

INSTRUCTOR TRAINING DIVISION  
GENERAL INSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT  
THE ARMORED SCHOOL  
Fort Knox, Kentucky

ADVANCED OFFICERS CLASS #1

DATE 1 May 1948

MILITARY MONOGRAPH

TITLE: The 10th Armored Division in the Crailsheim  
Operation.

SCOPE: This paper describes in considerable detail  
the operation in the vicinity of Crailsheim,  
Germany, during the period of 5-10 April 1945.  
The narrative is divided into four main phases:  
1. The preliminary period which led up to  
the operation.  
2. A detailed account of the operation  
itself.  
3. Results of the operation.  
4. An evaluation of the operation setting  
forth some of the combat lessons which can  
be learned from it.

41-66

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As the American armies closed up to, and crossed the RHINE RIVER during the month of March 1944, it became apparent that the European War was entering its final stages. However, despite the fact that the German Army was rapidly disintegrating, it was still capable of offering strong resistance along various sectors of the front during the month of April. Consequently, many units were engaged in some heavy fighting during this period, although these actions were usually rather short in duration. I shall describe in detail one such action, that of the 10th Armored Division, operating as part of VI Corps, Seventh Army, in the vicinity of ORALSHEIM, GERMANY, from 5-10 April 1944.

I. 1 APRIL TO 4 APRIL 1945--DRIVE FROM THE RHINE TO THE NECKAR

In order to give the reader a clearer picture of this action it will be necessary for me to describe briefly the events which led up to this operation. Therefore, I shall quickly cover the period of 1 April to 4 April 1945, without attempting to discuss it in detail.

The 10th Armored Division, which had been in action for about six months at this time, had been assigned to Third Army during most of its period of combat. However, upon reaching the RHINE RIVER, the Division was transferred to Seventh Army, and fought as part of VI Corps for the remainder of the war.

It would be well to point out at this time that the division was far below strength in both vehicles and men at the start of the campaign east of the RHINE. The division had been in combat continuously since 20 February 1945, and had received practically no replacements since. Combat units, especially tank and armored infantry, were on the average, at only about fifty per cent effective strength. This was to be a vital factor in the days ahead.

During the initial stages of the campaign east of the RHINE, priority of troops on the Western Front was given to the armies in the north, until after the RUHR industrial area could be reduced. Therefore Seventh Army, operating with a minimum of combat troops, was unable to launch a large scale offensive. However, Seventh Army was ordered to attack out of its bridgehead making its main effort to the east and northeast on the right flank of Third Army. Also, it was to send one corps to the southeast (Army right flank), to pave the way for an offensive into southern BAVARIA and the German National Redoubt Area, as soon as more troops were made available.

VI Corps was given the mission of driving toward the southeast, and was assigned only three divisions at this time: the 63rd and 100th Infantry Divisions, and the 10th Armored Division. The Corps plan was to spearhead the attack with the 10th Armored Division (attacking with three combat commands abreast), followed by the infantry divisions (100th Infantry Division on the right

and the 63rd Infantry Division on the left).

The 10th Armored Division plan was to attack southeast astride the NECKAR RIVER, with CCR and the 90th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron north and CCA south of the river. CCB, meanwhile, was to drive south along the RHINE until contact was made with the First French Army, then turn east and contact the remainder of the division in the vicinity of HEILBRONN.<sup>1,2</sup>

The 10th Armored passed through the infantry bridgehead on 1 April and made rapid progress at first against sporadic resistance. Corps had not anticipated having trouble near HEILBRONN, and had ordered that it be captured and the offensive continued to the southeast. By 3 April the division had closed up generally along the line of the NECKAR and JAGST RIVER, and was poised before HEILBRONN.

When CCR and the 90th Cavalry Squadron reached the JAGST RIVER, they found that all bridges across the river north of HEILBRONN had been destroyed, and heavy artillery fire was received from south of the river. CCR and 90th Cavalry were relieved by elements of the 63rd Infantry Division, and ordered to block to the east and northeast protecting the flank of the 63rd Infantry.

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<sup>1</sup>See Figure #1.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix #1 for organization of 10th Armored Division for combat.

