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H I S T O R Y

Thirtieth Infantry Division Artillery

APO No. 30, U. S. Army,
1-30 June 1944.

The period from 1-9th June 1944, was spent in preparations for overseas movement under existing warning orders. The final concentration area waterproofing of materiel was completed, records and files sorted, packed and readied for shipment, final equipment drawn and last minute instructions under movement orders and regulations issued. On the evening of the 8th June 1944, orders were received to proceed to the marshalling area at Southampton, England. The 197th Field Artillery Battalion received similar orders at the same time; the 230th Field Artillery Battalion had preceded to the same intermediate destination on one (1) hours notice the preceding day; other battalions were to follow.

At 090630B June, a chilly, rainy and thoroughly unpleasant day, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery crossed the I.P. in route to the Southampton Marshalling Area, an intermediate pause to their proverbial "place in the sun" on the battle fields of France. The convey to the marshalling area was without incident save an unwarranted one and one-half (1½) hours delay at the Road Convoy Regulating Point awaiting assignment to an area. The unit finally closed into Area "C-21", Southampton at 091630B June 1944.

Colonel Otto Ellis was in command of the convey to the marshalling area and Lieutenants Fay, Kincaid and Engram preceded the convey as advance representatives. General McLain, Lieutenant Colonel Shepard and Lieutenant Flowers with a detail of eight (8) enlistedmen made the move on the same day with Division Headquarters as a part of that unit according to prearrangement, because of the necessity for an artillery "advance C.P." to accompany the Division Headquarters.

On the day following the arrival at the marshalling area the unit was alerted for movement to the embarkation area; however, movement was not effected until 121000B June, at which time the unit proceeded to the embarkation area and boarded the Ezra Weston, MT 215, Transport No. 54, Pier No. 49, Port of Southampton, England, together with elements of the 30th Division Staff, 105th Medical Battalion, with "C" Battery, 197th Field Artillery Battalion and with rear elements of the 79th Infantry Division.

During the enforced stay in the marshalling area, shortages of clothing and equipment were filled in part and officers and men were issued maps and briefed by Colonel Ellis and Lt. Col. Shepard on the destination and anticipated landings. General McLain and Lt. Col. Shepard spent the night of the 9th June with the unit in Area "C-21" and visited the unit frequently thereafter during the stay in the marshalling area and on board ship at the pier.

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The unit sailed from pier 49, Southampton at 131800B June, and dropped anchor off Omaha Beach, Normandy, France at 141000B June. The crossing was uneventful and the channel smooth. No enemy activity was observed during the crossing.

Disembarkation was commenced in the early afternoon of the day of arrival; however, a considerable delay was occasioned by the failure of the port authorities to provide experienced personnel to operate the winches. Colonel Ellis, Commander of Troops on board, dispatched Major Parrish to the beach to contact port authorities and procure immediate remedial action. Thereafter, loading began with proper dispatch; however, considerable damage had already been done to material and the unit had suffered delay at a time when every minute counted. As a further result of this delay, the greater part of the unit was left in the middle of the harbor under continuous air attack on a "Rino" landing raft ... a rather fragile craft of doubtful seaworthiness ... where members of the unit were treated to a rare display of pyrotechnics from an altogether exposed position. One enemy plane managed to penetrate the screen of barrage balloons and flak and passed directly over the landing raft at an altitude of one hundred (100) feet. All members of the unit took the situation in stride, with attitudes varying from total indifference to amazement at the unusual display.

The main body landed during the very early morning hours of the 15th June, and proceeded directly thence to the first bivouac area, located approximately one and one-half (1½) miles south southwest of Isigny, Normandy, France, closing into this area at 151000B June.

The unit was met at the bivouac area by General McLain who had become impatient with the delay in sailing from the port of embarkation and had preceded the unit over in a destroyer the preceding day. At the time of the arrival of the unit, General McLain was directing effective artillery support of the successful attack by the 120th Infantry south on ~~the~~ Monmartin-en-Gaignes and thence to the Vire-et-Toute Canal.

