1ST INF DIVISION

Omaha Beach

June 6, 1944

An unsusually complete collection of interviews on assault landing by one combat team. Full narrative at regiment, battalion and company level. A great deal of precise tactical data on amphibious operations and small unit combat.

Interviews (Sources unknown) Pages

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16th Inf Regt – 1st Inf Div

1. A narrative letter written by a member of the IPW team which landed on D-Day with the 16th Inf. It gives an informative account of PW handling durin the assault stage. 5.5 pages.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY CT – 16

APO #1 U.S. ARMY

REPORT AFTER ACTION:

The advance C.P Group, consisting of 102 officers and men in LCM 26 moved toward the beach in a rough sea. The weather was rainy, foggy and cold. A considerable volume of fire, artillery, machine gun and rifle was directed at the craft as it neared the beach. The tide was just beginning to rise and the ramp was dropped 150 yards from shore at 0720 hours. Lt. Hill led the I & R into the waist deep icy cold water followed by the personnel of the communications group carrying radios and wire, the Regimental Headquarters advance Group, and the advance Command post. Landing at extreme low water the men had but a short distance to cover before they came to the first obstacles. They were in some depth of water when they met their first enemy fire. They immediately hit the sand but the rushing tide made cover impossible, many of the wounded that were unable to walk were swamped heroic efforts were made by other personnel to escort them to the safety of the beach. Considerable confusion resulted, the officer in charge Lt. Col Mathews was among the first to be hit, and died immediately. Thirty five men in all were wounded and killed from the time the ramp went down till they reached the beach. The beach was crowded, no exits had been made in the wire, the beach was under continual cross fire from small arms and artillery. Communication equipment had been lost and any radio that showed an antenna above the shale shelf drew immediate and personal attention from enemy guns. Into this confusion the rear C.P. group landed at about 0815. When these boats were within fifty yards of the shore they came under fire, the men went off in orderly fashion, but the confusion on the beach soon infected them. The commanding officer proceeded immediately to the vicinity of where the advance CP should have been which was some hundred yards to the left of where they landed. It soon became evident that no such command post existed and that most elements ill pinned on the beach. A word might be said at this point that may in all fairness be included to explain some of the grouping on the beach. A good number of the men in the small craft were deathly sea sich and needed some rest before they could continue. Col. Taylor sought out the various commanders and tied to get order out of what looked like chaos. “The only people on this beach are the dead and these that are going to die-now let’s get the hell out of here”. They did. By that time he had most of the companies moving and followed shortly with Headquarters Company. The primary end was to clear the beach so that a good bit of equipment was left behind. In the meantime at a point close to where the rear CP came ashore a hole was made in the wire and it was thru this single hole that the whole combat team left the beach. Cover was taken behind steep hill that bordered the beach some three hundred yards inland. The CP was organized and rescue quads were sent back to the beach to salvage what wire radios and other equipment was left there. At this point a cont was taken on the personnel present, and those that were hit on the beach. The air support command was there almost intact but without equipment. Not one radio was in working order, a shortage of wire was reported but within an hour everything was almost in working order. Major Godfray was reported to be killed on the beach while trying to assemble his command. It soon became evident that while the new location was better than the beach it left much to be desired. Mortar shells fell in the draw with a disconnecting frequency, and picked off men every now and again. The Regimental medics were doing a land sale business. The command continued to function in creditable manner. During the night the enemy air power showed itself and the CP found itself on the receiving end of the naval anti air fire. The following afternoon the CP moved to the vicinity of Colleville to the comparative safety of the war zone and soldiers slept a peaceful sleep.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY CT – 16

APO #1 U.S. ARMY

SUBJECT : Report on operation “Neptune”.

To : Commanding Officer, CT – 16

Prior to commencement of operation “Neptune”, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 16th Infantry, started its movement form Parnham, Beaminster, Dorset, England, on May 15, 1944, when two vehicles and drivers, with 1.25 ton trailed left from Bristol Channel. The main body of men and officers departed from Parnham at 1000 hours, May 17th and moved to Marshalling Camp D-10. Col. Taylor and several members of his staff remained behind at Parnham, and moved to D-10 on May 25th. Also left behind was a small group from Headquarters Company of about 23 men and one officer to clean out Parnham. This group, less 10 kitchen personnel, departed for D-10 area on May 25th. The kitchen truck with one ton trailer and personnel reported to the personnel Adjutant, where it was to be under his command until it joined the company again in France on D plus six.

The main body which had moved to area D-10 on May 17th, was under command of Lt. Col. Mathews, Executive officer of the regiment. Area D-10 was occupies and administration set up with a minimum of confusion.

The rear detail left at Parnham gave the area we had occupied since November 1943 a thorough clean-up, and the place was left in clean and orderly condition. During this period that the rear group was still at Parnham, there were frequent and sizeable conferences and meetings by Co. Taylor, his staff and other officers – all relating to the impending “Neptune” operation.

Two days after the rear group moved into D-10 area, the camp was sealed, and shortly thereafter, briefing commenced. If any officer or enlisted man had any doubt that “Neptune” was really the invasion, and many held this belief, the briefing eliminated this thought.

Men and officers were briefed in a room especially set up for the purpose, An exact model of the beach we were to assault, and the surrounding terrain, was there for all to see and study. Aerial photographs, close-up photos of the beach, maps, were all here. Briefing officers read pertinent sections of the “Neptune” field order to their respective men. The men were particularly interested in the model, and carefully looked at that particular section of the beach where they would be landed.

At Area D-10, new type assault gas masks were issued and tested in a tear gas chamber. The reaction to the few type of mask was favorable, and the men seemed to prefer this mask over any other type they had ever been issued.

On May 29th, Headquarters and Headquarters Company moved out of Area D-10, and was moved into other camps by Boat Groups. The great majority of Headquarters and Headquarters company was in two groups. One group, under Lt. Col. Mathews, constituted the Advance C.P Group, and moved to Camp D-8. The other group under Col. Taylor moved to D-4. Those men not included in either of these groups went to other mashalling area. These for the most part were drivers, who were to load on other boats with their vehicles.

Life at Areas D-4 and D-8 was largely a matter of final checkups, meetings of officers, clean up of equipment, and other last minute details. Though hot water facilities were none too plentiful, there were frequent movies and the chow was good.

On the 1st of June the rear CP group packed their equipment, loaded their rolls, and moved from D-4 area at 1030 hours, in trucks for Weymouth. It took about four hours’ standing in line at Weymouth until the last of the rear CP group was loaded onto APA #1, otherwise known as “The Chase.”

The advance CP group departed from D-8 at 1700 hours on the 1st of June, proceeded to Weymouth by truck, and proceeded to load onto APA #2, better known as the USS “Henrico.”

LGVPS were used to transport the men from the dock at Weymouth out into the harbor where the ships were anchored. The seas was not what would accurately be called rough, but neither was it calm and this, combined with the characteristics of an LOVP, brought the men to their ships wet, but full of spirit.

They were happy to board the ship. They had been there before. They knew the chow would be good. The big question, of course, was – when would D-day be? Every man was anxious to get the job started, for the sooner it started the sooner would come the long-awaited victory.

Life aboard ship was pleasant, especially as compared to that in the marshalling areas. The food was excellent and ample. The conversation was, of course, all invasion. When would D-Day be? How rough would be the show? Would the Germans be expecting the troops? Those and a million other questions were soon to be answered.

Officers and NCOs found themselves busy on board ship. Meetings, final plans and details were attended to. In addition, the troops were given a final briefing and final questions were answered. Those on board the “Chase” had the opportunity of viewing the model of the beach for the last time and get their final orientation.

The evening meal on June 4th was steak and ice cream. The men figured they would set sail that evening. However, they didn’t, and (they maintain) whether or not plans had been changed or D-day moved up, they said they never knew. At any rate, the evening meal on June 5th was again ice cream with pork chops this time. The “Chase” weighed anchor at about 1800 hours, and set sail for France, and the “Henrico” set sail at about the same time. The convoy grew larger as they proceeded. Ships – and more of them – all sides, of all types – LCI(L)s, transports, destroyers, cruisers, PT , and others.

There was little sleep the night of June 5th. The most anyone could get was a two or three hour snatch. Few actually wanted to sleep, for there were rifles to be cleaned and checked, and equipment to be readied. The men were anxious and ready to get going with the big show. Morale was excellent, and all Headquarters men were confident.

Exactly when the convoy dropped anchor few of the men knew for sure, but what each and every man did know after he finished his breakfast at 0415 hours was that we were there – ten miles off the coast of France.

The advance CP group, on board the “Henrico”, went down the nets on the side of the ship and loaded into LCM #26 at 0500 hours, and set sail for the beach. The rear CP group left the “Chase” at 0600, scrambled down the nets, and loaded into two different craft – and LCM and an LCVP. The latter carried Col. Taylor, and his staff and certain other liaison person.

The advance group, consisting of 102 men in LCM #26, moved toward the beach in a rough sea. The weather was rainy and foggy. Many men were seasick and the small vomit bags which had been issued to each man, proved their usefulness. As the boats neared the beach, a considerable volume of fire, both shellfire and MG fire, was directed against the boat. The tide low, or just on its way in, and the ramp on the LCM was dropped at 0720 hours several yards from shore. There was thus considerable distance to traverse, under heavy fire, to reach cover on the beach itself. In addition there was a sand bar some 25 yards wide which had to be crossed to reach the beach proper.

As the ramp dropped, Lt. Hill was first off into the water, 1st high, followed by men from his I. & R. Platoon. The communication group followed, carrying all its equipment, followed by Company Headquarters group, field artillery, and other attached men. There was very heavy fire. Officers and Cos were active in trying to disperse the men, and in trying to get all equipment off boat, and onto shore. Approximately 35 officers and men were killed or wounded from the time the rap went down until the beach was reached. When the beach was reached there was indescribable confusion. The beach was crowded. There was no exit off the beach which was open. One pill box was still firing. There were dead and wounded all over, on the beach in the water. Equipment was floating in the water and strewn on the beach. Examples of bravery, courage, heroism, and initiative during this period are too numerous to mention.

The rear C.P Group in one LCVP and one LCM left the “Chase” at approximately 0615 hours, and proceeded towards the beach. At about 0815 hours the ramp was lowered. The boat was about 50 yards from shore. The boats had been under some artillery and machine gun fire on the way in, but as the ramp was lowered there was no fire immediately. The men went off orderly, into the water waist deep. All equipment was gotten off. As the last few men were getting off, the ICM was brought under fire, but no one was hit. There was no sand-bar to cross, such as the advance group experienced, and the distance to the beach was much shorter, due to the fact the tide had risen considerably.

The rear group got to the beach to find the same confusion and chaos which existed when the advance group hit. The group moved to the left in an effort to join up with the advance group. Contact was made, but it was difficult to marshall the men together into any organized group, as they were too spread out. The primary task at this point was to take what cover was possible, save what equipment could be saved, rescue what men from the water that could be rescued, and last but not least, to try to get off the beach.

Midst all the confusion, one beach exit was opened, and the men started to move off the beach up onto the hillside, where there was defilade. Most Headquarters and Headquarters Company men joined up at this point. The hillside was crowded with troops, but everyone had a hole, and there were several opportunities to use it.

The outfit remained here during the day, and all that night. The beach was under constant fire, and the position was actually that of a group of spectators watching a big show. During the night, enemy bombers were over, and considerable flak was sent up. One Headquarters Company man was wounded by flak, in spite of the fact he was in his trench.

The next day, D plus one, Headquarters and Headquarters Company moved forward to a new C.P location. It was here but a short time, and moved forward again to a new location, where it spent the night. This was in the vicinity of Colleville Sur-Mer. Again, the next day, June 8th, we moved again, and spend the night at the new location. At this point the action slowed and our regiment went into a reserve position.

STEPHEN V. RALPH

Capt., Infantry

Commanding.

1st BATTALION, 16th Infantry

On x hour D day 0630 hours 6 June 194 the 16th Infantry CT of the 1st Inf. Div assaulted beaches ER and EG of the Omaha Beach located east of the base of the Cherbourg Peninsula on the coast of France. The 116th Inf CT was on the right of the 16th CT and the British 50th Div was on the left.

The 1st Bn initially in reserve, landed at 0730 hours with A and C Cos ab east, A on the right. Company B landed 10 minutes later. Bn forward CP landed at 0740 followed in 10 minutes by D Co and the remainder of the Bn. The landing was made in the face of very heavy fire from MGs, mortars, and artillery. The beach was heavily mined with anti-mechanized and anti-boat obstacles.

The Bn landing found the 2nd Bn still on the beach, so the various Cos rapidly pushed inland through the 2nd Bn and seized the cliffs overlooking the beach from the south. A Co was on the right, C Co on the left, and B Co followed C Co up the cliffs. By 0930 the Bn was at the top of the cliffs.

From the top of the cliffs the Bn attacked straight inland (south). Approximately 500 yards inland Co. A ran into an enemy strong point of approximately Co strength. They took up the attack immy from the x and worked two sections around to attack the strong point from the west. Here the fight continued for the remainder of the day.

In the meantime Co. continued the attack to the south and advanced rapidly clearing up isolated enemy snipers and MG positions. Co. B was moved to the right of C Co and continued the attack to the South.

1300 hours found Co Co at the X-roads 0.5 mile west of Collevilles Mer (approx. 1-1.5 milesinland). B Co was on the right rear of C Co and A Co was in the right rear of B Co. In the afternoon C Co cleared the woods and orchard to the east of the X-roads of snipers, riflemen, and MGs. This area received intermittent mortar and artillery fire for the rest of the day and early evening hours.

At about 1600 hours the 116th Inf attacked the strong point that was holding up A Co. The attack was made from the north and east, and A Co was then able to disengage itself.

The attack by the Bn. Was continued to the SW after the 2nd Bn was contacted on the left. C Co moved forward on the left, B Co on the right, and the high ground SW of the X-roads was seized and organized for defense. B Co was in position to the right rear of C Co., and A Co moved into position to the left of C Co. Remenants of E and F Cos, total strength that approximately 1 platoon, was in position to the left rear of A Co. D Co in support had only three HMGs and 3 mortars.

Contact was maintained with the enemy continually from the time the Bn hit the beach. Prisoners captured during the first day’s fighting totaled approximately 60. Casualties for the first day were 4 Os and 127 Ems. C.O, Co.A, Capt. Pence, was wounded on the beach and evacuated. Ex. O., Lt. Kolb, took command.

During the night B Co was engaged almost continually in a fire fight on the right flank. Patrols maintained contact during the night with the 2nd Bn., 16th Inf and 2nd Bn 18th Inf, on the left. Patrols were unable to gain contact with the 116th Inf. on the right. Bn. CP for the night was located about 200 yards west of the cross roads in the rear of C Co.

At approximately 0900 hours 7 June the Bn received 1 platoon from the AT Co as attachment. These guns were placed in position protecting the flanks and rear. The Bn AT platoon came up at the same time but only with two guns. These were placed in position in C Co’s area to protect the front of the position. At approximately 1000 hours, Can. Co., originally attached to the Bn., joined the Bn. but with only one gun. This gun was not in condition to fire. All of the missing weapons mentioned above were lost in the landing personnel from anon Co. went into position to protect the Bn area.

On the morning of D-1 the Bn continued the attack to the south. Axis of advance was the road to the SW. The Bn. started the attack at approximately 1030 hours with C Co on the right of the road and A Co on the left. B Co in support followed C Co. Resistance met was in the form of isolated MGs protected by riflemen with sniper scattered throughout the woods. The Bn objective was the wooded high ground about 1 mile north of Surrain. This objective was reached at approximately 1200 hours. NSFCP provided support.

The objective was organized for all-round defense with A Co on the left, C in the center, B on the right, and Cn Co on the right rear. The 18th Inf and 26th Inf passed through the position during the afternoon and evening.

Contact with the enemy was lost when the 18th Inf continued the attack on the Bn front. Prisoners captured during the second day’s fighting totaled approximately 40 casualties for the second day were x Os and 13 Ems. The Bn remained in position until 1800 hours 8 June.

From an account at 16th Inf – 4 July 1944.

23 June 1944

INVASION OF FRANCE

(FORWARD C.P.)

On 6 June 1944 at 0800 the forward C.P. group of the 1st Battalion 16th Infantry landed on the left side of Easy Red-Omaha beach. The machine gun and rifle fire was terrific and men were being hit from the front and flanks as they left the LXPV’s. Men who were carrying the heavier loads of equipment such as wire and radios seemed to be the ones that were hit more often because they could not move as fast as the rest.

Upon reaching the beach it was found that there were many men from the first assault unit still laying there. Some were going back into the water to get wounded men, ammunition and equipment.

