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HELL ON WHEELS IN THE

DRIVE TO THE ROER

2d Armored Division

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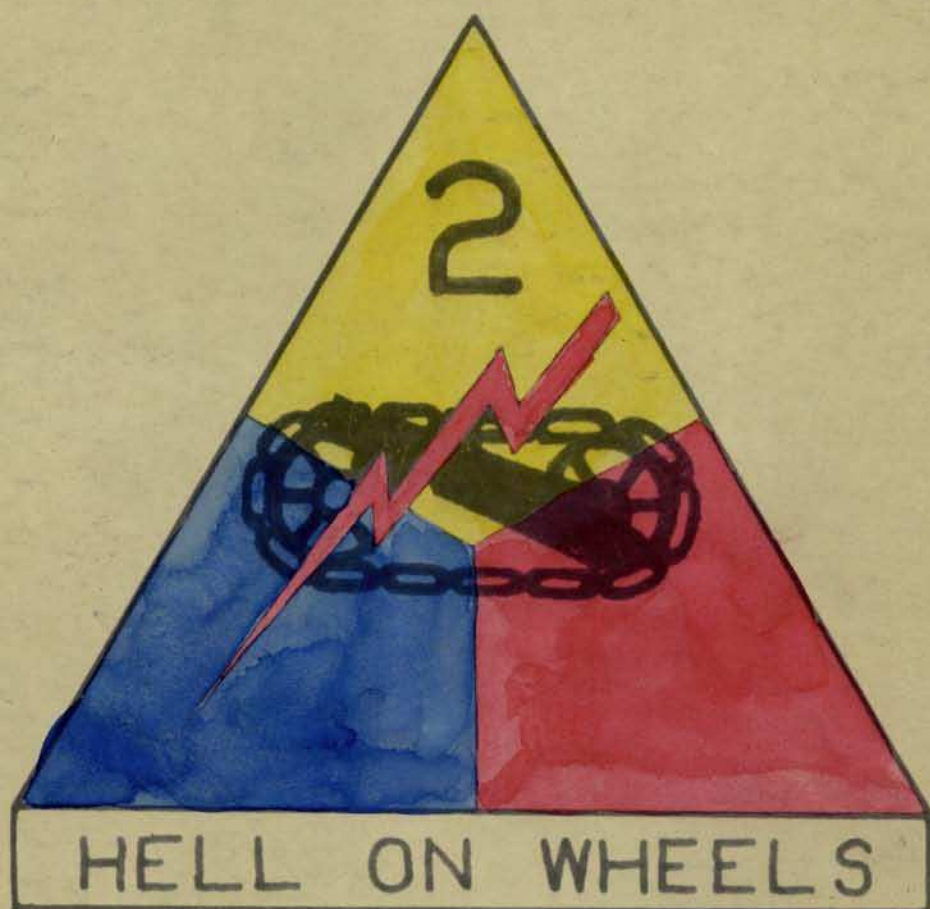
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IN THE
DRIVE TO THE ROER

**HELL ON WHEELS IN THE DRIVE TO THE ROER
(THE EMPLOYMENT OF THE 2nd ARMORED DIVISION IN
A LIMITED OBJECTIVE ATTACK)**

A RESEARCH REPORT PREPARED

BY

COMMITTEE 5, OFFICERS ADVANCED COURSE

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1948-1949

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PREFACE

This report describes the 2nd Armored Division's limited objective attack from 16 to 28 November 1944 in the ROER River Offensive against a grimly defended segment of the SIEGFRIED LINE. To find an example of a limited objective attack by armor in World War II is difficult because tanks by their nature seek always to thrust deep and break free in the enemy's rear areas where they can wreak the maximum damage. In this operation the attack was limited by the ROER River from any hope or possibility of a breakthrough.

Although the term limited objective is familiar to all military students; no official, printed definition is available. The definition at the beginning of Chapter II that a limited objective is normally within the enemy battle position was hammered out by our committee with the help of faculty members of the Command and Staff Department, The Armored School.

In order to present a clear, unbroken narrative of the action, many interesting sidelights have been omitted. Those which are vital to a thorough understanding of the operation have been added as appendices. Since this report is a study of an armored limited objective attack, the tank actions have been stressed. Although infantry and artillery participation has not been described in detail, the vital necessity for combined arms teamwork must not be overlooked.

We are indebted to Major M. J. L. Greene and Mr. Joe M. Hibbs, both of the Research and Evaluation Department, The Armored School, for their meticulous editing of our manuscript. Their helpful suggestions are responsible for whatever clarity and unity the reader may find in our narrative.

Records and accounts of the planning phase are meager, no doubt because they were never written down in permanent form until they became decisions and orders. However, Major Greene provided us with ample after action reports, unit histories, and documents dealing with the battle.

We were particularly fortunate in obtaining first hand accounts from members of the 2nd Armored Division who participated in the events. Brigadier General John H. Collier, former commander of CCA; Colonel Paul A. Disney, who commanded the 67th Armored Regiment; Lieutenant Colonel Frank M. Muller, assistant division G-4 during the operation; Major H. S. Long, Jr., commander of the 2nd Battalion, 66th Armored Regiment; and Major Paul A. Bane, executive officer of the 3rd Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment gave their time generously to answer our questions. We gratefully record our thanks to them and to Major General Ernest N. Harmon, former division commander, for their interest and assistance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A month before the Battle of the Bulge the newspaper headlines in the United States screamed "~~ALLIED~~ STRIKE FOR FINAL VICTORY IN THE WEST."¹ The November Offensive on the Western Front had jumped off. Preceded by Third Army's push 8 November in LORRAINE toward the SAAR, the entire front from the SCHELDT to the VOSGES drove forward on 16 November toward the RHINE. Little wonder that Hanson W. Baldwin, military analyst of the New York Times exclaimed exuberantly, "A great Allied attempt to end the war with Germany this year started last week...."²

But the men of the 2nd Armored Division had a more limited objective. Not BERLIN, but a slight rise in the muddy ground north of GERONSWELLER, GERMANY, was their goal³ and they expected a dogged, desperate battle to get there. They had good reason. Along with the rest of the Allied Armies they had outrun their supply lines in the wild dash from NORMANDY across FRANCE; and now after a month's delay they faced a reorganized German army securely defending the famous SIEGFRIED LINE area.

To the south the grim battle for AACHEN just ended had demonstrated the enemy capability of tenacious defense. And we now know from a postwar statement by the commander of the German XLVII Corps, which opposed the 2nd Armored Division, that he had been ordered to hold ~~at all costs as part of the~~ counter-offensive which Hitler was even then planning. "Neither the (German)

troops nor (their) leaders knew at this time that an advance on MAASTRICH was intended to take place from the bridgehead at ROERMOND in connection with the offensive in the ARDENNES. Therefore the unconditional demand that no ground be given up."⁴

These defenders facing the 2nd Armored Division held a deep belt of strongly fortified towns stretching to the ROER River, with mutually supporting fields of fire surrounding each town. An attacker could find little cover in the gently rolling fields between these fiercely defended strong points. Besides these fortifications a sea of mud covered the entire battle area, restricting wheeled vehicles to paved roads and making the going, even for tanks, almost impossible.⁵ To his staff General Simpson, the Ninth Army commander, said succinctly, "I expect one hell of a fight."⁶

In General Eisenhower's overall plan the First, Third, and Ninth Armies were to attack to the RHINE with General Simpson's Ninth Army protecting the left flank of the First.⁷ Ninth Army assigned its main effort to XIX Corps, commanded by Major General Raymond S. McLain. This Corps was composed of three veteran divisions - the 2nd Armored Division commanded by Major General Ernest N. Harmon, the 29th Infantry Division commanded by Major General Charles H. Gerhardt, and Major General Leland S. Hobbs' 30th Infantry Division. The 2nd Armored Division's combat record went back to the NORTH AFRICAN landings and the SICILIAN campaign,

while all three divisions had been outstanding in the NORMANDY campaign and the ST LO breakthrough. (See Appendix I-C for background of 2nd Armored Division.)

XIX Corps planned its main effort with the 29th and 30th Divisions making a combined attack on JULICH to establish a bridgehead across the ROER. The 2nd Armored Division protecting their northern flank would drive northeast to two objectives, GERFONSWILLER and BARMEN, from its positions along the line WAURICHEN-BEGGENDORF.⁸ (See Appendix VIII-A for map.) By going as far as the first objective, GERFONSWILLER, the 2nd Armored Division would seize the high ground at hill 98 dominating LINNICH on the ROER River. Then the 102nd Infantry Division would pass through to reach the river and make a crossing. The capture of the second objective, BARMEN, would deny the enemy his last north-south communications west of the ROER and protect the left flank of the 29th Division attack on JULICH and its subsequent crossing of the ROER. From an assembly area in the vicinity of BARMEN the 2nd Armored Division would prepare to follow the 29th across the ROER.

For the 2nd Armored Division the operation was divided into two distinct efforts. Poised like a boxer on the line WAURICHEN-BEGGENDORF it planned first to throw a left jab northeast to GERFONSWILLER, and then a punch with the right due east to BARMEN. Brigadier General I. D. White's Combat Command B would make the left jab to GERFONSWILLER and then turn its sector over

to the 102nd Division of XIII Corps which would drive on from GEREONSMETER to LINNICH. At that time the Corps boundary would shift to south of EDEREN. (See Appendix VIII-B for map.) The punch with the right would be made by Combat Command A, commanded by Brigadier General (then Colonel) John H. Collier, after CCB's attack and after the 29th Division had cleared SETTERICH. Then it would drive through SETTERICH, EDEREN and FREIALDENHOVEN to seize MERZENHAUSEN and BARMEN. (For attack order see Appendix VI.)

On the left of the 2nd Armored Division the front curved back beyond WAURICHEN. CCB's drive would deepen a salient already created by the German possession of GEILENKIRCHEN to the left rear of WAURICHEN. The 84th Division of XIII Corps was placed under British 30 Corps for the reduction of GEILENKIRCHEN to widen the salient before XIII Corps passed the 102nd Division through CCB at GEREONSMETER to make XIII Corps' main effort against LINNICH.

"To sum up, the mission of the XIX Corps was to establish a bridgehead at JULICH and to advance within striking distance of LINNICH. The mission of British 30 Corps was to facilitate the movements of the XIX and XIII Corps by reducing the GEILENKIRCHEN salient."⁹ XIII Corps had the mission of carrying the ball beyond CCB's objective at GEREONSMETER to seize a bridgehead at LINNICH. Thus 2nd Armored Division's mission was a limited objective attack between the main effort of XIX Corps on the right to JULICH and XIII Corps' main effort on the left to LINNICH.

Due to unfavorable weather the attack originally planned for 10 Nov was postponed day by day until 16 Nov. At 1245 that day, following an air strike greater than the memorable carpet bombing at ST LO, the armies attacked.¹⁰ In the 2nd Armored Division sector CCB's initial objectives, IMMEDNORF and PUFFENDORF fell the first day, but the reduction of APWEILER required three days. The 9th Panzer Division counter attacked the morning of 17 Nov in the biggest tank battle in 2nd Armored experience¹¹ delaying the capture of ~~GERSTENWALDER~~ until 20 Nov. Meanwhile CCA attacked 18 Nov through EDEREN and FRIEDENHOVEN to secure MERZENHAUSEN and BARMEN, which fell 28 Nov.

This operation demonstrates above all that ARMOR DRAWS ARMOR. The German commanders considered the presence of 2nd Armored Division such a threat that they drew in all available armored units to meet it. The 9th Panzer Division, 15th Panzer Grenadier Division and 10th SS Panzer Division were all committed against the 2nd Armored Division despite the necessity to hoard every tank for the ARDENNES counter-offensive. Yet the 2nd Armored Division was making only a limited objective attack blocked by the ROER River from any possibility of a decisive breakthrough. On each flank a corps main effort thrust out for a bridgehead-- XIX Corps' 29th Division against JULICH on the south and XIII Corps' 102nd Division toward LINNICH on the north. What would have happened if these German tanks had counter-attacked either of these infantry drives? The psychological effect of armor in

drawing enemy strength appears clearly in this action.

In referring to the campaign, General Simpson said that heavy weight German armor caused a high battle loss rate to our lighter armored and gunned tanks. However, he added that the 2nd Armored Division inflicted heavy losses on the 9th Panzer and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions and diverted this enemy armor from attack against our infantry divisions.¹²

NOTES OF CHAPTER I

1. New York Times, Sunday 19 Nov 44.
2. Ibid.
3. Ninth United States Army, Operations IV, Offensive in November, 4th Information and Historical Service, p. 8.
4. Statement, Gen. d. Pz. Tr. Heinrich Freiherr v. Luettwitz, comdr. XLVII Corps in the Rhineland, Allerdorf, 11 June 47, (Translated by Christensen) p. 7.
5. Op. Cit., Ninth Army, p. 37.
6. Ibid., p. 8.
7. Letter of Instruction, Twelfth Army Group, 21 Oct 44.
8. Op. Cit., Ninth Army, pp. 5-8 and 37 (All facts in remaining portion of chapter are from this document unless otherwise noted).
9. Ibid., p. 8.
10. Report of Operations, First United States Army, 1 Aug 44-22 Feb 45, p. 73.
11. Op. Cit., Ninth Army, p. 65 and statement Col. Paul A. Disney, former commander 67th Armored Regiment, in interview Fort Knox, Ky Nov 48.
12. Op. Cit., Ninth Army, p. 251.

CHAPTER II

PLANNING A LIMITED OBJECTIVE ATTACK

The 2nd Armored Division's limited objective attack required especially careful planning. This type of attack varies from the normal armored operation which seeks a break through followed by exploitation in the enemy's rear areas. It is an attack in which the objective is within the enemy battle position and the commander has no intention of continuing the attack immediately beyond that point. No plans are made for an exploitation and all effort is directed toward taking, securing, and defending the objective.

Since the objective is within the battle position, the tactics employed are like those of the penetration rather than the exploitation. The objective is relatively close and it is defended by an organized enemy. Resistance will be continuous and immediate heavy counterattacks may be expected.

Being close, the limited objective offers fewer avenues of approach and fewer choices of maneuver plans than a more distant objective. This restriction of maneuver makes detailed planning more possible than for an attack on a distant objective, which offers infinite variations and possibilities for maneuver. The deliberate planning is more necessary because of the heavy resistance which is likely to be encountered. This applies equally to the 2nd Armored Division's objectives of GEREDNSWEILER and BARMEN.

The timely receipt of the XIX Corps order afforded General Harmon and his staff ample time to make complete plans for this limited objective attack against a strongly fortified position. He ordered the division engineer to construct a large sand table representing the division zone of attack. This table proved to be an invaluable training aid during the weeks of preparation which followed. Key personnel from each combat battalion were oriented hereon. Each battalion commander ordered the construction of smaller sand tables representing the terrain in their particular zones.

Each company commander briefed his tank crews on the battalion table so that when H-Hour arrived all crew members knew the part that they would play in the overall plan. This type of planning, so necessary in an attack against a strongly organized position, paid great dividends because it eliminated all hesitation and confusion.¹

Because of the flatness of the ground in the division zone, built-up areas assumed an importance not normally given them. These areas commanded virtually all crossroads and bridges. (See appendix IV for terrain study.) Around all these key points the Germans constructed defensive positions in depth all the way back to the ROER River.

In addition the enemy dug extensive anti-tank ditches between these strong points. These ditches were approximately ten feet wide and often eight feet deep. Two were encountered in

the division sector, one beginning northwest of APWEILER and extending south to a point west of LOVERICH, with several gaps near FLOVERICH. A more continuous ditch protected the western approaches to EDEREN and FREIALDENHOVEN. Neither of these ditches had been completed but were tied in with a system of fire trenches and foxholes.

Added to the obstacles, presented by natural and prepared defenses, was the mud. Soil trafficability was the concern of everyone from the Army Commander, Lt. Gen. W. H. Simpson, down to the Sherman tank commanders, who were to make the assault. General Harmon realizing that the condition of the soil was a deciding factor of the date of attack personally checked the soil daily.

The division drew up elaborate plans to overcome expected obstacles. First the anti-tank ditches had to be bridged--a problem increased by the anti-tank fire covering these ditches. Included in the plan was the decision to drive certain tanks into the ditches and quickly doze them over thereby forming a bridge. Another method was a bridge, improvised by the 17th Armored Engineer Battalion, capable of supporting a medium tank and transported by a T-2 Tank Retriever (see plate 2). This retriever would accompany the leading tanks prepared to bridge any ditch they met. It was expected that, despite the addition of track connector extensions (duck bills), the boggy ground would still mire the vehicles.



Plate 2

A tank retriever similar to that improvised by the 17th Armored Engineer Battalion for crossing Anti-Tank ditches.

U. S. Army Photo graph

150093

All light and medium tanks carried logs approximately nine feet in length and four to six inches in diameter. These logs would help increase flotation. Lashed in bundles they were carried on the rear decks of the tanks. However, it was seldom necessary to use them because the tanks traversed the ground easily in first and second gear. The area covered by the fighting was dotted by log piles, after the tank crews decided to cut loose their unused burden.²

Additional obstacles confronting the division were minefields and barbed wire concertinas employed to block avenues of approach and gaps in the prepared defenses. The numerous minefields, both anti-tank and anti-personnel, which the enemy had prepared were gapped by the engineer units attached to each assault battalion.

General Harmon, realizing that secrecy in the attack was practically an impossibility, devised a very effective plan of deception. This was to confuse the Germans as to when the assault battalions moved to their attack positions. Several nights before the attack tank platoons, first from CCB and later CCA, moved in and out of WAURICHEN and BEGGENDORF during the night. The first few nights this movement received hostile mortar and artillery fire and also caused the enemy to discharge flares along his front. Eventually this movement ceased to alarm the Germans. Except for the usual amount of harassing and interdiction fire the front remained quiet.

Logistics

The logistical situation within the division was generally adequate; however, some problems did arise. Although the tank strength was almost 100%, about half of the M4's were of the old model, armed with 75 MM guns. Track connector extensions for full track vehicles had not been received in sufficient quantity by the division. Therefore the division G-4 arranged with a manufacturer in LIEGE, BELGIUM, for the production of these attachments. By D-day nearly three-fourths of the vehicles had been equipped. After the installation of these extensions, tests indicated a considerable gain in cross country mobility. Some new equipment was received and a great deal of maintenance was performed on all organizational equipment. Certain ammunition in short supply was rationed by Army. The shortage of 105 MM, 81 MM and all HVAP was especially serious. (For detailed logistic report see Annex VII.)

Plan of Fire Support

The division artillery commander after studying the terrain and available enemy information devised a plan of fire support. By utilizing the 14th, 78th, 92nd, 65th and 83rd Armored Field Artillery Battalions (105 MM HOW), and the 258th and the 557th Field Artillery Battalions (155 MM Gun) he prepared an extensive thirty minute preparation to be fired prior to the time of attack. In addition to the artillery units mentioned above the 84th Infantry Division on the north flank agreed to place the

fire of its battalions on the initial objectives in CCB's zone of attack.

To thicken the artillery and to add additional close support to the leading elements of CCB, the artillery commander's plan provided for the massing of all assault gun and mortar platoons in centralized firing positions. Each platoon set up a fire direction center and fired first on prearranged missions during the preparation and then on-call missions, after the attack had been launched. In addition, an air observer from the 92nd AFA Bn adjusted fire on targets of opportunity. All platoons were placed on a common radio channel and were tied in to the air observer and also to division artillery fire direction center so that calls for fire from forward observers could be answered. This plan was intended to secure maximum fire support to the initial assault from the available weapons.

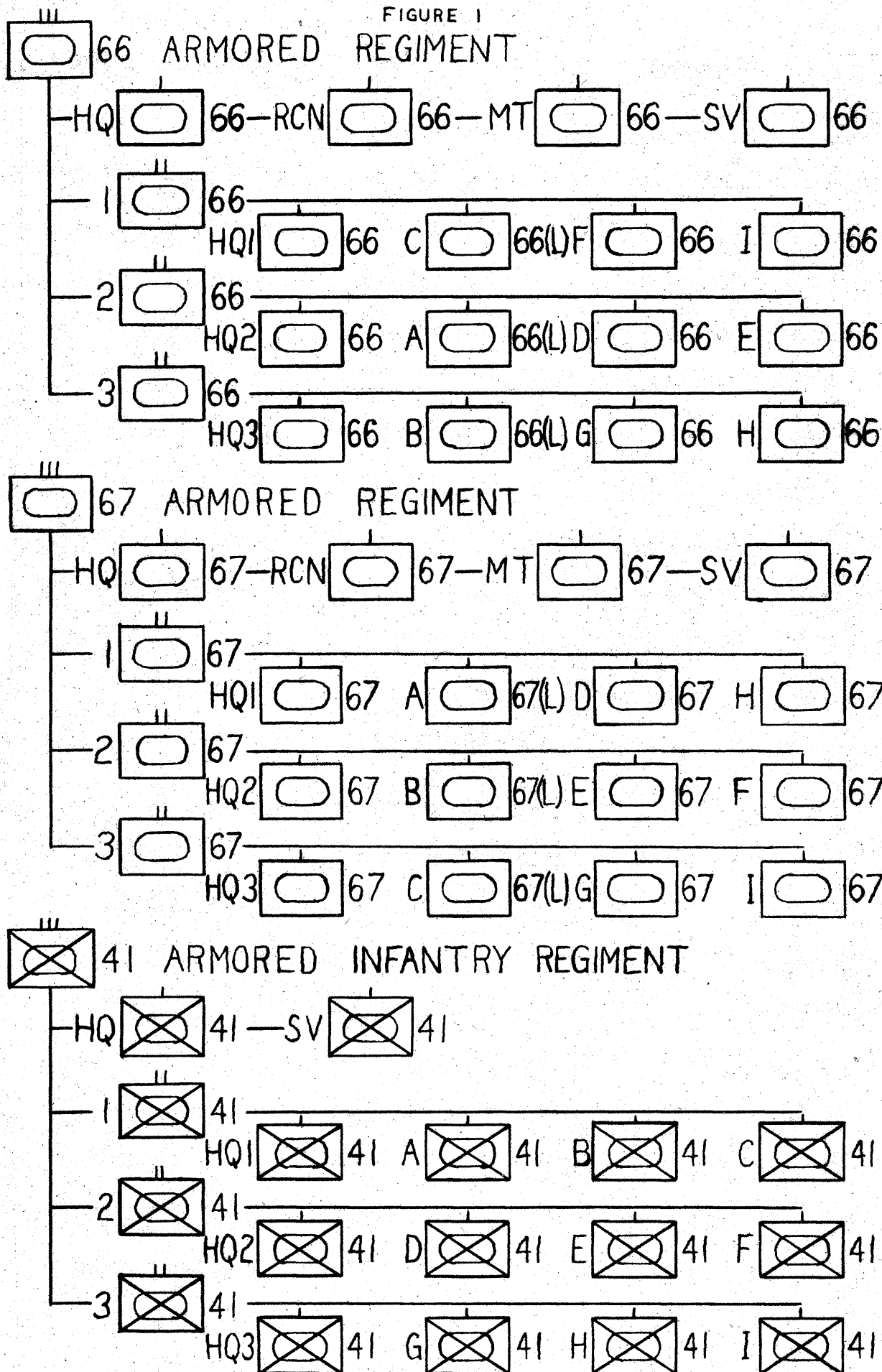
Preceding the thirty-minute artillery preparation the Allied Air Forces provided saturation bombing of enemy supply and communication centers and assembly points in the ROER River valley and towns east of the line of departure. IMMENDORF, FLOVERICH and LOVERICH were each struck by a squadron of fighter-bombers. Damage in the towns, though extensive, did not hinder the passage of the assault waves (see Appendix III for description of air preparation).

Order of Battle

The 2nd Armored Division's lack of armored infantry was especially serious in an attack of this kind against a fortified position. It was necessary to attach infantry from other divisions to make up the lack. It must be remembered that the 2nd Armored Division was one of the old "heavy" armored divisions, which was later replaced by the present light armored division. In the heavy division there were two armored (tank) regiments and one armored infantry regiment (see Figure 1 for organization) - a total of six tank battalions and three infantry battalions compared to the four tank and four infantry battalions in the present division. In other words there were roughly 50% more tanks and 25% less infantry in the heavy than in the present division. (However, one of the companies in each tank battalion was a light tank company.) One battalion of the 406th Infantry Regiment, 102nd Infantry Division which attacked with CCB on Nov 16, was not sufficient. Therefore, on

DETAILED REGIMENTAL ORGANIZATION

FIGURE 1

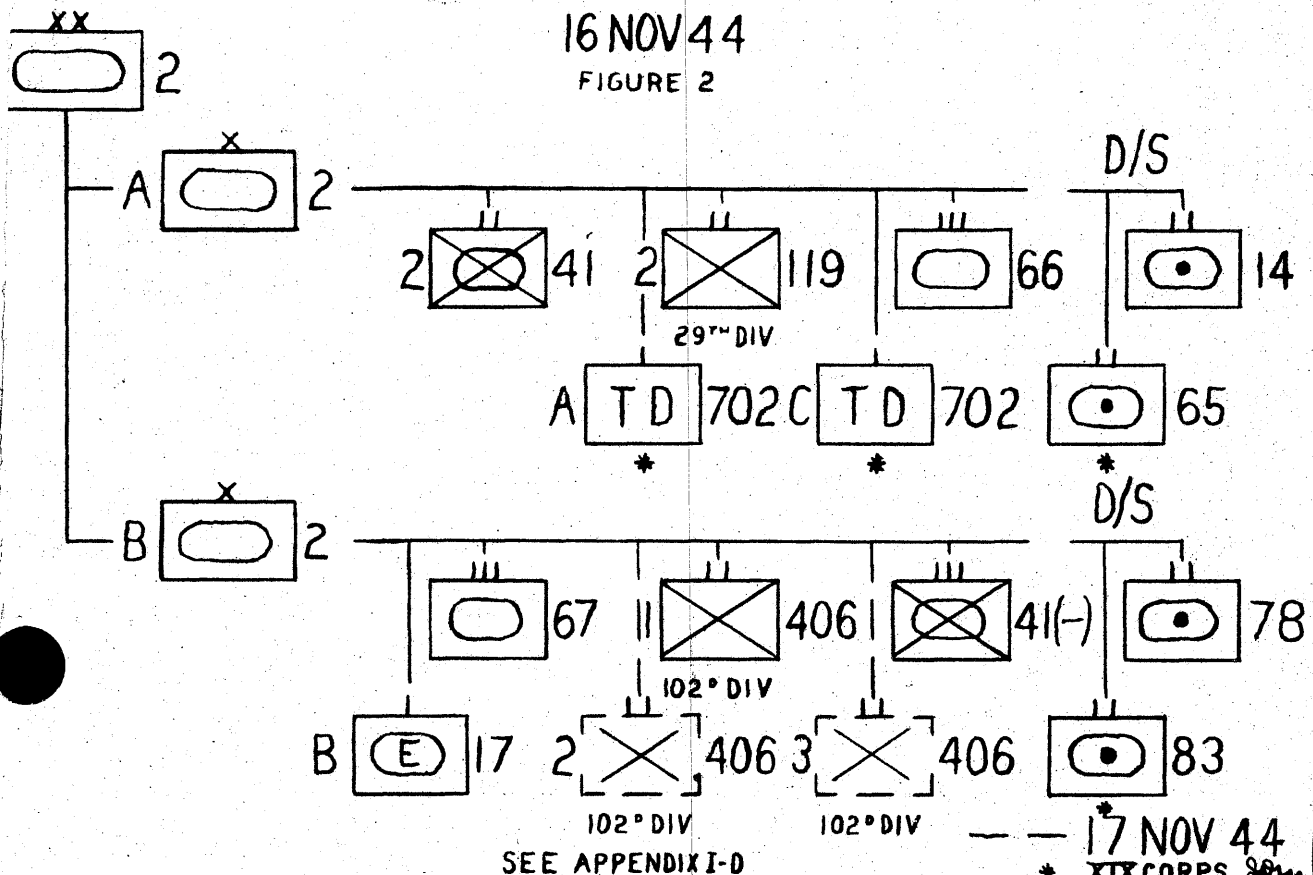


Nov 17, it was reinforced by the entire regiment. (See Fig 2 for attachments.)

MAJOR ATTACHMENTS

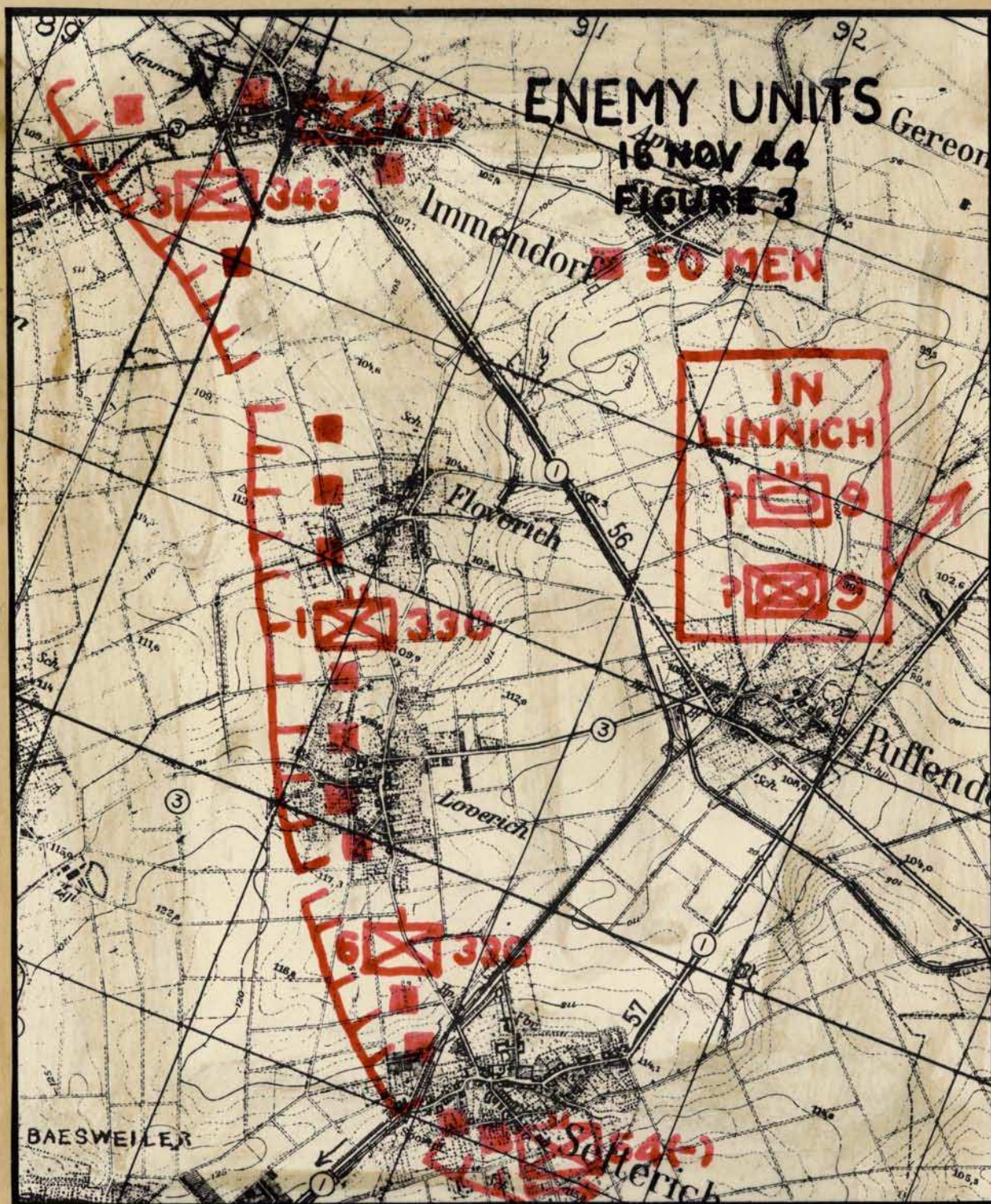
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FIGURE 2



The general enemy situation indicated a delaying action on successive positions to a strong defensive along the ROER River. The sector in front of the 2nd Armored Division was defended by elements of two infantry regiments. A reconnaissance battalion and a separate machine gun battalion formed the main line of resistance, with one locally formed battle group (kampfgruppe) consisting of approximately forty tanks and one regiment of

infantry from the 9th Panzer Division in reserve. (See Fig. 3.)



All this detailed planning paid off in the assault 16 Nov. The air preparation, followed immediately by the execution of a coordinated artillery plan, stunned the defenders. Careful integration of attached infantry units into the division assured maximum striking power to the assault echelons. Although the measures for bridging the anti-tank ditches were found to be unnecessary, the detailed orientation of each individual on the sand tables gave the troops a confidence which added to the violence of their assault. Force 1 reached its objective within eight minutes and the attack was executed exactly as planned.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

1. Personal interview, Colonel Paul A. Disney, former Commander of 67th Armored Regiment, at Fort Knox, Kentucky, November 1948.
2. Ninth United States Army, Operation IV, Offensive in November (4th Information and Historical Service) p. 56.

CHAPTER III

THE ATTACK--FIRST DAY

Its detailed planning completed, the 2nd Armored Division attacked in column of combat commands, CCB leading. CCB had the mission of seizing the high ground north of GERFONSWELLER. To effectively cover the zone, General White (see Plate 3) organized his combat command into three task forces and assigned them that part of the zone most favorable for their employment. Colonel Paul A. Disney's tank heavy force struck on the south and captured LOVERICH and PUFFENDORF with a successive objective attack. Colonel Hillyard in the center seized FLOVERICH with his balanced tank-infantry force. Colonel James C. Reeves' infantry heavy force took IMMENDORF in the north.

