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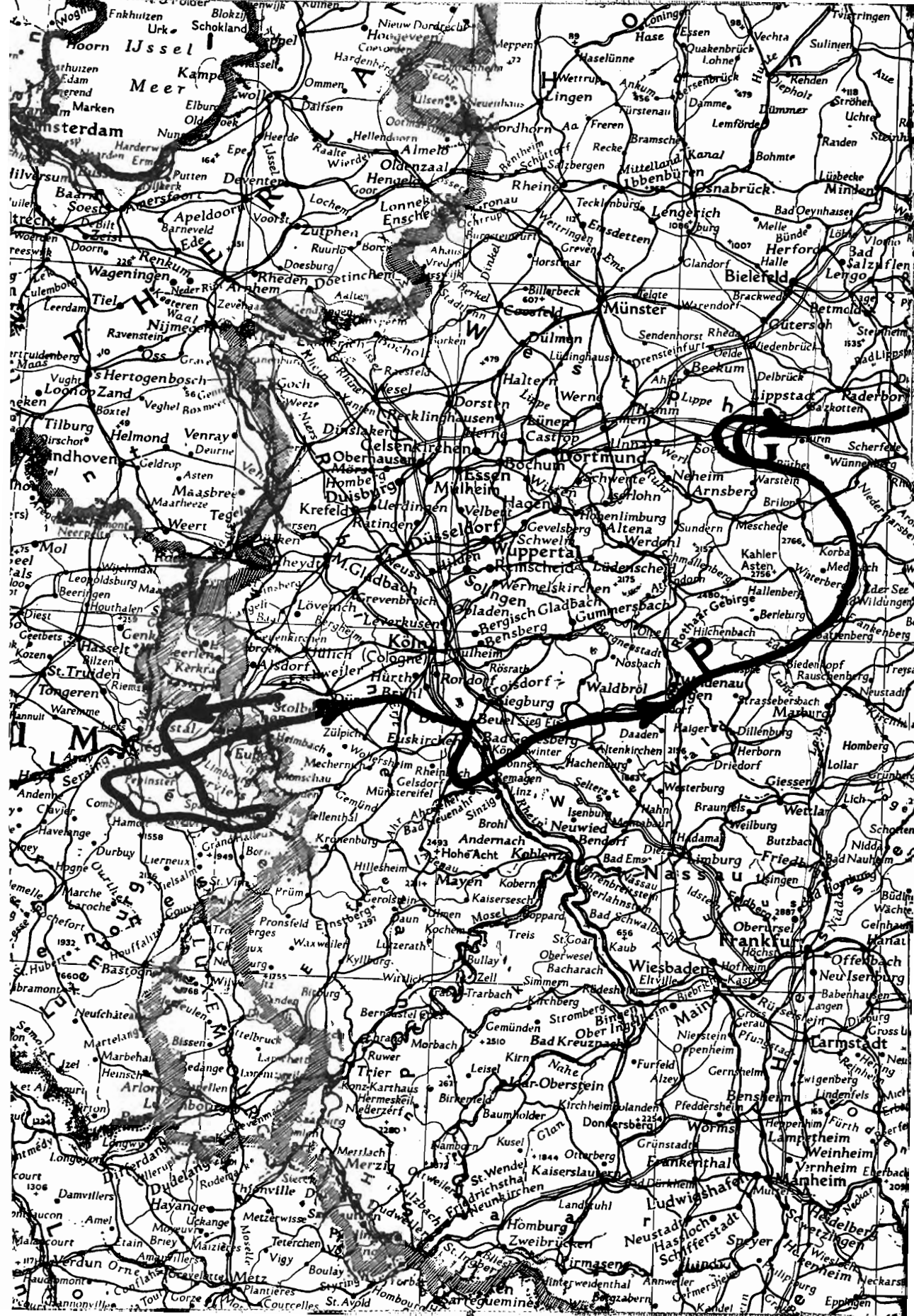
Selected Intelligence Reports

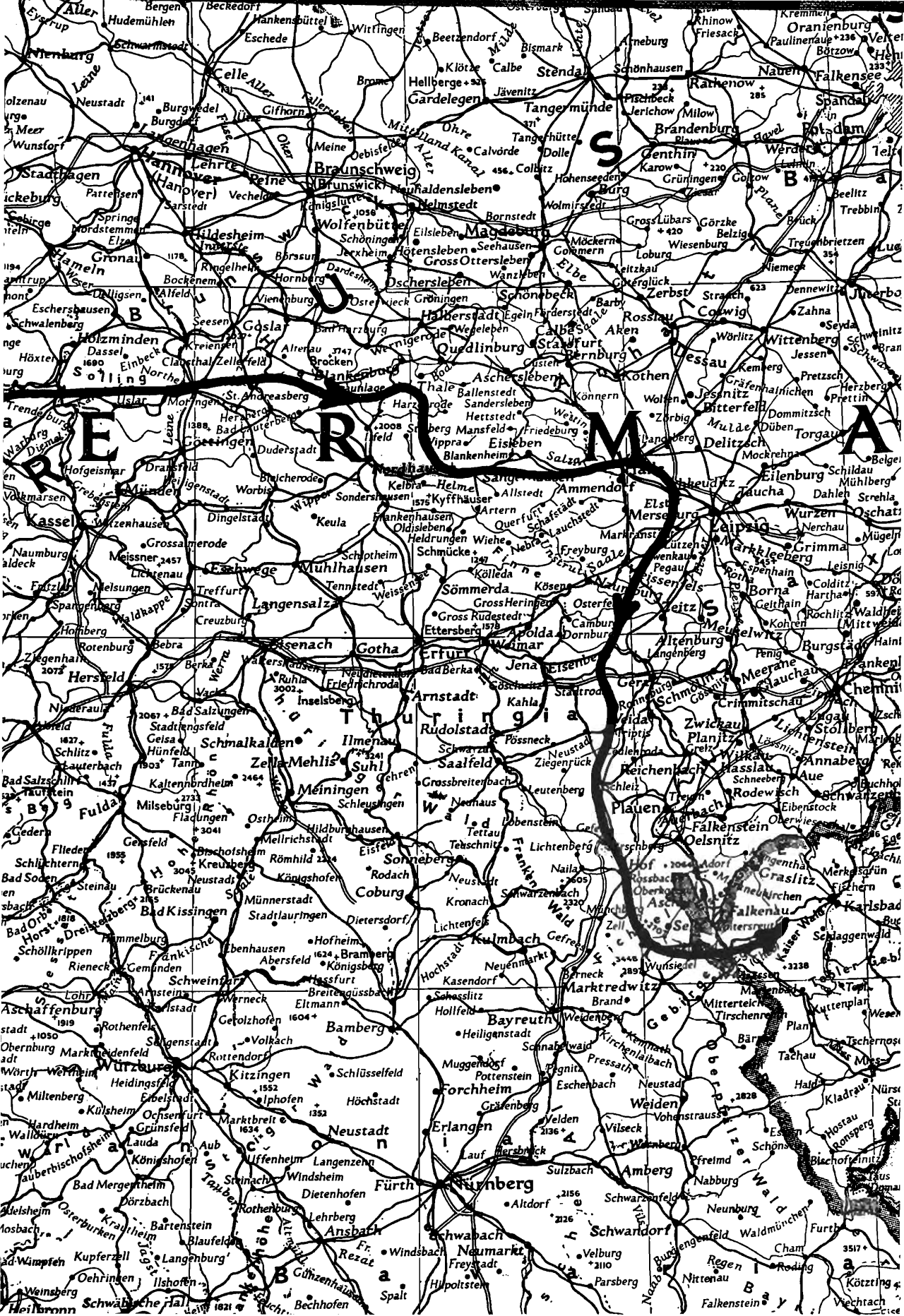
VOLUME II

December 1944 - May 1945



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R-10309

*Selected
Intelligence Reports*

December 1944 - May 1945



*Office of the A C of S, G-2
First United States Infantry Division*

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, 6 JUNE 1945

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HEADQUARTERS 1ST U.S. INFANTRY DIVISION

APO 1, U.S. Army

6 June 1945

SUBJECT: Selected Intelligence Reports, December 1944 — May 1945.

TO: Commanding General, 1st US Infantry Division.

1. The enclosed intelligence reports represent a consecutive account of enemy operations against the 1st US Infantry Division from 1 December 1944 through 9 May 1945 — in other words, the second half-year of operations on the European continent. The volume as a whole is intended to complement the report, previously submitted, of enemy operations from the landing on D-Day through the end of November.

2. The reports cover a remarkably wide latitude of operations and situations: the completion of the ditch-to-ditch drive to the Roer River, the German counteroffensive of 16 December and its subsequent compression, the crossing of the Roer River and the advance across the Cologne plain, the capture of Bonn, the operations in the Remagen bridgehead, the closing of the Ruhr pocket and the crossing of the Weser, the elimination of resistance in the Harz mountains and, finally, the end of the fighting in Czechoslovakia.

3. Since enemy operations only assume form when balanced by our own, the operations of the 1st Infantry Division have been included where necessary to bring out a more cohesive picture of the campaigns. Basically, these reports are the result of the work of regimental and battalion S-2s complemented by the attached intelligence teams.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "John H. Lauten". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

JOHN H. LAUTEN,

Major, G. S. C.

A. C. of S., G-2.

C O N T E N T S

PART I

LUCHEM	7
Enemy Breakthrough	9
The Big Picture	9
BUTGENBACH Ridge	11
Annexes	
Captured Photograph Captions	18
Captured Intelligence Estimate, 12th SS Division	19
Captured Letter — "We MARCH!"	21
Captured Combat Report	22

PART II

Choice of Action	25
Defense of the Salient	26
Annexes	
Battalion Order	34
3d Para Division Estimate of the Situation	35
Defense Order, 1055th Grenadier Regiment	36
Order of Col Liebach	38
Captured Interrogation Report	39
Interrogation Report	42

PART III

Second Breaching of the Siegfried Line	44
Defense of the Roer	46
Breakthrough	47
Annexes	
Interrogation Report	50
Captured Document	51
Interrogation Report	53

PART IV

Introduction: Crossing the Roer River	55
Collapse of the Rhineland	57
Fall of BONN and Crossing the Rhine	60
Bridgehead Operations	62

Breakthrough	67
Annexes	
Interrogation Report	69
Interrogation Report	71
Troubles in the Panzer Regiment	73
Interrogation Report	75
 PART V	
The Ruhr Locked Up	77
Retreat to the Harz	78
Defense of the Harz	80
Collapse	82
Cost Accounting	83
Annexes	
A General's Briefcase	86
Interrogation Report	90
Interrogation Report	92
Interrogation Report	95
Interrogation Report	96
Interrogation Report	98
 PART VI	
Unconditional Surrender	99
Annexes	
Incident on the Road	102
Interrogation Report	104
Interrogation Report	106
 PART VII	
"Bits and Pieces"	108

Part I

(1 December to 31 December 1944)

1. LUCHEM (1 December to 7 December)

On 1 December, after two weeks of arduous fighting, the enemy had succeeded in delaying the advance on the ROER River. At MERODE he had achieved a local success in holding the town and eliminating two companies which had entered it. On the other hand, he had lost HAMICH, HEISTERN and LANGERWEHE, the frame-work of his defenses before DUREN. In losing them, moreover, he had suffered serious losses in personnel and materiel, and, in spite of his efforts, the line on 1 December roughly paralleled the course of the ROER and the natural defenses of the terrain had been over-run.

This weakening tactical situation, however, in no way diluted the enemy's determination to hold what he had. The WENAU-MERODE road was a very sensitive point; any effort on the part of the Division to move down the road was met by heavy and concentrated fire, although the penetration of the 3d Battalion, 26th US Infantry north of the road met much lighter opposition. The Stutgerhof (a large farmhouse) east of LANGERWEHE was an equally troublesome point. A platoon from "G" Company, 18th US Infantry, which assaulted the house was pinned down by intense artillery fire and surrounded by enemy troops; after extremely bitter fighting on the part of rescue parties, ten of the men were pulled out. Enemy artillery, likewise, was at its high-water mark. It was estimated that the enemy had available, besides the organic artillery of the 3d Parachute Division, the remnants of the 12th and 47th Volksgrenadier Division's artillery, possibly that of the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division, as well as normal corps and Army artillery.

At the beginning of the period, it was believed that the 3d Parachute Division alone opposed the 1st Division's advance; the survivors of the 47th Volksgrenadier Division and of the 48th and 89th Regiments (12th Division) had been pulled out. Of the 3d Parachute Division, the 3d Battalion, 8th Regiment, was in position north of the Military Highway; the 2d Battalion extended the line to the south, with outposts in the Stutgerhof, and the 1st Battalion was in the line south of the Division sector. The 1st and 3d Battalions, 5th Parachute Regiment, were believed to be in position east of JUNGERHOF and west of MERODE, with the 2d Battalion in local reserve east of MERODE. The 9th Regiment was probably in division reserve somewhere in the vicinity of MERKEN.

LUCHEM was the next enemy strongpoint to be eliminated. It was reduced by a power play of infantry, tanks, TDs and artillery. On the morning of 3 December, LUCHEM was held by elements of the 2d Battalion, 8th Regiment, supported by a platoon of the 14th Company covering a road-block on the LANGERWEHE—LUCHEM road. A large part of the 12th Company was in the town, although some of its mortars were about 600 yards to the northeast. Altogether, the enemy with fairly good reason considered himself secure from attack. At 0600, 3 December, the 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, moved across the open ground between LANGERWEHE and LUCHEM, and entered the western edge of the town. There was no artillery preparation and the enemy was taken completely by surprise. As the infantry advanced they liquidated the road-block shutting off the LANGERWEHE road. At first light, tanks and TDs were moved into the attack, and with their arrival our artillery boxed in the area to prevent the bringing up of reserves. Although the enemy stubbornly defended his positions at the main crossroads, the town was cleared in the afternoon. More than 150 prisoners were taken. The prisoners said that the sudden appearance of our tanks had decided the question for them, further evidence that a few tanks may produce the German "hopeless situation" and consequent "honorable" surrender. During the attack on LUCHEM the enemy artillery, which might have been a weighty factor in the seizure of the town, was slow in taking up fire, possibly because its forward observers had been bottled up by our deceptive attack. It was not until later in the day that the enemy laid heavy fire on the town, and by then it was too late. Several American soldiers were recaptured; they said that the parachutists, before surrendering, had burned all valuable papers and destroyed their weapons; it was obvious all during the Division's contact with the 3d Parachute Division that the paratroopers' sense of security was far higher than that of the ordinary Landser.

The enemy's reaction to our seizure of LUCHEM started with reconnaissance patrols in the morning of 4 December. Shortly before dark in the afternoon, movement was observed in the area northwest of ECHTZ, and our artillery, preparing for a concentration, had just registered on the area when the first elements of the attack left the enemy positions and advanced on LUCHEM. In the subsequent disaster, only one PW was taken, and he believed himself to be one of the few survivors of his company, the 6th, which had been given the mission of retaking the town. The prisoner said that his battalion commander, a 1st Lieutenant who had been elevated from commanding the 5th Company the day before, had decided to take LUCHEM on his own initiative, spurred on "by desire for a Ritterkreuz". The 6th Company and one platoon of the 5th Company were ordered to assault the town, and after a short artillery and mortar barrage the men started across the open fields in line of skirmishers. They were fairly in the middle when the four battalions of artillery caught them. Some of them managed to struggle through to come to grips with the 16th US Infantry, but the back of the attack had been broken.

With the loss of LUCHEM enemy activity went on the descendant; artillery slackened off, and although large-scale movements were observed and attacked by our aircraft well behind the enemy lines, enemy activity in the forward areas was confined to minor reshuffling of troops and positions. The enemy's attention swung to the north, where he mounted an attack, supported by ten tanks, against LUCHERBERG, previously captured by the 104th Division. The attack was unsuccessful and did not spread to the Division area. This decline of activity continued, interrupted by patrolling on both sides, until 7 December, when the 1st Division was relieved by the 9th Division.

2. ENEMY BREAKTHROUGH (16 December to 31 December)

a. The Big Picture

On 16 December, the enemy, implementing a capability which had existed since the start of the Allied drive to the Rhine, launched a high-geared meticulously-planned counterattack on the center of the American line between MONSCHAU and ECHTERNACH. The ultimate objectives of this drive are still not clear: it is probable that the operation was designed as a monumental spoiling attack cutting off the Allied supply port of ANTWERP and communications center of BRUSSELS. In any case, the German people and the Wehrmacht were promised LIEGE and the Meuse, and in the PW cages during the early days there was considerable high talk of PARIS for Christmas. One of the primary objectives of the attack was the seizure of the enormous American supply dumps in the LIEGE, VERVIERS and EUPEN area; in fact, the continued impetus of the drive hinged on the capture of these supplies. Certainly the thrust was for more than a local counter-pressure; if its success could not win the war for the enemy, at least it could delay the Allies' winning for a depressing length of time.

The enemy's plan for the blow was carefully thought out and carefully disguised (See Annex 1). He picked the terrain — an unlikely spot and therefore lightly held. He waited for the weather, and for the first week his operations were blanketed in baffling fog. He built up enough supplies to catapult the initial momentum. And he gathered up all his strategic reserves, including the Sixth SS Panzer Army, and drove them through in a gamble that was far from unreasonable. Furthermore, beyond the normal means at his command he used every deception and surprise element he could conceive, labelling them collectively "Operation GREIF".

The plan was simple enough once the necessary force had been assembled. Detailed intelligence reports and estimates kept track of the American situation in the avenue of the proposed attack (See Annex 2), and it was plain that the one imponderable in the German planning was the mobility of the American forces which could be made available to block the drive. "Operation GREIF" had the mission of equalizing this factor. Roughly 700 parachutists dropped behind our lines would seize the important road junctions between EUPEN

and MALMEDY and block the American troops which could be counted on to be pulled from the north, where the main strength of the Allied Armies had been committed in the drive on the Rhine. In conjunction with the parachutists, special troops in American uniforms and equipped with American transportation and Sherman tanks would spearhead the German panzers to spread confusion behind the American lines and disrupt the organization of resistance. (These men planned to race toward the American rear, shouting "The Germans are 500 yards back!", to stall Sherman tanks at critical points in the American road net and, in general, carry on dozens of similar diversions). With the American ability to organize and strike back thus tied down, the panzers could get under way and move west. The preponderance of the weight was committed in the north with the Sixth SS Panzer Army; to the south was the Fifth Panzer Army, and below that was the Seventh Army with the mission of holding the southern flank and, eventually, the rear of the drive west and north. The two panzer armies were to advance, with eight panzer divisions in line, on a vast, simple turning movement: four SS divisions on the axis MALMEDY — LIEGE, and four army divisions on the axis MARCHE — NAMUR.

Four routes were allotted to the Sixth SS Army: "A" and "B" ran eastward through the MONSCHAU area and were for the use of the 277th, 246th and 326th Volksgrenadier Divisions breaking a way for the panzers on the northern flank. Routes "C" and "D" (and presumably other routes to the south) were to carry the Sixth Panzer Army, with the 1st SS Division heading west along the MALMEDY—STAVELOT line to reach the Meuse west of LIEGE, and the 12th SS Division to get on the LOSHEIM—BULLINGEN—BUTGENBACH—WEISMES—MALMEDY—SPA axis to hit LIEGE from the north.

Things went wrong, at least in the northern sector, from the start. On the night of 16—17 December, nearly 700 parachutists were dropped in the general area of the MALMEDY—EUPEN woods. They were, as established from PWs taken by the 18th US Infantry later, members of a special unit led by Col. Von der HEYDTE, and had been culled from various parachute divisions on a "volunteer" basis. Col. Von der HEYDTE himself was a veteran of the CRETE landings and a former holder of a \$ 16,000 Carnegie Fellowship for the study of international law in VIENNA. In spite of this distinguished leadership, however, the plan went awry. None of the paratroopers had been told of his mission, other than that further instructions would be given him once he landed. The NCOs only knew that they were to hold certain road junctions; beyond that they knew nothing. A cross wind and bad briefing of the JU 52 pilots scattered the units and their weapons and equipment over an area far wider than planned. Much of the equipment was lost during the fall and more was broken; the radios were knocked out and reorganization was sketchy. With no secondary mission, those paratroopers who managed to reassemble hid out in the woods, harassing isolated vehicles and taking a few prisoners. They were entirely unable to block the arrival of reinforcing troops (See Annex 3).

Meanwhile, to the south the 1st SS Panzer Division was going well, but the 12th SS had stalled east of BULLINGEN; the II Panzer Corps (2d and 9th SS Panzer Divisions) for some reason had not even tried to force a passage through the MONSCHAU area, possibly because of the failure of the Volksgrenadiers to break the crust. Still further to the south, however, the Fifth Panzer Army was doing very well, having completed its breakthrough on schedule. This success of mere Wehrmach troops was probably a matter of some chagrin to the superior SS men.

b. BUTGENBACH RIDGE (16 December to 31 December)

On 16 December, the 1st Infantry Division was in a rest area north of EUPEN. When it became apparent that the breakthrough was of major proportions, the Division was put on an alert; at 0300, 17 December, the 26th US CT was sent down to Camp ELSENBORN, on the northern flank of the breakthrough, to contain the enemy's drive and prevent it from spreading north. The Division, less the 18th US Infantry and elements of the 16th US Infantry, unmolested by Von der HEYDTE's parachutists, was in position 24 hours later. From that time to the end of the period the enemy's frantic efforts to break through by the BULLINGEN—BUTGENBACH—WEISMES route of approach to the dumps of SPA and VERVIERS were blocked by the Division.

It is impossible to overlook a startling parallel between this enemy operation (and the Division's reaction to it) and the enemy's attempted breakthrough at KASSERINE PASS in late February, 1943. At KASSERINE, the Division, in the Ousseltia Valley, was threatened by a major breakthrough to the south in the vicinity of FAID PASS. Here, the breakthrough south of MONSCHAU caught the Division in a rest area to the north. In both cases the enemy was spurred on by the hope of capturing supplies: TEBESSA in Africa, and the VERVIERS—LIEGE—EUPEN area in this drive. In both cases the 26th US Infantry was detached from Division control and sent out to hold the flank of the German spearhead, attached to II Corps in Africa and V Corps here. In both cases the Division turned back the threat, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy: on the 2d Panzer Division in Africa, and on three divisions (the 12th SS Panzer, 3d Parachute and 12th Volksgrenadier) here. And finally, in the case of Africa, the Tunisian campaign was over three months later.

The enemy attack in the north, around MONSCHAU and BULLINGEN, was slow in starting. On 17 December the enemy attacked MONSCHAU in some force, but was turned back by artillery fire; subsequent attacks, which did not seem to be pressed to the full extent of the enemy's potential, were likewise repulsed. Meanwhile the Germans occupied BULLINGEN and pushed patrols toward BUTGENBACH, failing to take advantage of the fact that our defenses had not yet completely congealed in the area: the first elements of the 26th US Infantry only reached Camp ELSENBORN to the north at

0700 hours, 17 December. Consequently, something of a race developed between the 26th US Infantry and the 12th SS Panzer Division for the occupation of BUTGENBACH, the next town on the projected northern route of the enemy. Before dark on 17 December the 2d Battalion, 26th US Infantry had taken over the town and was defending the high ground to the southwest against any thrust from BULLINGEN. The 16th US Infantry was on its way down from its bivouac area in the vicinity of VERVIERS to take up positions north of WEISMES; the 18th US Infantry remained just south of EUPEN on an anti-parachute mission.

During 18 December the enemy continued his attacks to reach his assigned road net from the east, putting heavy pressure on KRINKELT and ROCHERATH, and finally occupying these towns after the 2d and 99th US Infantry Divisions had been ordered to withdraw by V Corps. Preparatory to a full-scale offensive, the enemy probed our positions constantly during 19 December. The attacks grew in violence as the enemy tested our defenses from all sides with up to ten tanks and approximately a battalion and a half of infantry. During the day of 19 December no prisoners were taken who could identify the attacking units, but it is probable that they were elements of the 12th SS Panzer Division which was falling far behind in its failure to get on its route of approach according to the German over-all plan. With every day he delayed the enemy's opportunity of breaking the line and getting control of the ELSENBORN and MALMEDY roads lessened; during the day of 19 December the 18th US Infantry was moving south to take up a position in the line after sweeping the woods south of EUPEN for parachutists. During the hunt "K" Company ran into a sizeable force from the von der HEYDTE group dug in in the woods, but a large part of the group took off to the east and southeast during the night. Members of von der HEYDTE's ill-starred crew, in fact, kept showing up all over the area and turning themselves in to anti-aircraft units, supply installations and artillery positions; the whole venture was officially pronounced a fiasco when the colonel himself, trying to beat his way back to the German lines, called for an ambulance in the vicinity of MONSCHAU a few days later and asked to be evacuated. Although well aware of the failure of his mission, he asked the interrogator to notify him should the German radio announce that he had been awarded the Swords to the Knights Cross.

