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TITLE: CCA 10th Armored Division from TRIER to LANDAU

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is entitled CCA 10th Armored Division from TRIER to LANDAU. However, I will write in detail of only one of the reinforced battalion teams of the Combat Command.

My purpose in this paper is to portray the operations of the reinforced battalion team in the exploitation phase. I am including references to the other battalions of the Combat Command, in order that some understanding of the Combat Command's operation in combat may be more clearly visualized by the reader.

In presenting this I have elected to give a brief background of events to bring the picture up to date and then go into a day by day report of the action, and finally to summarize.

BACKGROUND OF THE OPERATION

On 10 March 1945, the following was issued as Par. 3.c of operations directive Headquarters 3d Army:

Par. 3.c XX Corps (94, 80, 65, 26 Infantry Divisions, 10th Armored Division).

1. Maintain and improve Bridgehead in SAARLAUTERN area, prepared to launch attack northeast from Bridgehead.
2. Attack on army order from TRIER - SAARBURG Bridgehead on axis; TRIER - ST. WENDEL. Destroy enemy in zone and contact elements of Seventh Army in the vicinity of ST. WENDEL - prepared to continue the attack to northeast.
3. Maintain contact with Seventh Army on right (south) flank.

It is with sub-paragraph (2) above that this monograph is concerned.

On 11 February 1945, 3d U. S. Army attacked and cleared the SAAR-MOSELLE triangle. Then, without pause, the attack was continued across the SAAR River and north to the capture of TRIER by the 10th Armored Division on 2 March 1945. Meanwhile, other elements of 3d Army were continuing the attack north of the MOSELLE to COBLENZ.

Thus on the 10th of March, the 3d Army stood poised to strike at the remaining German resistance west of the RHINE - in the area known as the PALATINATE. This area is bordered on the north by the MOSELLE River, just south of which lies the HUNSRÜCK Mountains; on the east by the RHINE River; on the south by the RHINE River to the northern

limits of the VOSGES Mountains; on the west by the SAAR River.

The area is characterized by hilly, wooded terrain and numerous small mountain streams, many of which are unfordable. The major water obstacle in the area is the NAHE River running from southwest to northeast, generally through the middle of the area to its confluence with the RHINE, west of MAINTZ.

In the zone of XX Corps, the general plan of attack was to initiate the corps attack by the infantry divisions and to pass the 10th Armored Division through on corps order.

On 13 March 1945, CCA received Division F.O. #36, which stated in part "10th Armored Division initially in corps reserve, prepared to pass through either 26, 80, or 94 Infantry Division's zone, and continue the attack northeast. When committed, to exploit breakthrough to maximum.

CCB on the left, CCA on the right of division zone of advance in as many columns as possible, as road nets permit. Continue the attack without hesitation until final objective is reached."

The Division, less elements of CCA (3d Tank Battalion Reinforced), were in assigned assembly area in the city of TRIER, Germany. This last named element closed into TRIER at 131130 hours, having been previously committed in XII Corps zone in the vicinity of ZELL and BULLAY.

ORGANIZATION FOR COMBAT

Having received the division order, the Combat Command immediately organized its teams for combat. The troop list as made up for

CCA was as follows:

Task Force Cherry

3d Tank Battalion (-A Company + 2 Platoons D Company)
A Company 61st Armored Infantry Battalion
3d Platoon/A Company/55th Armored Engineer Battalion

Task Force Hankins

61st Armored Infantry Battalion (-A Company)
A Company 3d Tank Battalion
1st Platoon/A Company/ 55th Armored Engineer Battalion

Task Force Haskell

54th Armored Infantry Battalion (-A + C Companys + MG
Platoon/Hq Company)
B Company 21st Tank Battalion
2d Platoon/A Company/55th Armored Engineer Battalion
1st Platoon/D Company/3d Tank Battalion

Combat Command Control

Hq & Hq Company, CCA
A Company 55th Armored Engineer Battalion (-3 Platoons)
MG Platoon, Hq & Hq Company 54th A. I. B.
B Company, 796 AAA AW Battalion (-1 Platoon)
A Company, 90th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron

Direct Support

419th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105 How. S.P.)
A Company 80th Armored Medical Battalion
C Company, 132 Ordnance Maintenance Battalion

General Support

776 Field Artillery Battalion (155 How. (?) attached to
Division

420 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105 How. S.P.)