Since the tremendous air bombardment preceeding the First and Ninth Armies' attack required favorable weather, D-day and H-hour could not be determined definitely in advance. Corps order set D-day as the first clear day after 10 November.

In preparation for the all out offensive, plans required units to move to attack positions during the period 10-11 November. During daylight on the 10th, assault guns and mortars of the 67th Armored Regiment and the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, and the howitzers of the 78th and 83rd Armored Field Artillery Battalions moved forward to indirect fire positions prepared to support the attack. Division halted movement of other troops at 2330 Nov 10 upon receipt of orders postponing the attack. The units returned



Plate 3

BRIGADIER GENERAL I. D. WHITE
Commanding General
Combat Command B

to their original positions.¹ From 12 to 15 Nov the division was alerted daily. Finally, at 0400 hours 15 Nov Division received instructions from XIX Corps that D-day would be 16 Nov, H-hour to be announced. General White moved his combat command into attack positions beginning at 0020 on 16 Nov (see Appendix VIII-C for map). All units closed into their positions before daylight.

The three task forces of CCB attacked on a front of 3200 yards (for detailed composition see Appendix I-D). Task Force 1, commanded by Colonel Paul A. Disney, moved into its attack position in the BEGGENDORF-DRINHAUSEN area. Initially it was to seize LOVERICH, PUFFENDORF, and the high ground to the north. Task Force 2, under Lt. Col. Harry L. Hillyard, from its attack position 1,500 yards north of UBACH, was to take EDOVERICH, and strike for the high ground southeast of APWEILER. Task Force X, initially under Lt. Col. James C. Reeves, occupied an area in and around WAURICHEN.² Its mission--the capture and holding of IMMENDORF on the left flank. These forces planned to work independently in taking the three initial objectives; then cooperate in attaining further gains toward GERONSWEILER.

The air and artillery preparations the morning of 16 Nov proved very effective. 1204 American and 1188 British heavy bombers participated.³ They hit practically all of the towns in the immediate front of the 2nd Armored Division from the line of departure to the ROER River,⁴ (see appendix III for detailed study of the air strike). The weather did not clear sufficiently

for the air mission until late in the morning. Finally, word came at 0840 that H-hour would definitely be at 1245 and that the air strike would precede the attack. The artillery fired a 30 minute preparation beginning at H minus 30. It included the fires of 2nd Armored Division Artillery, 84th Infantry Division Artillery, battalions of XIX Corps Artillery, and the assault guns and mortars of the 67th and the 41st AIR. Five battalions fired concentrations on known command posts and gun positions, then seven battalions massed their fire on the three objectives, IMMENDORF, FLOVERICH, and LOVERICH; while SETTERICH and PRUMMER on each flank of the objectives received similar treatment. APWEILER and PUTTENDORF were fired on after the attack jumped off.

Promptly at 1245 CCB crossed the line of departure with three task forces abreast covering the entire division zone of attack.

Task Force 1

Colonel Disney divided his tank heavy force into three teams built around 1st Bn, 67th Armored Regt, 2nd Bn, 67th Armored Regt, and 3rd Bn, 41st Armored Infantry Regt respectively. Major Clifton B. Batchelder, commander of the 1st Bn, 67th Armored Regt, commanded the right (south) team. It consisted of 1st Bn, 67th Armored Regt (-), a platoon of Company B, 17th Armored Engineer Bn, and a platoon from Company B, 702d Tank Destroyer Bn (90mm).

Batchelder's force had the mission of enveloping LOVERICH from the south and protecting the right flank of the left force

by neutralizing enemy fire from the east and northeast. Having accomplished these missions, it was to be prepared to assist in the attack on PUFFENDORF and the high ground to the north.

Lt Col. Lemuel E. Pope commanded the left (north) force which consisted of the 2nd Bn, 67th Armored Regiment reinforced by Company H, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, and a platoon each of engineers and tank destroyers. The mission of this force—to cross the line of departure on order, pass to the north of LOVERICH, capture PUFFENDORF, and organize it for all around defense.

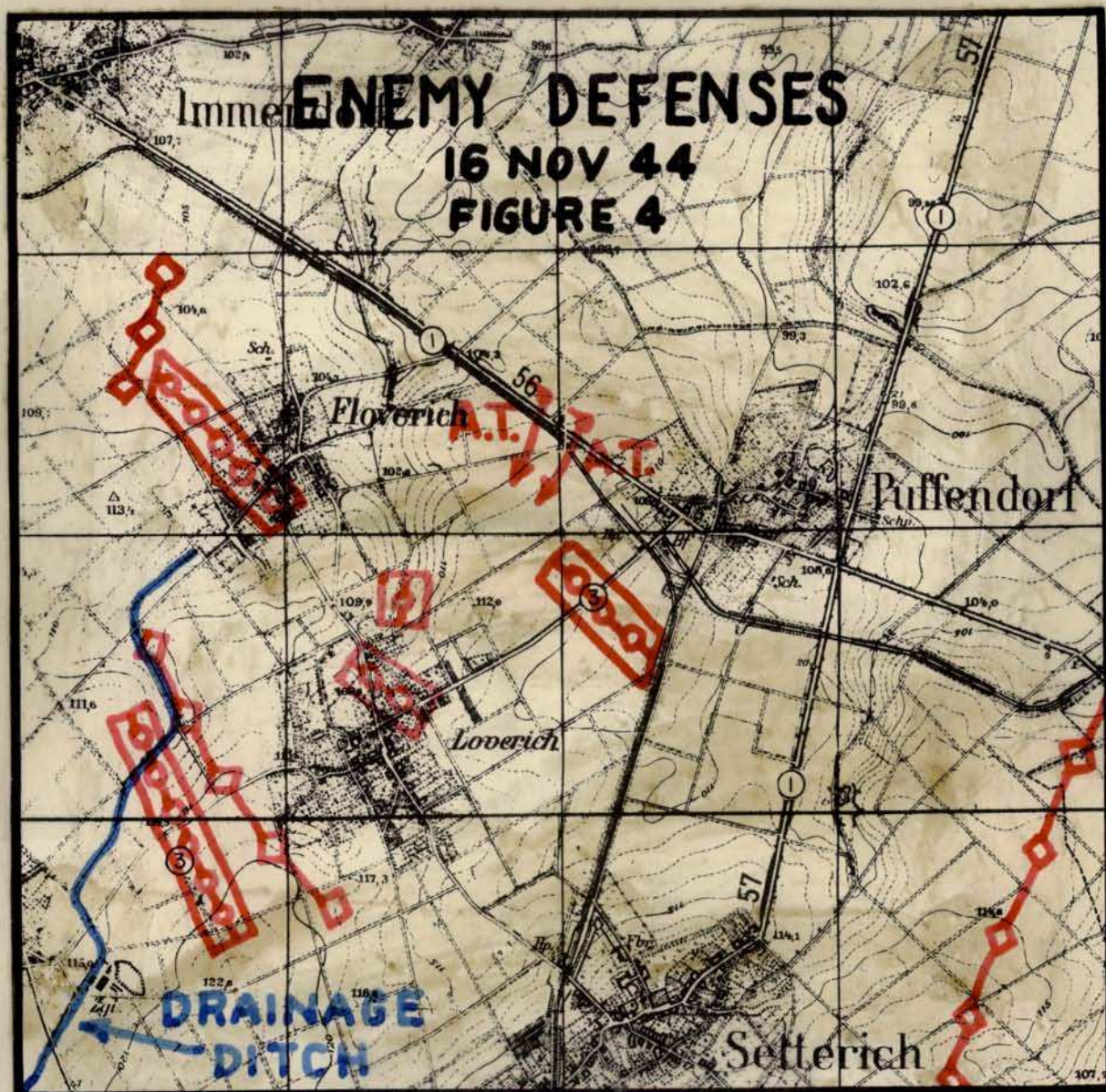
Lt. Col. Marshall L. Crowley, Jr., commander of the 3rd Bn, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, led an infantry force of two companies. His mission—to assist Batchelder's tank force in the capture of LOVERICH by approaching the town from a different direction, clear and organize it for defense.⁵

Colonel Disney's scheme of maneuver called for an attack on successive objectives in column of battalions. His objectives successively: LOVERICH, PUFFENDORF, and the high ground approximately 1000 yards northeast of PUFFENDORF (see map Appendix VIII-C). The 1st Bn 67th AR (Batchelder's) planned to lead off and quickly envelop LOVERICH. The infantry battalion (Crowley's) less one company, would proceed directly into town so as to arrive shortly after the tanks. The plan for taking this first objective had several advantages, two of which were: the tanks had ample room

for an enveloping maneuver from the south, and the infantry received the most direct route. As soon as Colonel Disney satisfied himself that Batchelder could handle LOVERICH (before it was mopped up) he planned to commit Pope's force to bypass LOVERICH to the north and quickly seize PUFFENDORF. On the other hand, if Batchelder could not handle LOVERICH then Pope would be directed to provide assistance.⁶ Batchelder's force would next take HILL 102.6 or assist in PUFFENDORF.

Major Batchelder's team crossed the line of departure promptly at 1245. Lt Robert E. Lee's Company D (medium tanks) led with the 1st and 2nd platoons abreast. These two platoons fanned out to the right and eastward under the direction of their platoon leaders as soon as they had crossed over the drainage ditch on the edge of BEGGENDORF (see figure 4). The 3d platoon followed the 2nd on the right to cover the advance. Lt. Lee had placed his strength on this flank because he expected serious opposition from the east. The platoons advanced rapidly over the fairly level terrain just to the right of the coal mine, east of BEGGENDORF. Capt Francis E. Pfaff, commanding Company A, moved a platoon of his light tanks to cover the advance of the mediums and to protect their right flank.

The attack started well. Within three minutes after the jump-off the first prisoners started coming in. The force crossed several trenches protected by concertina wire barriers without incident. At 1249 the 2nd platoon reported receiving antitank fire from the vicinity of SETTERICH (in the zone of the 29th



Infantry Division), and at the same time one of the tanks hit a mine, putting it out of action. As soon as it stopped, this tank received repeated hits from antitank guns and bazookas. Lt Lee then directed the fire of his two flank platoons on the enemy position and in a matter of two minutes silenced the hostile guns.⁷ (See Fig. 5, first phase).

The tanks of Company D's first platoon arrived in the orchard on the east of LOVERICH only eight minutes after they had crossed the line of departure at BEGGENDORF (see Plate 4). This represented a distance traveled of approximately 1200 yards. The speed and violence of the tank assault following closely on the heels of the artillery fire stunned the enemy in LOVERICH to such an extent that they gave up in large groups.

The light tanks and infantry soon arrived to complete the task of clearing the town and making it secure. The shock action provided by the tanks made the job of the infantry easy as they advanced into town from BEGGENDORF.

Two companies of armored infantry, Company G on the right and Company I on the left, arrived at the town shortly after the tanks, killing 20 to 30 Germans and capturing about 100 who were flushed out by the tanks. Company A (light tanks) reorganized on the eastern edge of town after aiding the infantry in the mop-up. Company G (infantry) secured the right flank for defense against possible counterattack from SETTERICH, to the southeast.

As soon as the light tanks and infantry arrived in LOVERICH, Lt. Lee moved his company of medium tanks to the high ground north of LOVERICH. This move provided security for the town. From this position he could see the next objective for his force, HILL 102.6, north of PUFFENDORF.

The suspected presence of minefields around LOVERICH did not deter Colonel Disney from using tanks for the assault. Some

Plate 4

Tank assault of Company D, 67th Armored
infantry on LOVERICH.

U. S. Army Photograph



tanks were lost to mines but enough got through to accomplish the mission. The tanks which were blown-up by mines, for the most part, merely lost tracks and were returned to unit in about 24 hours.

Colonel Disney, realizing that Batchelder's force could handle LOVERICH without assistance, moved Pope out. Pope's force crossed the line of departure and moved between LOVERICH and FLOVERICH in the direction of PUFFENDORF. The battalion attacked cross country, in a column of companies with Company B's light tanks leading. The infantry followed with Company's E medium tanks bringing up the rear. Pope's troops bypassed LOVERICH at 1400 and secured PUFFENDORF at 1455.⁸ This force encountered very little opposition taking PUFFENDORF (see Fig. 5, second phase). Four tanks mired in the soft ground and six others were blown up by mines. (see Plate 5.)

Major Batchelder received orders from Colonel Disney to attack his next objective, HILL 102.6, at 1400 hours. The attack proceeded in a similar manner to the assault of LOVERICH. Boggy ground made the advance difficult, but the battalion soon occupied the hill.

The enemy reacted strongly and his heavy artillery fire made it impossible for the battalion to hold the top of the hill. Major Batchelder pulled his tanks and infantry back to the draw just south of HILL 102.6. From here he could command

the hill by fire and at the same time have his troops in defilade (see Fig. 5, third phase).

After Pope's force took PUFFENDORF, the enemy plastered the town with artillery and mortar fire. This fire came in almost continuously throughout the afternoon and night. Colonel Pope received instructions from Colonel Disney to dig in for the night and resume the attack on GERBONSWEILER at 0800 the next day.

Task Force 2

Colonel Hillyard's Task Force 2 attacked on the left of and simultaneously with Task Force 1. Task Force 2 consisted of the 3rd Bn 67th AR (Hillyard's Battalion), 1st Bn 41st AIR, and supporting engineers and tank destroyers. The force contained a fairly well balanced ratio between tanks and infantry. The tank battalion was minus Company I, held in combat command reserve.

Colonel Hillyard planned for Task Force 2 to make a frontal assault on FLOVERICH at H-hour with a medium tank company leading. The infantry would follow at 200 yards with light tanks and engineers in support. The tank destroyers received the mission of silencing any direct fire from IMMENDORF, APWEILER, or FLOVERICH. With the capture of FLOVERICH the force would continue on to the high ground south of APWEILER.

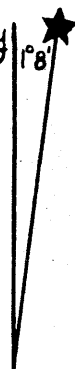
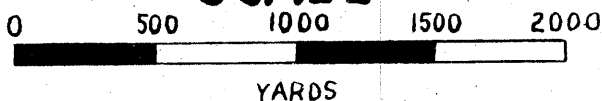
Captain James L. White, commanding Co G 67th AR, moved his 16 medium tanks (one under normal strength) through the 3rd

ATTACK OF TASK FORCE ONE

16 NOV 44

FIGURE 5

SCALE



gdm

31

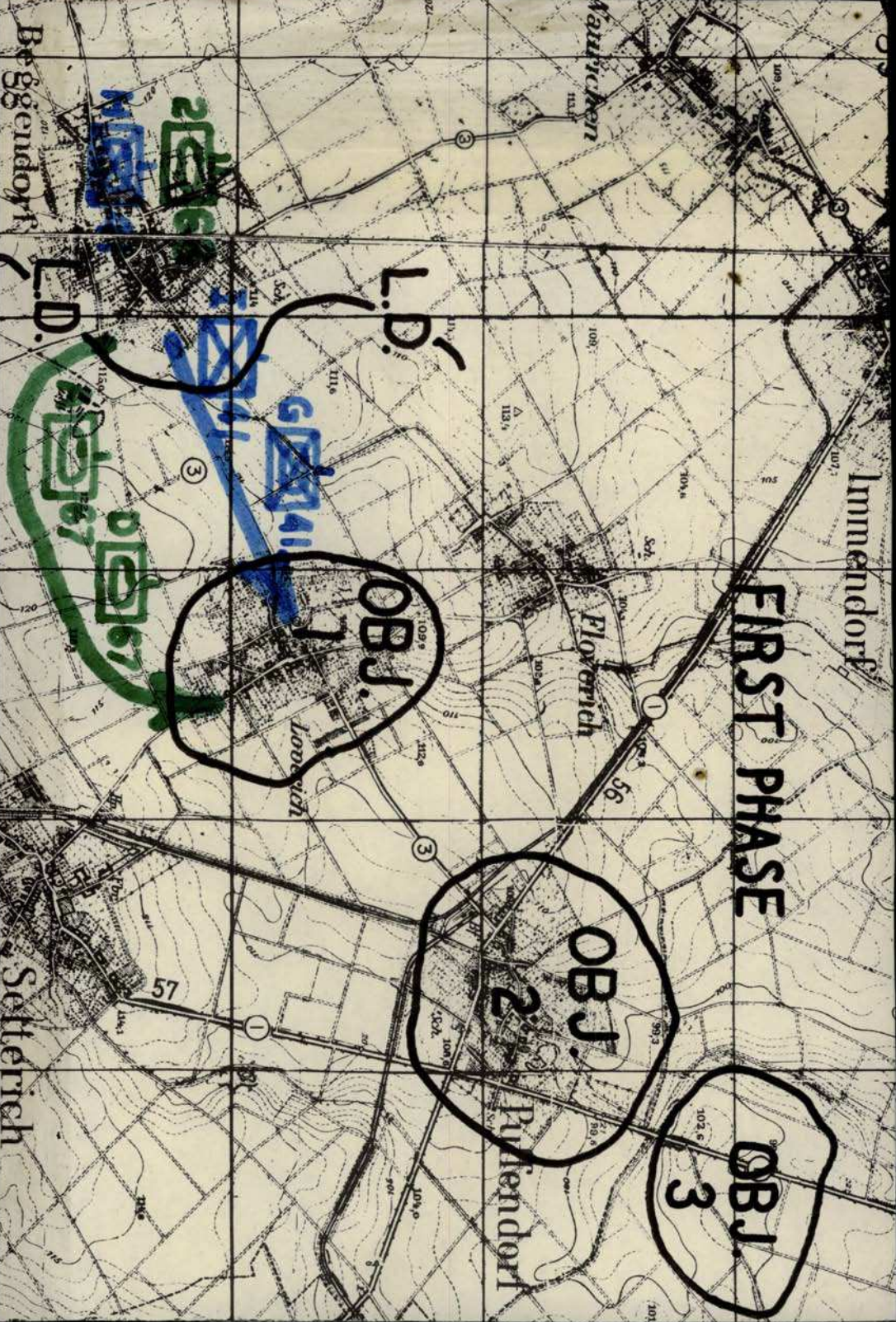
FIRST PHASE

OBJ. 3

OBJ. 2

OBJ. 1

L.D.



Immendorf

Floersich

Püttendorf

Selterich

Begegendorf

L.D.

OBJ. 1

OBJ. 2

OBJ. 3

SECOND PHASE

Immeldorf

Floerfisch

Puffendorf

OBJ. 2

OBJ. 3

OBJ. 1

L.D. 67

67

67



THIRD PHASE

Immeldorf

Floerich

Immeldorf

Setterich



3

3

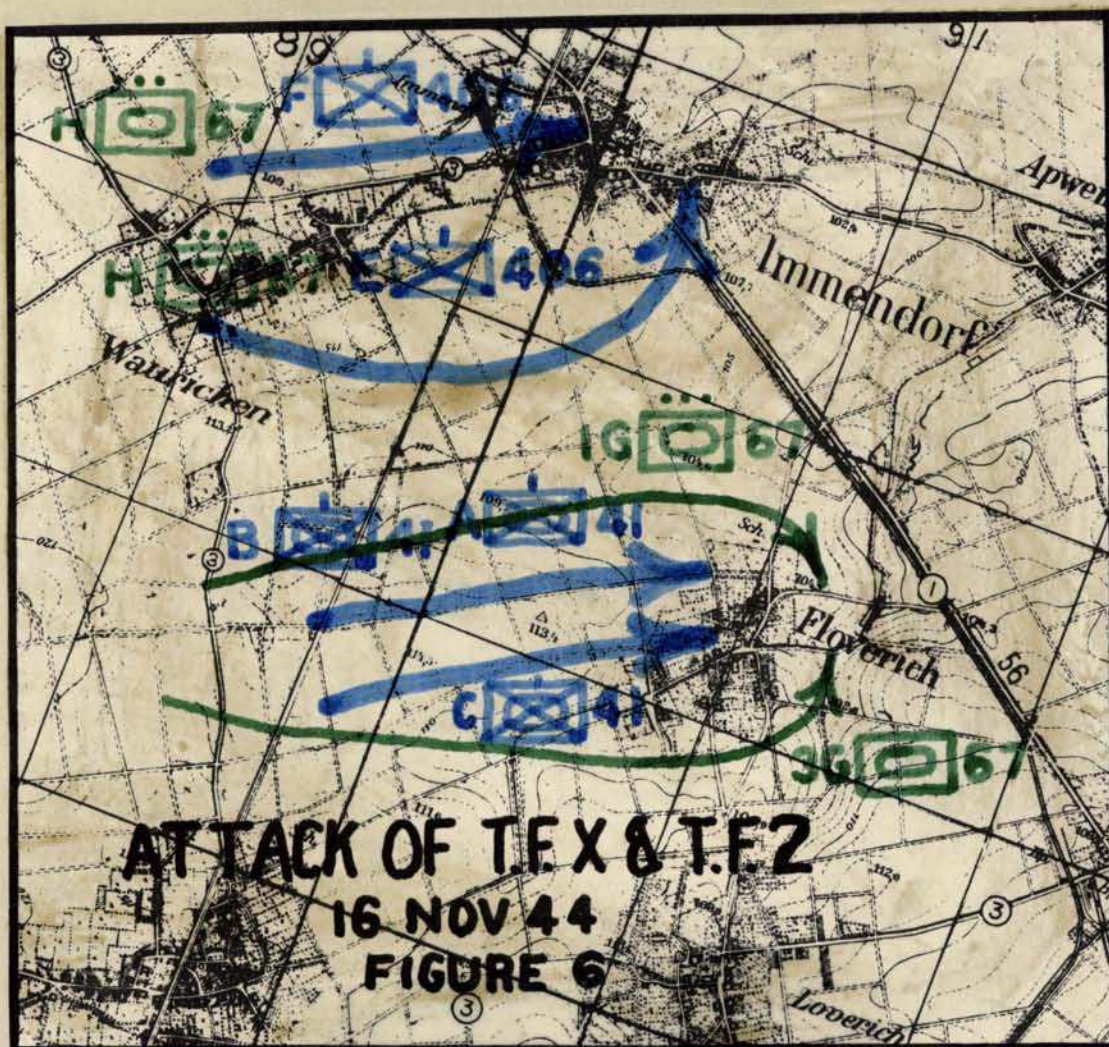
57

57

Bn 406th Inf Regt, and across the line of departure at H-hour. The 1st Bn 41st AIR had moved, during the night 15-16 Nov, into existing foxholes behind the infantry occupying the line. From these holes they could quickly pass through the troops along the front and follow the tanks. The movement of the tanks through the infantry had been carefully preplanned so that no infantrymen would be injured. As the tanks started to move each rifleman held up a ration box with his rifle. The tankers easily spotted these boxes which marked the fox holes and thereby moved between them with ease.⁹ The tanks moved in two columns into the attack without confusion.

Fortunately both the 1st and 3d platoons found a gap over the antitank ditch and crossed without delay. The 1st platoon circled FLOVERICH to the north and the 3d platoon came around the south side of town. The two platoons met on the east of town and effectively isolated it (see Fig. 6). They occupied perfect positions to prevent the enemy from fleeing the town or from being reinforced. The support platoon, the second, soon joined the other two platoons east of FLOVERICH.

The tank assault of FLOVERICH reduced Company G's strength by six tanks. Mines blew up three, a bazooka set one on fire as it crossed a trench, a mortar shell stopped another, and a sixth had mechanical failure due to previous damage.



Major John W. Finnell, commanding officer of 1st Bn 41st AIR, had his infantry follow 200 to 300 yards behind the medium tank company. Each company had a platoon of Company C's (67th AR) light tanks attached. These light tanks accompanied the infantry, some leading and some following. As it turned out this was an excellent formation to adopt since the infantry followed far enough behind the medium tanks so as not to catch the artillery fire directed at the tanks. The light tanks leading effectively neutralized machine guns firing at the

infantry. This arrangement did much to insure the uninterrupted advance to the objective. Those following the companies provided effective flank security.

The enemy reacted to the advance with a great volume of fire from light and medium guns. Some small arms fire from the railroad to the northeast hit Company C. The artillery fire caused the most damage. Lt. Harold B. Crane, Commander of Co C 41st AIR, who had fought with the company since it landed in AFRICA two years before, said, "It was the worst I have ever seen." The only consolation in the German fire was that it also fell on their own troops and pinned them down sufficiently for the men of the First Battalion to overpower them easily.¹⁰

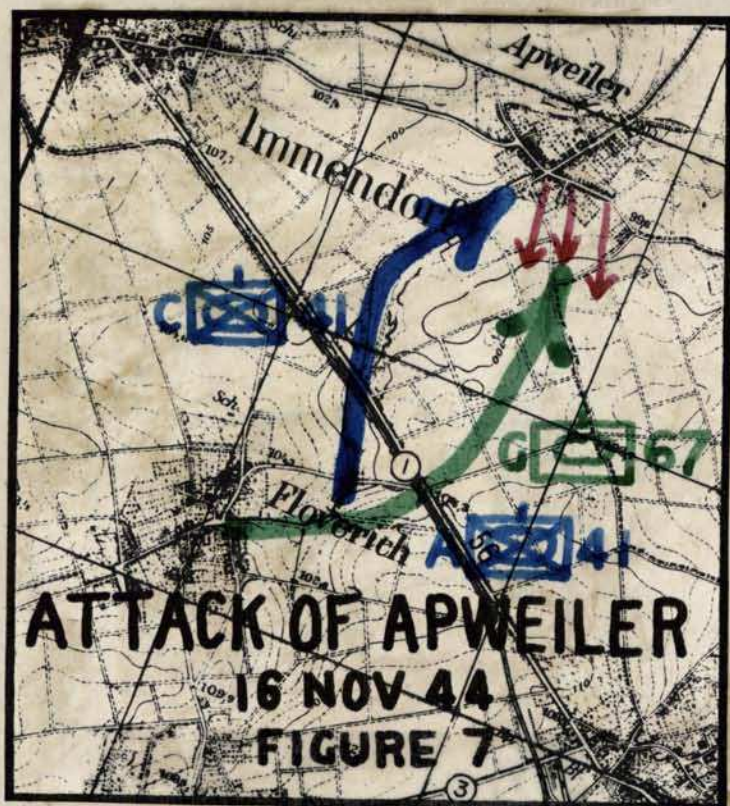
Lt. Crane's company assaulted the northwest outskirts of FLOVERICH and drove straight through to the northern part of town. Company A entered from the southwest and cut toward the northeast. Both companies encountered limited resistance. Here again the light tanks proved invaluable in the mopping up. The force advanced rapidly through the town and reached the eastern edge at 1411.

While the troops worked their way through and cleared the town, the medium tanks of Company G 67th AR on the western side of FLOVERICH, had a busy time. The riflemen flushed the Germans towards the east where they encountered the tanks. A group of enemy on the high ground 500 yards east of FLOVERICH drew attention by firing small arms and machine guns at the

tanks. Several M-4s charged up the slopes and overran this position, taking approximately 50 prisoners. The remaining tanks stayed in place. The tank commanders, standing in the turrets, waved the Germans back into town.¹¹

Reorganization of Task Force 2 took place east of FLOVERICH. The force moved out with the 10 tanks of Company G in the lead, and Company A's infantrymen again following at 200 yards. The force moved in a wedge formation. The tanks planned to capture the high ground 600 yards southeast of APWEILER, and to secure the right flank of the infantry. The infantry intended to move into and secure APWEILER.

Task Force 2 moved out, crossed the railroad east of FLOVERICH, and headed toward APWEILER (see Fig. 7). The Germans,



who had previously emplaced a number of antitank guns in the woods on the south edge of APWEILER, spotted our tanks as they topped the hill. The Germans held their fire until the tanks had reached an area approximately 300 yards south of APWEILER. Then the guns simultaneously opened with intense and accurate fire on the attackers. In two minutes Captain White lost seven medium tanks. Three burned and the others were immobilized. The three remaining tanks opened fire on the guns and silenced four of them. In the ambush, Company G suffered the loss of seven tanks, three tankers killed and seven seriously wounded.

Lt. Crane's company (Co C 41st AIR) jumped off from FLOVERICH about 15 minutes after Company A and proceeded toward APWEILER through the draw which runs generally from FLOVERICH to APWEILER. They made good progress despite scattered resistance along the way. The infantry received increasing fire as it approached the town. Shortly before dark, about 1645, the company reached a point within 100 yards of the western edge of APWEILER.

Major Finnell, the battalion commander, decided to pull Company C back near the railroad and have it tie in with Company A on the south and Task Force X on the north.

The defensive line for the night ran from 200 to 400 yards northeast of the railroad. A platoon of Company B filled the gap between Company A and Task Force 1. A gap between Company C and Task Force X on the left was secured by patrols. The tanks of the force pulled back to the eastern outskirts of

FLOVERICH. Here a small shell fragment jammed the turret of one of Captain White's three remaining mediums. Company G had a bad day. The day's action had cost the company 14 of their 16 tanks.

Task Force X

Simultaneously with Task Force 2's attack, General White had ordered Task Force X, on the left to seize IMMENDORF and prepare it for defense. Lt. Col. Reeves' force, predominately infantry, consisted of the 2nd Bn 406th Inf reinforced by Co H 67th AR (medium tanks). Colonel Reeves planned to attack IMMENDORF at H-hour with two infantry companies in the assault supported by tanks. Company E would envelop from the southeast while Company F made a frontal assault. Company H provided both rifle companies with a platoon of tanks.

The task force moved from its attack position vicinity of WAURICHEN and crossed the line of departure at 1245 (see Appendix VIII-C for map). Company E attacked on the right (south) flank with a platoon of tanks in the lead. Company F made the frontal assault along the WAURICHEN-IMMENDORF road with its platoon of tanks in support. Company G, in reserve, followed on order behind F (see Fig. 6 for map).

Both companies made good progress to IMMENDORF. Most of their trouble came from snipers inside the town, necessitating a house to house mop-up. During this town-fighting the tanks provided excellent fire support for the infantry. After

clearing the town, Task Force X organized a perimeter defense. In the assault of IMMENDORF, Company H had 4 tanks blown up by mines.

When Task Force 2 pulled back from APWEILER the south flank of Task Force X became exposed. Colonel Reeves committed Co G 406th Inf, his reserve company, to organize the high ground on the southeast of town and maintain contact with Task Force 2.

Upon the taking of the objective, the artillery and mortars organized their defensive fire plan and fired in their barrages. The force installed all available mines on roads leading into town. This defensive organization of the position was completed at 1900. All elements of the force occupied the line except one platoon of Company G, held in reserve.¹²

The first day's action had made encouraging gains against a determined enemy. All objectives with the exception of APWEILER fell to Combat Command B. The defense of APWEILER indicated that the enemy might make a determined stand west of the ROER instead of fighting a delaying action back to the river. The German 350th Infantry Regiment of the 183d Volks Grenadier Division occupying the front line opposite OCB was virtually wiped out during the afternoon.

The attack of OCB had, through necessity, been on a broad front (3200 yards). This wide frontage necessitated the use of three task forces. Because of the nature of the terrain, these forces were organized and employed differently. They

present different methods of using tanks and infantry.

Task Force 1, Colonel Disney's tank heavy team, gave us an excellent example of the attack of successive objectives. The speed and violence of the tank assault coupled with the perfect timing of the infantry's arrival on the first objective illustrates the success that can be expected from a properly planned and controlled attack. Also noteworthy in this action was the manner in which the force commander controlled the action. Colonel Disney, by being well forward where he could observe the action, was able to direct the forces to the next objective at the proper time so as to preserve the continuity of the attack.

Lt Col Hillyard's Task Force 2 was balanced. The tanks gave excellent support to the infantry, and the infantry in turn aided the tanks. The technique of passing the tanks through the infantry at H-hour and the use of the light tanks in close support of the infantry exemplify excellent coordination between tanks and infantry. The problem of infantry casualties from artillery fire, directed at tanks, was met by separating the tanks and infantry by 200 yards. In the assault on FLOVERICH this worked out particularly well.

Task Force X's operation is an example of an infantry attack supported by tanks. Here tank platoons were parcelled out to infantry companies because the action consisted mainly of clearing the town of IMMENDORF.

Combat Command B was disposed as shown on the map (in Appendix VIII-B) at the end of the first days operations. General White issued orders for all task forces to resume the attack on the following day.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

¹S-3 Periodic Report, Combat Command B, 2nd Armored Division, 1-30 November 1944.

²Ibid, p. 3.

³General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, (Doubleday & Co., Inc., Garden City, N.Y.) p. 329.

⁴After Action Report, 2nd Armored Division, November 1944.

⁵Ninth United States Army, Operations IV, Offensive in November, (4th Information & Historical Service), Chapter 3; Notes of Major Arthur J. Anderson, 3rd Bn, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, 16 November 1944, p. 45.

⁶Personal interview, Colonel Paul A. Disney, former commander of the 67th Armored Regiment, at Fort Knox, Ky., November 1948.

⁷Op. cit., Ninth United States Army, p. 47.

⁸Op. cit., CCB, p. 3.

⁹Personal interview, Major Paull A. Bane, Jr., former Executive Officer, 3rd Bn, 67th AR, at Fort Knox, Ky., December 1948.

¹⁰Op. cit., Ninth U.S. Army, p. 52, interview Lt. Harold B. Crane, Co C, 41st AIR, 6 December 1944.

¹¹Ibid, p. 53; Interview Major John W. Finnell, Commander 1st Bn, 41st AIR, 5 December 1944.

¹²Ibid, pp. 53-54, passim.