At 0225, 19 December, the first thrust at our positions southeast of BUTGENBACH was launched when 20 truck-loads of enemy infantry and several tanks hit "E" Company, 26th US Infantry; supporting artillery was called in and the attack faded out within an hour. Patrols from "E" Company later counted over 100 enemy dead in front of their positions. Later, at 1010, two tanks and about a company of infantry were observed moving in on the 2d Battalion positions from the south. The tanks managed to work their way up to our road-blocks where one of them was destroyed by 90 mm fire; the other

tank withdrew, but not before a bazooka team had damaged one of our 90 mms. The supporting infantry was disposed of handily by artillery fire. At the same time another attack in about the same strength thrust eastward from BULLINGEN; it, too, was dispersed with one tank destroyed. Other tanks, working their way toward WEISMES from the east and west, were turned back by intense artillery and mortar fire. Before dark two more forces, both of company size and supported by tanks, tried again to find a soft spot on the southern and eastern edges of WEISMES, with a complete lack of success. Altogether, the day was totally unproductive from the enemy's point of view; not only did he fail to sound a hollow spot in our defenses, but his attempts to do so were very expensive in both infantry and armor.

Nevertheless, with the 1st SS Panzer Division in serious straits to the west on account of the 12th SS Panzer's failure to clean up the north flank, and probably because it was clear to the most inflated SS ego that the campaign had stalled, the enemy continued resolute in his decision to force a passage to the north and west. He attacked on 20 December in greater strength but with no greater success. At 0615 the 2d Battalion, 26th US Infantry, reported contact with a heavy force of tanks and about a battalion of infantry. The attacking force was probably the 2d Battalion, 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, reinforced by additional infantry (possibly elements of the special parachute regiment attached to the 150th Panzer Brigade, part of "Operation GREIF") and supported by the 3d Battalion, 12th SS Tank Regiment. Although first contact with our forces was made just before daybreak, previously, as an extremely interesting captured document indicates (See Annex 4), the attack had suffered high casualties and had been confused by our intense artillery, mortar and small-arms fire. In spite of this initial disadvantage the attack was driven home hard and a slight penetration was made. By 0815, however, the attack had been completely repulsed, eight tanks had been knocked out and were seen burning (the number knocked out and not seen must have been considerably higher, according to the same captured report), and all Division positions had been restored.

While this attack was under way, another attack, possibly coordinated with the 12th SS, but more probably not, was coming in against our positions south of WEISMES. The unit engaged in this thankless task was identified as the 8th Regiment, 3d Parachute Division, old acquaintances from NORMANDY, LANGERWEHE and JUNGERSDORF. The parachutists had had, in fact, much the same history as the Division during the month. Relieved from the line in the Duren area on 15 December, they were sent back to a rest area near MUNSTEREIFEL to refit and re-equip. On 16 December they were alerted and sent to MODERSCHIED to hold the northern flank of the German breakthrough. On 20 December the 3d Battalion, 8th Regiment, was ordered to attack our positions in OBERWEYWERTZ from the south. According to the captain commanding the 11th Company, who was taken prisoner during

the fighting, the 11th and 12th Companies worked their way northward along the railroad track to the edge of the objective. There the captain was told by a civilian that the area was lightly held by American troops. The captain was not sure of the civilian's integrity and circled the town to the east, intending to take it by the main road. Our troops opened fire on him before he could group his forces for the assault and the two companies scattered. The captain said that a great many of his men had been killed; the 10th Company, which was to support the attack, never showed up after suffering heavy casualties from our artillery fire.

Although these and subsequent smaller attacks throughout the day of 20 December were unpromising from the enemy's point of view, the build-up in front of the Division positions continued, and it was plain that it presaged far more than continued local pressure.

On 21 December another assault was launched. Into it the enemy put everything he had at his command, as well he had to, for by this time his need to break through to the north and come to the rescue of the beleaguered 1st SS Panzer Division to the west was imperative. At 0130 the enemy opened up with machine gun and tank fire on the 2d Battalion, 26th US Infantry, positions southeast of BUTGENBACH; artillery was brought down and the attack was disposed of as another feint. At 0300, however, the enemy laid down an intense, concentrated artillery, nebelwerfer and mortar barrage. The battalion positions were blanketed, communications were reduced to radio and no contact at all was possible with the forward elements of the battalion, but when the inevitable follow-up thrust developed, our infantry was ready for it. Ten to fifteen tanks and approximately a battalion of infantry drove forward on the battalion positions. Artillery defensive fires were laid down (during the day the artillery fired nearly 10,000 rounds) and succeeded in putting a serious crimp in the assembly of the reserve and following troops. In spite of this disruption of his rear elements, however, the enemy drove his attack hard and a slight penetration was made. Five tanks which hit between "E" and "F" Companies, 26th US Infantry, got through our lines, but our infantry held fast and cleaned out the infantry following. The tanks which got through, although working on borrowed time, succeeded in pinning down the 2d Battalion CP with direct fire at a range of 75 yards and overrunning the "E" Company CP. Anti-tank guns near the battalion CP destroyed four of the tanks; the fifth got away. By 1140 hours the full force of the enemy assault began to abate and the situation in the "E" and "F" Company's area was being restored. The enemy, though operating under considerably reduced power after his rough handling, continued to try to force his way through our positions during the day. Late in the morning, a couple of tanks, spearheading the attack of approximately a battalion of infantry (again, probably the 12th SS) broke through the lines of the 1st Battalion, 26th US Infantry, but again was isolated. At 1430 hours another attack led by tanks hit "F" Company, but was so punished by our artillery that the enemy was not able to come to grips with our infantry.

After the full weight of the fighting was over it was possible, through the interrogation of the one prisoner captured (See Annex 5), to reconstruct the enemy's attack. This man said that the 9th Company, 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, had led the attack with the mission of taking BUTGENBACH with strong tank support; following in line were the 10th, 12th and 11th Companies. Leading the attack, the 9th Company suffered extremely severe casualties from our machine gun and small arms fire and withdrew, but the following companies pressed on with, in the end, no greater success and at an equal cost.

Although the 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was pretty well eliminated as a potential in the fighting of 21 December, the enemy continued to place the highest priority on cracking our defenses to allow him to roll up the BUTGENBACH road. On 22 December the 26th Panzer Grenadier Regiment was committed to succeed where the 25th had failed. For a while this new outfit, again with heavy tank support, almost succeeded. Tanks started north against the Division positions shortly after dawn, attacking from three points west of DOM BUTGENBACH; enemy infantry following the tanks managed to push our lines back. At 0940 hours an undetermined number of panzer grenadiers had forced through our lines, splitting "A" and "K" Companies, 26th US Infantry. Elements of the 18th US Infantry were committed to hold further penetrations, "B" Company, 26th US Infantry, advanced to restore the ground and "A" Company attacked due east to close the gap. Later, around 1600 hours, elements of the 18th US Infantry moved in and helped in retaking the ground. One tank was still behind our lines after the fighting was over, but managed to escape after dark.

This second attack, which was equal in intensity to that of the 25th Regiment the day before, was, in the end, equally disastrous to the enemy. Beyond his failure to reach the promised land of his northern road net, he lost well over twenty tanks and his casualties, although uncounted, ran into crippling figures. Patrols sent out on 23 December reported enemy dead as common as grass, with corresponding amounts of abandoned equipment. For the two days fighting it was estimated that the enemy lost more than 44 tanks — more than 44 since that number was actually seen and counted. The 26th US Infantry estimated that it had inflicted over 1,200 casualties on the enemy.

With the collapse of his plan to force his way north, the enemy subsided into the defense, bringing up infantry units to hold the line while he withdrew the 12th SS Division for repairs. Movement in front of the Division was heavy but undetermined in purpose; the most significant report of 23 December was that horsedrawn equipment was observed moving across the Division sector indicating the arrival of purely infantry units. Small attacks came in against the 16th and 26th US Infantry, but they were obviously intended as holding efforts rather than serious attempts at penetration. Two more enemy tanks were knocked out in the vicinity of BULLINGEN.

From 23 December to the end of the period the enemy continued to bring in infantry elements to replace his armor and to build up an artillery concentration, both field and anti-aircraft, southeast of BULLINGEN. Movement on the limited road net in front of the Division line continued heavy, and was taken under punishing artillery fire, but rather than indicating a new formation for an attack, it proved to be traffic supplying the deeper penetrations of the enemy salient, driven off the main roads by our air attacks. The Division prisoner count dropped to practically nothing; those who were taken were usually lost and snared on our minefields. Division patrols moving to the front were often able to penetrate 1,000 yards before contact, and from their reports it was evident that the enemy was digging in and preparing to defend. On 26 December, prisoners and documents indicated that the 3d Parachute Division still held the western flank of the Division's front; to the east it was believed that the 12th Infantry Division had moved into line.

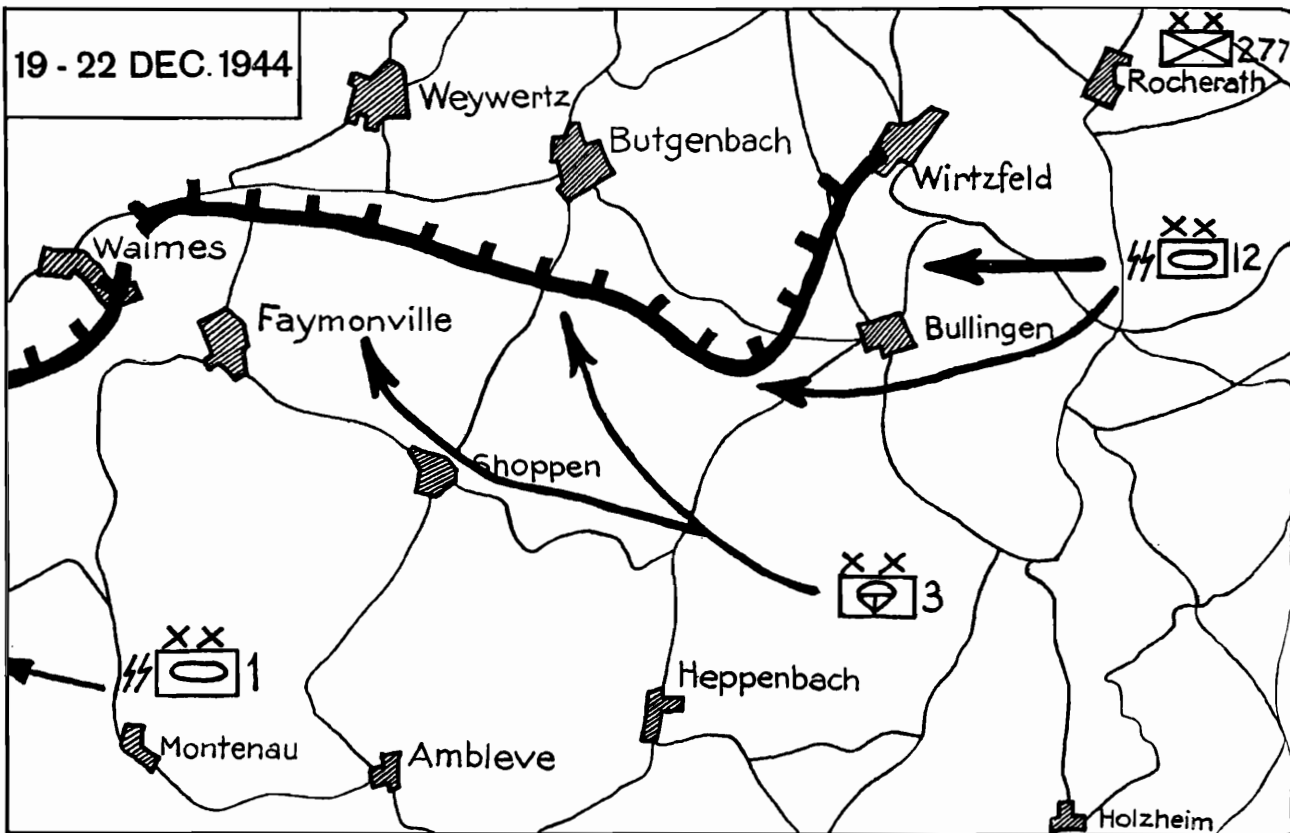
On 28 December, this belief was confirmed: shortly before dawn the 3d Battalion, 27th Volksgrenadier Regiment (12th Division) attacked the left flank of the Division positions after an intense artillery and nebelwerfer barrage. The plan was ambitious. The 1st Battalion, 48th Regiment, was to make a simultaneous attack to secure the high ground west of WIRTZFELD, and elements of the 246th Volksgrenadier Division, previously identified in front of the unit on the left of the Division, were to push through to ELSNBORN from the east. In spite of these elaborate plans the attack was a complete fiasco. The 3d Battalion, 27th Regiment, was taken under intense artillery fire during its approach march and a high percentage of the Volksgrenadiers reversed their field and moved rapidly to the rear. Some elements of the 9th Company and a handful of engineers from the 12th Engineer Battalion succeeded in infiltrating up the draw northwest of BULLINGEN; they remained ineffective during the day and were combed out by strong combat patrols before dark. The attacks of the 1st Battalion, 48th Regiment, and the elements of the 246th Division were equally discouraged, and the net result of the day's work was the capture of three men from the 53d Nebelwerfer Regiment which had supported the attack, thus giving a source for much of the nebelwerfer fire which had been falling on Division positions during previous days.

The failure of his last ambitious attack apparently convinced the enemy of the futility of trying to force his way through our defenses, for enemy activity to the end of the period, as reported by patrols, consisted only of busy digging and moderate counter-patrolling. The enemy continued to lay artillery fire on our forward positions and extended his efforts to interdiction of roads in the rear areas.

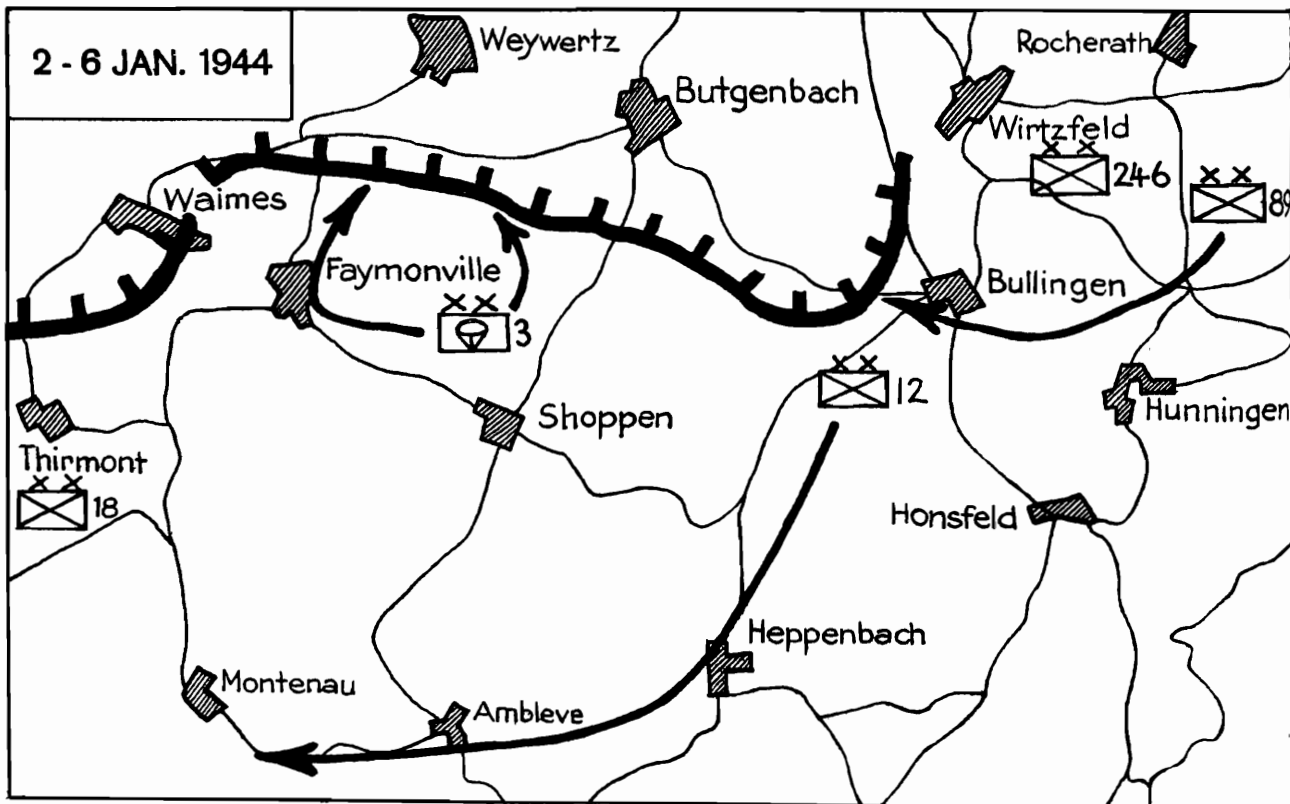
To what extent the stand of the 1st Division southeast of BUTGENBACH put a spoke in the wheel of the enemy's plan is an open question. Certainly the enemy, from the high priority he placed on getting through to the northwest and his successive all-out attacks, considered it of primary importance.

ELSENBORN RIDGE

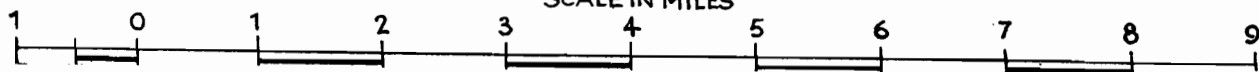
19 - 22 DEC. 1944



2 - 6 JAN. 1944

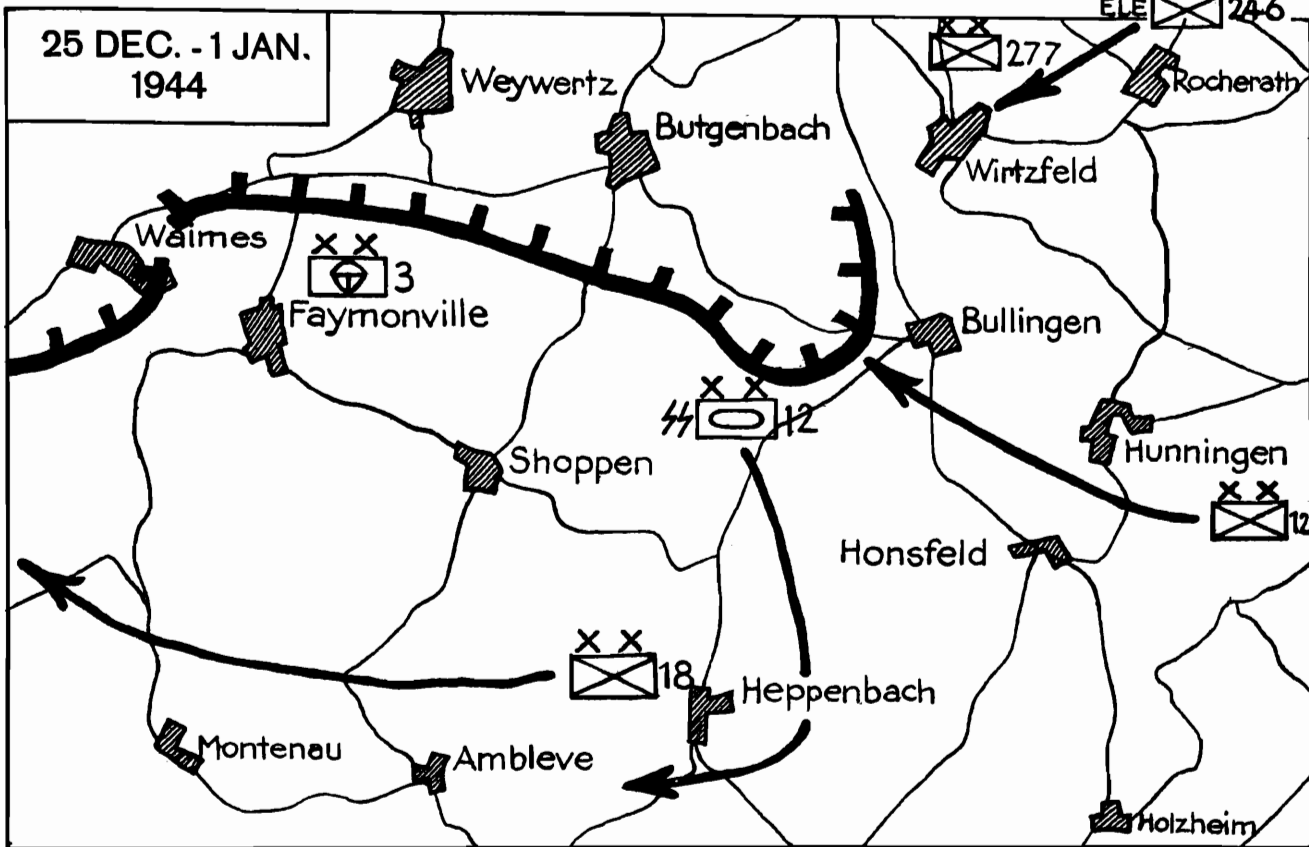


SCALE IN MILES

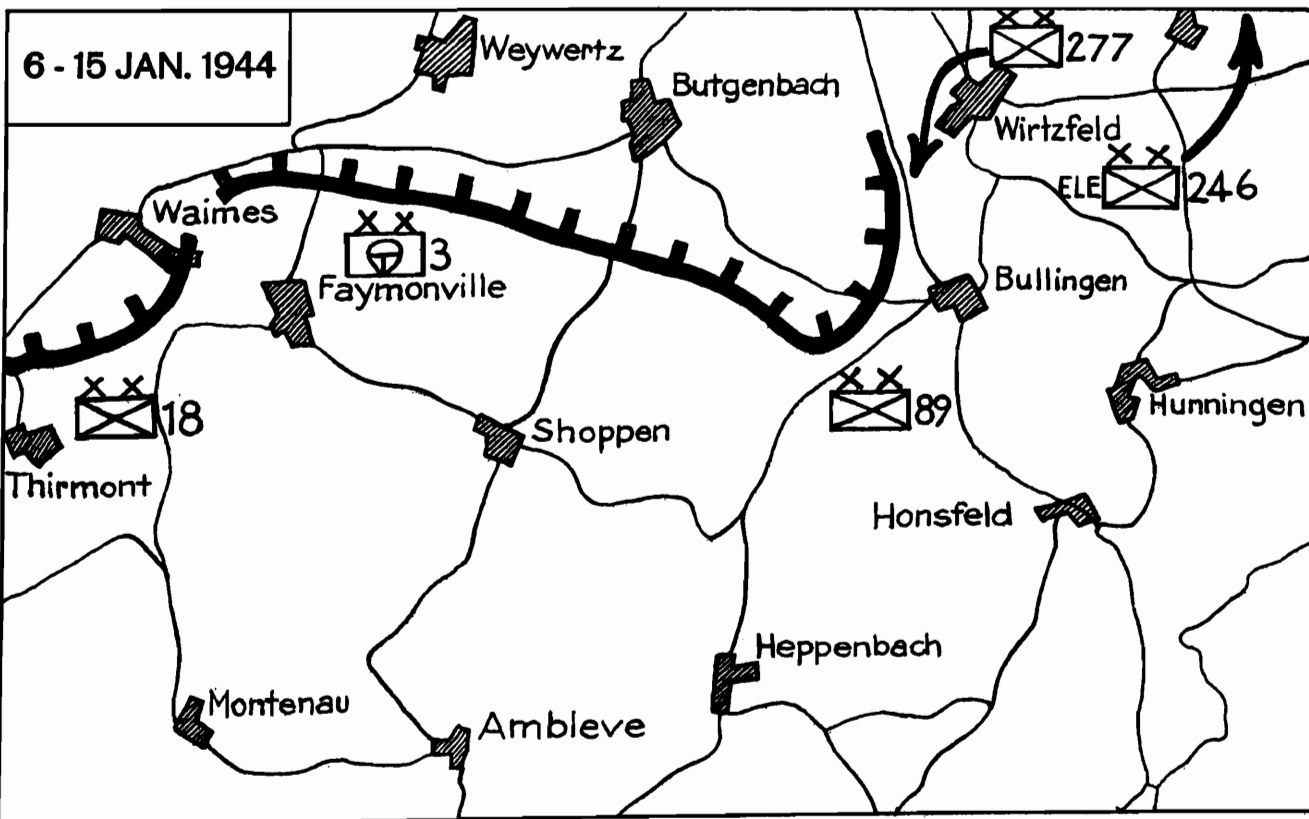


17 DECEMBER
15 JANUARY 1944

25 DEC. - 1 JAN.
1944



6 - 15 JAN. 1944



SCALE 1 : 100,000

The stand, moreover, was disastrous to the enemy in a negative way. On the positive side he had two regiments of one of his top-drawer SS panzer divisions ground down to a framework and lost up to 60 tanks in addition. On the negative side, however, he was unable to come to the rescue of the 1st SS Panzer Division caught in a vise in the STAVELOT—LA GLEIZE area by the 30th US Infantry Division. And, possibly most important of all, he was forced to rearrange his high-level plan completely, abandoning the idea of getting at the First Army dumps in the VERVIERS area. As a result, II SS Panzer Corps, which was to follow up the successes of the I Panzer Corps, was committed to the the south instead. With the 1st Division jutting out into the salient, the overloaded road net supplying the point of the thrust was further restricted in the radius of artillery fire. Altogether, the northern flank of the German penetration was not a matter of heart-warming satisfaction to the German High Command.