In the way of explanation, it is noted here that it was the practice in the Division to designate reinforced battalions as TASK FORCE and reinforced companys as TEAMS.

The above troop list remained in force during the entire operation with minor changes that will be noted as they appear.

After the reorganization of troops, the Command spent its time on the 13th in cleaning up and normal preparation for battle. Ammunition loads were checked and filled. Extensive maintenance of vehicles was carried on into the night. Operational rations (C, K, and 10 in 1) were issued to all vehicle crews.

ENEMY SITUATION

The division not being in contact, the only source of enemy information was the Corps G-2 Periodic Report. The following is noted to show in some measure, the general enemy troop strengths and identifications indicated in those reports:

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Strength</u>
79 Infantry Division	400
256 Infantry Division	600
416 Infantry Division	700
6 SS Mountain Division	3000

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Strength</u>
2d Mountain Division	500
719 Infantry Division	2500
Miscellaneous Units	<u>5790</u>
TOTAL	13,490

It can easily be seen that enemy units in the zone were at greatly reduced strength. In many cases the entire combat units of one division would be assembled into a single "Kampf Gruppe", battle group, and be commanded by a field grade officer.

The enemy's strength lay in three things:

1. The terrain favored the defender.
2. He had large amounts of artillery, mortars and anti-tank guns.
3. He had fine anti-tank "Bazooka" type weapons (i.e. the Panzer Jaust, a single shot type, Rocket launcher approximately 3.9 CM similar to our own rocket launches).

14 MARCH 1945

All units of the Combat Command continued maintenance and rehabilitation. Units instituted a program for the training and integration of replacements into crews and squads.

Combat Command placed on a 3-1/2 hour alert to move to attack in corps zone.

Tank status report of the Combat Command for this date was as follows:

	<u>Operative</u>	<u>Repair</u>	<u>Losses</u>
Tank (M-4A3) 75 mm	30	7	0
Tank (M-4A3 E8) 76 mm	25	4	0
Tank (M-5 AL) 37 mm	18	2	0
Assault Gun (M-4A3) 105 mm	13	0	0

15 MARCH 1945

Units continued maintenance and training. Alert changed to 1 hour at 0230 hours.

Commanders made reconnaissance of routes to attack position during daylight and contacted commanders of the Infantry Division Units in contact.

March orders and march tables sent to the units of the Division at 2300 hours.

16 MARCH 1945

The Combat Command received the march orders from division at 0100 that stated in substance as follows:

"No change in mission, 10th Armored Division marches, IP 160300 A, pass through 80th and 94th Infantry Divisions at daylight.

CCA - March on route GREEN from TRIER to L.D., attack east through 80th Infantry Division along L.D., break into multiple columns as soon as possible."

The Combat Command column moved at 0340 hours. The march was uneventful and the teams halted in previously selected assembly areas just after daylight.

Task Force Cherry - 3d Tank Battalion Reinforced

Team Brown (B/3+) made first contact with elements of the 318th Infantry Regiment at 0857. Due to the dispositions of the regiment, the team was not able to attack until 1422.

At 1422 Team Davis (A/61st+) attacked south from WALDHOLZBACH and cleared MITLOSHEIM, meeting only token resistance from small arms fire.

As soon as Team Davis had cleared MITLOSHEIM sufficiently, Team Brown followed by Team Wall (C/3+) attacked northeast from the town to RAPPWEILER. The town was not defended heavily and Team Brown progressed rapidly through the town and continued the attack to THAILEN. This town was defended by a reinforced infantry company and the Team was forced to deploy to capture the town. Three MK IV tanks were knocked out and four AT Guns (75 mm) were destroyed by tank and artillery fire. Approximately 60 prisoners of war were taken.

The team regrouped rapidly and moved on the town of NOSWENDEL, attacking and capturing the town by 1813 hours. After consolidating positions, Team Brown continued movement toward WADERN where the team was ordered to hold advance for the night.