CHAPTER IV

THE 9TH PANZER DIVISION COUNTERATTACKS

The enemy reacted to the CCB's successful attack on 16 November with immediate violence. Early on the morning of 17 November, the Germans using armor in mass, supported by infantry and heavy mortar and artillery fires, launched the largest armored counterattack against the 2nd Armored Division that it had ever experienced.¹

From observation and from interrogation of American Prisoners of War, the Germans had built up a rather clear picture of the American situation before D-day. Anticipating an attack by the U.S. Armies in this area, the Germans moved the 9th Panzer and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions from the KREFELD Area to the MUENCHEN-GLADBACH area during the second week in Nov to form a mobile reserve for the 5th Panzer Army. On the 3 Nov, General der Panzer Truppen Von Manteuffel, Commander of the German 5th Panzer Army, discussed with Gen. der Panzer Truppen Von Luettwitz, Commander of the XLVII Panzer Corps, the advantages and disadvantages of transferring elements of the 9th Panzer Division to the western bank of the ROER River (see Appendix I-E for German Order of Battle). The disadvantage was that this would bring them within artillery range, subject to heavy shelling. The advantages were that it would make them readily available for a counterattack in case of a penetration, and they would not have to cross the ROER River by bridge. This was the deciding factor.

Because of the Allied air superiority the Germans faced the possibility of their bridges being bombed out. The final decision was to move one kampfgruppe (Battle Group) of the 9th Panzer Division to the western side of the ROER before the attack. This kampfgruppe moved across the ROER and into the LINNICH area during the first half of November.² It was this kampfgruppe that struck at the north and south flanks of the 2nd Armored Division early on the morning 17 Nov, with the mission of recapturing IMMENDORF and PUFFENDORF and sealing the penetrations made by CCB on the 16 Nov.

2nd Armored Division Plan of Attack

Gen. Harmon planned to continue the attack at 0800, 17 Nov, committing CCA, commanded by Brig. Gen. (then Col.) John H. Collier (see Plate 6), to seize EDEREN while CCB continued its fight towards GEREONSWEILER.

CCB's plan of attack: TFX and TF2 to attack and secure APWEILER while TFI secured the high ground south of GEREONSWEILER. The three forces then were to seize GEREONSWEILER (see Appendix VIII-C for map).

CCA's plan of attack: Force A to move to assembly area west of BEGGENDORF during the night 16-17 Nov and at 0800, 17 Nov move from BEGGENDORF through LOVERICH to an attack position in the vicinity of PUFFENDORF. From PUFFENDORF, Force A would attack to the northeast and seize EDEREN.³ (See Appendix VIII-C for map.)



The enemy counterattacks forestalled these attacks, forcing the 2nd Armored Division to go on the defensive.

Counterattack on Puffendorf

Signs of enemy reaction were apparent as they shelled PUFFENDORF continuously during the night 16-17 Nov. In the early morning they began to concentrate their fires on the exits out of PUFFENDORF. During the night the outposts had reported hearing enemy tracklaying vehicles moving in front of their positions.

At 0700, Co D 67th AR, outposting PUFFENDORF, reported receiving small arms fire from the north. A heavy morning mist obscured enemy activities, but the tanks of Company D returned the enemy fire with all weapons. Shortly after dawn, as the tanks of the 1st Battalion drew up on line and the 2nd Battalion moved up on their left in preparation for the scheduled attack, high velocity armor piercing shells began to plough furrows in the soft earth around the tanks. The 11th Panzer Grenadier Regiment supported by 20 to 30 MK V and VI tanks had launched a counter-attack with the mission of retaking PUFFENDORF.⁴

The counterattack caught TF1 off balance while it was preparing its own assault. The tanks of the 1st and 2nd Battalion, 67th AR on line in an exposed position, lacked the necessary depth to cover any advance by fire. Out gunned, out armored, and out maneuvered, in the slush and mud, which favored

the German MK V and MK VI's with their wide tracks, the tanks of TFI fought back furiously.

The Germans had the advantage with their long range, high velocity guns and thick armor. Time and again the tanks of TFI scored direct hits on the enemy armor only to have their shells go screaming off into the air as they ricocheted off the heavily armored enemy tanks. One tank of the 2nd Battalion fired 14 rounds of 76mm shot at a MK VI before destroying it, only to be knocked out the next moment by another MK VI.⁵

The enemy fire began to take its toll as the German gunners found their range. The tanks of TFI were being picked off one by one. In the space of a few minutes, Company A lost five light tanks to direct fire. There were too many tanks and too little room for maneuver. The Shermans fought back desperately, but the range was too great for their lower velocity 75 mm and 76 mm guns. The enemy had the additional advantage of position and maneuverability, which rendered advance or flanking movement impossible. By early afternoon the situation had become critical. The 1st Battalion had only three medium tanks left in Company D and only five light tanks in Company A. The 2nd Battalion had fared no better. Company F had eight medium tanks remaining and Company E was left with four, having lost seven to direct fire. All were short of ammunition, with only four or five rounds of 75 mm and 76 mm left in each platoon. Losses of officer personnel further increased the difficulty of keeping control of the situation.⁶

Since it was impossible to continue to defend their exposed positions, the American tanks were ordered to disengage and withdraw to the outskirts of PUFFENDORF. Here, the ruins of the stone buildings would afford some protection. As the tanks started to withdraw, Lt. Robert E. Lee, Commander of Company D, dismounted from his tank and went from foxhole to foxhole telling the infantry to withdraw with the tanks. Keeping his tank in an exposed position, he covered the infantry withdrawal. This action forestalled any panic that might have spread through the infantry when they saw the tanks pulling out.

The withdrawal to PUFFENDORF reversed the situation. Now the German tanks had to come out in the open to attack. One MK VI was knocked out by Lt. Hunicutt's Tank Destroyer as it charged PUFFENDORF, firing as it came.

After six hours of fierce fighting the enemy withdrew to a defiladed position south of GERONSWELLER, and continued to harass the positions in PUFFENDORF with fire the rest of the day.

The counterattack had been stopped before the Germans had reached their objective, but at great cost to TFI. The 2nd Battalion alone lost 19 tanks from direct fire. The enemy known losses were, two tanks knocked out by the Shermans and two knocked out by the 90 mm guns of the 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion.⁷

This action was tank versus tank. The artillery fire of the 75th and 53rd Armored Field Artillery Battalions combined with the fires of the mortars and assault guns of TFI had driven back the enemy infantry. On the U.S. side, some of the most devastating artillery fire of their experience pinned down the doughs of the 3rd Battalion, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment.

The reasons for the Germans not following up their initial success are debatable. The heavy artillery concentrations had little or no effect on their armor, but they did stop the infantry. The arrival of Force A in FUFFENDORF may have been a deciding factor. In any event the Germans failed to push the counterattack home. They did, however, succeed in delaying the 24 Armored Division's advance to the ROER River, nearly two days.

Force A's Attack Stopped

Force A received verbal orders to move from their present location at BEACH to an assembly area in the vicinity of BEGGENDORF on the evening of 16 Nov. Force A closed in to its new assembly area the night 16-17 Nov, and at 0800 the next morning its infantry mounted tanks and moved through BEGGENDORF, to attack EDEREN.⁸

ORIGINALLY GCA planned to attack EDEREN through SETTERICH, but since the 29th Infantry Division was still assaulting the

town, Force A bypassed SETTERICH to the north on the main road through LOVERICH to PUFFENDORF. As Force A's lead tanks emerged from LOVERICH on the LOVERICH-PUFFENDORF road, the counterattack was in progress against TF1 of CCB in PUFFENDORF. Force A stopped at the northeast edge of LOVERICH; the infantry dismounted, and the tanks dispersed in a near-by field to wait for the situation to develop.

Col. Ira P. Swift, Force A Commander, went up to make an estimate of the situation and at 1100 hours, ordered Force A to move to the southwest of PUFFENDORF. There the infantry dismounted in an orchard on the southwestern edge of town, and immediately encountered heavy artillery fire. The men could find no cover or fox holes and quickly began to dig in to get as much protection as possible. The tanks fanned out and moved to the east and northeast of PUFFENDORF, tying in with TF1 on the high ground north of PUFFENDORF.

By 1500, Co D 66th AR had moved up to the northeast edge of PUFFENDORF, where they came under direct fire from the direction of GERONSWELLER. 1st Lt. John B. Roller, of Co D, with a tank platoon of 76's, which were holding down the hottest sector of the battalion, had his tank knocked out by three high explosive shells. He then went to the Command Post of the 2nd Battalion and requested permission from Major Herbert Long, the Battalion Commander, to withdraw his tanks to a less exposed position. Major Long contacted Col. Swift by radio and received

permission to pull the tanks back about 75 yards behind some shattered buildings from which they could cover the approaches to the town from the northeast. Company D lost four tanks and one attached Tank Destroyer in the ruins of PUFFENDORF. At 1630, Force A in coordination with TF1, made plans for the defense of PUFFENDORF.⁹

Attack on Apweiler Falls

In the center TF2 planned to co-ordinate with TFX effort for APWEILER. Company A, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, commanded by 1st Lt. Raymond S. Earhart, with one platoon of Co B 41st AIR, planned to push forward to seize the high ground southeast of APWEILER, the previous day's objective. This attack was to be led by the 3rd Platoon, Co I 67th AR, commanded by 1st Lt. James White. The remainder of Company B, supported by the tanks of Co G 66th AR would move east of the town to prepare against possible counterattack. The 1st and 2nd platoons of Co I 67th AR to support the attack with direct fire and then go forward to cover the right and left flanks. Co G 67th AR, which had received three repaired tanks during the night bringing it up to the strength of five, would support the attack with direct fire.

The attack began 17 Nov at 0800 as scheduled. The enemy immediately concentrated intense fire from artillery, tanks, mortars and machine guns on the attackers. The platoon of Company I's tanks, leading the attack for TF2, moved only 500 yards before

being forced to withdraw. Fire from a MK V from the direction of GEREONSWEILER hit and burned Lt. White's tank, wounding him; another was disabled by a mine, a third forced out of action by a hit on the deck, and a fourth had its gun shield damaged.¹⁰

The heavy artillery and mortar fire drove the infantry back to their original positions. The action ended by 0910.

A singular act of heroism of the most outstanding nature highlighted the day. Captain John Erbes, Battalion Surgeon, 3rd Bn 67th AR, and a small detachment of his aid men, went forward under the heaviest type of fire to evacuate many wounded men who had been left on the battlefield. The Red Cross flag that he carried was riddled with small arms fire as he and his men accomplished the magnificent feat. Captain Erbes was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for this work and his men each received a Silver Star.¹¹

In IMMENDORF, TFX was making preparations for the attack on APWEILER in coordination with TF2 on the morning of 17 Nov. At 0700 the Germans counterattacked IMMENDORF with approximately three companies of the 10th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and ten MK V tanks of the 9th Panzer Division. Defensive artillery and mortar fires were very effective in breaking up the enemy formations and inflicting heavy casualties. Fire from the 771st Tank Destroyer Battalion's 90 mm guns knocked out three of the Panzer tanks. The German infantry used every method to close on the Task Force's position. At about 1100 hours a group of company

strength came forward with a white flag on the pretense of surrendering. When about 100 yards from TFX's position, they dropped the white flag and charged. This group was stopped by small arms fire and forced to withdraw.

TFX received another counterattack about 1700 from a battalion of infantry and 8 tanks. The Germans used the ruse of firing high over the front line of the 2nd Battalion, 406th Infantry Regiment, with tracers while using ball ammunition to inflict casualties on the unwary troops. Mine fields stopped two of the attacking MK V's and the 771st Tank Destroyers then knocked them out. One MK V broke through into IMMENDORF, followed by a small number of foot-troops. A Co H 67th AR tank knocked out the intruding Panther at a range of 30 yards.¹²

Col. Hurless brought forward the 3rd Battalion, 406th Infantry Regiment, to aid in repelling the thrust. Company L, the leading element, found itself in a fight as it neared the center of IMMENDORF. The troops formed a skirmish line directly from their march column and forced the enemy elements from the town.

At 1800 all forces made contact with each other and formed a defensive line from IMMENDORF through FLOVERICH to PUFFENDORF (see Appendix VIII-B for map). The possibility of enemy counterattacks kept all forces alert. One small counterattack, about platoon strength which was quickly repulsed, struck in TF2's sector at about 2000. In PUFFENDORF the tank and infantry outposts turned

back several enemy patrols, but one succeeded in slipping through to the center of town. At 2200 small arms fire caused Major Batchelder, CO of the 1st Bn 67th AR, to send his reconnaissance platoon leader, Lt. Edelberg, out to investigate. He returned in a few minutes with two prisoners, who stated they belonged to a force of 400 men who had dug in on the edge of town prepared to attack and seize PUFFENDORF in the morning. They had been told that as a result of the day's fighting the bulk of the American force had been destroyed or withdrawn, and that the town was only lightly outposted. That the Germans believed this was amply demonstrated when another patrol of thirty men came strolling through town after midnight, making so much noise that the guards thought they were prisoners being marched in by the infantry. When the mistake was discovered, the enemy patrol was engaged by headquarters personnel, infantry and dismounted tankers. Twenty of the enemy were killed and the remainder taken prisoner.¹³ The night of 17-18 Nov was spent in hauling ammunition and preparing positions for an expected counterattack the next morning.

Although the 2nd Armored Division successfully repelled all counterattacks on 17 Nov, and did not lose any of the gains made the previous day, the counterattacks stopped the momentum of the Division's attack and forced it to go on the defensive for nearly two days.

With the commitment of one of their best Armored Divisions, the 9th Panzer, in a large scale counterattack, the Germans clearly indicated their determination to defend every inch of ground. This was not a delaying action but an all out struggle in defense of their homeland.

18th of November

Since more heavy counterattacks were expected on CCB front on the 18th, Gen. Harmon indicated in a discussion of the situation with Gen. White, that CCB would have a holding mission. CCB had no armor in reserve. The single tank company held for that purpose had been committed to reinforce TF2. Gen. Harmon made available the division reserve, the 3rd Battalion of the 66th Armored Regiment, to support any sector hit by a counter-attack.

Interrogation of prisoners taken by TFX revealed plans for another enemy attack at 0600 on 18 Nov. Artillery fired preplanned missions in front of the entire CCB sector at 0530. No attack came at the scheduled time but CCB received a weak effort at 0700. It was thrown back by defensive fires. Prisoners said that losses from artillery completely disrupted the attack plans. Eight Panther tanks participated in the attack but withdrew after tank and tank destroyer fire destroyed three of them.¹⁴

Since no large scale counterattack had materialized and the British 30 Corps had begun a push through GEILENKIRCHEN on

the left flank, it was possible to go ahead with the planned action against APWEILER. At 1130, CCB issued a letter of instruction for the day's attack which ordered TFX to make the main effort. The First Battalion, 406th Infantry supported by one tank platoon of Co I, 67th AR was to attack from the vicinity of FLOVERICH, and secure the high ground southeast of APWEILER. The 3rd Battalion was to attack from IMMENDORF and seize the town of APWEILER while the 2nd Battalion supported the attack with fire from IMMENDORF. The attack was scheduled for 1400 hours.¹⁵

An artillery preparation began at H-minus 5 minutes and at 1400 hours the attackers moved out. Companies K and L led the attack for the 3rd Battalion, 406th Infantry, following within 100 yards of the artillery. This proved very effective as the enemy infantry, on the west side of APWEILER, were captured in their fire trenches without a fight. The infantry moved steadily through the town, taking a large number of prisoners. Reaching the east side of the town by 1445 they began to consolidate their positions. Company K on the right tied in with TF2 three hundred yards south of the town. Company L secured the northeast corner of town, and two platoons of Company I were on the left flank connecting with the 2nd Battalion between APWEILER and IMMENDORF.

The 1st platoon of Co I 67th AR, commanded by 1st Lt. Thomas H. Osborne, led the attack for the 1st Battalion, 406th Inf. Utilizing a wooded draw, Lt. Osborne was able to move his

tanks on the objective without loss. The infantry followed close behind and the position was consolidated by 1600. Companies C and G, 67th AR and a Tank Destroyer Platoon supported the attack with direct fire.¹⁶

Companies B and C, 41st AIR, were ordered to attack to straighten out the line after APWEILER was secured. They moved out at 1630 hours. Company C filed through the draw and tied in with the 1st Battalion, 406th, on the left about 200 yards south of APWEILER. Company B traversed the flat ground to the south and made contact with TFL approximately 800 yards northwest of PUFFENDORF. Company A remained in its present position as reserve company (see Appendix VIII-B for map).

CCB ordered TFL to have three patrols reconnoiter to GEREONSWELLER during the night. Two of the infantry patrols were unsuccessful. The third reached a point about 400 yards from GEREONSWELLER. The patrol heard no enemy vehicular activity in GEREONSWELLER but noticed several enemy bunkers on the outskirts of GEREONSWELLER.

Reconnaissance Company, 67th Armored Regiment continued to protect the right flank of Combat Command in the vicinity of LOVERICH, tying in with elements of CCA which were assembled at PUFFENDORF, protecting the south side of the town.

During 18 Nov, while Force B waited for an opportunity to wedge its way into the battle, a platoon of tanks from Co I 66th AR was loaned for the day to assist in the attack on

SEITZ by the 29th Infantry Division.

Approximately 225 prisoners were taken on the division front during the day. Casualties of the division and its attachments totaled 13 killed, 90 wounded and 31 missing in action.¹⁷

The counterattack on November 17th had stopped the division's advance dead and had thrown its schedule off balance. Braced for another counterattack the morning of the 18th, the 2nd Armored Division did not get started again on the second day except for the capture of APWEILER. Thus the assault was delayed for two days after initial successes of the first day. Contributing to this set-back were the inferiority of our tanks in guns, armor, and maneuverability; the advantageous defensive position held by the enemy; and the aggressiveness of the defenders, in that order.

Despite these disadvantages, the German failure to follow up their counterattack enabled CCB to continue to reorganize for another day and then attack again, while CCA was able to throw its full strength on EDEREN the next morning.

The precipitous reaction of the German command in committing all available tanks to counterattack within 24 hours of 2nd Armored Division's initial assault shows vividly that ARMOR DRAWS ARMOR. The extreme sensitivity of the enemy to armored threats is apparent.

NOTES ON CHAPTER IV

¹History, 67th Armored Regiment, (Printed by Georg Westermann, Burnswick, Germany) p. 38.

²Statement, General der Panzertruppe Heinrich Freiherr von Luettwitz, Commander, 47th Panzer Corps in the Rhineland, Allendorf, Germany, 11 Jan 47, (Translated by Christensen) p. 2.

³Ninth United States Army, Operation IV, Offensive in November (4th Information and Historical Service) p. 65.

⁴Op. Cit., History, 67th Armored Regiment, p. 105.

⁵Ibid., p. 198.

⁶Ibid., p. 199.

⁷Ibid., p. 199.

⁸Op. Cit., Ninth US Army, p. 69.

⁹Ibid., p. 70.

¹⁰Op. Cit., History, 67th Armored Regiment, p. 276.

¹¹Ibid., p. 277.

¹²Ibid., p. 112.

¹³Ibid., p. 108.

¹⁴Op. Cit., Ninth US Army, p. 87.

¹⁵Op. Cit., History, 67th Armored Regiment, p. 277.

¹⁶Op. Cit., Ninth US Army, p. 88.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 89

CHAPTER V

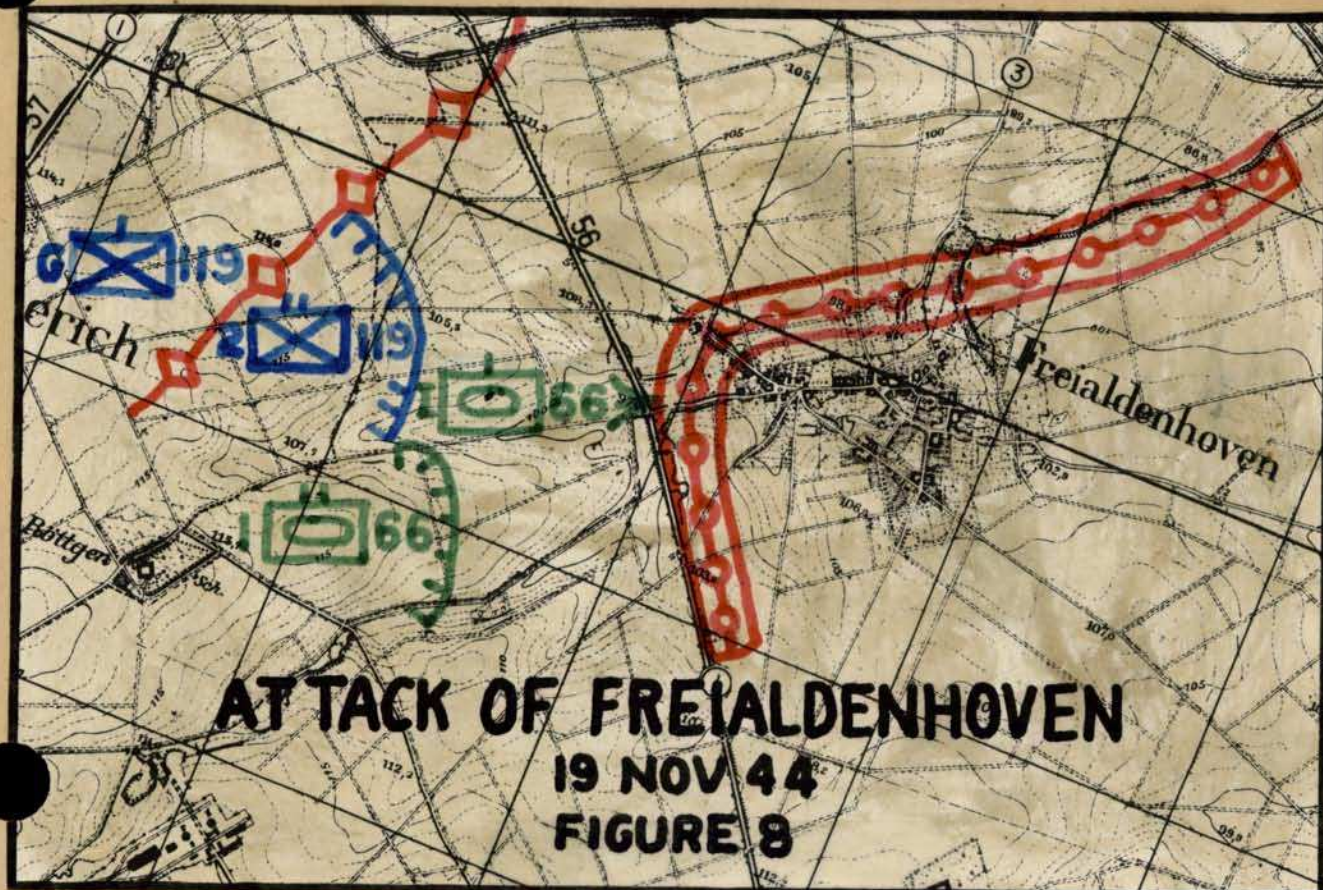
THE DRIVE IS RESUMED

We find the 2nd Armored Division now ready to proceed to the capture of EDEREN, FREIALDENHOVEN and GEREONSWELLER, and to seize the high ground overlooking the ROER. With the capture of these objectives the Division will be in position to launch the final blows of the campaign.

On 19 November, while OCB consolidated its gains of the previous days, CCA attacked to seize and secure FREIALDENHOVEN and EDEREN. Force A was assigned EDEREN as its objective, while Force B was directed to capture FREIALDENHOVEN.¹ This marked the initial employment of Force B in the ROER operation.

The Attack on Freialdenhoven

The plan of attack against FREIALDENHOVEN contemplated that Force B attack through a bridgehead to be seized by the 29th Infantry Division across the antitank ditch east of SETTERICH (see Fig. 8). Since SETTERICH was still in German hands at the time the plan was drawn up the attack by Force B was dependent upon the capture of the town and establishment of the bridgehead by troops of another division. Not until the town was captured and the bridgehead secured was the area to come under the control of the 2nd Armored Division. This introduced a serious element of doubt into the CCA planning since no direct action could be taken by the 2nd Armored Division to expedite capture of the



town. As a consequence, it was necessary to make an alternate plan in the event SETTERICH and the bridgehead should not be secured prior to the attack. The second plan provided that Force B should move through BEGGENDORF, LOVERICH and PUFFENDORF and force its own crossing of the antitank ditch. This awkward arrangement was a matter of considerable concern to the 2nd Armd Div. It underlined the fact that the responsibility for securing key terrain, vital to the launching of a major attack, should be made the responsibility of the command primarily concerned, and not be dependent on cooperative arrangement.

SETTERICH was taken by the 29th Inf Div on the afternoon of the 18th and the necessary bridgehead established, making it possible for Force B to launch its attack the next morning.

Force B moved out from its assembly area in the vicinity of BEGGENDORF at 1030 on November 19. The 2nd Battalion 119th Infantry (Lt Col William C. Cox) occupied SETTERICH, and at 1300 relieved the 1st and 2nd Bns 116th Inf which had been holding the town and the bridgehead across the antitank ditch to the east. Co G of the 2nd Bn 119th Inf remained in reserve west of the anti-tank ditch. The remainder of Force B moved initially to the vicinity of BATSWEILER, bypassing SETTERICH when it launched its attack.

The attack order directed the 2nd Bn 119th Inf to hold its positions in the vicinity of SETTERICH; the advance guard of Force B, commanded by Capt Henry H. Chatfield (CO, Company I 66th AR) to operate on the ridge west of FREIALDENHOVEN; and the 1st Battalion 66th Armored Regiment (Lt Col Carl Parker) to envelop FREIALDENHOVEN from the south, covering the south and east exits of the town and protecting the division's right flank.

A fifteen-minute artillery concentration preceded the attack. The advance guard crossed the ditch at 1400, followed by Col. Parker's battalion. Elaborate plans which had been made for moving the tanks across the ditch in expectation that it would be a formidable obstacle were now discarded as several easy crossing places were found. There was no hindrance from mines.

Capt. Chatfield's advance guard quickly succeeded in reaching a point just short of FREIALDENHOVEN. Though the town could be covered by fire, both the advance guard and the Parker force southwest of the town, were stopped by a minefield which extended across the entire front of FREIALDENHOVEN. At 1620 orders were issued to dig in and consolidate for the night. The positions occupied were approximately 1000 yards west of FREIALDENHOVEN. Except for the mines, the attack of Force B had been unopposed. On the left contact was established with Force A and with the 115th Inf (29th Inf Div) on the right.²

Force B's attack on the 20th was delayed an hour beyond the scheduled jump-off time of 0900 by a heavy mist. In the plan for the day's operation, Co G 119th Inf was to move up to the line secured by Cos E and F 119th Inf the previous day and then ride tanks into FREIALDENHOVEN. On its left Co F 119th Inf and Co I 66th AR were to secure the road running northwest between MERZENHAUSEN and EDEREN. On the right, Co E 119th Inf and Co F 66th AR were to seize HILL 110.8 south of FREIALDENHOVEN.

Company F 119th Inf and Co I 66th AR launched their attack at 1000, moved out across the PUFFENDORF-DURBOSLAR road and advanced to a point approximately 1000 yards northeast of FREIALDENHOVEN. There they ran into the north part of the minefield protecting FREIALDENHOVEN. Both wooden and metallic mines halted the progress of the armor, so the order was given to dig in. They were just short of their objective.

The attack of Co G 119th Inf was delayed until 1400 due to extensive minefields immediately beyond the line of departure. The plan of having the infantry ride on the tanks was given up, and the company advanced without tank support except for four British flamethrowing Crocodiles. These tanks were placed in direct support and committed despite the fact that the minefields had not been cleared.

Other than the antitank minefields, which were no obstacle to the infantry. The first enemy resistance encountered was along the fire trenches which were dug in all around FREIALDENHOVEN. Although these trenches were manned, the only antitank fire received came from bazookas and four small antitank weapons sited in a camouflaged position at the western edge of the town. The flame-throwing British tanks advanced aggressively. They squirted liquid fire into the trenches just west of the town, expediting the advance of the infantry through the obstacles. About this time three of the Crocodiles hit mines and were disabled. The fourth got to within 100 yards of the town, but there it bogged down in the mud.

The infantry drove into the town alone. Due to unsatisfactory communications practically no supporting fires aided the advance. Most of the Germans pulled back or gave up. Numerous prisoners were taken. No hostile tanks were encountered in the town, nor any antitank fire. Although there were many mines they were carelessly laid. The engineers followed the infantry and

lifted an enormous number of mines. Not a single man was injured by them. By nightfall about half the town was secure.

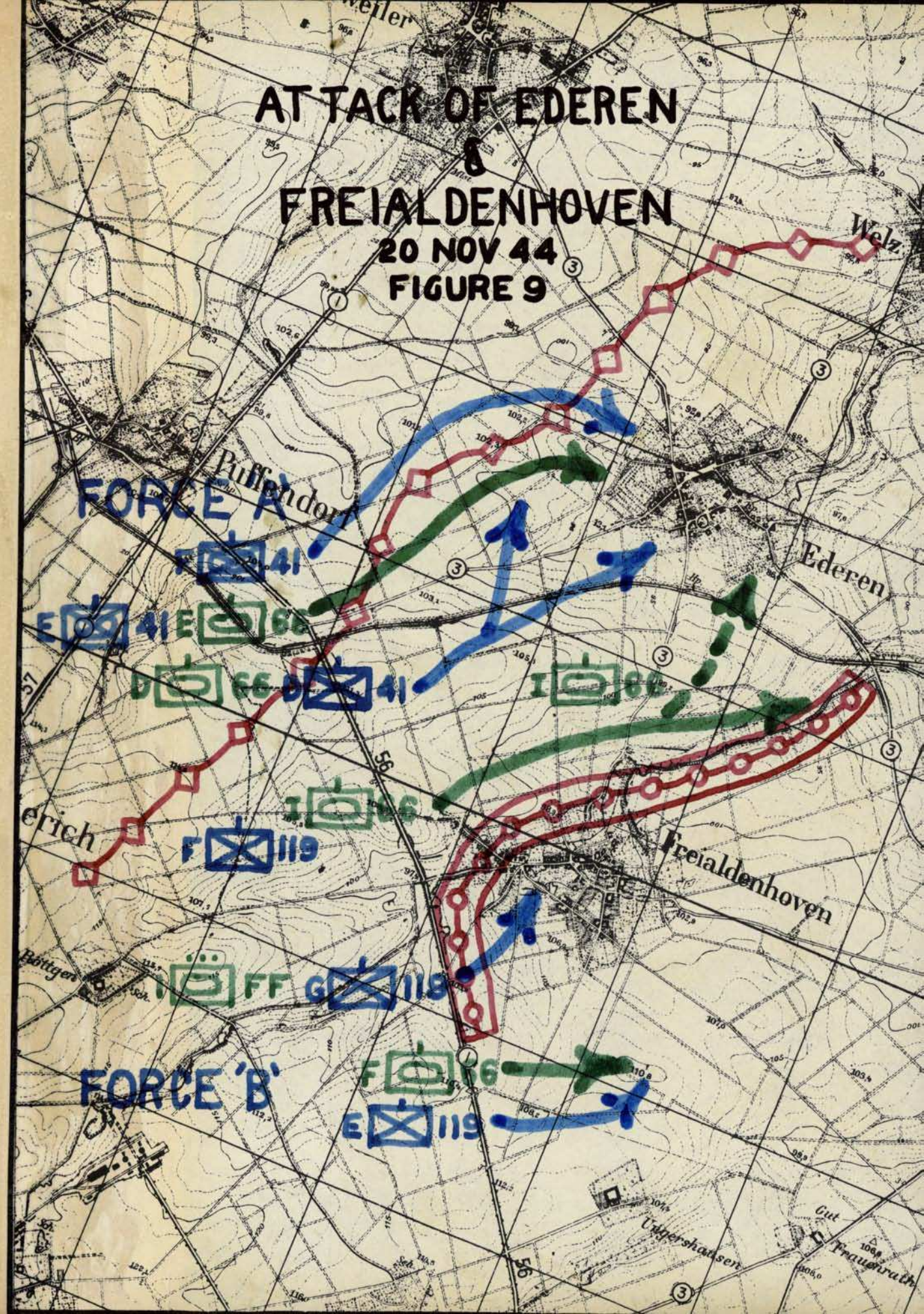
The advance south of FREIALDENHOVEN was spearheaded by Co F 66th AR which was ordered to reconnoiter well to the south in an endeavor to find a way around the minefield. It found it possible to skirt the barrier, but great difficulty was encountered in crossing an irrigation ditch in this sector. At 1345 Co F reached its objective, HILL 10.8, northwest of the village of FREUENRATH, where it commanded the south and east exits of FREIALDENHOVEN. Company E 119th Inf, the other member of this team, moved forward about 1400. Very little small arms fire was encountered, and the infantry caught up with the tanks in about an hour. ³

Company I 66th AR was detached from Force B at 1445. Company B 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion was attached to Force B at 1200 and was employed to maintain contact with the 29th Inf Division on the right flank.

The Attack on Ederen

At 1500 on the previous day, 19 November, Force A, CCA, which had been holding PUFFENDORF jointly with elements of CCB, attacked east-southeast with the mission of forcing a crossing of the antitank ditch and seizing EDEREN (see Figure 9). Task Force 1 of CCB was given the task of protecting the left flank of Force A and of placing direct fire on GERBONSWILLER.

