

Arnold Meyer enlisted in the U.S. Army on 7 March 42. He had basic training in Texas and was assigned to the 90th Infantry Division, 358 Regiment, 2nd Battalion, H Company. The 90th Division was shipped to England on 23 MAR 44. Most of the original members of the 90th were from Texas and Oklahoma, but the Division later had men from every state. By common consent the Division adopted the nickname of the 'Tough Ombres'. Their unit patch was triangular with the letters 'TO'.

Arnold Meyer's regiment landed on Utah Beach on 8 JUN 44. Th unit was immediately put in the line. The 90th Infantry fought its way from Utah Beach to Czech Republic. Arnold never spoke about his wartime service to his family. I have found some handwritten notes from his wife Dottie that indicate Arnold was an 81MM Mortar 2nd Class Gunner. Arnold Meyer's service records were lost in a fire in St. Louis in 1973.

We will never know Arnold Meyer's experiences in the conquest of Europe. He never spoke of the combat, friends who he served with, or the destruction and misery he lived through. Perhaps he lost so many comrades, saw the horrors of the concentration camps, and shut down the memories. Whatever the reason for his silence about his experiences he must be remembered as an honorable veteran of the greatest generation. Arnold Meyer became a loving husband and father and grandfather.

I have taken the history of the 90th Division and plotted their movements from D-Day until the end of the war. Major events are noted on the maps of France and Germany.

James Bowersox

3 Dec 25

90th Infantry Division
 358th Regiment
 2nd Battalion
 H Company

1. 8 JUN 44. H Company 2nd Battalion of 358 Regiment arrived on Utah Beach and began debarkation at noon. By midnight all units assembled with Division Headquarters at Loutres.
2. Headquarters 358 Reg. 9 JUN 44. The 90th Division secured an East West Line to prevent the Germans from reinforcing or breaking out of the besieged port of Cherbourg. Line was approximately 7 kilometers South of Valognes. Battle was fought in hedge rows. Difficult fighting from 9 JUN 44 to 26 JUN 44. Area of the hedge rows was known as the Bocage.
3. Cherbourg had fallen by the end of JUN 44 mopping up operations were underway in the Cotentin Peninsula. (26 days to capture Cherbourg).
4. On 3 JUL 44 the 90th Division was ordered to attack South. The Division had to capture numerous German defense lines and strong points. The 358th Reg. saw heavy fighting. Lt. General George Patton took command of the 90th Division on 30 JUL 44.
5. Under the command of Gen. Patton the 90th Div. made lightning fast advances to take the cities of Mayenne and Le Mans. In ten days, the Division advanced 140 miles, took 1,500 prisoners and had less than 300 casualties.
6. On 10 AUG 44 the 90th Div turned northward along with French 2nd Armored Div. The Division moved by leaps and bounds meeting limited enemy resistance. The City of Alencon was taken on the 12 AUG 44. From the time of the Normand landings to 15 AUG 44 the 90th Div had captured 4500 prisoners. On 11 Aug 44 the U.S. 7th Army and French 1st Army landed at Marseilles in Southern France. The Allies faced light and disorganized German resistance. The ports of Marseilles and Toulon were opened to aid in the movement of supplies. The landing greatly facilitates the liberating of Southern and Western France.
7. Battle of the Falaise Gap: The German 7th Army South of Caen had their lines broken and communications shattered. They were threatened by the British and Canadians from the North and the Americans from the South. The only route of escape was

through the City of Falaise Southeast through the City of Chambois 25 Kilometers away. When the German 7th Army attempted to escape, the battle began on 16 AUG 44. The 90th Div. seized the high ground NE of Chambois and cutoff the German's main road of escape. The Germans in the Falaise pocket were shelled by artillery until destroyed tanks and other vehicles littered the pocket. On 20AUG44 the Germans surrendered. In four days, the Allies had taken 13,000 prisoners, killed or wounded 8,000 and suffered less than 600 casualties. More than 300 enemy tanks, 250 self-propelled guns, 164 artillery pieces, and 3,270 vehicles were destroyed. This was the greatest Allied triumph on French soil. This victory opened the way for the liberation of Paris.