In the meantime, Team Davis had attacked south from MITLOSHEIM toward NIEDERLOSHEIM. Resistance in this town was not severe and the town was quickly cleared. Attacking northeast from NEIDERLOSHEIM, the team ran into a series of defended road blocks in a heavily wooded area. Progress through these obstacles was slow but steady. The

team progressed until it reached the outskirts of WEIERWEILER where a blown bridge balked entrance to the town.

The enemy defending the obstacle withdrew after Armored Infantry supported by tank fire moved in on the town. Much time was lost in passing the obstacle and the team was ordered to hold up for the night.

Task Force Hankins - attacking from WEISKIRCHEN reached OBER MORSHOLZ where they held for the night.

17 MARCH 1945

Task Force Cherry

Team Brown and Team Wall attacked at 0705 from vicinity of NOSWENDEL toward WADERN. At WADERN they found the two bridges blown out. Immediate reconnaissance was made and a bridge was found intact at DAGSTUHL over one stream and a ford through another. Team Wall crossed, followed by Team Brown and attacked the town of LOCKWEILER. The town and its approaches were covered by tank, artillery and anti-tank fire. The enemy tanks withdrew as the attack pressed home and four anti-tank guns were destroyed. Team Wall continued advance, bypassing enemy resistance while Team Brown cleared the town. Team Wall continued east on north side of the PRIMS River to attack KRETTNICH. However, a bridge was blown over the river and vehicles could not form the stream. The armored infantry of Team Wall attacked across the stream and secured KRETTNICH at 1620. They were later relieved by elements of the 317 Infantry Regiment, 80th Infantry Division.

Reconnaissance again disclosed an intact bridge over the PRIMS southeast of DAGSTUHL and it was seized immediately by Team Davis.

Team Davis had moved earlier in the day from WEIERWEILER through BARDENBACH and then north through NOSWENDEL to join the column.

At 2030, the team commanders were assembled at the Battalion Command Post at DAGSTUHL and given the initial axis and objectives for the next day. Continue attack south over the bridge to ALTLAND and UBER - ROTH. Time of attack 180100.

Task Force Hankins

Attacking from OBER MORSHOLZ, advanced through the towns of WEDERN, RATHEN, BUWEILER and seized KASTEL on PRIMS River.

18 MARCH 1945

Task Force Cherry

All teams of the task force completed refueling and reorganization prior to midnight. The attacking eschelons were ready and moved out at 0100. The attack was aided by the use of searchlights for artificial moonlight.

Team Davis led out from his position across the PRIMS River attacking south past dug-in infantry to ALTLAND continuing east and south to UBER-ROTH. His route of advance was covered with heavy artillery fire. However, in most cases, the fires were unobserved concentrations and did not inflict severe casualties on the team. The enemy was completely surprised by the night attack and many left

positions that would have been difficult to attack in daylight and surrendered to the elements following Team Davis. Interrogation of these men revealed that they had not expected us to attack prior to first light. Many of the prisoners of war were actually terrified by the movement and the fire of the tanks during the night.

Team Davis reached and cleared UBER-ROTH at first light. Here Team Brown leapfrogged past Team Davis and continued the attack. The night attack had ruptured the thin crust of defenses the Germans had relied upon to effect his delay on the PRIMS River, and Team Brown took full advantage of the resultant confusion in the enemy rear areas. Moving at top speed, catching the troops in the rear areas completely by surprise. Team Brown advanced through NEIDERHOFEN, DAUTWEILER, HASBORN, THELEY and THOLEY. Team Brown had captured THOLEY by 0945. The enemy resistance was spotty and only the towns were defended.

The enemy attacked the column at THELEY with 7 MK IV tanks. Of these, five were destroyed by fire from our own medium tanks; the remaining two got away. Of approximately 150 Infantry supporting the tanks, 100 were captured, the remaining either killed or wounded.

The elements following the lead teams received very little resistance from by-passed enemy and for the most part, these passed-up enemy troops surrendered quickly.

Team Wall passed through at THOLEY and led in the attack on ALSWEILER. Resistance was considerably stronger in this town consisting of anti-tank fire from PAK 40's (75 mm towed AT Gun) and 88 mm

Dual purpose AT Guns. Also considerable volume of small arms fire and supporting mortar and artillery fire. The enemy troops were in strength, but poorly organized for defense and the town soon fell to the insistent pounding of tank cannon and advance of armored infantry.