There were not sufficient exits cleared through the wire entanglements and mine fields to remove the men quickly from the beach at the time we arrived. They made their own exits by blowing wire and going through mine fields.

After this section was reorganized as much as possible, it moved through the exit by the house and proceeded to a point about 20 yards inland. A check was made of the equipment and men and it was found that only three miles of wire remained. A wire team was sent to lay wire to C Company and one to A Company. One team laid a line back to the regimental C.P. It was not very long before our unit had fair telephone communication.

The radio section attempted to establish a net with regiment but it was found that the S.C.R. 284 radio had been damaged, and the unit ha to defend upon the telephone communication from battalion to regiment for the rest of the day. The man carrying the message center S.O.I. and the radio operator carrying a SCR 300 radio was shot before reaching the beach. That left one SCR 200 radio in the battalion CP which was used to contact the companies who had not lost their radios and radio operators.

After leaving the first assembly point the forward CP group proceeded to the first road running parallel with the beach. The assault companies had crossed this road but there was still much sniping in this area. After staying there for a short period of time the Bn CO then moved out behind Company C which was moving south. After reaching a point about three hundred yards south of Colleville, the first forward CP was established and remained there until the following day, 7 June 1944. The C.P group then moved about one half mile south of Colleville and regiment moved into the old CP location. There was some enemy artillery fire falling near the CP during the night, and there was also quite a bit of sniping going on in that vicinity. We remained in that location until the following night.

HEADQUARTERS CO. 1ST BATTALION 16TH INFANTY

A.P.O. #1 U.S. ARMY

INVASION OF FRANCE

On the morning of 6 June 1944, Headquarters Company as members of the reserve battalion, landed on the Easy Red Section of Omaha Beach. The company was split mainly into three groups; the forward CP; the rear CP and the anti-tank platoon. With the exception of the anti-tank platoon and drivers of our organic transportation which crossed the English Channel in LSTs, the company sailed to within 15 miles from French soil on the U.S.S. Chase.

Just about the time the assault battalions hit the fortified beach, our company began loading into the landing craft. As out waves of boats neared the beach, the enemy let loose with MG, artillery, and mortar fire. From the time that the ramps were lowered until we reached the high ground about 0.25 mile inland the company suffered 15 casualties. The entire beach was under enemy observation and the heavily mined approaches made progress the high ground costly and slowly.

The CP was established in the high ground area which our assault units used as an assembly area at 0930 hours. After remaining at this point for two hours, the group moved forward. Spasmodic sniping forced us to move cautiously. The battalion CP was established at 1345 hours about 1.5 miles inland in the vicinity of Colleville Sur Mer. Headquarters Company dug in and provided the security for the remainder of the day and throughout the night.

On the morning of D/1 the company moved forward about 1.5 miles where the anti-tank platoon joined the organization. As the drivers were preparing to move to their new motor pool site, about 30 German snipers discovered and captured by Headquarters Company men two hedge rows from where the company was located during the previous night.

Two more moves were made during the day. At the end of D/1 the company was located about 2.5 miles inland.

HEADQUARTERS CO. 1ST BATTALION 16TH INFANTY

A.P.O. #1 U.S. ARMY

INVASION OF FRANCE

(Anti-Tank Platoon)

At 0300 hours 6 June 1944 we disembarked from the LST with our three DUKWs. At that time we were 12.5 miles from the beach and as yet the transports had reached their area. We circled another LST until 0400 hours at which time an assault guide boat started taking us to shore. After about 2 miles the guide boat motor quit, but was again started. The naval personnel told us to go ahead as he was unable to make it. We continued toward shore on our own not knowing the lanes or anything else. At approximately 0700 hours my 1st squads DUKW sank and all men were later rescued by the navy. We got about 100 yards off shore at approximately 0830 when we received heavy artillery and machine gun fire. One mas was seriously wounded in my DUKW. We went back to the sea where naval control vessel told us not to and until ordered. We waited around until 1415 hours then went in again. This time we made it. The exits were not finished as yet so we had to sit under artillery fire on the beach until 2000 where two more men were wounded. At 2030 hours we finally got two half tracks and took our guns to the main transit area, as the original one was not taken. During the rest of the evening we stayed in that area continually being harassed by sniper and machine gun fire. At 0600 hours, D/1 Sgt. Cameron found us and took us to the CP of the 1st Battalion at which point 1 displaced my guns in the Battalion area. We stayed in this position until the Battalion again moved about 1500 hours we again went into position here.

A COMPANY, 16th Infantry

At approximately 0530 hours on 6 June 1944 the company disembarked from the USS Samuel Chase for the invasion of France. Company A was the assault Company of the reserve bn and landed on ER beach at H-70 (0740 hours). After landing on the beach and finding the assault waves still on the beach Capt. Pence ordered the Co. to pass through the assault waves and beach obstacles and seize the first high ground. In moving his Co off the beach, Capt. Pence was wounded and the Co carried on under Lt. Dillon all the time being under heavy enemy concentrations of artillery, mortar, MG, and sniper fire. While moving through an AT ditch (which was mined) and through a mine field, Lt. McElyea and Lt. Webne were wounded together with approximately 45 EMs from mines and small arms fire. The Co pushed on to the high ground and toward a sector of the 2nd Bn’s objective. After reaching the high ground the company was up against numerous enemy MG nests which had to be cleared out before advancing. T/Sgt. Benn, taking over the 4th section after Lt. McElyea became a casualty, was ordered to clear out a wood from which we were receiving enemy fire. T/Sgt. Benn and at least three others became casualties when Lt. Webne and his section were sent in to assist the fourth section, where he and his section became pinned down. Lt. Long and Lt. Hinchcliffe flanked the enemy positions. In clearing out one of these MG positions, Lt. Long and part of his section were caught in enemy MG cross fire, where he and his men became wounded, captured, or killed. Lt. Hinchcliffe and his section came on line with Lt. Long and proceeded to assist in knocking out the enemy positions, but he also was pinned down under at least three more enemy MGs. After some time, friendly fire opened up on the flanks, thus distracting the enemy and allowing Lt. Hinchcliffe and his section to withdraw, losing about three Ems. The enemy apparently withdrew so the Co continued advancing, still meeting some resistance but succeeding in pushing through and reaching the objective, where the Co again ran into fairly stiff enemy resistance, composed of several Mgs, machine pistols and snipers, The Co took up the fight placing rocket, mortar, AT grenade, and small arms fire on the emplacements and succeeding in silencing the enemy MGs in the area, leaving only occasional sniper fire dor the remainder of the night. Here the Co halted and the men and officers rested the rest of the night. Lt. Kolb joined and assumed command of the company just prior to reaching the objective with Lt. Jones and excess men of the Co. During the night it became necessary to outpost the Co front. Lt Hinchcliffe and his section were ordered to undertake this mission and, after leaving the Co, were lost and he dug in for the night about 0.25 miles to the Co front. He had small fire fights throughout the night and succeeded in knocking out at least one enemy MG nest with mortar fire. At daylight contact was made with him and the Co advanced approximately 0.5 miles where it was ordered to patrol all surrounding fields, hedges, woods, roads, and trail within one mile to the front and the small gap between the company and the 18th Inf. This mission was carried on throughout the day and night.

From an account by Lt. Chambers, Co. Historian, at 16th Inf. – 4 July 1944.

B COMPANY, 16th Infantry

Boats were lowered from the APA at 0555 hours 6 June. The landing craft put the Co ashore on ER beach at 0755 amidst heavy artillery and small arms fire. Practically all the preceeding waves were still pinned down on the beach.

Co. Hq.’s LCVP received two direct hits, probably 47 mm, and it began sinking just as its personnel landed. The Co. moved up to the wire and section leaders did an excellent job of hastry reorganization.

Five breaches in the wire having been made by Co A were used to clear the beach. The first and third assault sections made very good use of their smoke greandesat the wire barrier and in the field beyond, as both were being swept by enemy fire.

The Co could not contact Bn with the SCR 300 radio set as it had been lost when the operator was wounded.

The minefield in front of the wire and one FPL (?) on the far side of the minefield took their toll of casualties as the company moved off the beach.

The fifth and third sections tried to advance over the first high ground and were pinned down by enemy MG, sniper fire in the second minefield, causing more casualties. These two sections withdrew and moved left and reached the top of the ridge 400 yards to the left of Exit E-1.

Bn Cp was located and the Co was ordered to take up positions to the right of Co C.

The Co then moved about 1-1.5 miles inland and reached a point just to the right of Colleville where it was held up by an enemy strong point and was forced to spend the night in the spot.

Enemy activity was encountered throughout the night and small enemy groups tried to penetrate the positions. The enemy strong point was neutralized about 1030 D-1 and the 18th Infantry moved up on the right flank. The Co then moved forward about 600 yards and took up position on the high ground overlooking Surrain to the south. Here they spent the second night and part of the third day.

Second section patrols located a German Bicycle Bn bivouac area deserted except for one sniper who was eliminated.

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From an account by Lt. Beach, Co. Historian, Hq. 16th Inf. –4 July 1944

COMPANY C 16TH INFANTRY

A.P.O. #1 U.S. ARMY

20 June 1944

INVASION OF FRANCE

Company C 16th Infantry landed on Easy Red section of Omaha beach on the coast of France at H/70, D-Day. The landing was made midway between the points where the 2nd and 3rd Battalions 16th Infantry had landed. Before hitting the beach the assault craft came under enemy artillery fire, the 2nd boat group receiving a direct hit causing several casualties. On leaving the boats the company encountered heavy enemy machine gun fire as well as encountering water about 7 feet in depth. A number of casualties resulted from the filing and drowning. Small arms fire pinned the company down on the beach until a path was cleared through the mine field directly inland from the beach. The company then moved through the mine field and up the cliff to a reorganization area. Several prisoners were taken in this vicinity.

After reorganizing the company moved inland approximately 1000 yards under continual sniper fire. The advance was halted at the Manor House 500 yards west of Coleville Sur Mer for another reorganization. While here an enemy artillery and mortar barrage caused additional casualties. The company again pushed ahead but was pinned down by heavy sniper and MG fire a short distance from the house. Large numbers of enemy were observed to the south and the company was forced to dig in for the night in this area. At down an enemy machine gun squad was captured by a C Company outpost. Naval artillery was directed on a farmhouse where approximately 200 of the enemy had spent the night. The artillery caused the enemy to withdraw and C Company advanced 1000 yards south to a point just northeast of and overlooking the town of Surrain. Enemy snipers were encountered but were driven back and the company dug in for the night of D/1. Patrols were sent out continuously throughout the night but very little enemy activity was encountered.

1st Lt. Winter

Historian

Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry

The majority of Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn. 16th Infantry, landed with the third wave of the Bn. assault team in LCVPs and an LCM. Transportation followed letter in the day on LSTs.

The Bn Headquarters section with message center and the radio section landed 200 yard to the left of its objective, approximately 50 yards from shore. Heavy MG fire was raking the beach and water. Part of the rifle companies were still along the shingle on the beach. The men, well developed, waded through the water, crossed the sand bar and proceeded to cover provided by the high water mark. The A & P Plat on beach Easy Red at 0655 hours in an LCM. 500 yards from the beach the craft came under heavy artillery fire and mortar fire in addition to raking MG fire. The ramp was put down at the three-foot water mark level and the first group of men headed for shore. The fire became more intense as the boat unloaded and the last men to leave the craft, carrying heavy equipment, were moved down by the enemy fire.

The wire section was divided into two teams, one with the free boat carrying the Bn, CO, and staff, and the other with Co H. This craft, too, received heavy MG fire, the H Co craft sinking as it approached to make landing. The heavy sea and intense shelling of the beach made it impossible to save equipment. Several men carrying wire on the free boat were wounded in the water. The men managed to bring the switchboard, phones, and several rolls of wire ashore. The radios that were carried ashore were put out of commission by small arms and MG fire.

The sections organized quickly on the beach. The A and P platoon started through the passage to the initial CP, finding unexperienced beach engineers in a minefield. The demolition squad, having lost their equipment through casualties, borrowed the equipment of the engineers and proceeded to mark the minefield and direct troops through the passage. The Headquarters and wire sections followed to the initial CP at 682896.

The radio, wire, and A & P sections returned to the beach to try to recover equipment lost in the landing. Enough equipment was recovered to enable the company to the initial CP at 682896.

The transportation was to land at 0730 but because of the heavy seas and intense fire of the Navy, forced them to pull back from the beach.

The ship had received several direct artillery hits. They landed the transportation about 1235 on a beach full of troops and equipment. After struggling to get the vehicles through the water they proceeded to the vehicle transient area. Two half tracks were lost in water too deep for travel.

The Bn AT platoon approached the beach at 0800 hours. The heavy sea proved too rough for the DUKWS and they had to be towed in. Troops were still on the beach and enemy fire was heavy. Keeping the platoon from landing until 1200 hours. With only one truck available, the platoon leader went in search of prime movers returning with transportation from the AT Co By 1700 hours Exit E-1 had been cleared sufficiently to enable them to proceed to the transient area, where they awaited orders from the Bn. C.O.

Despite the overcrowded beach, the confusion caused by the beach Bn., the intense fire, and the missing of objectives by the landing craft, the reorganization of the sections and platoons of the Co by the plat. Ldrs and section sgts. was excellent. Equipment lost in the operation was due to casualties and every effort was made by the other men to retrieve equipment carried by the men wounded. Many trips were made under heavy shellfire to secure equipment ashore.

The Co moved forward to establish a second CP at 1145 hours in the vicinity of 684892 where constant communications were maintained with the Cos of the Bn and surrounding units, prisoners were received and taken to the rear by the intelligence section, and the necessary administrative work was handled by the Headquarters section. The company stayed at this location for the remainder of the day.

-O-

From an account at th 16th Inf. Hqtrs. 4 July 1944.

COMPANY D 16TH INFANTRY

A.P.O. #1, U.S. ARMY

INVASION OF FRANCE

“D” Company landed on Omaha Beach Easy Red at 0920 hours 6 June 1944 and moved in against a low bank while an exit was being cleared.

The Mortar platoon and the 2nd platoon went into position along the beach and opened fire on enemy positions approximately 75 yards away.

The company ceased firing and moved to the left along the beach to an exit cleared by the 3rd battalion by 1045 had moved in along the cliff just off the beach. The 2nd battalion was contacted approximately 0.5 mile inland from which point the company moved 0.25 mile to the east and rejoined the 1st battalion. Here the 1st platoon was attached to B Company, the 2nd platoon to C Company and the Mortar platoon went into position as a battery in the support of the battalion advance.

The 1st platoon was relieved of attachment to B Company and was attached to A Company at about 2300 hours.

For the remainder of D Day there was no chance.

Casualties – 11 MIA and 10 WIA.

The mortar platoon had 4 serviceable guns and the MG platoons each had 3 guns in action.

The company did no firing after that done of the beach.

D/1

The company moved out at about 1200 hours with the platoons disposed as at end of D Day.

Casualties at end of day – 11 MIA and 10 WIA.

8 Jeeps were brought into company at about 1730.

No firing done during day.

Lt. Barker

Historian

F COMPANY, 16th Infantry

4 July 1944

Company F landed on Beach vicinity of Colleville S Mer at 0640 hours. Smoke laid down by the Navy and artillery had already lifted, which therefore enabled the enemy to observe the landing of the company.

Enemy machine guns, rifles and mortars were fired at the assault teams as they ran out of the LCVPs. The water was about 4.5 ft deep. The assault teams had to wade across 30 yards of water under fire and cross the beach of approximately 150 yards under the same fire. The cost in casualties was 6 officers and about 50% of the company.

The second, 4th and 5th sections landed approximately 400 yards too far over to the left. These three sections played a major part in silencing beach defenses in the third Bn sector. S/Sgt. Strojny aided in the success of the 3rd Bn by picking up a rocket launcher of a wounded soldier and firing it unassistated at the pillboxes and open emplacements. A direct hit into the embrasure of one pillbox hindering the advance caused the pillbox to go up in flames. S.Sgt. Piyo, mortar squad leader, 4th section, knocked out several emplacements and after all his ammunition had been expended, with a few other NCOs, led the men in an assault on enemy positions.

Approximately 15 prisoners were captured and turned over to the 3rd Bn. These men stayed with the 3rd Bn until they were able to rejoin the Company the following day.

The 1st section landed at their proper place on the beach. This section also displayed courage and initiative. When the section leader was fatally wounded, the assistant section leader took over. He ordered the wireman to blow the barbed wire, which he did after crawling 30 yards exposed to small arms and mortar fire. Shortly after the section sgt. was wounded and the next senior NCO assumed command and led the section to commanding ground overlooking the beach. This section attached itself to Co G, moved inland and helped in destroying enemy snipers and isolated MG nests between the beach and Colleville s Mer.