8. The 90th was under the command of General Patton and would remain under his command to the end of the war. On 26 Aug 44 the 90th began to move. The Division encountered little organized resistance on the move south of Paris through Fountainbleau and on the Reims. On the move South of Paris the 90th past the WWI Battle fields of the Marne, Chateuthierry and the Arsne. Early in September the rapid advance had outrun the supply and communication lines. Lacking gasoline, the wheels ground to a halt. The 90th remained in the vicinity of Reims. This delay by the Allies allowed the German Army to regroup and establish fixed defense lines. The enemy rushed troops to the Maginot and Sigfried Line. Germans were no longer confused and bewildered.
9. On 07 SEP 44 gasoline became available and the 90th Div. was ordered to advance to the City of Thionville, capture the city and force a crossing of the Moselle River. The enemy opposition was easily brushed aside. On the same night the 90th was in battle with the Nazi 106Panzer Brigade, this battle raged until the next afternoon until the enemy forces were destroyed. The Division advanced through hilly terrain against vigorously defended strong points. On 12 SEP 44, the 90th fought its way into Thionville in house-to-house combat. The enemy was defending the East bank of the Moselle River in Division strength, and the crossing was not made. Operation Market Garden was a plan formed by British Field Marshall Montgomery. The plan called for airborne troops to land behind German lines in occupied Netherlands. Paratroopers were to seize several bridges along a Dutch highway that lead to a bridge at Arnhem on the Rhine River. The bridge at Arnhem could not be held and operation was a failure that resulted in 16,000 casualties. Patton's 3rd Army was stopped at Metz. Bradley's 1st Army was stopped at the West Wall.
10. The 90th was immediately ordered South to the area just west of the fortress city of Metz. The western approaches to the city were ringed by fortified hills which had to be taken by storm. The hills had fortresses capable of withstanding aerial and artillery pounding. Inside this ring was an even stronger arc of defenses. Through

the month of Sept the Division attacked the outer ring of the fortress. The month of Sept 44 ended with the 3rd Army stalemated long the banks of the Moselle River with the Germans holding firm. The town of Metz with its interlocking strong points, connected by tunnels and trenches, could not be taken by frontal assault. The plan to take the city called for attacks limited in size to nibble away at the fortifications. Approximately ten kilometers north of the City of Metz was the town of Maizier-Les-Metz. It was through this town that the Germans in Metz were getting supplies and re-enforcements. On 07 OCT 44, the 90th were given orders to take the town. Approximately half the town was taken on day one! Resistance in the form of street barricades, land mines, violent mortar and artillery fire, and grim house-to-house fighting stopped the attack. The city became an urban warfare training ground for the 90th Division. Elements of the Division, not on the front lines devoted themselves to training and rehabilitation. The Division was training to learn methods and techniques to reduce pillboxes and other fortifications expected to be encountered on the Siegfried Line. On 21 OCT 44 an all-out attack was set in motion take Maiziers-Les-Metz. The battle raged for two days. By the end of the engagement the Tough Ombre Division had destroyed an entire enemy division with the loss of only 55 casualties. This was the main effort to encircle the impregnable fortress of Met. The City of Metz was secured on 13DEC 44.

11. The rains came and soaked the troops. The cold rain came day after day. Roads became seas of mud and trucks bringing supplies were stuck in the mud. The 5th Infantry Division relieved the 90th in the Metz area. The 90th was ordered to the north of Thionville to affect a crossing of the Moselle Rier ad attack Southeast through the Maginot Line. The initial crossings were to be made in assault boats with pontoon bridges to follow. The 358th Regiment crossed at the town of Cattenom and the 359th Mallig. The river was crossed on 9 NOV 44 and the Germans were caught by surprise. The first day the 90th had a bridgehead 3 Kilometers deep. The 358th Regiment had to go against the German strongpoint at Fort Koenigsmacker. The fort's defenders had to be blasted out of tunnels. The rain continued and the Moselle River continued to rise. Engineers had problems throwing a bridge across the river. The 90th Division fought in the freezing rain and mud for two days and nights. Low on supplies with no armor support, finally, the river was bridged at Mallig and help came. Fort Koeningsmacker held out for 72 hours. Gasoline had to be poured into the ventilators and ignited by white phosphorous grenades. The Division held the bridgehead for 5 days against heavy German counter attacks even though six of the infantry battalions were down to 50% strength. On 15 NOV 44 a fierce enemy counterattack struck the 358th Regiment in the town of Distroff. The Regiment held and drove the attackers back. On the 6th day of the battle, the 90th

received the luxuries of blankets, overcoats, clean socks and hot meals. On 19 Nov 44 after 11 days of battle despite the rain, the mud, and the cold, the 90th had broken the Maginot Line. The Army Commander called this the greatest achievement in the war. The German Border lay only a few kilometers to the East.