By 1350, the town was captured with some 400 prisoners of war, including a Major General and some 30 of his higher ranking staff officers and commanders.

Team Davis passed through Team Wall at ALSWEILER and continued the attack on WINTERBACH. This town and its approaches were defended by dug-in enemy infantry and the roads covered by AT weapons. By 1600 the town was secured and Team Brown passed through to attack ST. WENDEL, the corps objective.

The team made good progress initially until reaching the high ground overlooking the city.

Here, due to the heavy artillery and mortar fire, the column was forced to deploy off the road and forward progress was slowed considerably.

The team continued to advance until reaching the town of BREITEN at about 1820. This town is a suburb of ST. WENDEL and there is no break between the buildings of the two. On reaching the town, a substantial road block was encountered and the resistance behind the road block stiffened. The team lost its forward momentum when Lt. Brown, the team commander, was wounded by mortar fragment through the face.

Team Brown was then commanded by Lt. Barnes and was ordered to

maintain pressure on the town. The Task Force Commander ordered Team Wall to move cross-country to the right (south) of ST. WENDEL, and attack from a new direction. Team Wall succeeded in his cross-country advance and entered the southern section of ST. WENDEL after dark. The teams halted active operations and sent out patrols during the night to obtain more definite information on enemy installations in the town.

The Task Force had advanced 25 kilometers and captured 10 towns and 1004 prisoners of war in 20 hours of operation.

Task Force Hankins

Attacked at 0125 across the bridge at KASTEL, attacking south to METTNICK and PRIMSTAL, and then east to SELBACH. After taking SELBACH, advance continued southeast toward corps objective of ST. WENDEL, through the towns of GRONIG, OBERTHAL and IMWEILER. At BLIESEN, 6 kilometers northeast of the objective, the Task Force was held up by stiffening enemy resistance and advance was held here for the period.

19 MARCH 1945

Task Force Cherry

During the night the Task Force refueled and filled up on basic ammunition loads and by 0400, all elements were ready to move.

At 0530, infantry from 80th Infantry Division joined Team Wall. Together they moved forward, cleaning out the town as far as the railroad station against light resistance. Team Barnes and Team Davis attacked from the western edge of the town at 0615 and by 0815 the

objective was secured.

Instructions were received to continue without delay toward KAISERSLAUTERN.

Team Barnes led the attack southeast from ST. WENDEL. Progress was slow initially due to the large volume of fire received from AT Guns and artillery defending the high ground east of ST. WENDEL. A coordinated attack dislodged the enemy infantry dug in on the high ground. Team Barnes reduced a defended road block and Team Davis passed through to continue the attack. When the column had proceeded on about 4 kilometers from ST. WENDEL, it passed through a forested area. In this forest were large piles of German ammunition dispersed throughout the woods. When Team Davis had gotten well into the woods the piles started to explode. This caused such a hazard that the rear elements of the task force were forced to halt until the explosions ceased.

Team Davis continued despite the explosions and succeeded after a short fight in capturing WERSCHWEILER. In this town, Captain Davis captured a German Technical Sergeant who confessed, after interrogation, that it was he who had set off the charges that had exploded the ammunition dump. Davis also captured approximately 300 prisoners in the town. The town was secured at 1420 hours.

Team Wall took the lead and led the attack east out of WERSCHWEILER. It was from this point on that all resistance became merely token resistance. The enemy now had certainly lost control of the lower

units and most companies and battalions had no idea where the next higher headquarters was located.

Team Wall moved so rapidly at this point, by-passing the towns of ALTENKIRCHEN, KROTTLEBACH, PETERSHEIM, on a cross-country route, that the following elements of the Task Force lost contact with the tail of Team Wall.

Wall's advance was so rapid covering a distance of 10 kilometers in less than one hour, that a large concentration of German soldiers in OHMBACH surrendered without firing a round in return.

The action was a new one to the Task Force and worthy of mention. After arriving within sight of the town, Captail Wall, the team commander, maneuvered his tanks in such a manner as to appear to the defenders of the town as a much larger force. Then he had a Third Army Psychological Warfare team go into action. This team consisted of a Staff Sergeant (who spoke fluent German) and a driver with a 3/4 ton weapons carrier mounting a public address system.