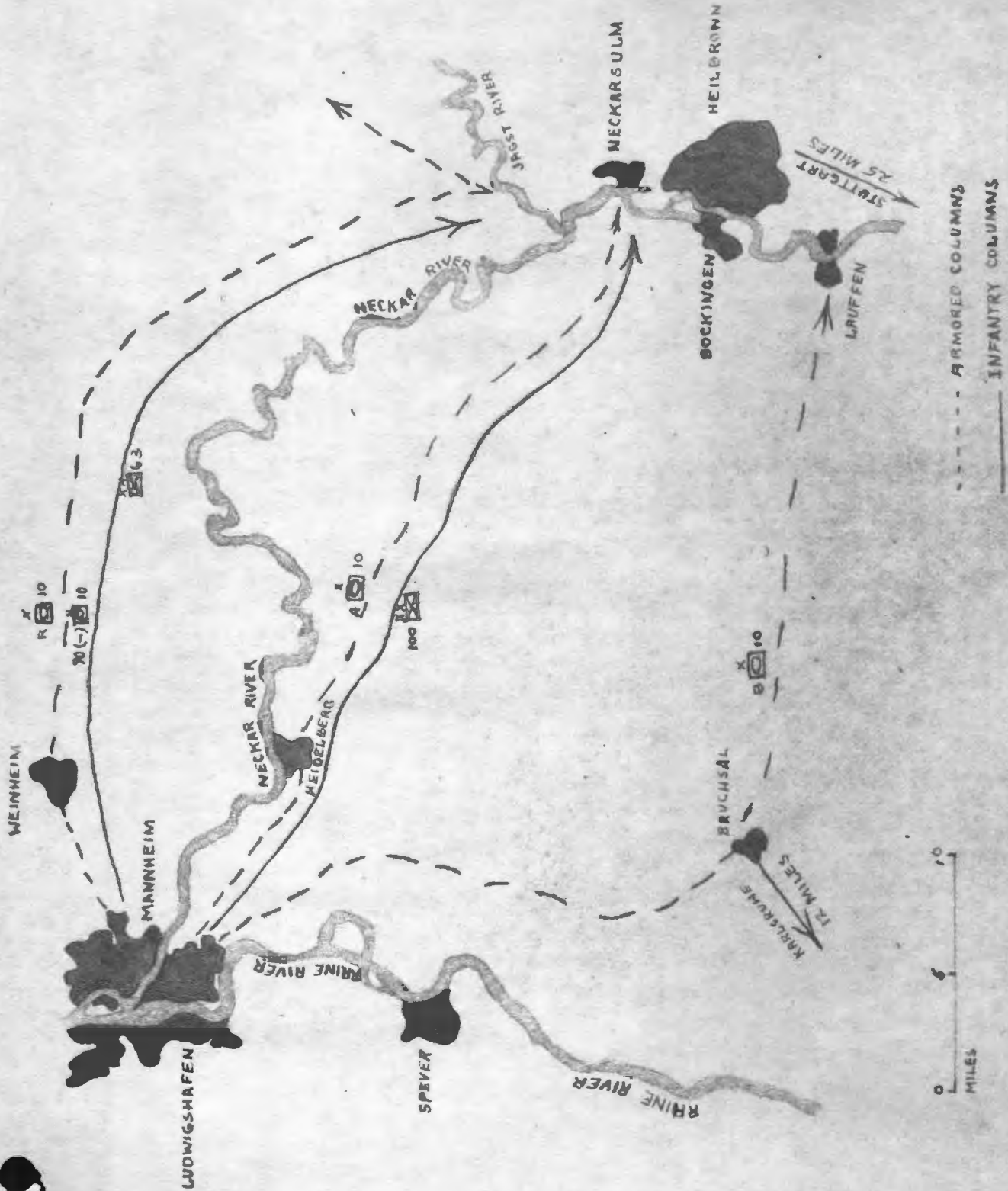


FIGURE #1 1-4 APRIL

CCA began to run into stiffening resistance west of the NECKAR opposite HEILBRONN. During the day of 3 April, and the night 3-4 April, troops of the combat command fought to reach the river and capture a bridge intact. These attempts were unsuccessful, since the enemy troops withdrew slowly, and blew all bridges as the last of their men were forced across them.