Company Headquarters and the 3rd section landed directly in front of strong point assigned to Co F. 3rd section lost all its special equipment, due mostly to casualties inflicted by the enemy. Therefore, only small arms fire was used against enemy emplacements with little effect. No support was received from the tanks as none landed at this particular sector of the beach. However, three tanks did come over from the left flank at 1000 hours and fired at open enemy emplacements and pillboxes. Also a destroyer came fairly close to shore and fired at the same strong point. Company headquarters and the 3rd section were pinned at the high water line, which offered some cover until approximately 1200 hours. At 0945 hours the Company commander sent a runner along the beach to the right to contact Bn and give them the siun. The runner returned about 1130 hours with orders for Capt. Fine to move all 2nd Bn men to the right where a breakthrough had been made about 500 yards down the beach. When the Co finally assembled at Bn, only the Co C.O., 1st Sgt., and 10 pvts were present. These pvts were used as local security for the Bn C.P. The 1st Sgt. by placing three men to the left flank of the CP was fired upon and pinned down temporarily by an enemy MG. One of the CP was fired upon and pinned down temporarily by an enemy MG. One of the men managed to return to the CP immediately after he was fired upon and informed the Co. C.O. that he believed the 1st Sgt. to be hit by the MG fire. Upon receiving this information, Capt. Finke, with one pvt. Tried to capture or kill the enemy MGer by working his way up around the flank. He succeeded in getting to within 75 yards of the gun but both he and the pvt. Were wounded by mortar fire and were evacuated to the aid station. This left the Co on the night of D-day with no officers, a 1st Sgt., and about 10 pvts. Eight more EM joined the Co. before midnight.

The men separated from the Co rejoined it in Colleville s Mer during the afternoon of D-1. The overflow consisting of two Os and 31 EM also arrived. A roll call was held. The company reorganized and was once more able to function and operate tactically.

Despite the fact that all Os and 3 Plat sgts. were lost, the men gallantly carried on. Also the fac tthat they were landed on wrong sectors of the beach and were not under Company headquarters control, showed the discipline, which had been instilled in the men and it was a fine example of leadership done by junior NCOs. (Skip the last -- )

From an account at 16th Infanry Headquarters.

COMPANY “G” 16TH INFANTRY

APC #1 US ARMY

History of Company “G”, 16th Infantry, from 6 June 1944-7 June 1944

The following resume of events concerning Company “G”, 16th Infantry, relate the participation of this organization during the initial phases of Operation “Neptune”.

At 0115 hours, 6 June 1944 the Company was alerted aboard the USS Henrico and began preparations for disembarking into assault craft. Breakfast was given all Army personnel at this time, consisting of bologna and lenche on meat sandwiches and coffee. All equipment was then secured, and at 0345 hours the Company was called by boat teams to their respective debarkation stations and began loading into the LCVPs. A very heavy sea was running, which created considerable difficulty in loading the personnel from the “Henrico” into the assault craft. Loading was effected by means of loading all heavy equipment and ten men into the assault craft before lowering away these boats. The remainder of the boat team personnel was then loaded over the side of the “Henrico” by scramble nets. This was extremely difficult, due to the weight of the equipment carried by each xan in his assault jacket and the slippery footing created by the wooden rungs of the scramble nets.

All assault craft teams were loaded by 0415 hours, and the boat wave was formed approximately 500 yards off the starboard bow of the “Henrico”. The boat wave rendeezvowed in this position until 0445 hours, and then proceeded in line toward the beach. All craft were heavily loaded, and the very rough sea encountered caused the personnel and equipment to become thoroughly drenched before leaving the rendezvous area, and all boats shipped more water than could be pumped out, causing them to be constantly in danger of foundering.

The blat wave reached the line of departure 2000 yards from the beach at 0635 hours and deployed with all boats abreast, and proceeded toward the beach at the best possible speed. Intense enemy fire was seen falling on the beach and as the company came within 1000 yards of the beach this fire began to land in and around the craft, and increased in intensity as we moved closer. Great difficulty was experienced by coxswains of the assault craft in maintaining the boats formation, and one of the craft capsized about 200 yards from the beach, necessitating the boat team to swing ashore without a great deal of their assault weapons. The remainder of the boats, however, succeeded in almost reaching shore before lowering the debarking ramp, and most of the company was able to walk ashore. Very heavy artillery, mortar, and machine gun, and small arms fire was falling, and the company received a number of casualties as they proceeded across the beach. Approximately 200 yards inland from the waterline a small shingle mound about ten feet in height enabled the Company to secure a slight amount of defilade from the flanks and to the immediate front. A large number of personnel was already ashore in this position, (having landed at H hour), and seemingly were unable to advance onto the steep, high bluff overlooking the beach, and from which the enemy was firing. Most of the units were disorganized, due to losses of officers and NCO’s on the beach.

A soon as this organization reached the above mentioned position (time –h plus 30) a hasty reorganization of the assault teams of the company was made and the 60mm mortars and light machine guns were placed in firing positions, and all effort was made by a few officers and NCO’s to build up a volume of fire on the enemy to enable movement forward. A few of the elements of the 1st wave had succeeded in advancing approximately 100 yards in front of this position, but were pinned down and seemingly unable to move in any direction because of the terrific fire descending on them.

AT approximately 0710 hours, Company “G: was ordered to move forward toward the front and managed to infiltrate thru a narrow gap between the mine fields between the shingle mound and the cliff overlooking the beach. The section of Company “E”, 16th Infantry, under command of 2nd Lt. Spalding and remnants of two sections from Company “E”, 116th infantry, were those troops pinned down at base of the cliff. They were told by the company commander of Company “G”, that their organizations were supposed to be 500 yards to the right of this position, and to move inland, and to the right if possible. They, then, began to move forward and slightly to the right. As the company “G”, sections reached this point they were directed to seize the high ground to the immediate front and to deploy from right to left as they cleared the crest of the hill and move forward as quickly as possible; also to maintain contact with the two sections of Company “E”, 116th Infantry, on the right.

Two machine gun nests were destroyed and one prisoner was taken by 5th section, Company “G” and secured the immediate crest of the bluff, thus enabling the remainder of the company to reach this high ground and deploy in their movement forward. The company moved out from this position in the following order from right to left: Sections 5, 3, 4, 1, and 2, with the light machine gun section attached to the 2nd section. Movement forward was accomplished under artillery fire and a number of snipers firing machine pistols at us. One enemy machine gun was destroyed on the left flank of the company by the 2nd section, and light machine gun section and three enemy soldiers were killed. This engagement took place about 200 yards from the development position. Two more enemies were destroyed by the 1st section as they progressed inland.

At approximately 0900 hours the company had moved inland to a line generally from 677881 to 685885.

Effort was then made to consolidate the Company laterally, but this was seriously hampered by enemy small arms and automatic weapons fire that came from both front and rear of the Company. Also heavy mortar fire began falling on the right flank section. (Section 5) The 5th and 3rd sections were then ordered to clear the enemy from the woods surrounding the road junction at 683883. The enemy was engaged in this area for several hours and a number of casualties were incurred on both sides. Meanwhile the 1st, 2nd, and 4th sections were also engaged on the left flank, and most of the fire was coming from the small valley at 663900. One machine gun nest was destroyed in this vicinity by the 2nd section.

At approximately 1200 hours the enemy had been cleared from this area and aside from sporadic mortar and artillery fire falling in the general vicinity of our positions, all enemy personnel had withdrawn or had been destroyed. The 5th and 3rd sections had moved and were at this time forming a line at 682879-685879 with a few men from Company “E”, 116th Infantry Co C, 16th Infantry moved up into position on the right flank and abreast of this Company, but did not remain but a very short time before withdrawing back to the road junction at 682880. This withdrawal was made without notifying this organization of their intentions until they had already left.

At approximately 1300 hours the 1t section was sent into the town of Collville-Sur-Mer, with the mission of clearing the town of any enemy, and to seize and hold it. The 5th and 2nd sections were ordered to protect the right front of the Company, and were in position at 63878-686889. One section of 30 Cal. HMG of Company “H”, 16th Infantry were placed in position on the right flank of this line when the 4th section was moved to extend to our right flank to a point 682878. Only 13 men composed the 4th section at this time, as the remainder had become casualties. One O cal. HMG from Company “H”, was also put in position at 686883 to cover the advance of the 1st section into the town. The remaining elements of the 2nd section were put in position on the left flank at 684883, but became engaged in a fire fight in this vicinity, with enemy located generally around 684885, therefore could not render any covering fire or support to the 1st section as it advanced into the town.

The 1st section reached the outskirts of the town at 1315 hours and occupied the church and house due south of the church at 687882, where they become engaged with the enemy at point blank range. Although three men were killed almost immediately and two seriously wounded, these buildings were occupied by our men and held. A heavy counter attack developed on all sides of the entire company at this time, but was beaten off successfully with nine enemy killed in the town; four on the north of town by the 2nd section and five by the 5th and 3rd sections on the south, a total of 18. These were definitely known to be destroyed. The total number of prisoners taken up to this time was eight. This engagement necessitated a consolidation of the company in an oval position as the enemy completely encircled us, and no font could be fixed. In order to contain the ground that had been gained, no further effort was made to advance and the company dug in at this time and awaited the 18th infantry to pass through and relieve the pressure on us. At this time the company strength was 107 men and 6 officers, plus about 25 men from other organization. The 2nd battalion, 18th infantry passed thru, moving S.E. from the road junction at 683879, which relieved the pressure from this sector. Meanwhile the 4th section and one section HMG from company “H”, had moved further south and became isolated from the company to a point generally at 680877, where they remained for the remainder of the D-Day and the morning of 7 June. Efforts were made to contact this section, but enemy infiltration between our lines prevented this from being accomplished.

At about 1530 hours and continuing to 1700 hours friendly naval gun fire shelled our position in the town with very heavy fire, causing seven casualties. Efforts were made to stop this fire by firing yellow smoke flares. Contact was finally accomplished through battalion, who caused this fire to lift. On the morning of D plus 1 the company executive officer and 27 EM rejoined the company and brought the effective combat strength up considerably.

On the morning of D plus 1 the company moved thru the town and occupied it, taking 12 more enemy prisoners and killing 5 when we became engaged at 1000 hours at 688879; we suffered 2 men wounded.

The total casualties for the company from H-Hour D-Day to 1200 hours, D plus 1, was 60 EM and 3 officers.

Co. H. 16th Inf.

12 June 1944

Members of this organization loaded into their assault craft at approximately 0430 hours and started rendezvous movement until the entire group had gathered. The armada was complete and very satisfying. The sea WS was very rough and quite a few men were seasick, some of the craft turned over, but fortunately none from this company. The rocker lightens (LCT-R) and heavy ships were constantly bombarding the shore.

H Co was scheduled to hit the shore at Easy Red beach at 0710 hours, but had to contact the Navy control boat and lost some time in doing that. After finding the exact direction from the control boat the Co started towards shore at full throttle. The Co reached shore at approximately 0727 hours. They were immediately hit by MG fire and heavy casualties ensued. They hit the beach too far left of where they were to land. The tanks were on the beach to the right of where they landed, but were not giving too much support. There were obstacles on the beach and around these were anti personnel mines and teller mines on top of them. The tide was rising at this time and any of the wounded, who probably could have been saved were drowned. Quite a bit of equipment was lost. All of the radios were either lost or destroyed.

The situation on the beach was critical, and at times looked very black. One of the Co’s MGs set up on the left and started firing at the pillbox and open emplacements that were on the left flank. Enemy mortar fire was dropping on the beach but the enemy either was scared or was hit because it wasn’t very effective and after a time ceased. There was MG fire coming from the extreme left. This sector was supposed to be taken up by the 3rd Bn. Every time a move was made this gun would open up and kept the Co pinned down. There was also a lot of mines going off. These evidently were timed. About three hours later a hole was blown in the barbed wire by a Bangalore torpedo and they then started moving down the beach, a distance of about 200 yards; and started infiltrating through the gap. An enemy MG on the left kept up a continual fire which made progress very slow. There were a lot of mines along the Co’s path, most of which were marked, and the engineers were trying to take them out. After getting off the beach, they climbed up a hill and crossed a minefield and then turned to the left and continued on until they hit a road and then turned right. The mortar platoon was set up in position near some ruined buildings and the Co CP was set up near these positions.

This position was approximately 800 yards from the beach and approximately 400 yards from the town of Colleville. The MG platoons were in direct support of the rifle Cos. The 2nd platoon could not be contacted for a period of time and it was believed that they were captured, but later, contact was established with them.

The manner in which the battle was fought was out of ordinary. The enemy seemed to be everywhere. MG fire, artillery and sniping were very heavy. The mortars played a very important part in eliminating these MG nests and also snipers. At times the Co had a MG to the left, front, and right, and it had begun to look like they would be backing into the sea but sheer guts, excellent leadership dominated and they pulled through successfully. They remained in a defensive position during the rest of the night.

The total of casualties numbered 26, eight of these were believed dead, but were carried as MIA. The rest were wounded, most of them seriously.

-O-

From a statement by Sgt. R. D. Hopes, H Co, 16th Inf.

(Handwritten letter)

The D Day Experiences of Company L, 16th Infantry

The company landed between 0650 and 0700. The order from left to right in the assault sections was four, five, three, headquarters detachment, two, and one.

The fourth section foundered due to heavy seas. The boat sunk about two miles from shore. The men remained in the water from two to three hours. Four of them drowned, four others are still missing.

The first section boat was hit by an artillery shell about two hundred yards out, but lost no men. This shell was probably a 47mm. However, as with the second battalion, the boats did not suffer any real losses while in motion, although under steady fire. The losses began when the ramps were lowered.

When L Company landed there were tanks on motion and other infantry on the beach well off to the right. The tanks were moving up and down the beach but they were not firing.

Headquarters and third section landed dry. The second landed in water up to their hips, and the first section landed in water neck deep. Fifth section landed in knee deep water.

In the first section two antitank artillery shells landed on the boat just as the men were debarking. One shell hit under the ramp and knocked off two men who fell into the water. Several others were wounded.

The third section had some near artillery misses. The same was true of the second section which had two shells to the right of their boat. Five men were wounded by this fire, two in the stomach, the others in the extremities. These men were all dragged to safety.

The second section had just landed when a shell hit the boat and exploded it. It seems to have been the experience of L Company that it was able to retrieve its wounded in time, as the men do not recall seeing any of them taken out by the tide. However, they did see Navy personnel lost in this manner.

There was no shingle where L Company landed, but only flat beach stretching out ahead of them to the foot of the cliff. The company landed so that its right flank was just at the right edge of the cliff.

The men advanced to the foot of the cliff immediately and without having to be urged. There was much machine gun fire from above and from both flanks. On the left flank there was a 47 mm gun shooting down the beach.

It was only a matter of a few minutes—as long as it takes to walk three hundred yards—until the company had moved from the water edge to the foot of the cliff. The first and more lightly loaded men ran. The weight carriers did it at a walk.

Of the 31 in the first section, 18 arrived at the cliff and six of these were wounded. Second section got 25 to the cliff, five wounded. The third section got all of its 31 men to the cliff and only one man was wounded. This section had kept extremely well spread out and its movement regulated off the boat. This section had taken up an interval but the others had deployed on leaving. The fifth got twenty men to the cliff, about ten wounded en route. One man was killed at the foot of the cliff from mortar fire. Headquarters detachment lost five men before reaching the cliff. This included the company commander, Capt John B. Armellino, who was hit by mortar fire.

The aid men were treating right at the edge of the water. They worked back and forth from the water dragging those back to the cliff who could not move under their own power. First Army troops, both engineers and medics, went to the rescue of the wounded. Some were shot while so doing. The Germans fired at all that moved and made no exceptions of the aid men.

L Company was supposed to land with its right flank next to the left shoulder of F Company, but in fact it came in about five hundred yards to the left of its objective and at the point that I Company was supposed to land. It thus was displaced five hundred yards from its assigned missions. The first section under Lt Kenneth E. Klenk struck out immediately to the right to feel out the strong point confronting the beach and between the two draws. However, upon finding that the approach to this strong point exposed his men unduely, he moved his men back and straight up the hill toward the strong point between the beach and Cabourg. The ground of this incline was furrowed with numerous small circular ditches so that it was almost terrace like. The men were able to walk right up the draw without receiving any fire. In part this was due to the nature of the ground but also to the defenders being shelled by a destroyer. Two men were hit in the group. That left ten. In retracing its steps, however, the first section had closed in behind the second, third, and fifth sections which were already fighting their way up the slope with the second in the lead. The second section swung in toward the strong point and got behind it. The third and fifth moved oblique right and continued up the draw. By this time the naval fire was holding up the movement and preventing second and first sections from closing in on the strong point.