The Sergeant addressed the German soldiers in the town and told them to surrender within a specified time limit or else the town would be destroyed.

When the time limit was nearly up, out came the German soldiers with white flags and hands over heads.

The reported number of prisoners taken was 700. The prisoners of war were lined up and marched to the rear, escorted by two men in a 1/4 ton truck.

The rear elements of the Task Force finally caught up to Team Wall and advance was resumed. Team Wall still maintained the lead, by-passing all towns in his path in order to avoid road blocks set up in the streets of the towns.

The force moved rapidly through BRUCKEN and SAND; about 1500 yards east of SAND a blown bridge was detoured by moving the column down a railroad, then moving back on the axis of advance just west of MIESAU. Two kilometers south of this town, the column turned east on the main road from SAARBRUCKEN and SARREGUEMINES to KAISERSLAUTERN. The column was now about 25 kilometers west of KAISERSLAUTERN. The column advanced rapidly east through HAUPTSTUHL to LANDSTUHL. There was no resistance in these towns or along the route until reaching LANDSTUHL when some small arms fire was received on the flanks of the column from the woods, to the south of the road. Team Wall passed through LANDSTUHL at 1945 hours and ran into a road block that was defended about 2 kilometers east of the town.

Colonel Cherry, the Task Force Commander, decided to hold the advance until refueling could be completed on all elements of the Task Force.

The Task Force had advanced some 38 kilometers during the day and had taken 14 towns including ST. WENDEL, and had captured a reported 1498 prisoners of war.

During the day, 10th Armored Division Headquarters had issued the following instructions:

"All units continue the attack without halt until reaching the RHINE. Division has XX Corps approval to operate in XXI Corps Zone (Seventh Army), where necessary. Mission CCA, continue the attack east in zone, by-pass to south of and contain KAISERSLAUTERN, seize and hold any intact bridge over the RHINE in zone."

Task Force Hankins

Attacked northeast from BLIESEN after objective (ST. WENDEL) secured by Task Force Cherry. Reached GLAN-MÜHLBACH at the end of the day.

20 MARCH 1945

Task Force Cherry

During the night, the Task Force became acutely aware of the fact that our presence so deep in enemy territory was a complete surprise to the enemy. Three enemy convoys ran into our position from the direction of HOMBURG.

At 0100 hours, Lt. Curtis, the Battalion Transportation Platoon Leader, ran headlong into a convoy of German vehicles in the vicinity of VOGELBACK. He was leading empty gas trucks to the rear and being escorted by a platoon of light tanks (M-5).

The lead tanks of the escort opened fire, destroying a staff car and 4 enemy trucks, the remainder of the column withdrew.

Refueling was finished prior to daylight and at 0755, the column moved out again.

Team Wall had reported that the enemy to his direct front had moved during the early morning hours toward KAISERSLAUTERN.

Team Davis led the column toward the objective passing through KINDSBACH and then continuing on toward KAISERSLAUTERN through a 10 kilometer stretch with forest on both sides of the highway. This road was not strongly defended and the greatest obstacle to movement was the large number of motor and horse transport that air armed reconnaissance had caught on the roads. The tactical air had been quite active for the past two days and according to the Forward Air Controller working with us, was having a field day with the retreating German columns.

By 1030, after a brisk fire fight with approximately eight 20 mm anti-aircraft guns, the crews of which were either all killed or captured, the head of the column started on a southern by-pass of KAISERSLAUTERN. The column moved along the main railroad line that runs along the southern edge of the city, and only three large undefended road blocks retarded the progress. By 1200 hours, the column had cleared KAISERSLAUTERN and was proceeding east on the main road to HOCHSPEYER. The road was bordered on both sides by dense forest that was a portion of the large forested, hilly area that lies between KAISERSLAUTERN and the RHINE River plain, a distance, airline, of approximately 17 miles.

At HOCHSPEYER, the advance was halted by anti-tank fire from 88 mm dual purpose guns and 20 mm flak guns.

Progress through this area was extremely slow as armored infantry had to dismount and clear the edges of the woods to protect the tanks from Bazooka fire. The column finally broke through to the town of FRANKENSTEIN.