Corps attached an infantry battalion from the 100th Division to CCA to establish a bridgehead across the NECKAR just north of HEILBRONN.<sup>3</sup> This battalion crossed the river in assault boats before dawn on 4 April, and was successful at first in establishing a bridgehead against heavy resistance. However, at 0900, the battalion was counterattacked by a strong enemy force and driven almost back to the river. The battalion suffered severe casualties in this action, losing two complete infantry platoons which were cut off by the enemy attack. Since the enemy held the commanding terrain in the area, the task of establishing a bridgehead was extremely difficult. As soon as the bridgehead was large enough, a bridge was to be constructed under the supervision of the 10th Armored Division Engineer for the passage of CCA.

CCB was also meeting stiff resistance, and was moving slowly toward the river in an attempt to capture a bridge in the vicinity of LAUFFEN.

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<sup>3</sup>3rd Bn, 398th Inf Regt.

Thus it became apparent that the enemy was determined to defend HEILBRONN, and was forming a defensive line along the NECKAR and JAGST RIVERS. This line ran from positions south of HEILBRONN, north to the junction of the JAGST and NECKAR, then west along the JAGST to its southward bend. As early as 4 April it was determined that elements of five German divisions, and several miscellaneous battle groups were dug in along this line.<sup>4</sup> It is understandable why the German high command decided to defend this area vigorously. HEILBRONN, in addition to being the gateway to BAVARIA and UPPER AUSTRIA, was also the key point in the vital communications network connecting HEILBRONN and STUTTGART with MUNICH and NURNBERG.

The terrain in the area also favored the defense. In addition to the many rivers which were formidable obstacles, the country was hilly and dotted with wooded areas, and the road net was generally poor, consisting mainly of secondary roads. The countryside was dotted with small towns and villages which made excellent defensive strong points, and were difficult to bypass because of the character of the terrain.

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<sup>4</sup>17th SS Division, 2nd Mountain Division, and 246th, 198th, and 553rd Infantry Divisions. See Appendix #2 for complete enemy order of battle.

This unexpected enemy buildup caused VI Corps to change its plans on 4 April. The new plan of attack was as follows:<sup>5</sup>

1. 10th Armored Division--attack to the east, seize and hold the line ROTHENBURG-NETTRINGEN-CRAILSHEIM-SCHWABISCH HALL, thereby cutting the escape routes from HEILRONN and surrounding the strong concentration of enemy troops attempting to hold the NECKAR-JAGST line. The division was ordered by corps to attack in the following manner: CCR attack east from its present position, CCA to cross the NECKAR north of HEILRONN and attack east, CCB to seize the bridge at LAUFEN and advance to the east.

2. 100th Infantry Division (closed up along NECKAR behind 10th Armored)--cross the NECKAR RIVER, attack east reducing HEILRONN, and continuing attack until all enemy troops in the area were destroyed.

3. 63rd Infantry Division (had been following the 10th Armored astride the NECKAR RIVER)--force a crossing of the JAGST RIVER near its junction with the NECKAR, attack south until contact was made with 100th Infantry Division, then turn east and aid in the destruction of the enemy troops trapped in the area.

In order to put the plan into effect the following orders were issued by the 10th Armored Division on 4 April:

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<sup>5</sup>See Figure #2.



GRAD  
MEMPHIS

ASSEMSTADT

LADEL SHIM

SSR - 5 APRIL

TO CIV SON - 5 APRIL

NECKAR RIVER

MOSBACH

WALDUNNLEBACH

NECKARBUZ

BRIDGE #1

NECKAR RIVER

RAPPENAU

BIBERRICH

NECKARSULM

BOCKINGEN

BRIDGE #2

WEILBRONN

LIMPFER

BRIDGE #3

ARMORED

10 TM

SCHWABISCH  
HALL

RODED TO DIVISION OBJECTIVE - 5 APRIL

BACKING

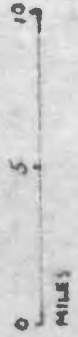
DIVISION

CRRILSHEIM

WETTRINGEN

ROTHENBURG

OBJECTIVE - 4 APRIL



4-5 APRIL

FIGURE #2

1. CCR--pass through the 63rd Infantry Division on 5 April, attack east, and seize and hold the line ROTHENBURG-WETTINGEN.