12. After the Maginot Line was reduced, it was time to attack the Siegfried Line which was called Hitler's West Wall. The line defenses were on the German border to stop the Allies advance into the German homeland. On Thanksgiving Day, 23 NOV 44 the 90th and the 10th Armored Division were ordered to advance Eastward to the Saar River on the Siegfried Line. The 90th encountered pillboxes and well defended communication trenches. The troops also suffered heavy enemy artillery barrages. For three days the Division advanced taking two towns, destroyed 26 pillboxes and captured 500 prisoners. After two weeks of continuous combat the 358th Regiment was so exhausted that they had to be pulled off the line. The Regiment was moved to the rear for Rest and Rehabilitation. The remainder of the 90th pushed on and reached the Saar River. This was the densest part of the Siegfried Line. Once again, the 90th had to cross the Saar River at flood stage. The cold rain did not let up. On 6 DEC 44, the Saar River was crossed by the 90th Division catching the Germans by surprise. A bridge head was established on the East bank near the City of Dillingen. Counter attacks and German tanks pounded the division. As at the Moselle River, the flood stage at the Saar prevented armored units to cross the river to aid the infantry. The regiments of the 90th held the bridge head for five days. Trench foot inflicted numerous casualties and men limped into battle with swollen feet. The 90th had made minor progress against the Siegfried Line in the fortified City of Dillingen. House to house fighting was stalling the 90th advance. Casualties due to wounds, sickness and trench foot were wreaking havoc on the Divisions. In spite of all the problems, the 90th pushed on in the City of Dillingen piercing the heart of Hitler's West Wall. On 16 DEC 44 the picture changed. In the North in Luxembourg and Belgium, General von Rundstedt hurled his best Divisions into a final counter offensive. Before the fury of the attack, the American lines bent back. This counterattack became the Battle of the Bulge. On 19 JAN 44, the 90th ordered to disengage and return its forces to the West Bank of the Saar River. The withdrawal was made under enemy fire and took three days. This move was made to protect the Southern Flank of the American Battle Lines.
13. Christmas of 1944 found the 90th in the area between the Moselle and Saar Rivers in light contact with enemy. New replacements arrived to fill the 90th depleted ranks. It was vitally important for the newly arrived troops to receive additional training and combat orientation. Bitter cold had descended on the area and freezing winds drifted the snow. Roads became icy sheets. On the night of 05 JAN 45, the 90th was

ordered to prepare to move. No one yet knew the Division's destination. The Division moved to an assembly area in Luxembourg. The 26th and 35th Infantry and the 6th Armored Division had stopped the German advance southeast of Bastogne. The strength of the enemy, the winter weather and the terrain made operations against the Bulge extremely difficult. On 09 JAN 45, the 90th was ordered to attack and reduce the Salient and destroy the enemy therein.

14. The 90th was to move on the enemy's, main supply roads running East from Bastogne. The troops were going to have to defeat the snow-covered hills, zero degree weather, and German mobile Reserves of SS Panzer Units. The speed and power of the assault was a surprise to the Germans and on the 3rd day of the battle 1200 prisoners were taken. By the 4th day the 90th had found through Luxembourg and were now on Belgium soil. On that 4th day, 90th established contact with the 35th Infantry Division and 6th Armored. The enemy salient had been liquidated. On 16 Jan 45 the skies finally cleared and Allied aircraft began to mercilessly pound the German columns into retreat. The 90th beat back numerous German counterattacks and advanced to the Our River. On the morning of 29 Jan 45, the 90th crossed the Our River and were on German soil. Beyond the present lines lay the bulwark of enemy defense, The Siegfried Line.
15. During FEB 45 the weather warmed, and mud became a hindrance to the 90th advance. The Our River became a river in flood. 6 Feb 45 the assault on the Siegfried Line began. The German troops manning the line were not highly trained but fought stubbornly to defend the homeland. The 90th struck the line around the City of Prüm. The Division picked its way through Dragon's Teeth, minefields, barbed wire and pill boxes. When 155mm self-propelled guns were brought forward to blast the concrete bunkers, the Germans began to pull back. For three days the 90th held defensive positions and watched American Air Corps pound the German positions. 24Feb45 the tankers and infantry of the 90th reached the Prüm River. The Division had breached the Siegfried Line. The next objective was to cross the Rhine River.
16. The 90th pushed on to the Rhine River with little opposition, the 5th Division had forced a crossing of the Rhine near Oppenheim. Elements of the 90th arrived on to help hold the bridge head. The remainder of the 90th crossed the Rhine on 24 Mar 45. The German Luftwaffe flew sorties against the bridge site bombing and strafing in an attempt to halt the crossing. Once over, the Rhine, the 90th began a drive to the Main River to the North. On the advance North from the Rhine crossing the German resistance was confused and sporadic. By this time the enemy sensed the war was lost. The Prisoner of War cages bulged with surrendering German troops.
17. 28 MAR 45 the 357 and 358 Regiments reached the Main River near Hanau. The river was defended by a battalion of Hitler Youth. The river was crossed with assault boats

and Hitler Youth withdrew without offering a fight. In the Month of March, the 90th had crossed three river barriers, Kyll, Moselle and Rhine. Now with the crossing of the main the last major River was crossed, and the way was clear to advance into the heart of Germany.

