

On This Day, 26-JUN 1944, We Remember a Fallen Hero



Norbert H. Schulte was born 8-OCT 1912 in Josephville MO, St Charles County. His parents were Ernest John Schulte and Mary "May" Elizabeth Amptmann Schulte. When Norbert H Schulte was born on 8-OCT 1912 his father, Ernest, was 34 and his mother, Mary, was 30. He had three brothers; Clarence, Fred and Wilbert. Norbert was the oldest of the four brothers. Three of the brothers would serve during WWII.

Norbert enlisted in the Army in MAR 1942. Wilbert and Norbert would meet in England while preparing for the invasion. It was the last time Wilbert would see his brother. Norbert served in the 357th Infantry Regiment, 90th Division. First elements of the 90th division saw action on D-Day, 6 June, on Utah Beach, Normandy, the remainder entering combat 10 June in France.

Norbert was killed shortly after D-Day in France. He was killed in action on 26-JUN, 1944, in Killeen, Nord, France. Norbert was 31. He is buried in Josephville, MO, at Saint Joseph Catholic Church Cemetery. Norbert was in France just a few days before being killed in action.



Norbert is honored and remembered at the St. Charles County Veterans Museum.

We are looking for more information about Norbert including pictures. If you can help, please contact Jim at the museum.

Regimental History of the 357th Infantry

Compiled by S-Sgt. George von Roeder

On 22-MAR 1944, the 357th Regiment moved to the New York port of embarkation and boarded "HMS Dominion Monarch", a 27,000 ton British ex-luxury liner which had been converted into a troop transport and turned over to the United States Army by the British government.

At 0545 of the 23rd of March 1944, the Regiment sailed. To most, this was the occasion for the first goodbye to their homeland. As the convoy moved farther out, it grew until finally there were over forty ships of all classes, troop ships, tankers, aircraft carriers, destroyers, and cruisers. The 13 day voyage was without particular incident from a seaman's point of view, but many of the landlubbers spent considerable time feeding the fish and expected to be sent to the bottom most every day by U-boats.

The Dominion Monarch docked at Mersey Docks, Liverpool, England, on the 4th of April 1944. After de-barking at 1630, the troops loaded immediately on trains and moved to Kinlet Park (near Kidderminster, England). All elements of the Regiment were quartered here except the 1st Battalion which was quartered at Camp Gatacre nearby.

Intensive training was begun immediately with stress being placed on speed marches and on forced marches with heavy loads of weapons and ammunition. Covering 5 miles on foot in less than an hour was the way it went. This can and will be appreciated only by those readers who have walked up the steep English hills and realize that the average rate of march for foot troops is only 2 1/2 miles per hour.

During the stay in Kinlet Park, the men were granted short passes to the nearby towns. The soldiers, however, were not here for fun, but for the most serious business they had ever undertaken -- and they knew it. Besides, when the evening came, a few hours rest what was wanted most.

Only a few short months ago the speculators had said that the 90th Division would not see action until the initial landing units had proceeded far inland on the French mainland. They were not so sure now. Although guessing openly when D-Day would be was discouraged by authorities, each man, in his own mind, was doing quite a bit of thinking and wondering about it. The chances of guessing correctly were aided materially on the 13th of May when the Regiment moved 64 miles nearer the English Channel to Camp Race Course, Chepstow, Monmouthshire, Wales. It was here that the men had their first experience with enemy planes and bombs. Although the attack was not directed against the Regimental Camp but at a coastal city several miles away, the exploding bombs sounded as though they were falling in the next field. This occurred during the days before the advent of the flying bomb when the Germans still had a few planes left with which to harass Britain.

During the period from 14th May to 3rd June, the Regiment carried out usual physical conditioning training while making final preparations for the invasion of France. On 15th of May, Colonel Phillip Ginder assumed command of the Regiment to replace Colonel Sheehy who was attached to 90th Division Headquarters.