The unit as such, commenced operations in the latter sector 15th June 1944. The "advance C.P." detail under command of Lt. Col. Shepard, closed in 16th June 1944.

During the operations above mentioned, 15th June 1944, Lt. Col. Lewis D. Vieman, Commanding Officer of the 230th Field Artillery Battalion, performed services for which he was latter awarded the Silver Star Medal. In the same engagement Captain Gordon L. Coltrin was recommended for the Silver Star Medal Award by the Commanding Officer of the 120th Infantry Regiment for gallantry in action... he was awarded the Bronze Star Award. These awards were the first received in the 30th Infantry Division Artillery in the current war.

On the 15th June 1944, elements of the 197th Field Artillery Battalion closed into position areas and took part in the action of the day. On the 16th of June, elements of the 118th and 113th Field Artillery Battalions closed into position areas and commenced operations. By the 18th June 1944, all combat elements of the Division Artillery were closed in. The crossing by all battalions was uneventful except for the 113th Field Artillery Battalion. The LST transporting this unit hit a mine in mid-channel and in the resulting explosion the battalion lost thirty (30) men ... Two (2) killed, Eight (8) wounded and twenty (20) missing.

From 15th-30th June 1944, the Thirtieth Infantry Division Artillery actively supported the efforts of the Division along the Vire-et-Toute Canal, Manache, France. The Division front extended along said canal from a point approximately two thousand (2000) yards southerly from the intersection of the Cherbourg-Isigny Highway and said canal, on said canal, thence southwesterly along said canal to the vicinity of La Meauffe. Harrassing and interdiction fires were fired nightly; forward observers and air observers were extensively employed and targets of opportunity promptly engaged; many counter-battery missions were successfully undertaken and accomplished during this period and defensive fires were developed to a fine point.

The effectiveness of the above was forcefully brought out by stories of prisoners of war, typical of these is the following taken from a Prisoner of War Report, Headquarters FUSA, P & PW Section-PWB, Psychological Warfare Intelligence, Field Report, Serial No. 2, 281300B June 1944, in part:

"... They are near the bridge over the La Vire River whose other side is shelled by Americans (thought at first to be British) ... Unit had very heavy casualties from our artillery ... 2nd Co. with 118 men when thrown into the line lost 25 killed, 15 seriously wounded... 3rd Co. lost appr. 2/3's. while 1st Co. 1/3rd. PW states that with one direct hit 7 men were killed on 24th June, killing some others... They also state that our arty fire is terrific, firing appr. 300 shots to 1 of their own. It is firing terrifying accurate 'It could hit a pencil with three shots', PW says. It prevents them from fetching their food regularly and men had to be forced to the job. To fetch food they have to cross the road which is under sporadic but unpredictable interdiction fire, and even though nobody was killed yet, it frightens the men. Last Sunday they had such a barrage that they had to go without food for the whole day ... He continued to say that up to now

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they only fired 30 shots, each time getting a barrage as an answer from our batteries... Our arty and mortar fire cause considerable damage to equipment and materiel knocking out 2 of the 3 (mortars) that the 2nd Co. had... their kitchen ... is supposed to bring the food up, but our arty interferes frequently causing them either not to arrive at all or dumping and spilling the food any place. PW states he had 2 warm meals in 2 weeks. No coffee whatsoever. The men are afraid to make a fire for heating coffee water on account of our arty. and are drinking river water.... They have little sleep, being kept up by our arty. fire and rain which soaked their foxholes....."

S T A T I S T I C S


1. POSITION AREAS: (Maps: GSGS 4250 1/50,000. Sheets 6E5, 6E6, 6F2, 5F2, 6F1)

Units	16th June	30th June
Hq. & Hq. Btry-	4975-8390	Same
113th F.A. Bn.	5130-822	525-7945
118th F.A. Bn.	512-8031	526-7865
197th F.A. Bn.	529-774	525-744
230th F.A. Bn.	445-843	455-8150