18. The 90th and 4th Armored Division swept north from the main bridgehead. 30MAR45 the combat team advanced 30 miles and the next day another 25 miles. White flags were displayed in village after village. The Germans acted as if they despised the Nazis and loved the Americans. Morale of the G.I.'s rose to the boiling point. Complete and final victory was just around the corner. When the 90th reached the town of Merkers, two women informed a guard that gold was hidden in a salt mine in the area. An investigation found the mine contained 100 tons of gold bullion, millions of German marks, American dollars, French francs and English Pounds. In addition, 1,000 cases of paintings, statues, and priceless art works were stored in the mine. Items looted from art galleries of Europe were recovered.
19. One regiment was left to guard the treasures at Merkers and the rest of the 90th pushed ahead. All roads were lined with liberated slave labor walking home. Allied prisoner of war camps of Americans, British, French and Russians were liberated in large numbers. Resistance was light and infrequent. The 90th advanced into the forests and mountains of Thuringis. On 18 APR 45 the 90th had reached the Czech border to become the first unit to slice across the German nation. The border city of Hol was taken against fantastic but futile resistance. The 90th was ordered to move South with Czech border as its left flank.
20. The town of Marktredwitz was taken and 13 American soldiers, haggard and emaciated, because of the starvation diet and harsh treatment by their SS captors were liberated. Nearby, in Fuchsmuhl, 63 more Americans were found seriously ill from malnutrition.
21. In the town of Flossenbergl, the troops learned the evil they were fighting. The Flossenbergl concentration camp was one of the infamous in all Germany. Bodies of dead inmates were stacked like cord wood to dispose of in the ovens. 1100 inmates were liberated by the 90th. The nature of the enemy was now revealed fully and graphically. With the memory of Flossenbergl etched indelibly in their brains, they moved on.
22. 4 MAY 45 the Commanding General of the 11th Panzer Division surrendered to the 90th. 9,050 German troops, 700 trucks and a wealth of guns and material were now in American hands. Inside Czechoslovakia, citizens in the capital city of Prague sprung into open revolt against their German oppressors. The 90th was ordered to the rescue of Prague. The 90th and the 4th Armored Division were ordered to the Czech City on 05 MAY 45. Opposition was light as they rolled through the lines

toward Prague. 07 MAY 45 the Division moved forward only to be halted by Headquarters. The German high command had signed the unconditional surrender of all German forces. The war was over for the Tough Ombres. The Czech's treated the Americans as heroes. Every City and Village welcomed the G.I.'s. The American troops met the Russian Army Troops in the Czech Republic.

23. At some point at the end of the war, Arnold Meyer is sent to Berlin with the Army Occupation Forces. Arnold had a command of the German language so it is possible the Army ordered him there or he could have volunteered. It is unknown. According to family sources, he was in charge of maintaining housing for officers. It was in Berlin that Arnold Meyer met Dorothea Schnittke. Arnold was working at Berlin-Tempelhof and after they met, Dorothea was hired as an office helper. Dorothea spent 2 ½ years working in Arnold's office. Army records show that Arnold Meyer received the Rank of Tech Sergeant while in the 90th Division, 3rd Battalion. Arnold was a 81MM Mortar 2nd Class Gunner. Meyer returned to the US and separated from the Army 22 APR 48. On 26 JUN 48, Dorothea Schnittke came to the US/Minneapolis, MN airport and married Arnold Meyer.

Arnold Meyer never spoke about his service in WWII. After a study of the 90th Division history it reveals that Meyer entered combat on 08 JUN 44 after landing on Utah Beach. From 08 Jun 44 to 09 MAY 45, the 90th Division was in almost constant combat. Arnold saw the difficult fighting through the French hedge rows, the massacre of the Germans in the Falaise Gap, the lightning advance across France to the grinding battle at Metz. Then the first assault on the Siegfried Line, battling the mud and rain as they crossed the Moselle and the Saar Rivers, the battle in the freezing snow and cold against the German retreating during the Battle of the Bulge. Then the intense combat at the 2nd assault on the Siegfried Line. After crossing the Rhine River, the 90th saw the liberated slave labors and concentration camp horrors. The Tough Ombres of the 90th captured 83,437 prisoners of war, the equivalent of 6 Divisions, 501 tanks, 195 self-propelled guns and 134 warplanes. The 90th Division had 3,871 killed and 21,000 wounded. The unit motto is D-DAY TO VE-DAY.