If the enemy had failed to gain his ground, certainly he had tried hard enough with every means at his command. Treachery and deception played an integral part in his plan. The tactics of the 150th Panzer Brigade (the power behind "Operation GREIF") were never fully successful due to greatly increased security measures taken by the Division. Although no established penetrations of Germans in American uniforms took place in the Division zone, an idea of the effectiveness of control can be had from the case of a strange officer from higher headquarters who got lost on his way to one of the regimental CPs and ended up on a road leading through one of the front-line company positions. Within an hour of the first alarm, the officer had been arrested four times and checked for identity. Treachery had an equally important part in the enemy operation. A number of American prisoners taken by the 1st SS Panzer Division southwest of MALMEDY on 17 December were disarmed and shot by their captors; more than 25 civilians were murdered in STAVELOT by the same unit. On 26 December a three-man enemy patrol entered the lines of the 16th US Infantry with the indication it wanted to surrender. It was discovered, however, that one of the enemy was carrying a machine-pistol behind his back. The patrol was eliminated.

Enemy artillery during the period was consistently strong, although it reached the intensity of the HAMICH Woods only on the few occasions before an attack. At the end of the period a considerable artillery build-up was still reported southeast of BULLINGEN.

During the operation the GAF put in an appearance in greater strength than the Division had encountered since the European campaign started. Enemy air attacks were frequent but not very productive; the highest number of enemy planes reported over the Division area at one time was 30. The enemy air situation was further confused by the appearance of American P-47s which committed hostile acts and were believed to be enemy-operated; it was later learned that the planes were American and that the fault lay with the pilots' briefing.

ANNEX 1

(Captured Photograph Captions)

Evidence of the enemy's long-range planning and elaborate preparations for his drive to the west is obtained from four reels of newsreel and propaganda films captured by the 16th Infantry.

The films were taken off a courier who had been dispatched from COLOGNE to the leading elements of the 1st SS Panzer Division to pick them up. He was to return to SCHLEIDEN, the CP of the division, but was captured enroute. Eventually the films were to be sent to BERLIN for development; instead, they have been forwarded to higher US headquarters.

With the films was following descriptive note:

Unit: 1st SS Div.

No. 85—88

*SUBJECT: "We Attack" LIGHT: Dark, rain
Develop and cut!*

s/ SCHAEFER

Contents and Captions:

1st SS "AH"

LIGNEUVILLE, Belgium, 18 December, 1944.

Battle Sector: Belgian Border.

Route: MUNSTEREIFEL, HALLSCHLAG, Belgian Border, BULLINGEN, six kilometers south of EUPEN—MALMEDY.

The attack started on 17 December across the Westwall, at 0530. The weather is extremely bad. A very heavy artillery barrage throws the surprised enemy out of his position. We follow up our attack day and night. Already plenty of PWs are being brought in during the early hours of the first day. Many guns and vehicles are being captured. Most of the American gun crews are surprised and killed at their guns.

REEL PICTURES

<i>230</i>	<i>1—4</i>	<i>The first surprised PWs come in during the early hours.</i>
	<i>6—8</i>	<i>Bridges demolished by the Americans are rapidly fixed by our engineers and we only stop for a few hours.</i>
	<i>9—11</i>	<i>Only four shots were fired from this US 75mm anti-tank gun; after that our tanks took care of it.</i>
	<i>13—19</i>	<i>New PWs stream back.</i>
	<i>20—24</i>	<i>Pictures from a vacated American tent city in the Eifel.</i>

- | | | |
|-----|-------|--|
| | 25—30 | New weapons and vehicles are captured —
And plenty of dead are left by the surprised
enemy. |
| 231 | 1—3 | Snapshots of the advance.
— Laughing drivers.
— Captured cigars are distributed. |
| | 4—8 | Scenes of the march through the Eifel mud. |
| | 9—13 | Pictures of the advance of the infantry.
From our SPs we have shot up many
US tanks, scoutcars, and supply vehicles.
1st SS Div attacking the Belgian Border. |
| 232 | 1—30 | Attack; captured vehicles, burned out US
tanks and vehicles. |
| 233 | 1—17 | On road to MALMEDY. |
| | 18—20 | CO of Reconnaissance Unit, SS Stbf. Knittel,
speaks to an officer. |

(Danger G-2 Note: Many of the photographs captured in this haul later received prominent attention in the Allied press.)

ANNEX 2

(Captured Intelligence Estimate, 12th SS Division)

12 SS Pz Div "HITLER JUGEND"
G-2 Section

Annex to G-3 Journal 1503/44
top secret

Div HQ 14. 12. 1944
TOP SECRET / III/25

Intelligence Report Page 1.
closed 14. 12. 44, 1200 hours

1. Enemy Strength and Organization.

In the first line of our own frontal sector the 99th US Inf Div has been identified. The Division covers the MONSCHAU-ORMONT sector (along the road bend 2 kilometers west of HOLLERATH) with 3 Regiments along a front of 30 kilometers.

At MONSCHAU the newly-arrived 78th US Inf Div is in position. This unit succeeded in penetrating the German defense lines with the intentions of reaching the ERFT reservoir. The 99th and 78th US Infantry Divisions belong to the V Corps of the 1st US Army. South of the 99th US Inf Div sector the 108th independent Cavalry Regiment is probably committed. It may be assumed that the operational reserves in the rear of the 99th Infantry Division consist of the 2d US Inf Div plus the 4th and 102d independent Cavalry Regiments. Furthermore those units, now in rest areas, which

have been relieved in the ROER sector, including the 1st US Inf Div, may be considered as operational reserves.

In this sector may be committed units of Division size from the reserve of the 9th Army now attacking in the JULICH area.

2. Enemy Operations.

In the sector of the 99th US Inf Div the enemy is in a defensive position. His defensive line in the sector in the sector HOFEN—HOLLERATH consists of strongpoints only, due to the wooded terrain, while in the area HOLLERATH—UDENBRETH and to the south a system of strong entrenchments has been identified. Due to the recent digging activities in the area HOFEN—HOLLERATH it may be concluded that his defense line will be strongly fortified. It may even be assumed that the enemy will commit his units south of MONSCHAU into the attack in the direction of the ERFT reservoir. (99th US Infantry Division.)

German prisoners of war are being used to dig entrenchments. A large number of dogs have been observed at many places. Apparently troops occupy all villages near the front. The American soldier is very careless in guarding his billets. In many instances the guards desert their posts at night.

Enemy artillery build-ups are apparent in three main areas:

In the area KRINKELT—NUNNINGEN (5 to 6 battalions).

South of MONSCHAU (approx 4 battalions).

At MANDERFELD (approx 4 battalions).

So far only harassing fire has been employed.

3. Evaluation of Enemy Units.

99th US Infantry Division activated 1942; in Europe since end of October; first combat experience middle of November . . . The 78th US Infantry Division is also a newly-activated infantry division without combat experience. These units in reserve areas which will probably be committed from their rest areas have suffered heavy losses during the battle in the sector west of the ROER. In spite of the fact that they are old and battle-experienced divisions it appears that the replacements are not of the desired caliber, since it has been learned that one of the divisions used members of a penal company as replacements.

4. Enemy Capabilities.

In view of his intentions in the area east of AACHEN, and the heavy losses sustained there, the enemy has occupied the EIFEL front only very weakly.

In order to secure this sector against German surprise attacks the relieved units from the ROER sector have been placed in rest

areas in the forward sector. These units are only capable of offering strong resistance against an energetic attack if the enemy succeeds in bringing to the south in a short time the operational reserves held in readiness for the ROER attack.

As learned from experience it is assumed that the enemy will not quickly recover from his unexpected reverses.

As far as terrain is concerned, the attackers as well as the defenders must cope with the heavy clay of the area HOHEN VENN and also the many rivers and rivulets which mostly flow from north to south. A good road net is available for troop movements in a north-south direction.

5. Enemy Airforce Employment.

In the area of Belgium and northern France, enemy can employ from 1700 to 1800 fighters and fighter-bombers. Besides, he has at his disposal units stationed in Holland and northeast France.

6. Partisan Activities.

At all times one must consider the employment of a Belgian — French Militia or members belonging to units of the "Armee Blanche". In this connection your attention is brought to the instructions about interrogation of civilians, which has been sent to the F. P. A. (lower unit interrogation).

For the 12 SS Pz Div "HITLER JUGEND"

First General Staff Officer

signed/ Illegible

ANNEX 3

The following letter was written by an eager SS man to his sister Ruth:

Eifel 16 Dec. 44

Saturday

Dear Ruth:

My daily letter will be very short-short and sweet. I write during one of the great hours before an attack-full of unrest, full of expectation for what the next days will bring. Everyone who has been here the last two days and nights (especially nights), who has heard the constant rattling of Panzers, knows that something is up and we are looking forward to a clear order to reduce the tension. We are still in the dark as to "where" and "how" but that cannot be helped!

Some believe in big wonders, but that may be shortsighted! It is enough to know we attack, and will throw the enemy from our homeland. That is a holy task! I do not want to talk or write much now-but wait and see what the hours ahead will bring!

*Overhead is the terrific noise of VI, of artillery - the voice of war.
So long now wish me luck and think of me . . .*

The following postscript was hurriedly scribbled on the back of the sealed envelope:

"18 December 1944 . . Ruth! Ruth! Ruth! WE MARCH!!!"

ANNEX 4

(Captured Combat Report, 3d Battalion, 12th SS Tank Regiment)

During the night of 19—20 December the 26th US Infantry received a heavy armored and infantry attack on its left flank. The attack, which started at about 2300 hours, continued in varying degrees of intensity throughout the night and until about 0800 hours. An hour later a second attack, at the time believed to be a continuation of the first, came in on the right flank of the 26th US Infantry. After the attacks had subsided, the 26th US Infantry estimated that it had knocked out six tanks.

During the morning of 24 December, a courier, apparently lost, ran across a minefield laid by the 16th US Infantry in a tracked motorcycle and blew up. The courier was carrying the document below. The report deals with the attack on the left flank of the 26th US Infantry, and it is evident that considerably more than the estimated six tanks were knocked out by our fire. The infantry mentioned is believed to be the 2d Battalion, 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment; the parachutists were probably from the special (z. b. v.) parachute regiment attached to the 150th Panzer Brigade. The later attack on the right flank of the 26th US Infantry was launched by elements of the 3d Parachute Division.

3d Battalion, 12th SS Pz Regt.

Bn CP, 23 Dec 1944

COMBAT REPORT FOR PERIOD FROM 18 to 23 Dec 1944

After the night attack on KRINKELT during the night of 18—19 December the battalion was ordered back to its starting position on orders from regiment. The battalion, less 11th Company, reached the highway in the wooded area vicinity point 639 and 672 at 2400 hours. 11th Company, which, together with 5th Company, had remained at the northeastern edge of KRINKELT for security, was also pulled back into the wooded area later during the night.

*Losses in the night attack: 1 Mark IV belonging to 10th Company became a casualty when it hit a mine.
1 Mark IV belonging to 11th Company was damaged by a Sherman tank during the night fighting in the town (damage to tracks).*

1 Officer of 11th Company was slightly injured by shrapnel.

Accomplishments: 1 Sherman put out of action by 11th Company; 10 prisoners taken. After replenishing its gas and ammunition supply, the battalion was to assemble at 0500 hours and start its advance on BUTGENBACH via LOSHEIMERGRABEN—BULLINGEN. Because of difficulties in connection with refueling and the clogged highways, the battalion's point reached the road near (left out of original) at 1200 hours.

The battalion commanding officer, together with his liaison officer, went ahead to BULLINGEN in order to reconnoiter terrain and situation and establish contact with elements committed there. After being briefed by Captain URABEL of 3d Battalion, 26th SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment, the battalion was oriented as follows by the commanding officer of the advance elements of the 12th SS Panzer Division, Major (Wehrmacht, not SS) MEIER:

"I reached BULLINGEN which had already been taken for one or two days. (The exact date slipped my mind; it can, however, be established by further inquiry). I was then stopped by my division in spite of my suggestion to penetrate to BUTGENBACH without delay, lest the enemy gain time to bring up reserves and establish a strong line of defense".

Major MEIER further explained that the enemy had strengthened himself continually during the preceding day, that he had dug in, and thus established a defense line in the vicinity north of BULLINGEN, DOM BUTGENBACH, to the edge of the woods southwest of DOM BUTGENBACH.

After the report concerning the situation at BULLINGEN had been given to the Regimental Commanding Officer in the Division Commanding General's presence, the latter gave instructions concerning further plans.

The alerted battalion moved in the following dispositions:

10th Company with Engineer Platoon
9th Company
11th Company
Parts of Headquarters Company

As the infantry reached its first objective west of BULLINGEN only at 2300 hours, the battalion started its attack at 2310 hours. In the darkness, the tank point, instead of advancing in a westerly direction, advanced towards the southwest; yet it was possible to halt it and direct it to the correct road. In the meantime, the liaison

officer had found out that the infantry was still on both sides of the road about 800 meters west of the road junction at the western entrance into BULLINGEN. Slowed down by the pace of the infantry, the attached paratroopers and mine detector squads, the point made halting progress only.

After the security lines of the infantry, paratroopers, and engineers already committed in that area, had been passed by about 220 meters, heavy anti-tank fire from the left, from the direction of DOM BUTGENBACH, as well as exceedingly heavy artillery and mortar fire was encountered. The infantry suffered most serious losses as a result of this fire and the accompanying heavy rifle and enemy machine gun fire. The attack failed before the point could be fully committed, as several vehicles were in bad shape because of artillery and mortar hits.

The company was withdrawn by the commanding officer, and the battalion was regrouped.

At about 0500 hours, the battalion, on both sides of the highway, renewed its attack with the 9th Company (Jagdpanther Tanks) as point. It penetrated the foremost anti-tank defenses, but the commanding officer and his tank were hit. The commanding officer took his burning command tank to the rear and took the command tank of 11th Company, which he led during the attack. In the meantime, 9th Company, in spite of extremely heavy anti-tank fire, had penetrated to the high ground west of DOM BUTGENBACH, and was engaged by superior enemy forces, which put three of eight tanks out of action. 9th Company, engaged in that vicinity, was exposed to extremely heavy artillery and mortar shelling.

The 11th Company, which had been brought up in the meantime, received heavy anti-tank fire from the right flank, and the command tank with the battalion commanding officer, received a direct hit and started to burn. Other tanks were damaged by artillery and anti-tank fire.

As 9th Company was unable to advance further, and the point was pinned down, the commanding officer decided to discontinue the attack. There was no further hope of success, and friendly artillery was unable to diminish the enemy's artillery fire.

The battalion was taken back into its starting positions. Refueling, repairs, and receipt of ammunition could not be accomplished in BULLINGEN as originally planned. For that reason (the enemy's artillery having zeroed in on the town), the battalion was taken two kilometers to the rear to the vicinity of TIEFENBACH.

Since very few elements of the battalion were left (3 Jagdpanther and 10 Mark IVs), they were consolidated under Captain WEWERS in order to take part in another attack on 21 December.

During that action, the battalion's liaison officer, Lieutenant FRITSCH, was killed by a direct anti-tank hit on his tank. Detailed reports about that action will have to follow, as Captain WEWERS has probably been killed and the situation will have to be cleared up through further inquiry.

The same is true of the attack of SCHOPPEN on 22 December 1944.
(Illegible Signature)

Part II

(1 January 1945 to 31 January 1945)

1. CHOICE OF ACTION (1 January to 15 January)

On 1 January the enemy was on an operational see-saw: his original plans of an unchecked drive to the MEUSE had been blocked to the west and his desperate efforts to enlarge his salient to the north by driving the 12th SS Panzer Division through the 1st Infantry Division and on up the BUTGENBACH-EUPEN road net had failed with serious losses. As a consequence, the 1st SS Panzer Division, farther west, had been cut off on its exposed right flank and very roughly handled. The enemy was rapidly losing the advantage of initiative in operations, but he still had sufficient forces to attempt to seize it again, although on a plan considerably revised from his original ambitious strategy. What he could do, and eventually, what he did was to bring in infantry units to hold the salient which he had won while he withdrew his striking forces, the panzer divisions, and assembled them for a new blow, possibly to the north toward LIEGE. (See Annex 1). But as so often in his planning, the enemy waited too long before initiating this policy. By the time sufficient infantry forces had been brought into the salient, his armored forces, regrouped in the center of the bulge, had to hurry off to answer the threat of the American penetration from the south in the vicinity of BASTOGNE. The idea of holding his gains by infantry, however, persisted, and on 1 January, a prisoner from a Volksgrenadier division was captured to the right of the Division sector.

On 2 January a battalion of the 27th Regiment, 12th Infantry Division, another old acquaintance from VERLAUTENHEIDE and GRESSENICH, was identified in the BULLINGEN area, and on 3 January the 1st Battalion, 1055th Regiment (89th Volksgrenadier Division) was located south of DOM BUTGENBACH and the 2d Battalion in the BULLINGEN-WIRTZFELD area. It was probable that the 27th Regiment had dropped off on its way west to protect the stalled panzers and that 1055th Regiment had been moved into the area to hold the line permanently. In any case there was no question but that the enemy was implementing his capability of trying to hold the line he had gained with infantry while he regrouped his panzers elsewhere for either a concerted attack, or, failing that, an integrated withdrawal. (See Annex 2). It was evident from the activities of the enemy infantry units

facing the Division that they held no idea of attacking in force. Our patrols, which were active and frequent, reported that the enemy was digging in, putting up wire and constructing dugouts.

By 5 January the enemy position had become more or less stabilized, with the 1st Battalion, 9th Parachute Regiment on the extreme left flank of the 3d Parachute Division (one company held THIRIMONT), the 8th Regiment to the east extending to within 1,500 yards of the road from MORSCHECK to DOM BUTGENBACH, and the 1055th Regiment carrying on from there, through BULLINGEN to WIRTZFELD. Elements of the 5th Parachute Regiment, believed to be in strategic reserve, were identified in VIELSALM on 7 January, but prisoners captured on the Division front later in the fighting said that the main body of the 5th Regiment had relieved the 8th Parachute Regiment on 7 January.

2. DEFENSE OF THE SALIENT (15 January to 30 January)

In the early morning of 15 January, the 1st Infantry Division, with the 23d Combat Team attached, jumped off from positions which had been held since the 12th SS Panzer Division had tried to force a passage north at the beginning of the German breakthrough. The attack was the reverse swing of the pendulum: the Division was attacking to the south to close off the ambitious enemy salient. During the time between the German breakthrough and the Division's attack to the south the enemy had seen his best forces shot up, his reserves committed, his drive curbed and turned and his main power slowly draining away by attrition, lack of gasoline and the paralyzing rigors of winter. By the middle of January he no longer had the initiative of attack; his most pressing concern, in fact, was to get what he could of his indispensable panzer divisions off the hook. To accomplish this it was imperative that the shoulders of his original salient be held firm. He could not allow any reduction of the mouth of his bulge, since his road nets, clogged with traffic and blocked with snow, were already carrying capacity movement. The loss of any roads at all would be disastrous.

It was into this situation that the 1st Infantry Division attacked on 15 January. The enemy's strategic position forbade a slow and organized withdrawal; he had to hold the ground he was on and hold it to the last man. Over and above any reaction by the enemy, however, was the difficulties of the terrain and weather. Both presented conditions which were almost insurmountable. The terrain comprised a series of high ridges and deep draws, usually heavily wooded. These obstacles, difficult enough in themselves were greatly increased by the weather: a deep snow, over a foot and a half on the level and running as high as five feet in drifts, covered the area. The ground was frozen, making it extremely difficult to dig sufficient cover. The temperature hovered around 20 degrees and the wind was strong and cutting. The weather was so bad, in sum, that during the engagement PWs often expressed surprise that the Division had been able to attack at all. The only

advantage that the weather presented, and it was a somewhat left-handed one, was that the Division was often able to achieve surprise because the enemy did not believe that an attack was possible under the prevailing conditions.

It is hard to say whether or not the initial attack came as a surprise to the enemy. (See Annex 2.) Prisoners taken later said that their officers had told them that the Americans would attack on 15 January; it was front-line gossip, and the report may have had its origin in "Operation GREIF". On the other hand they said that the attack without artillery preparation certainly was unexpected. Probably as a result of the first report, a strong combat patrol, numbering over 50 men attacked the 16th US Infantry positions after midnight, and was only driven off by 0430 hours. Shortly afterwards the Division jumped off all along the line, with the 23d US Infantry on the right, the 16 US Infantry in the center and the 18th US Infantry on the left. The 23d US Infantry was to take STEINBACH and REMONVAL, the 18th US Infantry was to take the high ground about 1400 yards south of their line of departure, and the 16th US Infantry was to seize FAYMONVILLE. The first and all-encompassing obstacle was the snow. Complete mine detection was next to impossible and in at least one case a tank was knocked out by one of our own mines, buried so deeply in the snow that it did not register on the detectors. The attacking infantrymen found the going as difficult as wading through waist-high water. A man carrying his equipment could go no more than 300 yards without stopping for a rest. All across the front progress was slow.

On the eastern end, the 23d Infantry, moving out from positions near WEISMES, labored over the difficult terrain to take STEINBACH and REMONVAL against enemy resistance. REMONVAL was held by about 120 men from the 3d Battalion and part of the 2d Battalion, 9th Parachute Regiment; the enemy in STEINBACH numbered about 100, with an equal number on the hill southeast of the town. The approaches were well mined and difficult to detect: 56 mines were probed at one point near the underpass, and two tank destroyers and one tank were lost. In spite of the fact that the enemy controlled all observation and had ideal fields of fire, the two towns were taken by 1900 hours, as well as a bag of more than 100 prisoners.

In the center of the line, the 16th US Infantry pushed towards FAYMONVILLE, but was stopped cold north of the town; the 3d Battalion moving to the east, got into a hornets' nest in a patch of woods east of the town, which was only cleaned out by "K" Company after a hard and bloody struggle. Later, however, the 1st Battalion was able to push the enemy out of the northern part of FAYMONVILLE, which was held by the 2d Battalion, 9th Parachute Regiment. (See Annex 4). By nightfall, the 16th Infantry held about half of the town, but the enemy at first showed no disposition to vacate his end without forcible ejection.

On the Division's left flank, the enemy was giving the 18th US Infantry serious trouble from well emplaced positions on KLINGELBERG and the hill

to the south. "L" Company, advancing to the south was caught by daylight in front of the enemy's MLR, and the 1st Battalion, 5th Parachute Regiment on the high ground was able to cut the company to ribbons. By 1125 hours the company's attack had been broken and the company was forced back to its original positions. Casualties were heavy; one officer and 25 men were wounded; one officer and 42 men missing.

The first day of the attack emphasized the difficulties imposed on supply and evacuation which were, indeed, as dogged as the reaction of the enemy himself. Jeeps were almost useless in the snow; the only vehicle which could negotiate the drifts, in fact, was the Weasel, and there were not enough of them: only one to a battalion. Evacuation was particularly difficult and made more so by the fact that unless casualties could be evacuated within a few hours the chances of the wounded, if seriously hit, were pretty slim. It is probable that a large percentage of the men listed as missing were not captured by the enemy but had fallen when hit and had been covered over by the snow.