AT TACK OF EDEREN
&
FREIALDENHOVEN
20 NOV 44
FIGURE 9



to disrupt any hostile preparations for counterattack. Force A pushed forward 800 yards to a gap in the antitank ditch southeast of PUFFENDORF. During the advance, the Germans committed a force of approximately 100 infantry with four tanks towards the seemingly exposed left flank of Force A, but the counterattack failed, and the enemy was driven off with heavy losses.⁴

Promptly at 0900 the next morning, 20 November, Force A renewed the attack.⁵ The two assault platoons of Co E 66th AR, followed closely by the infantry of Co E 41st AIR, and a platoon of tank destroyers, swung east across the ditch and veered sharply to the north. The morning was misty, the ground boggy; it was doubtful for a moment whether the tanks would be able to operate at all. The infantry followed the tanks at a distance of 200 yards. The tanks were heavily loaded with ammunition, carrying 113 rounds for cannon and 13,000 rounds for machine guns. They attacked with all guns firing. This heavy and continuous volume of fire was the major reason for the day's success.⁶

The main road to EDEREN served as the axis of advance. Co E 66th AR and its attached infantry advanced on the left of the road. The leading elements of this team were about 800 yards out while the other team, consisting of Co D 41st AIR and Co D 66th AR, was still passing through the antitank ditch. Co E 66th AR slowed up a little to give Co D 66th AR an opportunity to come up on the opposite side of the road. However, before

this could be accomplished direct antitank fire from the outskirts of EDEREN knocked out a tank destroyer and five tanks of Co D, three of which were later recovered. Co E 66th AR was now between the antitank ditch (left) and EDEREN (right), and swinging towards the town from the west. Four haystacks in a field between the assault tanks and EDEREN were burning furiously, sending up white smoke in huge swirls. A providential wind blowing from the south provided a first-rate smoke screen behind which the leading tanks of Co E advanced towards the town. The tanks flushed an estimated 250 to 300 prisoners in the fields southwest of EDEREN.

As soon as he saw Company D being mauled, Major Herbert S. Long, commander of the 2nd Bn 66th AR, called Capt Bruce Kelley, CO of Co D, and ordered him to slideslip to the east behind Co E. Kelly disengaged himself successfully and with his four remaining mediums crossed the highway to the left, took advantage of the smokescreen, and came up in half an hour without further loss.

Company F 41st AIR, the Force A reserve, followed the attack, moving up on the left side of the ditch and in the ditch itself. Prisoners came out like flies, abandoning bazookas and small arms. When this company reached a point opposite EDEREN, it turned east across the ditch and reached the town at 1530.

Major Long then called Colonel Swift and told him that the tanks and infantry were ready to attack EDEREN from the northwest.

Colonel Swift ordered the armor to hold fast and the infantry to move into the town. (See Plate 7.)

Meanwhile Co I 66th AR (Capt Chatfield) had been detached from Force B for the purpose of supporting Force A in the attack on EDEREN, and was now attacking EDEREN from the southwest. Under covering fire from the tanks, Co F 41st AIR entered the town from the west to clean it out, while Co I 66th AR ranged throughout its eastern approaches. (See Fig. 11.)

By 1730 the town was secure, and contact had been established with CCB on the left (see Appendix VIII-B).⁷

The Attack on Gereonsweiler

On 20 Nov, while CCA continued its attacks on EDEREN and FREIALDENHOVEN, CCB launched a coordinated drive against GEREONSWEILER (see Fig. 10). Field Order 37 issued by Division Headquarters at 1800 on the 19th directed CCB to attack not later than 0900 20 Nov. Elements of the 9th Panzer Division and the 11th Panzer Reconnaissance Bn of the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division with remnants of the 183d Volks Grenadier Division held the enemy line in the CCB zone.⁸ Against this force, CCB planned a coordinated assault by its three task forces.

Task Force 1, on the right, was assigned HILL 102.6 as its initial objective. It had been driven off this hill four days previously. After its capture, Task Force 1 would assist the attack of Task Force 2 by advancing northeast, maintaining contact with CCA on the right.

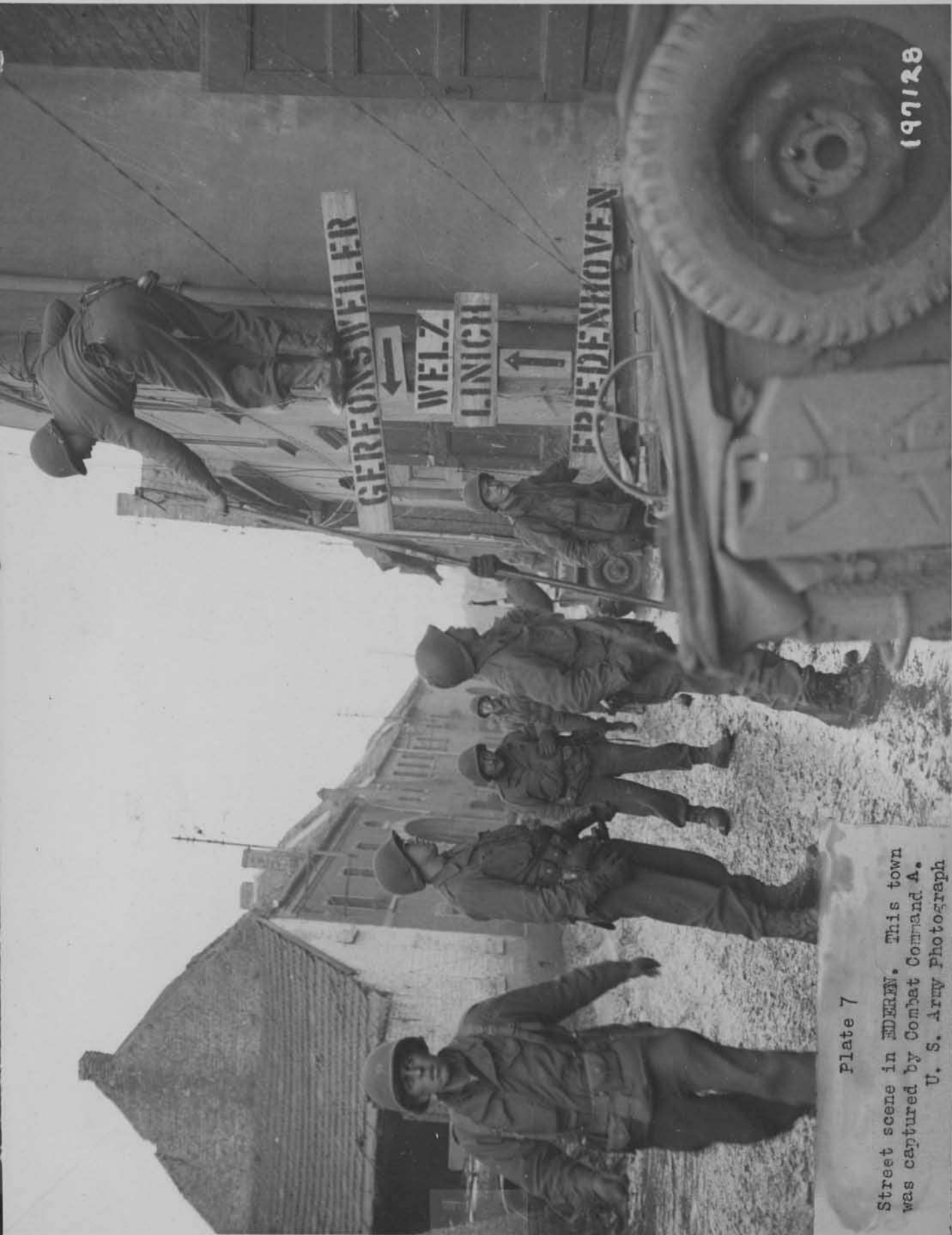
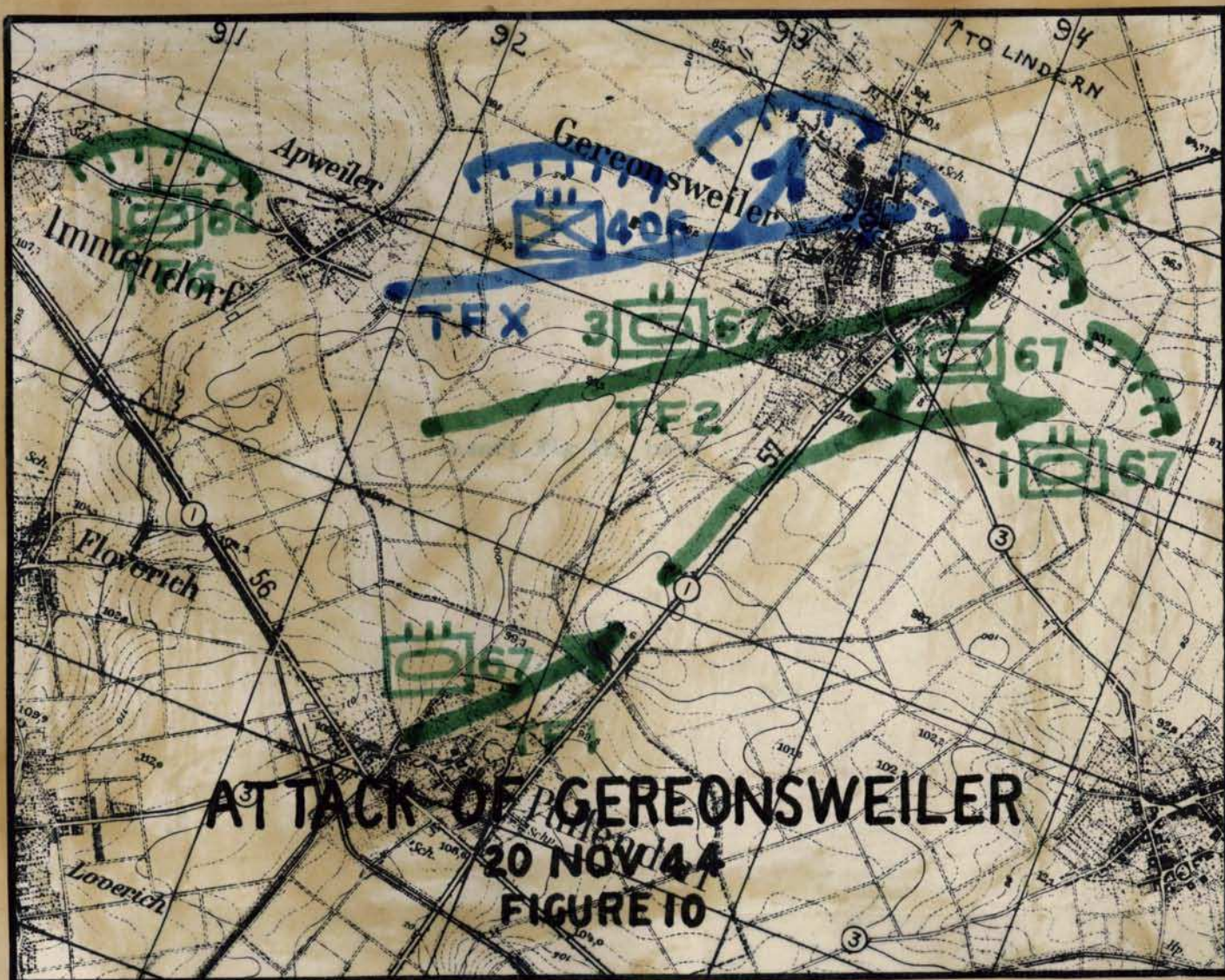


Plate 7

Street scene in EUDERN. This town was captured by Combat Command A. U. S. Army Photograph

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The plan called for Task Force 2 to drive northeast to the southern part of GEREONSWEILER. Its infantry was to jump off in two echelons with a platoon of Co G 67th AR supporting each of the assault companies, while the 3rd platoon of Co G remained in reserve. Co I 67th AR was ordered to support the attack with direct fire from its present positions.

Task Force X would attack abreast of and on the left of Task Force 2. Its objective was the northern portion of GEREONSWELLER. Two troops of the 2nd Squadron, Fife and Forfar Yeomanry (British), which had been attached to CCB the previous day, were now attached to Task Force X for the operation. These troops, which were equipped with flame-throwing Churchill tanks, were to lead the 1st Bn 406th Inf in the attack, while the 3rd Bn followed in reserve. Tanks and tank destroyers were placed on the left to guard the north flank of the task force. The 2nd Bn 406th Inf was given the mission of holding APWELLER.

During the night, units were grouped for the attack and all preparations were made to move at 0900. A detailed artillery fire plan was developed by Lt. Col Briard P. Johnson, executive of CCB. It provided for heavy concentrations to neutralize the GEREONSWELLER defenses, to isolate the town from possible reinforcements and to protect it from counterattack once our teams had entered it.

Heavy rain fell during the night and continued during the early morning. As a consequence the push was postponed until 1100 in hope of better weather.

As planned, intense artillery fires preceded the drive on GEREONSWELLER. Six battalions, beginning at H minus 10, fired five rounds per gun into the western outskirts of the town. From H-hour to H plus 15, corps artillery laid down heavy fires on the commanding ground around the objective. At H plus 15 the

fire falling on the west edge of the objective was lifted, and the six battalions rolled a barrage through the town.

At 1100 all three task forces crossed the line of departure. Task Force 1 jumped off in two columns toward its initial objective HILL 102.6. The hill was taken at 1130 hours. Tanks covered the infantry all the way to the hill, and no losses were sustained. After capturing HILL 102.6 the task force moved to the eastern edge of GEREONSWELLER where it reorganized. It then resumed the advance and secured the high ground 600 yards east of the town.

Task Force 2, on the left of Task Force 1, came initially under only light small arms fire, but soon thereafter heavy machine gun fire from south of GEREONSWELLER struck the troops, inflicting numerous casualties and pinning Co A 41st AR down for half an hour. Company C 41st AIR, to the north had some defilade from this fire but despite this was also hard hit and was forced down momentarily. Within a few minutes the strength of two of its platoons was reduced by half.

Two Mark V tanks south of GEREONSWELLER kept the tanks of Task Force 2 from moving against the enemy machine gun positions. The Shermans of Co I 67th AR which had been firing on GEREONSWELLER now turned their attention to the Panthers. They saw their 76 mm projectiles bounce off the heavily armored enemy, and consequently broke off the unequal duel.

However, the tank fire into GEREONSWELLER aided the infantry advance. Two armor piercing projectiles hit an oil dump

in the southern section of the town and set it on fire. Black smoke rolled out and was blown by a southeast wind across the front of the foot troops.

Six Mark V tanks, 3500 yards to the north, opened ineffective fire on Co I 67th AR. The fire was returned, but without hope of any damage being done by the outranged guns of the M-4's.

Company C 41st AIR finally reached the outskirts of the town. 2nd Lt. Robert Brockman took the leading platoon forward but was stopped by fire at a brick wall protecting the entrance to the town. The 2nd platoon, following the first, stopped and established a base of fire. The 3rd platoon maneuvered to the left and came abreast of the first.

The platoon leaders were unable to push their men forward, but the company commander, Lt Crane, rose to the situation, exclaiming to Lt Preston, forward observer of the 83rd Armored FA Bn, "Let's walk into town and see if they will follow."

The two officers set out, accompanied by two runners carrying an SCR 509 suspended on a pole between them. Seeing this display of heroism the troops jumped to their feet and followed the two officers into GEREONSWELLER.

Meanwhile the 1st Platoon of Co I 67th AR crossed the GEREONSWELLER-PUFFENDORF road and attacked a strong point south of the town, destroying a machine gun. About 30 enemy infantrymen in fox holes and burned-out tanks had been protecting the gun.

The tank dozer of Co I moved up and began covering up the fox holes. The Germans quickly emerged with white flags up. The tanks held their fire and the scattered enemy began running to the rear in an attempt to escape only to be quickly cut down.

Freed from the enfilading fire, Cos A and B 41st AIR moved up rapidly and entered GEREONSWEILER about 1200 hours.

The commander of the 1st Bn 41st AIR ordered Cos A and C to push through GEREONSWEILER and set up a defense on the eastern side. He directed Co B to remain in town and clear it of enemy. M-4 tanks followed the infantry and supported the mop-up with fire (see Plate 8). However, all three companies were soon pinned down inside the town by tank and machine gun fire delivered by Task Force 1 which was advancing from the south. When this fire lifted after about 15 minutes the infantry pressed on through the town, reaching the eastern edge at 1400. Companies A and C continued their advance 500 yards east of GEREONSWEILER where they linked up with elements of Task Force 1 on the right. They were not able, however, to contact Task Force X on the left.

Meanwhile Co B continued the cleanup of GEREONSWEILER. Intense artillery fire harassed the troops. The shelling was sporadic until the mopping force reached the center of town, and then it became very heavy. The Germans in the town resisted only half heartedly. Many were found in cellars attempting to hide until nightfall in the hope of escaping through our lines to rejoin their units.

The Task Force X thrust from APWEILER was led by the 1st Bn 406th Inf spearheaded by Crocodiles, while six tanks of Co H 67th AR moved out on the north flank to the high ground north-east of GEREONSWELLER.

Intense 88 mm Cannon and machine gun fire was received by the infantry as they left APWEILER. The fire came from high ground to the north in the vicinity of PRUMMERN and DEECK. Company C 771st TD Bn moved to the east of APWEILER to engage the enemy guns. The maneuver was a success in that it drew all the fire to the tank destroyers, but at heavy cost for the company lost all except three of its vehicles in the fight. Once the harassing fire was diverted the infantry advanced rapidly behind the leading Crocodiles. Small arms and machine gun fire from GEREONSWELLER was light. Companies B and C 406th Inf reached the town at 1115. They drove straight through and reached the northeastern outskirts at 1300 and set up a defensive line. Co A, following, made contact with the tanks of Co H 67th AR and occupied the high ground north of the town. Co A then moved on the town to assist Cos B and C in mopping up.

The flank attack of Co A completed the demoralization of the defenders. German troops began streaming out of the north-east edge of town in an attempt to escape to LINNICH. They were cut down in large numbers by the two companies which had reached the eastern edge of GEREONSWELLER.

The 3rd Bn 406th Inf after having been held up in APWEILER for an hour and a half by 88 mm fire from PRUMMERN and by small arms fire from GEREONSWELLER, followed the 1st Bn toward the objective. Co I swung off to the left and secured the high ground which had previously been taken by the tanks and Co A. Companies K and L moved into the western part of GEREONSWELLER.

The 2nd Bn moved out of IMMENDORF and secured a defensive line from APWEILER to GEREONSWELLER, contacting the 3rd Bn in the latter town. The newly formed Task Force G, commanded by Major Charles J. Girard, replaced the 2d Bn in IMMENDORF (see Appendix I-D for composition of Task Force G).⁹

By nightfall a continuous line ran from IMMENDORF to APWEILER, thence around GEREONSWELLER to the Task Force I positions where a tie-in was established with CCA troops.

The Division captured more than 700 prisoners in the course of the attacks on GEREONSWELLER, EDEREN and FREIALDENHOVEN. Its losses were 24 killed, 156 wounded and 11 missing. (See Appendix VIII-B for map).

CCD Deepens Its Penetration

The 2nd Armd Div continued the attack on all fronts on 21 November, the combat commands employing their five task forces in coordinated drives from positions in the vicinity of FREIALDENHOVEN, EDEREN and GEREONSWELLER. Division artillery, reinforced by Corps, laid down intense preparatory fires prior to the attack.

The missions assigned CCB included the capture of the high ground to the north and east of GEREONSWELLER and the improvement of its positions southeast of the town. The enemy situation confronting the combat command, as given in the attack order, issued at 2000 hours 20 Nov was as follows:

... "Enemy rear installations are withdrawing across the ROER. Our advance is opposed by els of the 9th Pz and 15th PzG Divs and remnants of the obsolescent 163rd Volks Grenadier Div. Dug-in tanks, Mk V and VI, effectively delay our advance, and artillery and mortar continues to be heavy. Casualties have reduced the En in our sector to approx 1000 men and 20 tanks. No reinf's are rptd by PW's and inclement weather prevents air rcn"¹⁰

Task Force X was assigned the mission of capturing the high ground overlooking the ROER one mile north and northeast of GEREONSWELLER. The 3rd Bn 67th AR and a platoon of tank destroyers were detached from Task Force 2 and attached to Task Force X.

Task Force X jumped off at 1100 after a heavy artillery preparation followed by a rolling barrage through the objective. Air strikes on HILLS 94.8 and 98.1, battalion objectives, had been planned but were cancelled due to misty weather.

The 3rd Bn 406th Inf followed so closely behind the barrage that it captured its objective at 1122. The enemy had suffered heavily from the preparatory fires and resistance was very light. The German survivors were quickly captured, and the assault companies dug in, looking down on the ROER. They were not required to hold their positions long, however, as at 1200 elements of the 405th Inf (84th Inf Div) began crossing in front

of the 3rd Bn and by 1500 had completely pinched out the 3rd Bn positions. The battalion then reassembled and occupied new positions north and east of GEREONSWELLER, forming a reserve line for Task Force X.

The 1st Bn 406th Inf crossed the line of departure at 1100, its objective being HILL 98.1. This battalion also crowded the artillery and reached the crest of the objective just as the enemy rose from his holes to fight. Resistance was brief. By noon all hostile troops had been driven from the hill—killed or captured.

In these two attacks Task Force X took about 200 prisoners.

Task Force 1's principal objective was HILL 95, about 800 yards east of GEREONSWELLER. The Germans laid down heavy artillery and mortar fire on the attackers as soon as they jumped off. Although this fire forced Task Force 1 to advance more slowly than Task Force X on its left, it also captured its objective rapidly.

The 1st Bn 41st AIR was detached from Task Force 2, attached to Task Force 1, and ordered to advance 300 yards east of its present positions.

"A damn fool mission as we already had the commanding ground," was the comment of one Task Force 2 officer.

But the battalion pushed out 300 yards as ordered, whereupon it got into a fight that lasted the rest of the day. The 2nd Bn 67th AR supported it with fire. At last, under intense mortar, direct artillery and tank fire, the battalion was pulled back to its original positions.

Task Force X was also having difficulties. When the 1st Bn 406th Inf captured HILL 98.1 the flanks of its left company (Company A) had been left exposed. There was a gap of 500 yards between it and the 3rd Battalion on its left, while an interval of 700 yards separated it from Company B on the right. A platoon of Company B was sent out to link up with Company A, but was unable to close the gap.

The enemy saw his opportunity and made a determined effort to drive Co A off the objective. The first counterattack, made by an infantry company at 1600, was repelled before a penetration could be effected.

A second and larger counterattack was launched at 1745, shortly after dusk. The enemy employed three companies of the 11th Pz Gr Regt, again making his main effort against Company A.

The Germans used trickery in their attempt to close in. Some groups advanced under the protection of white flags, while others came forward with their hands up, in an attitude of surrender, but cleverly concealing hand grenades in their palms.

As a result of this vile conduct, the two platoons of Company A holding the line were almost completely destroyed, and the company was forced to withdraw about 300 yards to the south to a position which afforded some defilade against machine gun and rifle fire.

Tanks of the 3rd Bn 67th AR and one platoon of Co B 702d TD Bn were detached from Task Force 2 to reinforce the infantry. With this assistance, the Germans were driven back and the original

line was restored at 1830. When the attack ended, the strength of Co A had been reduced to 54 men. Co B was a little better off with 80 men remaining.

Company C 406th Inf was brought forward immediately to fill in the gap on the left flank. Capt George C. Armentrout, the company commander, displayed such leadership and heroism that he was recommended for the Distinguished Service Cross.

The 2nd Bn 406th Inf was held in reserve in GEREONSWEILER during the day. When the second counterattack developed, Co G was moved to the right flank of Co A, Co F occupied a position in depth, while Co E was held in reserve.

The 3rd Bn 41st AIR moved up to restore contact with the 1st Bn 41st AIR and by darkness the line was intact along the entire CCB front. Contact was gained with the 405th Inf Regt (under 84th Inf Div) on the left and with CCA on the right.

The 1st Bn 335th Inf (84th Inf Div), attached to 2nd Armd Div, was further attached to CCB. It occupied FLOVERICH preparatory to relief of the 3rd Bn 406th Inf during the night of 21-22 November. ¹¹

CCA Begins to Threaten Merzenhausen

While CCB was wresting more ground from the enemy in the vicinity of GEREONSWEILER, Force B of CCA launched two attacks to capture positions whence an assault could be made on MERZENHAUSEN.

The left element of Force B, consisting of the 2nd Bn 119th Inf (less 2 co's), one platoon of Co I 66th AR and one troop of Fife and Forfars, jumped off from FREIALDENHOVEN at 0900, the

initial objective being the ground 300 to 400 yards west of MERZENHAUSEN. The ground a few hundred yards east of FREIALDENHOVEN begins to slope gently down towards MERZENHAUSEN. Although exposed to observation from the high ground east and northeast of MERZENHAUSEN, for some reason the enemy did not fire on the attackers to any great extent. The intermittent mortar and artillery fire received was inaccurate and there were few casualties.

Company G 119th Inf reached its objective about 1500. Its first platoon, under Lt. Gale C. Kuhn, patrolled into MERZENHAUSEN. When Lt. Kuhn returned and reported the presence of tanks in the town, it was decided to postpone further attack until the next morning.

Company F, on the left of Co G, had meanwhile advanced almost to the MERZENHAUSEN-EDEREN Road, where it occupied positions from which it could cover the road with fire. The enemy was dug in on the high ground opposite Company F, and further movement would probably have drawn heavy fire from him. The company remained in these positions until the evening of 26 November.¹²

The right element of Force B, consisting of the 1st Bn 66th AR (-), Co E 119th Inf, and one platoon of Co C 702d TD Bn was also scheduled to cross the line of departure at 0900, but delays in fueling the tanks postponed the jump-off until 1100.

The attack, launched from a position south of FREIALDENHOVEN, was spearheaded by Co F 66th AR while Co E 119th Inf followed on foot, initially at a distance of 300 yards. The objective was HILL 101.5, about 600 yards south of MERZENHAUSEN. The attackers advanced across potato and beet fields wholly exposed to observation from the high ground east and northeast of MERZENHAUSEN. Our tanks met little resistance until they were on the objective, when they were engaged by six Mark VI tanks from positions in MERZENHAUSEN. Two of the enemy tanks were destroyed and the others driven undercover.

During the exposed advance, the infantrymen suffered a number of casualties from artillery and mortar fire. Efforts to obtain cover by proceeding along the DURBOSLAR-MERZENHAUSEN road proved vain, for the enemy had this avenue of approach zeroed in, and covered it with artillery and mortar fire. Nonetheless, the infantry pushed on doggedly, and reached the objective by nightfall.

Only a minor operation was carried out by Force A on the 21st. It attacked at 1100 to seize HILL 97.6, a few hundred yards east of EDEREN. There was no opposition except light artillery fire.¹³

The night of the 21st found the 2nd Armd Div tied in on a front that ran from south of MERZENHAUSEN through HILL 97.8 (east of EDEREN) to the high ground east and north of GEREONSWEILER (see Appendix VIII-B for map). In less than 60 hours of

determined fighting it had taken three well defended towns, had seized the high ground overlooking the ROER, and had established itself in positions from which it could launch a knock-out blow against MERZENHAUSEN.

NOTES ON CHAPTER V

¹Field Order 35, CCA, 181630A Nov 44.

²After Action Report, 2nd Armored Division, 19 Nov 44.

³Ninth United States Army, Operations IV, Offensive in November, 4th Information and Historical Service, p. 141.

⁴Op Cit., Ninth Army, p. 113.

⁵Ibid., p. 113. After Action Report, CCA, 2nd Armored Division, 20 Nov 44, gives the time as 201000. The 4th Information and Historical Service is careful to point out that the attack of Force B was delayed one hour after the scheduled time; it gives no indication that Force A was similarly delayed.

⁶Personal Interview, Brig. Gen. John H. Collier, former CCA Commander, at Fort Knox, Ky., Nov. 48.

⁷After Action Report, CCA, 2nd Armored Division, 20 Nov 44.

⁸Field Order 59, CCB, 2nd Armored Division, 191730 Nov 44.

⁹Op Cit., Ninth Army, pp 143-148, passim.

¹⁰Field Order 60, CCB, 2nd Armored Division, 202000 Nov 44.

¹¹Op Cit., Ninth Army, pp 157-159

¹²Ibid., p. 161. After Action Report, 2nd Armored Division, 21 Nov 44 states that these elements were halted by severe tank and automatic weapons fire.

¹³Op Cit., Ninth Army, pp 160-161.

CHAPTER VI

THE LAST PHASE

MERZENHAUSEN was the key to the enemy's final defensive positions in the Division zone. So long as he could hold it his lines of communication west of the ROER were secure. But once he lost MERZENHAUSEN and its satellite high ground, BARMEN would be rendered untenable and the west bank of the ROER uncovered. The enemy could be counted on to fight tenaciously for MERZENHAUSEN. In the event, it proved one of the hardest fought actions of the month.

Initial Attack on Merzenhausen

On 22 Nov, while the other units of the Division regrouped and improved their positions, Force B of CCA launched the first attack against MERZENHAUSEN (see Fig. 11). Its mission was to seize the town, block its northeast entrance, and thereafter defend a line running NW and SE, maintaining contact with Force A on the left and with the 29th Inf Div on the right.

MERZENHAUSEN was heavily defended. Fire trenches protected it on the north, west and south. The German infantry was strongly supported by tanks. An orchard immediately west of the town concealed numerous tanks and 80 mm assault guns. To overcome these powerful defenses was extremely difficult.

The attack jumped off at 0900. The 1st Bn 66th AR reinforced attacked from south of the village, while the 2nd Bn 119th Inf

reinforced approached from the west. Of the five British tanks in support, two Crocodiles were included in the force attacking from the south, while one Crocodile and two Churchills supported the attack from the west (see Appendix 2).

At 0900, the two Crocodiles led off the attack from the south, advancing aggressively towards the southwestern edge of MERZENHAUSEN. Employing their flame throwers almost continuously, the Crocodiles had an electrifying effect on the hostile infantry. Almost immediately, at five different places along the south side of the town and in the orchard, white flags began to wave. Then, unluckily, the British vehicles moved into exposed positions on a ridge, and before 1000 all had been destroyed by high velocity fire from the orchard. The white flags disappeared.

The Crocodiles had been leading a platoon of infantry. As soon as the flame throwers were destroyed, the enemy, who only a few minutes before had been so willing to surrender, now blocked the advance of the infantry with grazing machine gun fire. The platoon was forced to a halt, and the Germans then took it under fire with their mortars. Our own mortar and artillery fire on the orchard and on MERZENHAUSEN failed to silence the enemy pieces. Later it was discovered that most of the hostile positions were protected by overhead cover. The platoon had to withdraw to the line of departure.

Company G 119th Inf, part of the force west of the town, was now ordered to fix bayonets and charge the town. The men at

the time were dug in an open ground under direct hostile observation. They had discovered that any attempt to leave their positions immediately brought down fire. So a patrol was sent forward to attempt to find an avenue of approach. It was soon pinned down. Company I 66th AR was then ordered to attack. As it approached the town, two Shermans were knocked out, and two more bogged down. The others, however, opened a gap through the fire trenches, drove the hostile armor from the orchard, and forced it to retreat east of the town. The first and second platoons of Co G 119th Inf then passed through the gap and at 1310 began to attack the outermost buildings of MERZENHAUSEN.

At about 1530 Capt Warne R. Parker of Co E 119th Inf, which had been involved in the abortive attack from the south in the morning, ordered his third platoon forward to help consolidate the town. The leader, Lt William Hall, advanced along the same route he had taken that morning, and this time was able to get through the orchard. Near the cross roads at the edge of town his men were forced to take shelter in a ditch from machine gun and tank fire coming down the main street. He asked Capt Parker to have the second platoon pull up on his right. This was done, and as daylight faded both platoons worked into the first three or four buildings on the south side of town.

While Co E 119th Inf was moving these two platoons into MERZENHAUSEN, the two assault platoons of Co G 119th Inf continued to work on each side of the street. By 1730 they had advanced

about one-third of the way through town when the enemy launched a counterattack down the street, headed by a Mark VI tank. It knocked out one of the tanks of Co I 66th AR which had followed the infantry into town and it completely broke up the attack of Co G 119th Inf. Lacking confidence in their bazookas, and unaware that two platoons of Co E were coming up to strengthen their position, all but a handful of Co G retreated to the vicinity of the company CP, located in a house just west of the crossroads at the western edge of the town. Luckily the Mark VI did not pursue them, as none of the four remaining tanks of Co I were in position to halt the Tiger if it had dared to go further, and no mines had yet been laid.

Capt Chabaud ordered his third platoon forward to establish a line near the CP while with the help of his executive, Lt Faris, he attempted to pull together the rest of his disorganized company.

Lt Colonel William C. Cox, commanding officer of the 2nd Bn 119th Inf learned only late in the evening of the experience of Co G. He immediately came to Co G's CP---in fact, he set up his own headquarters there---and supervised the mining of the street in front of the battalion's line. Colonel Cox spent the rest of the night strengthening the battalion's positions. He had three heavy machine guns set up to cover the minefield, with a tank in support. The other heavy machine guns were placed on the north side of the town.

At 0130, 23 Nov, Capt Thomas F. Carothers, commander of the 2nd Bn 41st AIR, whose unit had just arrived in FREIALDENHOVEN from EDEREN and whose men thought they were due for a rest, was called to the regimental CP by Colonel Hinds. The Colonel described the situation in MERZENHAUSEN as critical and alerted Capt Carothers for movement to MERZENHAUSEN to restore the lines.

The relief battalion arrived in MERZENHAUSEN about 0430. By this time, Col Cox had the situation in hand. Company E 41st AIR moved in on the right edge of town, jointly occupying the first four or five houses with Co E 119th Inf for protection from the enemy artillery. Company D 41st AIR moved into the houses on the left side of the road. These houses were to serve as the line of departure for the following day's attack. Company F 41st AIR remained in reserve and dug in in the field between MERZENHAUSEN and HILL 101.5.