The road forked here, the main road going due east to BAD DURKHEIM and a secondary road turning southeast to NEUSTADT. This last road was assigned to the Task Force and is a narrow twisting road that follows a mountain stream to the RHINE plain.

The column turned south on this road at 1420 hours, and initial progress was quite rapid, large number of German soldiers coming out of the hills to surrender at the approach of the armored column.

At 1707 hours, the column was held up by a large crater and a blown bridge. It took nearly one hour for a tank dozer and engineers to improve the route sufficiently for the passage of the column.

The column moved out again at approximately 1800 hours and moved rapidly to the town of LAMBRECHT, closing there at 1959 hours just twenty minutes after the last enemy soldiers had withdrawn to the southeast toward NEUSTADT.

All teams were refueled and reorganized by 2230 and it was decided to attack NEUSTADT at 0100 hours. The plan was to lead out with Team Barnes and cooperate with a battalion of the 317th Infantry.

The team had advanced 47 kilometers during the day, reaching KAISERSLAUTERN and capturing six towns with a bag of 1633 prisoners of war.

Task Force Hankins

Crossed GIAN MULBACH and moved rapidly east and south to the Autobahn. Continued attack in early morning aided by the use of searchlights and at 0645 hours, moved on the Autobahn, advanced east toward KAISERSLAUTERN until ordered to change route and follow Task Force Cherry. Followed Task Force Cherry until RJ at Q 176934, where Task Force followed by Task Force Haskell attached toward BAD DURKHEIM.

21 MARCH 1945

Team Barnes moved out for NEUSTADT at 0111 hours. The team moved slowly without opposition until 0236 hours, when a defended road block was encountered. The action was slow and entailed the movement of infantry to outflank the obstacle and engineers to remove the block. At 0340 hours, the obstacle was cleared and the column moved forward again.

At 0432 hours, another road block was encountered. The fire covering the block was extremely heavy, consisting of heavy caliber artillery fire plus AT Rockets and mortars. Progress was extremely slow against stubborn, determined resistance. The team cleared the obstacle and at 0645, encountered another road block at the edge of the city. Armored Infantry flanked the road block and went on into the buildings at the edge of the town and cleared the enemy snipers from the buildings. At 0710 the road block was cleared.

The infantry of the 317th Infantry was deployed as follows: one company to the high hill mass on either side of the city, and one company went on into town to assist in clearing the buildings of enemy riflemen.

Progress through the city was very slow. Every block was defended and all the streets had road blocks. Each road block was properly defended and the tanks were only able to support by fire, the fight of the infantry, both armored and those of the 317th Infantry Regiment, 80th Infantry Division.

At 1202 hours, a road block was encountered so heavily covered with fire that the Engineers could not approach it to place their charges. This block gave considerable trouble, being extremely large and without possible by-pass. Finally after four hours of bitter house to house combat, the block was forced and the column again moved forward at 1626 hours. At this time, all the command echelons in the division were snapping at the heels of the Task Force Commander. The pressure was on to speed up the advance.

The Combat Commander Brigadier General Edwin Fibern entered the town and personally contacted the Task Force Commander and conferred with him on the situation. The General closely watched the progress of the attack, following closely behind the lead tank team.

Approximately 300 yards further along the street, another road block was encountered. Immediate reconnaissance disclosed another route around the obstacle and the tanks were withdrawn to go on the

by-pass. The infantry, not certain of the tanker's action, started to pull out and move to the rear. A near ^{riot} ~~route~~ ²¹⁰² was short stopped by the action of Lt. Col. Henry T. Cherry, Battalion Commander of the 3d Tank Battalion. Colonel Cherry, sensing the uncertainty of the infantry, quickly took personal command of the leading groups of infantry, and led them on the by-pass that routed the team through the heart of the city. It was inspiring to see him sauntering erectly down the middle of the street with two columns of Infantry following him, but clinging closely to the doorways. The time was now approximately 1730 hours.