The attack, however, continued. The enemy facing the 23d US Infantry had retired south of the AMEL River to take up strong defensive positions on the south bank. As the deployed troops of the 23d US Infantry pushed on down to the river bank they were subjected to intense small arms and mortar fire, but in spite of heavy casualties, the 2d Battalion managed to reach the near bank. But the position was untenable; exposed to direct fire from the other side, the troops were being decimated. After dark on 16 January the battalion pulled back to the high ground southwest of ONDENVAL.

In the center sector of the 16th US Infantry it was found that the enemy occupying the southern half of FAYMONVILLE, in spite of a show of force earlier in the night, had withdrawn to the south. By 0915 hours the town was open and the high ground taken to the south. Enemy resistance stiffened almost immediately, however. As the 2d Battalion, 16th US Infantry pushed on down the road to SCHOPPEN, with "F" Company leading, intense small arms fire, supported by self-propelled guns, was laid on the advancing troops from the town. The condition of the road prevented friendly tanks from being brought up, and it is doubtful that they would have had much effect anyway: the enemy was firing from hull-down positions and had the road covered and zeroed in from several directions.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion, 5th Parachute Regiment, facing the 18th US Infantry on the right, continued to resist any attempts to push further south, a resistance that was considerably aided by artillery support that resembled that of HEISTERN and VERLAUTENHEIDE ridge. An attempt to take the ground at 888014 was turned back, although other elements of the 18th US Infantry managed to push through the snow east of the KLINGELSBURG draw. To the east the 1055th Regiment, 89th Volksgrenadier Division was identified holding the northern edge of the woods

from 903017 to 921017. In spite of the artillery concentrations laid on the 18th US Infantry, enemy artillery over the whole front showed a substantial decrease from the day before, when more than 1,700 rounds were reported. The reduction was believed to be the result of the 3d Parachute Division artillery moving to more secure areas.

The next day, 17 January, the first offensive enemy reaction to the attack of the 18th US Infantry hit "K" Company at 888018; about 40 men from the 1st Battalion, 5th Parachute Regiment, supported by two tanks, attacked and were repulsed. Later elements of the 18th managed to push to the southern edge of Hill 566 and to the high ground north of SCHOPPEN. Enemy artillery was intense.

On the other end of the front enemy mounted a major counterattack to break up the drive of the 23d US Infantry (with 1st Battalion, 18th US Infantry attached) through the ROHR BUSCH, 865990. About 200 men from the 8th Parachute Regiment (160 of whom were replacements fresh from Holland), plus 60 men from the 13th Company, 9th Regiment, and 30 men from the 3d Parachute Division Reconnaissance unit, launched their attack supported by five to seven self-propelled guns. The attack came in at 0730 hours, just before the 23d US Infantry was to launch its own attack to clear the woods, and raged back and forth through the woods until noon. Extremely heavy casualties were inflicted on the enemy; at least two-thirds of the attacking force was killed, captured or wounded, and by 1400 hours the remnants of the enemy began pulling out to the south.

While this fight was going on, the 1st Battalion, 18th US Infantry, attacking the elements of the 1st Battalion, 9th Regiment plus the 15th Company, 8th Regiment and the reserve companies of both regiments which were holding the pocket south of the AMEL River, cleaned the force out of the woods. The complete surprise of the attack from the south resulted in the captured of three 88mm guns, four 105mm howitzers, a half-track and an ammunition dump. (See Annex 6). These two actions on the western flank of the Division sector netted a total of 236 prisoners for the day. To the east the 16th and 18th US Infantries continued to work their way south under heavy artillery fire.

On 19 January four more enemy-held towns were taken in the worst weather of the battle. EIBERTINGEN, the first, was defended by a force of about 130 replacements and stragglers from the ROHR BUSCH. Entrance to the town was blocked by a large number of wooden box mines. Self-propelled guns and one tank were in the town, which faced the attacking 23d US Infantry, and it was only after heavy artillery concentrations forced the enemy to fall back into the town that infantrymen were able to move forward and seize several houses on the northern edge. The enemy counterattacked immediately, and bitter hand-to-hand fighting resulted, but by 1400 hours the enemy troops began to pull out toward DEIDENBERG. One hundred prisoners

were taken and more than 35 enemy dead were counted in the streets. MONTENAU and IVELDINGEN, also taken by the 23d US Infantry, put up less resistance, and only 22 prisoners were taken from the two towns. The most effective resistance was put up by a nine-man strongpoint from the 5th Company, 352d Regiment in IVELDINGEN; the same group was later encountered in MONTENAU after they had been forced back.

With the line on 20 January running roughly on the axis DEIDENBERG—EIBERTINGEN—SCHOPPEN, the division attack held up, except for readjustment of the lines and mopping up of stubborn areas. Most stubborn of these was the BUTGENBACHER HECK, where elements of the Fusilier Battalion, 89th Volksgrenadier Division, and the 1st Battalion, 1055th Volksgrenadier Regiment were deeply and skillfully dug in. Division troops succeeded in clearing about 800 yards of the northern edge of the woods in the face of extremely heavy small arms and artillery fire and the relentless weather and terrain. On other sectors of the front the enemy took advantage of the breather to reorganize his shattered forces and feverishly erect defenses. He was anxious to learn our intentions. (See Annex 5). Division patrols heard digging and construction work all along the front as the enemy tried to bring a coordinated resistance line out of the chaos. This activity, with concomitant stubborn defensive action on the part of the enemy troops in the BUTGENBACHER HECK, continued to 24 January. It was clear from patrol reports that the enemy intended to make an MLR on the east bank of the MODERSCHIED River, with an outpost line on the western bank.

During 24 January, the enemy's MORSCHHECK position, which he had captured in the early stages of his December offensive, was retaken. The MORSCHHECK crossroads, possibly the best organized of the enemy's defensive positions, and probably where he least expected an attack, was held by the 1st Battalion, 1055th Regiment. The force was divided by the attack of the 18th and 26th US Infantries, and our troops, achieving this breakthrough by surprise, continued to push on south and southwest against stubborn but disorganized resistance. Coincidentally, the enemy positions in the BUTGENBACHER HECK were heavily attacked and the enemy was forced to withdraw from the northern part of the woods. A high number of prisoners were taken from the 1st Battalion, 1055th Regiment, which held the eastern part of the woods as well as the crossroads, and the 2d Battalion which was deployed to the west. Our troops pushing south from the crossroads position reached MODERSCHIED shortly before dark. Our positions in the vicinity of the crossroads were counterattacked by the 2d Battalion, 1056th Regiment, which had assembled in HEPSCHIED, but effective artillery fire beat the attack off. A second attack by 50 enemy was similarly handled. MODERSCHIED itself fell after a brief struggle when the 3d Battalion, 5th Parachute Regiment, pulled out toward HEPSCHIED at dusk. A total of more than 280 prisoners were taken during the day.

On the next day, 25 January, the enemy was cleared from the ridge southwest of MODERSCHIED and the towns of AMEL and MIRFELD were taken. The 2d Battalion, 1055th Regiment, encircled in the BUTGENBACHER HECK managed to extricate only a limited number of its personnel to HEPSCHIED to organize another line of defense. The 3d Parachute Division, which had been holding the MODERSCHIED—MIRFELD—AMEL line apparently withdrew to the HEPPENBACH—VALENDER area, a move that was reported by several PWs and civilians. The outposts left in the two towns were captured when our forces took advantage of the withdrawal and attacked, not from the southwest as the enemy expected, but from the northeast. The only enemy reaction to this operation was to move a force of about 50 or 60 personnel north from HEPPENBACH to HEPSCHIED, but if he had any idea of an attack it was discouraged by our intense artillery fire.

During the next two days, 26 and 27 January, as the Division attack halted, the enemy activities were confined to further work on his defenses and counter-patrolling. On 27 January two of our outposts, one about 1,000 yards west of HEPPENBACH and the other on Hill 625 (939008) were pushed back by stronger enemy forces, but the latter outpost was retaken after a heavy artillery concentration had driven off the enemy.

On 28 January, however, HEPSCHIED, HEPPENBACH and VALENDER were cleared of the enemy, and our troops, taking advantage of the enemy's disorganization, pushed rapidly up the HEPSCHIED-HONSFELD road to Hill 620, about 1500 yards west of HONSFELD. This move apparently caused the enemy to believe his troops in the REIGELSBUSCH were being encircled; at any rate, the enemy in the area pulled back to the HONSFELD area, and when the woods were taken by our forces, only a few stragglers remained. A total of 257 prisoners were taken during the day's operation. HEPSCHIED was held by the remnants of the 1055th Regiment and elements of the 5th Parachute Regiment; the rest of the 5th Regiment held HEPPENBACH. In both areas the enemy had taken advantage of the hiatus in the Division's attack, and well-constructed fortifications were encountered. The flanking position to the north in the REIGELSBUSCH was held less firmly by the 2d Battalion, 1056th Regiment, and a strong position in the patch of woods about 1,000 yards west of HEPPENBACH was outposted by a force of about 40 men from the 48th Parachute Regiment under a Lt SPRENGER. In spite of these precautions, however, the fighting in HEPSCHIED was over as soon as our tanks penetrated the town. Fighting in HEPPENBACH was more severe: our tanks got stuck in the snow and the initial assault was by infantry alone. With the taking of HEPPENBACH, our troops moved along the road to HONSFELD, encountering small resistance, but eventually clearing the enemy as far as Hill 620. Battlegroup SPRENGER was eliminated when our tanks were able to advance far enough to bring the woods under direct fire. It appeared that the 2d Battalion, 1056 Regiment had pulled back to HONSFELD and was holding the

town. To the north, BULLINGEN, the base of the attack of the 12th SS Panzer Division in December, was finally cleared of enemy after stubborn fighting in the southern and western parts on 29 January. The town was held by the 3d Battalion, 1056th Regiment, from which more than 200 prisoners were taken. Prisoners said they had no warning of the attack until it had actually closed in, but in spite of this surprise, the elements in the outskirts put up a stiff fight before the added support of our tanks discouraged them. Whatever was left of the 3d Battalion, 1056th Regiment pulled out toward MURRINGEN. Along the rest of the Division front the enemy was inactive.

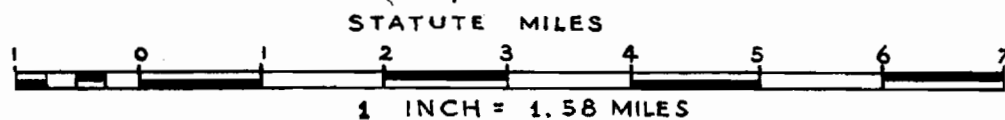
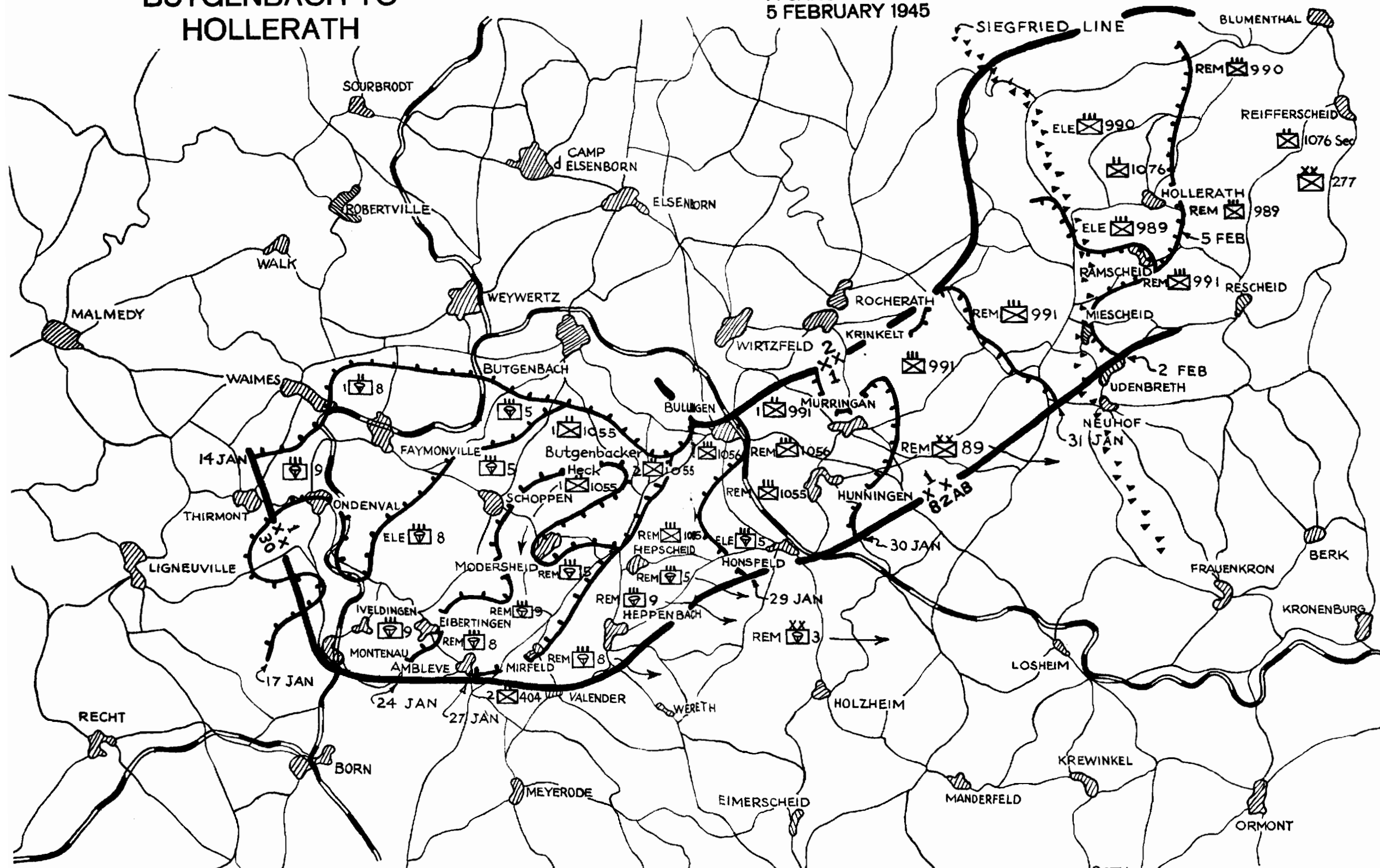
3. WITHDRAWAL TO THE SIEGFRIED LINE (30 January to 31 January)

MURRINGEN, HUNNINGEN and HONSFELD, the last enemy-held towns in front of the German border, fell to the 1st Division on 30 January, after moderate fighting which netted nearly 350 prisoners. The attrition which the enemy had been suffering since the start of the Division attack on 15 January was noticeable in his defense of the towns; although he had excellent defensive terrain around the villages, he was unable to round up enough men to defend them to their full capabilities. In MURRINGEN were elements of the 1st Battalion, 991st Regiment, 277th Division, and also elements of the 1056th Regiment. What was left of the 5th Parachute Regiment (combined under a Battlegroup NOETH) defended HONSFELD, and HUNNINGEN was held by the discouraged remnants of the 2d Battalion, 1056th Regiment and about 80 men from the 89th Fusilier Battalion. Coordination between the various defending forces was not complete, and the Division attacked with such force and speed that HONSFELD was taken shortly after 0300 hours, 30 January. The attack against HUNNINGEN got under way at 0800 hours under bitter resistance at first, but as the enemy began to withdraw an hour later, he was taken under effective mortar and artillery fire. Coincidentally the attack against MURRINGEN proceeded with our troops moving in from the east and northeast. The enemy was taken by surprise and by dark our forces had outposts on the high ground well to the east of the town. It was apparent that the enemy had withdrawn a considerable distance to the east. Above the resistance of the enemy, however, was the continued heavy snow and rough going which hampered the Division's movement. In spite of this obstacle, the Division continued its push to the east, and enemy screening forces were pushed back from the approaches to the high ground northeast of the HOLZWARCKE River on 31 January. The only severe fighting during the day developed around the crossroad (005052), which was eventually taken.

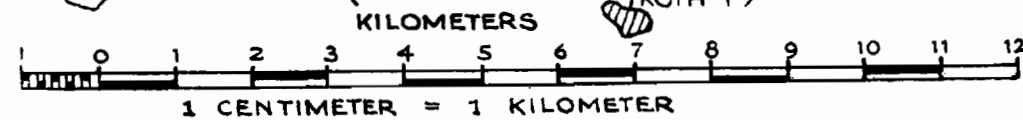
The fighting during January marked the grand deflation of the enemy's ambitious plan of 16 December. At the beginning of the month, though his drive to the east had been bent, he had the intention of holding what he had with infantry divisions, while he regrouped his panzers. At the end of the month he had been forced to give up even this compromise measure: the divi-

BUTGENBACH TO HOLLERATH

14 JANUARY TO
5 FEBRUARY 1945



SCALE 1:100,000



sions which he had left to hold his salient were sacrificed, and his whole attention was devoted to pulling out everything not urgently needed to the comparative safety of the Siegfried Line. The effects of this policy were seen on the Division front. The 3d Parachute and 89th Volksgrenadier Divisions, attacked, mauled and cut to pieces, were not relieved, nor were they reinforced beyond a trickle from Holland. The effect of the Russian advances in the east on the enemy's policy in the west cannot, of course be assayed, but it unquestionably forced major changes in the plan of holding west of the Siegfried Line. Prisoners taken by the Division after the Russian offensive had got under way indicated the official German information still controlled the reports from the east, but that grapevine rumor had given the prisoners a fairly accurate knowledge of events. The general attitude in the cage was, "Why not let the Americans advance? Our real enemies are the Russians."

In spite of this dispiritedness which was evident in some cases, the enemy put up a bitter, exhausting fight for the ground that he held. At no point did he retreat without pressure, no matter whether he held good or poor defensive terrain. The higher enemy policy of selling every foot of space for time was evident in the month's operations, and during the first days of the attack, the enemy had considerable success with his plan, although at shattering cost in personnel and equipment. His losses were indeed severe. By 31 January, the 3d Parachute Division, in its original form, was virtually non-existent outside of scattered battlegroups. The same was true of the 89th Volksgrenadier Division, and the dissolution of the 277th Division was in progress.

One element which aided the enemy in his delaying defense (though it operated against him by increasing his losses) was the bitter weather. Terrain which would have been a minor problem in supply and evacuation during the summer presented almost insoluble problems under a two-foot cover of snow. The progress of the infantrymen through this obstacle was painfully slow. Points had to be changed every 75 to 100 yards. Machine gunners and mortar-men were barely able to move at all. Moreover the temperature added its weight to the difficulties. Frostbite and freezing were common. Radio mouth-pieces froze; signal wire froze and broke. Laying wire at all was extremely difficult and repairing a break almost impossible. A wire crew from the 16th Infantry worked for six hours to locate a break in 1,000 yards of wire buried under four feet of snow. Evacuation of wounded was equally serious, when only a Weasel was able to cover the ground. Mines were very hard to locate, and in one case an invaluable Weasel was destroyed travelling over a cleared road: the snow had been packed down just enough by the traffic to allow the weight of the vehicle to detonate the mine. Since most of the terrain covered by the Division in its advance was open ground, there were no villages or houses to shelter the troops. Many of the advance companies spent two or three successive days with no more shelter than they could dig for themselves in the frozen ground. Altogether the month's operations were as difficult as any in the Division's campaigns.

ANNEX 1

(Battalion Order, 2d Battalion, 9th Parachute Regiment)

2d Bn, 9 Para Regt
S-3

CP, 5 January 1945

Battalion Order No 3/1945

It seems that the enemy has penetrated more deeply west of STAVELOT. Counter-measures are being undertaken. However, there remains the constant capability that the enemy will attack on our division front, in order to tie down our troops or even to force a breakthrough. The small-scale attacks which the enemy undertook on the 4th of January must be considered as feints for the main attack in the STAVELOT-MARCHE sector. The division expects the enemy to undertake several small-scale attacks in the next few days. It is a constant necessity, especially during the hours of dawn and dusk, to have reserves available, to improve defensive dugouts, and to have constant and adequate communications with the artillery forward observers.

According to an order from the 3d Parachute Artillery Regiment, dated 2 January 1945, the division artillery is also responsible for counter-battery fire against heavy mortars. The 3d Parachute Artillery Regiment will fire at these targets when sufficient ammunition is available.

Not a single foot of soil will be relinquished. The enemy's attack must be stopped immediately at the MLR by concentrated fire of all weapons and by counterattacks. The enemy's penetration west of STAVELOT was accomplished by tanks with the infantry riding on the armor. The AT defenses are once more to be checked for adequate security in depth.

The troops are to be instructed again that we are now on German soil. Theft will be punished as pillage. The inhabitants are to be treated as German "Peoples Comrades". Civilians who are picked up at the MLR or under suspicious circumstances anywhere are to be arrested and evacuated immediately.

Signal security will be stressed once more. The Americans are able to listen in on all telephone conversations. Secret messages are to be transmitted by runners only.

Morning report — (Administrative details of no interest follow)

*signed
(illegible)
Captain, Commanding*

ANNEX 2
(3d Parachute Division Estimate of the Situation)

3d Parachute Division
G-2

Div CP, 4 January 1945

SUBJECT: G-2 Report No 1
TO: Distribution

ESTIMATE OF THE ENEMY SITUATION:

Both the presence of new enemy troops brought up since the beginning of our offensive and the well-sited enemy positions and mines encountered during our attack on 28 December 1944 show that the enemy has constructed strong defensive lines after re-grouping and consolidating the breakthrough. This strong defense line in front of the Corps sector is supported by strong artillery formations.

ENEMY INTENTIONS:

Further entrenching and holding of the ELSENBORN apex in order to prevent further progress of our defensive screen towards the north and west.

1. Especially in the direction of ST VITH in order to narrow our bulge in southeastern Belgium.
2. Enemy attacks of greater than merely local significance must be expected in a southeasterly and easterly direction from ELSENBORN.

ENEMY METHODS OF SPECIAL NOTE:

The enemy is conducting a stubborn defense in well constructed, strategic positions, and is well armed.

1. He will place his MLR in a locality where there is open ground between his and our positions, at the outer edge of the woods; he will construct strongpoints along this line, using houses and high ground sometimes located in front of the MLR. A complete system of communication lines. He will construct strongpoints in the middle of the woods, from which he can dominate the MLR.

2. Enemy defense is in depth, with usual thin outpost line. There are strong reserves for counter-thrusts and holding attacks and roadblock defenses, and artillery plans for fire on advancing troops, even far inside his own lines. The MLR has been strongly fortified by mines and log obstacles, which are only superficial and badly camouflaged; use of mines in depth is rare. Infantry defense in forest fighting is extremely stubborn; the attackers and patrols will remain unmolested until they reach the immediate vic-

nity of the enemy, where they will be suddenly taken under fire. Snipers will be employed, and hand-to-hand combat is probable.

3. AT defense in the woods and along main highways will be exploited by means of single AT guns, bazookas, rapid construction of AT gun positions and use of armor at places where our troops have to leave the woods for open terrain. The enemy will use HE shells against attacking infantry.

4. Enemy artillery is exceedingly mobile, firing effective concentrations on our movements and congestions with excellent intelligence. He will rely on maps for night firing, Cubs and forward observers for observed fire. Frequent use of forward observers with infantry, tanks and planes is usual.

5. Armor has been committed only to a limited extent in front of the Corps sector; it is mostly used as artillery support for infantry troops and fires at a considerable distance from the front lines. Occasionally, tanks are dug in.

6. Enemy Air: Support of medium bombers, fighter-bombers, and fighters when weather conditions are favorable (fairly clear weather) is probable. These craft as well as Cubs will take part in combat. Use of four-engined formations in forward positions is to be expected.

For the Division Commander

ANNEX 3

(Defense Order, 1055th Grenadier Regiment)

On 10 January the 89th Division expected the 1st US Infantry Division to attack. This captured order shows the measures the division undertook to counter the blow. On 15 January, the 1st Division fulfilled the enemy's expectations by attacking. The defense outlined in the extracts of the order as translated below, was followed until the heavy pressure of our attack forced drastic, and eventually make-shift revisions of the enemy's plan.

Secret

Grenadier Regiment 1055
S-3 Reg No: 55/45 Sec
Regt CP, 10 January 1945
6 Copies
4th Copy

*Regimental Order for the Defense of the
BULLINGEN — BUTGENBACHER HECK Sector*

1. Enemy: The strong infantry patrol activity has now been somewhat reduced. However, we must expect further patrols during the daytime as well as at night. We also must

expect reconnaissance in force, with the enemy probing our positions constantly to determine our strength, and prevent withdrawal of our forces.