2. 90th Cavalry--pass through the 63rd Infantry Division on 5 April, and reconnoiter in force to the line ROTHENBURG-CRAILSHEIM.

3. CCA--cross Bridge #2 when completed, and attack to the east to seize the line CRAILSHEIM-WETTINGEN.<sup>6</sup> Because of the precarious condition of the bridgehead at this time, CCA was also ordered to prepare alternate plans to cross on a bridge held by the 63rd Infantry Division in the vicinity of MOSSBACH (Bridge #1), or over Bridge #3 in the event CCB was able to capture it intact. In any case the mission was to remain the same.

4. CCB--cross on Bridge #3 if captured intact, and attack to the east to seize and hold the line SCHWABISCH-HALL-CRAILSHEIM. Also to prepare alternate plans to cross on either Bridge #1 or #2, with the mission remaining the same. Because of the resistance being encountered, it was considered extremely unlikely that the bridge would be taken intact.

Throughout the day of 4 April, the situation remained fairly static with our forces advancing painfully slow, and suffering heavy casualties from an enemy who was resisting bitterly. Several times during the day the 10th Armored Division requested permission from corps to cross CCA over Bridge #1 in order to

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<sup>6</sup>See Figure #2. Bridges discussed as possible crossing sites will be referred to as Bridges #1, #2, and #3.

keep up the momentum of the attack. However, corps refused because it believed that Bridge #2 could be completed on the morning of 5 April.

Since it had been necessary to reinforce the bridgehead troops with more elements of the 100th Division, the bridgehead was removed from 10th Armored Division control during the day.

## II. 5 APRIL--THE ATTACK REGAINS MOMENTUM<sup>7</sup>

### A. CCR and 90th Cavalry Squadron.

The 90th Cavalry moved out from the vicinity of WALDMULBACH at 0600 on 5 April followed by CCR, which had assembled in the vicinity of ADELSHEIM. After passing through the 63rd Infantry Division, the 90th moved rapidly, and by 1000 had reached ASSAMSTADT, after encountering practically no resistance on the way. The squadron immediately deployed, and established contact with what seemed to be an enemy MLR along the line ALTHAUSEN-STUPPACH-RENGERSHAUSEN.

CCR passed through the 90th Cavalry in the north at 1430 and quickly seized the towns of STUPPACH and HACHTAL, while the 90th cleared RENGERSHAUSEN and developed considerable resistance at DORZBACH. As usual, what resistance was encountered centered around roads and towns, and consisted of enemy infantry armed with small arms and panzerfaust.

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<sup>7</sup>See Figures #2 and #3.