The tanks followed and the advance through the city continued steadily, of slowly. At 1809 hours, just after the center of the city had been passed, Lt. Col. Cherry was wounded severely by a sniper. This seemed to touch off a chain of events. The next 20 minutes were some of the wildest ever witnessed on a battlefield. Captain Wall, commanding C/3 was killed by sniper fire. Lt. Barnes, commanding B/3, was mortally wounded in the same manner. Within the next few minutes, Lt. Wherley and Lt. Phillips of C Company were also hit and C Company was commanded by S/Sergeant Belak, who drove the team on through the town. In B Company, Lt. Fritz, who took command after Lt. Barnes was hit, was also wounded and B Company passed to the command of the Motor Officer, Lt. Sullivan, the only remaining officer in the company.

Despite these losses, the Task Force drove through the town and

outposted the far side of the town by 1830 hours. At this time the Task Force was ordered to halt and reorganize during the night. Elements of the 26th Infantry Division had contacted the Task Force and took over the responsibility of cleaning out the town.

Task Force Hankins

Attacking from west of BAD DÜRKHEIM cleared the town and continued east until receiving orders to turn southeast with the mission of capturing the SPEYER Bridge. Turned south at Q 39179, attacking in two columns; reached DANNSTADT.

Task Force Haskell

Followed Task Force Hankins initially, turned south at Q 357965, reached vicinity of NIEDERKIRCHEN.

22 MARCH 1945

Task Force Thackston (Cherry)

At 0703 hours, Team Davis moved out on the road leading southeast toward SPEYER. When the column was about two kilometers from NEUSTADT it received heavy anti-tank fire from the woods approximately two kilometers to the left flank of the column. The two lead tanks were knocked out immediately and heavy concentration of mortar fire began taking toll of the Infantry in the column. Team Davis moved to defiladed positions and reorganized for a continued attack while heavy concentrations of friendly artillery covered the suspected area. It was decided to smoke the woods heavily and dash for SPEYER. While these fires were being prepared, CCA was halted and ordered

to turn south. At 1103 hours, the Task Force received the mission of attacking south to LANDAU. The column moved out at 1435 hours with a covering force of light tanks (M-5 A1) leading. The advance was rapid with only slight resistance encountered until the covering force reached sight of the city of LANDAU. Here the column was stopped by the fire of 88 mm AT Guns.

The column deployed rapidly. Team Davis and Team Sullivan (B/3) each deployed on one side of the road, advancing until the guns were over-run. One tank was lost by Panzer Faust fire, but no losses were sustained from the two 88 mm AT Guns covering the road.

The column moved on into LANDAU without further opposition at 1851 hours.

Here the Task Force was ordered to halt and send patrols south to contact either elements of Seventh U.S. Army or First French Army. On the next day, the patrols made contact with both.

Task Forces Hankins and Haskell

Task Forces continued the attack toward SPEYER Bridge. Received order from CCA to cease eastward movement to allow 12th Armored Division to attack south. Task Forces turned due south and reached HAFSTOCK and BOHL.

* * *

SUMMARY

In the preceding pages, it has been shown how one Combat Command operated in the exploitation. I have tried to show the picture in

such a way as to bring out how the Combat Commander accomplished his mission. It is not by the Combat Command fighting as a large single unit, but rather the subordinate elements of that Combat Command executing given missions that accomplished the mission of the Combat Command.

Each of the subordinate units executes its assigned task and the sum total of these tasks equal the Combat Command task or mission.

In the execution of their tasks, these units in CCA employed many different tactics.

In some cases these tactics were successful, in other cases, not so successful. This is a point that should be borne in any leaders mind, that just because a certain pattern, used once, produces certain results, it should not be expected to produce those results everytime and under all conditions. One of the factors present in this operation that contributed to its success, was the high caliber of combat leadership in all echelons. This factor is a prime necessity in any unit, in order that the highest results may be obtained.

I would like to recall to the reader at this time, that the enemy was not a determined defender, but in most cases, an enemy of low morale whose mission was to delay. This last is important, I think, because we are all prone to rate our success as being accomplished against great odds.

To enumerate all of the tactics employed by the one battalion in our discussion would be impossible in a paper of this size inasmuch

as each would pose a scope for a paper of equal length.

In any future armored operation, the tactics employed in this operation might well apply. The application of proven tactical principles coupled with aggressive leadership and mental flexibility, cannot fail to produce victory on the battlefield.

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