Before daylight Capt Chatfield of Co I 66th AR suggested that Co G 119th Inf resume the attack on the enemy in MERZENHAUSEN. Company G had suffered 34 casualties since jumping off the previous afternoon and its three rifle platoons were down to a total of 38 men. It was obvious to leaders of the company and to Col Cox that the survivors were too shaken to launch a successful attack. The 2nd Bn 41st AIR therefore undertook to attack employing one company on each side of the street. These companies were supported by four tanks and two tank destroyers.

The infantry jumped off from the shattered houses at 0800. The enemy, estimated as a battalion, fanatically defended his positions in town with tanks hidden in houses, dug-in tanks, artillery, mortars and small arms fire.

The fight progressed from house to house. Snipers fired at the advancing Americans and grenades were thrown at them from second story windows. Forty or fifty prisoners were taken as the battalion advanced 100 yards to the middle of MERZENHAUSEN.

One of Co I's tanks was knocked out. Its crew reported that it was hit by an enemy tank concealed behind a sliding door in a large building. The door was opened only to allow the tank to fire and then was promptly closed. At 1500 a bazooka and Molotov cocktail team was organized to set this building on fire. The building went up in flames, but the intensity of the hostile gunfire prevented the team from remaining to observe the results.

At 1500 the battalion was ordered to consolidate the ground it had gained. Only about half of MERZENHAUSEN had been cleared of enemy. (See Fig. 11.)

Elements of CCA spent 24 Nov consolidating their positions in MERZENHAUSEN. The 2nd Bn 41st AIR (less Co F) returned to FREIALDENHOVEN. Company F 41st AIR, which had been in reserve, relieved Co F 119th Inf in the line one half mile northwest of MERZENHAUSEN.¹

Although prisoners reported that the Germans were reinforcing their garrison in the north part of the town no effort

was made to drive them out of MERZENHAUSEN as major changes in the divisional scheme of maneuver were in the process of development.

The Division Regroups

Several days previously XIX Corps had announced a change in the corps left boundary, effective at 1800 24 Nov. This change narrowed the division zone to HILL 97.6 (exclusive) immediately east of EDEREN to a point about 500 yards west of KOSIAR (see Appendix 8-B for map). This in effect relieved the Division of responsibility for the area held by CCB and thus greatly improved its freedom of action in launching the final blow of the operation.

The regrouping incident to the shift in boundary began on 22 November when troops of the XIII Corps were temporarily attached to the 2nd Armd Div for the purpose of relieving elements of CCB in the line. The next day CCB relieved Force A of CCA in the vicinity of EDEREN. Upon its relief Force A was dissolved and Force B was redesignated as the 41st AIR (-) reinforced.

When the new boundary became effective at 1800 24 Nov the XIII Corps elements reverted to their parent units. At the same time the 406th Inf reverted to the 102nd Inf Div.

Upon the completion of these changes, the entire Division front was held by CCA. CCB assembled in the vicinity of OIETWEILER.

Continuation of the Attack

While these changes were in progress CCA was engaged in planning the final drive of the operation. The plan as developed laid down a three-fold mission for CCA: To clear the enemy from MERZENHAUSEN, to seize the town of BARMEN, and to cut the enemy communications west of the ROER in the Division zone.²

The troop list was revised and a new task organization established. The new attack force consisted of the 1st and 2nd Bns 119th Inf, 2nd and 3rd Bns 41st AIR, Rcn Co 66th AR, and Cos I, C and G 66th AR. The 1st Bn 119th Inf was attached to the 2nd Armd Div at 2000 25 Nov by verbal order of the CG XIX Corps, and assembled northwest of FREIALDENHOVEN.

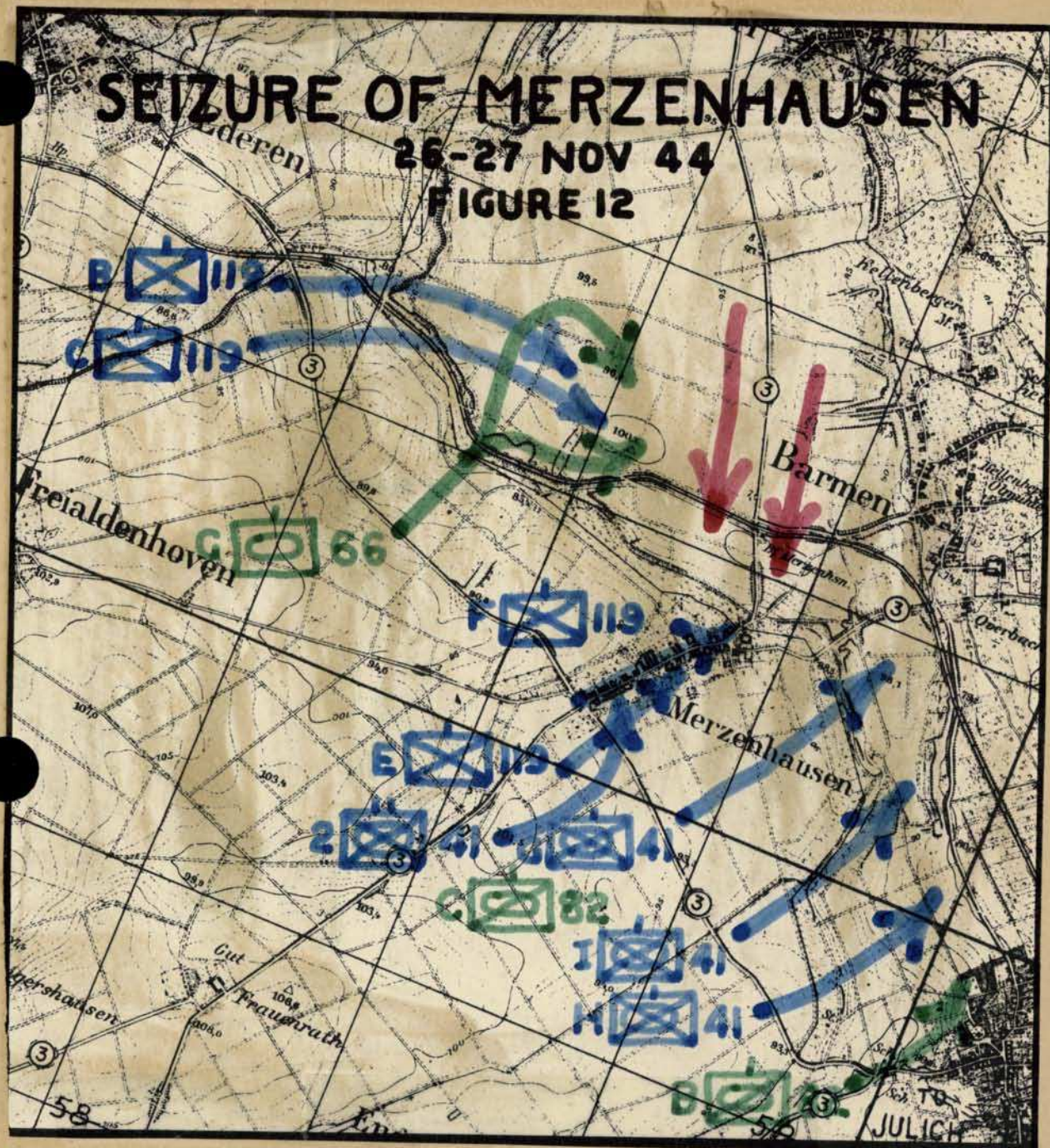
The time of attack was set as 0715 27 Nov. CCA's scheme of maneuver contemplated a three-pronged attack. The 3rd Bn 41st AIR on the right was directed to capture the high ground from HILL 98.1 (east of MERZENHAUSEN) to KOSLAR (exclusive). The 2nd Bn 119th Inf would clean out MERZENHAUSEN and establish road blocks at intersections east of the town. The objective of the 1st Bn 119th Inf was HILL 100.3, northwest of MERZENHAUSEN. The 2nd Bn 41st AIR, initially in reserve, was to pass through the 2nd Bn 119th Inf after MERZENHAUSEN had been cleared and seize objectives west and southwest of BARMEN. (See Fig. 12.)

Col. Collier, commander of CCA, saw that the chief problem of the operation lay in finding a good route of approach for tanks to assist the 1st Bn 119th Inf in taking the high ground

SEIZURE OF MERZENHAUSEN

26-27 NOV 44

FIGURE 12



northwest of MERZENHAUSEN. This high ground was protected both on the south and on the west by a cliff, varying from 10 to 15 feet in height. A second barrier to a tank assault was a small

stream 30 to 40 yards on the near side of the embankment. In addition, an antitank ditch protected the high ground from armored attack from the west, while a series of fire trenches along the top of the cliff provided a formidable defense against either tank or infantry approach from both south and west. Southwest of the stream the ground sloped gently upwards to the outskirts of FREIALDENHOVEN; west of the stream the ground also sloped slightly upwards to high ground just east of EDEREN. Thus the enemy from his positions along the crest of the steep rise had good observation on nearly all the ground over which he might be attacked. Col. Collier explained to Col. Herlong that he had requested the assistance of the infantry because no satisfactory tank approach to the high ground had been found. He emphasized that he would like very much to use tanks in the assault if Col. Herlong could find a defiladed route with reasonably good traction over which the tanks could move.

Col. Herlong planned to move his battalion from its assembly area on the northwest side of FREIALDENHOVEN to the railroad tracks southeast of EDEREN. The Rcn Co of the 66th AR held positions along the EDEREN-MERZENHAUSEN Road. The 1st Bn 119th Inf would pass through these positions with two companies abreast. Company B was given the mission of scaling the cliff and cleaning out the antitank ditch. It would then proceed eastward along the crest, swing around and assault HILL 100.3 from the southeast. Company C was to advance on the right of Co B, while

Co A remained in reserve in the vicinity of FREIALDENHOVEN. Col. Herlong specified that Cos B and C were to attack with two platoons abreast and one platoon in reserve.³

The Attack on 27 November 1944

CCA, occupying the entire 2nd Armd Div front, attacked as planned in three columns at 0715 on 27 November. The attack was preceded by an artillery barrage.

The 3rd Bn 41st AIR attacking on the right, encountered the enemy in force on the ridge east of MERZENHAUSEN and was taken under fire by artillery and mortars. A fierce counterattack pinned the battalion to the rear slopes of the high ground. The infantry jumped into abandoned German trenches and held out in them for the remainder of the day, receiving considerable fire from KOSLAR.

The advance of the 2nd Bn 119th Inf, in the center, was resisted by the enemy with heavy small arms fire within MERZENHAUSEN and with tank fire from the vicinity of BARMEN and the crossroads northwest of MERZENHAUSEN. Company F, advancing in the center of the town, was taken under fire by snipers and bazookas, as well as by artillery and mortars. In order for Co F to advance it became necessary to reduce nearly every house on either side of the main street. The technique employed was simple. While one squad poured fire into the openings of a house, a second squad rushed the occupants. A squad commanded by Staff Sgt. Charles B. Miner

captured approximately 300 prisoners in houses during the day.

The commander and entire staff of the battalion which had been defending MERZENHAUSEN was captured in one of the last houses in the town. By 1700 Co F had cleaned out all the buildings in MERZENHAUSEN.

While Co F was fighting its way from one house to another, Co E was having a hard fight in the back yards of the houses on the south side of the main street. In these yards the enemy had dug a large number of overhead bunkers connected by communication trenches. To assist Co E, two tank destroyers and two M-4's were assigned the mission of moving abreast of the infantry in the open field south of the town. The two M-4's were soon disabled by mines. Two more were brought up, but one of these was promptly knocked out by bazooka fire. Co E was given no further tank support, and the two tank destroyers were too far to the south to be of much value.

It took nearly the entire afternoon to drive the stubborn defenders back 200 yards. Finally, when it was almost dark, the company commander committed his support platoon. Lt. Harold Holycross, the platoon leader, determined to make an old fashioned infantry assault. Firing almost constantly, the attackers swept through the remaining back yards making no effort to take cover but only to move forward as quickly as possible. The men either vaulted over the fences or boosted each other over them. Enemy

Resistance collapsed in the face of this assault. The momentum of the attack continued until it reached the creek on the far side of the town at 1800. There Co E formed a defensive line for the night.

The attack on the left was made by the 1st Bn 119th Inf. Protected by very limited visibility, the battalion made rapid progress after crossing the line of departure. Companies B and C comprised the assault echelon; Co B was on the left with two platoons abreast. An antitank ditch south of HILL 100.3 proved to be unoccupied, but some men were left there by Co C to secure it.

The troops got within 400 yards of the objective, HILL 100.3, before being discovered. The first hostile fire was received by Co B, which was trying to advance up the cliff at the point where the railroad bends northward. Small arms fire from the trenches overlooking the embankment soon became intense, and the assault was pinned down. Approximately 150 yards west of this point, the other attacking troops found an avenue of approach in the form of a narrow northsouth draw. Two platoons of Co C and one platoon of Co B moved into the draw, passing beneath the railroad overpass. The third platoon of Co C was echeloned to the rear to protect the line of communications.

A straight infantry attack was organized in the draw. Artillery and mortar concentrations were placed on the objective as well as on the fire trenches to the east. The artillery

forward observer arranged a rolling barrage to precede the infantry at a distance of 200 yards.

The three platoons in the draw advanced behind the barrage. But it soon became apparent that the hostile small arms fire had not been neutralized. Enemy fire from the trenches 500 yards to the east was deadly. Our artillery was shifted to these trenches, making possible an advance of approximately 50 yards, but at a cost of five killed and 15 wounded. The enemy had dug in so well that the artillery fire had only a minor effect. Col Herlong became convinced that an infantry assault without tanks would prove too costly. He ordered his men back to the draw.

In the meantime, reconnaissance of the railroad tracks that ran between the stream and the embankment revealed that tanks could be routed along these tracks to a point 400 yards west of the draw. At this point the ground, instead of rising abruptly, sloped gently upwards, providing an ideal avenue of approach for armor. Col Herlong promptly advised Col. Collier that he had found a route over which tanks could gain the high ground. Col. Collier immediately ordered Co G 66th AR, commanded by Capt Joseph Roberts, to advance over this route. The infantrymen held their positions during the hour and a half before Capt Roberts' tanks arrived.

The railroad bed proved more satisfactory than most roads as an avenue of approach. As the tanks moved off it and up the

hill, the soaked condition of the ground slowed them down somewhat. But none of the tanks bogged down.

The infantrymen's spirits soared with the tanks' arrival. They followed the tanks at a distance of 100 to 200 yards. The effect on the enemy was marked. His fire slackened, and soon ceased. Forty Germans were captured; an equal number were killed or wounded; and the balance managed to escape.⁴ The tank-infantry assault secured the objective (HILL 100.3) and the trenches to the east simultaneously. The position was immediately organized. Company A's positions on the right flank were occupied after dark and were thoroughly tied in by 0200 28 November.

At 2200 the 2nd Bn 41st AIR, which had been held in reserve throughout the day in FREIALDENHOVEN, was ordered forward to capture HILL 98.1 and to fill the gap between the 3rd Bn 41st AIR on the right and the 2nd Bn 119th Inf in MERZENHAUSEN. The attack was made by Cos D and F following an axis to the left of the MERZENHAUSEN-KOSLAR road. They were assisted on their right by Co G 41st AIR. The objective was taken without difficulty. Company E 41st AIR moved up to fill the gap between the 1st and 2d Bns 119th Inf.

Counterattack Against Merzenhausen

At 2130 the enemy launched a tank-infantry attack from the direction of FLOSSDORF against the positions of the 2nd Bn 119th Inf in the vicinity of MERZENHAUSEN. Most of the counter-attacking force was stopped by artillery fire but two of the tanks

and the infantry on them crossed the railroad tracks and approached the mine field laid by Co F 119th Inf. The bazooka team covering the mine field had been reinforced by two tank destroyers, a BAR man and a rifleman. About 10 to 15 yards from the mine field the tanks stopped and the accompanying infantry attempted to clear the mines. The tank destroyers requested that flares be sent up to enable them to spot the tanks, and Co F's mortar platoon proceeded to comply. The tank destroyers attempted to maneuver into a satisfactory position to fire on the tanks, but actually never got off a round. Meanwhile, six infantrymen had worked into positions from which they could fire on the German foot troops. These men opened up on the Germans, apparently killing or wounding six or eight. The Americans continued their fire for some time, despite the fact that the two German tanks continuously returned the fire. The tanks were never able to locate the exact positions of the Americans, and most of the fire went into the buildings to the rear.

In the darkness the enemy had considerable success in his efforts to remove the mines. Fearing that he would eventually succeed, the defenders called for artillery support despite their extreme proximity to the area to be fired on. Our fire had the desired effect, and the enemy gave up and retreated to the north.

Shortly after this counterattack was repulsed, Co E 119th Inf repelled a patrol of 21 men who had crossed the bridge over the stream in Co E's sector. This patrol was part of a

counterattacking force, and as Co E had not yet mined the BARMEN-MERZENHAUSEN Road, its appearance caused alarm among the men holding Co E's line. The counterattack was supported by heavy artillery, mortar and machine gun fire. Some of Co E's men retreated, but enough stuck to their positions to prevent the entire counterattacking force from breaking through. The patrol which did get across the creek ran into heavy fire. Five of the Germans reached the edge of town but there two of them were captured, and one killed, while the others got away. The two prisoners taken by Co E said that the mission of the counterattacking force was to recapture their battalion commander who had been seized some hours before.

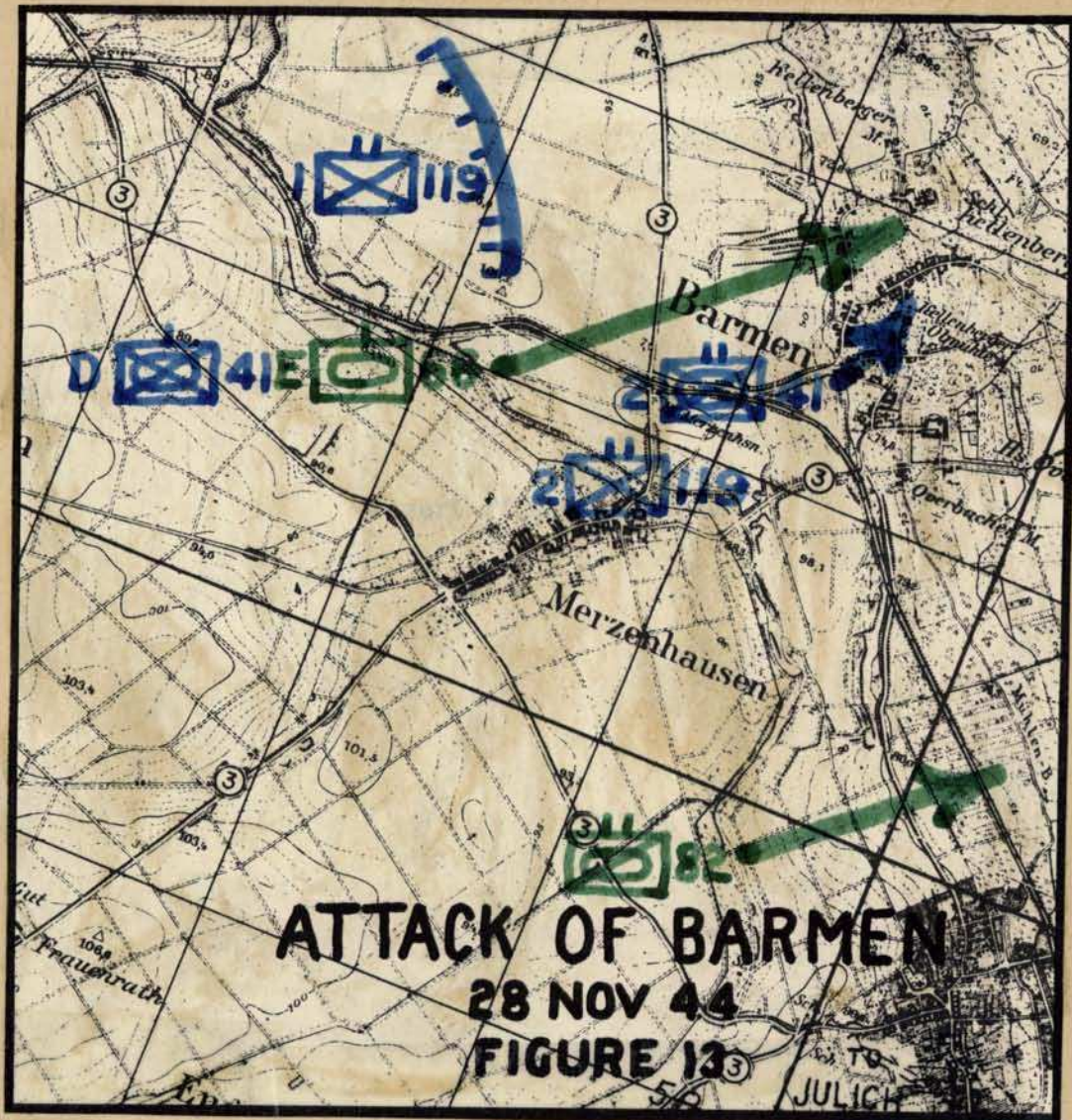
Col. Cox ordered that road blocks be established that night at the crossroads halfway between MERZENHAUSEN and BARMEN. Capt. Parker sent Lt. Holycross forward to establish a road block, and by 0400 he reported that his mission had been accomplished. In the early morning hours Co E also placed a road block on the FLOSSDORF road at its junction with the railroad. Thus by daylight of 28 Nov all avenues of approach to MERZENHAUSEN from the north and east were thoroughly blocked.⁵

CCA's successes on the 27th destroyed the integrity of the final German battle position in the Division zone. The capture of HILL 100.5 gave the Americans the critical terrain which had been a constant menace to their forces in MERZENHAUSEN. MERZENHAUSEN itself, bitterly contested for six days, had been

cleared of the enemy. With the capture of HILL 98.1 and the ridge east of MERZENHAUSEN by the 2nd and 3rd Bns 41st AIR the Americans stood on ground which dominated BARMEN. It was now only a matter of moving forward to capture BARMEN and sweeping the shattered enemy remnants from the Division zone.

Col. Collier, foreseeing that the Germans were on the verge of collapse, made a brief and simple plan for the final day--the 28th. While the bulk of his forces held their present positions, the 2nd Bn 41st AIR reinforced by Co H 66th AR would seize BARMEN. On its right the 82nd Rcn Bn reinforced by a platoon of tanks and a platoon of tank destroyers would cut the BARMEN-KOSLAR Road and the railroad running parallel to it. On the left, he planned to employ a tank-infantry company team to protect the north flank from counterattack from FLOSSDORF and to seize the high ground northwest of BARMEN. (see Fig. 13).

Exactly at noon on the 28th the three columns jumped off. As Colonel Collier had anticipated, the enemy fought only a rear-guard action. Thirty minutes after crossing the line of departure the leading elements of the 2nd Bn 41st AIR were entering BARMEN and by 1500 the town had been completely cleared of the enemy. The 82nd Rcn Bn moved forward with equal rapidity, quickly cut the BARMEN-KOSLAR Road and railroad, and contacted elements of the 29th Inf Div in KOSLAR. The reinforced company attacking on the left received tank fire from the vicinity of FLOSSDORF but gained its objective--the high ground northwest of BARMEN--by 1230.



By late afternoon a firm line had been established along the front from FLOSSDORF (exclusive) through BARMEN to KOSLAR (exclusive). Patrols pushed forward to the ROER, clearing the last of the enemy from the Division zone.⁶

During the past seven days the Division had narrowed its zone, regrouped its forces, and fought a bitter battle

against a skillful and tenacious enemy for MERZENHAUSEN. After six days of intense fighting it drove him from this key position and followed up the victory by capturing BARMEN and severing his communications west of the ROER. The battle had been fought in heavy rain and deep mud by men who were soaking wet and operating under the most wretched of conditions, made worse by constant artillery fire.

Now the battle was over, the ROER had been reached, the 2nd Armored Division had accomplished its mission.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

¹Ninth United States Army, Operations IV, Offensive in November, 4th Information and Historical Service, pp 181-236, passim.

²After Action Report, 2nd Armored Division, 27 Nov 44.

³Op Cit, Ninth Army, pp 236-239, passim.

⁴Ibid, p. 245. After Action Report, 2nd Armored Division, 27 Nov 44, states that the enemy was encircled on the hill, and that the entire force, including a battalion commander and his staff, surrendered at 1500.

⁵Ibid, pp 239-248, passim.

⁶Ibid, p. 248; After Action Report, 2nd Armored Division, 28-30 Nov 44.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND LESSONS

On 16 November 1944 the 2nd Armored Division attacked toward the ROER River as part of the general Allied offensive to close to the RHINE. The division planned a boxer's one-two; a left jab northeast to GEREONSWELLER by CCB followed by CCA's right punch due east to BARMEN. CCB's left jab would secure dominating ground at GEREONSWELLER from which the 102nd Inf Div could launch an attack on LINNICH and the crossings of the ROER. CCA's right punch would protect XIX Corps' left flank in its main effort against JULICH and would also capture a division assembly area at BARMEN preparatory to following XIX Corps' 29th and 30th Inf Divisions across the ROER.

On the 2nd Armored Division's right, the 29th and 30th Infantry Divisions were making XIX Corps' main attack to seize JULICH and secure a bridgehead across the ROER. And on the left the 84th Inf Div was engaged in the major operation of reducing GEILENKIRCHEN. Between these two main efforts the 2nd Armored Division made a limited objective attack—the objectives, GEREONSWELLER and BARMEN, were within the enemy battle position and there was no intention to continue beyond them immediately, for the ROER River precluded such a possibility.

The division had formulated elaborate preparations and plans to assault this strongly defended segment of the SIEGFRIED

LINE. Sand tables representing the zone of attack helped orient everyone down to the tank crews as to exactly what each individual was expected to do. In addition, the division absorbed double its own rifle strength to bring up its tank-infantry ratio. This was necessary because the enemy held the terrain by fortifying the numerous towns and built up areas in the zone.

After an air preparation, greater than the one at ST LO, the 2nd Armored Division attacked in column of combat commands, CCB leading with the mission of capturing GERONSWEILER. TF 1 of CCB on the right was tank heavy in order to cross the open ground to its initial objectives of LOVERICH and PUFFENDORF, while TF X consisted of infantry supported by tanks to seize and clear the village of IMMENDORF. In the center TF 2, a balanced force drove at LOVERICH and APWEILER. The tanks of TF 1 disregarded the mine fields to dash onto their objectives. Most of the tanks knocked out by mines were repaired and returned within 24 hours. TF 2's infantry followed their tanks at 200 yards to avoid artillery fire directed at the tanks. After carefully passing through the front line riflemen's fox holes, the tanks encircled FLOVERICH while the infantry pushed straight in, capturing many prisoners. Meanwhile IMMENDORF fell to TF X, but APWEILER held out against TF 2 with a resistance that foreshadowed the dogged defense which the enemy was to continue to employ back to the ROER.

The following day, 17 Nov, the 9th Panzer Division counter-attacked from GERONSWELLER with 10th Pz Gren Regt at IMMENDORF and 11th Pz Gren Regt at PUFFENDORF. Despite the major US attacks against GEILENKIRCHEN on the north and JULICH on the south, the German command hurled the 9th Pz Div, the bulk of its armored reserve, against the 2nd Armored Division forcing it to the defensive for two days. CCA committed Force A to seize EDEREN but it merely became involved in the counterattack on CCB at PUFFENDORF.

On the 18th CCB occupied APWEILER and reorganized after the counterattack. The next day CCA sent Force B through LUTTERICH to take FREIALDENHOVEN, which however held out until the 20th. On the 20th CCB's three task forces seized their objective (GERONSWELLER) in a coordinated attack; and CCA's Force A and Force B moved into EDEREN and FREIALDENHOVEN respectively. The following day, the 21st, CCB completed its mission by securing the hill north of GERONSWELLER dominating LINNICH on the ROER River. It remained only for CCB to hold the ground until the 24th when XIII Corps would take over the sector and pass the 102nd Inf Div through.

Resistance to CCA at MERZENHAUSEN was especially bitter. Force B reached the outskirts of the town 22 Nov, but not until the 27th was it able to launch the final blow of the campaign and capture MERZENHAUSEN. By nightfall the town and its satellite

high ground overlooking BARMEN had fallen to CCA. On the next day, the 28th, CCA took BARMEN cutting the enemy's last communications west of the ROER.

In thirteen days the division had made a successful limited objective attack from a line of departure near BEGGEN-DORF and had penetrated seven miles through a heavily fortified zone to reach the ROER near BARMEN. This entire advance was made under adverse conditions of terrain and weather. Despite cold, wet weather, fire-swept, muddy terrain and well organized enemy defenses the 2nd Armored Division took its objectives and successfully defended them against counterattacks.

This operation of the 2nd Armored Division presents the student with a number of valuable lessons. Armored divisions of the future must expect to have severe limited objective attacks against fortified positions included in their missions as well as the more spectacular—and lighter—exploitation type of actions. In their training they must not allow the more appealing role of the exploiting force to obscure the necessity to be prepared for grim limited objective attacks against the enemy's main fortified position. Since many of the lessons of this operation are evident from the narrative, only the more important conclusions are discussed below.

Probably the outstanding principle to be gleaned from this operation is that armor draws armor. General d. Pz. Tr. Heinrich von Luettwitz, commander of the XLVII Panzer Corps,

stated that upon the commitment of the 2nd Armored Division the German Fifth Army commander moved the 9th Panzer Division and the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division, the bulk of his reserve armor, to meet this thrust.¹ Later it was necessary to reinforce them with elements of the 10th SS Panzer Division. Yet on both flanks of the 2nd Armored Division major operations were in progress-- the 84th Infantry Division against GEILENKIRCHEN on the north and the 29th Infantry Division against JULICH on the south. The presence of the 2nd Armored Division drew in armor which otherwise could have been employed against the 29th and 84th Divisions which were making these main efforts. What would have happened if the 9th Panzer Division and the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division had been thrown against these infantry divisions?

An armored division can successfully attack a fortified zone with economy of personnel, although this type of offensive does not fully exploit the characteristics of the tank. The decision to employ armor in such a situation must be the result of weighing possible equipment losses against expected personnel casualties.

The organic infantry-tank ratio of an armored division is insufficient for an attack against a strongly fortified zone comparable to the defenses confronting the 2nd Armored Division during this operation. The ratio was one infantry regiment to two tank regiments. Because this was too small, the Corps

commander attached additional infantry to the division, increasing the balance to the equivalent of three infantry regiments to two tank regiments. In effect, this tripled the division's infantry strength. Even with the additional infantry, elements of the 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion fought in the line as riflemen before the operation was completed. Actually, CCA used infantry supported by tanks in its attacks on MERZENHAUSEN and BARMEN. The present trend in armored division organization points to a more balanced ratio.

Armored divisions are capable of absorbing a large number of attached units, employing them tactically with success and supporting them logistically without undue difficulty. For this action 2nd Armored Division had the 406th Infantry Regiment of the 102nd Infantry Division, two battalions of the 119th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Infantry Division, the 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, Squadron B, Fife and Forefar Yeomanry (Br), the 195th AAA Battalion, and five artillery battalions attached. These attachments doubled the size of the division and show the flexibility of an armored division in absorbing and employing these units. The demonstrated ability of the staff to administer and service such large scale attachments is especially noteworthy.

The effectiveness of combined arms teams depends on organizing them with due consideration to the composition and disposition of enemy defenses. To accomplish his mission effectively, a commander must carefully analyze the terrain to employ the

proper type team on the ground. General White demonstrated the flexibility which can be obtained by the proper organization of tank-infantry teams based upon the mission and terrain. Task Force 1, Colonel Disney's tank heavy team, was employed across open ground which afforded maneuver room for tanks. This team quickly accomplished its mission (LOVERICH) with very few personnel casualties. Had the assault been made by infantry or by an infantry heavy team no doubt the casualties would have been high. Task Force X, on the north, demonstrated how an infantry heavy team can successfully attack a built-up area. General White judiciously organized and employed his combat command so as to sustain the minimum number of casualties in both tanks and infantry, and yet accomplish his mission in the shortest possible time.

The suspected presence of mine fields must not deter tanks from advancing. Taking counsel of one's fear is fatal to success. Many tanks were disabled, but enough got through to insure victory. This was especially true of CCB's tank assaults on LOVERICH, FLOVERICH, and PUFFENDORF where mine fields protected all avenues of approach for armor. The tanks quickly pushed through the mines and, although they suffered some casualties, captured the assigned objectives. Most tanks which were blown up by mines had sustained only track and suspension damage, which could be easily repaired.

The effectiveness of artillery fire in separating dismounted infantry from their tanks poses a problem in the employment of tank-infantry teams. The 2nd Armored Division met this problem with successful results by having the riflemen follow the tanks at about 200 yards. On the other hand, time and again the German infantry was destroyed by shells directed at their tanks, and the tanks then knocked out by close range AT weapons or by mines which the infantry should have gapped for them. Infantry working with tanks must be in position to assist the tanks at the crucial moment. Therefore it is vital to make provision for the infantry to be in the right spot at the right time.

Flame throwing tanks spread panic among the enemy. General von Luettwitz stated, "The American flame throwing tanks-- used in this battle for the first time--had a strong effect on the morale of our troops."² At MERZENHAUSEN on 22 November, the enemy, terrified by the Fife and Forfar Yeomanry flame throwers, displayed white flags. Their demoralization and the flags both disappeared when they saw the last flamers knocked out.