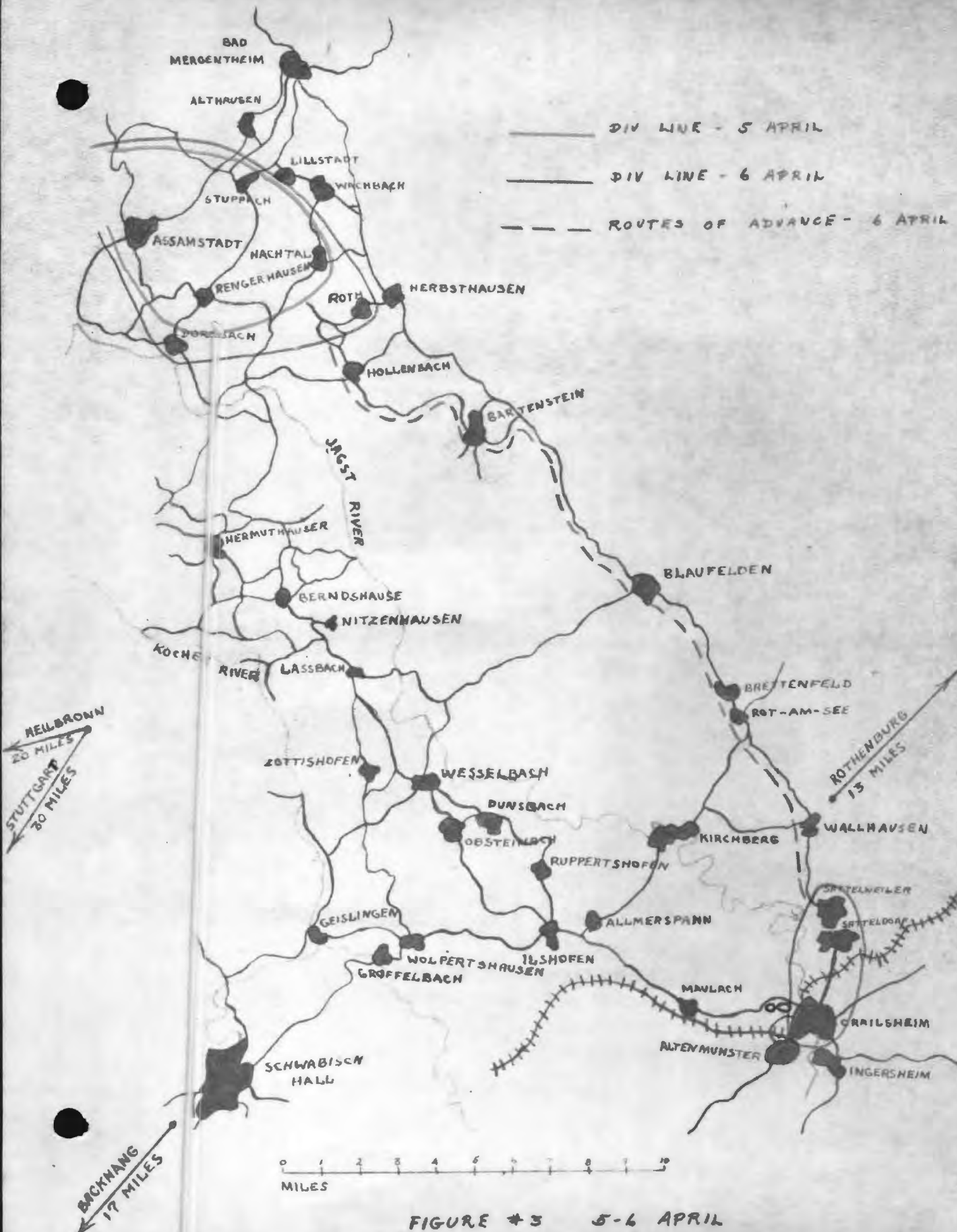


FIGURE #3 5-6 APRIL

At 2100, both units were ordered by division to stop and consolidate their positions for the night. At this time their line ran generally ASSAMSTADT-RENGERSHAUSEN-HACHTAL-STUPPACH. During the night, CCR positions were attacked by small groups of SS troops from BAD MERGENTHEIM and ROTHEMBURG.

B. CCA

The combat command, assembled in the vicinity of BIBERACH, was notified on the morning of 5 April by division that the construction of Bridge #2 had not as yet been started. CCA was ordered to have one task force ready to move on fifteen minutes' notice to cross Bridge #1 and attack southeast toward the CCA objective. The remainder of the combat command was to follow as soon as possible. Shortly thereafter, permission was obtained from corps to cross Bridge #1, but the CCA objective was changed to seizing and holding the line CRAILSHEIM-BACKMANG.

CCA moved out at 1130 in the order TF Hankins, TF Riley, and TF Roberts.<sup>8</sup> The plan was for TF Hankins to lead to CRAILSHEIM, then for TF Riley to pass through and turn west toward SCHWABISCH HALL while Hankins blocked the shoulder at CRAILSHEIM.

TF Hankins contacted CCR and the 90th Cavalry in the vicinity of ASSAMSTADT at 1830 after a march of more than 45 miles. It was necessary for the task force to stop here to refuel and to coordinate the passage through the 90th Cavalry lines. At

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<sup>8</sup>For composition of task forces see Appendix #1.

2000 TF Hankins passed through the 90th Cavalry at REGENERSHAUSEN and began the drive toward GRAILSHEIM. This was made extremely difficult because of the poor road net in the area, and because it was accomplished during the hours of darkness. Immediately after leaving REGENERSHAUSEN, Hankins ran into a road block. A bypass was soon found but the task force moved very slowly throughout the remainder of the night 5-6 April, being hampered more by the terrain than by enemy action. The roads had become hardly more than trails and were nearly impassible for armor. At daylight he was still attempting to get through the bad stretch of road south of REGENERSHAUSEN.