By the 4th of June, final preparations had been made. Most of the men had over two years of hard training under their belts and were in the best physical condition that they had ever been in their lives. Everything that was humanly possible in the way of preparations had been done.

On this day, the battalions entrained, traveled 30 miles to Cardiff, Wales, and embarked on two ships, the "S. S. Explorer" and the "S. S. Bienville". At 0730 of the 5th, the ships sailed down the River Severn and dropped anchor in the Bristol Channel near Swansea, where the convoy assembled. By 0200 of the 6th, the convoy was underway toward France, following a route close to the coast of England. At this very moment, other men, many thousands of them, were "sweating out", the few remaining hours before they were to make the greatest assault landing in history.

During this short voyage across the English Channel the actions and conversations of the soldiers who were about to tackle the biggest job of their lives is deemed worthy of mention. The apparent necessity for absolute secrecy for security reasons prevented the disclosure to these

men of what their first job was to be. They knew, however, that the future held no picnic and that in a very short time they would be engaged in this bloody business called combat. Most were not worried too much. Things like seeing that equipment was ready and testing life jackets for leaks were the important ones now. Some who were satisfied that everything was in readiness were reading, others just taking it easy. Here and there a few final hands of cards were being dealt out with the brand new French invasion money for stakes. Some of the men were already talking about what they were going to do when they got back home. These were good soldiers, as they should be, for they were some of the best Uncle Sam had.

The submarine alerts which were sounded several times during the day did not bring much of a stir from anyone except possibly the ship's Captain. As dawn of the 8th came and the world became real again, the sight which presented itself was indescribable. Many more vivid descriptions of D-Day and the days following have been written in other texts, but in a word, it may be described as a show which is not presented very often. The price of a show of this type is too high. Ships and planes were everywhere. The big battle wagons were firing round after round into the coast, and the world's finest air force was operating at full capacity. So were some of the Luftwaffe. Burning ships could be seen in the distance and a flaming plane hitting the water was not an uncommon sight.

At 0930 of the 8th, the convoy dropped anchor off Utah beach on the Cotentin Peninsula. Debarkation into big LCI's began at 1200 and by 1245 the first elements of the Regiment, led by Colonel Ginder, were wading ashore. At this time, the Regimental Commander was notified that the prearranged transit area had not yet been secured by the 4th Division - which had made the initial D-Day assault landing - and that the Regiment would move instead into an area in the vicinity of Loutres.

The wearing of life jackets and belts undoubtedly saved many lives during the landing, as in some places the men, heavily laden with supplies and ammunition, had to go off the boats into water five and six feet deep. The most consoling thought at this time was the fact that the men working on the beach were Americans instead of Germans. The beach was still under fire and occasionally a barrage of 88's would come in. No time was lost here, however, for the men were assembled rapidly and the march inland began. The Regiment closed in its assembly area at 1900.

On the 9th, orders were received to pass through elements of the 82nd Airborne Division near Amfreville by daylight of the 10th and seize and secure crossings of the Douve River west of St. Columbe. As this movement was being executed, the Regiment received its first casualties in land action against the enemy from 88mm fire. The saying that first impressions are the greatest held true in this case, as this wicked weapon, employed so effectively by the enemy throughout the Normandy campaign, soon was familiar to everyone, and its name became almost a byword.

When daylight came, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, from left to right, jumped off and met surprisingly little resistance. Signs of recent vicious combat between the Airborne men and the enemy were everywhere, and everyone felt in his bones it was just a matter of time until the show would start for the 357th. As the advance began, an officer in "L" Company was credited as

being the first man in the Regiment to kill a German. They met face to face coming around the corner of a building.

At noon the enemy defense line was reached. Darkness found the Regiment still attacking in the face of withering enemy mortar and machine gun fire. It seemed that every German had an automatic weapon, and mortar shells seemed to follow the men right into their holes and ditches. Casualties were heavy and gains could be measured in yards.