Piecemeal commitment of armor in a counterattack invites disaster. The Germans learned this forcefully when the 9th Panzer Division made simultaneous counterattacks on PUFFENDORF and IMMENDORF. Each thrust was made by a Panzer Grenadier Regiment. Since the direction of the two attacks made mutual support impossible, both efforts were badly mauled. Had the division been used in mass against either IMMENDORF or PUFFENDORF the story might have been different.

The reconnaissance battalion must be versatile. The initial mission for the 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion of the 2nd Armored Division was to "establish contact with 29th Division and/or close possible gaps between combat commands and/or pass through CCB and reconnoiter northeast and/or attach one reconnaissance company to each combat command." (See Appendix VI for FO 3⁴). By the time the operation was over the unit was fighting in the line as infantry.

In such a study as this it is easy to lose sight of the absolutely vital part played by those outstanding individuals on whose heroism such a battle depends. The actions of these men are frequently unrecognized, although we have mentioned Lt. Lee's preventing panic when his tanks withdrew and Lt. Crane rallying his company before GERTONSWILFER. It is by the aggressiveness of such individuals and others like them, unknown forever, that a unit inches forward. Of all the lessons to be learned from such a study as this, it is universally true that no force regardless of size can win battles without such heroes.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VII

¹Statement, Gen. d. Pz. Tr. Heinrich Freiherr von Luettwitz, comdr. XLVII Pz Corps in the Rhineland, Allendorf, 11 June 47. (Translated by Christensen). pp 3-5.

²Ibid., p. 36.



APPENDICES

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APPENDIX I

Order of Battle

- A. Chart, Allied Armies
- B. Organization Chart, 2nd Arm'd Division
- C. Background, 2nd Arm'd Division
- D. Composition and Daily Dispositions of
Major Units
- E. Chart, German Order of Battle

[illegible]

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APPENDIX I-A
ORDER OF BATTLE

ALLIED ARMIES

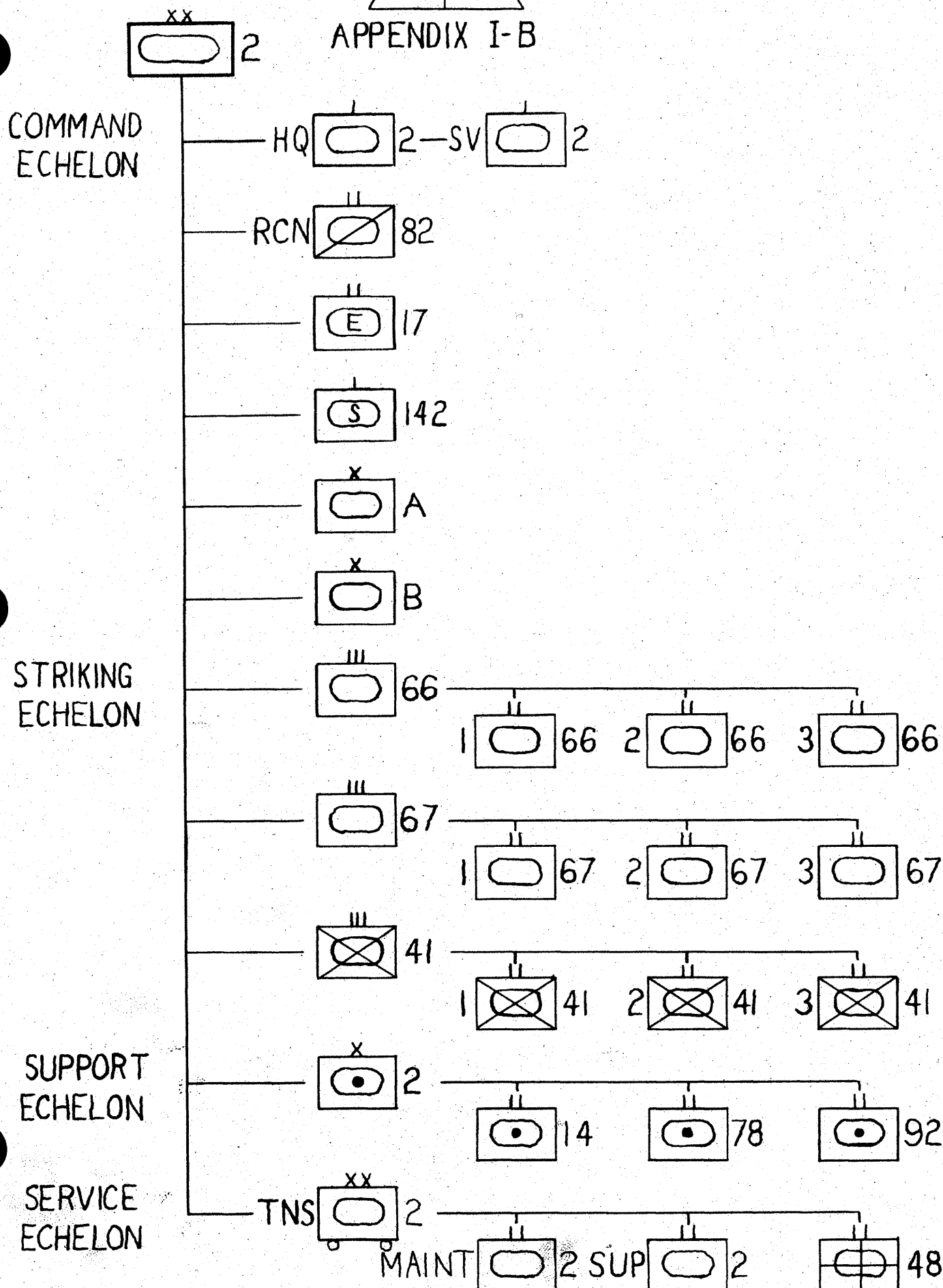
ROER RIVER OFFENSIVE

241200 NOVEMBER 1944

SOURCE: SITUATION MAP,
TWELFTH ARMY GROUP

ORGANIZATION CHART

APPENDIX I-B



APPENDIX I-C

"HELL ON WHEELS"

ORGANIZATION AND COMBAT ACTION TO THE WEST WALL

The 2nd Armored Division, one of the two original Armored Divisions in the United States Army, was organized on July 15, 1940 at FORT BENNING, GEORGIA. Its tank units traced their ancestry back to the tank battalions of the AEF in World War I. In the years of peace that followed they took part in the evolution of American tank organization. As the 66th Infantry (Light Tanks) and the 67th Infantry (Medium Tanks) they were part of a Provisional Tank Brigade in 1939.

When the 2nd Armored Division was activated these regiments were redesignated as Armored Regiments and combined with the 68th Armored Regiment (Light) formed the 2nd Armored Brigade or Division Assault Echelon under the command of General (then Brigadier General) George S. Patton, Jr.

Led by General Patton the division became the first to participate in large scale army maneuvers during 1941 in TENNESSEE, LOUISIANA and in the CAROLINAS. During these maneuvers General Patton's armored doctrine of "Grab 'em by the nose and kick 'em in the pants" paid off in spectacular end runs and powerful tank attacks which earned the 2nd Armored Division its nickname—"Hell on Wheels". A name which became a reality in battle only one year later—known and feared by the enemy from AFRICA to BERLIN.

Organization and Composition

In January 1942, based on world trends in armored action, it was decided to reorganize the division into two combat commands, under control of the Division Commander, but capable of operating independently. The Armored Regiments of the Striking Echelon were reduced to two—the 66th and the 67th. These consisted of a Regimental Headquarters and a Headquarters Company, a Reconnaissance Company, a Maintenance Company, a Service Company and three tank

battalions (see Fig. 1, p. 15). The first of these was a light battalion, while the second and third were medium. Each battalion had a headquarters and a headquarters company and three tank companies of 17 tanks each divided into three platoons of five tanks each. In the battalion headquarters company were also a reconnaissance platoon, mortar platoon and assault gun platoon.

The other element of the striking force, the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, was also reorganized but to a lesser extent. It consisted of a regimental headquarters and a headquarters company, a service company and three armored infantry battalions (see Fig. 1, p. 15). Each battalion had a headquarters company similar to those of the tank battalions and three rifle companies of three platoons each carried in half-tracks.

In the 2nd Armored Division Artillery, the main stay of the Support Echelon a regiment--the 14th, and a battalion--the 78th, were reorganized into three identical 105mm Howitzer battalions (Self Propelled) of three firing batteries of six guns each under Division Artillery Headquarters. (See Appendix I-B.)

Minor changes took place in the elements of the Service Echelon composed of the Supply, Maintenance and Medical Battalions.

With this organization the 2nd Armored Division participated in its first combat action in the African Landings in MOROCCO during November 1942 and the conquest of SICILY in July 1943. Initially the 1st and 3rd Armored Divisions were similarly organized as Heavy Armored Divisions. The First engaged the enemy in AFRICA and ITALY but was reorganized into a Light division in July 1944 while the Third fought across FRANCE and GERMANY as a Heavy division. All other American Armored Divisions were of the Light type composed of separate battalions instead of regiments.

In relative tank strength the Heavy division had six light tank companies and twelve medium tank companies organized into two light and four medium battalions as compared to three light

tank companies and nine medium tank companies in the three standard tank battalions of the Light Division. This gave the heavier armored division thirty-three percent more tanks.

Other advantages of the Heavy armored division were the greater staff strength and concentrated logistical support given by the regimental organization. Each regiment had a regimental staff available for operations, while the maintenance company provided greater repair facilities and the service company more logistical support than the similar platoons in the separate tank battalions of the light divisions.

During the intensive training in ENGLAND, which followed the 2nd Armored Division's transfer from the Mediterranean to the European Theater of Operations, further changes in the composition but not the organization of the Division took place. It was decided to follow a "middle of the road" policy with the idea of strengthening the composition of armored task forces. The Regimental organizations were retained but tank battalions were constituted of one light tank company and two medium tank companies. This was accomplished by the light battalions releasing two of their companies and receiving two medium companies in return. The medium battalions each traded one of their companies for a light tank company. This produced better balanced tank battalions but caused havoc in the identification of the individual companies. For, in reconstituting the battalions, the lettering of the companies was not changed but companies were physically transferred between battalions in accordance with the wishes of the regimental and battalion commanders. As an example, Company B, in the 67th Armored Regiment, became the light tank company of the Second Battalion while in the 66th Armored Regiment, Company B was the light company of the Third Battalion. Similar confusion of designation existed among the medium tank companies with Company H

being in the First Battalion of the 67th and Company F being in the First Battalion of the 66th Armored Regiment.

Although the reconstituted tank battalions were each short one medium tank company, they represented six battalions complete with staff and headquarters company in comparison to only three tank battalions in the lighter divisions. This allowed the formation of a greater number of armored task forces--packing more armored power in the punch of the heavier divisions--enabling them to continue in sustained attack for longer periods of time. Figure 1, page 15, shows a detailed graphic representation of the companies composing the battalions of both armored regiments and the armored infantry regiment.

In Action--Africa to Germany

The "Hell on Wheels" Armored Division received its baptism of fire during the Allied Invasion of FRENCH NORTHWEST AFRICA, when it participated in amphibious landings, striking at three points along the coast of MOROCCO on 8 November 1942.

Armored Battalion Landing teams, specially constituted task forces composed of two light tank companies, an Armored Infantry company and an Armored Field Artillery battery, supported the assaulting Infantry at each of the three invasion sites--PORT LYAUTEY, FEDELA (north of CASABLANCA) and SAFI.

The landing force at SAFI was commanded by Major General Ernest N. Harmon, CG of the Second Armored Division, and was supported by CCB, the floating reserve of the Western Task Force.

In the months that followed, the Division was joined by the remainder of its elements in the CORK Forest near RABAT with the mission of holding MOROCCO against a Nazi threat through SPAIN. During this time hundreds of officers, men and vehicles were sent to TUNISIA as replacements for the units fighting there.

During July 1943 the 2nd Armored Division took part in the rapid conquest of SICILY by General Patton's Seventh United States Army. Both combat commands were employed in support of assaulting Infantry elements. CCA was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division at LICATA while CCB landed with the 1st Infantry Division at GELA. Later both combat commands of the Division joined at AGRIGENTO in a lightning dash to cut the island in two and seize the port of PALERMO in a pincer by a double envelopment. During November the Division was transferred to ENGLAND where an intensive training program preparatory to the invasion of "Fortress Europe" was undertaken.

The first "Hell-on-Wheels" elements landed in FRANCE on 8 June 1944 (D+2) over OMAHA Beach and were immediately committed in support of the 29th Infantry Division. On 12 June CCA was ordered to CARENTAN to the relief of the 101st Airborne Division. These two units then launched a combined attack against the enemy to enlarge the beach head. July 26 was the start of the famous ST. LO Breakthrough which spilled American armored might across the plains of northern FRANCE. Starting at CANISY CCA pushed southwest to TESSY-SUR-VIRE while CCB reached CERENCES. Ferocious fighting and terrible devastation marked these advances.

On 2 August CCB led an end run southward through BRECEY and ST. HILAIRE turning eastward through LE TEILLEUL into BARENTON while CCA smashed southeast from VIRE to GER to close the vice-like jaws of this double envelopment on the enemy. The weeklong battle that raged helped smash the German drive on AVRANCHES and in the destruction of the fleeing Seventh and Fifteenth Armies heading east toward the FALAISE GAP.

Continuing in pursuit of the retreating Nazi Legions the Division crossed the SEINE on 28-29 August and then swept with six

columns abreast northeast to BELGUIM. Second Armored units were the first Allied troops to cross the Belgian border by advancing 60 miles in 36 hours.

The pursuit slowed down for several days along the ALBERT Canal by a violent defense put up by the Germans. CCB cleaned out enemy forces east of the MEUSE River and the southern tip of HOLLAND. CCA attacked northeast through MAASTRICHT and liberated many Dutch towns.

The onslaught of the "Hell-on-Wheels" division finally halted on German soil by order of higher headquarters on 20 September near GEILENKIRCHEN. Preparations for the assault of the SIEGFRIED Line continued during the remainder of September. The attack started by CCB armor pouring across the WURM River on 3 October followed two days later by the commitment of CCA. A slow systematic reduction of the pill boxes and fortifications created a penetration in Hitler's impregnable "West Wall". On 6 October the 3rd Battalion, 67th Armored Regiment conducted one of the most spectacular tank operations of the entire war while attacking WAURICHEN from UBACH. After several futile assaults by its slow moving medium tanks the battalion launched its swift but thin-skinned light tanks which penetrated the enemy defenses and whose successes were capitalized by the medium tanks.

During the ensuing six weeks the Division held its defensive sector east of the WURM River. While this area was comparatively quiet the personnel of the units were busy behind their lines planning and rehearsing the tactics to breach the German fortified belt.

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4. After Action Report--66th Armored Regiment--November 1944.
5. After Action Report--67th Armored Regiment--November 1944.
6. After Action Report--41st Armored Infantry Regiment--November 1944.

APPENDIX I-D

COMPOSITION AND DAILY DISPOSITIONS OF MAJOR UNITS

16 November 1944

2d Armd Div (CG: Maj Gen E. N. Harmon). Adv CP: PALENBERG (K854600)
GERMANY*

Main CP: Vic WAUBACH (K811585)

Combat Command A (CG: Col J. H. Collier).

Force A (CO: Col Ira P. Swift)

66th AR (-) reinf

66th AR (less 1st & 3d Bns, Rcn, Sv and Maint Cos)

2d Bn 41st AIR

1 Plat Co A 17th Engr Bn

Co A 702d TD Bn (SP)(less 1 plat)

Force B (CO: Col Sydney R. Hinds)

41st AIR (-) reinf

Hq & Hq Co, 41st AIR

1st Bn 66th AR

2d Bn 119th Inf

2 Plats Co C 702d TD Bn (SP)

Co D 17th Armd Engr Bn

2 Trps, Sq B, 1st F&F Yeomanry (Br.)

CCA Control

Hq CCA

3d Bn 406th Inf

Rcn Co 66th AR

Artillery:

14th Armd FA Bn

65th Armd FA Bn

Btry D 195th AAA AW Bn (SP)

Co A 17th Armd Engr Bn (less 2 Plats)

Co C 702d TD Bn (SP) (less 2 Plats)

Maint Co 66th AR

Co A 48th Armd Med Bn

CCA held Div front from WAURICHEN (excl) to BEGGENDORF employing 3d Bn 406th Inf until the assault forces of CCB passed through the line.

Combat Command B (CG: Brig Gen I.D. White). CP: PALENBERG (855599)

T/F 1 (CO: Col Paul A. Disney)

Hq 67th AR

67th AR (less 3d Bn, Co H, Rcn and Maint Cos)

3d Bn 41st AIR (w/3 flamethrower crews, Co B 17th Armd Engr Bn atchd)

Co B 17th Armd Engr Bn (less 1 plat)

1 Plat Co B 702d TD Bn (SP) (direct support)

1 IPW team

T/F 1 crossed line of departure along east edge of BEGGENDORF at 1100A; captured LOVERICH by 1335A; captured PUFFENDORF about 1530A; reached high ground north of PUFFENDORF (vic K930615) and consolidated by 1700A. Fwd and rear CPs 67th AR moved to BEGGENDORF.

T/F 2 (CO: Lt Col Harry L. Hillyard)
 3d Bn 67th AR (less 1 med tank co)
 1st Bn 41st AIR (w/3 flamethrower crews, Co C 17th Armd
 Engr Bn attached)
 1 plat Co B 702d TD Bn (SP) (direct support)
 1 plat Co B 17th Armd Engr Bn

T/F 2 attacked at 1245A, reached woods on west edge of FLOVERICH at 1300A, and cleared FLOVERICH by 1435A; pivoted northeast towards its second objective, across the IMMENDORF-PUFFENDORF highway; reached positions about 1000 yds beyond FLOVERICH at 1530A, where leading elements were halted just northeast of highway by heavy AT fire from vic of APWEILER; positions consolidated.

T/F X (CO: Lt Col James C. Reeves)
 2d Bn 406th Inf
 Co H 67th AR
 1 plat Co C 17th Armd Engr Bn
 1 plat Co B 702d TD Bn (SP) (direct support)

T/F X attacked

T/F X attacked at 1245A from vic of WAURICHEN; captured IMMENDORF at 1350A.

82d Rcn Bn (CO: Lt Col Wheeler G. MERRIAM) CP: BRUNSSUM, HOLLAND.
 82d Rcn Bn (-): BRUNSSUM, HOLLAND.
 Co A: HEERLERHEIDE, HOLLAND.
 Co B: HEERLERHEIDE, HOLLAND.
 Co C: RUMPEN, HOLLAND.

17 November 1944

2d Armd Div

Adv CP moved to SE of UBACH; Main CP moved to PALENBERG.

Force A, CCA

Moved from west of BEGGENDORF via BEGGENDORF and LOVERICH to PUFFENDORF; attacked at 1100A in direction of EDEREN; unable to advance; consolidated its position on the south and southeast edge of PUFFENDORF.

T/F 1, CCB

Attacked at 0805A towards GEREONSWELLER; enemy counterattacked and drove T/F 1 from high ground north of PUFFENDORF to positions along south edge of PUFFENDORF at 0908A. Defense of PUFFENDORF organized in conjunction with Force A, CCA, on the right (southeast and south).

T/F 2, CCB

No substantial change in positions.

F/F X CCB (CO: Col Bernard F. Hurless)

IMMENDORF. 1st and 3d Bns 406th Inf and Co B 327th Engr C Bn attached to T/F X. Col. Bernard F. Hurless (CO, 406th Inf) assumed command.

18 November 1944

Force B, CCA moved to fwd assembly area SW of BEGGENDORF.

T/F 1, CCB

Supported attack by T/F X, CCB and T/F 2, CCB, on APWEILER commencing at 1400A. Left flank moved up with the attack of T/F 2 to maintain contact about 500 yds northeast of PUFFENDORF. APWEILER was secured at 1825A and positions were consolidated.

T/F 2, CCB

T/F 2 supported attack by T/F X on APWEILER; moved up on right and contacted T/F X tying in with T/F 1. A complete line was organized from 500 yards north of IMMENDORF to APWEILER to PUFFENDORF.

T/F X, CCB

Attacked at 1400A and captured APWEILER at 1515A; organized perimeter defense.

19 November 1944

Force A, CCA

Attacked southeast from PUFFENDORF at 1500A; pushed forward 800 yards; consolidated at antitank ditch southeast of PUFFENDORF, contacting Force B, CCA, across ditch.

Force B, CCB

Moved from fwd assembly area southwest of BEGGENDORF at 1030A, reached objective 13 between antitank ditch and DURBOSLAR-PUFFENDORF Road and consolidated approx 1,000 yards west of FREIALDENHOVEN, contacting Force A, CCA at the railroad crossing on left, and with 115th Inf, 29th Inf Div on right at K955587.

T/F 1, CCB

Contact point between T/F 1, CCB, and left flank of Force A, CCA, established at PUFFENDORF.

T/F 2, CCB

No change in positions. Co G, 66th Armd Regt was detached from CCR and attached to CCB, and placed under control of T/F 2.

T/F X, CCB

APWEILER. Patrolled during night to vicinity of GEREONSWEILER. Two troops, Sq B 1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry (Br) attached to T/F X.

82d Rcn Bn

82d Rcn Bn (-Co B and Co C) moved from BRUNSSUM, Holland to vicinity of UBACH.

20 November 1944

Force A, CCA

Attacked north and northeast at 1000A; captured EDEREN at 1730A, consolidated and established contact with CCB on left in vicinity of K948625.

Force B, CCA

Reinforced by Co I, 66AR (detached from Force A, CCA)

Attacked at 1000A, advancing east to a north-south line through FREIALDENHOVEN and the high ground southeast thereof, consolidated by 1700A contacting 3d Bn 116th Inf, 29th Div, vicinity of UNGER-SHAUSEN.

T/F 1, CCB

Attacked at 1100A as right prong of three-pronged attack by CCB, captured Hill 102.6 at 1130A, between PUFFENDORF and GEREONSWELLER (Force A, CCA, attacked on right, and T/F 2 and T/F X, CCB attacked on left of T/F 1); continued attack and entered southeast edge of GEREONSWELLER at 1200A as elements of T/F 2 entered from the west; secured GEREONSWELLER by 1405A; and secured high ground 1000 yds southeast of town by 1500A. Dispositions for night were as follows:

Left Force, T/F 1, held line between K945635 and K946632. Contact with T/F 2, CCB, on left.

Right Force, T/F 1, held line between K946632 and K945625. Contact with Force A, CCA on right.

T/F 1 Reserve at east edge of GEREONSWELLER.

Holding Force, T/F 1, on Hill 102.6.

T/F 2, CCB

T/F 2 was middle prong of three pronged attack launched by CCB at 1100A on GEREONSWELLER; T/F X on left; T/F 1 on right. T/F 2 and T/F 1 began moving through GEREONSWELLER at 1200A; and completed occupation of town at 1405A. Elements of T/F 2 continued to advance northeast and established a road block 700 yards from the town on the main GEREONSWELLER-LINNICH Road.

T/F X, CCB

Attacked as left prong of CCB, with T/F 1 and T/F A, CCB, secured GEREONSWELLER at 1405A.

T/F G, CCB (CO: Major Charles J. Girard)

Organized by direction of CG, 2d Armd Div, and placed under control of CCB; consisted of Rcn Co 67th AR, Co A 82d Rcn Bn; and plato of engineers and tank destroyers; occupied line IMMENDORF-APWEILER, maintaining contact with 84th Inf Div on left.

20 November 1944 (Cont'd)

82d Rcn Bn

Co A attached to CCB Force G, acting dismounted filled gap between IMMENDORF and APWEILER in conjunction with Rcn Co, 67th AR.

Co B moved from HEERLERHEIDE, HOLLAND to UBACH; later to SETTERICH; attached to Force B, CCA.

Co C moved from BRUNSSUM, HOLLAND to southeast of UBACH, placed in Division Reserve.

21 November 1944

Force A, CCA

Attacked at 0900A, occupied high ground east of EDEREN (Hill 97.6) and as of 2000A held a line from K947625--EDEREN--Hill 97.6 K966615 contacted CCB on left, Force B, CCA on right.

Force B, CCA

2d Bn 119th Inf (-), one platoon Co I 66th AR and one troop, F&F Yeomanry attacked at 0900A and secured high ground south and west of MERZENHAUSEN, establishing contact with Force A, CCA, on left. 1st Bn 66th AR one company of 2d Bn 119th Inf and one platoon Co C, 702d T/D Bn attacked east from position south of FREIALDENHOVEN at 1100A, reached objective between FRAUNRATH and MERZENHAUSEN. (See 82d Rcn Bn below.)

T/F 1, CCB

1st Bn 41st AIR relieved from T/F 2, CCB and attached to T/F 1 at 0700A. T/F 1 took over T/F 2 sector (K945635 to K943638). T/F 1 sector now ran from K943638 thru K945635 to K945625; contact with T/F X, CCB on left and with Force A, CCA on right. Attacked at 1100A and captured high ground about 600-700 yards east of GERHONSWEILER by 1400A. The line now ran from K946645 thru K947635 to K945625, held by 1st Bn 41st AIR (supported by 2d Bn 67th Armd Regt) and 3d Bn 41st AIR (supported by T/D Plat) with 1st Bn 67th AR in reserve at south edge of GERHONSWEILER. Contacted CCA on right. H Co rejoined.

T/F 2, CCB

Contact with 1st Bn 405th Inf, 84th Div on left.

T/F X, CCB

Attacked at 1000A, objective high ground one mile north of GERHONSWEILER at K928654; occupied objective at 1330A. Repulsed enemy counterattack at 1745A vicinity K934658, reinforced by 3d Bn 67th AR and one platoon, 702d TD Bn, from T/F 2.

T/F G, CCB

Patrolled from IMMENDORF to GERHONSWEILER.

82d Rcn Bn

1st Platoon, Co B, attached to Force B, CCA, outposted gap between 119th Inf and 116th Inf at K983596.

22 November 1944

Force A, CCA

Co I, 66th AR reverted to Force B, CCA. Maintained defensive line east of EDEREN, CCB on left and Force B, CCA on right.

Force B, CCA

Attacked MERZENHAUSEN at 0900A; reached town at 1610A. During night of 22-23 Nov the enemy counterattacked and drove elements of Force B to the southwest edge of MERZENHAUSEN. Contact with Force A, CCA on left.

T/F 1, CCB

1st Bn 41st AIR attached from T/F 2.

T/F 2, CCB

3d Bn 67th Armd Regt and platoon of TD's detached from T/F 2 and attached to T/F X, CCB. 1st Bn 41st AIR detached from T/F 2 and attached to T/F 1.

T/F X, CCB

3d Bn 67th Armd Regt and platoon of TD's attached from T/F 2. 1st and 3d Bns 335th Inf relieved 1st and 3d Bns 406th Inf. 3d Bn 406th Inf moved to vicinity EDEREN preparatory to relieving 2d Bn 41st AIR of Force A, CCA. 1st Bn 406th Inf prepared to relieve 1st and 3d Bns 41st AIR of T/F 1, CCB.

T/F G, CCB

Disbanded.

82d Rcn Bn

Co A relieved from attachment to CCB, and moved from IMMENDORF to ALSDORF. Co B (1st and 2d Plats) outposted gap between 119th Inf and 116th Inf. Co C moved from vicinity southeast of UBACH to vicinity north of ALSDORF. Co D moved from east of UBACH to ALSDORF.

23 November 1944

Force A, CCA

Co F 41st AIR detached at 0900A. Co C, 702d TD Bn (-2 plats) detached at 1200A. 2d Bn 66th Armd Regt, Co A 702d TD Bn (-1 plat) and Co A 17th Engr Bn (-1 plat) detached at 1200A; attached CCB, 3d Bn 406th Inf detached at 1400A. Force A dissolved at 1400A.

Force B, CCA

Limited attack at 0800A to clear MERZENHAUSEN; cleared one-half of town. Co F, 41st AIR attached at 0900A. Co C 702d TD Bn (-2 plats) attached at 1200A. Force B redesignated 41st AIR (-) Reinf at 1400A. Co C 82d Rcn Bn attached 41st AIR (-) at 1723A. Co H 66th AR attached 41st AIR (-) at 2020A.

23 November 1944 (Cont'd)

T/F 1, CCB

T/F 1 relieved from sector control by 406th Inf (-) at 2342A. 1st Bn 67th AR moved to assembly area vicinity OIDTWEILER at 1600A in sector support; 2nd Bn 67th AR, Co B 17th Engr Bn (-) and platoon, Co B, 702d TD Bn remained in support of 406th Inf (-). 3d Bn 67th AR reverted to 67th AR control from T/F X at 1700A, assembled vicinity OIDTWEILER. 1st and 2d Bns 41st AIR relieved from attachment to 67th Armd Regt, assembled at UBACH and ALSDORF, respectively.

82d Rcn Bn (-)

1st Platoon, Co B, relieved by 3d Platoon, Co B, on outpost.

24 November 1944

2d Armd Div

Div Z narrowed to include front line positions east of EDEREN and FREIALDENHOVEN from Hill 97.6 (exclusive) to MERZENHAUSEN to K995594 (west of KOSLAR). Control of former div sector north and northwest of Hill 97.6 (inclusive) and in vicinity of GEREONSWEILER turned over to 102d Inf Div. Boundaries between 2d Armd Div and 102d Inf Div and between XIX Corps and XIII Corps were adjusted accordingly. 406th RCT (771st Tank Bn attached) reverted to 102d Inf Div. 335th RCT (CO A 814th TD Bn and 40th Tk Bn attached) detached from 2d Armd Div and attached to 102d Inf Div. Slight adjustments were made in right boundary between 2d Armd Div and 29th Inf Div. 83d Armd FA Bn relieved from attachment to 2d Armd Div and attached to XIII Corps at 1800A. See T/F 1 changes below. CCA now held the entire defensive line in 2d Armd Div sector. Div CP moved to K898578, vicinity of BAESWEILER.

T/F 1, CCB

During morning Plat Co B 702d TD Bn and Co B (-) 17th Engr Bn were withdrawn from the line and relieved from attachment to 67th Armd Regt. 2d Bn 67th Armd Regt was relieved by 771st Tank Bn and was withdrawn at 1243A. At 1250A the 67th Armd Regt was released from sector support. The final dispositions this date of the 67th Armd Regt, in the vicinity of OIDTWEILER, follow:

Command Posts

Regtl Hq and Hq Co	K909561
1st Bn	K900553
2d Bn	K911561
3d Bn	K907567
Rcn Co	K913563
Maint Co	K912563
Service Co	K912564

41st AIR (-) Reinf

Occupied position vic MERZENHAUSEN, with following units: 82d Rcn Bn (-Co D); Rcn Co 66th AR; Co D, 17th Armd Engr Bn, Co E, 119th Inf and one plat Co C, 702d TD Bn.

24 November 1944 (Cont'd)

82d Rcn Bn

Co C moved from vicinity ALDSORF to FREIALDENHOVEN and was attached to 1st Bn 66th Armd Regt. Part of company outposted line.

25 November 1944

41st AIR (-) Reinf

1st Bn 119th Inf (30th Inf Div) attached to 2d Armd Div. and further attached to CCA under control of 41st AIR (-). Reinforced and moved to vic FREIALDENHOVEN.

82d Rcn Bn

Co A moved from ALDSORF to FREIALDENHOVEN, and into line about 1000 yds northeast of FREIALDENHOVEN. 2d Plat Co C with two sections of 3d Plat Co C outposted Hill 101 southwest of MERZENHAUSEN. 1st Platoon and two sections of 3d platoon in reserve east of DURBOSLAR.

26 November 1944

41st AIR (-) Reinf

3d Bn 66th Armd Regt and elements 82d Rcn Bn detached from 41st AIR (-). 3d Bn 41st AIR moved to forward assembly area vicinity FRAUENRATH at 2200A.

82d Rcn Bn

1st Platoon, Co B, relieved 2d platoon at 1100A. 1st and 3d Platoons secured MERZENHAUSEN-KOSLAR Road as line of departure from 41st AIR attack on hill just west of KOSLAR. Co C 1st and 3d Platoons moved from Hill 101 and dug in along the MERZENHAUSEN-KOSLAR highway between 119th Inf on left and Co B 82d Rcn Bn on right.

27 November 1944

CCA

CCA attacked in three columns from vicinity MERZENHAUSEN at 0715A. 3d Bn 41st AIR attacked on right; 2d Bn 119th Inf (Co I 66th AR atchd) in center; and 1st Bn 119th Inf on left. 1st Bn 119th Inf Regt with Co G 66th AR (-) and one plat Co C 702d TD Bn captured Hill 100.3 at 1500A. MERZENHAUSEN was cleared by 2d Bn 119th Inf at 1800A.

CCB

Vicinity OI DTWEILER.

27 November 1944 (Cont'd)

82d Rcn Bn

Co B moved forward to line from K999594 to K997597. Co C (less 3d Plat) moved to high ground just north of KOSLAR and relieved Co H 66th AR. 3d Plat Co C attached to Co H 66th AR captured Obj 7 east of MERZENHAUSEN.

28 November 1944

CCA

Attacked in three columns at 1200A to seize BARMEN and cut the BARMEN-KOSLAR Road. Occupied BARMEN at 1530A. 82d Rcn Bn cut BARMEN-KOSLAR Road and the railroad parallel to the road and contacted 29th Inf Div elements in KOSLAR.