Artillery interdiction fire has been considerably reduced. Immediate attack seems unlikely. However, we will have to keep the possibility in mind at all times, since the enemy may want the BULLINGEN—HUNNINGEN—HONSFELD high ground in order to disrupt the MSR of our attacking armies.

2. 89th Infantry Division will defend the present front line and oppose any enemy attempt to break through to the east, southeast and south.
3. 1055 Grenadier Regiment has the mission of defending the present MLR against any enemy attack. An active defense must be initiated. As soon as our own strength permits we will assault all located enemy strongpoints in order to camouflage our intentions and to gain a more favorable defensive line.
4. The following units will be employed: 2d Battalion, 1055 Regiment on the right, 1st Battalion on the left.
5. Mission: 2d Battalion, 1055 Regiment will defend and hold the present MLR to oppose a breakthrough on either side of BULLINGEN and the line MURRINGEN—HUNNINGEN—HONSFELD.
1st Battalion, 1055 Regiment will defend and hold all enemy breakthrough attempts in the direction of MORSCHHECK and BUTGENBACHER HECK and in the neighboring sector of HEPPENSCHIED—MODERSCHIED SCHOPPEN.
The battalions will also prepare an offensive defense, which will mean combat patrols to capture enemy strongpoints.
6. Artillery: 2d Battalion, 189 Artillery Regiment will cooperate with the regiment and support the regiment on the defense.
407 Volkartillery Corps will support the regiment with TOTs and other fire as directed by Commander, 189 Artillery Regiment.
The artillery will at all times be coordinated with the organic heavy weapons of the battalions.
For all missions code names will be used.
7. Infantry Employment: The regiment will defend the present MLR and will repulse any attack directed against it. The MLR

will be held with strongpoints because of the present strength of the unit. Strongpoints will be laid out according to the terrain. He who tries to defend everything ends by defending nothing.

Constant reconnaissance will be maintained.

To give the troops more rest, the line will be held in less force in the daytime. That is the only alternative. Infiltration of enemy forces is a constant danger and will be vigorously opposed.

HMGs will not be employed within the MLR, but about 100 meters to the rear. During the day these HMGs will be moved without the tripods and employed with and as LMGs.

8. *Defense in depth:* At all times resting troops will constitute the reserve. Each company will furnish one squad, each battalion one platoon and each regiment one company. This force will be the initial counter-attacking force and will form an effective defense in depth. Every position will be made a strongpoint. Enough ammunition, food and first aid equipment will be on hand to make every position self-sufficient.

s/ Meyer Bertholdt

S e c r e t

ANNEX 4

(Order of Col Liebach on Resuming Command of 8th Parachute Regiment)

8 Parachute Regiment
Commanding Officer

7 January 1945

Special Order

As of today I am again in command of the 8th Parachute Regiment. I greet you in old comradeship and mindful of the old spirit and soldierly bearing which you displayed in so many actions as parachutists.

With proud memory I think of the many officers, NCOs and enlisted men who died for the freedom and future of Germany. Also I think of the many who were taken prisoner through no fault of their own and who now must endure the rest of the war defenseless.

I particularly expect the "old men" of the EIGHTH to carry on the traditions of the regiment and also that the new men will fit themselves into the unit. They owe that spirit to the many who have died for the banner in the course of their duty. With the old parachutist spirit we will fight on, master the difficult and achieve the impossible. I expect strict discipline in all men of my command;

I expect everyone to bear responsibility for his command down to the letter.

We know that we parachutists always draw the toughest assignments. In proud tradition of our branch, we think back to the men of Crete, the many battles in the east, west, and south which have added here and there more and more glory to our banner!

We are a community of battle-hardened men; we look with confidence to the new year!

Our watchword is: STRONG AND TRUE FOR FUEHRER AND REICH!!!

*s/ Liebach
Colonel and Co
First Staff Officer
s/ Gaul
Major*

ANNEX 5

(Captured Interrogation Report)

The following interrogation report was captured by the 1st Infantry Division. It is a model of its kind in several ways. First, it indicates how much the enemy wants to know about our order of battle, our replacement system and our organization. Second, it points up again the enemy's preoccupation with the propaganda value of interrogation, i. e., V-1 damage in LONDON, the effect of his leaflets and, the stock question, the progress of Communism in America. Third, and most important, it shows that the soldier in question refused to say a word of value to the enemy. His identification was made by shoulder patch and documents.

*89 Infantry Division
G-2 Section*

Div CP, 24 January 1945

INTERROGATION REPORT

Through interrogation of a PW taken shortly after midnight 2 kilometers north of BULLINGEN, the following information was obtained:
UNIT

9th Infantry Regiment, 2d US Infantry Division. Through document interpretation it is believed that the PW probably belongs to the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment. The shoulder patch of the 2d Infantry Division, US Army, was worn on the sleeve.

NAME

Sgt Edward G. Morlock, 35129778, 25 years old single, from Ohio. In the army since September 1941. Sgt for over one year, volunteer; civilian occupation: clerk.

HISTORY

According to documents, the PW was still in Camp Blanding, Florida in June 1944. Five months ago he came to England and has been in this sector for a few months. At one time he came through the outskirts of LONDON, where he observed heavy damage and saw intense labor being done.

CIRCUMSTANCES OF CAPTURE

During the night of 22—23 January he was at an outpost with a few other men two kilometers north of BULLINGEN. The PW was somewhat in advance of the others. Here he was surprised by a German patrol of about 5—6 men which he did not notice due to their camouflaged clothing. He was taken PW without a fight; the others escaped.

ATTITUDE OF PW

The PW shows good soldierly bearing and refuses to give any information, although he has been influenced by propaganda about the supposed maltreatment of American PWs. He refused to give information about his unit, number of replacements and losses, the location of the 23d and 38th Regiments, neighboring divisions or weapons of his unit with the reasoning that he would hurt his friends that way. The PW says that he is ready to take the consequences of his decision.

WEAPONS EQUIPMENT RATIONS

As far as weapons are concerned he admitted that he himself had only an M1 at the time of capture but added that his battalion has heavy mortars, with which they will bombard BULLINGEN. He would not say how many mortars there are in a company or platoon. From captured documents it can be assumed that the 2d Platoon of "A" Company was supported by 60mm mortars.

With reference to gas masks the PW said that each man has a gas mask which is always kept within reach. In case of loss, the mask is replaced without penalty. Concerning his basic training the PW would

OWN PROPAGANDA
AND ENEMY PRO-
PAGANDA

say nothing. Food was termed excellent by PW; he got warm food twice daily.

Our own propaganda leaflets and loud-speakers were not observed by the PW. However he was very much influenced by the US point of view. During our breakthrough at one time we were alleged to have murdered 105 drivers after taking them prisoner.

In another instance German tanks were alleged to have shot several drivers after they had surrendered. To our doubts, he answered that the report can be read in the "Stars and Stripes" (a US Army paper).

MISCELLANEOUS

With reference to his serial number the PW said that all volunteers do not have a "1" as a first number. Those who enlisted before a certain date kept their old serial number.

Concerning the end of the war, the prisoner said because of the rapid advance of the Russians the war would be over by April at the latest. Our resistance on the western front is still formidable, but what he saw of our transport on his way to the rear he termed "catastrophic". He expressed surprise that soldiers march everywhere and that so many dilapidated vehicles are on the roads. When we explained, he replied that in spite of the weather conditions all the vehicles needed repair and maintenance badly. America and England know how to prevent Communism from spreading in Europe and the more territory England and America occupy the better off Germany will be.

A true copy
s/ Illegible
1st Lt

Interpreter
Schonfeld, Corporal.

ANNEX 6

(Interrogation Report)

(Period 171800A January to 181800A January 1945)

Prisoners of war processed through the Division cage represented the following units:

5th Parachute Regiment	— 6
8th Parachute Regiment	— 19
9th Parachute Regiment	— 50
3d Parachute Reconnaissance Company	— 3
3d Parachute Artillery Regiment	— 3
TOTAL	<hr/> 81

A major provided rank and a modest amount of information at the Division cage during the day. Commanding the 1st Battalion, 9th Parachute Regiment, he was captured by the 18th US Infantry during the hard fighting in the vicinity of 846987, along with his adjutant. The major said that his battalion, before his last engagement, numbered 110 men; it was, however, a battalion in name only. Remnants of the 7th Company from the 2d Battalion had been lent to him and small detachments of clerks, butchers, signalmen and the like had been moved up from the trains to fill out the ranks. This force held a line running from the river on the left to the looping bend of the railroad on the right.

Last night, the major said, contact with the 8th Regiment on the right was broken. Nor was there any word from the 3d Parachute Reconnaissance Company which had been moved into the draw on the right to hold the gap between the 9th and 8th Regiments. On the 1st Battalion's left there was nothing, except possibly American troops; the major didn't know. Although he realized he was cut off, or soon would be, the major held his battalion in line and was putting up a stiff defense when suddenly American troops appeared from the south and it was all over. The major was captured in his CP, a bunker dug into the side of a hill. "I stuck my head out and about 12 automatic weapons opened up, so I came out," he said.

The prisoner was brought up in East Prussia and had been an officer in the army for 12 years. He is 32 years old. Before his arrival in this sector 14 days ago, he had been on the eastern front as an air observer. Three days ago the commander of the 1st Battalion was wounded by artillery and the prisoner took over. Although he had never been in the infantry before, he had studied infantry tactics by the book at various times during his career. "The book doesn't work when you have men like mine to deal with and no weapons," he added. He was considerably impressed with the conduct of our infantry, observing that in his opinion every soldier was at least the equal of a squad leader.

The prisoner also said he had been in ONDENVAL and THIRIMONT when artillery TOTs had landed; the effect caused him to view the prospects of the German army with misgivings.

The story of the 3d Reconnaissance Company's move into the gap between the 9th and 8th Regiments was filled out by three PWs from the company, one of them the 1st Sergeant. Most of the company had been moved into the line after dark on 17 January, but the 1st Sergeant and two NCOs had stayed behind to bring up the ration truck from DEIDENBERG. Everything proceeded according to plan until the sergeant and the two men reached the crossroads at AM KREUZ and took the left fork for ONDENVAL where they were to meet a company guide. The guide didn't show up, so the men left the truck and went up the road on reconnaissance. Near the edge of the woods they suddenly ran into a mine-detonating tank which was rumbling along unconcernedly. The PWs thought the tank was one of the "Operation GREIF" captured tanks and let it go by; when, however, they saw the American soldiers following the tank, they grew doubtful. By that time it was too late: the Americans had spotted them. One of the Americans called out, "Are you Heinies?" and the sergeant, unable to think of a crushing reply, said nothing. He and the two men with him were picked up and put in a jeep accompanying the tank. While they were sitting in the back seat waiting to be carried off, a fourth and unexpected German appeared from nowhere out of the woods and asked the 1st Sergeant for a ride back to DEIDENBERG. Before the sergeant could point out to the newcomer that he was making a very big mistake, the man perceived it for himself and vanished back into the woods. The jeep driver was so astonished at this sideshow that he was unable to hurry the fourth party along with a shot. At this point the remaining platoon of the Reconnaissance Company came marching up the road in column of twos and stumbled on to the *mise en scene*. The tank opened up with its 50 caliber machine gun, the jeep took off at high speed, and the prisoners, who were as disconcerted as anybody, were finally disarmed behind the American lines.

A prisoner from the 8th Regiment who showed up at the cage with only one shoe explained how he had lost the other. He was a forward observer for a mortar squad and in his foxhole OP when he decided to massage his feet to prevent trenchfoot. Sitting on the edge of the hole, he had taken one shoe off when one of our mortar forward observers spotted him. The prisoner heard the mortar shell coming and fell back in his hole. The shell hit the shoe on the edge of the hole and the prisoner was captured before he could get another. At the cage he admitted to one cold foot and a strong respect for the accuracy of our mortar fire.

Strong and repeatedly-voiced rumors collected from the prisoners indicated that a relief of the 3d Parachute Division may be effected on 20 January. At least six prisoners, from different outfits, had heard the report and all agreed on the date. Identification of the relieving (or supporting) unit was not so spe-

cific. The 2d Parachute Division was most frequently mentioned, followed by an unnamed SS Division, and last, an equally vague Volksgrenadier Division. One PW said that a battalion of the 2d Parachute Division was already at VALENDER and the rest of the division at STADTKYLL. Another prisoner said that two days ago at COLOGNE he had seen elements of SS Panzer Division FRUNDSBERG packing up. The men said they were on their way to the Hungarian front.

PART III

(1 February 1945 to 28 February 1945)

1. SECOND BREACHING OF THE SIEGFRIED LINE (1 Feb to 5 Feb)

On 1 February the enemy's position gave him little cause for self-congratulation. The great counter-offensive which had looked so promising six weeks before had been reduced from a salient to a bulge to a desperate defense of what little ground remained to him west of the Siegfried Line. Moreover, this defense, though desperate, was conducted by the enemy with an apprehensive eye over his shoulder: while the Allies were threatening to push to, and possibly through, the Siegfried Line in the west, the Russians were piling through the eastern defenses in Army Groups. The greatest threat to the Reich, of course, was in the east. With the supply system in critical condition and only enough materiel available to patch gaps hastily on the three fronts, it was apparent that the only course was to let the west fend for itself, aided to a great degree by the refurbished Siegfried Line and the difficult terrain, while every available man was rushed off to defend the east. This policy was supplemented by orders to unit commanders to defend every foot of ground, regardless of its tactical importance, in order to inflict as many casualties as possible on the Allies in the west in order to slow them down and perhaps discourage them from breaking loose with a full-scale offensive all along the front. Possibly if the Allies were blocked long enough the Russian situation could be stabilized and the dwindling resources of the Wehrmacht could be re-assigned on a more equitable basis. No doubt the enemy would have preferred to trade space for time; unfortunately for this course, he had no more space to sell in the west. The ROER River line in the north and the Siegfried Line in the south represented the last advance he could allow the Allies before their advances would occupy ground which he could not afford to lose.

Consequently, though the over-all situation may have been one to induce sharp cries of delight from directors of economic warfare in Washington and combined boards of heavyweight strategy in London, the ordinary Landser in the line on the western front saw little change in the picture except, perhaps, that it was even gloomier in aspect. His orders remained the same: to defend the particular square foot of ground on which he was standing until he was killed or ordered by competent authority to move somewhere else. To aid him

the Landsers had the weather and terrain, which in this area had a greater potential value than the heavy support and air power that were lacking.

On 1 February, the 3d Parachute Division and elements of the 89th and 277th Infantry Divisions were opposing the advance of the 1st US Infantry Division. All the units were in straitened circumstances and had been pushed back beyond the German start line for the 16 December offensive. To their rear they still had the Siegfried Line, but as our units advanced and high winter attrition took its toll, it became questionable whether there was enough manpower to man the defenses securely once they were reached. During the day the pocket in the woods east of KRINKELT was cleaned out. This force had been cut off by our thrust to the northeast, and had made an abortive effort, aided by five self-propelled guns, to break out to the east. During the fighting two self-propelled guns were knocked out and the colonel commanding the 991st Regiment was killed. When the pocket was finally cleared, more than 100 prisoners were taken. (See Annex 1). With this threat to the rear liquidated, Division patrols pushed on to about 2½ kilometers west of RAMSCHEID, meeting enemy screening forces on the way. To the south, other Division units pushed forward to the high ground overlooking the Siegfried Line defenses and the village of MIESCHEID. One patrol succeeded in getting within 500 yards of UDENBRETH and reported that the enemy was clearing the Siegfried defenses of snow and that two companies of infantry were observed moving towards UDENBRETH itself. It was clear that the enemy still intended to defend his forward positions. The area was heavily mined.

On the next day, 2 February, elements of the 1st Division penetrated the Siegfried Line for the second time in the European campaign. Defenses of the line, an unknown quantity until the positions were tested, proved to be as stubborn as at the first cracking of the line at AACHEN. The attack jumped off at 0500; in the attack on SCHEITERT and RAMSCHEID the Division units ran into two rows of dragon's teeth generously fortified with mines, both antipersonnel and anti-tank. At SCHEITERT the enemy put up hard resistance with machine guns and mortars, and our troops were unable to enter the town until shortly before dark when supporting tanks and TDs were able to breach the dragon's teeth and get into the fight. Both towns were occupied. In the northern sector of advance, however, defending forces were alerted by a tripwire flare, and our troops attacking toward the road junction at F-036070 were taken under intense machine gun fire from pillboxes defending the area with the customary text-book fields of fire. It was impossible to bring up heavy supporting weapons, and the Division attack was stalled. Late in the afternoon, however, self-propelled 155mms were laid on two of the more troublesome pillboxes. It was apparent that the enemy had made no plans to relieve or reinforce the worn-out units already engaged by the 1st Division, except with the usual second-grade troops which appear whenever the enemy is hard-pressed. (See Annex 2). During the day prisoners were identified from the 1076th Security

Battalion and the 106th Fortress Maintenance Company, as well as a terrified group of elderly city policemen from COLOGNE who had been dispatched to the forward areas to protect the civilian population from looting by the Wehrmacht.

On 3 February the Division attack in the HOLLERATH "Knee" sector was resumed. Although enemy resistance around the vital road junction continued in its intensity, Division troops were able to isolate several of the key pillboxes and control the area. The pillboxes were all manned by eight to ten men; during the whole action, in fact, the only pillboxes found unoccupied were those with restricted or secondary fields of fire. No new identifications were made during the day, but it was clear that the enemy was moving troops, and first-grade troops at that, in the area. The 11th Panzer Regiment, 9th Panzer Division was identified on the front of the adjacent division and it was reported that the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division and the 116th Panzer Division were in the vicinity, if only passing through. More than 125 prisoners were taken during the day.

On the 20th day of continuous attack, 4 February, HOLLERATH, an important enemy communications enter, fell to the Division, and the breach through the Siegfried Line to the north of the HOLLERATH "Knee" was widened against stubborn resistance. The chief delays imposed on Division troops were the miserable road conditions, enemy mines, and the hostile terrain, but by dark the high ground in the vicinity of F-035100 had been taken and consolidated. The final clearing of the remaining enemy pillboxes between UDENRATH and HELLENTHAL was achieved on the next day, when the 1st Division was relieved of the sector by the 99th US Infantry Division. During the 21 consecutive days of attack, nearly 2,000 prisoners were taken; 28 anti-personnel pillboxes, nine anti-tank pillboxes and 22 troop shelters were captured.

2. DEFENSE OF THE ROER (7 Feb to 24 Feb)

The order of battle of enemy units facing the 1st Division across the ROER in the WINDEN-UNTERMAUBACH area was not at all clear, but the enemy tactical situation was perfectly plain. He was occupying positions along the east bank of the river which he had many weeks to prepare. His camouflage was excellent and the only trace of his presence at all was movement of his infantry. From the high ground in the vicinity of F-093350 he had excellent observation of all our movements, particularly of traffic on the HURTGENGEY road which he interdicted whenever the volume warranted it. Enemy patrolling was confined to security patrols on his side of the river, and our patrols on the west bank were taken under fire as soon as they appeared. Enemy artillery was light, with the exception of a few rounds of very heavy mortar or artillery fire. The shells were estimated at 320 mm.

Facing the Division across the river were elements of the 941st and 943d Infantry Regiments (353d Infantry Division) and the 6th Parachute Regiment, an orphan outfit which was attached to the 85th Division. Later it was learned

that the 85th Division had been pulled out entirely, turning over its area, as well as a cadre of officers and at least one battalion (from the 1053d Regiment), to the 8th Parachute Regiment. The enemy's major potential was blowing the SCHWAMMENAUDEL Dam. The flash flood that resulted would have wrecked the ROER Valley, liquidated the towns of JULICH and DUREN, and made the river impassable to any troops at all while the flood was in progress. His secondary threat was to wreck the floodgates and spillways of the dam, increasing the river's flow considerably and adding greatly to its efficacy as an obstacle to our crossing. Two days after the 1st Division moved into its sector on the river, the SCHWAMMENAUDEL Dam was captured by friendly forces, but not before the penstocks had been irreparably damaged. The ROER rose more than two feet and made crossing extremely hazardous, not only because it increased the enemy's ability to lay fire on our troops for a longer time, but because of the danger of the swift-flowing current itself. It was estimated that the dam would require nearly two weeks to empty, or at least recede low enough to permit crossing the river. The blowing of the penstocks also made patrolling across the river more difficult: in the period before the jump-off on 25 February only one Division patrol crossed the river and it had such difficulties that it was unable to extend its activities to pick up any enemy information. The enemy, on the other hand, experienced the same difficulties; only one known enemy patrol was able to cross the river and it was taken under fire before it could spread out. As a consequence of this obstacle, very little factual information on enemy order of battle was available, but it was believed that the enemy units facing the Division remained more or less stable, possibly shifting slightly to the north.

3. BREAKTHROUGH (25 Feb to 28 Feb)

On 25 February the enemy's last major line of defense in front of the RHINE was crossed by the 1st Division. At 1200 hours Division troops crossed the ROER on bridges to the north of the Division sector and attacked KREUZAU from NIEDERAU; by mid-afternoon the town had been taken. Pushing on the high ground west of STOCKHEIM, the attack continued to the southeast where stubborn resistance was met from self-propelled guns and infantry in log and earth bunkers. After dark our forces, still moving south, took the high ground in the vicinity of DROVE, and the town itself by 2200 hours against moderate resistance. During the day's fighting, elements of both the 941st and 943d Regiments, 353d Division, were identified, with the 943d Regiment on the north and the 941st on the south. It was apparent from prisoners' statements that our attack from the north of KREUZAU came as a complete surprise to the enemy. (See Annex 3). His defenses, naturally, were fronting on the river and the attack from the north disrupted any coordinated scheme of defense he may have had. First-hand information on the composition of the elements facing the Division, furthermore, indicated that the enemy even during the long period of rest and reconstruction he had been permitted, had

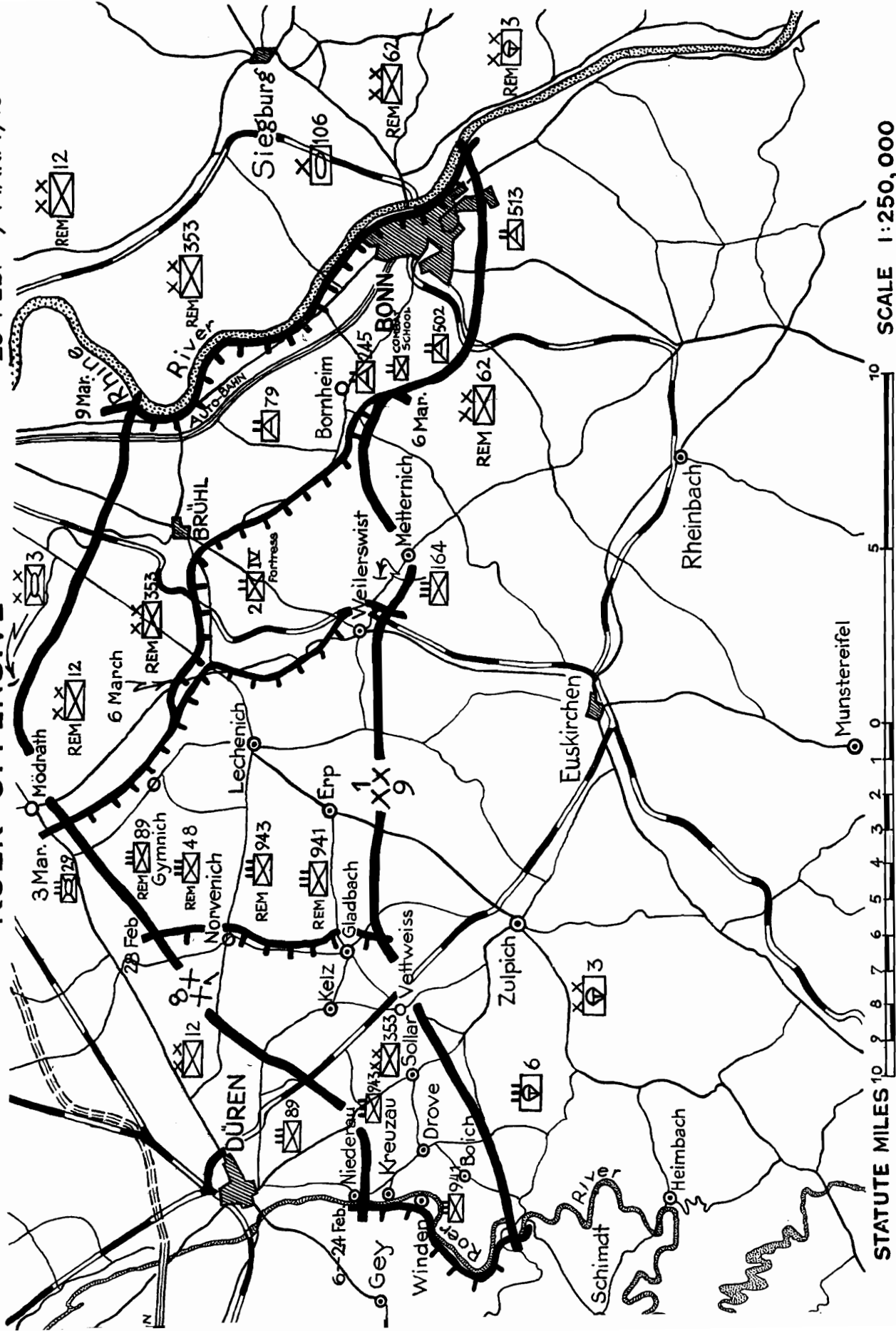
only succeeded in forming make-shift units by cannibalizing shattered elements of regular outfits, rather than reconstructing the originals with replacements and training. The 942d Regiment of the 353d Division, for instance, no longer existed, having been siphoned away to form a special assault regiment for the attack on BASTOGNE. The 2d Battalion, 8th Parachute Regiment, encountered by the Division on 26 February, was nothing more than the 1st Battalion, 1053d Regiment (85th Division), left behind when the 85th Division pulled out.