The sections attacking the strong point had come up the hill under bullet and rifle grenade fire. The men had moved along in squad column and were taking advantage of the shrubbery within the draw so that the enemy fire did them little hurt. They could see the Germans moving around in position on the top of the hill and the BAR men not only in the sections closing on the strong point, but in the two sections which had gone on rightward, were spraying the ground steadily. The BAR fire was extremely effective and they saw some of the enemy fall.

At the same time, two medium tanks on the beach were putting 75 mm fire on the enemy emplacements, this fire being directed by Lt Jimmie W. Monteith of L Company.

The machine guns of L Company were set up on the ridge to the west of the strong point. They also supported the advance.

The second section phoned Lt Robet R. Cutler that it was ready to close on the position if the naval fire could be lifted. Just then Cutler saw purple smoke rising from the strong point and told the second section that part of the force was already closing in. The second should therefore push on inland. The signal had been put out by the first section which had worked in to the strong point on a shorter line than the second section. The naval fire was falling in between the two groups. The second section then continued inland. The third section had kept moving right along and was already standing on the initial high ground. The fifth had come in on thirds right. The second went on up and formed to the left of the southward facing line.

First section moved in to the outlying trenches of the strong point and began mopping up with grenades and satchel charges. About four or five of the enemy were knocked out during the close fighting before the remainder surrendered. The Americans lost only one. He is supposed to have been killed by a mine. In the second section four men were wounded, but they treated on the ground and remained to fight. One other was hit in the stomach. The third section was still unhurt. The fifth lost no men advancing up the hill.

At 0900 Lt Cutler called to battalion and told them that the enemy had been subdued in the strong point. At 0930 battalion was again called and told that the company was on the initial high ground.

Almost immediately Sgt. Burton Davis took a patrol of three men to cut the road to le Grand Hameau. He then added one man to the patrol and moved up to the first building of le Grand Hameau, looking or the flank of K Company. His mission also included reconnaissance of a route by which L Company could advance but while he was talking with a French civilian, a German came toward the patrol. They shot him.

At the same time machine pistols started firing over on the left and the patrol fell back toward the company. The troops claim that the Germans were drunk. Sgt. Davis could hear them laughing and giving commands in English in the hedgerows.

L Company had already beaten off its first small counter attack. The Germans moved their automatic fire along the hedgerows from the direction of the beach. This attack was driven off by fire before many of the enemy were seen. But it seemed to be about a platoon omen. They moved from both the left and right rear. Monteith was killed during this attack. Half a dozen others were hit. By this time L Company had been joined by a heavy machine gun section from M Company and a section from K Company.

Another patrol from the fifth section was sent on a reconnaissance toward Cabourf on the right flank. It sent back word by one man that it had followed a defiladed position from which to observe the town. A few minutes later, however, one of the men was wounded. While the two others were attending him, they were captured by a German patrol. They spent the night on Cabourg and came out next night with 52 prisoners. The leading figure in this was Pfc. Lawrence Mielander.

That afternoon L company moved into le Grand Hameau.

ANTI TANK CO., 16th Infantry

14 June 1944

On 6 June the leading elements of the Co. landed with the 2nd and 3rd Bns of the regiment at 0745 on FG and ER beaches in the vicinity of Colleville s Mer, France. Both beaches were under heavy enemy small arms fire and artillery fire. Company headquarters landed on EG beach shortly thereafter and was met with the same type of fire. This group moved a long the beach in an easterly direction for about 600 yards, then moved south and set up the initial CP about 500 yards inland in the vicinity of the regimental CP. While moving literally along the beach two gun squads which had already landed, joined the company headquarters group. In the landing the Company suffered the loss of two 0.25 ton trucks and 0.75 ton truck but were able to salvage the guns by the excellent work of the gun crews. Some casualties were experienced at the time. At about 0845 the element landing with the 2nd Bn, led by Lt. Kunze, made contact with the Company proper. The Co CP dug in for all around defense in order to further its operations. AT approximately 1100 hours the rest of the Cp, guns started to land in the vicinity of Exit No.1, ER beach. The company suffered a later time by the gun crews. At about 1300 hours Lt. Allen joined the company with the residue group and assisted in the all around defense of the CP. Up until this time the word had come from Lt. Campbell and his reconnaissance element with the 3rd Bn of the regiment. At about 1600 hours enemy resistance slackened and the company moved inland about 1 mile and reorganization took place. At about 200 hours S/Sgt Baker and 23 EM of the Mine Platoon landed and joined the company. Snipers were active throughout the night and bombs were dropped on the beach and the regimental area. During all this action the company lost 2 Ems believed killed, one officer and 13 Ems MIA, 4 Ems wounded and evacuated, and 2 officers and 6 Ems wounded and not evacuated. During the period from H-hour to 2400 hours officers and men of this company performed many heroic acts such as salvaging equipment and men from the sea pushing forward in their task as anti-tank men in securing the beach head for the regiment.

-O-

From an account by Capt. Lincoln D. Fish, AT Co., C.O., at the 16th Infantry Headquarters --- 4 July 1944

COPY

IPW Team #24,

MIS ETOUSA

APO #1

27 June 44.

Memorandum: To Adjutant, FID, MIS, ETOUSA.

Dear Major Stremlau,

Greetings from France. I thought you might be interested in the experiences of my team since I last saw you. We are all hale and hearty and got through “D” day OK and hope that the other teams fared the same.

Shortly after my visit to Broadway on 9 May 1944 we received orders to start 1st phase waterproofing, which was completed on 12 May. On 17 My we moved to the marshalling areas where we were allowed short passes until the camps were sealed for the briefing, which started on 27 May. Pvt Valtin joined me on 25 May in Camp and I was able to get him some necessary last minute equipment. When I talked to you on the phone about him my vehicles were already waterproofed and could therefore not come and get him myself, but could not tell you so over the phone but hope you understood anyway. We were loaded in to our crafts starting the last few days in May. For thin operation I had to lend it. Shapiro and M/Sgt Bartal to Division Headquarters to form a provisional interrogation team for the Division Cage, together with Lt. Renberg and M/Sgt Lewkowitz from the 18th Infantry team. The rest of my team and myself remained with the 16th infantry combat team. As I had also to furnish 1 jeep to the team at the division cage, I needed only one driver to take charge of the other vehicle which was loaded on an LCT and was scheduled to land at H plus 220 minutes. This left me with 2 men, S/Sgt Kirchheimer and Pvt Valtin, to go on board the APA 1 (USS Chase), where we had some good American chow for a few days, including nice white bread, etc. The night before “D” day an extra good dinner had been prepared.

We sailed on the evening before “D” day from Portland Harbor and went east for a while along the coast and started turning south when we were approximately opposite the Isle of Wight. It sure was an impressive sight for anyone to look at that invasion fleet. I never realized that there could be that many ships. Besides the numerous APAs, we had what looked like hundreds and hundreds of LCTs and LCIs with us and plenty of naval protection, from countless small craft up to a number of big battle ships. “H” hour was set for 0630 and my team was scheduled to land with Regimental Headquarters at H plus 90 minutes. Breakfast was at 0400 and we were scheduled to go down the nets at H minus 40. Everything went according to schedule till we neared the beach where the enemy resistance proved stronger than had been anticipated. This was mainly due to the fact that units of the German 352nd Infantry Division had moved into our area just a few weeks before we landed and had established a number of strong points unknown to us.

We were supposed to land at and leave the beach via the beach exit at Coleville sur-Mer, but such terrific fire greeted each craft trying to land there, that we were forced to move further west along the beach for a landing which was accomplished 500 yards down the beach, by turning in through a maze of beach obstacles which the demolition engineers had been unable to remove, as the murderous fire from shore had pinned them down on the beach. We got off our landing craft in chest deep water about 150 yards from shore. The concussion of a nearby exploding shell made me lose my balance just as I went down the ramp and I took a complete ducking but got up right away and we all made for shore as fast as we possibly could to take advantage of the cover afforded by the gravel embankment on the beach.

The 16th infantry was the assault regiment of the 1st division, with the 18th and 26th in reserve. The assault battalions of the 16th had of course landed at “H” hour, and the reserve battalion came in at about the same time as we did, but by the time we landed, elements of the assault battalions were still pinned down at the beach, but started working their way inshore. The beach was packed with thousands of troops waiting for exits to be cleared and as “H” hour had been at midtide, the tide was now coming in with a strong surf and narrowed the beach down to a strip only a few feet wide. Just one enemy plane strafing that narrow strip of beach could have killed hundreds of us. But no German planes were seen by us throughout the day, only after dark a few showed up to do some not too effective bombing along the beach near our CP.

A narrow path through some minefields was at least cleared for us and we filed up the rising ground for a few hundred yards up to where a fairly steep bluff offered pretty good cover against low angle fire, and established the Regimental CP and aid station.

In order to keep contact in the terrific confusion at the beach I kept within view of our CO, Col. Taylor, at all times and told my men and also the French interpreter with the 16th, Sgt. Peignat, to keep my in sight all the time, and in this manner we managed to stay together.

Just when I started filling up the path towards the proposed CP, I saw the first batch of prisoners coming down the hill, a sorry looking lot, carrying their own wounded. I stopped them and declared that spot off the path on the hillside the PW enclosure and went to work. The first thing I did was to ask one of the prisoners for his paybook, and I could not believe my eyes when I saw that he was from the 2rd Co, 914th Infantry, 352nd Infantry Division. This regiment and division was supposed to be about 50 miles south from us, and the only thing our O.B. had told us that we would run into at the beach would be the 726th Infantry of the 716th Infantry Division. I checked with several other prisoners, but they were all from the same unit and then sent our discovery up to the S-2 on the hill. I found out that this 352nd Division had their units emplaced in various field fortifications along the coast for a number of weeks already, which accounted partly for the terrific fire we encountered during the initial stages of the landing. I processed about 120 prisoners the first day and around 80 the 2nd day, after that their number fell off considerably during the next few days as our regiment was, on account of its terrible losses, put into Division reserve. Most prisoners I received from now on were mostly deserters or left behinds stirred up out of ditches or other hiding places.

Soon after our first prisoners arrived on “D” day, both our own and also the Shore-Party engineer brigade MPs arrived and we operated jointly throughout “D” day, as there was no room for 2 inclosures, and it worked fine as the whole thing was necessarily very informal anyway. A big part of the time was spent by prisoners and myself hitting the ground when mortar and artillery shells came whistling down. My team got through “D” day without a scratch (how, I don’t know) but I had a prisoner killed and a number of them also some MPs, wounded, even though we did have them in the safest possible spot under the circumstances. I have received a lot of useful information so far. I have had no trouble with any of the prisoners as far as making them talk is concerned.

They all talk freely (have had to shut some of them up for talking too damned much). The officers I had (highest rank Captain), also talked fairly freely when engaged in conversation, but did not respond so well to direct questioning. All were very polite and cooperative, have had none of the so-called “arrogant” type, but will be able to deal with them if we run across any.

I adopt a fairly stern, matter of fact attitude in most of my interrogations and seem to be getting excellent results. Sometimes, if warranted, I fall into a more easy-going conversational tone of voice, which has also got me good results. I have had very few occasions to shout at any of our prisoners.

The first night on shore was one not so soon forgotten. I have never been so cold and miserable in all my life. We were still more or less wet from the landing, and with no shelter or blankets available I shivered most of the night while trying to get a wink of sleep. The cellophane gas cape was used by most of us to keep the wind off a little bit. Our wounded were suffering especially as none were evacuated on “D” day, except what some of the navy picked up in the water, but I had taken all the overcoats of the prisoners and we used them on most of the wounded.

Net day we changed CPs twice and everyday thereafter for about a week, we changed our CP once a day, moving forward a few miles each time. I always move with the CP, leaving, if necessary, one of my men behind, to finish up any business. For the last 2 weeks we have been in the same place now, and I have a good set-up in an orchard that affords good cover, but there is not much to do. I have my CP tent set up and it comes in very handy on account of the frequent rains. Our CP does not favor the use of buildings so I will probably make good use of the tent, if we stay any time at all in one place. My men and myself have all dug slit trenches 4 feet deep, covered them with heavy oak logs, and over them a thick layer of earth, which should give us protection from the shell fire which comes over every night.

My vehicles came through in good shape, both the jeep with me and the one with Division Headquarters. The boys had done a good job of waterproofing on them, and it was a good thing too, as they had to land in 3 feet of water. My jeep was supposed to land at H plus 220 but after 2 unsuccessful attempts due to the heavy fire being brought on the LCT ferrying it, the jeep did not land until the next day and after going through the Vehicle Transit Area, joined me in the afternoon. My trailer was supposed to come in with the Division residue vehicles on D plus 7, and did so and was turned over to me in good shape.

As indicated before, things are slow right now, our regiment still being in reserve, and the whole 1st Division advancing not further until the British on our left and the 2nd Division on our right come up on line with us. The division G-2, Liet. Col. Evans, has me check on the other teams at the 18th and 26th, and at the Division cage once in a while, to see that everything runs smoothly, I being the senior officer, but everything seems alright, except that the qualifications of some of the enlisted personnel leave something to be desired, according to their OICs, but I do not feel that this impairs the efficiency of the teams as a whole too much. The various S-2s concerned seem to be satisfied.

Altogether this operation has proven to me a very interesting experience and has made up somewhat for the months of inactivity behind us. I certainly have been fortunate in my assignment to the 1st Division and especially the 16th Infantry. As a combat unit I think it is tops. The fact that this Division has now made its third landing contributed much to the smooth working and success of this operation, and the quick reorganization after the first confusion at the beach. Ever since I joined the outfit I was aware of everybody knowing his job and going about it in a business-like manner. Never have I seen any of the total confusion and shouting that goes on in some outfits, whenever they start on a new phase of their training or operations. For instance, the S/Sgt in charge of the Regimental MPs is a police sergeant in the States, and he has been in charge of the MP platoon ever since the landing at Oran and Sicily. This naturally made the handling of prisoners work just like clockwork.

I would like to make a few remarks in regard to equipment. I have found the following items very helpful, and feel that they should be issued to all teams going into the field, if at all practicable:

Entrenching tools, with carrier - 1 per individual

Watercan, 5 gallon - 1 per team

Camouflage net, helmet - 1 per individual

Camouflage net, large - 1 per CP tent issued

Tube, tin, map storage - 1 per team

Lantern, Powerlite, Delta - 1 per team

I have found no use for the following:

Radios : All teams in the division have theirs turned in.

Alarm, gas : Alarm can be given by voice for a small unit like a PW team.

Knife, pocket : Men have enough cutting edges already, i.e. messkit knife, trench knife, and knife in TE-33 kit

Desk, field, Hq. : Too bulky, company size field desk seems to be sufficient.

Cabinet, file, 2-drawer : Too bulky to justify any usefulness. Papers can be kept in field desk.

Lantern, gas, Coleman : While this lamp gives an excellent light, does not work on anything but white gas, which is unobtainable. Substitute Delta Powerlite.

One each, rather than two each of the following seems to be more than sufficient:

Map measurer

Alidade

Protractor

The 1-burner gasoline stove has proved invaluable and two per team could easily be used.

I would also like to mention a few administrative matters. First, promotions. I am still working under the assumption that Memo, Hq FID, MIS, dated 7 January 1944, is still in effect, and have been trying twice to get a promotion for Lt. Shapiro, and also for T/5 Schneider and Pvt Valtin. If the provisions of that memo are not in force anymore, especially as far as promotions are concerned, please let me know. I heard something to the effect that promotion recommendations are now supposed to go through administrative channels rather than intelligence channels. Does FID still act on them at all or are the promotions handled by MIS itself? Whatever it is, I would appreciate it if you could do something for Lt. Shapiro My recommendations set forth in my letter of 28 February 1944 still stand good, except that I would not rate him quite as highly on “tact” at this time. However, if there is anything against his promotion, please let me know, and I will drop the whole matter.

In regard to Sgt. John F. Fisher, I would like to make reference to par. 5, SO #127, Hq MIS, 15 May 1944, which directs his relief from this team and places him on DS with FID, directing him to report to its Co. Sgt. Fischer is not able to comply with this order as he was transferred on 13 May 1944, to the Detachment of patients, 67th general hospital, APO #511. Therefore I believe that this order should be either amended or revoked.

If in the near or distant future the need for German Interrogators should ease up somewhat, I would like to be kept in mind for any other assignment where my language qualifications and my past administrative experience in the Army can be used advantageously, preferably something that requires a little more executive ability and a little more exercise of responsibility that my present assignment.

If you would like a more detailed report on any phase of my activities during the past few weeks, I will be glad to send it to you.