2. MISSIONS FIRED: 930 (Note: 56 of these missions were counter-battery missions, a large part of which were observed missions by air OP's)
3. CASUALTIES:
- Killed: 3 (2 by mine explosion on board LST; one by MG Fire)
 - Wounded: 25 (8 by mine explosion on board LST; remainder by counter-battery fire)
 - Missing in Action: 20 by mine explosion on board LST.
4. MATERIEL LOSS: (Evacuated)
- By Enemy Action: One (1) 155 mm M-1 Howitzer (Counter-battery).
 - By Accident: two (2) 1-4 Liason Planes (In loading and unloading MT)
One (1) 3/4 ton WYC (Same Cause)
One (1) 2 1/2-ton, 6x6 (" ")
 - By Mechanical Failure: Six (6) 105mm M-2 Howitzers (Cutting of Lands)
One (1) 155mm M-1 Howitzer (Faulty recuperator & Leaking oil seals)
Two (2) 2 1/2-ton, 6x6's (Differentials)
5. COMMENTS ON MATERIEL:
- It is thought that the M-29 Cargo Carriers (Snow Jeeps) are worthless for the purpose for which issued as (a) they have too high a silhouette, (b) they are too noisy, (c) the maintenance and spare parts problem for otherwise tractless units is out of proportion to their value to the unit.

2. Quantitatively, the equipment is insufficient to meet the many additional combat requirements. Additional transportation is required, additional equipment for forward observer parties is required to equip at least six (6) additional parties per light battalion and additional signal equipment is required.

Approved: .


Raymond S. McLain,
Brigadier General, U. S. Army

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HISTORY

Thirtieth Infantry Division Artillery

1-31st July 1944

Between the 1st and 7th July 1944, the activity pattern of the 30th Div. Arty. closely resembled that of the preceeding month; however, an air of expectancy permeated the command as it was felt that the role of defending a river line was rapidly drawing to a close. At the C.P. in the vicinity of Lison, Normandy, France, final plans and preparations during this period were completed for the support of the first coordinated attack of the division, a river crossing operation. This operation was to play an important part in a coordinated 1st U.S. Army attack.

The general plan of attack was as follows: The 117th Inf. would force a crossing of the Vire et Taute River in the vicinity of Aires and together with the 119th Inf. attack westward using the Aires-St. Jean de Daye Highway as the axis of attack. The 120th Inf would, at a later hour, force a crossing of the Vire et Taute Canal in the vicinity of the crossing of Highway No. 2 north of St. Jean de Daye, using said highway as an axis of approach to St. Jean de Daye. The two forces to join south of said village in the vicinity of the latter.

As the infantry plan of attack took shape and materialized, likewise did the artillery plan of supporting fires. The latter involved the use of eight field artillery battalions and one chemical mortar battalion in addition to the organic artillery battalions of the Division Artillery which are four in number. The bulk of the artillery was to support both crossings which were thousands of meters apart as shown by maps of the area. The plan was further complicated by the fact that both operations must be supported without moving a battalion, the Chemical Mortar Battalion must be employed to support an infantry attack (a most unusual role) and the attack must be supported by successive concentrations, both on time and on call in order to conserve ammunition.

In accord with the foregoing plan, at 074308 July 1944, the division lashed out with the first of its slashing two pronged attacks, that of the westward drive of the 117th Inf., followed by the southward drive of the 120th Inf. Marching behind murderous artillery fire both bridgeheads were secured by sundown of the 7th July 1944, according to plan. According to reports from Army Headquarters, this was the greatest display of artillery fire to date displayed in operations on the Normandy Beach Head. Certainly its effectiveness could not be minimized in view of the casualties sustained by the division which were: KIA, 42; WIA, 262; MIA, 2. This river crossing operation, one of the most hazardous of military operations, was successfully accomplished against a fierce and fanatically determined enemy, who had had weeks in which to prepare his defenses against this very operation, who occupied high ground affording superior observation and fields of fire over thousands of meters of ground, much of which must of necessity be crossed, and who had orders to hold his ground at all cost.

Credit for the success of this operation is in large part due to the superior work of Col. Otto Ellis and Lt. Col. Frederick C. Shepard, Executive Officer and S-3 in the order respectively, who took great pains to consider the minutest detail and meticulously secure the same. This plan may very well be of historic significance in future artillery study. See "Annex 1, F.O. No. 3, 30th Infantry Division Artillery". Also, see: "Annex 2" and "Annex 3"; photographs of River-crossing sites.