World war II had begun in earnest for the new 357th Infantry. The day had been the longest the men had ever spent. The initial shock of seeing old friends struck down had been great and it was evident that much fierce fighting lay ahead. The hedgerow country of Normandy was nature's gift to the defenders. The countryside was divided into tiny fields, each bounded by a drainage ditch covered over with a high dense hedge. This offered an almost perfect defense system for the camouflage-wise Germans. It was all but impossible to see them and their cleverly constructed and camouflaged hedgerow positions. Snipers, dressed in camouflage suits, were most troublesome in the wooded areas and were responsible for many casualties behind the lines. It was days before many of the front line rifleman even saw a live German to shoot at.

The task was clear. The beachhead had to be expanded before any sizable forces could be landed in the battle of maneuver began. There was essentially one way that this could be done and that was by frontal assault by the infantry against prepared enemy positions. The enemy knew it and so did the men of the Regiment. Consequently, the days that followed brought one of the worst baptisms of fire ever undergone by an American infantry unit. To attack as long as there was daylight was the only order. To advance from one hedgerow to another, the distance of perhaps 100 to 200 yards, was a day's job and a costly one. The Germans were putting up fanatical resistance. Expenditure of ammunition on both sides was tremendous. Every field was literally pocked with mortar and artillery shell holes, 88mm shells whined down every road.

By the end of the 13th, the Regiment in 4 days of combat had suffered a total of 703 casualties, including 133 dead. It was during this time that the value of a steady stream of good reinforcements was realized. Attacks were being launched toward Gourbesville against unrelenting enemy resistance. On the 13th, Colonel Sheehy re-assumed command of the Regiment.

On the 15th, the 3rd Battalion captured Gourbesville after overcoming fierce enemy resistance. During this operation, the Regiment lost its beloved commander who had so recently taken command of the unit which he had helped mold during training. Colonel Sheehy was killed when his vehicle was ambushed as he was proceeding to front line positions. On the following day, Colonel George B. Barth, former chief of staff of the 9th Infantry Division during action in Africa, assumed command of the Regiment.

At this time, the 9th Division had driven across the Cotentin Peninsula to the coast and the drive toward Cherbourg had begun. To prevent the Germans from leaving or entering the peninsula was the mission assignment of the Regiment on the 18th. Following a 15 mile motor movement, the battalions moved into position during the 18th and 19th. During this operation, 66 prisoners,

including 5 officers, were taken as they were attempting to infiltrate to the south through the 3rd Battalion lines.

The enemy immediately exerted pressure from the south in an attempt to break through to the entrapped forces in the peninsula. Simultaneously, other large groups were attempting to break out from the north and escape the trap. Sharp encounters resulted from these enemy efforts which were often supported by armor, as well as heavy artillery and mortar fire. On the 21st, the 1st Battalion engaged a force of 160 Germans attempting to break out to the south, and succeeded in accounting for the entire force, capturing 125 prisoners.

It was on 26-JUL 1944, Norbert Schulte was killed in action.

The Regiment remained in this position, holding firm against all enemy attacks and patrolling aggressively to the south, until the 29th. By this time, the entire Contentin Peninsula had been cleared and elements of the 79th Division, which had taken part in the siege of Cherbourg, moved to the south and relieved the Regiment from its positions. On the 30th, the Regiment closed into an assembly area near Houteville for a day of rest, the first since landing.

The end

Regimental Statistics

Killed in Action 953

Wounded in Action 5078

Injured non-battle 701

Missing in Action 584

(After v-Day it was found that 570 of these were prisoners of war) Captured 4

Total above casualties 7320

(Of those wounded in action, 143 died; of those non-battle wounded, 4 died. Five men died of illness during the campaign.)

Total Reinforcements received to V-E Day 8385 Number of enemy prisoners of war taken 18,117

Names and locations of cemeteries in which 357th men are buried:

St. Mere Eglise No.2, France Andilly, France

Marigny, France

Grand Feilly, France

Limey, France

St. Andre, France St. Martin, France Foy, Belgium Hamm, Luxembourg