, was attached to the 35th Inf Div at 1230 hours, 20 July.

PHASE VI - PERIOD 21-27 JULY

During the period 21 to 27 July, replacements were absorbed and equipment was brought up to T/S allowances. An intensive training program was instituted with particular emphasis placed on methods of reducing hedge-row defenses and on battle drills. Care and cleaning of equipment, personal hygiene, physical and disciplinary training, critiques of action during June, range firing of small arms and machine gun drill were also stressed.

The Division Artillery, 821st TD Bn, 967th FA Bn and 459th AAA AW Bn continued attachment to the 35th Inf Div, reinforcing their fires in the XIX Corps Sector until 1600 hours, 20 July, when 967th FA Bn was released from attachment to the 29th Inf Div and reverted to XIX Corps. Div Arty, 821st TD Bn, 459th AAA AW Bn were released from attachment to the 35th Inf Div and reverted to control of the 29th Inf Div. The 803rd TD Bn was attached to the Div, and the Div, with attached units, was alerted for motor movement.

PHASE VII - EXPLOITATION OF BREAKTHROUGH 28-31 JULY 1944

The First U. S. Army had begun its breakthrough with armor and motorized infantry to the enemy rear. A penetration had been successfully made. XIX Corps on 28 July was to begin exploitation of the breakthrough in its zone, west of the VIRE River.

At 0943 hours, 28 July, an order was received from XIX Corps, directing the Division to begin its advance to the south through ST LO at 1000 hours. Initially the Div was to move in one column from assembly area occupied during the period the Division was in Corps Reserve. The movement of the Div was to be made in the wake of C Group "A" (Reinf), 2nd Arm Div. Original scheme was for the Division to move in two columns to the march objective, both columns starting simultaneously. However, the eastern bridge was not completed on schedule; and the starting time and one column were postponed several hours.

The 29th Cav Recon Tr was given the mission of maintaining contact between the head of the Division columns and the 113th Cav, which also preceded the Division along the route of march. The 175th CT (consisting of: 175th Inf; 224th FA Bn; Co G, 121st Engr C Bn; Btry C, 459th AAA AW Bn; Co G, 104th Med Bn), completely motorized, was the first combat team to move. The Security Detachment (consisting of a rifle company, reinf, from the 1st Bn, 175th Inf) passed the initial point at the scheduled time and was followed by the main body at 1100 hours. Traffic south from ST LO was congested, particularly in the city. The narrow streets were filled with public roadblocking movement.

The 175th CT detached in the vicinity of LE MARTEL NEUF and approached the remaining distance to its assigned assembly area, closing at 2045 hours. During the afternoon, the eastern crossing of the VIRE River was completed, and the 116th CT (Reinf) (consisting of: 116th Inf; 116th FA Bn; Co D, 121st Engr C Bn; Btry A, 459th AAA AW Bn; Co B, 104th Med Bn), completely motorized, was ordered to proceed on the eastern route. The main body passed the initial point at 1600 hours, and the head of the main body passed 45 minutes later. The Combat Team (Reinf) closed in the forward assembly area, vicinity of ST SAMSON DE BAN RAISE, at 2045 hours.

At 1515 hours, the 115th CT (Reinf) (consisting of: 115th Inf; 110th FA Bn; 121st Engr C Bn less Cos B & C; 459th AAA AW Bn; 104th Med Bn less Cos B & C), completely motorized, was ordered to advance beginning at 1600 hours on the western route in rear of the 175th CT. At midnight two bns of the 115th had closed in its forward assembly area. The remainder of the Combat Team completed its move during the early hours of 29 July. Division Troops (consisting of: 227th FA Bn; 459th AAA AW Bn less Btrys A, B, C; 821st TD Bn T; 803rd TD Bn SP; 717th Tk Bn) moved on the western route in the rear of the 115th CT and completed its move into the forward assembly area during the morning of 29 July. Enemy activity during the afternoon consisted of tank fire on our column at LA DENISIERE and later, aerial bombardment. The Division ceased to be motorized when it closed in forward assembly area.

The eastern and western routes of march converged at ST SAMSON DE BON PUSSE, creating a very difficult traffic situation. The problem was made even more difficult because elements of C Comd "A", 2nd Armd Div, were operating at the same time and on the same roads. The problem was well handled, and the columns proceeded without mishap.

The plan for the Division for 29 July contemplated resumption of the advance at 0600 hours towards the Corps Objective. The 116th CT and the 175th CT were to advance abreast in the Division zone in the wake of C Comd "A" (Reinf), 2nd Armd Div. The 115th CT was placed in Division Reserve with instructions to be prepared to advance on Division Order.

The 116th CT advanced rapidly in its zone against light resistance, and the 2nd and 3rd Bns reached the low ground running from LA PROVOSTE (4419). The 1st Bn advanced to NOYEN, where it relieved the 2nd Bn, 66th Armd Regt (Reinf) on its position during the night 29-30 July. The 175th CT moved south rapidly from the vicinity of LA VALLONNE, the 2nd and 3rd Bns reaching the ground generally 1000 yds south of VILLEBAUDON - TRISSY-SUR-VIRE road between 430451-450451. The 1st Bn advanced rapidly through LA TELANDIERE (4244) and relieved the 3rd Bn, 66th Armd Regt (Reinf) on the hill at 4413. It completed occupation of the forward slope of the hill at 2145 hours. The 2nd Bn, 175th Inf, moved in the rear of the 1st and 3rd Bns initially and mopped up isolated groups of Germans who were passed by the other two bns. At 2200 hours, 29 July, the Regiment was ordered to consolidate on positions gained. The 115th CT was ordered in the early afternoon to advance south from its assembly area towards PERCY and to seize and secure the town. At the close of operations for the day, the 1st Bn was situated on the forward slope of the nose 1800 yards northwest of PERCY, the 3rd Bn on the high ground overlooking PERCY, 700 yards to the north; and the 2nd Bn occupied the forward slope of the high ground northeast of PERCY in the vicinity of 430420. The 121st Engr C Bn, less Co A, was relieved of combat team attachment at 1300 hours, and Co A was relieved at 2030 hours. Co A, 803rd TD Bn, was relieved of attachment to the Div Arty and attached to the 115th CT at 0900 hours. The 29th Cav Recon Tr was used to screen the advance to the right front and right flank. The 717th Tk Bn was relieved of attachment by the Div Arty at 1200 hours. It remained in Div Reserve in assembly area.