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In succeeding days following the attack of the 7th July 1944, the division pushed steadily forward until a parabolic line was established extending from Goucherie to a point approximately 2500 meters south of St. Jean de Daye thence to LA Meauffe.

On the third day of the attack Headquarters and Headquarters Battery crossed the Vire et Taute River at Aires and established the C.P. in the vicinity of the latter village. This was a period of extensive enemy sniper activity. In reconnoitering for a C.P. Major Parrish and Lt. Flowers were pinned down by sniper rifle fire, "Durrp" gun fire and artillery interdiction and harrasing fire in the order mentioned, extending an otherwise one hour's reconnaissance into a four hour ordeal. When the main body moved from the old C.P. Captain Campbell who remained to close out wire communications was immediately taken under sniper fire and forced to seek cover. During this move Jerry chose to counter-attack in force right at the time when the command post was in route to the new area. The situation was first dealt with by Gen. McLain, Maj. Parrish, Capt. Campbell and Capt. Kunkel who remained at the old C.P. for a period. Upon the arrival of Col. Ellis and Lt. Col. Shepard at the new C.P. they took over and directed the highly effective fires of the Div. Arty. out of pocket, proverbially speaking, with a map board, two grease pencils and a telephone. Literally, a curtain of artillery fire was pulled down on Jerry and the celebrated Panzer Lehr promptly retired; however, not before suffering severe punishment.

The 113th Cav. Regt., using the bridge had established by the 120th Inf., attempted to secure the right flank of the division and to clean out a pocket to the immediate right rear; however, it became or originally was a little too hot for them to handle. The Ninth Division, using the same beach head, cleaned out this pocket in time and pushed southward to eventually square out the front on a line east and west.

On the ___ July 1944, the division again executed a coordinated attack which ultimately took the division to the line Font Hebert-Vents and westward to the Division boundary. The

The break-through attack of 25th July 1944, was the next major item on the agenda of the division. Plans for this operation were evolved and completed from the C.P. located approximately 600 meters north and 1000 meters east of Vents. This attack was to be preceded by a great air bombardment involving upwards of 3000 aircraft, followed by artillery; then the breakthrough by the infantry and finally the passing through of the armor. After many days awaiting favorable bombing weather, the 24th July was set for the show. The bombers took off and a considerable part of the artillery preparation was expended when the attack was called off because of poor visibility. Unfortunately, many of the bombs fell short and considerable casualties were caused.

On 25th July 1944, the division once more smashed into the enemy lines seeking the all important breakthrough. This day the bombers of the Ninth Air Force really tore into our troops in earnest. Casualties ran high and this attack literally tore the guts out of the very high fighting spirit, morale and will of our forces. The 92 Chemical Mortar Battalion is a example of the havoc wrought. This battalion sustained four consecutive attacks by our bombers which for all intents and purposes put them out of action for the day. Despite the foregoing, the air did discourage the enemy and no doubt did contribute materially to the success of the operation. By late evening the armor began to pass through our troops.

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Upon passing through this division, armored elements, including the 2nd Armored Division, broke into the open. Thus did this division break the crust of enemy resistance and unleash the havoc of armor upon the enemy which subsequently made such spectacular dashes first to the coast and thence into France proper.

The division pressed on in succeeding days to capture first an intermediate object and then the final objective of the drive, Tessy sur Vire.

The month of July saw the final seasoning and shaking down of the division. The division, including all elements thereof worked smoothly and lived up to and exceeded the very high esteem in which it is held by higher authority. All objectives were taken in order, with all proper dispatch and the division was the pace setter for the divisions on the right and left flanks of the division, respectively.

The division was first up against a make-shift group, organized and pressed into the line until seasoned troops could be brought to bear. This group was largely made up of teenage boys, fanatical as they were unpredictable. The original river crossing was just in time to forestall an attack in force by seasoned forces of the enemy freshly brought into the line.