On 26 February, the wooded area south of STOCKHEIM and SOLLER, UDINGEN, BOICH, BOICH-LEVERSBACH, SCHLAGSTEIN and RATH were cleared of the enemy. The attack on UDINGEN jumped off before dawn. Elements of the 7th Company, 941st Regiment, holding the town, were driven out and our attack was pressed on. At 0900 hours an enemy force consisting of the 5th Company, 8th Parachute Regiment, attacked from THUM towards DROVE. Four assault guns supported the attack, but intense artillery and small arms fire took a heavy toll of the attackers and two assault guns were knocked out. Meanwhile our troops, who were launching an attack on BOICH and DROVE themselves, continued on and took the towns. Other elements pushed on to capture BOICH-LEVERSBACH, RATH and the high ground west of RATH. In the northern half of the Division zone the woods south of STOCKHEIM were cleared and late in the day SOLLER was captured. The 1st Company, 600th Engineer Battalion was identified in the fighting around SOLLER. The second day of close contact with the enemy clarified the enemy order of battle to a considerable degree. The 3d Battalion, 6th Parachute Regiment, was believed to be holding the NIDEGGEN area; elements of the 8th Parachute Regiment were deployed between THUM and FROITZHEIM, and the 600th Engineer Battalion and remnants of the 941st Regiment were holding VETTWEISS and JAKOBWULLESHEIM. The 8th Parachute Regiment had arrived in the area two weeks before our attack; the 9th Regiment had evaporated on a long march from the Eifel to this sector. The regiment had had a strength of only 300 men at the start of the march and no more than 80 remained when it reached its destination — the rest had wandered off and deserted.

The next line of enemy resistance — JAKOBWULLESHEIM, FRANGENHEIM, VETTWEISS, KELZ, IRRESHEIM and OBER BOLHEIM — was cleared of the enemy on 27 February and a bridgehead was established over the NEFFEL Creek in the NORVENICH woods, east of OBER BOLHEIM. JAKOBWULLESHEIM was defended by Battlegroup BOLL, a hybrid unit made up from the trains of the 353d Division. The other towns taken in the day's advance proved to be no more than way-stations for enemy resistance. All were contested briefly, but nowhere did a full-scale defense materialize. The only new unit identified during the day was the 89th Regiment, 12th Infantry Division, (20 PWs) which apparently crossed the Division sector in its retreat from the DUREN area. Prisoners reported that the 12th Infantry Division had

ROER OFFENSIVE

25 FEB. - 9 MAR. 1945



SCALE 1:250,000

been given the mission of retiring to COLOGNE to undertake the defense of the city.

NORVENICH, HOCHKIRCHEN, LUXHEIM and GLADBACH were cleared of the enemy on 28 February, and our troops were closing in on EGGERSHEIM at the end of the day. Enlarged bridgeheads were pushed over the NEFFEL east of the towns. Elements of the 48th Regiment in NORVENICH put up a brief resistance before pulling out to the east. Mines were encountered east of GLADBACH on the way to LUXHEIM, an initial difficulty which delayed the support of heavy weapons.

From the month's operations it was evident that the enemy, although afforded an excellent breathing spell to reconstruct his forces and bring up reserves to defend his ROER River line, had in fact been unable to effect much changes in his defenses other than attempts at patching up his defenses here and there. The disintegration of the 9th Parachute Regiment and the confused structure of the 8th Parachute Regiment showed that the enemy had come a long way since the bright and prosperous days of the 3d Parachute Division in Normandy, or even in HEISTERN and LANGERWEHE. Although he put up his best efforts to prevent our bridging the ROER, his best efforts had considerably less effect than the natural obstacles afforded him by the terrain. The threat and later the actuality of the SCHWAMMENAUDEL Dam flood held up our attack to a far greater extent than any military forces the enemy could muster.

The fighting, nowhere of the severity experienced in the HURTGEN Forest or the drive into the German salient at FAYMONVILLE and WEISMES, demonstrated again that the west had been left to fend for itself, and that once the chief ally of the enemy — the terrain — had been cancelled out, there was little hope for him but to defend where he could and with whatever he could round up on the spot. There were no evidences that any forces had been brought west of the RHINE to implement his defense, certainly none of any major proportions. Although the enemy seemed unwilling to take the sound step of abandoning the area west of the RHINE and retreating behind the river to build up his next major line of defense, in the end this course was being forced upon him, with all the ill consequences of a directed decision and none of the advantages of prior planning.

ANNEX 1

(Consolidated Interrogation Report)

(Period 021800A February 031800A February 1945)

Prisoners of war processed through the Division cage represented the following units:

991st Infantry Regiment	— 36
989th Infantry Regiment	— 9
277th Division Combat School	— 22
1056th Infantry Regiment	— 12
189th Alarm Company	— 2
5th Parachute Regiment	— 1
1076th Security Battalion	— 41
106th Fortress Company	— 8
COLOGNE Police Battalion	— 11
Organization TODT	— 45
Furlough Deserters	— 4
TOTAL	191

A furlough deserter from whom great things were expected turned out to be a disappointment. He was a former member of the 1st German Infantry Division (no relation) and was expected to view with ecstatic surprise the fact that he had been captured by the 1st US Infantry Division. Jeweled epigrams were awaited ("Isn't it a small world"; "What will they think of next?"), but the dull oaf said nothing. He had never heard of the 1st Infantry Division. He did say, however, when he saw the interrogator's lip begin to tremble, that the 1st German Infantry Division was considered a crack outfit, having distinguished itself in the battles of LENINGRAD, VINNITSA and TAR-NOPOL. As a special extra, he added that his division was horse-drawn.

The prisoners from the 1076th Security Battalion were picked up in the vicinity of RAMSCHEID, where they were holding part of the Siegfried Line. Their general appearance belied the stubbornness with which they had hung on to their pillboxes and bunkers. Their average age was 45; most of them had been drafted out of war factories and were 4-F retreads. All of them suffered from one physical trouble or another — speech defects, lung defects, epilepsy, and one even had a heart attack while being interrogated and had to be trundled off to the medics.

They said that their battalion was one of three — 1074th, 1075th and 1076th — which formed the 406th Special Purpose Division. This division was activated in November in PADERBORN with the original intention of assuming guard duties on the frontier. The recruits were armed with Danish rifles and machine guns; they had no weapons. The 1076th Battalion left PADERBORN in early December for this front and was set to cleaning and

repairing bunkers. On 1 February the battalion was attached to the 2d Battalion, 991st Regiment with the mission of defending the pillboxes they had been cleaning. The method of defense was to put one or two men in the pillbox with a machine gun and deploy the rest in trenches outside.

The policemen who were captured in the vicinity of RAMSCHEID were of much the same line as their counterparts who were captured by the Division in AACHEN. They were originally from a battalion of COLOGNE policemen, commanded by a Major HEISSE, which was sent to the towns directly behind the line to protect the civilians from looting and terrorism by their own distinguished Wehrmacht. The PWs belonged to the detachment which had been sent to RAMSCHEID, where, like any one else who happened to be wearing a uniform, they were impressed into combat duty. All the prisoners were middleaged and well established — typical apple-scrounging, heavy-footed patrolmen. They were still shaken from their sudden conversion into combat soldiers. One, who was 65 years old, actually said to the interrogator, "Now watch your attitude, young man, or I'll run you in."

Fifteen prisoners from the 277th Division Combat School still had their cards identifying them as medics. They said they had been in the Luftwaffe until the urgent cry for more infantry uprooted them and sent them to the 277th Division. They were captured in three bunkers in the HOLLERATH "Knee", or bend. The personnel at the school, numbering about 90, had been divided into three groups, they said.

A tough sergeant from the 991st Alarm Company turned out to be a former Lutheran pastor from WALKENZEN. He was born before the last war in German East Africa, where his family were missionaries. The family returned to Germany when he was three, and he was sent to theological school. In 1934 he was ordained as a minister. The prisoner said that the Lutheran clergy was liable to military service in Germany, and that only the Catholic priesthood was exempted.

The prisoner was evidence that not even the German Protestant clergy is immune to Nazi doctrine. He said, as so many have before him, that he despised the Nazi government and hoped it would fall, but his duties as a German prevented him from working for the fall. He was alarmed at the inroads the Nazi culture had made into the moral virtues of Lutheranism; he admitted that he often prayed for the collapse of the Nazis. Yet he never prayed so hard that he couldn't fight for them the next day.

ANNEX 2

(Captured Document)

(4 February 1945)

The following document captured by the 1st Infantry Division shows there is a slight rift in the lute of the regular Wehrmacht (ie, the 2d Batta-

lion, 991st Regiment) and the apathetic odds and ends making up the Fortress unit. The order is translated in extract.

*2d Battalion, 991st Grenadier Regiment
Commanding Officer
Battalion CP*

30 November

*To the CO of Bunker 236 or his assistant:
(Fortress personnel)*

1. The crew of Bunker 236 is tactically (i. e., under combat conditions and while preparing for combat) employed and commanded by the CO of the — Company, 2d Battalion, 991st Infantry Regiment. Therefore his orders will be followed implicitly.

2. It is not allowed to go to the rear of the company CP without specific permission from the Sector commanding officer.

3. It is the responsibility of the commanding officer of the bunker, or his assistant, to have the bunker prepared for combat, i. e., he is responsible for the training of all men in the bunker in the fixed weapons of the bunker and those which are attached to it. Each man must be able to fire all organic weapons of the bunker by 1 December 1944 and must have fired at least 50 rounds by this date. Each man must be able to correct jamming of weapons and must also be able to dismantle them.

4. Every day all men will train with the weapons for at least two hours. Training will be done alternately during the day and during the night.

5. Combat Procedure: Getting the weapons ready will be carried out with closed slits; they will only be opened when weapons are ready. Immediately after slits are open the firing will start and slits will be closed as soon as the last round is fired. All slits which are not used will be kept closed and locked.

6. I cannot understand the lack of interest and criminal negligence of some of the bunker commanders of the Fortress personnel with regard to training and care of weapons. German soldiers fight on all fronts every day and die in pursuit of their duty to their Fatherland as good soldiers. But some of the Fortress personnel, after being committed in their bunkers three to five weeks on a quiet front, are not even able to use their weapons properly. I am forced for this reason to remedy this situation by the most severe means at my disposal. Every commanding officer of a bunker or his assistant, who does not execute the orders of the

battalion or of the company in the sector will be called before courtmartial within three days on charges of disobedience and sabotage on divisional level.

Signed: Waller?

Signature

ANNEX 3

(Consolidated Interrogation Report)

(Period 251800A February to 261800A February 1945)

Prisoners of war processed through the Division cage represented the following units:

941st Infantry Regiment	— 114
943d Infantry Regiment	— 41
353d Pioneer Battalion	— 4
353d Artillery Regiment	— 6
353d Anti-Tank Battalion	— 1
8th Parachute Regiment	— 8
6th Parachute Regiment	— 6
407th Volks Artillery Corps	— 6
Fortress Anti-Tank Company	— 8
TOTAL	194

A prisoner who was in a position to know, the captain commanding the 2d Battalion, 941st Infantry Regiment, said that our breakthrough to the north of KREUZAU came as a complete surprise. His battalion had been holding a sector on the river running from KREUZAU to UDINGEN, with the 1st Battalion on the left and the 943d Infantry Regiment on the right. He said that he had been expecting a straight thrust across the river into KREUZAU and had laid his plans accordingly; the 6th Company, reinforced by a section from the 14th Company, was in position, peering anxiously across the river. The captain himself was in his CP just outside DROVE. When the attack broke, the captain found his observation completely cut off by a smoke screen. He ordered the 6th Company to peer even harder across the river and to beat back our assault. Everybody was completely surprised at being attacked from the north: 69 prisoners were taken from the 6th Company on the spot and the captain was picked up somewhat later.

The PW said that the 2d Battalion has no 8th Company and has had none since November. A few mortars and heavy machine guns have been grouped together into a section directly under the command of the battalion CO. The 941st Regiment has two battalions and is commanded by Col MARTIN who recently arrived from the High Command in BERLIN, where he had been in the Ministry of Propaganda. The 1st Battalion was comman-

ded by Capt DANERT and the second by the prisoner at hand. The 943d Regiment was commanded by Col THIEME who was killed in the artillery concentration preceding the original assault across the river. He had his CP in the woods west of STOCKHEIM; a heavy caliber shell hit his bunker directly, caving it in and killing the colonel and, according to a PW, six other officers.

According to PWs, the 942d Regiment no longer exists, and up to a week ago former personnel of the regiment were still being parcelled out to the two remaining regiments. By Christmas, after hard fighting during the breakthrough, the 942d Regiment had been reduced to 300 men. The regiment was pulled to the rear for reorganization, and levies from the 941st and 943d were made to fill the ranks. Additional replacements were unobtainable, however, and the men on hand were formed into a special assault regiment and dispatched to BASTOGNE to save the day. They saved very little and came back considerably depleted. Between 8—10 February, the assault regiment was dissolved and partitioned among the other two regiments.

Another prisoner caught in the thrust from the north was the regimental surgeon of the 941st Regiment. He had had his aid station in BOICH and when BOICH became too warm, he started out in his car for DROVE. In DROVE his car was stopped by our troops, who found, besides the doctor, two NCO medics and a 21-year old girl who was armed with unofficial papers identifying her as a civilian assistant in the regimental aid station. This novel prisoner explained that she had hired herself on at the aid station because she wanted to be near her cows in BOICH after the entire civilian population had been evacuated. She was dressed in what to the interrogator's urban eye appeared to be a milking smock, and the rural child of nature effect was increased by the fact that she was very, very pregnant. She was gingerly hustled off to civilian channels where, presumably, the facts of life are better understood than at a PW cage. Before she left she said that she had married a soldier on leave in August and that after three days of wedlock he had been killed in an air raid on COLOGNE while on his way back to his outfit. In January her mother and father were killed in an air raid on VETTWEISS.

The doctor, who had been standing on one foot claiming only altruistic motives towards the girl, said that the CP of the 353d Division had been northeast of VETTWEISS, where heavy concrete bunkers had been built.

Prisoners from the 353d Pioneer Battalion, said that they had been putting in road blocks on the VETTWEIS—GLADBACH road. One block was made of a wrecked railroad engine, and others constructed of threshing machines and other agricultural equipment, liberally larded with Riegel and anti-personnel mines.

A lieutenant from the 5th Company, 8th Parachute Regiment, old acquaintances from two previous engagements, said that Col LIEBACH is still at the old stand, but that not one man in his company had been with the

regiment in the battles of HEISTERN and LANGERWEHE or south of FAYMONVILLE. He was not able to say when this transfusion of personnel took place: he had been with the 85th Division, which relinquished control of this area to the 3d Parachute Division, plus the 6th Parachute Regiment. The 6th Company, he said, was in SOLLER and the 7th Company in the woods east of THUM to FROITZHEIM. He was captured early this morning when he moved from THUM with his company (50 men) and four self-propelled guns to occupy DROVE. One of the SPs got stuck in a bomb crater; the lieutenant, who had expected to find infantry alone holding the town was dismayed to find the town occupied by tanks and TDs as well.

Several PWs who in the main appeared full of the will to fight, said that there was sort of an unofficial pact among many of the men to fight their fight this side of the RHINE and surrender before crossing to the east.

PART IV

(1 March 1945 to 31 March 1945)

1. Introduction: CROSSING THE ROER (25 February to 1 March)

When the Allies reached the ROER, or the terrain commanding the ROER, in December 1944, the river presented a serious obstacle. The obstacle was not so much geographic — the river was an imposing stream only because of the artificial speed of its current — as it was a terrain feature bitterly defended. At that time the Americans had fought a hard and weakening fight through woods and crippling terrain and the enemy appeared to be determined to hold every foot of ground. Moreover, he was in a position to make our advances costly: he had equality, if not superiority in artillery, at least in the sector of the 1st US Infantry Division; his troops, while not of the top degree, were still plentiful and reinforcements arrived on schedule; his supply system was functioning relatively smoothly; and as an ace in the hole, he had the 6th SS Panzer Army collected near COLOGNE and ready to strike any incautious and isolated advance. Under these circumstances the ROER was a significant barrier, chiefly because the enemy made it so himself rather than because of any inherent difficulties.

When the 1st US Infantry Division finally crossed the ROER, on 25 February, the situation had changed considerably. Between the Division's advance to the ground commanding the ROER east of LANGERWEHE on 8 December and the final crossing on 26 February the all-important German offensive of 16 December had occurred, as well as the complete collapse of the eastern front and the advance of the Russians to the doorstep to BERLIN. These two events together had eliminated the 6th SS Panzer Army as an enemy potential. The German offensive had reduced the striking power of the panzers considerably: the 12th SS Division was badly battered by the 1st US Infantry Division at BUTGENBACH, and the 1st SS Panzer Division was equally whittled

down to the west, among other casualties to the south. The collapse and disorganization of the offensive had left the German supply and material position in a precarious state; the top-grade troops had been largely drained off and the replacements were inferior troops of security and static level. Materiel was bad, and there was next to no gasoline. Though this deterioration may not have affected the enemy's will to fight (he did, in fact, oppose the crossing of the ROER as bitterly as might have been expected in his better days) it at least affected his ability to fight for any length of time. For the previous month he had been cut off from any important flow of supplies from the other side of the RHINE; the railroads had ceased to function in large part due to our air attacks. The enemy knew that an attack was pending, but he did not know exactly when, a circumstance which only increased his natural jumpiness.

The initial assault across the ROER took place on 23 February to the north of the Division sector, against sharp local resistance and concentrated artillery fire. The enemy, however, apparently expected each unit facing him across the river to make a frontal attack. At any rate on 25 February, when the 1st US Infantry Division crossed over the bridges of the 8th Division and attacked south along the far side of the river, the enemy was taken completely by surprise. His defenses, which were well emplaced and well defended, faced west; he was unprepared for an assault from the north and so confused in many places that he gave up without strenuous resistance. The Division attack was launched by the 16th US Infantry at 1200 hours; from NIEDERAU the troops fanned southward to take KREUZAU by mid-afternoon. Pushing on to the high ground west of STOCKHEIM, the attack continued to the southeast where stubborn resistance was met from self-propelled guns and infantry in log and earth bunkers. The advance continued after dark, the first in a series of blacked-out moves that eventually leap-frogged the Division to the RHINE. These night attacks, planned meticulously and detailed in organization, were the desperation of the enemy; his previous reliance on being unmolested after dark to allow reorganization of new defense points was gone.

On 26 February the first enemy reaction to the Division attack took place. A company of parachutists of the 8th Parachute Regiment, supported by four assault guns launched an attack from THUM towards DROVE, only to meet intense artillery and small-arms fire. Two of the assault guns were knocked out and the attack was dispersed. The attack had no effect on the progress of Division troops: our assault on BOICH continued on to take the town, and other Division units swept around to take SOLLER, the wooded area south of STOCKHEIM, SCHLAGSTEIN and RATH while the enemy backed up into VETTWEISS, JAKOBWULLESHEIM and KELZ. The next day this line was overrun and a bridgehead was established over the NEFFEL Creek in the NORVENICH woods east of OBER BOLHEIM. On 28 February NORVENICH, HOCHKIRCHEN, LUXHEIM and GLADBACH were cleared of the enemy and the NEFFEL Creek no longer existed as an effective barrier to the Division's advance.

2. COLLAPSE OF THE RHINELAND (1 March to 8 March)

From the first three day's operations it was clear that the enemy, though he may have had elaborate plans for defending the entire COLOGNE plain foot by and had, in fact, engaged in an extensive, back-breaking program of civilian digging to lay out personnel and anti-tank trenches to slow our advance, was forced to fall back on the towns as strong points and let the open flats between built-up areas fall as they might. In the Baedeker-list of towns which the Division overran during the offensive, there was not one which was not defended to some degree by enemy forces, sometimes supported by high-velocity guns and artillery, but more often by individual anti-tank weapons. But so fast did the Division attack develop by night and day that the enemy had very little time to consolidate on any one line once his original MLR along the ROER had breached. His disorganization was growing by geometric progressions; never very well coordinated even before the breakthrough on the ROER, as one town fell after another and ingrated units were lost or captured, he fell back on the old system of rounding up the stragglers at any one point and putting them in the line as a strongpoint. As one prisoner said, any ten men and a ditch constituted a strongpoint. This sort of maneuver did very little to increase the German soldiers' determination to fight to the last, and great numbers of them merely waited our arrival in cellars and basements of the towns they were to defend. There was, of course, the usual interlacing of fanatics who fought until they were shot or surrounded, but in general, once the Division tanks and TDs broke into a town in support of the infantry which had infiltrated forward, often at night, enemy resistance became individual rather than coordinated. He had little to admire in either the weather or the terrain. For once the weather was not the usual 1st Division brand; on several days the sun actually came out and the mud flats dried up to a degree. The road net was in good repair, not having been subjected to the heavy traffic and freezing of the roads in the Eifel. Artillery observation was excellent; the terrain was so flat that in several cases fire could be observed from the artillery battalion CPs. Although these factors naturally operated for both sides, the enemy was not equipped to take advantage of them. He was out of gas and disorganized. On 28 February, the 18th US Infantry captured an entire battery of the 407th Volk-artillery Corps because the battery's prime movers which were to pull the guns to safety, had run out of gas and did not arrive until the 18th Infantry had already moved in.

The first full-scale defense of a town by the enemy was staged in ERP. Division troops attacked the town at 1800 hours, 1 March, and ran into a heavy concentration of 88s, self-propelled guns and automatic weapons. Elements of the 353d Infantry Division had dug themselves in the town, resisting any attempt to drive them out. At the outset the fight was hard, but by 2400 hours units of the Division had taken well over half the town and a considerable bag of prisoners. Meanwhile the Division flood had lapped over several more

towns to the north: DORWEILER and RATHE fell before dawn and PINGSHEIM shortly thereafter, together with 40 prisoners, two 88s, two armored personnel carriers and four 105 mm howitzers. The advance continued on to WISSERSHEIM, which fell by 1400 hours. Each of these towns had been converted into small-scale strongpoints, with mines planted on the likely routes of approach and log road blocks erected across the entrances to the villages. Prisoners reported that the area east of the NEFFEL had been extensively mined, and in fact considerable numbers of Riegel, Topf and Teller mines were picked up in NORVENICH, PINGSHEIM, GLADBACH and EGGERSHEIM. Nearly 300 PWs were taken, mainly from the 48th and 89th Regiments of the 12th Volksgrenadier Division and from the 353d Infantry Division.