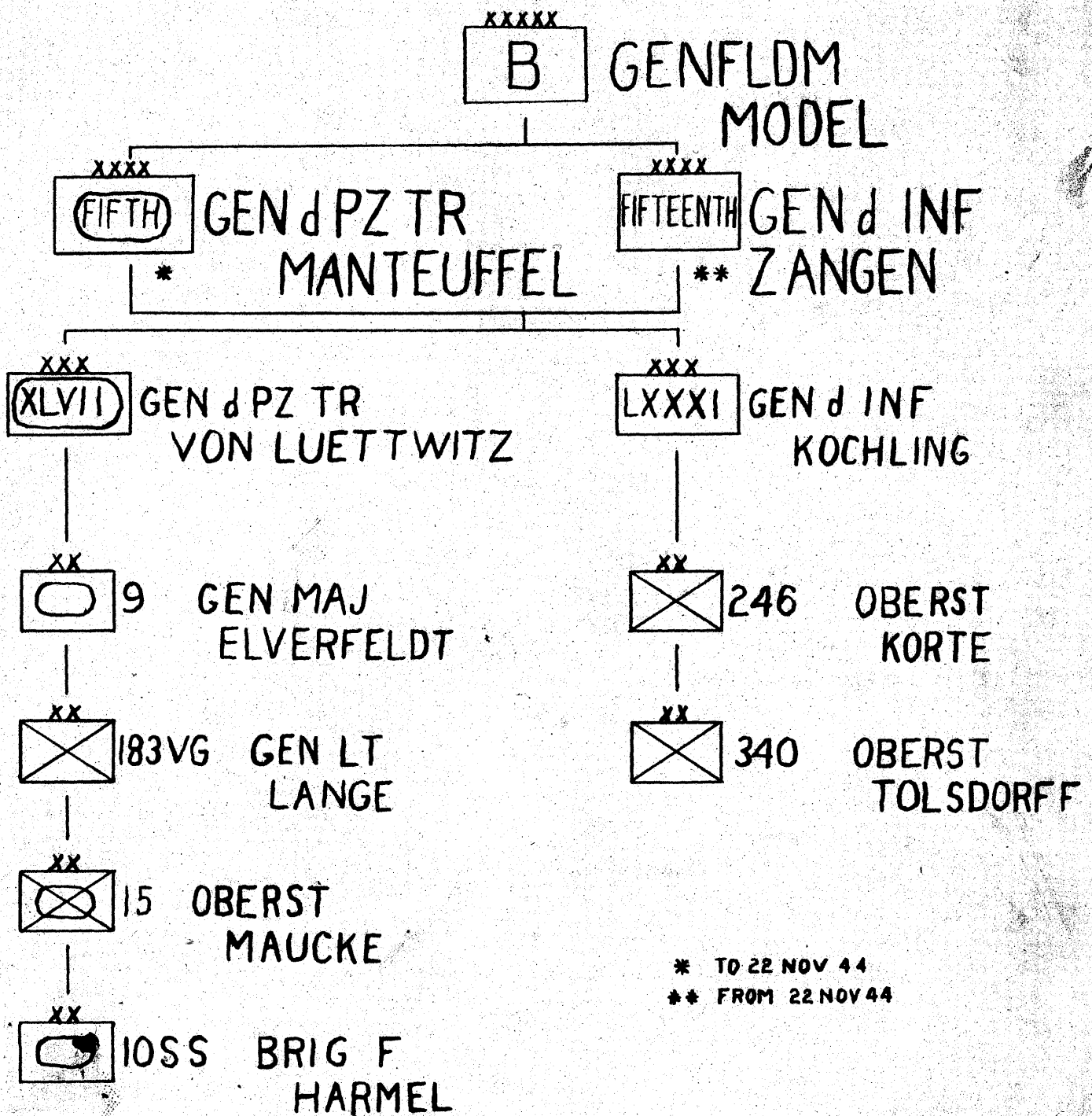
29 November 1944

CCA

Held line FLOSSDORF (excl)-BARMEN-KOSLAR. At 1700A 1st Bn 41st AIR (reinf) reld 41st AIR (-) Reinf. 2d Bn 119th Inf Regt reld from attachment to CCA, reverted to parent unit, and moved to 30th Inf Div sector. 41st AIR (-) assembled in vicinity of NORDSTERN.

ORDER OF BATTLE GERMAN ARMIES

16-30 NOV 44
APPENDIX I-E



* TO 22 NOV 44
** FROM 22 NOV 44

7 each

xxi

APPENDIX II

GERMAN GENERAL'S COMMENTS

by

General der Panzertruppen Heinrich Freiherr von Luettwitz
CG of the 47.Pz. Corps in the Rhineland from 23 Oct to 5 Dec 1944

(Translated by Christensen at Allendorf, Germany, 11 Jan 1947)

Our own attack was suspended, on the 1 Nov 1944 the corps was withdrawn to its line of departure, and again transferred to the area around KREFELD, where it was assembled on the 3 Nov 1944. Here, and in the area of MUENCHEN-GLADBACH it was trained until the 16 Nov 1944.

Considering the overall situation we expected enemy attacks in the near future. Based on observations of enemy movements in front of the sector of the 12. SS Pz Corps and on statements made by PWs, we had a rather clear picture of the situation of the enemy. This made us expect an extension of the enemy attacks, the point of gravity of which was supposed to be south of the 12. SS Corps in the area of AACHEN, and the attacks were also expected on the sector of the 12. SS Corps. In consequence of this estimate we transferred the corps and the subordinated divisions to the area of MUENCHEN-GLADBACH at the beginning of the second week of November. Reconnaissance, aiming at a commitment of the corps, was carried out in the sectors of the 12 SS Corps and the 81. Army Corps. The command post of the corps was located at ANRATH. On the occasion of a map exercise, on the 3 Nov, arranged by Gen d. Pz von Manteuffel, the problem was discussed whether it would be up to the point to transfer elements of the Pz divisions to the western bank of the ROER before the enemy attack. It is true that there they would be within the range of the enemy artillery, but, on the other hand, here it would be possible to send them in at once or move them without being obliged to use the bridges across the ROER. We had to reckon with very heavy air-raids on these bridges. The main body of the divisions remained in the area of MUENCHEN-GLADBACH. Anticipating an enemy attack one kampfgroupe of the

9 Pz Div was transferred to the western bank of the ROER and moved forward to the area of LINNICH during the first half of November.

The enemy attack started on the 16 Nov 1944. During the afternoon of this day the corps received the order that it had been subordinated (placed under command of) to the 12 SS Corps together with the 9. Pz Division. The 15. Pz Gren Div remained in its position as Army Group reserve for the time being. About 20.00 hrs. the staff of the corps arrived by the 12 SS Corps at VETTRATH, and found the situation to be the following: The enemy had taken IMMENDORF and FLOVERICH, fight was going on for the possession of PUFFENDORF, and the kampgruppe of the 9. Pz Div on the western bank of the ROER had already been sent in there. By the 12. SS Corps the 9. Pz Div was ordered to recapture PUFFENDORF and prevent the enemy from further penetration.

From the 16 Nov - 1 Dec there was violent fighting for the possession of every inch of ground. The clayey ground was very sticky owing to continual rain; even armored track-laying vehicles were almost unable to move, and this caused the attacker considerable difficulties. For the defenders the situation was the same, but the effect of the difficulties was much more unfavorable for the attackers....From BEECK I myself have seen with which difficulty the American infantry again and again tried to carry on the attack through the sticky terrain. The Artillery fire of all our guns (two Volks Artillery Corps and four divisions), which was directed by the corps, caused heavy losses. Only owing to the decreasing strength of our infantry the enemy gained slowly ground.

From the 23 Nov - 28 Nov there were no large engagements. Both sides regrouped their forces.

From the 29 Nov - 1 Dec there was fighting for the possession of LINNICH. LINNICH was finally lost on the 2 Dec and with this the engagements along the ROER stopped for the time being.

Details

17 November

Large enemy attacks did not take place. Tanks of the 9. Pz Div, still at the northern outskirts of PUFFENDORF, were pushed out of the village. During the evening of the 17 the main body of the 9. Pz Div took position along the line: PRUMMERN - PUFFENDORF, where only weak portions of the 183. Volks Gren Div still offered resistance. During the days following, these portions were subordinated to the 9 Pz Div. During the day, the 15. Pz Gren Div was subordinated to the Corps during the night of the 17 they were ordered to move to the area LINDERN - DRUMMEN - HIMMERICH.

18 November

At 07.00 hrs. the enemy attack in the general direction of PRUMMERN began. Very strong shelling of PRUMMERN, at noon, made us recognize that a direct attack on this village was imminent. Fighting took place at PRUMMERN at 15.00 hrs. At about this time the elevated terrain west of PRUMMERN was lost. PRUMMERN, the most important strong point, had to be cleaned from enemy forces. Counterattacks launched by one kampfguppe of the 15. Pz Gr Div from WURM on PRUMMERN and by one kampfguppe of the 9. Pz Div from GERBONSWILLER on PRUMMERN were ordered to take place during the night. We succeeded in recapturing a part of PRUMMERN, but we were not able to clean it completely from enemy forces. At GEILENKIRCHEN the German front now protruded considerably. Would the enemy continue his attack exclusively through PRUMMERN? If this would be the case his left flank would become longer and longer and more and more jeopardized. Thus we had to reckon with an attack on the protruding front at GEILENKIRCHEN in the near future. Consequently the bulk of the 15. Pz Gren Div remained in the area DRUMMEN-HIMMERICH. On the 18 the 43. British Div had attacked, and had gained ground in the direction of TRIPSRAETH. Thereby the protruding front at GEILENKIRCHEN was still more jeopardized. Since early in the morning

of the 17 the command post of the corps had been situated at HUECKELHOVEN.
APWELER was lost on the 18.

* * * * *

20 November

Attacks took place along the entire front and spread to the areas of GEREONSWELLER, EDEREN, and FREIALDENHOVEN. All forces of the corps were thrown in. The Army demands that no ground be lost, not under any circumstances. A retreat by sectors behind the ROER would have saved many lives, and would have made it possible to establish a strong defense on the opposite bank of the river. Neither the troops nor the leadership knew at this time that an advance on MAASTRICHT was intended to take place from the bridgehead at ROERMOND in connection with the offensive in the ARDENNES. Therefore the unconditional demand that no ground be given up. The infantry forces were too weak for the broad sector of the corps. Tiger Abteilung 507 situated along the line LINDERN-HILL 95 was sent in along the road GEREONSWELLER-LINNICH. The Tiger tanks were dug into the earth and inflicted heavy losses upon the American tanks, especially those of the 2nd American Armored Division. In the evening, GEREONSWELLER and EDEREN were captured by the enemy; our left neighbor lost FREIALDENHOVEN.

21 - 23 November

During these days further attacks took place along the entire front. The fighting for the possession of BEECK was extremely stubborn. All attacks were repelled, the line TRIPSRAATH - MULLENDORF - BEECK - HILL 95 (1 km northeast of GEREONSWELLER) - WELZ was held until the 29 Nov when new attacks began, leading to the loss of LINDERN. On the 22 Nov the first elements of the 10 SS Pz Div arrived. The 9. Pz Div, which was badly mauled, defended itself in the sector: Railroad - BEECK - the road fork 500 m east of BEECK. During the following days the 10. SS Pz Div was sent in from this point and as far as 400 m east of EDEREN....

Estimate of the situation on the evening of the 25 Nov 1944.

On the 25 Nov Lt. Col. Graf Bernstorff took over the activities of the C of S of the 47. Pz Corps because the former C of S Col Kleinschmit had been wounded. The situation was as follows:

1. It was the mission of the corps to keep the main line of resistance, which had existed since the 23 November and not give up one inch of ground west of the ROER. The order was given in this form because an attack was planned from the area south of HEINEBERG in the direction of southwest. This had to take place within the framework of the offensive in the ARDENNES, but during the defensive combat the corps did not know anything about these intentions, as they were kept secret. Not knowing about the plan, the corps considered it its main task to prevent the enemy from gaining a firm footing on the eastern bank of the ROER and thus obtain jump-off positions for further attacks on the RHINE. Further it was of importance to lose as few men and as small an amount of material as possible - particularly no artillery on the western bank of the ROER. As great amounts of material were used on all fronts, we could not reckon with ample supplies for our engagements between the ROER and the RHINE.

2. We recognized the 43. (British) Infantry Division in the northern sector, the 84. (American) Infantry Division in the central sector, and elements of the 2. (American) Armored Division in the southern sector. The enemy had attacked since the 18 November, he broke through our own positions between GEILENKIRCHEN and GERFONSWEILER, but was stopped by our new positions, which were reinforced by the 9. Pz Div and the 15. Pz Gren Division. The positions were situated along the line: TRIPSRAETH - hard south of MUELLENDORF - south of BEECK - northeast of GERFONSWEILER - the southern outskirt of WELZ. During these days the enemy suffered very heavy losses, and on the 23 Nov the attacks ceased temporarily.

In the sector of our northern neighbor (the 176. Volks Gren Div) no attacks of importance took place, and since the 23 Nov our southern neighbor (the 81. Army Corps) had only had local engagements.

Movements in the area south of BEECK and the southwest of GEREONSWELLER reconnaissance thrust (partly supported by tanks) on WURM, BEECK, LINDERN and LINNICH, increased air activity over the ROER bridges and the area of ERKELENZ indicated that the enemy had only temporarily suspended his attacks, aiming at the capture of the western bank of the ROER, and that he intended to resume them after having reorganized his troops. For this purpose he had to establish bridgeheads on the eastern bank of the river - if possible with undamaged bridges across the ROER. The bridges at LINNICH were especially suited for this. (Some 60 tons bridges were situated in the sector of the corps).

We knew that the 7. (American) Armored Division and the British Armored Division of the Guards opposed the sector of the corps, we had, therefore, to reckon with their commitment west of the ROER, in case the attack with other available forces did not result in a success.

On the other hand we did not know of the 102. (American) Infantry Division, and its presence at LINNICH was a surprise.

3. The corps sector of defense consisted of flat, arable land with difference of level of a few meters, it had numerous excellent roads and was traversed by numerous ditches along which grew long rows of trees, and spread over the terrain were large villages with stone houses. A chain of hills was the key point of the position, it ran from BEECK through LINDERN about 500 m southwest of the road LINDERN - LINNICH. The possession of this chain of hills was of decisive importance for the enemy because from there he had a free view into the ROER valley and thus he could survey his own hinterland as far as the ROER. The enemy recognized this, and from the 29 Nov his main attacks in the northern sector of the corps aimed at the capture of this chain of hills.

Rain lasting for weeks had turned the clayey ground into a swamp, and the activities of tanks and motor driven vehicles was completely restricted to the roads.

The open terrain and its muddy condition, which was caused by the rain, only offered the attacker bad possibilities for protection and limited the use of his tanks and combat cars. On the other hand the terrain favored the observation for the defenders, at least as long as they had the elevated terrain between BEECK - LINDERN - LINNICH in their hands, the numerous villages with their stone walls and cellars gave them fine possibilities for defense, the intermediate terrain was to some extent fortified (bunkers), and reinforced with field fortifications, and the muddy terrain offered at many points a certain security against mechanized attack. "The terrain thus offered many possibilities for the defense.

4. The Roer and the bridges across same.

The ROER was 10 to 15 m broad and 1.50 to 2 m deep; owing to rain the current had been rather violent for weeks, the meadows as far away as 500 m from the river-bed were inundated. Consequently a crossing was only possible by the bridges, and a building of bridges could only be done in connection with the existing crossing sites.

The following bridges were available

- 1) one wooden bridge at HILFARTH,
- 2) one wooden bridge at BRACHELEN,
- 3) one railroad bridge at BRACHELEN (the bridge was not planked and could only be used by pedestrians)
- 4) one foot-bridge at KORRENZIG,
- 5) two stone bridges east and northeast of LINNICH
(the only bridge strong enough for our type "VI" tanks),
- 6) one foot-bridge hard east of ROERDORF.

One of the chief concerns of the corps were these bridges. On one hand they had to be kept in repair in order to maintain the necessary communication with the front, and to make a withdrawal of the artillery and other motorized or horse-drawn elements possible, on the other hand it had to be possible to demolish the bridges at once in case the enemy surprisingly reached the bridges. The corps endeavored to construct additional footbridges in order to prevent traffic jams at the most westernly bridges, in case the enemy should achieve a speed penetration, but owing to lack of material this was not possible.

Bridge commanders were in charge of the bridges. They were responsible for traffic regulations and the preparations for demolition of the bridges when orders came from the divisions, in charge of the sector. In addition the bridges were occupied by security troops up to the strength of one rifle squad. All our engineer battalions were used as infantry, and consequently we did not have the platoon or company available which were prescribed for the occupation of bridges, likewise we had no antitank weapons available for the securing of the bridges. The bridge commanders were requested to cooperate with the heavy antiaircraft batteries emplaced in the neighborhood, which reconnoitered the possibilities for antitank defense at the bridge.

Despite the fact that the antiaircraft defense at the bridges seemed to be inadequate, considering the numerous objectives in the sector of the corps, the enemy did not once succeed in destroying or even harming one bridge by bomb hit.

The wooden bridge at BRACHELEN was destroyed by spontaneous combustion in the night of the 29 Dec (a shell hit an igniting charge). The other bridges were destroyed according to plan when we retired across the ROER, the enemy failed to thrust energetically on one of the bridges.

5. Order of battle of the corps on the evening of the 25 Nov

Condition of the divisions:

a. The 15. Pz Gren Division:

The 104. and 115. Pz Gren Regiments had each three weak battalions (with 100 to 200 men). In addition in the northern sector, being the most quiet one, one weak alarm battalion of the 183. Volks Gren Div. all battalions were very badly equipped with machine guns (2 to 4 light machine guns to each company).

The 115 Pz Battalion had about ten tanks of the type "IV long" ready for action.

The Pz artillery regiment was up to authorized strength. (two light and one heavy battalion).

The engineer battalion: two weak companies, partly used as infantry, partly used for the laying of mines in the area round WURM.

Despite very heavy engagements, the division was still fit for use in emergency cases. On the 23 Nov the withdrawal of the 9 Pz Div and remnants of the 183. Volks Gren Div, began which meant that the front line could only be thinly occupied. The div had only a very weak reserve battalion available.

b. The 9. Pz Div, badly mauled, was being withdrawn and assembled in the area north of HEINSBERG.

The Pz Gren Regiments and all elements available for use as infantry (engineers, alarm units) were put together in two kampfguppen of 100 to 200 men and subordinated to the 15. Pz Gren Div and the 10. SS Pz Div.

The Pz regiment had 3 to 5 tanks of types "V" and "IV long" ready for action, they were subordinated to the infantry kampfguppen.

The Pz artillery regiment (two light and one heavy battalion) were subordinated to the ARKO 47 in positions around BRACHELEN.

c. The 10 SS Pz Div at first only arrived with one Pz Gren Regiment and one Pz Gren Battalion (in total three battalions of 200 to 250 men) and one light artillery battalion. All other elements were still on their way from HOLLAND. The 506. Pz Battalion with about 6 to 8 tanks type "VI Tiger" was subordinated.

d. The ARKO 47 had one Volksartillery Corps (I do not know the number) and one Volks - Werfer - Brigade in positions in the area HILFARTHE - HIMMERICH - HONSDORF - BRACHELEN. An adequate amount of ammunition was available. Requested to cooperate with ARKO 47 were the following units:

The 115. Pz Artillery Regiment (about 17 light and 10 heavy guns).

The 9. Pz Artillery Regiment (about 10 light and 6 heavy guns).

The 2. Battalion of the 10. SS Pz Artillery Regiment (about 10 light guns).

In total 65 light and 29 heavy guns (the Volks-Werfer-Brigade not included). Together with the artillery of the neighbors about 130 to 150 guns covered the front of the corps.

Considering the material superiority of the enemy (air force, artillery ammunition, tanks) the troops had fought excellently in the engagements from the 18 - 23 Nov and prevented the enemy thrust on the ROER. Our own losses were very heavy. The continuous rain, the impossibility of feeding the troops regularly during the pitch dark nights, the long service in the positions without prospect of being relieved preyed on the strength of the Pz Grenadiers and the infantry men. Pale and hollow-eyed, sick and drenched through, unshaved and unwashed for days, facing an enemy who had abundant supplies, these men fulfilled their duty to the utmost. As was the case on all fronts: the leaders had also here to ask themselves how long the troops would be able to meet these requirements. For the time being they defended themselves, but they were no longer able to launch counterattacks because there was no inner connection between the units which were constantly replenished; and the company, platoon, and squad leaders, who were constantly

replaced, were unable to plan and carry out attacks systematically. Very seldom counterattacks carried any success, and where they succeeded this was only due to the element of surprise.

* * * * *

Details

25 November

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Field Marshal Model, the Commander-In-Chief of Heeresgruppe "B" visited the command post of the Corps. The following items were discussed:

a. The task, which was to hold the possessions of the momentary main line of resistance. LINNICH must be kept under any circumstances.

b. The freshening up and training of the 9. and the 116. Pz Division, which were assigned for this purpose, had to take place as soon as possible.

* * * * *

28 November

The enemy reconnaissance activity was carried out to the same extent as during the preceding days. At noon, when the weather temporarily changed to the better, there were several air-raids against the bridges at HILFARTH and LINNICH, but they were unsuccessful. The Chief of Staff visited the command post of the 5. Panzer Army at MANDERSCHIED for a preliminary discussion of the offensive in the ARDENNES.

29 November

* * * * *

On the 29 November in the evening the corps had the following picture of the situation:

1. The corps has the task of recapturing LINDERN in a counter-attack and of reestablishing the former main line of resistance. This task necessitates the commitment of all available reserves and a very high

consumption of artillery ammunition.

2. In the sector of the corps and that of its left neighbor the enemy started his decisive attack with the purpose of capturing the ROER sector during the 29 Nov. The 30. British Corps, opposing the northern sector of the corps and that of its right neighbor, did not take part in these attacks. By statements given by PWs and by radio reconnaissance we ascertained the presence of the 84. American Infantry Division, opposing our line. Further, we supposed that the 2. American Armored Division opposed the southern sector and that of our left neighbor, although our radio reconnaissance indicated the presence of one other combined-arms unit.

* * * * *

30 November

* * * * *

WELZ, in the sector of our left neighbor, is lost. Counterattacks with the purpose of recapturing the village fail.

At 19.00 hrs the 9. Pz Div, supported by its artillery, launched a counterattack on LINDERN. (The Artillery Commander "47" was requested to cooperate with the 9. Pz Div for this attack). A few assault detachments succeeded in penetrating into the village during the night but they were unable to hold on as the enemy attacked them at once with tanks and strong infantry forces.

* * * * *

During the night the corps was ordered to take over the command of all elements still engaged east of the ROER. Until then they had been under the command of the 81. Army Corps, our left neighbor. These troops included one weak battalion at ROERDORF and one engineer company at FLOSDORF, they were not subordinated to the 10. SS Pz Div. The 10. SS Pz Div was ordered to reinforce them with tanks of the 506. Pz Battalion and with artillery.

The forces sent in south of LINNICH have only one foot-bridge east of ROERDORF at their disposal for their communication across the ROER; there was also a line of communication through LINNICH, but they could no longer use it because the enemy was in the immediate neighborhood. There was therefore a danger that after the fall of LINNICH these elements might be cut off and lose their communication to the eastern bank of the ROER. The corps thought it desirable to build a second foot-bridge at FLOSSDORF. Measures were prepared, but it took too long to procure and bring up the material, and consequently nothing could be done. Owing to this, these elements were put in a very difficult position on the 2 Dec, and they were almost completely annihilated.

* * * * *

/s/ Heinrich Freiherr von Luetwitz

APPENDIX III

THE AIR PREPARATION

The air preparation for the ROER River Offensive was the largest scale close support effort ever flown by the Allied Air Forces.¹ Shortly before noon on 16 November the Eighth Air Force, with 1204 heavy bombers escorted by 485 fighter bombers, dropped 3679 tons of bombs in the ESCHWEILER area. The Royal Air Force Bomber Command with 1188 four engine Lancasters dropped 5640 tons on their targets, chiefly on DUREN and JULICH. Medium bombers of the IX Bombardment Division (British) executed heavy attacks on LINNICH in the Ninth Army zone, and on other towns in the First Army zone.² Practically all towns in the immediate front of the 2nd Armored Division were hit during this air operation.³

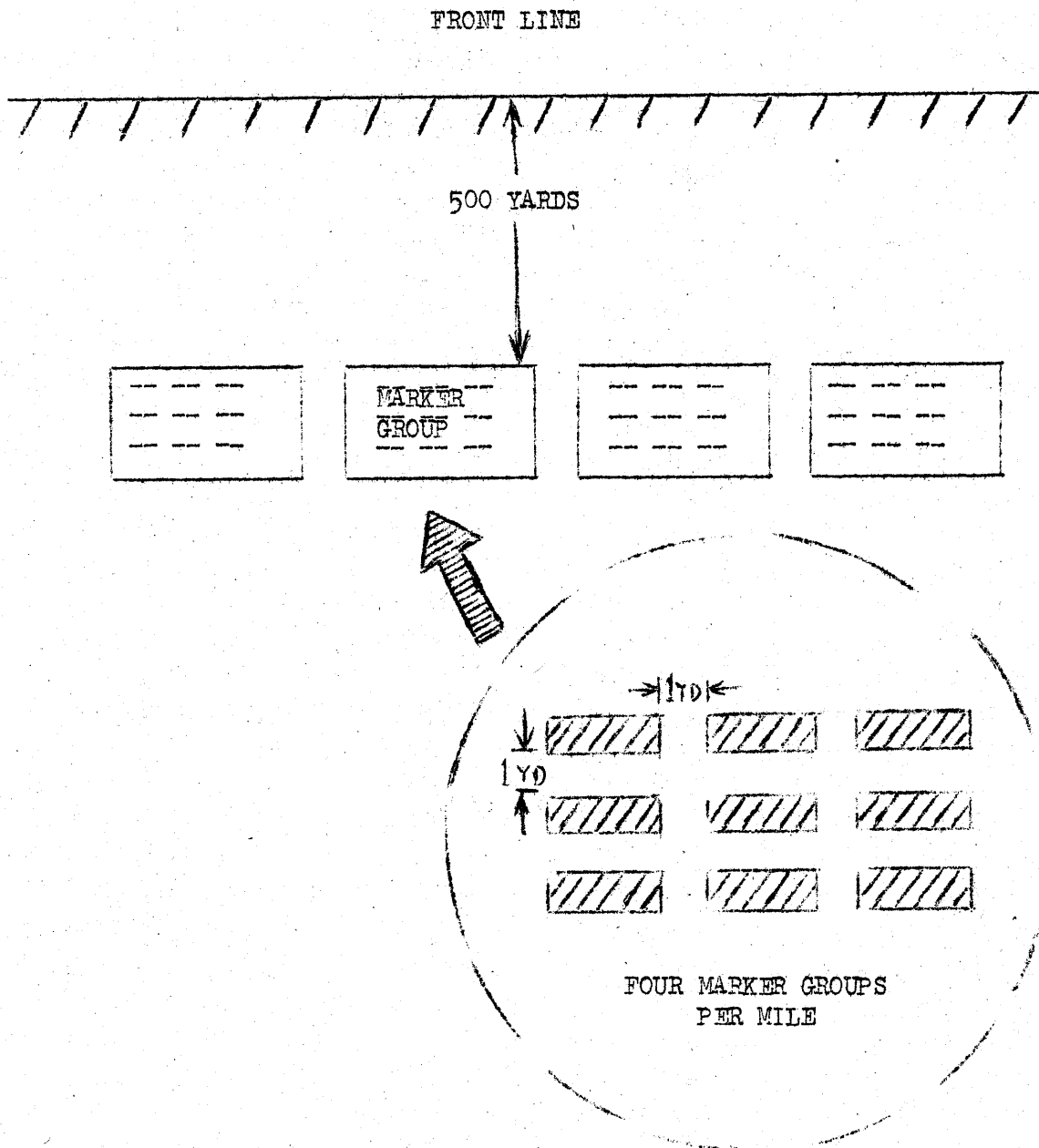
Control Measures

To insure accurate bombing, and to reduce the possibility of bombs being dropped on friendly troops, elaborate control measures were devised. The plan executed with outstanding success consisted of a number of safety devices.

The first control measure was the establishment of a line of approach on the ground for the bombers. This line consisted of white panel markers (36' x 7') placed parallel to the Army boundaries and leading to the target area.

The second measure was groups of nine vehicular red or yellow fluorescent panels placed so as to mark the front lines as shown on the sketch on the next page.

For the third element of the control plan eleven captive balloons established a line in the air. These balloons were attached to Army from the RAF. They were flown at 2000 feet altitude approximately 4000 yards behind the front lines, astride and perpendicular to the direction of approach of the bombing planes.



The fourth control measure established a line of red AA shell bursts, by 4 batteries of 90mm AA guns, on the same line as the balloons. Eight of these shells, adjusted so that they exploded about 2000 feet below the bombers, burst every 15 seconds. Coordination, by radio, between IX Tactical Air Force and Headquarters 109th AAA Group controlled the AA fire.

In addition to the above, a thin vertical radio beam marked the bomb release line, crews opened bomb bays over the English Channel to scuttle any loose bombs and bomb racks remained

locked during the passage over our front lines.⁴

Artillery, in both the First and Ninth Armies, fired on known and suspected flak gun locations during the air strike. This neutralization of AA guns by the artillery undoubtedly greatly reduced the aircraft casualties.

It was gratifying that no casualties to friendly troops occurred during this great air support mission. Proper selection of targets and the safety precautions taken to prevent casualty producing incidents were completely effective.

Results of the Bombing

Although it was never possible to accurately assess the results of the heavy bombing effort preceding the attack, subsequent investigations and intelligence reports indicated that considerable damage, particularly to communications, was inflicted and that the psychological effect upon enemy personnel was probably greater than expected. Enemy personnel casualties probably fell short of expectations. The explanation for this is found in the disposition of enemy troops. These troops were dispersed in the open country surrounding the towns rather than in the towns themselves. A NCO prisoner of war from an infantry division reported that his men completely ignored all orders during the attack and were in a dazed condition for 45 minutes after the bombing. Communications, particularly telephonic, were interfered with as far back as division headquarters and the slow reaction of the enemy in moving his reserves was due, in part, to the effect of the bombing.⁵

NOTES FOR APPENDIX III

¹Conquer, The Story of the Ninth U.S. Army, p. 87.

²First United States Army, Report of Operations 1st August 1944 to 22 February 1945, p. 73f.

³After Action Report 2d Armored Division, November 1944.

⁴Op. Cit., Conquer, p. 88.

⁵Op. Cit., First U.S. Army, p. 74.

APPENDIX IV--A

TACTICAL STUDY OF THE TERRAIN AND WEATHER¹

1. PURPOSE AND OTHER LIMITING CONSIDERATIONS.

To study the probable effect of the terrain and weather on an armored attack in the area GEILENKIRCHEN-LINNICH-JULICH-ALSDORF.

2. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA.

a. Climatic or weather conditions---Throughout the period the temperature varies from an average minimum of 41° F. to an average maximum of 46° F. Average precipitation in this area in November is 2.25 inches. Precipitation occurs, on the average, 15 days during the month.² The rain is generally accompanied by light winds (10-20 MPH).

b. Topography---(see Appendix IV--B)

(1) Relief and drainage. Two major streams drain the area, the WURM River on the west and the ROER River on the east. The WURM flows north-east and the ROER flows north-west. The valleys of both rivers are wide and meandering with steep cliffs bordering them in many places. Many tributaries of these two rivers cut the area, generally perpendicular to the line of flow of the streams. The WURM and its tributaries are narrow (16-33 feet wide) with hard bottoms, fordable ($2\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 feet deep) in most places;³ conversely, the ROER and some of its tributaries are unfordable. The entire ROER valley can be flooded by the destruction of two large dams approximately twenty miles upstream from JULICH.

The area is gently rolling, varying in height from 460 feet in the southwest portion to 210 feet in the north-east. There is a gradual decrease in elevation except in the two river valleys and their major tributaries. Some of these valleys have very steep slopes, dropping almost vertically for 100 feet. These steep banks are especially true of the ROER valley. Certain

portions of the area could be considered almost flat, the terrain varying very little in elevation for over 1000 yards.⁴

(2) Vegetation--The forested areas consist mostly of small wooded lots and long rows of trees bordering the numerous ditches. These ditches are generally perpendicular to the roads. Most of the towns have wooded areas surrounding them. The trees vary in size, none of which can be considered an obstacle to armor. The remainder of the countryside is devoted to agriculture.

(3) Surface Materials--The surface of the soil is clay which is satisfactory for tanks under optimum conditions of weather. In certain parts of the area the soil is not able to support tanks during periods when there is average or more precipitation. Armored movement is restricted to the roads during periods when the rainfall is above average.

(4) Cultural Features--Many small rural villages (1000 to 2000 population) dot the area. The distance between these villages is, on the average, 2000 yards. A comparatively good road net is available. The better roads are the ones running from north-west to south-east from IMMENDORF to DURBOSLAR and north-east to south-west from LINNICH to SETTERICH. There are other secondary roads capable to two-way traffic. A small coal mine is located east of BEGGENDORF. Bridges cross the ROER River at LINNICH, BURDORF, and FLOSSDORF. A railroad crosses the area from west to east, IMMENDORF to BARMEN and KOSLAR. A spur of this railroad runs south from PUFFENDORF to SETTERICH. (See Appendix IV-B.)

3. MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE AREA.

a. Critical Terrain Features.

(1) PUFFENDORF--A critical communications center. This town is located at the junction of the major roads in the area.

(2) High ground west of ROER--Permits unit to control crossings of the river.

(3) Hill area north and east of GEREONSWELLER--Controls approaches to LINNICH and ROER River and the terrain to the north.

(4) All the towns throughout the area--The towns control the road net. They are natural strong points by virtue of the construction of the houses, namely, the stone walls and cellars.

b. Observation and Fields of Fire--(See Appendix IV-B)

(1) Observation. Generally favors the attacking forces or the forces moving to the east. There are certain valleys and draws in which the enemy can operate unobserved, namely, the ROER valley and the valley through the towns of WELZ and MERZENHAUSEN.