Beginning with the river crossing and continuing throughout the month the division experienced some of the fiercest fighting of the whole Normandy campaign to date. The division sustained sixteen counter-attacks in the first seven days of the crossing, two of which were in force, supported by numerous tanks and were seeking a breakthrough to the sea. Involved in these counter-attacks were several well known German Paratroop Regiments, elements of the 2nd SS Panzer Division, the Panzer Lehr Division, etc. In the first seven days of this attack the division lost 3,277 officers and men, fired 6,592 rounds of 155 mm Howitzer ammunition and 22,064 rounds of 105 mm Howitzer ammunition. See "Annex 4". All attacks were either stopped before our lines, or sealed off by artillery fire, localized and then liquidated by the infantry. None of these attacks forced the division to give ground although they came in considerable force, many of which came across the front of the Ninth Infantry Division and into the exposed right flank of the division.

On the first night of the occupation of the C.P., previously mentioned, in the vicinity of ~~Yves~~ Le Manoir (440628) the unit was subjected to a holocaustic saturation attack by enemy bombers. The first wave struck at approximately 280155g July, bracketing the C.P. area and causing casualties in the division C.P. across the road. The second wave obtained hits in the C.P. and Battery area, one of which hit the stable in which the aid station was located destroying valuable medical supplies and equipment. One bomb hit in the vicinity of the aid station killing Major Joseph Funk, Div. Arty. Surgeon, who was at the time answering a call for medical aid by the wounded of the first attack. In addition to Major Funk, a driver was killed, the first cook and two cook's helpers of the general's mess, the Intelligence Corporal and a guard were wounded and three Liaison Officers were evacuated as a result of this attack. In addition to the foregoing, practically all of the transportation of the Div. Arty. Headquarters was either damaged or destroyed; the officer's mess tent was torn to ribbons, the equipment destroyed; all of the personal baggage of the officers was burned completely when the officers' baggage trailer burned. The stable burned the remainder of the

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night affording a perfect beacon for returning enemy bombers. This stable was only ten paces from the building housing the C.P. and all of the officers. The remainder of the night was hectic for all concerned.

On 29-30th July the C.P. was again bombed. On 29th July the C.P. was moved to the vicinity of La Gonniviere (49605695) and housed in building again. On wave of bombers struck at 302130B July and another at 0510. No damage was done to the premises; however, needless to say neither wave caught the personnel sleeping as the first severe bombing had done. We found that we were finally a very profitable target for Le Boche. On the night of 30-31st July, the C.P. was again attacked by enemy bombers, this time with more success. One stick of 100 pound bombs and assorted anti-personnel bombs landed squarely in the C.P. area. Two of the 100 pound bombs landed 20 feet from the front door of the house in which the C.P., quarters and installations were located. As the plans for the coordinated attack for the following morning were being completed these bombs burst in the windows, including all blackout, blew off a door and penetrated the building in a dozen places. One hot fragment finally lodging in General Lewis' bed. No casualties were incurred by this attack and little time lost in the completion of the Field Order. Another room was promptly prepared, blacked out and work went on almost immediately.

Brigadier General Raymond S. McLain left this command on 25th July 1944, and reported for duty with the 90th Infantry Division where he subsequently took command. His leaving was a serious blow to the personnel of this organization as well as to the organization. He was loved and respected by every member of the division with whom he came into contact. Much of the success of the division during this period was due to his activities, the benefits and lessons learned from his vast experience in actual combat and his sound counsel. Captain Richard Kunkel also left as his Aid de Camp. As counter-battery officer, Capt. Kunkel's work was of invaluable benefit to the division. His superior handling of counter-battery missions will long be remembered in this organization.

General James M. Lewis assumed command of Div. Arty. 281000B July 1944.

The Air OP's throughout this period proved their worth time and again and were used during all daylight hours. Enough cannot be said for their part in the operations of the command. Capt. Blohm, Div. Arty. Air Officer, can feel justly proud of his "brood". See "Annex 5, Report of Air Officer, July".