Please give my respects to Col. Hochschild and remember me to any of my friends that still be left in Broadway.

Sincerely,

FRED GERCKE

Captain, C. A. C.

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT TEAM 16

Office of the Supply Officer

A.P.P. #1, U.S. ARMY

SUBJECT: Report of Events, S-4 Section, 16th Infantry.

To : S-1, 16th Infantry.

On June, 6 1944 at 0830 hours, five men of the Regimental S-4 section landed on the coast of France in the vicinity of Colleville-Sur-Mer, under the command of Major Leonard C. Godfray. This group, despite continuous shelling and machine gun fire while still in the assault craft, waded ashore where they were pinned down by heavy machine gun fire, located in pill boxes on the beach and surrounding hills.

Major Godfray, while attempting to lead the section across the beach inland, was killed by machine gun fire and staff sergeant Schweitzer was wounded in the head by schrapnel. Second Lt. H. D. Balyeat assumed command and brought the section through the mine fields to a place of comparative safety.

The remainder of the section, under the command of Captain John M. Brooks, landed at 1800 hours from a LCT. The surf at this time was quite high and the men were forced to swim ashore. Sporadic enemy artillery fire was falling on the beach and one man was slightly wounded while crossing the beach to the high ground.

The entire section met at the Regimental CP at 2100 hours and at this time, Major Thomas McKoan assumed the duties of 3-4. The section dug in and spent the night at the Regimental CP, one (1) mile north of Colleville.

The next day, June 7, 1944, was spent by the section, in locating ammunition dumps and replenishing the supply of ammunition to the battalions. The section was split again between Vehicle Transit Area No.3 and Vehicle Transit Area No.4 to assist in locating 16th Infantry vehicles and directing the drivers to their respective units. At 1900 hours, the section moved to Colleville and dug in for the night. Only sporadic sniper fire was heard near CP during the night.

On June 8, S-4, having received enough transportation, proceeded to draw rations and clothing and equipment. Only a limited stock was available at the quartermaster DP, but a large quantity was obtained. Weapons were processed through S-4 to the Ordnance for repair and replacement. The section marched four miles to a new CP, 0.25 mile north of Bellefontaine and the march was completed and men dug in by 2300 hours. Heavy anti-aircraft fire took place around 2400 hours and one enemy plane was observed to go down in flames. The remainder of the night was quiet.

On June 9, the usual 3-4 functions went on during the day and at 1800 hours, the section marched three miles to the new CP, located one mile north en-Bessin. One air raid occurred during the night but no bombs fell area.

June 10 was spent handling rolls of the regiment which had just arrived from the ships. Over 1500 bedding rolls were processed and delivered to the regiment. Additional items of QM equipment were received and issued during the day. The section moved by transport at 1800 hours to a new CP, located ½ miles north of Cottun. The remainder of the night was quiet, except for anti-aircraft fire from the beach.

On June 11, more rolls continued to arrive for the regiment and some weapons and repaired vehicles were returned from the Division Ordnance. To enemy fighter planes flew over the CP at a low altitude at 1130 hours. At 1700 hours, one enemy fighter plane was seen flying low to the north of the CP. At 1900 hours, after reconnaissance by Major McKoan and Lt. Balyeat, a new CP was set up at a farm house one mile west of AGY. The move was completed at 2300 hours.

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From an account by Maj. Thomas P. McKoan, Regimental S-4, 16th Inf., at 16th Inf. – 5 July 1944.

CANNON COMPANY, 16TH INFANTRY

A.P.O. #1, U.S. ARMY

1 June 1944.

SUBJECT: Report of Company activities on Operation “Neptune”.

To : Co, 16th Infantry.

1. On 28 My 1944 the company was divided up into craft loads and ordered to various marshalling camps in Area D. The company was divided as follows:
2. Company Commander and party of five (5) EM to D-4, for loading aboard APA No.1.
3. Two forward observer teams of one (1) officer and two (2) EM each to D-8, for loading aboard APA No.2.
4. Howitzer sections loaded on DUKWS and one (1) each 2.5 ton, two (2) each 0.25 ton 4x4, to D-10 for loading aboard LST 401 (Navy No. LST 376).
5. Half tracks remained at D-1 for loading aboard LCT 65 and 68 (Navy No. LCT 541 and 538).
6. Company 0.25 ton 4x4 trucks to D-4 for loading aboard LCT 76 (Navy No. LCT 621)
7. Company overstrength of one (1) officer and twenty-one (21) EM to D-4 for loading aboard APA No.1.
8. a. On “D” day the two forward observer teams landed on beach, “Easy Red” at Hx50, (ten minutes late). These teams were attached to the 2nd battalion, 16th infantry, with the mission of rendering the close support for the battalion advance to its objective. They were then to join the 1st battalion, 16th Infantry and continue on with the 1st battalion to its objective. As these two forward observer teams were landing, the officer in charge of one team was wounded and an enlisted man, radio operator, of the other team was wounded. The enlisted man was evacuated, the officer continued to lead his men until again wounded and was forced to be evacuated. No equipment was lost on the beach. These two forward observer teams continued to advance with the 2nd battalion until joined by the Cannon Company Commander. They then joined his party and accompanied the 1st battalion advance.

b. On “D: day at Hx100, the Company Commander and party landed on beach, “Easy Red”. This party had the mission of coordinating Cannon Company support of the 1st Battalion. After spending some time on the beach working on the tanks, this party moved inland with the 1st Battalion. No equipment was lost. No casualties.

c. On “D” day at Hx60, the two LCTs carrying the company half tracks attempted to land on beach, “Fox Green”. Both of these LCTs were hit by enemy fire. Machine gun fire killed and wounded a number of men. The LCTs then withdrew from the beach without unloading the half tacks. At about Hx120, one CT returned to the beach and unloaded the company half tracks. Three of the drivers were wounded at this point. The half tracks could not be moved from the beach due to the fact that the beach was littered with tanks and half tracks and that the beach exits were not open. At about Hx360, the other LCT returned to the beach and unloaded the remaining company half tracks. Three men were wounded at this time. A total of four (4) half tracks were destroyed on the beach due to enemy shell fire. The remaining half tracks were driven to a vehicle assembly area when the beach exits were opened later in the day.

d. At about H-3 hours, the six howitzer sections loaded on Dukws aboard LST 376 were driven into the ocean approximately twelve miles out from the beach. As the Duwks were driven down the ramps of the LST, they were filled with water because of the steep angle of the unloading ramp. Every effort was made to bail out the Dukws as they were driven toward the rendezvous area. En route to the area the motors of two of the Dukws stopped. Other Dukws of the Company took these stalled Dukws into tow and continued on. Later, the heavy load of towing two loaded Dukws cause the towing vehicles to stall also. The two ropes were then cast off and furious efforts made to again start the motors. Success was gained with two of the Dukws and these continued on. The stalled vehicles sunk under the heavy seas. Most of the men from the Dukws were rescued by Navy small boats. Of the four (4) remaining Dukws, one (1) sank enroute for help for the men in the water from the sunken Dukws. Most of these men were also picked up by Navy small boats. One sinking Dukw reached a Rhine Ferry and was unloaded. The two (2) remaining Dukws reached the rendezvous area and proceeded toward the beach. Due to heavy seas these Dukws one by one flooded and sank along the route, despite efforts to lighten the loads and continuous bailing. The men were rescued by Navy small boats. Twenty four (24) men are still missing from these Dukws. The remaining men were assembled on an LST and brought to the beach at 1300 hours, Dx1. The company executive officer had the one remaining howitzer towed to an assembly area, organized a salvage detail, fitted his men with helmets and rifles and proceeded inland with the regiment. The entire group joined the 1st battalion on Dx1, was formed into a rifle company and attached to the 1st battalion. The 2.5 ton ammunition truck and the two (2) 0.25 ton trucks were unloaded on the beach late on Dx1 and joined the company at the 1st battalion CP. Loss of equipment: x (6) 105 mm howitzer ammunition, three (3) each 50 cal. Mg. complete, three (3) each SCR 300 radio, all fire control equipment.

e. The company 0.25 ton trucks were unloaded on beach “Easy Red” at Hx480 without serious mishap.

f. The company overstrength landed on beach, “Easy Red” late on D day, No casualties were suffered by this group. The one (1) officer and twenty one (21) men joined the company at the 1st battalion CP.

1. The company was unable to function as a Cannon Company and was formed into a rifle company attached to the 1st Bn. The company losses in personnel were: One (1) officer and nine (9) enlisted men known wounded and evacuated. Twenty-four (24) enlisted men missing, three (3) of these have returned to the company. The company losses in equipment were: Five (5) 105 mm howitzers, M-3, 360 rounds 105 mm howitzer shell, three (3) each SCR radios, complete, three (3) MG, complete, all fire control instruments of the company. The personnel equipment of eight (8) men and one (1) officer, rifle, belts, field glasses and watches. The company was able to continue as a rifle company by salvaging necessary items on the beach.

THOMAS F. O’BRIEN

Captain, 16th Infantry,

Commanding.

CO. A 1st MEDICAL BATTALION

REPORT

A report of the initial landing of U.S.C.G. LCT 85 with 90 members of the first medical battalion, Company A, 6 June 1944.

On the morning of June 6, 1944 the assault landing craft of which Company A, 1st Medical Battalion, was aboard approached the beach at the appointed hour. Eighty six men and four officers of Company A were aboard. At 8:30 AM our craft, LCI 85, headed in for the shore with no enemy position encountered so far. As the boat slid in over the pilings that stuck up there in front of us one could see soldiers lined up all along the rocky beach ahead of us. Suddenly we came to a stop and at that instant we could hear gunfire and then the report of shell fire. The men in charge at the front of the boat were then determining whether it was too deep to let down the ramps and at this time the first cries of the wounded from up front could be heard and we who were on the port side of the boat knew that we were the target for all the firing we heard around us. The skipper of the craft, Mr. Henley, then decided that a landing couldn’t be affected and so he backed the craft off the pilings and pulled out about a hundred yards for another try. At this time the report of fire was heard and smoke could be seen pouring out from out of the doorways just forward of our position. As the craft went underway again for another try at the beach Captain Relston was seen standing in the doorway leading from then smoking number three hold directing the men out of the sure death down below to a position along the port side of the boat. This he did while we were still under enemy fire. About fifteen minutes had elapsed between the time we backed off the beach and headed in for another try at the shore. It was also violent at this time that we had suffered a hit below the water line due to a list to the starboard side of the ship. The second attempt at the beach was more successful as far as getting the ship in close enough to disembark and one of the boat members we later learned jumped in with a life line and managed to get to shore via this line but the enemy was throwing all his fire at us and soon he shot away the landing ramp and at the same time injuring and killing others who were crowded forward and trying to get off the ship. Fire now broke out in the two forward holds and the craft began to have a more pronounced list to the starboard. The craft was then backed away from the shore after the skipper had evidently decided that no more landings could be made and also in view of the seriously damaged ship. All during this shelling the Medical personnel was giving what aid they could to the injured board the ship. I later learned that Captain Hahn had gone then into one of the holds that was on fire and had given plasma to one of the injured. Captain Apanasewicz was giving aid to two seriously wounded men who were injured on the starboard side of the ship which was then getting to be a dangerous place to be in. Captain Ralston was then seen giving plasma to men who had been shot and disfigured while standing amidships waiting their turn to get off. It was then between 0930 and 1000 and the ship had made two attempts to land on shore, several men succeeding in getting ashore but others were cut down where they stood and others, still able to function, were doing all they could for the injured. Fire was still raging in the holds and the ship continued to list. At this point a small landing boat came alongside and about 30 men from the rear of the boat went aboard with Lt. Cox. None of the Co A personnel went aboard this craft. Enlisted personnel who were seen doing meritorious service all during this action were:

Ginnetti, later missing, Sergeant Klein, later wounded, Sergeant Dumphey who did outstanding service, later wounded, and private Hopper who gave Captain Ralston yeomans service in keeping account of all our wounded and keeping the company together. It was now about ten-thirty and I was then near the control tower and learned that the skipper had decided to go out to the USS Chase and transfer our dead and wounded. When we reached the Chase, sometime after eleven, our decided list to starboard made it difficult and perilous to transfer our wounded and dead but this was accomplished by the hard and fast work of all the army officers and Lt. (JG) Kincald MC, who had already done meritorious service while we were making the previous landings.

The roughness of the sea, the dense smoke along the beach and some mist at sea all contributed to “E” coming in at the wrong place and becoming dispersed over a wide area. (1/Sgt Lawrence J. Fitzsimmons, T/Sgt Joseph A. Toth and T/Sgt Calvin L. Ellis). The men noted that the Navy crew seemed green and that when fired upon, they would not get to their guns. When at last ordered to get to the guns, they fired wildly and would not expose themselves. In Ellis’ boat, the coxswain didn’t know where to go and asked Ellis: “What is the objective?” Ellis pointed it out to him and then noted he was moving too far right. He said: “Bear left!” He then told the coxswain he was bearing too far left, but the man kept on the same course.

The Co boats began stringing out, and finally lost one another. All were supposed to guide on the CP boat, but that boat too was bearing far left and the others realized it. (Fitzsimmons). The men kept yelling at coxswain: “You’re going left.” He ignored them and kept on the same course. The CP boat landed far left—near 16-3’s sector. The only boats the CP men could then see were No 2 and 3, which were a little to their right. (Fitzsimmons). Ellis saw one other CO boat come in about 300 yards from him; that was all. Perhaps 800 yards separated the two flanks.

In all of the boats the in-passage was not too costly but when the ramps were dropped, automatic fire caught the open ends dead on. Some of them were caught in crossing bands of fire. The CP boat took its heaviest losses at that moment and only 12 of 36 men got to the beach. The rest got it in the water, as they waded in from a sandbar, or were hit as they returned to drag in the wounded.

Section no 1, however, didn’t lose a man in the water: the fire against the section was small in volume and erratic. (T/Sgt Phillip Streczyk).

Toth’s 2nd section was dropped in water over its head, the coxswain having started shying off as he drew into the beach. More than half of the men came in swimming; some, it was believed, were carried down the weight of their equipment. (Toth)

All told, “E” lost 105 men during the day, and only 1 of these was lost during the movement inland. Most of the others were lost in the water: many of the wounded crawled to the edge of the sand, fell exhausted and were there caught by the tide. In trying to pull these men in, the able-bodied were caught by enemy fire and some of these wounded also died from drowning. The Medical Detachment, coming in on the 4th wave, took enough casualties that its own wounded monopolized its attention. (Lt Thad A. Shaw, Ellis). On the beach, the men of “E” noted only other infantry men. The wire and obstacles had not been touched. A few minutes later, the men of “E” saw the first engineers arrive and set to work.

Stretching ahead of the Co were 300 yards of sand, and then a steep hill. The men among them knew that they had to move, but even they felt their seasoned strength and will fading. The fire wa hot; their lads were heavy. Their natural inclination was to stay there. (Fitzsimmons and Ellis.) They went on a few feet and then flopped again. The tide came racing in behind them and pushed them on. Fitzsimmons saw two of his men ---Pvts Spencer and Walch--- take a few strides, flop down and then be blown bodily into the air by mines buried on the beach. Both were killed.

It took one hour to get the survivors across the sand and to the foot of the hill. They went frd one at a time, figuring that they would be less of a target this way. German riflemen were firing at them from the brow of the hill and they were getting automatic fire from both flans along the beach. Ellis saw four enemy riflemen fire at his men from atop the hill and then move along it in silhouette. He tried to get some fire on them but discovered that every weapon in his section was out of action. The riflemen disappeared suddenly as if the ground had swallowed them and he figured that they had dropped into an emplacement.

Some of the men froze on the beach, wretched with seasickness and fear, refusing to move. Most of the survivors toiled painfully to the foot of the hill where the enemy might well have found and destroyed them, since they had no fire power. (Fitzsimmons)

Streczyk’s section—which was to contribute one of the most intrepid actions of the entire day—came in exactly where “F” was supposed to land. (See overlay: the place of landing was identified by Streczyk’s surviving members and by Streczyk during the interview.) Streczyk got 32 m3n onto the sands, took 12 casualties mostly from bullet fire in getting across the beach, and continued onward immediately with 20 men. The German SP—covering EXIT 3 on the eastern side--- when the debouchement took place was to the party’s immediate right, and from this, they were drawing most of the fire. Dad ahead of them was a small ravine and their approach was direct toward it. This put them a little to the left of the first line of emplacements serving as an outwork for the SP. A communications trench led back from the emplacements. The party moved rapidly up the draw, then went right and slightly up hill in such way that they emerged on the rear of the outwork before the enemy had noted the movement. (Steczyk) The 14 Germans inside the work were caught flat-footed. The party attacked them with grenades and bazookas and they made a futile attempt to reply with grenades: several were killed, two were captured and the others got away to the SP.