(2) Fields of Fire. This is an agricultural area and as such has excellent fields of fire. In the towns the fields of fire are limited by the houses and wooded areas.

c. Obstacles--A tank ditch exists between PUFFENDORF and EDEREN running north parallel to the PUFFENDORF-GEREONSWELLER road to (94.5-62.5)⁵. In certain parts of the area the soils are not capable of supporting armor during periods of precipitation. The steep banks to the west of the ROER Valley and the river are obstacles.

d. Concealment and Cover--Concealment is offered by the small wood lots and towns; however, it is not adequate for an armored division on a narrow front. Cover is almost non-existent throughout the area.

e. Avenues of Approach--Because of the precipitation the armor is almost roadbound and every road will be an avenue of approach. No terrain corridor is available to our troops. The ROER valley and the valley running through LINNICH-WELZ-EDEREN-MERZENHAUSEN are cross-compartments. Another cross-compartment is formed by the valley running through BEECH-GEREONSWELLER-APWEILER-PRUMMERN. The soil trafficability is extremely poor when wet.

4. TACTICAL EFFECT OF THE TERRAIN.

Effect on types of operations required to accomplish our mission--The extreme weather conditions encountered will necessitate attacks by small teams of integrated armor and infantry. These teams will have to capture each small town enroute to the objectives. It is almost impossible to outflank the enemy positions because of lack of room for maneuver. The enemy is capable of making each town a strong point which will only fall after assault on the town. The enemy is in an extremely good position to defend the ROER Valley from the high ground to the east.

NOTES FOR APPENDIX IV--A

¹FM 101-5, Draft, C&GS College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, 1 Sept 48, p. 237.

²Ninth United States Army, Operations IV, Offensive in November, (4th Information and Historical Service). p. 3.

³84th Division in Battle of Germany, Viking Press, p. 15.

⁴Statement, Gen d. Panzertruppe Heinrich Freiherr von Luetwitz, Commander of the 47th Panzer Corps in the Rhineland, Allendorf, 11 Jan 47, (Translated by Christensen) passim. (All facts, unless otherwise noted, are from this document).

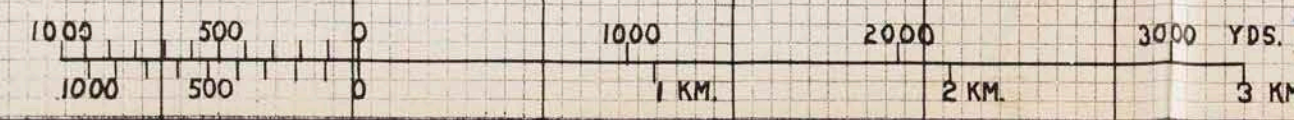
⁵After Action Report, 2nd Armored Division, Nov 44.



APPENDIX IV-B
LAYER TINT MAP

140+		110-120	
130-140		100-110	
120-130		90-100	
110-120		80-90	
		80-	

SCALE



1. *Chlorophyll a* (Chl a) is the primary photosynthetic pigment in most plants and algae. It is a green pigment that absorbs light energy in the blue and red regions of the visible spectrum. Chl a is essential for the light-dependent reactions of photosynthesis, where it converts light energy into chemical energy in the form of ATP and NADPH.

COMMANDERS AND PERSONALITIES

Commanders

Supreme Headquarters

Allied Expeditionary Forces. Gen. of the Army Dwight D. Eisenhower

Twelfth Army Group Gen. Omar N. Bradley

Ninth Army Lt. Gen. W. H. Simpson

XIX Corps.Lt. Gen. Raymon S. McLain

2nd Armored Division Maj. Gen. Ernest N. Harmon

Combat Command A Brig. Gen. John H. Collier

Combat Command B Brig. Gen. I. D. White

66th Armored Regiment. Col. Ira P. Swift

1st Battalion Lt. Col. Carl O. Parker

2nd Battalion Maj. Herbert S. Long, Jr.

3rd Battalion Lt. Col. Lindsay C. Harkness

67th Armored Regiment. Col. Paul A. Disney

1st Battalion Maj. Clifton B. Batchelder

2nd Battalion Lt. Col. Lemuel E. Pope

3rd Battalion Lt. Col. Harry L. Hillyard

41st Armored Infantry Regiment Col. Sidney R. Hinds

1st Battalion Maj. John W. Finnell

2nd Battalion Lt. Col. Charles D. Etter

3rd Battalion Lt. Col. Marshall L. Crowley, Jr.

2nd Armored Division Artillery Col. Carl I. Hutton

14th Armored F.A. Bn. Lt. Col. Lloyd P. Van Court

78th Armored F.A. Bn. Lt. Col. Robert A. Berlin

92nd Armored F.A. Bn. Lt. Col. Wm R. Buster

82nd Armored Rcn. Bn Lt. Col. Wheeler G. Merriam

17th Armored Engr. Bn. Lt. Col. Louis W. Correll

2nd Armored Div. Trains. Col. Louis C. Friedersdoff

2nd Armored Maintenance Bn.Lt. Col. Allen L. Harts

2nd Armored Supply Bn. Maj. Edward T. Sanford

48th Armored Medical Bn. Lt. Col. John S. Wier

ATTACHED UNITS

406th Infantry Regiment. Col. Bernard F. Hurless

1st Battalion. Lt. Col. Cecil R. Everett

2nd Battalion. Lt. Col. James H. Reeves

3rd Battalion. Lt. Col. Verle D. Miller

195th AAA AW Bn (SP) Lt. Col. D. R. Corum

1st Battalion, 119th Inf Lt. Col. Robert L. Herlong

2nd Battalion, 119th Inf Lt. Col. William C. Cox

702nd TD Bn (SP) Lt. Col. John A. Beall

Personalities

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Armentraut, George C.	Capt	Co C, 406 Inf.
Brockman, Robert	2nd Lt	Co C, 41st AIR.
Garothers, Thomas F.	Capt	2nd Bn, 41st AIR.
Chabaud	Capt	Co G, 119th Inf.
Chatfield, Henry H.	Capt	Co I, 66th AR.
Crane, Harold B.	Lt	Co C, 41st AIR.
Farhart, Raymond S.	Lt	Co A, 41st AIR.
Edelberg, Irving M.	Lt	I&R Plat, 1st Bn, 67th AR.
Erbes, John	Capt	Bn Surg, 3rd Bn, 67th AR.
Faris	Lt	Co G, 119th Inf.
Hall, William	Lt	Co E, 119th Inf.
Holycross, Harold	Lt	Co E, 119th Inf.
Hunnicut	Lt	702nd TD Bn.
Kelly, Bruce	Capt	Co D, 66th AR.
Kuhn, Gale C.	Lt	Co G, 119th Inf.
Lee, Robert E.	Lt	Co D, 67th AR.
Miner, Charles B.	S/Sgt	Co F, 119th Inf.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Rank</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Osborne, Thomas H.	Lt	Co I, 67th AR.
Parker, Warne R.	Capt	Co E, 119th Inf.
Pfoff, Francis E.	Capt	Co F, 67th AR.
Preston	Lt	83rd AFA Bn.
Roberts, Joseph	Capt	Co G, 66th AR.
Roller, John B.	Lt	Co D, 66th AR.
White, James	Lt	Co I, 67th AR.
White, James L.	Capt	Co G, 67th AR.

APPENDIX VI

Hq 2nd Armd Div
APO 252
K811585
061800A Nov 44

FO #34

MAPS: GSGS 4414 - HOLLAND & GERMANY - 1/25,000.

1. a. See Intelligence Annex.

b. First US Army operating on R of Ninth US Army makes main effort of 12th Army Gp; VII Corps, on L of First US Army, makes main effort of First US Army. Ninth US Army protects L flank and assists advance of First US Army. On or about 7 Nov 44 XIII US Corps operates on L of Ninth Army. 8th Air Force supports attack (weather permitting) by saturation bombing of areas indicated and other areas in Army zone. XIX Corps attacks in zone, making main effort with 29th Inf Div on R to seize and secure bridgehead over ROER River via JULICH; continues advance to the RHINE River, protecting L of 12th Army Gp.

2. a. 2nd Armd Div (reinf) attacks in zone D-Day H-Hour (D-Day tentatively set for 10 Nov 44, exact day and hour to be announced) to seize initial objective, committing CCB initially; establishing contact with 102nd Inf Div on L; protecting L flank XIX Corps, prepared to exploit any weakness in enemy defenses in the direction of LINDICH. Bulk of Div will be prepared to attack E on Div order to seize and secure that part of assembly area in Div zone. Div will assemble in area shown, prepared for early crossing of ROER River through bridgehead established by 29th Inf Div and continuance of attack to E.

b. TROOP LIST:

CCA

Col J. H. Collier, Cmdg.

Hq CCA

2nd Bn, 41st AIR
66th AR (- 1st Bn)
Co A, 17th Engr Bn
Co A, 702nd TD Bn (SP)
Co A, 48th Med Bn
Det Maint Bn
1st Plat. Btry B, 195th
AAA Bn AW (SP)

CCB

Brig Gen I. D. White, Cmdg.

Hq CCB

1st & 3d Bns, 41st AIR
67th AR
Co B & 1 Flat Co C, 17 Engrs w/3
flame thrower teams atchd.
Co B, 702nd TD Bn (SP)
Co B, 48th Med Bn
2nd Bn, 406th Inf Regt
Det Maint Bn
1st Plat. Btry A, 195th AAA
Bn AW (SP)

CCR
Col S. R. Hinds, Cmdg.

Hq & Hq Co, 41st AIR
1st Bn, 66th AR
2nd Bn, 119th Inf Regt
Co D, 17th Engr Bn
702nd TD Bn (SP) (-
Cos A & B)
Co G 48th Med Bn
Co A 82nd Rcn Bn

DIV ARTY
Col Carl Hutton, Cmdg..

Hq Div Arty
14th FA Bn (/ Plat Btry D,
195th AAA Bn AW (SP))
78th FA Bn (/ Btry D (-1 Plat)
195th AAA Bn AW (SP))
92nd FA Bn (/ Btry C (-1 Plat)
195th AAA Bn AW (SP))
65th FA Bn (/ 2nd Plat, Btry D,
195th AAA Bn AW (SP))
83rd FA Bn
258th FA Gp (consisting of 2
Bns 4.5" gun and 2 Bns 155 mm
SP How) in dir sup 2nd AD.

DIV CONTROL

Hq & Hq Co 2nd Armd Div
142nd Sig Co
195th AAA Bn AW (SP)
(less Dets)
17th Engr Bn (-Cos A, B
& D, -1 Plat Co C
w/3 flame thrower
teams atchd.)
82nd Rcn Bn (-Co A)
Div Tns (/ Btry B, 195th
AAA Bn AW (SP)
406th Inf Regt (-1st & 2nd
Bns)

3. a. 82nd Rcn Bn (- Co A): Prepare to move on Div order to establish contact with 29th InfDiv on R; and/or close possible gap between CCs; and/or pass through CCB and reconnoiter to NE and E to ROER River and LINNICH; and/or attach 1 Rcn Co to each CC.
- b. CCA: Prepare plans to move on Div order to assist CCB in obtaining initial objective by attacking in southern part of Div zone to seize and occupy that part of assembly area in Div zone. The 3rd Bn, 406th Inf Regt attached prior to the attack reverts to Div control when passed through by the attack of CCB on Div order.
- c. CCB. Attack H-Hour D-Day in zone to seize initial objective; protect the L flank of the Div and Corps. Be prepared to release part of the command upon reaching initial objective and to be assembled in Div Res in area to be designated preparatory for crossing of the ROER River, reconnoiter aggressively toward LINNICH and be prepared to exploit any weakness discovered in that vic. Employ 2nd Bn, 406th Inf Regt reinforced by armor to seize IMENDORF and the high ground north thereof. Upon the securing of this objective this Bn will defend in place and the reinforcements will be detached when the danger of a counterattack is over. Remainder of the 406th Inf Regt, less 1 Bn, now under division control, will extend this line to the E including the objective N of GERBONSWEILER and upon Div order this part of CCB sector will be turned over to the 102nd Inf Div.

- d. CCR: Move on Div order to assist either CC or to move into assembly area (exact location later). Prepare plans to assist in accomplishing missions outlined in paragraphs "b" and "c" above.
- e. Div Arty: The Div organic and attached artillery will operate initially under Div control in direct support of the attack and will be prepared on Div order to detach Bns as follows: 78th and 83rd AFA Bns to CCB; 14th and 65th AFA Bns to CCA; and 92nd AFA to CCR. Coordinate with CG XIX Corps arty for supporting fire, and particularly with the 102nd Inf Div for counter-battery fire in the WURM River area N of GEILENKIRCHEN. Principal effort of the arty will be to neutralize and destroy tanks and SP guns in the towns on the immediate front; counter-battery; and fires on call. Amount of preparation will be determined based on XIX Corps arty plan. See Arty Annex (to be published) for pre-arranged fires.
- f. Div Tns: See par 4 below.
- g. 17th Engr Bn: Move on Div order. Prepare plans to assist advance of Div by road work, removal of mines and booby-traps and clearance of obstacles. Co C (-1 Plat) will move forward in close support of CCB.
- h. Hq and Hq Co, 2nd Armd Div: Move on Div order.
- x. (1) All previous lists of lettered code groups issued by this Div are revoked. CCs will use letter code groups as shown on overlay in order to report locations in clear.
- (2) Special emphasis will be placed on security.
- (3) Special check lists will be prepared to insure that all measures are taken in preparation for attack.
- (4) Prior to attack, all units will be on the alert to repel any hostile counter threat which might unbalance the command for the attack.
4. a. Unit Tns (less combat trains) revert to control of Div Tns Cmdr in unit areas upon movement of major units.
- b. Units will carry full basic ammunition loads and two hundred (200) operational miles of gasoline.
- c. Div Tns Cmdr will be responsible for the orderly collection of unit trains from areas where parent organizations have departed and prepare them for forward movement upon order of AC of S, G-4.
- d. MSR-East of WURM River: UBACH-BEGGENDORF-LOVERICH-PUFFENDORF.
- e. Other Administrative Matters: See Administrative Order #7 this Hq and Change 1 thereto.

5. a. Current SOI in effect.

b. CP's--no change--changes to be reported.

HARMON
Cmdg

OFFICIAL:

/s/ Jenna
Jenna
G-3

1-Incl (Overlay)

APPENDIX VII

LOGISTICS AND STATISTICS

General

At the beginning of the offensive all 2nd Armored Division dumps were located in the vicinity of HEERLEN, HOLLAND (approximately 9 miles southwest of PALENBERG, GERMANY), and XIX Corps installations¹ were at HEERLEN, GULDEN, and VALKENBERG. Ninth Army located its Class II & IV installations in and around MAASTRICHT.

On 17 November the division established a truckhead for Class I, III and V supplies east of the WURM River in the vicinity of PALENBERG. This truckhead, located to give close support to the combat elements of the division, consisted of the 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks of the Quartermaster Battalion. Those service units west of the WURM River continued to draw supplies from the dumps in vicinity of HEERLEN.

Dumps for all classes of supplies were established near MERKSTEIN, GERMANY on 23 November. These dumps served the division for the remainder of the ROER River Offensive.

Trains

Unit trains were organized into A and B trains.² A trains, except for necessary maintenance, unit medical vehicles and in some instances a limited number of ammunition vehicles, operated under Combat Command control. B trains, including kitchens, operated under control of the Division Trains Commander.

During the ROER River Offensive Division Trains employed a fleet of ninety six 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ ton trucks to haul divisional supply requirements. Forty-eight of these trucks carried the needed ammunition (Class V), forty the fuel and lubricants (Class III), and the remaining eight carried the rations.

It is interesting to note the allocation of trucks that hauled the ammunition. These trucks were loaded as shown below:³

- 20 - 105mm How
- 5 - 76mm Gun
- 5 - 75mm Gun
- 2 - 81mm Mortar
- 1 - 75mm How
- 15 - Small arms, machine gun, 37mm gun, and miscellaneous.

Vehicle Evacuation

Vehicle evacuation, during this operation, presented quite a problem. If a vehicle was disabled or knocked out along a road, evacuation was relatively easy, but for the most part the tanks and half-tracks which became casualties in the fields had to be abandoned because of the muddy condition of the ground. In some instances, evacuation of tanks from fields was attempted, but it proved a major engineering project to accomplish.⁴

The following number of vehicle casualties, sustained by the division, were evacuated to shops of the Maintenance Battalion.⁵

	As a result of enemy action	<u>Not</u> as a result of enemy action
Tanks & SP Arty	60	166
Half tracks, Sct & Arm'd Cars	5	19
All other vehicles	<u>17</u>	<u>139</u>
Total	82	324

In addition to the above, some Chruchill Tanks of Squadron B, 1st Fife and Forfar Yeomanry (Br) were evacuated.

Supply Problems

The shortage of certain types of ammunition created the most critical supply problem of the operation. The problem was such that General Simpson, Commanding General of Ninth Army, issued orders which rationed many types of ammunition.⁶ The 2nd Armored Division keenly felt the restrictions on expenditures of 81mm WP, 75mm gun WP, 105mm Howitzer (all types), and 76mm gun armor piercing (especially hyper-velocity).⁷

Because of the muddy ground, it was desirable that all tanks be equipped with track connector extensions ("duck bills") to increase flotation. At the beginning of the offensive most tanks had been so equipped. These extensions were manufactured for the 2nd Armored Division in LIEGE, BELGIUM, and before the end of the operation all tanks in the division had been provided with them. The installation of the extensions to the track connectors presented an additional problem for the Maintenance Battalion for which they set up a special shop and used production line methods.⁸

The division main supply route, for the first part of the operation, followed the SCHERPENSEEL-UPACH-BEGGENDORF-LOVERICH-PUFFENDORF Road. The heavy traffic over the road soon destroyed the surface. What had been a road developed into a quagmire.

Statistics

During this operation, the division evacuated 2,438 casualties, expended 75,861 rounds of 105mm howitzer ammunition and 621 tons of ammunition other than 105mm, consumed 80,870 gallons of gasoline, 2,130 gallons of diesel fuel and 12,715 gallons of oil of all types, and captured 2,424 prisoners of war.⁹ The engineer water points furnished 1,400,000 gallons of water.¹⁰ In addition the division sustained the following losses:

Personnel Battle Casualties¹¹

	Killed in Action		Wounded in Action		Missing in Action		Totals	
	Off	EM	Off	EM	Off	EM	Off	EM
CCA	5	64	20	387	0	67	25	518
CCB	11	123	36	661	0	131	47	915
Totals	16	187	56	1048	0	198	72	1433

Equipment Losses ¹²

Engineer

Block, Snatch, 16" diameter	6
Case, map, plastic, 12" x 18"	9
Compass, Lensatic	30
Compass, Watch	46
Cable, steel, 1 inch diameter	200'
Demolition Kit, Cavalry	14
Class, Reading, Magnifying	1
Nets, camouflage, fabric twine:	
36' x 44'	76
45' x 45'	4
Net, camouflage, for steel helmet	160
Pens, lettering, speedball, sets	3
Protractor, far range def 18"	4
Protractor, semi-circular, grad in degrees	14
Scale, coordinate, plastic, grad in yards, 1/20,000 & 1/62,500, & in meters 1/25,000 & 1/50,000	12
Scale, coordinate, 1/65,000	7

Medical

Kit, Medical, NCO	4
Kit, Medical, Officers	4
Kit, Medical, privates	12
Kit, 1st aid, Gas Casualty	18
Kit, 1st aid, M. V., 24 unit	17
Kit, 1st aid, M. V., 12 unit	31

Chemical Warfare

Mask, Gas, Service, lt. weight	431
Apparatus, decon, 1½-qt.	160

Ordnance

Tank, Medium, M4 w/75mm gun	21
Tank, Medium M4A1, w/76mm gun	15
Tank, Light M5A1	5
Truck, Trailer, 40-Ton Tk Trans- port M25	1
Truck, 2½-ton, 6x6 cargo	4
Truck, 3/4-ton, Weapons Carrier	4
Truck, 1/4-ton, 4x4	18
Motorcycle, H.D., Solo	5
Gun, Machine, Cal 30, M1919A4	41
Gun, Machine, Cal 50, HB, M2	6
Gun, Machine, Cal 30, M1919A5	1
Gun, Machine, Cal 30, M1917A1	4
Gun, Sub-machine, Cal 45, M1	5
Launcher, Grenade, M1	35
Launcher, Grenade, M8	8
Launcher, Rocket, AT, M1A1	33
Mount, Tripod, Cal 50, M3	1
Mount, Tripod, Cal 30, M2	35
Mount, Tripod, Cal 30, M1917A1	3
Mortar, 81mm, M1	2
Mortar, 60mm, M2	8

Ordinance (Cont'd)

Post aiming, M1	2
Projector, pyrotechnic, hand M9	15
Rifle, US Brg, Auto, M1918A2	8
Rifle, US Cal 30, M1903A4, Snipers	1
Sight, M4, for mortar	2
Binocular, M3	70
Binocular, MK21	1
Circle, Aiming, M1	4
Watch, pocket, 15 or more jewels	3
Watch, wrist, 7-9 jewels	48

Quartermaster

Bag, Carrying, Rocket	25
Can, corr, nest, 16 gal.	1
Can, corr, nest, 32 gal.	6
Can, water, 5 gal.	667
Cutter, wire	16
Case, carrying, 30 rd SMG	20
Fly, tent, wall, large	6
Heater, water, immersion type	6
Paulin, canvas, 12' x 17'	46
Stove, 1 burner, gas	16
Tent, CP	1

Signal

Axle, RL-27-A	13
Antenna, AN-45	48
Bell, LC-23	2
Blowtorch, TL-130	7
Climber, LC-6	1
Coil, C-161	2
Cord, all types	789
Chest, BC-5	3
Detector Set, SCR-625	3
Dynamotor, DM-34	25
Dynamotor, DM-35	20
Dynamotor, DM-37	36
Flashlight, TL-122	1,309
Flag Set, M-238	18
Gloves, LC-10	6
Handset, TS-13	78
Headset, HS-30	108
Headset, P-23	44
Headset, HS-19	1
Headset, HS-18	48
Head & Chest Set, HS-19	5
Holder, M-167	3
Lantern, Port., 6-volt	27
Loudspeaker, LS-3	10
Maint Equipment, ME-13	2
Mast Base, all types	106
Mast Base Bracket, MP-50	40
Mast Section, all types	2,200
Microphone, T-17	128
Microphone, T-30	114

Signal (Cont'd)

Panel, AL-140	207
Panel, AL-141	210
Panel Set, AP-30-C	1
Panel Set, AP-50-A	144
Pliers, TL-13	7
Radio Set, SCR 300	5
Radio Set, SCR 508	17
Radio Set, SCR 509	1
Radio Set, SCR 510	26
Radio Set, SCR 528	1
Radio Set, SCR 536	41
Radio Set, SCR 538	27
Radio Set, SCR 608	2
Radio Set, SCR 610	8
Radio Receiver, BC 603	6
Remote Control Unit, RM-29	1
Reel Unit RL-31	13
Switchboard Unit, EE-2	6
Switchboard, BD-72	1
Transmitter, BC-604	4
Telephone, EE-8-A	59
Terminal Strip, TM-184	9
Test Clip, CD-190	6
Test Clip, CD-478	2
Tool Equipment, All types	71
Tubes, all types	6,137
Test Set, I-176	5
Voltmeter, I-166	3
Wire Pike, MC-123	4

Enemy Losses

Personnel

	Killed (estimated)	Prisoners of War
CCA	230	728
CCB	600	1,657
Totals	830	2,385

Material Destroyed

	Tanks	SP Guns	Misc (Veh, wpns)
CCA	20	3	34
CCB	36	6	67
Div Arty	22	3	12
Air Spt	8	?	?
Totals	86	12	113

NOTES FOR APPENDIX VII

¹Army Supply Points earmarked for XIX Corps.

²Presently referred to as Combat and Field Trains. A trains consist of those vehicles of the battalion trains which are required for immediate support of combat operations. B trains consist of those vehicles which are not required for the immediate support of combat operations, and which are not included in the battalion A trains.

³Personal interview, Lt. Col. F. M. Muller, formerly Assistant G-4, 2nd Armored Division, at Fort Knox, Ky., 5 November 1943.

⁴Ibid.

⁵After Action Report, Headquarters Maintenance Battalion, 2nd Armored Division, November 1944.

⁶Ninth U.S. Army, Operations IV, Offensive in November 1944 (4th Information & Historical Service).

⁷Op. Cit., Muller.

⁸Ibid.

⁹After Action Report, 2nd Armored Division, November 1944.

¹⁰After Action Report, 17th Armored Engineer Battalion, 2nd Armored Division, November 1944.

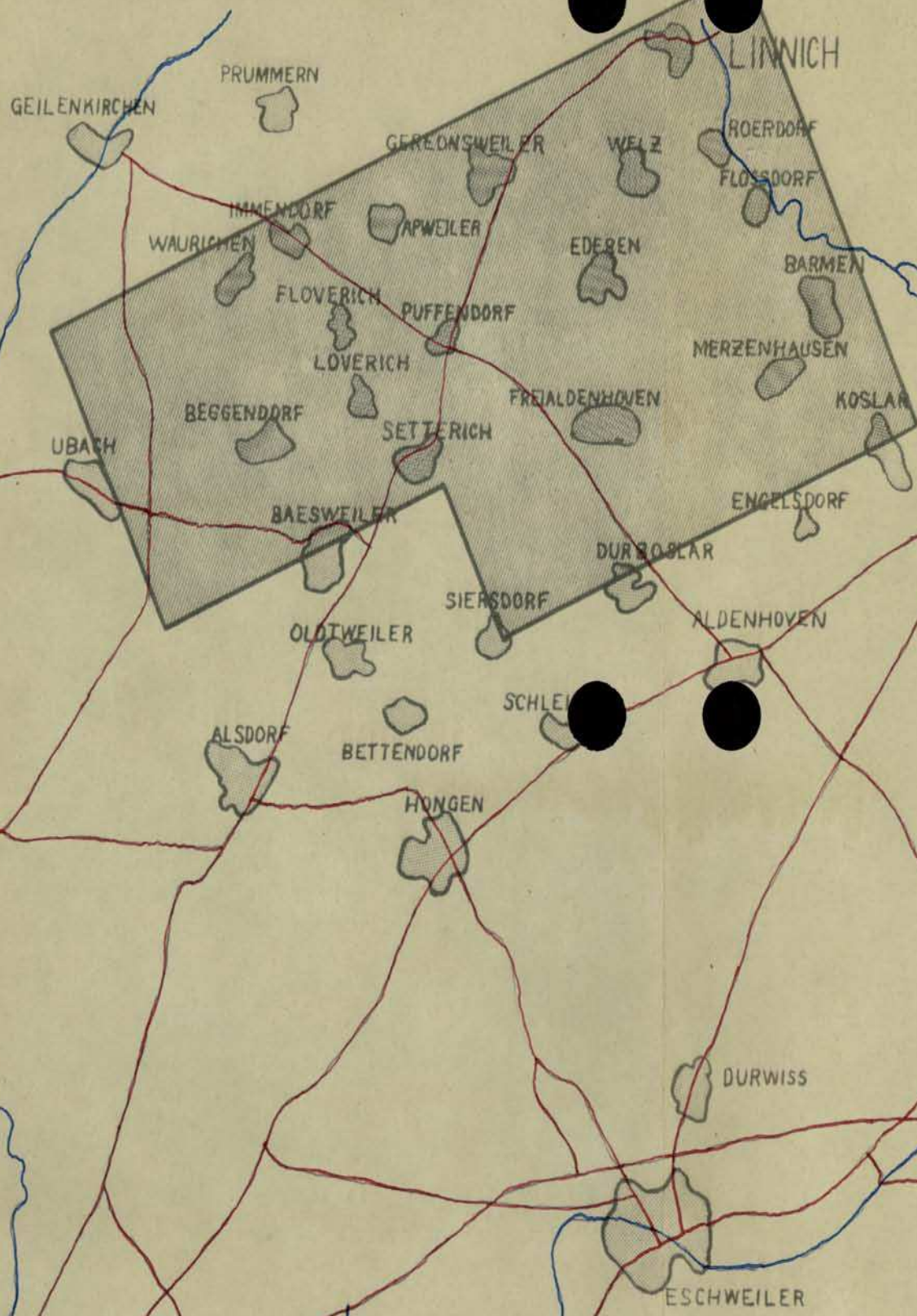
¹¹Op. Cit., 2nd Arm'd Div., November 1944.

¹²Notes, Lt. Col. F. M. Muller

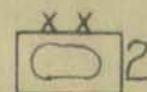
APPENDIX VIII

Maps

- A. Area of Operations
- B. Boundaries and Front Lines
- C. Attack Positions and Objectives



AREA OF OPERATIONS



16-30 NOV 44
APPENDIX VIII A

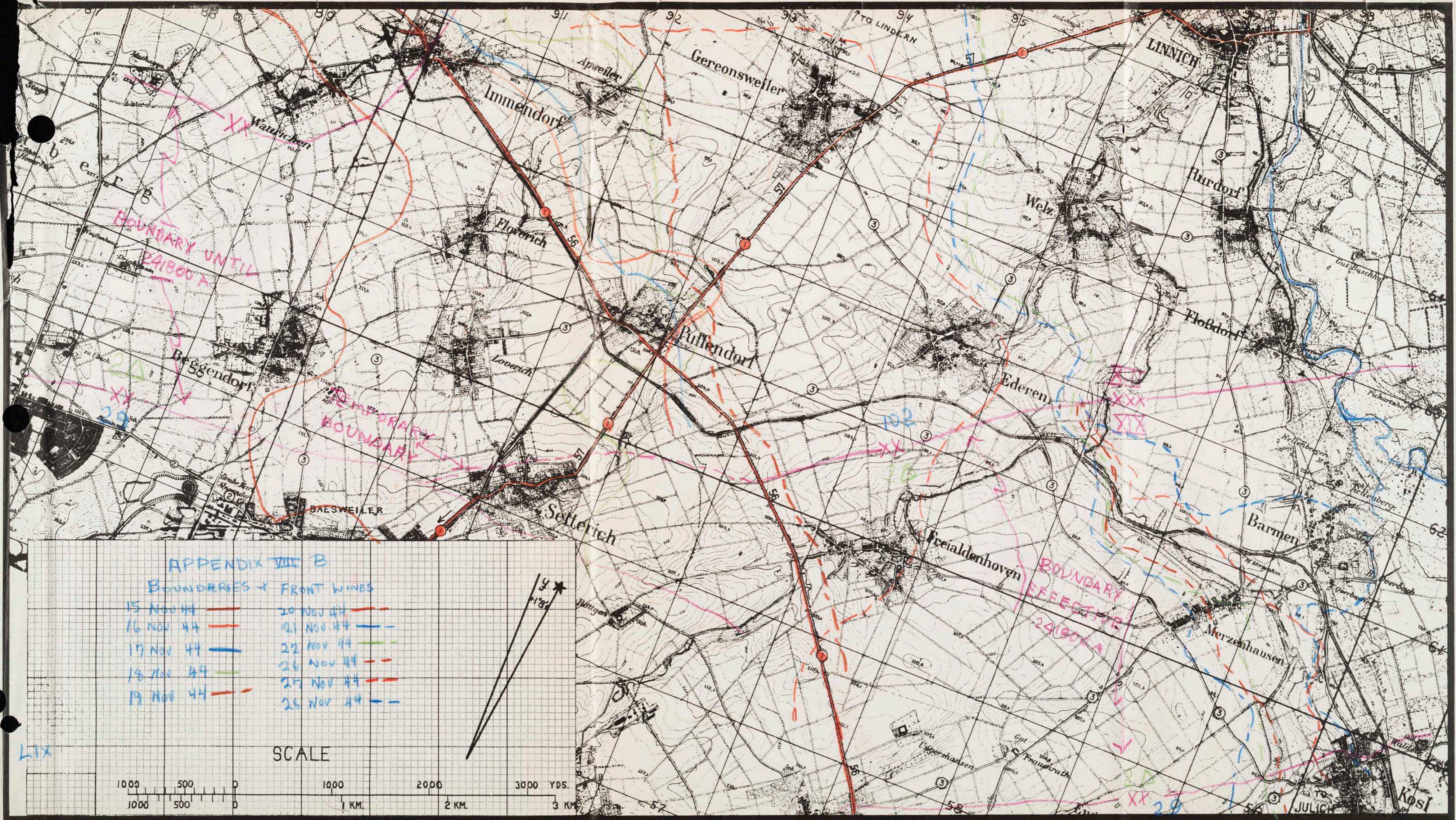
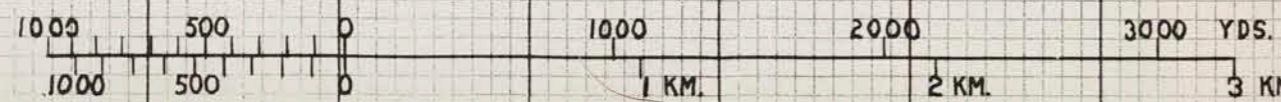
AREA COVERED
BY 1/25,000 MAP

APPENDIX VIII B

BOUNDARIES & FRONT LINES

15 NOV 44	20 NOV 44
16 NOV 44	21 NOV 44
17 NOV 44	22 NOV 44
18 NOV 44	23 NOV 44
19 NOV 44	24 NOV 44
	25 NOV 44

SCALE





APPENDIX VIII-C
ATTACK POSITIONS
OBJECTIVES
2ND ARMORED DIVISIONS 16 NOV 44

SCALE