The work of Sgt. Ellis and his communications section; of Sgt. Duffie and his Medical Detachment; of Sgt. Fountain and his Operations Section and of Sgt. Berg as Sergeant Major could not be excelled. Through adversity, fire, bombings, etc., they maintained their poise, sound judgment and further enhanced the respect and admiration in which they are held by the officers and men of this command.

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S T A T I S T I C S

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Position Areas: 1 July 10th July 17th July 20th July 28 July 29 July

Div. Arty. (See Body)

113th F.A.Bn. 52757924 48887590 45607000 43986371 45105990

118th F.A.Bn

197th F. A. Bn 525744 48657211 46206940 44656277 43705595

230th F.A. Bn. 45808160 46907680 46807300 45006930 45106220 47505730

Missions Fired:

Light Battalions: 2381 missions
(200 counter-battery missions included)

Medium Battalions: 865

Casualties:

KIA - 27

WIA - 119

MIA - 0

NEC - 20

Note: Casualties were extremely high among the forward observer parties and liaison parties. Two (2) of the light battalions sustaining in excess of 70 % officer forward observer casualties. One light battalion lost all three liaison officers and one replacement liaison officer.

Material Loss:

Primary loss in materiel occurred from shell and bomb fragmentation. Although accurate records are not presently available tires, radiators and gas tanks on approximately fifteen per centum of the vehicles were punctured and repaired. Loss by accident and by mechanical failure was negligible.

Prisoners Captured: 35, including three by the Chaplain.

Effective Strength, 31st July: 2121 Officers and Men.

<u>Ammunition Expenditures:</u>	<u>113th</u>	<u>118th</u>	<u>197th</u>	<u>230th</u>	<u>Total Lts # Used</u>
	17424	21348	17345	28136	65557 24803

Comments:

Hedgerow fighting is exceedingly expensive in forward observers and the equipment of these parties. These parties must of necessity be in most cases not over one hedgerow behind the leading elements of the infantry. These parties must use every effort to conform in appearance to the troops which they are accompanying otherwise they find themselves casualties in the very early stages of the operation.

Units should be allowed to enter combat with a fifty per centum coverage in officer strength of battery grade. Some delay is occasioned in receiving replacements and green officers straight out of a replacement center and entering combat for the first time with seasoned troops find the going rough to say the least and casualties among this element are high. Further, battlewise enlisteds are not prone to respect the judgment of these officers at times when confidence is of great concern.

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Unit: 30th Inf
Place: 1/2 MI WEST of
PONT DE ST. FROMOND
Date: 9 July 1944

UNIT REPORT NO. 26

Inclosure No. 2 to accompany Unit Report

Par. 2 - CWN SITUATION:

- a. Front lines, or most advanced elements: See overlay.
- b. Location of troops, CFC, boundaries, etc: See overlay.
- c. Location of adjacent units and supporting troops: See overlay.
- d. Brief description of operations during period:

Div Arty, 203rd FA Bn and 391st Groupment (391st Armd FA Bn and 58th FA Bn) attached supported attack of Div South from St. Jean de Daye - Aire. Support by successive ons on call. H Hour 0700.

Organization: 230th FA Bn direct support 120th Inf
118th FA Bn direct support 117th Inf initially
197th FA Bn direct support 118th Inf
203rd FA Bn general support and reinforcing
fires of 230th FA Bn.
113th FA Bn general support
391st Groupment (391 & 58th ARmd FA Bns) direct
support CCB and be prepared to reinforce fires
of 197th FA Bn
228th FA Gp, genl supt of Corps - reinforcing fire of Div.
113th, 118th displaced to positions S and W of Vire River

during day.

From 1530 to 1930, Div Arty assisted in repulsing counterattack on South front. Fire from 18 Bns, namely, Div Arty, 391st, 58th, Corps Arty, 54th and 67th Armd FA Bas, concentrated fire on front of counterattack.

Ammunition Expended: (090600 - 091930 July 44)

105-mm - 4871 Rds.
155-mm - 4000 Rds.

e. Estimate of combat efficiency: 100 per cent.

f. Results of operations during day: En Arty and general activity kept to minimum.

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INSPECTOR OF THE ARMY
DATE 5-24-1946

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