The party then attacked the SP from the rear, and had its reward exit covered before a shot was fired. From the cover of an outer trench, they engaged it with grenades. The enemy fire gradually fell off as the occupants went to cover, but there was no sign of a surrender. For 4.5 hours, Streczyk’s men stayed there, keeping this point neutralized and thereby greatly assisting the movement of “G” and of other units across the beach. Yet they did not feel strong enough to assault it directly and under the conditions in which the men were employed, the Streczyk party was wholly scattered with each man fighting his own battle and doing what he could to harass the enemy. In this time they took 21 prisoners and left an equal number of German dead behind without, themselves losing one man. They had kept under cover in the outworks, worked in small groups through the trenches and gradually reduced the enemy strength so that the SP was not capable of any strong action. It had become “contained.”

Steczyk’s men had blown the wire confronting the ravine just after landing. There was thus a convenient avenue for the advance of other troops. Fitzsimmons, who had landed well over to the left, came up shortly after 1100 and learned about the breach. The Co Commander, Capt Edward F. Wozenski, then decided to move laterally along the beach toward Streczyk and he and Fitzsimmons set to work wounding up the men. They could get only about 1.5 squads together. Wozenski then tried to get smoke laid on the beach to cover the movement to the right but this was unavailing. The party then moved on along the beach.

1st section had already quit the ground around the German SP and gone on inland when Wozenski’s group came to the route which they ahd taken up the hill. At the rear of the German SP, they ran into scattered enemy riflemen and some machine gun fire but the enemy resistance here was now disorganized.

They went on. About 1200, Wozenski halted his party about 1000 yards S of Exit 3. He sent Fitzsimmons back to the beach to look for more of the Co. Fitzsimmons met Toth and 7 men coming through the mine field. Other small groups were met and collected farther back. The Wozenski group had caught up with the Streczyk party in the interimand and with the fresh men brought in by Fitzsimmons, the Co numbered 60 men. They organized in two platoons and continued to sweep toward Colleville where they went into position on the right of “G”. They had encountered some sniper fire on the way and had taken a few casualties but most of their trouble had come on the beach.

Ellis and 20 men were up with Stine and Krukas’ section from “G” in the advanced ground, and had in fact been the first men to reach this position. They stayed there 4 hours, getting rifle fire from their rear and being unable to return it lest they fire into the G-E positions. After that, they returned to Bn CP and rejoined the Co.

Lt Shaw was in a party that arrived 2 hours later than the main body. The boat was hit by 3 artillery shells when 400 yards from shore. Three men were killed and 12 wounded; the engine was destroyed. The boat began to drift. There was a tank in the LCT. As the boat drifted, the tanker trained his 75 on the German artillery piece which had put them under fire; he had the good luck to demolish it on the first round. For 2 hours the boat drifted and finally grounded on the rocks, near the beach. Shaw had the ramp lowered. He hit the water with two other men, and one was immediately felled by machine gun fire. Shaw then ordered the men to unload on the other side of the boat and they waded on in ---21 from and miscellaneous elements--- 66 men all told. The fire on Bn 2 beach was still heavy. So they found a section of scaling ladder and went on up the cliff---the 6 men using one 5—foot section of ladder as it was needed. They found German mines all along the ledges, but were able to avoid them.

Streczyk said that after getting to the top of the hill, his party moved west, not east, and that in so doing, they crossed the route by which Dawson and his men had moved inland from the beach. He was positive that the party had moved to the right after reducing the SP. The other men agreed that this was the line taken by the small parties which came up on Streczyk’s rear. Fitzsimmons said that the groups which came up later and took the same route were not seriously checked by fire on the beach nor in their journey up the hill.

Co. “E” 16th Infantry

The following is a chronological listing of events, actions and circumstances surrounding the landing of Co “E”, 16th Infantry in the assault wave on Beach “Omaha”. Easy Red – North of Colleville-Sur-Mer, France on 6 June 1944.

Aboard the U.S.S. Henrico – APA #2 – Reveille was sounded at 01:00 hours 6 June 1944. Quarters were policed and equipment collected and adjusted for debarkation.

Details from the company reported to the ship gallery for breakfast which consisted of black coffee and one sandwich per man not a vey appetising mess.

At 03:30 hours CO “E” was called to debarkation stations.

At 04:15 hours the assault wave Co’s “E” and “F” were lowered into the sea which was very rough for the small assault craft.

There was considerable milling about, shouting and juggling for positions on the part of the assault craft until they were in proper order for Rendezvouing.

The order to lower away was delayed for some reason and the assault craft were considerably knocked about by banking into the mother ship as she rolled in the heavy sea.

Once in the rendezvous area, as in so many of our prior exercises, there was the usual racing around for well over one hour during which every man was completely soaked and many sickened.

With “H” hour at 06:30 apprehension increased as we continued to rendezvous after 06:00 hours.

At approximately 06:00 hours heavy naval support weapons opened up with their fire display followed by flashes from the distant low shore where the shells were landing.

A few enemy planes floated over the massed invasion forces dropping their long burning flares.

Anxious eyes scanned the dawn, lightened skies, searching for the hundreds of promised bombers-especially any headed for “Easy Red” our beach. Dam few were seen and there many high flying fighters.

Now we were headed in for shore-pounding in the rough sea.

Out to our front we could see the LCT’s “Rocket” moving up to firing position. Guide craft and tank ships were out font as well as small support boats.

About a mile off shore we began to pass a few, and then more and more men possing about in the water in life belts and small rubber raft- at first we thought that these men were shot down airmen but soon realized that they must be tank men from tanks that had sunk.

We knew our time table was off when, as we were still 10:15 minutes off shore, the rocket ships opened up with their thousands of rockets. It certainly was an impressive and cheering sight. Unfortunately, as was later seen, it was morals effect only what was achieved by our rocket ships for we saw no material effects of their landing apparently most had fallen into the water.

COMPANY “k” 16TH INFANTRY

A.P.O. #1, U.S. Army

June 22, 1944

SUBJECT : “K” CO., activities on “D” Day.

TO : Commanding Officer, 16th Infantry, A.P.O. #1, U.S. Army

“D” DAY, JUNE 6th, 1944

“K” Co., debarked from HMS EMPIRE ANVIL, 0325, 6 June 1944.

Absolutely nothing was seen at the assault landing craft from the 116th Inf. to our right – we didn’t know whether they had already landed or were still out of sight behind us.

Nearing the shore, to a point where it was possible to easily recognize landmarks, it became obvious that the company was being landed approximately 1000 yards left of the scheduled landing point.

How anyone who had been briefed could make such an error, will never know, for the lone house which so prominently marked Exit #E3 was in flames, and clearly showed its distinctive outline.

Small are and AT fire opened up on us as we were still 500-600 yards off shore.

When told to fire back, from our LCVP, with the MG’s mounted astern. The naval man on one gun fired a burst straight up into the performance if I ever saw one. No one would man the second gun.

MG fire was rattling against the ramp as the boat grounded. For some reason the ramp was not latched during any part of our trip, but the ramp would not go down. Four or five men battered at the ramp until it fell and the men with it.

The boats were hurriedly emptied – the men jumping into water shoulder high. Under intense MG & AT fire. No sooner was the last man out than the boat received two direct hits from an AT gun, and was believed to have burned and blown up.

Now, all the men in the company could be seen wading ashore into the field of intense fire from the MG’s, rifles, AT guns and mortars. Due to the heavy sea, the strong cross current and the lads that the men were carrying, no one could run. It was just a slow methodical march with absolutely no cover up to the enemy’s commanding positions. Many fell left and right and the water reddened with their blood. A few men hit under water mines of some sort, and were blown off the sea. The others staggered on to the obstacle covered, yet completely exposed beach. Here men, in sheer exhaustion, hit the beach only to rise and move forward thru a tide runlet that threatened to sweep them of their feet. Men were falling on all sides but the survivors still moved forward and eventually worked to a pile of shell at the high water mark. This offered momentary protection against the murderous fire of close-in enemy guns but his mortars wee still raising hell.

A firing line was built up along this pile of shell and the enemy guns were brought under small arms fire unfortunately most of our guns were jammed with sand but every arm was brought to bear on the enemy. Men armed with pistols alone were firing back at machine guns in an effort to cover the company’s men still struggling ashore. Other men displaying the best in courage and devotion to duty striped and cleaned their weapons while under heavy fire.

Though enemy machine guns and snipers would mercilessly mow down, anyone attempting to go back to the water and drag their wounded comrades to the lee of the shell many men dropped back to do it and a few succeeded despite the point blank enemy fire.

An attempt was made to reorganize the scattered remnants of the company for an attack on the enemy’s strong point to our frontal. Only two men who could be found and most of their weapons were jammed. All radio communication was gone. An attempt was made to set smoke for cover but without avail. Finally in an effort to reorganize in some strength a lateral movement along the exposed beach was started. Men were picked up at scattered intervals and were being led to our originally scheduled landing.

Approaching this point it was seen that the first platoon of Company E had broken through just east of Exit E-1. There Lt. Spaulding, with his passion made the initial brake through from the beach and the entire beach Easy Red was attempting to clear inland by his route despite the fact that it was being swept by machine gun, artillery, mortar, and AT fire. Mines were thickly sown throughout the area but the company heedless of this danger realized the necessity of a breakthrough and plunged boldly through to attack and silence the machine guns covering the sector.

Working their way to the top of the high ground overlooking the beach the first platoon under covering fire of a platoon from “G” Co 16th Inf worked west where pill box by pill box it reduced the strong point guarding the East side of “E-1” extremely stubborn resistance was encountered in this point with its maze of underground shelters, trenches and dugouts. There was a close exchange of grenades, small arms fire until the platoon had cornered about twenty men and an officer. Again there was a fierce exchange of grenades in the confined trenches until the enemy was overpowered and surrendered.

Having cleaned this strong point the remnants of the Co without communication of any kind pushed on towards its objective.

Reaching a point approximately 1000 yards south of “E-1” the Co was held up and partially reorganized. A rough check showed that well over 100 men out of the 183 landed were killed, wounded or missing.

Patrols were sent into newly discovered strong points to the front until the first battalion took over the job of reducing it.

Orders came from battalion headquarters by runners to move east. The Co moved east then south along the road to the town. Snipers were extremely accurate all throughout but the CO moved towards its destination. Heavy accurate artillery fire registered on the Co for a few minutes but no casualties were suffered.

The battalion commander ordered the Co, then about fifty strong, to sweep the woods and fields west of the Colleville road and proceed to the Colleville – St. Laurent road. The Co swept forward without serious opposition but the small headquarters group following the deployed company was repeatedly pinned down by machine gun and sniper fire, It became apparent that the enemy was not firing on large groups but was concentrating on small ones.

The enemy ha previously prepared fox-holes, trenches, and deadly fields of fire through this area and was difficult to locate and drive of.

G Company 2nd Battalion 16th Infantry had in the meantime moved up to Colleville-Sur-Mer and occupied the west half of the town in a bitter struggle. E Company with an attachment of one section of each company’s machine guns was given the mission of building up the battalion line by going into cover G Co’s right flank which was exposed to numerous enemy machine guns and enemy machine pistol men. Two skeleton sections of E Company moved on under Lt Robert A. Huch to take positions on the right of G Co. The situation at the time was extremely touch and go with enemy in front among and behind the company. Still the Lt. Huch led his men into this rather desperate situation where by setting himself up and holding his ground he eased the dangerous pressure of G Co’s right and eventually established a Bat’n line. This was to be held until a reorganization could be effected the next day. We were completely surrounded many times with no supporting troops nearby without communication the Co held its ground throughout the night and by morning had sufficiently reorganized both its personnel and ground to repel enemy thrusts and ensure the success of the beach head in its particular sector.

This is from an account by Capt. Edward F. Wozenski, Commanding “E” Co. 16th Inf. in the Invasion

The Story of Company F, 16th Infantry, on D Day

The entire company was in the assault wave. It was contained in six boats entitled headquarters detachment, and the one thru fifth assault section boats. During the approach the boats were to advance in a column of boats, later to deploy in a regular company front some hundred yards apart. All boats were to touch the shore at the same instant.

No fire was encountered from embarkation in the assault boats until two hundred yards from shore. The fire at this point was entirely small arms fire and did no damage to any section. The headquarters detachment boat contained the company command, Captain John G. W. Finke, the company executive officer, Lt Howard Pearre, the first sergeant, SGt Thaddeus A. Lombarski and twenty seven others. Captain Finke stood at the front of the boat to guide the naval personnel to the proper beach. The coxswain was bearing too far to the left and the captain insisted that a change be made to the right. By the time that the change in direction was made, it was too late to hit the proper spot. The boat beached 200 yards to the left of its objective.

In the first assault section boat the army leader was Lt Aaron E. Dennstedt, his assistant, Staff Sgt Andrew Nesevitch. Sgt Nessevitch felt that the Navy did its best to hit the proper beach but by the time it was identified the ground swell was so large that a change of direction was dangerous. It was better to get out wherever you were. Navy men in the boat fired their machine guns all the way in to the beach. This boat beached 200 yards to the right of its objective.

Lt Bernard J. Rush was in charge of the second assault section, his assistant was T/Sgt George B. Hammond. Due to the mist it was very difficult to see the beach. Lt Rush was near the ramp and insisted that the boat bear to the right. Sgt Hammond stood near the coxswain and relayed the information but the coxswain refused to follow these directions until too late. The landing was 800 yards to the left of the proper spot. The ramp stuck momentarily before it opened.

The third section boat was commanded by Lt Gilbert H. Rollins. It landed a good deal right of its target and was near the boat of the headquarters detachment.

The fourth section was commanded by Lt Glendon S. Siefert, his assistant, T/Sgt Farya Williams. This section followed closely behind the third section, but was forced to halt as an LST broke through the formation. Later this section did catch up and headed for its proper landing point. The coxswain believed himself to be on the wrong course but Lt Siefert thought it to be correct. A hundred yards from shore the coxswain turned the boat around, returned 300 yards, then came back to the beach about 1100 yards to the left of the proper position. The landing was thus at least twenty minutes late, although the other sections were all about ten minutes late also. The navy crew fired their machine guns during the final run, but the fire was extremely inaccurate.

The fifth section was commanded by Lt Otto W. Clemens, his assistant, T/Sgt Raymond F. Strojny. As this boat was approaching the shore it seemed to be bearing too far to the right. An artillery shell landed to the right of the boat. The coxswain swung left because of this burst but a shell then lit to the left of the boat. Lt Clemens said, “Take her in. Let’s get the hell off this ship.” Moving toward the shore the boat received enemy machine gun continued to fire, but the ramp could not be opened. When the ramp did get down the machine gunner was out of ammunition or changing his barrel. Most of the men got off the boat in good shape before the gun again opened up.

In the headquarters section the ramp was slow in lowering. The men hit the water with only rifle around them. Before all reached the water edge, however mortar shells started landing in the water. Several of the men were killed including Lt Pearre. The enemy machine guns raked the waters edge and all the men hit the dirt in a fully exposed position. Capt Finke yelled to the men to move forward and in little groups they advanced to the high water line. Here they had a small amount of defilade. The light machine guns set up at the waters edge to fire at a pill box. An enemy machine gun soon opened fire on this exposed group killing the machine gun leader, S/Sgt William A. Miller, and two squad leaders, Sgts. Robert Price and Rodney Chase. The two gunners were wounded.

By the time the group reached the high water mark, only 17 of the original 30 men were present. Of these seven wounded and the section leader knew that nine of the absent had definitely been killed.

The first assault boat hit an obstacle about 50 yards from shore. This caused the boat to swing and almost flounder. The boat captain tried to get free but could not. Fire was hitting in front of the boat so everyone yelled to lower the ramp. The ramp lowered quickly and the men jumped into neck deep water. Some were hit right on the ramp, some in the water. On reaching the beach Lt Dennstedt turned and yelled to the men to keep moving. At this moment he was killed by enemy machine gun fire. The high water mark was 75 yards away. Of the 30 men and 1 officer leaving the boat, only 14 men reached this cover. Sgt Nesevitch looked back at the beach to see if anyone still moved. Mortar shells were landing at the waters edge by this time.