The enemy, however, was beyond mustering anything but temporary stops and blocks to stem the Division tide. During 2 March Division troops took GYMNICH, MELLERHOFE, POLL and AHREM; the rest of ERP was cleared of the enemy. A small but bitter fire fight developed in taking MELLERHOFE and the troops pushed on to GYMNICH where a fight of somewhat larger proportions developed. The enemy, however, was without the necessary heavy weapons to combat the thrust of Division tanks and TDs and the town fell along with nearly 100 prisoners. ERP was the toughest nut of the day, but shortly after dawn the town was consolidated. It was estimated that nearly 200 parachutists, reinforced by whatever enemy units were on hand in remnants had defended the town. Three to five self-propelled guns supported the defense, and when the town fell, four 88 mm anti-tank guns were captured. That night the advance continued against LECHENICH where resistance was relatively stiff until after midnight; by 0300 hours, 3 March, the town had been taken.

Some idea of the disintegration of the enemy situation was obtained from an officer prisoner captured in GYMNICH. He was commanding the 8th Company of the 89 Infantry Regiment. When his company was committed northeast of DUREN he had two 75 mm infantry howitzers, six 81 mm mortars and four heavy machine guns. Upon our breakthrough his company was forced to withdraw. The lieutenant muffled the horses' hoofs and wagon wheels with straw and sacking and pulled out during the night, losing four men. At GOLZHEIM, the next stop, he lost both infantry howitzers, two of his mortars and his whole machine gun section to artillery hits. He withdrew with four mortars and 25 men. At NIEDER BOLHEIM he lost the remaining two mortars and five men. The prisoners finally ended up at GYMNICH with 20 men and no heavy weapons. There a captain turned up, gave him a sheaf of defense overlays and some heady advice, told him he was now the town's official defender and departed. For two days the lieutenant worked on roadblocks and defense points guarding the city. He found a handful of Volkssturm men lying around, lined them up for inspection and then advised them to return to the cellars and wait for the Americans. On the second day a lieutenant and 70 men from the

4th Fortress Regiment showed up. This new lieutenant ranked the prisoner and immediately announced that he was taking over command of the town. The PW, outranked, retired to a cellar for the first sleep he had had since the breakthrough; when he woke up there was nobody in town but the Americans.

Division troops continued east to attack BLESSEM, LIBLAR and FRAUENTHAL on 3 March, against resistance which could do little but delay their seizure. The enemy was not to the point of declaring no contest, however. At 1200 hours, shortly after our troops had consolidated LIBLAR, an enemy counter-attack, the first in three days, was launched against the town, supported by six assault guns. The attacking force was taken under intense artillery fire, and the attacking infantry was dispersed. One assault gun did succeed in breaking through our lines, but was eliminated in short order, and the troops who went on to seize DIRMERZHEIM found only five enemy in the town — all of them deserters from the engineer battalion of the 89th Infantry Regiment. Enemy resistance still came from scattered remnants of the 12th Volksgrenadier Division and the equally scattered remnants of the 353d Division.

On 4 March the enemy order of battle apparently ran something like this: The 62d Volksgrenadier Division had evidently moved in between the 353d Infantry Division and the 3d Parachute Division and occupied a sector extending south from the wooded area north of WEILERSWIST, with the 164th Regiment in contact with Division elements in the WEILERSWIST area. The 353d Division's northern boundary near LIBLAR was the 12th Volksgrenadier Division, at the time reduced to virtual inconsequence. Of the three divisions the 62d Volksgrenadier Division appeared to be the one in the best shape, but still not up to the job of stopping the 1st Division's advance to the RHINE.

Division troops continued forward on 5 March against only scattered enemy resistance; what show of strength appeared was centered as always in the towns and built-up areas. A few self-propelled guns fired on the road between LIBLAR and OBER LIBLAR, but the towns fell in short order, as did METTERNICH, the built-up area between ROSBERG and TRIPPELSDORF, the wooded area east of BLIESHEIM and WEILERSWIST. The reduction of DERSDORF on 6 March caused quite a bit of trouble, since it was defended by a stubborn group of flak men, well equipped with 20 mm machine guns. Eventually, at 2100 hours, the town was reported cleared, but even after Division troops had occupied the town, continued harassing 20 mm fire from the vicinity of ROLSDORF and the wooded high ground to the southwest continued to come in. The encounter with the flak troops in DERSDORF marked the beginning of a considerably better organized and more stubborn resistance on the part of the enemy. These flak troops were young, well-equipped and well-organized. They had been the outposts posted across the RHINE plain in defense of the RUHR and western Germany; with our advance toward the

RHINE they were being compressed against the river and used as infantry troops by the local infantry commanders. While DERSDORF was being contested, other Division units were pushing on through TRENICH, BALKHAUSEN, BRUGGEN, KLERDORF, ROGGENDORF, DORF PINGSORF, BADORF, SCHWADORF, WALBERBERG, TRIPPELSORF, GARDORF, WALDORF and ULLEKOVEN. These villages could hardly be said to have been taken by storm, although considerable resistance was put up in TRIPPELSORF.

The collapse of the Rhineland continued on 7 March, when BRUHL, BERZDORF, BORNHEIM, BRENIG, BOTZDORF and ALFTER fell into Division hands. The town of BRENIG was again defended by flak troops equipped with 20 mms, and when the strongpoint was taken, 19 anti-aircraft guns, 14 trucks and 52 prisoners also were captured. As Division troops entered SECHTEM from the west, an enemy patrol moved in from the east; after a short skirmish, both the enemy patrol and the town were captured. It was apparent that the enemy was pulling out as many men across the RHINE as he could. The BONN bridge was still serviceable and heavy ferrying and barge traffic was observed upstream. Enemy positions on the east side of the RHINE were taken under fire by mortars of the 26th US Infantry. Prisoners continued to flow through the Division cage at a high rate: 726 were processed during 7 March, among them the 60,000th prisoner taken by the 1st US Infantry Division during the current war. This man, a driver for the commander of a flak battalion, 35 years old and a native of Sudeten Germany, was no indication that the Wehrmacht had reached the last dregs of its manpower barrel.

3. FALL OF BONN AND CROSSING THE RHINE (8 March to 17 March)

During 8 March another dozen towns in which varying degrees of enemy resistance were encountered, were cleared by Division units. As on previous days, enemy resistance was most determined in the southern part of the Division zone. The barracks at F-524358 were bitterly defended by the garrison of two companies of the 78th Replacement Training Battalion. Other barracks, previously occupied by the 365th Replacement Training Battalion, were cleaned out with less trouble, and Division troops mopped up the west bank of the RHINE between HERSEL and BERZDORF quite handily. The advance into BONN itself, however, met increasing resistance as it penetrated into the heart of the city, chiefly from the grade-A troops of the flak units which had been compressed against the river. Intense 20 mm machine gun fire, supported by several self-propelled guns and tanks covered the streets leading in from the north. The enemy situation, however, was essentially hopeless, and during the day one tank and one self-propelled gun were destroyed and more than 600 prisoners were taken in the northern part of town alone. The BONN bridge, the only exit for the enemy, was a touch-and-go affair: several prisoners reported they had seen it prepared for demolition, and most of them were sur-

prised it had not been blown already. To the south of the city area the fighting, although stubborn, was on a lesser scale, centering chiefly in DUISDORF and ENDENICH. From the tally of prisoners taken during the day, it was learned that BONN was being defended by the 253d Replacement Training Regiment (78th, 412th, and 365th Battalions), plus an undetermined number of anti-aircraft units. In addition there was a sizeable collection of odds and ends — Volksturm, city police and straggler groups rounded up for combat on the spot. Artillery defense was put up for the most part by anti-aircraft guns which attempted interdiction of the roads leading into the city from the northwest as well as more direct missions on our troops. The bridge was blown at 2115 hours, 8 March, by a captain of the 6th Engineer Regiment, (later captured by the 1st Division) who had not slept for three days, worrying over whether he would be able to blow the bridge at precisely the right moment. He succeeded admirably.

With the bridge blown, resistance in the city was working on borrowed time and came to an official end at 1410 hours, 9 March. Some efforts were made by remnants of the 365th Battalion and a handful of misguided Volksturm, but the chief problem faced by the Division was rounding up the large number of prisoners wandering around the city, some still in uniform and others in civilian clothes. With the city quiet once more except for enemy artillery shelling the town, cellars all over the town began giving up their yield of Landser, some of whom had been hiding out for over a month. More than 200 deserters were flushed out of basements and civilian houses: most of them had arrived in the area on furlough and had simply decided to wait the arrival of the Americans and the end of the war instead of returning to their units. All during the race across the Rhineland it was found that large numbers of deserters could be expected as soon as the Division troops reached towns and built-up areas where the German soldiers could get away from their officers and NCOs without being missed.

Coincident with the appearance of the straggling Wehrmacht was an unprecedented number of civilians. During previous Division operations in Germany, the number of civilians encountered was almost negligible, with the exception of the capture of AACHEN. After the penetration of the first defense zone east of the ROER, however, the numbers of civilians encountered in the towns and villages exceeded the most optimistic Chamber of Commerce figures. Hundreds of refugees from towns west of the ROER had flooded back and other hundreds had come in from the heavy bomb targets of COLOGNE and BONN. The screening and processing of these civilians presented enormous problems to the CIC and Military Government detachments, aggravated by the speed of the Division advance. Screening by the CIC was done on a group basis. In all, somewhere in the neighborhood of 150,000 civilians were estimated to be in the Division zone during the operation: 55,000 in BONN, 20,000 in BRUHL, 2,500 in LIBLAR and so on.

The bag of prisoners during the advance from the ROER to the RHINE was equally lucrative. During the 12 days, of the advance, from 26 February to 10 March, the Division took 5,163 PWs, most of them from the three major units — the 62d Volksgrenadier, the 353d Infantry and the 12th Volksgrenadier Divisions — which faced the Division sector. Towards the end of the drive, however, a vast variety of units began to appear in the Division cage, most of which had been trapped between the 1st Division and the RHINE. These ran from a bonafide woman soldier to a 65-year-old Volkssturmer and included postal workers, bakers and clerks of all descriptions, and one was the 60,000th PW taken by the Division in its nearly 400 days of combat in this war.

While the 1st Division was cleaning up BONN, elements of the 9th Armored Division had seized the railway bridge across the RHINE at REMAGEN and had captured a bridgehead on the far bank. On 16 March the 1st Division crossed the RHINE (for the second time in its history), and the next day went into action in the northern sector of the bridgehead. The enemy forces trying to contain the threat east of the RHINE were in a disorganized condition, but it was obvious that the Germans were bending every effort to bring up reinforcements to fill in the gaps. To some extent they succeeded: certainly the 1st Division had some of its most exhausting and roughest days in the battle to expand the bridgehead and, finally, to break open a corridor for the eventual thrust to the east.

4. BRIDGEHEAD OPERATIONS (17 March to 26 March)

During the first day's fighting, 17 March, the main units which the enemy had committed to block the expansion of the bridgehead were identified. Of 223 prisoners taken in the day most were from the 377th Training Battalion (a component of the 160th Training Regiment brought down from Denmark), and Battlegroup HENKE of the 3d Parachute Division, the most persistent opposition in the Division's book. In the vicinity of HUSCHEID the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division was identified and the 2d Battalion, 11th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (9th Panzer Division) showed up near the overpass over the Autobahn at F-1713281. During the day the enemy was driven from the vicinity of the overpass and from the woods to the south. The villages of GRAFENHORN (F-677324) and HUSCHEID were taken, but during the afternoon a company of enemy infantry attacked our positions in the two villages. They were driven back to NONNENBERG. Previously five tanks or SPs with infantry riding on them had attempted to evict our troops from BRUNGSBERG; three of the armored vehicles were disabled and most of the infantry cleaned out by intense Division artillery fire. The most bitter fighting of the day, however, took place south of ORSCEID along the Autobahn; the overpass was seized before noon, but enemy artillery and mortar fire was of an intensity to prevent any further advance. Enemy artillery, in fact, was fairly strong over the entire Division sector: more than

3,100 rounds of artillery and mortar fire landed in the Division zone. It was evident, and was to become more so as the fighting in the bridgehead went on, that whatever shortages the enemy may have felt in quality infantry, he at least had all the artillery he needed, amply supplied from convenient ammunition dumps. Moreover, the quality of his infantry did not prevent him from mounting frequent and ambitious counter-attacks, driven home with desperation.

The Division advance continued on, however, and on 18 March the high ground west of EUDENBACH, the towns of QUIRRENBACH, ROSTINGEN, ORSCHEID, GRATZFELD, WULLSCHEID and STOCKHAUSEN were cleared of the enemy. The attack in the northern half of the Division zone got off before dawn to take the high ground west of EUDENBACH and the two towns to the south. At the same time the 2d Battalion, 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, attacked from the northeast in an effort to recapture HUSCHEID and a force of about 100 parachutists from the 5th Parachute Regiment, kicked from behind by the Terrible-Tempered Col BECKER, tried to retake BRUNGSBERG from QUIRRENBACH. After rough-and-tumble fighting, the two attacks were beaten off. Col BECKER, however, who is a staunch fellow where his parachutists are concerned, ordered another practically suicidal attack on BRUNGSBERG shortly after noon. Later a fourth counter-attack, comprising infantry and tanks, probably from the 29th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, was seen forming up west of NONNENBERG. It was dispersed by Division artillery. In the south, ORSCHEID and Hill 363 had fallen before dawn. During the afternoon one of our platoons succeeded in hacking its way into WULLSCHEID despite intense SP and towed artillery fire. Heavy fighting ensued in the town until after dark when reinforcements were able to move up and settle the question. Shortly after 1800 hours, still another counter-attack was launched down the STOCKHAUSEN-HIMBERG road with four tanks in support. It was repulsed by heavy fire, and our troops pushed forward to occupy STOCKHAUSEN. During the day enemy artillery fire grew in intensity with more than 4,500 rounds (including one 350 mm dud) recorded.

NONNENBERG and EUDENBACH fell on 19 March after heavy fighting, and in the face of even heavier artillery concentrations, to which was added a sizeable proportion of rocket fire. At 2045 hours, after a very heavy rocket and artillery barrage on our positions in EUDENBACH, the enemy attacked the town in strength from the northeast, east and southeast with tanks and infantry. The attack achieved some initial success and infiltration into the town was reported. Division artillery laid heavy concentrations on the attacking forces and compelled the follow-up troops to withdraw, pounding them heavily on the way. By 2330 hours the positions were restored after bitter hand-to-hand fighting. No identification was made of the attacking force although it was probably from the 3d Parachute Division, elements of which had been trying to retake BRUNGSBERG for three days in order to cut the Autobahn. (See Annex 1). At 1100 hours the enemy started a series of strong

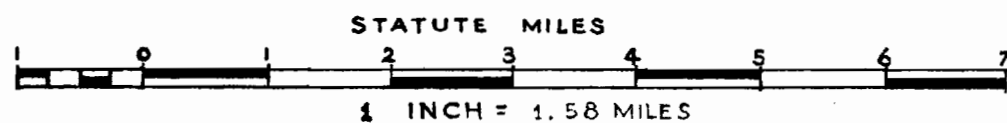
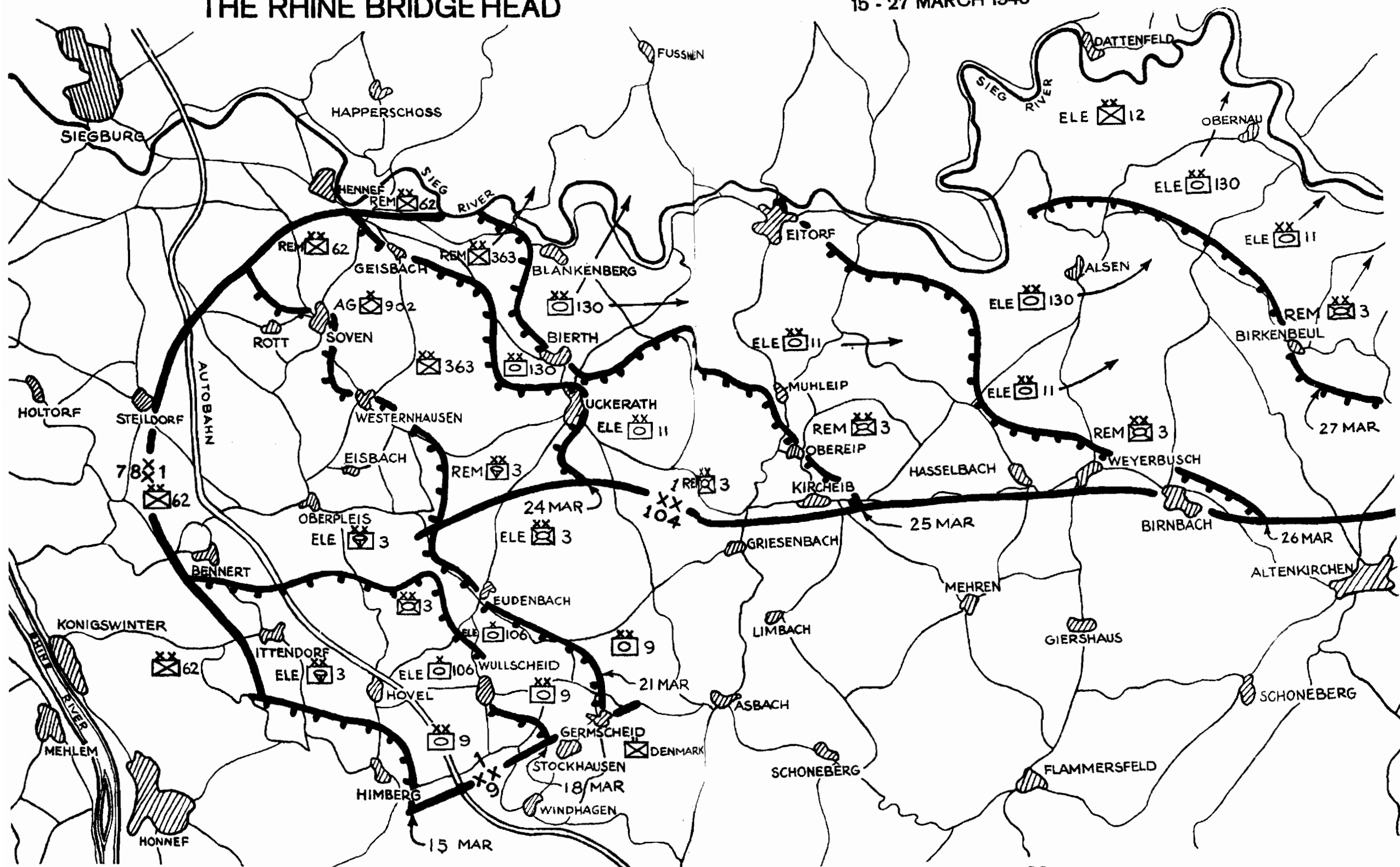
counter-attacks to recapture GRATZFELD from the east. Four attacks were launched by a straggler battalion of about 250 men. During the fighting, which was severe, just under 200 prisoners were captured, and a considerable number were left dead on the field.

During 20 March the Division advanced, 3,000 yards in the north and 2,000 yards in the center of the Division zone. Over 20 inhabited localities were taken, of which the larger were STIELDORFERHOHN, OBERPLEIS, HERRESBACH and BERGHAUSEN. Enemy resistance continued to be stubborn, supported by ever-increasing artillery, mortar and rocket fire. Prisoners tallied over 700 at the end of the day, most of them from the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division, the 3d Parachute and the 9th Panzer Divisions. Five SPs and two half-tracks were destroyed and two half-tracks captured. The attack toward STIELDORFERHOHN and OBERPLEIS started shortly after midnight and proceeded well except for stubborn resistance in BOSEROTH. The enemy was pushed out, however, along with two tanks and an SP, and Division units continued on to take the two towns, which were defended by the 164th and 183d Regiments, before dark. In the center, the enemy was driven out of BERGHAUSEN after hard fighting and in the face of a counter-attack by a company of infantry and four tanks or SPs. Here the enemy was identified as elements of the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division. The enemy's chief effort to slow our advance was launched in the south where Division troops which had pushed to the southeastern edge of the airfield were heavily counter-attacked by 200 infantry and five tanks. Two of the tanks were knocked out and the infantry driven off after hard fighting.

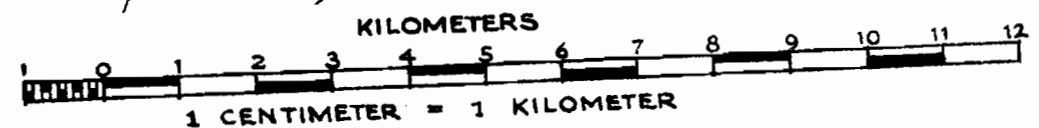
The seriousness with which the enemy regarded the Division's advance was indicated by the identification on 21 March of two regiments of the 363d Infantry Division which relieved what was left of the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division on the night of 20—21 March. Two other important and troublesome identifications were those of the 244th and 902d Assault Gun Brigades who brought with them a heavy support of SPs. In spite of these changes and reinforcements, however, the enemy was unable to halt the Division's advance. By dawn the general line of BOCKEROTH—UTHWEILER—PLEISERHOHN—RUBHAUSEN was held. Shortly after daylight the enemy began a series of strong counter-attacks against the Division's right flank, the first with 200 infantry and five tanks. The first assault was broken, but the German infantry continued to apply pressure in an effort to retake the hill at F-705356. By 1800 hours ROTT, SOVEN, WESTERHAUSEN and KURSCHEID were cleared, although the advance was contested by 10 SPs operating between SOVEN and WESTERHAUSEN. Three SPs were destroyed in SOVEN, and the Division's move into GERMSCHIED on the right flank was counter-attacked by about 100 infantry and four SPs. Both SOVEN and WESTERHAUSEN were cleared on 22 March and the built-up areas in the eastern part of HENNEF and the vicinity of WEIDERSCHALL were re-

THE RHINE BRIDGE HEAD

15 - 27 MARCH 1945



SCALE 1:100,000



connoitered. The two new enemy regiments in the line, the 957th and 958th, contributed the greater part of the 204 prisoners taken during the day; again the enemy relied mainly on intense artillery fire to make up for the deficiencies of his infantry. The 957th and 958th Regiments, which had moved down from LEVERKUSEN, had been hastily reorganized on the spot after disastrous casualties before crossing the RHINE. Any available male in the LEVERKUSEN area was tapped for duty, and a strong flavoring of local Volksturm was impressed into the ranks as regulars. On 23 March, the KUMPEN—WIPPENHOHN area and WEIDERSCHALL were mopped up with brief flare-ups of fighting. Two enemy SPs were knocked out. The prisoner bag went down (again most of them were from the 363d Division) but artillery fire increased sharply. About 4,000 rounds of all types fell in the Division zone during the day. It seemed clear that the enemy was organizing for something big during the comparative lull.

During the fighting of 24 March, it was obvious that the enemy indeed had been planning a large and powerful operation. The day's fighting was as grueling and hard-fought as any in the Division's campaigns in Europe; at the end of the battle, however, Division troops had succeeded in driving 1,500 yards to the east to take the high ground east of the HANF Creek as well as the town of UCKERATH. Throughout the sector the enemy's defense was stubborn, based largely on the employment of large numbers of tanks and SPs to support his infantry. Nowhere did he give ground without being pushed out by main force, and even then he counter-attacked vigorously. During the day 14 major counter-attacks were reported, in addition to many smaller thrusts. Enemy mortar, artillery and rocket fire reached a peak of intensity, with more than 5,000 rounds coming in on the Division zone. Of the estimated 60 tanks and SPs which the enemy committed during the day, 23 were destroyed, with five more as probables. Nearly 550 prisoners were taken.

Probably what had happened was that Division troops, moving out to the east, had jumped the gun on the enemy's own offensive. Before dawn and during the morning GEISBACH, eastern HENNEF and LICHTENBERG were taken. The enemy's reaction to this northern advance was sharp. Division units in the GEISBACH area were counterattacked beginning about 0900 hours by SPs and tanks and infantry in a continuous action which continued until 1300 hours, at which time the enemy managed to penetrate the town. By liberal use of artillery and fighter-bombers on follow-up troops in the GREUEL-SIEFEN area, the enemy was prevented from exploiting his success and our units were able to push the enemy armor and infantry out of the town to the northeast by 1750 hours. Meanwhile, in the STREIFEN-LICHTENBERG area the enemy was being equally hard-headed. Division troops which had reached the road near STREIFEN shortly after dawn by-passed an enemy force and as soon as they reached the positions they were strongly counter-attacked from

both front and rear. The Division troops held on, however, and by noon the attack from the west had been eliminated. To the south the action was just as hard: our troops which had crossed the HANF were counter-attacked first at 0220 hours and spasmodically thereafter, particularly in the vicinity of HUCHEL and on the high ground at F-727344.