Initially there was little resistance to the advance of the Division on 29 July. Later, strong delaying action from positions generally to the south and east, along the road running from PERCY to TRISSY-SUR-VIRE, was encountered.

Mission of the 29th Inf Div on 30 July was to resume the advance at 0700 hours to seize and secure the high ground running north of the PERCY - TRISSY-SUR-VIRE road to reduce pocket of resistance offered by the German 2nd Panzer Division northwest of TRISSY-SUR-VIRE, and to advance to the south to capture the high ground in the vicinity of ST VIGNE-DES-MONTS (4911). The 115th CT (Reinf) attacked to capture PERCY. The 1st and 3rd Bns, which were employed for this task, met heavy resistance and made little progress. In the early afternoon they were ordered to defend the positions they had gained at that time. The 2nd Bn, 115th Inf, extended its position to include that occupied by the 1st Bn, 175th Inf. This

relief was completed during the early morning. The 175th **GT** (Reinf) was given the mission of seizing the high ground at 475460. Just as the relief of the 1st Bn, 175th Inf, was completed, the enemy launched a counter-attack, and the 1st Bn was ordered to occupy the ground in the vicinity of 430425. The 2nd Bn, 175th Inf, was ordered forward to vicinity of LA TILANDERIE (430438). The 3rd Bn continued to defend the ground they had occupied the previous day. The 116th **GT** pressed the 2nd Panzer Division during the entire day, but no appreciable advance was made.

The 26th Inf Div moved into the Division sector, using as its axis of advance the LE MESNIL HERMAN - PERCY road. Heavy fire from German tanks and artillery in the vicinity of LA DENLISIÈRE crossroads caused the 26th Inf Div advance to lag. The 1st Bn, 110th Inf (26th Div) was attached to the 116th Inf and was given the mission of reducing this resistance. The 1st Bn Hq moved to positions NE of the **CR** of LA DENLISIÈRE. Co G, 116th Inf, attacked west along the N-S road to LA DENLISIÈRE and cleaned out the group of enemy infantry and tanks located there. This action allowed free use of the main N-S road to PERCY.

The 303rd TD Bn, less Co C, was relieved of its attachment to the 29th Inf Div and reverted to Corps Reserve. Co C, 303rd TD Bn, was attached to the 115th **GT**. The 29th Cav Recon Tr was employed on a reconnaissance mission to the right of the Division sector.

IXX Corps planned to drive the enemy east to the VILLEMARCON - PERCY road and secure the ground in the vicinity of 465454, beginning 31 July. The 29th Inf Division's role was to regroup during the night of 30-31 July and attack on 31 July to seize the high ground at 465440 and 475460 and to drive the enemy to the VIREN River.

The 1st and 3rd Bns, 115th **GT**, were relieved of positions gained on 30 July by the 2nd and 3rd Bns, 110th Inf (26th Div). This was effected so as to remove 29th Div troops from the zone of the 26th Inf Div. The 26th Inf Div was assigned to the right portion of the Corps zone. During the morning, the 1st Bn, 115th Inf, occupied the high ground in the vicinity of 44443, which was formerly held by the 2nd Bn, 115th Inf. The occupation of this area was completed at approximately 0830 hours. At 1315 hours, the 115th attacked in column of bns, in the order: 2nd Bn, 3rd Bn, 1st Bn, to capture the high ground vicinity of 465440. At 1815 hours, they were ordered to consolidate the positions gained at that time and prepare for resumption of the attack at 0105 hours. The 2nd Bn, 115th, had advanced to the western slope of the objective. The 2nd and 3rd Bns, 110th, remained in the defensive positions that had been gained on 30 July. The 1st Bn, 116th Inf, attacked MOYEN at 1420 hours, supported by the fires of the 2nd Bn. Strong enemy resistance from the south of MOYEN retarded the advance of the 1st Bn, and the town was not taken. The 1st Bn, 110th Inf, was relieved of attachment at 1200 hours and reverted to the control of the 26th Inf Div. The 1st and 2nd Bns, 175th Inf, after relief by the 115th Inf of positions northeast of PERCY, moved to the vicinity of VILLEMARCON during the early morning.

At 1200 hours, an attack was made in conjunction with elements of C Comd "A", 2nd Armd Div. The mission: to capture the ground in the vicinity of 475467. The 1st and 3rd Bns, 3rd Bn on right, advanced abreast in rear of C Comd "A", 2nd Armd Div. At approximately 1900 hours, they had reached a line running generally through BEAUCOURRAY and at that hour were ordered to consolidate for the evening and be prepared for continuation of the attack in the morning. At 2100 hours, C Comd "A" was attached to the 29th Inf Div for operations on the next day. At 0800 hours, all combat team attachments reverted to unit control.