The second assault boat beached about twenty of thirty yards from the land. The water was so shallow that the men could move quickly. Between the boat and shore there was small arms fire but no one seemed to go down in the water. On the beach the BAR men fanned to the right and left, firing right from the edge of the water. The men generally started running across the beach. At this point it is about a hundred yards to the high water line. Both BAR gunners were hit almost immediately. The man on the right Pfc George Bert, lost his right leg from a shell fragment, despite this he pulled himself a hundred yards to the cover. He died several hours later as the proper aid could not be given to him. Next the mortar squad leader, Sgt Joseph Zukowski, his gunner, Pfc Rueben Schatz, and the two ammunition bearers, Pvts Goza Fazekas and P.L. Wells were killed on the beach. Sgt Zukowski’s last act was to pass the mortar sight to Sgt Hammond. Hammond tried to recover the mortar but found it to be ruined so he threw all of his equipment away. The first aid man, Pvt Edward Morozewicz, was killed on the beach while trying to aid a man. About twenty men reached the cover, about half of these were wounded. Those who fell near the water could not be brought forward. Some of these kept moving just ahead of the incoming tide. Many became overcome by the cold water and were carried out by it.

The third section landed near the headquarters section. The water was more than six feet deep. There was small arms fire and mortars causing several casualties in the water. On reaching the beach the men dropped, many of them being mixed with the headquarters section. On Capt Finke’s urging the men moved forward. About twenty reached the cover, half of them wounded.

The fourth section jumped into breast deep water. Small arms and mortar fire fell all around but the men cleared the water well. Between the waters edge and the cover, three men and Lt Siefert were wounded. All of them reached the cover, but Siefert died soon afterward.

The fifth section entered waist deep water which extended about fifty yards. While in the water they were subjected to machine gun and rifle fire so that many were wounded. By helping one another most of them got out of the water. Practically all the men dropped on the beach on reaching it. Soon they were urged on by platoon Sgt Coleman F. Steirer and they reached the defilade. The fire was intense but as the group moved forward everyone kept yelling, “Keep moving, keep moving.” Lt Clemens waved the men and was killed at the edge of the beach. Only seven men reached the ledge, one of these was wounded. A few others crawled along very slowly just ahead of the tide. The aid man, Pvt Horris T. Levine, made several trips out to the beach to help forward those who could not move. He was seriously wounded before he began this work, but kept at it until he had done all he could. For this section he was awarded the Silver Star.

By the time that each section had reached the beach and the cover of the high water mark, only two of the officers were capable of command. All units were badly scattered.

The first section made a cut through the wire. This was done by Sgt David N. Radford after the section had been on the beach about fifteen minutes. Radford found the wire to be double apron type and his bangalore torpedo was not long enough to blow a path. He returned from the wire to the beach, ran to wounded man to secure another bangalore, returned to his exposed position at the wire, fastened the torpedoes, and successfully blew a path through the wire. He was exposed during every motion of this operation and was later awarded the DSC.

Beyond the wire was a grassy field, the grass about two feet high. The BAR man, Pvt Homer Richards, covered the men as they crawled forward. After wire was a field of personnel mines. In leading his unit through the minefield, T/Sgt Edward I. Zukowski, brother of Sgt Joseph Zukowski, was severely wounded by a mine. Sgt Nesevitch took charge of the platoon and headed on a right oblique through the minefield. The mines extended about fifty yards. On reaching the bottom of the hill the unit met the battalion executive officer, Major George Washington, who ordered the unit to go to the top of the hill. Here they were to build up a line of fire. The hill was steep incline for about two hundred feet. The men pulled themselves up by grabbing shrubbery, firing occasionally. Forty five minutes elapsed between the blowing of the wire and the arrival at the top of the hill. The Germans had elaborate fox holes and trenches, beautifully constructed and well camouflaged. The enemy ran without putting up a fight.

Sgt Nesevitch established a line of fire with fourteen men. At this position there was a good deal of sniper fire. Here Pvt Richards was killed. The men fired at three or four machine gun positions with rifle grenades and forced many of the Germans back.

The thirteen men then moved inland at a right oblique for about a mile. Just outside Colleville-Sur-Mer the group met G Company under Captain Dawson. Captain Dawson put Nesevitch to guarding road blocks.

Nesevitch says the majority of the Germans in the town were drunk. He also said that G Company was hit by our own heavy naval fire. The naval control party was approached by Nesevitch but they did not seem to know just their fire was landing. Nesevitch suggested that they move their fire to the town where it would do some good, but the party merely had the fire cease.

The headquarters detachment and third section landed directly in front of an enemy strong point. There were several emplacements and pill boxes about two hundred yards away. The entire unit was pinned down until just before noon. About six men were wounded by sniper fire at this position. Capt Finke sent a runner about 0800 to the right (?) to try to contact battalion. The runner returned about 1000 with an order for Capt Finke to move all second battalion men to the right to join the battalion. Finke turned the unit over to 1st Sgt Lombarski with directions to move a half an hour later. The move did not take place until well after 1100. After receiving orders, Lombarski notified everyone possible to prepare to move. Not more than twenty men of the two sections were able to do so. About this time Sgt Lombarski saw three tanks move from the left flank along the high water line. They were fully exposed but did not seem to fire at anything.

About 600 yards to the right (?) the party came to a break through position. This was possibly e Company’s. There were many people from the first Division moving through and men of the 116th Infantry, 29th Division were milling around on the beach. Artillery fire prepared the break through area. There was no small arms fire here, the mines were taped off, and the men walked upright 150-200 yards to the top of the hill.

At the top of the hill the party met Capt Finke and also saw the Regimental CP. Lombarski then had only ten men and sent a runner back to try and find the stragglers and any other F Company men he could. The Sgt thinks the ten who didn’t arrive had been unable to stand the pace. Lt Rollins and Sgt Edward Plona met the ten stragglers and came ahead. Both Plona and Rollins were wounded while moving forward toward the break through position.

Capt Finke moved the ten men near Colleville-Sur-Mer to the battalion rear CP. Lombarski and the ten men provided left flank protection for the CP including a three man outpost. While placing the outpost an enemy machine gun opened fire on Lombarski. Capt Finke took a patrol to flank this gun, but a mortar round landed nearby wounding Finke and two men. Mortar fire forced the battalion CP to move back. By late evening enough men joined the group so that Lombarski had twenty men.

While on the beach Lombarski saw a British destroyer come within four hundred yards of shore and directed close in fire on the beach. The strong point in front of Lombarski’s landing position was not wiped out until D+1. For leadership and gallentry in action, Lombarsi received a cluster to his Silver Star.

The second section continued to receive mortar and artillery fire while on the beach. About 0900 the enemy fire slackened and Sgt Hammond noticed that men were going up the hill 600 yards to his left. Four men and Hammond moved toward this area, their number increased to about eight by the time the break through area was reached.

At the break through there were a good number of people. The third battalion CP was dug in on the beach. Hammond reported to Capt Edmonds who told him to stand fast. Hammond remained with the third battalion for the remainder of the day. He did not move up the hill until late that afternoon.

In the fourth section, just after Lt. Siefert died, Sgt Williams and his BAR man, Pvt Walter Pielock, engaged an enemy machine gun nest. Pielock was wounded. At this time a DD tank arrived and knocked out several machine guns. About the same time the British destroyer arrived and through its fire enabled the third battalion to reach the crest of the hill. Williams section was mixed with the third battalion and soon joined L Company.

By the time the fourth section reached the crest of the hill Sgt Kasmir J. Pisl was in charge of the section. He saw two German 75 mm guns, a 47 mm gun, two mortar positions, and many machine gun positions. All of these were very elaborate positions. The mortar positions had hand painted panoramic sketches (360 degrees) with the targets indicated on them. Our mortar fire and naval fire caused the Germans to leave. They did not fire at the party going up the hill. S/Sgt Lewis Van Hoogstraten led all of the units up the hill. For this he was decorated with the Silver Star.

The fifth section received a lot of machine gun fire on the beach area. Sgt Strojny found a better position so he called his men to it. There he built a line of fire. Soon he saw two enemy machine gun positioned and directed all the fire to these. Both guns ceased to fire. Then Strojny saw a pill box about a hundred yards away which was firing a 75mm gun toward the tanks on the beach. He fired his rifle at the pill box then called for a bazooka. None of his men had one, but a sergeant from the 116th infantry appeared with one. Strojny told the sergeant to fire at the gun. The sergeant said he did not have anyone to load. Strojny loaded the first round which went way wide. A second was loaded but it was too short. At this time a mortar round landed in the five yards between the two men, severely wounding the sergeant. Strojny was not wounded so he took up the bazooka but it was pierced through the tube by shell fragments. The enemy gun continued firing which made Stojny mad. He decided to try the bazooka but it was pierced through the the by shell fragments. The enemy gun continued firing which made Stojny mad. He decided to try the bazooka anyway, so loaded a round and fired. The first two rounds missed, the next two were direct hits. Nevertheless the gun continued to fire. Strojny yelled for more ammunition but there was none. He then went down the beach and returned with six rounds he found. He fired all six from the same position, all rounds hitting the target—the last one causing the ammunition to explode. A number of dead were observed and only one German was seen to explode. A number of dead were observed and only one German was seen to escape. Strojny fired at the German with an M1 but was wounded by a sniper. The bullet entered his helmet over his left eye, going through the helmet and leaving a large hole in the rear of it. Despite this, Strojny was only superficially wounded. For this action Strojny was awarded the DSC.

Seeing the pill box in flames, Strojny urged his men forward. He got up but no one followed. He did see a good spot to the left so he urged his men to it. His men followed him but the men from the 116th Infantry, who were nearby, did not. Sgt Strojny had his men pick up two BARs the 116th had abandoned. He worked to the left to the point where his unit was to cross, but as there was wire he could not get through. Strojny got a man from the 116th to blow a hole through the wire. The BAR men were placed on the right to fire into a wooded area. Pvt Charles Rocheford had his hand blown off by a mine as he came into position. Strojny ran through the gap and cleared the minefield. He mentioned for the others to follow. Five men from Strojny’s section and an officer and a squad from the 116th followed. They received machine gun fire from their right flan. The entire group headed for this fire and seven Germans were killed. One American was killed, one wounded. Both of these were from the 116th. Another machine gun emplacement was found and silenced with a demolition charge. Strojny wished to enter the wooded area, but the Lt from the 116th insisted that a bombardment must come first. The party withdrew, but could not contact the navy. Strojny then took his men, returned to the beach, and moved to the left where he found third battalion. He reported to K Company and moved forward with them for about a mile. This union was about 1300. At 1600 orders were received for all second battalion men to join their own organizations. Strojny’s group tried to find the second battalion but could not. They informally attached themselves to the beach engineers for the night.

16-G ON D DAY

The survivors in this company were group-interviewed on 22 Aug 44, at Ferte le Mace.

The Co hit the beach together except the 5th BT. They were shipping much water and couldn’t bail fast enough, so the boat was slowed. The Co came in on 6 LCVPs. There were no casualties coming in. “Bullets were dropping around us like rain but the good Lord seemed to be with us.” (Capt Joseph T. Dawson. Note: This man is an unusually accurate witness.) AP shells and some HE were hitting in and around the Co and were having a harassing effect on the men, but the nearest of these did not fall closer than 50-60 yards. (T/Sgt V.J. Miceli.) There was some machine gun fire which fell close to the boats, but on the whole the automatic fire of the enemy seemed to be inaccurate.

No 5 BT, getting to the beach, found its ramp fueled and unworkable. The water inside was then up to the men’s knees and this blocked the mechanism. So the men had to clamber over the sides. This made the, a broadside target and they lost 15 men debarking—mostly to bullet fire.

The 2nd section hit a sandbar 700 yards out, but the coxswain told the men to stand steady and he bumped his way on through. He seemed to be absolutely fearless and he kept assuring the men that he was get them in at the right place. (Liet E.A. Day.) He paid for his courage with his life. He tried to straighten the boat around after he dropped the men and a shell made a direct hit on him.

The water was still quite clear when “E” hit the beach. The Co was supposed to land at H PLUS 30, and di so, at the designated spot, but the few men who had preceded “G” to this part of the beach had been delayed and had been on the sand only 5 minutes. (Dawson). The engineers were engaged in blowing the tetrahedrals, trihedrals and mines, etc., when the company came ashore. (Miceli.) The men of “G” saw some men trying to land behind them (116th Inf and CWS troops) and taking cover behind the obstacles. They were blown up by our own explosives. (MIceli, Dawson.) The engineers had not yet completed the lanes for the tanks; it was about 15 minutes after “G” landed that the first lanes were cleared in this area. (Dawson) However, three tanks had arrived at this strip of beach (where they came into the shore is not known) and had already been destroyed by direct fire from the shore batteries when “G” landed among them. (Dawson’s estimate of this arty fire was that it was not heavier than 75 or 77.) These were DD tanks and were supposed to have preceded the first wave by 5 minutes. Out of 60 DD tanks which were supposed to have landed (this is Dawson’s comment but the record requires a check on this point) only these three had made the shore. Ten had drowned at once in the heavy seas and others had foundered as they came on. All the way in, the men of “G” had passed tankers afloat on rafts and had mistakenly thought they were markers intended of the surf, that men in the “B” boats were making bets to one another that none of their own craft would reach the shore. (S/Sgt Vincent J.Kachnik).

The scene along the shingle as “G” landed was one of complete confusion. “The assault wave had become pinned down, mentally if not physically.” (Dawson) There was no coordinated fire from the Americans ashore. “G” could see a line of me along the shingle, frozen to earth and taking no steps against the enemy. They were bunched shoulder to shoulder and were huddling on patches of ground which gave them partial cover from the fire. (Dawson, Miceli.) These were remnants from “E” but principally men from 116-E who had been landed on the wrong beach and had become demoralized in part by that error. (Dawson.) The beaches were supposed to have been saturated with rocket fire from 5 LCRs; one LCR hit the target and got its rockets in the E-3 draw. The other rocket clusters had gone off in the water quite far from the shore: the men of “G” had passed thousands of dead fish killed by this fire. (Dawson)

“G” lost most of its men---63 all told---in getting from the boats to the shingle. They fell mainly from mortar and bullet fire; the enemy arty was falling too far behind to be dangerous. There was no way, however, to minimize these beach-crossing losses. The men had to walk across the sands; they could not sprint because of the weight of ammo, demolitions, etc. (Dawson) It was the feeling of the men that their losses would have been cut in half had their loads been cut likewise. (Miceli.) When the ramps went down, some of the men couldn’t move shore, but stumbled and fell in the water. They had become so cramped because of crowding that their muscles would not respond; they lay in the water for a few minutes, rubbing their legs, then they crawled ashore. (Lieut Marvin M. Stine) It even seemed to some of the leaders that they were glad of the chance to assault, so miserable had they felt on the in-journey. (T/Sgt Peter Gorba) Except for the wounded and perhaps a few stragglers, the men streamed on up to the shingle. The light mgs and the mortars at the base of it. Five minutes after hitting the shingle, these weapons were ready to fire at first the men could see no targets, so they put down a general “zone” fire. At least 10 minutes passed in this way. Then new boat waves came into the beach. At that, the enemy fire shifted from the beach and shingle to the oncoming boats. “They caught all of unshirted hell that “G” Co had been catching. When that happened, the men at the mortars and mgs had their first chance to see the targets clearly. They spotted 8 or 10 emplacements—some of them looking like Tobruk pits--- and we directed all our fire toward these points. The BARs and rifles added to the volume. We tried to put rocket fire on the emplacements but the rockets were ineffective. So was the mortar fire.” (Day) The open emplacements were directly to the front of “G”; the heavier guns were off to the flanks. The Co profited by the fact that there was a small defilade directly ahead and this was what helped most in getting the advance going. (Kachnik)

The wire—2 double aprons and a concertina, about 10 feet broad—was about 5 yards beyond the shingle. While the offensive fire was being built up, 4 to 5 men from each section blew the wire ahead of them with bangalores, having to use 4 bangalores to cut one lane. They did this under bullet fire. (Dawson) Pfc Henry J. Peszek wiggled through and under the wire with Lieut John D. Burbridge. They got part way through and Burbridge got his pack hung up. He shook himself loose. Peszek yelled to him: “Keep going. I’m going back for the bangalores.” He exploded two of them: both men were lying within 6 of the torpedoes when they exploded. Peszek got creased on the army by a bullet while laying the second torpedo but kept working.

This was the best placed and cut lane along the beach. Through it, most of the men of “G” passed, and the Bns which came after them took the same route.

A mine field lay beyond the wire. There were two dead Americans lying in the mine area; they had been blown up. The men of “G” went through the field over the bodies of the two dead men, figuring that this was their safest route. They then continued on through the Roman Ruins and proceeded up the draw. Dawson was out ahead of them. He had crawled through the wire and gone on up the hill with Pfc Frant Baldridge to see if he could clear the way for his men. They got halfway up the draw. Dawson then found himself caught between the fire of his own men and fire from an enemy mg at the head of the draw. Having walked up to that point, they flopped next to a fallen log for cover. Dawson told Baldridge: “Leave your equipment here. Go back and get the rest of the Co.”