Possibly the most severe fighting, however, took place in and around UCKERATH, which appeared to be the main enemy strongpoint in the sector. At the end of the day the town was almost entirely in our hands. During the day two prisoners from the 11th Panzer Division were captured in the UCKERATH area. Although most of the 500-odd prisoners taken during the day were from the 62d Volksgrenadier and 363d Divisions, prisoners captured several days later explained that the 11th Panzer Grenadier Regiment had been ordered up from KIRCHEIB to hold and defend UCKERATH. The regiment was due the day after UCKERATH fell to our forces, and the prisoners taken in the town were there as advance parties. The 1st Division had cut off the enemy's plan by attacking one day too soon.

On 25 March the fighting went on with equal intensity, supported by the appearance of all the major elements of the 130th Panzer LEHR Division which had moved into the area on the night of 24—25 March. In spite of this reinforcement, the enemy was cleared from his remaining positions in HENNEF and UCKERATH, and DONDORF, GREUELSEIFEN, STREIFEN and BIERTH were captured. To the south, FERNEGEIRSCHEID, HULSCHEID, LINDSCHEID and OBEREIP were taken against moderate resistance by the left flank elements of the 130th Panzer Division. 802 prisoners were captured. Again the advances in the northern sector were the most fiercely contested. At 0600 hours a counter-attack of 200 infantry and four tanks was launched against our thrust towards BIERTH, and was followed by another attack in the same area with a force of the same size at 0920 hours, but at 1600 hours the western part of the town had been entered.

After coordinating the stories of prisoners and filling the gaps with mellow hypothesis, it seemed that the fanatical resistance of the enemy during 24 March was based on determination to keep our troops from seizing the ridge line from HENNEF to UCKERATH, behind which the 130th Panzer LEHR and 11th Panzer Divisions were assembling for a major offensive to reduce the northern half of the bridgehead. The prisoners said that UCKERATH was to be the boundary and strongpoint of the two panzer divisions; mellow hypothesis is supported by the unprecedented identifications of artillery and mortar and rocket units on the Division front. The attack had apparently been scheduled for 25 March, but despite the almost suicidal defense put up by the 62d and 363d Divisions and the supporting assault gun brigades the enemy was not able to protect his line of departure and was forced to commit some of his forces piecemeal.

5. BREAKTHROUGH (27 March to 31 March)

The major battles of 24—25 March seemed to mark a climax in the enemy's opposition to our breakthrough. Though there was still stiff fighting to be done before the breakthrough was complete and the armor could drive out, on 24—25 March the enemy had committed his major units, brought up to the greatest strength possible. (See Annex 3). At the end of 25 March the Division had taken 4,319 prisoners since beginning operations in the REMAGEN bridgehead; during the same eight days the Division destroyed more than 50 tanks and SPs, and ground up a total of five divisions, three armored (9th and 130th Panzer and 3d Panzer Grenadier) and two infantry (62d and 363d Volksgrenadier). The remnants of the 3d Parachute Division and large elements of the 11th Panzer Division, the 340th and 353d Infantry Divisions were also encountered.

The fighting, however, continued with severity in some places, although for the most part the enemy was bending every effort to get his main forces north of the SIEG River. Six tanks were destroyed and 309 prisoners were taken during the day, which saw the seizure of ADSCHIED, BLANKENBERG and SUCHTERSCHIED. The greatest resistance was encountered in the advance towards EITORF against direct fire supported by artillery and rocket fire from across the river. One large-scale counter-attack was launched against Division troops in this area, apparently designed to keep the bridge open as long as possible to allow evacuation of units. To the south the enemy had given way to the major thrust of the bridgehead; Division troops in that area moved up 6,000 yards against resistance which was scattered at best (See Annex 4).

On 27 March the race was on. To the south of the Division sector enemy resistance had collapsed and armor and infantry were driving through the gap. In the Division zone the enemy was cleared from the area northwest, north and northeast of ALTENKIRCHEN. In the west, Division troops took the high ground overlooking the bend of the SIEG River; north of ALTENKIRCHEN the towns of REUKENBUEL and KRATZHAHN were taken, and by the end of the day the EICHELHARDT area had been taken and consolidated. Though these moves were accomplished without the resistance of the previous days, stiff fighting took place at several points, particularly in the vicinity of KUCHHAUSEN. Artillery and rocket fire had also diminished, but it was apparent that the enemy had succeeded in withdrawing a considerable concentration of guns north of the SIEG: about 1,500 rounds fell in Division territory. From identifications made during the period, it was evident that major elements of the 12th Volksgrenadier Division (at least the 89th Regiment) had been brought down from the COLOGNE area to hold a sector on the northern flank of our penetration. From contact with elements of the 2d Battalion, 164th Infantry Regiment, it appeared that the 62d Volksgrenadier Division had been

assigned the mission of withdrawing east along the southern bank of the SIEG River, limiting the thrust in this area as much as possible.

Enemy resistance during 28 March was light except for a stubborn fight in the vicinity of PRACHT, where four enemy tanks and some infantry held up Division units in the morning; the strongpoint was outflanked and the town was taken from the rear. VISSEN also fell after scattered resistance; to the east no organized resistance was reported although a few groups of stragglers, coordinated by hardheaded die-hards attempted to engage in purely local actions. At the end of the day BIERSDORF and DAADEN had been taken and reconnaissance had been pushed north, drawing fire from HERDORF. What the enemy was doing north of the SIEG River was anybody's guess: prisoners taken during the day were strays and stragglers for the most part who had been out of contact with any central authority for some time. That the enemy crust had broken was clear from the nature of some of the installations captured by the Division during the day: a gunpowder plant with 70,000 pounds of black powder at HAMM; a large ammunition dump at G-0134; three locomotives and a string of freight cars in a tunnel at F-9437, and two hospitals at MARIENTHAL and BIERSDORF. Over 350 prisoners were captured.

Enemy screening forces continued to block our sweep south of the SIEG River during 29 March. Division troops attacking before dawn pushed into BURBACH and WAHLBACH, meeting considerable opposition in the latter town, where four SPs and some infantry held up the advance during the morning. GILSBACH and WILDEN, however, were taken with little trouble. WILNSDORF was a different story; between 150 and 200 infantry from the 2d Battalion, 901st Panzer Grenadier Regiment were defending the town supported by three tanks. At the end of the day fighting was still going on in the town. In the eastern half of the Division zone, HOLZHAUSEN, WURGENDORF, HAIGER, SEELBACH, STEINBACH and RODENBACH were captured.

Elements of the 130th Panzer LEHR Division continued to furnish the major defense of the enemy against the drive of the Division to the north, supplemented by odds and ends of enemy units formerly engaged in all sectors of the REMAGEN bridgehead. After the town of WILNSDORF was finally cleared of enemy after a very stiff fight during the morning of 30 March, Division units pushed forward, encountering a series of enemy strongpoints at each of the key road junctions in the zone of action. In the EISEN-OBERSDORF area the 57th Training Battalion was captured almost intact.

Division troops did not make serious contact with the enemy during 31 March; both the move of the 16th Infantry into the BUREN area and the 26th Infantry into the LAASPHE area were without incident. Elements of the 4th Cavalry Group, however, preceding the 26th Infantry columns, encountered enemy forces from the 1st and 2d Battalions of the Combat School, Army Group "B" and miscellaneous Volkssturm and local defense units. The main

enemy threat during the day was infiltration through the columns and supply routes of the Division.

During the battles of France and Belgium, the 1st Infantry Division undoubtedly covered more ground in one 30-day period than it did in the month of March. On the other hand, the Division never engaged in such a wide variety of operations, each of which was a major critical blow to the enemy, as it did during March 1945. The drive across the RHINE plain cost the enemy his last territorial buffer belt; the capture of BONN lost him an important city and communications center. With the REMAGEN bridgehead the enemy's last ditch of defense was compromised at the most embarrassing possible time. And with defeat in the field by the 1st Infantry Division of his major counter-attack to eliminate the bridgehead on 24—25 March, the enemy not only used up his most precious reserves, but failed to block a complete breakthrough. The breakthrough itself, which might prove to be the last straw for the enemy, was the culmination of all these previous shocks. Just how far it would go remained to be seen, but it was certain that it would do the enemy no good at all.

ANNEX 1

(Consolidated Interrogation Report, 19 March)

A captain commanding a battalion of the 106th Panzer, or FELDHERRNHALLE, Brigade, passed through the Division Cage in a high state of dudgeon. He was burned up at the parachutists, and it came about in this way: His battalion was originally attached to the 9th Panzer Division and he had his CP in QUIRRENBACH. On the night of 17 March he received word that his battalion had been attached to the 3d Parachute Division, and that he had been designated as infantry tactician for the parachute units in the area. The prisoner yesterday reported to the CP of the 10th Panzer Grenadier Regiment in JUNGERTH to discuss this change and to find out what he was meant to do as infantry tactician. There he learned that the 5th Parachute Regiment was sending down three companies to participate in an attack on BRUNGSBERG with his battalion, which was to remain in the positions it held, along with some units of the 10th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. When the prisoner returned to his own battalion CP he found that the three companies of parachutists had already arrived and had been put in position by the lieutenant commanding them. The positions taken by the parachutists displeased the prisoner mightily: they were on the wrong slope of the hill and the men had restricted fields of fire. He was in the midst of ordering the parachute lieutenant to change positions when our troops attacked. The parachutists and FELDHERRNHALLE men resisted stubbornly and well, but our troops swept around to their left and rolled them up from the flank, which accounts for the relatively large catch of the two units. The captain in the cage still felt sure he could have

held the attack if he had defended the ground he had chosen and had not been caught by the stupidity of the parachute lieutenant.

Discouragingly enough, the present breed of parachutists encountered in the cage is just about the highest type soldier the 3d Parachute Division has produced in the 1st Infantry Division's long and wearying feud with the outfit. The men, who apparently do not read the elegantly bound publications of the Allied forces which point out that Germany has only 47 men, more or less, available for duty, are as arrogant, confident and well turned out as any encountered in Normandy, LANGERWEHE or FAYMONVILLE. They consider Col. BECKER, who is rapidly turning into a major blight, to be a fine soldier and inspiring leader. Many of the men have been drawn from the 3d Parachute Division base — butchers, supply and maintenance men. How they escaped the draft until now is unknown. Others are fresh replacements from the parachute school at STENDHAL.

In striking contrast to the do-or-die parachutists was a collection of prisoners from the 10th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. These men were replacements who had arrived only a short time ago from LIMBURG on the LAHN River, nearly 100 kilometers from this area. The replacements had walked the distance. At MERGENDORF, en route, they were relieved of their steel helmets and arms, except for pistols, a few carbines and four rounds of ammunition per man, and were told that they would be re-equipped when they reached ASBACH. They continued on to ASBACH. Meanwhile, a red-hot rumor had been making the rounds of the 10th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. The men had heard that a special new set of reinforcements had arrived in ASBACH. These men were probably the most important and secret replacements on the western front: they were all equipped with atom-crushers which eclipsed all life within a two kilometer radius when applied. The new unit was so terrifying that it was called the "ghost outfit". As can be imagined, there was a considerable anti-climax when the limping and groaning group from LIMBURG, sans helmets and weapons, hove into view. "Where are the atom-crushers?" asked one of the expectant panzer Grenadiers. "Atom-crushers, my foot!" the footsore pedestrian replied bitterly.

Prisoners from the 8th Panzer Grenadier Regiment left COLOGNE—MULHEIM on 17 March and arrived in this area with about 60 men to a company. Most of the men were stragglers and recently discharged hospital patients who had been rounded up after the fall of COLOGNE. Before leaving they were given a full-blown inspirational talk: they were told that the Wehrmacht had succeeded in blowing the REMAGEN railroad bridge and that the Americans were trapped on this side of the RHINE, ripe for plucking. They were also advised to leave their watches and valuables behind — this was it, this was the final blow and they should be stripped for action. The men detrucked at WITTMEROTH (7033) on the afternoon of 17 March and were put in the line behind the HUHNERBERG (700325), with a mission of

securing and holding. They were unprepared for our attack of the next day and the casualty rate was very high. In the cage, many of the men wondered what had become of their watches and valuables. The prisoners said the 1st, 2d and 3d Companies of the 8th Regiment had come down from COLOGNE; the 4th Company and the 2d Battalion were left guarding the river front, but they had believed that the 2d Battalion was slated for an early attachment to the 3d Parachute Division.

ANNEX 2

(Consolidated Interrogation Report, 24 March)

From the ferocity of the day's fighting, the high number of major counter-attacks and the general tenor of the prisoners, it seems plain that the enemy has been given a powerful shot in the arm. The same units — such as the 958th Regiment and the 363d Fusiliers — which appeared to be left-handed military step-children in previous fighting, today resisted as stubbornly and bitterly as the top-grade troops of the Normandy campaign. Even when surrounded they still fought on, something which no German unit has done for the past six weeks. Just what is responsible for this galvanic change of attitude is not clear; the outward signs have all the earmarks of the presence of Col BECKER, the eager martinet, but it is more probable that the 1st Division's attack caught the enemy just as he was launching a well-coordinated and well-supported attack himself. Most of the prisoners were unaware of any special plans; but piecing together the stories of several individual PWs, it is apparent that the enemy had something up his sleeve, although timed for somewhat later than the Division's push.

The first witness was a battalion commander of the 957th Regiment. He had just been elevated from commanding the 13th Company, and consequently was not up on the regiment's rumors and gossip, but he said that he had been expressly ordered to put his battalion in position on the west bank of the HANF Creek and not behind it. The prisoner, figuring on a continued defense of the sector, thought the order silly and left most of his troops on the east bank while he set up an advanced OP on the west bank in the vicinity of HERMESMUHLE (712367). Consequently, he and his OP staff were among the first of his battalion to be captured. Thinking over the situation in the cage he began to see why he had been ordered into position on the west bank: he had overheard the regimental commander say that he expected 12 tanks from the 11th Panzer Division to arrive before noon to support intended operations.

The second witness was a prisoner from the 209th Engineer Battalion of the 11th Panzer Division. This man was a motorcycle messenger for his company commander. Until 0500 today his outfit had been in the area of ALTENBURG; at that time they were ordered to move. On the way up, he said, he passed a group of 45 Tiger tanks which had pulled off into the woods in the

vicinity of KIRCHIEB (8034). The PW subsequently received an order to go on a route reconnaissance of the roads to HERMESMUHLE. Particular attention was to be paid to the weight capacity and width of bridges which tanks would have to cross on the side roads beyond UCKERATH. Before he left on the reconnaissance, the prisoner was told by his lieutenant that the tanks were to support a counterattack by the 363d Division.

The prisoner who should have been able to give the most accurate information on the projected plans of the 11th Panzer Division proved to be of least value. He was from the 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, but he was stupid. He said that he and 51 other men had been sent into the line near UCKERATH, the group was shortly withdrawn, and the prisoner was captured near HUCHEL. He said he had come to this area from NEUSTADT (7825), near ALTENBURG.

Another factor in the increased tenacity of the enemy was undoubtedly due to the exceptionally strong artillery support he was able to muster. Some indication of the intensity of this support can be had from the bag of prisoners on EULEN BERG, the high hill commanding the center of the division sector. Four officers and ten men were taken off the hill — all of them forward observers, radio operators and wire men. One officer was from the 8th Battery, 3d PG Artillery Regiment; another from the 5th Battery, same regiment; the third from the 53d Werfer Regiment, and the last from the 1183d GHQ Mortar Battalion. This last outfit is noteworthy both for the size of its mortars (210 mm) and its complete TO and TE. The battalion had been stationed on the defenses of BERLIN, but was sent to this sector 12 days ago. It arrived with high-caliber personnel and complete equipment, including a large supply of ammunition. The battalion consists of three batteries of nine mortars each, all of them committed in this area. Moreover, all the mortars have been ordered well forward; one battery, in fact, was overrun by the 18th US Infantry north of the EULEN BERG.

The prisoner from the 53d Werfer Regiment (encountered once before by the 1st Division in the BUTGENBACH area) said that the regiment now consists of two battalions, with eight nebelwerfers in one battalion and nine in the other. He added that there is plenty of ammunition of all types on hand.

Finally, and this may well be the most important factor in the enemy's increased determination, it seems there has been an important though undocumented change in the commitment of officers in the fighting. Several prisoners remarked that their officers were now constantly up forward (e. g. the battalion commander of the 957th Regiment who was captured in his forward OP) instead of urging the men on to greater efforts from the security of cellars well to the rear. Apparently the officers, either by order or because of a feeling of hopelessness, are now sticking it out with their men come what may, instead of pulling out at the last moment to form new alarm companies or to organize

straggler groups. And the men, either inspired by the officers' presence or prodded on by the officers' pistols, fight on as hard as they can.

The only unexpected identification of the day was that of the 959th Infantry Regiment. Prisoners said it is called a regiment for sentiment only: actually it is one battalion of about 200 men without a regimental organization and operating under direct divisional control. It was committed in the 957th sector. According to the prisoners the regiment (or battalion) was recruited in even greater haste in LEVERKUSEN than its sister regiments. As many men as possible were pulled out of the LEVERKUSEN area and others were tapped for duty on the way down to this sector. The regiment arrived last night.

ANNEX 3

(Trouble in the Panzer Regiment)

Documents picked up by the 26th US Infantry and the 701st Ordnance LM Company, point up the difficulties of reorganizing and committing a German panzer regiment during these depressing days.

The documents form an interesting series. First is an order by the new commander of the 130th Panzer Regiment. The 1st Battalion (less the 1st Company apparently lost somewhere) was to be fully equipped with tanks and men. The 2d Battalion would furnish tanks and personnel to bring the 1st Battalion up to strength; thus depleted it would take over the regimental workshop company as an integral unit, as well as other supply and maintenance services. Whether the 2d Battalion was to retain any tanks and personnel for offensive operations is not clear. A secondary mission of the 2d Battalion was to recall the various battlegroups which had been operating far from home in the southern parts of the bridgehead, giving fits to conscientious Order of Battle experts. In spite of these heroic measures, however, the difficulties of the rejuvenated 1st Battalion are outlined in the subsequent documents.

130th Panzer Lehr Regiment

Regtl CP, 8 March 1945

ORDER FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF THE REGIMENT

1. The regiment will be reorganized as follows:

Regimental Headquarters, 130th Panzer LEHR Regiment.

1st Bn, 130th Panzer LEHR Regt (fully supplied with tanks).

2 Bn, 130th Panzer LEHR Regt (fully staffed with supply and workshop units).

This reorganization will be completed not later than 10 March 1945.

2. The 1st Battalion will be brought up to full strength in men and tanks by using personnel and equipment of the 2d Battalion.

For this purpose the 2d Battalion will hand over to the 1st Battalion the following:

- a. 8 Mark V tanks.
8 Mark IV tanks.
1 armored command car.
3 Fla tanks.*
 - b. 1 "Willy" vehicle now with Lt Petkat (probably a captured jeep).*
 - c. 7 crews for Mark V tanks.
7 crews for Mark IV tanks.
3 crews for Fla tanks (with platoon leader).*
 - d. 1 infantry squad for Mark IV now with Lt Petkat.*
 - e. 1 mechanic for Mark IV.
1 maintenance man for Mark IV.
4 motor mechanics for Mark IV.*
- 3. The 2d Battalion will try to get in communication with the NEROTH Battlegroup, the tanks on the MOSEL and Lt MAETSCHKE's Battlegroup and bring them back to the 2d Battalion.*
- 4. The completed reorganization will be reported to regiment by both the 1st and 2d Battalions at 2100 hours, 11 March.*

s/ HUDEL

Major and Regiment Commander

Next in the series of documents is a tank strength report of the revitalized 1st Battalion, as of 22 March. In spite of the juggling, the tanks strength has apparently not reached staggering proportions.

<i>1st Battalion, 130th Panzer LEHR Regiment</i>	<i>CP, 22 March 1945</i>		
	<i>Mark IV</i>	<i>Mark V</i>	<i>TD</i>
<i>Ready for commitment.</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Just repaired.</i>	<i>—</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Out for minor repairs.</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Out for major repairs.</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>2</i>
	<hr/> <i>5</i>	<hr/> <i>15</i>	<hr/> <i>10</i>

On the same day the CO of the 1st Battalion got out his movement order, a standard affair. Apparently this move proved to be a taxing effort for many of the tanks of the 1st Battalion, for on 24 March, the following tank strength report was submitted for regimental headquarters. It bears comparison with the report of 22 March.

Tanks of the Battalion

CP, 24 March 1945

	Mark IV	Mark V	TD
<i>Ready for commitment.</i>	1	1	4
<i>Out for minor repairs.</i>	2	10	4
<i>Out for major repairs.</i>	2	7	2
	<hr/> 5	<hr/> 18	<hr/> 10

This document also shows when the tanks will be repaired:

	Mark IV	Mark V	TD
<i>Ready 24 March.</i>	1	4	2
<i>Ready 25 March</i>	1	2	2
<i>Ready 26 March</i>	—	4	—
	<hr/> 2	<hr/> 10	<hr/> 4

There follows a long list of the repairs necessary for each of the damaged tanks. Included are the following:

- Leaking gas tank.*
- Gear damage.*
- Damage to transmission.*
- Damage to steering arm.*
- Change of motor.*
- Break in oilpipe.*
- Change of armored plates.*

ANNEX 4

(Consolidated Interrogation Report, 27 March)

One of the enemy's last coordinated (and successful) delaying actions in this sector was described by a prisoner from the 388th Volksartillery Corps. When the bridgehead was first pushed across, this corps was operating in the south, in the vicinity of LINZ. Instead of the usual seven battalions, it had only three: a battalion of 88 mms, employed in a normal artillery role; a battalion of 75 mm anti-tank guns, and a battalion of 170 mm guns. As of day before yesterday the weapon strength of the three battalions was two anti-tanks guns, four 88 mms and three 170 mms.

The three battalions moved into this sector on 25 March with the mission of establishing a strongpoint to block our advance down the UCKERATH—WEYERBUSCH road. The 170 mms were employed in the vicinity of MARENBACH (8836), the two anti-tank guns behind HASSALBACH and WEYERBUSCH. The gun crew members not employed on the reduced number of guns were formed into alarm companies and employed around the guns as defending infantry. The prisoners said that two Tiger tanks were added to the group as support. He did not know where they came from.

Our tank spearheads pushing down the WEYERBUSCH road were preceded by artillery smoke shells, and as they came down a slope into WEYERBUSCH they suddenly burst out of the enveloping smoke and appeared to the anti-tank gunners on the other side of the draw silhouetted against the white background. To make an unfortunate story short, the enemy anti-tank gunners knocked out five of the tanks on the road, according to the prisoner, and accounted for one more coming cross-country. Their success was short-lived, however; our artillery Cub planes flying over the area spotted the anti-tank guns and Tiger tanks and called down a really strenuous artillery concentration. Both the enemy anti-tank guns were destroyed, as well as one of the tanks, the alarm company men were scattered and the unit was ordered to pull out to LEINGEN (8635). The prisoner said that one of the 88 mms, either disabled or out of gas, was left behind. The remnants of the strongpoint were supposed to assemble in LEINGEN at 2000 hours last night; once there they were ordered further back to MARENBACH, but the prisoner, who had got a good look at all the Sherman tanks he hadn't knocked out, decided he had had enough and sneaked off to await our arrival. He had no idea what had happened to the 170 mm guns, but he did know the gasoline to move them was, as always, very scant. While the men were digging in and laying out their strongpoint, every man who was unemployed was given an empty jerrican and told to go fill it, whether he had to steal it from another unit, borrow it, buy it or sing for it.

With the exception of the 388th Volksartillery Corps, most of the PWs in the cage were strays and stragglers, though not deserters, who had been cut off from their units for two or three days during the general disorganization following the major engagements of 24—25 March. Among them was a scattering of men from the rear echelons, overrun during our advance — signal companies and flak battalions.

As a note of cheer to Order of Battle experts, and as a source of future reference for the G-1 of the 48th Panzer Corps, who may be wondering what happened to many of the men in his two panzer divisions, the following figures represent the 1st Infantry Division's take in prisoners from the 130th Panzer LEHR battles of 24—25 March. The number of enemy dead is estimated to be about half the total figures for the prisoners.

<u>130th Panzer LEHR Division</u>		<u>11th Panzer Division</u>	
901st Regiment	283	111th Regiment	308
902d Regiment	124	110th Regiment	55
130th Pz Arty Regt	6	119th Pz Arty Regt	14
130th Pz Regt	16	15th Pz Regt	5
130th AT Battalion	2	209th Engr Bn	3
130th Escort Company	18	11th Pz Repl Bn	3
	<hr/> 449		<hr/> 388