Baldridge crawled on back and Dawson crawled on another 75 yards. He moved to any cover he could find. The draw was V-shaped, the ruins being right at the bottom of the V. There was a promontory at the top near the left hand angle of the V. He crawled on behind this and around, which move put the enemy emplacement a little behind him and to his right. He was within 10 yards when the Germans saw him, swung the mg around and fired wildly. He heaved a fragmentation grenade; it exploded between them and killed both men.

Dawson then waited at the brow of the hill for the company to come up. As the platoons reached him, he deployed them. Baldridge, the messenger, had met 5th section under Liey Kenneth Bleau already coming up the hill. Kachnik, getting frd as far as the ruins, then found that most of the men weren’t following Bleau. He went back to the Beach and learned that in the interval the asst section leader had been hit on the beach and there was no one to “goot the men on.” He went to work on them and before long, got the majority moving up the hill. He then followed along. Come to the top of the hill, Kachnik saw “minen” signs to his left. He heard someone yell: “Try the right!” There were more signs in that direction. He then tried looking for a path and began to crawl through the field. Four men followed him—S/Sgt Joseph Gaetano, Pfc Richard Torrey, Pvt Leo A. Sheerer and Pvt Louis Johns. They hit no mines and they crawled on to the hedgerow beyond the field—200 yards or so. Kachnik sent Sheerer back with the word: “It’s safe. Tell the men to come ahead.” The Co however, was already coming ahead, guiding on the trail which led frd from the draw, the enemy fire by now had almost ceased. The men of “G” continued on for about 1000 yards. They then saw Germans “milling around” 150 yards or so to their leftward. S/Sgt Joseph Barr moved out along the hedge with an M-1 and took 8 prisoners, routing them from out of dugout. They were a mixture of Germans and Poles. (The Co had seen mortar fire coming from this position and had thus spotted the enemy group in the first place.) The other elements quit the shingle and came on behind “G”, but many of the men stayed in the draw, where the cover was better.

Save for his dead and wounded, Dawson had brought every man off the beach. He did not have one malingerer. To the eye of Kachnik, it seemed that the new men came along quite as well as the old men, and in some cases, with more dash. In the journey across the mine field, part of the Co had been guided by a Russian POW, picked up on top the hill. On the beach, the work of rescue proceeded with T/5 Ray Smith, Pvt Abraham Nearon and Pvt Philip Kalan, aid men, figuring conspicuously. They worked back and forth dragging the wounded from the sands before the tide could overtake them. Smith, an unusually large man, made three trips across the beach, carrying men on is back or in his arms. Smith was hit in the leg, Kahan in the side but they kept working until next day when both were evacuated for wounds. Also, conspicuous for his work on the beach was Pvt James Stickles who worked for several hours, away from the cover of the shingle, patching up men. A private named Meadows was hit by a bullet while crossing the mine strip just off the beach. T/5 Smith crawled out, got him, and carried him to the shingle on his back.

The plan was for 3rd and 4th sections to attack the German bivouac area on the right (marked TPS) after which the whole Co would pivot against Colleville-Sur-Mer. 1st and 2nd sections would then advance on Colleville and the others would remain behind as a reserve. They proceeded to operate on this plan. About 12 men were lost in cleaning the enemy from the bivouac area in a close-up house-to-house action fought through with rifles and grenades. After this job was complete and the Co made the left turn, Dawson found the fire from the Colleville positions building up against him at such a rate that he realized he could not take the village. The hour was about 1300 and his men had penetrated the edges of the community. Burbridge’s 1st section anchored the Co there, containing a few buildings along the outskirts. Bleau’s 5th section tied in to Burbridge on the S, extending the Co line to a group of buildings just short of the bivouac area. Lieut Day’s 2nd section closed the perimeter to the N. Dawson sent word to Lieut Col Hicks at 1430 that he could not commit the Co to the attack on Colleville. He was partly influenced by the fact that the other two sections, under Stine and Lieut James Kruckas, had become separated from the Co, having gone on to high ground about 1000 yards beyond. They had purposed to so extend themselves in order to cover the exposed flan, this being done at an hour when it was still reckoned that the other three sections. They did not mean organized resistance but riflemen coming in on the flanks picked off 1 officer and 2 men.

At about 1500, 18th Inf came through “G” and went on S of Colleville, bypassing the Germans in Colleville. “G” continued to hang on Colleville’s flank. At 1630 the Navy opened fire on Colleville and swept the town from end to end. Dawson took 8 casualties in the opening fire which landed right in “G”’s position. The cordite fumes became so intense that all of “G”, including the aid men attending the wounded, had to carry on in gas masks. Orange smoke was sent up but the fire continued. It was lifted at last by a radio message put through Bn. The enemy in Coleville did not waver during the fire and POWs taken by “G” next day said they had not lost a man during the shelling. (Dawson)

Dawson was getting small arms fire from all around his perimeter. Losses were occurring, but there was no place to withdraw the men. The arrival of the 18th Inf had cause a slackening of this fire for a few minutes; then when the larger group went on, it picked up again. Dawson was hit in the knee but felt that he had to stay on. Eighteen men in the three sections had been either killed or wounded by the American naval fire or enemy bullet fire while the Co clung to the flank of Colleville during the afternoon.

In the meantime, these things had happened: 16-1 had started arriving at 1300 and had gone into position on “G”’s rear; their later elements continued to build up through the mid-afternoon. “G” was not in contact with them --- did not even know they were there--- but gradually the enemy fire from that part of the perimeter fell away to a whisper. The night was fairly quiet.

At about 0800 on D PLUS 1, Dawson put his first patrol through the town –Burbridge, Kruckas, Gaettano, Peszek and 4 others. They worked down the main road, moved carefully from house to house, shot a few enemy riflemen and captured eight prisoners. As they reached the edge of the town, the 20th Engs and some MPs came along behind them. The patrol was followed by exactly one block by an MP carrying “OFF LIMITS” signs. Gaettano cleaned out one house, went on a short distance, went back and tried to re-enter the same house as he wasn’t certain whether he had completed the job. An MP said: “You can’t go in there.” Gaettano replied: “the hell I can’t. Just try tto stop me!” and wnt on in. (Burbridge).

At 1000 Dawson was ordered to displace the Co tp the S side of the town. They went 200 yards and drew fire. Dawson got two sections up to an HR and built up a fire position. (18th Inf was 500 yards on beyond him.) In a 15-minutes engagement, “G” disposed of 17 Germans who had gone by an underground passage from the barracks in Colleville to prepared positions outside the village. They had got out in the early morning. One 60 mm shell, landing dead oeter, took all of the fight from this crew. “G” killed 5 and captured 12, having lost two of its men (wounded) in the same skirmish.

It was Dawson’s impression that the lanes cut by his Co in the wire were used by 18th, 26th and other elements.

COMPANY A, 1st MEDICAL BN.

REPORT

On June 6, 1944, at 0830 – two hours after H Hours – LCI no. 85 carrying 90 personnel of the Company A, 1st Med. Bn. landed on Fox Green Beach.

Immediately on the touching of shore the enemy opened fire on the LCI with machine gun, 47 mm and heavier artillery. Several direct hits were made going through the front holds, the control room, and the forward deck killing several men and severely wounding several more. Immediately Captain Hahn with an aid man went into hold No.2 to give medical aid and administer plasma to a critically injured patient. Captain Apanasewics was on starboard side also giving aid and treatment to critically wounded.

The beach at this place was not satisfactory for a landing so the LCI was withdrawn from land a few hundred yards then came in again to make another landing to the right.

On this 2nd landing we succeeded in reaching shore the port side ramp was withdrawn from land a few hundred yards then came in again to make another landing to the right.

On this 2nd landing we succeeded in reaching shore the port side ramp was lowered and the men started getting off. About 20 of the men from A Company succeeded in getting into the water when the enemy again opened fire hitting the ramp throwing it off the side of the boat into the water and at the same time badly wounding some of the men as they came off the ship. During this time other direct hits went into the holds setting two of them on fire, by his time the holds and deck were littered with dead and wounded when the 3rd hold caught on fire there were still several men in it and since the opening to this hold was on the inside they were becoming quite panichy. We succeeded in getting them through the door to the outside deck.

However there was a critically injured in the officers’ cabin immediately above in front of the opening of the 3rd hold. Another man and myself went into the cabin in face of terrific hear and blinding smoke and carried the helpless patient to the deck. At this time Lt. Lundgren went up to the control tower to give aid to one of the injured men. The control tower by this time was full of smoke. The ship was listing badly to starboard and was rapidly sinking. It was also getting out of control therefore was swinging around with the tide so that the port side was exposed to the shore. The enemy was still firing and some hits were scored on the port side. The crew finally got the badly listing ship out into the water further from shore, the fire was being extinguished and we started with the dead and wounded to the Chase to be evacuated.

Throughout this time during the attempted 1st landing and 2nd landing, the following officers and men: Captain Hahn, Captain Apanasewicz, Lt. Lundgren, Sgt. Dunphy, SGt. Kline, Corp. Ginnetti, Pvts. Hopper and Wise, with utter disregard for their own safety or position on the ship gave first aid, set up plasma units and helped carry patients from the holds and cabins to the deck thus saving the lives of several critically injured patients.

When the LCI reached the Chase the same men continued to work at top speed to transport the dead and wounded from the sinking ship to a place of safety. This removal being done by placing the patients into net litters which were lifted by derrick to the larger ship.

After all evacuation was completed we again organized the remaining part of the company transferred to an LCM and returned to the beach at about 5 P.M. The landing this time being on Easy Ref Beach. This landing was accomplished in the face of heavy artillery barrage on the very beach in which we were landing and in spite of the fact that again several of the men were injured or killed. Of the men Sgt. Dunphy, Sgt. Kline, Corporal Ginnetti. Of the officers Captain Hahn, Captain Apanasewicz, and Captain Railston were hit. Some of them critically so. At this time Lt. Lundgren distinguished himself by giving aid to those injured and helping others to areas of safety from the incoming tide. This all being done while the beach was still under an artillery barrage.

Later in the evening after more of the men had been collected, we reported to the Regt. Surgeon to aid in the evacuation.

Of the men who reached shore from the first landing Sgt. Pasletti distinguished himself by keeping the unit together as well as assisting and directing the first aid care to casualties along the shore. Sgt. Good, Sgt. McDay, Cpl. Bechom, Pvt. Richardson and Pvt. Soucie throughout the day went up and down the shore giving first aid. This was done at all times and on frequent occasions throughout the day received terrific barrages of artillery, machine gun and sniper fire.

It was here that Captain Ralston organized and directed what men he had left with him, though dazed and suffering from the shock of what we had all been through, to get into a small landing craft, LCM, and make another attempt at a landing. Several of the uninjured personnel had already boarded the Chase but it was Captain Ralston who decided that our duty was ashore and not out on the Chase.

It was now after three O’clock and our small overcrowded craft headed for the shore again. As we could observe shell firing and mines still exploding on the beach. Our craft hit the beach and immediately we all headed for shore, but several explosions of some sort occurred as we left the craft and more casualties were suffered by our men and other men who were with us.

It was then that we later learned that Captain Apanasewicz was hit and unaccounted for. When I looked around there was three men severely injured. One was Private Cinnetti whom later died while lying there, Sergeant Klein was injured and after tying him up he managed to crawl to a higher part of the beach. The other injured man with help was brought of shore to position behind a previously damaged boat.

It was behind this damaged boat that I found several injured men whom were in danger of the incoming tide. Upon securing aid from some very helpful corpsmen no were up on the beach these men were removed to a more comparative place of safety. Sergeant Dumphy who was among those injured on the last landing though severely wounded himself did help in the direction of care for the other wounded men about him while we attempted to get the men off the beach.

It was due to Captain Ralstons efforts that Company A was able to reorganize itself and later on that D-Day evening though severely handicapped again function as a Collecting station. Personnel from those that were left were sent to the Sixteenth Surgeon for use as litter bearer late that evening.

Kent T. Lundgren, 2LtMAC

O-1542779

Co A 1st Med Bn

Medical Det. 16th Inf.

A.P.O #1 U.S. Army

SUBJECT: Activities of Med. Det. 16th Inf. D-Day.

TO : C.O. 16th Infantry.

1. Regimental section descended nets into LCM #1 at 0600 hours, June 6, 1944. Heavy equipment was lowered into the boat. The sea was rough with considerable ground swell and craft rolled pitched and tossed. Many men were seasick within fifteen minutes of being on the ship. The Bn sections accompanied their respecting battalions on shore.

The LCM approached the beach at the eastern end of “Easy Red” but obstacles were not cleared and machine gun bullets were hitting the beach. The coxswain pulled off and made a landing on the extreme end of “Easy Re” beach. Machine gun bullets were hitting the boat and landing in the water all about the boat as we descended from a ramp into waist deep water. The time was now approximately 0815 hours.

Our group made its way ashore through the tetrahedral and log obstacles, a distance of about 75 yards. I spine the MG fire all of the group reached shore without being hit. With the help of my first sergeants, I assembled the men in a group on the shell shelf above the high water mark. I led the men to the east along the beach following Colonel Taylor’s lead. We pulled wounded from the surf, rendered first aid and placed these men in the best shelter available, as we traveled down the beach. The ESB medical personnel not functioning. I passed members of the first, second and third Bn medical sections as we went east ward on the beach. These men seemed all at work pulling wounded from the surf and dressing them. The fire MG rifle and artillery, was heavy along the beach at this time. Functioning was uncertain and movement through the shells complicated by the number of personnel was uncertain and the ESB lying full length on the shelf was slow difficult and laborious. I examined several dead on route down the beach, some had been killed by mines, others by machine gun, others by artillery and mortar fire but a great percentage were dead from bullet wounds through the head.

A halt was made after three hundred yards of the beach had been covered. Radio equipment was set up and a tentative CP set up. My group continued caring for the wounded in this area.

Coronel Taylor issued instructions to CO and Bn. Co’s at this point the men moved to the west along the beach in search of an exit.

Fire seemed heavy along the route going back and we treated several casualties along the way back. I was forced to rest after going 525 yards and staff sergeant Goldberg led the men toward the exit. I then followed treating patients en route. I worked for about two mutes behind cover of the DD tanks just short of the exit in the vicinity of the ruined house. I met a wounded officer recuiring assistance and had him come through the exit with me and assisted him up the hill following a taped lane through the mine fields located the CP and reported then rejoined our men 25 yards west of the CP dug in on a steep slope.

The men were all present but Capt Tierney was missing. Captain Lavire was present. All of our portable equipment was present and all the men had salvaged additional supplies and two litters which they had found on the beach. It was now approximately 1040 hours.

The men were dispatched in all directions on the slope to assist in bringing wounded men. (These were being hit by shell fragments?) T/3 Bailey and T/3 Friedenberg voluntarily descended the hill back to the beach despite the heavy artillery fire to render aid and to rescue an injured man on a mine field. We had collected 80 wounded men in the vicinity of the CP by 1900 hours. Five of these men were seriously wounded three of which died during the night from shock and exposure despite the use of blood plasma and blankets given by Lt. Coronel Corley, Bn. C1 of the 3rd Bn. 26 Inf. Major Plitt had messages sent to the Ancon for beach and naval personnel to evacuate the wounded. I called Major Ficchy at Div. Forward CP and asked for litters, blankets, men and boats. He promised to get them.

At about 2100 hours we led and assisted the walking wounded back to the beach so that they could be put aboard LCVPs bringing in the 26th Infantry. Litter cases, about fifteen in number, were carried to a naval beach station in the ruined house. There was no naval officer at the station. We stopped evacuating and the enemy began again shelling the beach and hit an abandoned LCM loaded with ammunition which began to burn and exploded.

An auxiliary surgical group attached to the ESB joined about 2200 hours. They however were useless. They had no equipment, no litters and no litter bearers and were only interested in a place of shelter from enemy artillery fire. Capt. Ralston CO collecting company A, first Med. Bn brought 12 litter bearers, all he had at 2230 hours. These were sent out to the Bn Med. Center with whom we came in contact by runner. Early D plus 1 he brought up an additional ten litter bearers and two litters which were sent forward to the 3rd Bn.

During the artillery shelling just before dark T/5 Kisker of the Med. Dt. Was hit in the neck and seriously wounded by shell fragment.

A man from headquarters co was wounded by naval AA fire during the night.

The morning of D plus one we evacuated our wounded walking and litter to a 61st Med. Bn. which had set up a station in the vicinity of eit E-3. At 1200 hours D plus 1 we moved inland.

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From an account by Major Charles E Tegtmyer, Regimental surgeon, 16th Inf. Headquarters.