Upon reaching ASSAMSTADT, TF Roberts was ordered to reconnoiter a route to the west of Hankins, in an attempt to bypass him and keep the attack moving. However, TF Roberts was held up by a heavily defended road block north of DORZBACH, and spent the remainder of the night attempting to find a bypass around it.

TF Riley and CP of CCA were assembled at ASSAMSTADT, with Riley prepared to follow either Hankins or Roberts, depending on which task force broke through first and began to move.

#### G. CCB

Although division recommended that the entire 10th Armored be crossed over Bridge #1, CCB was detached from the division and placed under control of VI Corps, on the morning of 5 April. CCB was ordered to clean up remaining resistance west of the

NECKAR RIVER in the corps zone, and to be prepared to pass through the 100th Infantry Division as soon as its bridge was completed. It was then to attack east to join other elements of the 10th Armored in cutting off the German troops in the area.

### III. 6 APRIL--EXPLOITATION AND THE START OF ENEMY INFILTRATION

#### A. CCA

TF Hankins broke loose on the morning of 6 April, after finally passing through the poor stretch of road, and drove rapidly to the southeast, overrunning the moderate resistance that stood in his way. The resistance encountered consisted of a few road blocks at the towns along the route. These blocks were defended by small enemy groups equipped with small arms and panzerfaust. At 1745 he entered the outskirts of CRAILSHEIM after driving a distance of 22 miles!

TF Riley followed Hankins and one of its teams entered CRAILSHEIM at 2100. Both task forces spent the night consolidating and resupplying. TF Hankins and one team of TF Riley were in CRAILSHEIM, while the remainder of Riley's force was in SATTELWEILER and SATTELDORF. During the day, TF Hankins had captured more than 200 prisoners.

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<sup>9</sup>See Figure #3.

TF Roberts was held up most of the day by road blocks and heavy enemy anti-tank, artillery, and small arms fire, both from DORZBACH and from the south side of the JAGST RIVER. However, DORZBACH was taken before evening.

At 2200, CCA received orders from division to continue on its mission, protect the east flank of its own advance, and hold the shoulder at CRAILSHEIM until relieved there by CCR. In order to carry out these orders, the CCA plan was to have TF Hankins block at CRAILSHEIM while TF Riley passed through, turned west, and continued toward the division objective.

However, the CP of CCA had remained at ASSAMSTADT, and radio contact with the troops in the vicinity of CRAILSHEIM had been lost early in the afternoon, so that these orders did not reach the advance elements that night. Repeated attempts were made to re-establish communication through the use of relay stations, but these were only partially successful.

During the night of 6-7 April, it became apparent that the enemy had no idea that the CRAILSHEIM area was occupied by American forces. Outposts of TF Hankins at CRAILSHEIM captured several command vehicles which were travelling toward the town. Prisoners, when questioned, said they were amazed to find American troops occupying the town.

Another incident occurred at SATTELDORF which proved that the enemy was oblivious at this time to the existence of a force in



his rear. A German army bus had somehow been allowed to pass unmolested through the outposts during the night, and was stopped in front of the CP of TF Riley by the S-4 of the task force. When questioned, the occupants said that they had been sent to pick up their division's laundry, and were driving along with no expectation of meeting American troops. Needless to say, they were immediately relieved of their mission.

B. CCR and 90th Cavalry Squadron.

It had been planned to have CCR and the 90th Cavalry follow CCA, but because of enemy activity in the area, the mission was changed during the day of the 6th, and both units were ordered to hold the northeast shoulder of the division zone, until relief could be accomplished by other forces.

Both forces were subjected to increasing enemy pressure throughout the day. Before daylight, approximately 150 enemy SS troops infiltrated into STUPPACH. In doing so they cut off, and killed or captured, a portion of our troops which were occupying the town. Troops from both CCR and the 90th Cavalry were engaged in severe fighting most of the day before STUPPACH was retaken late in the afternoon. About 35 prisoners were captured in the action and 75 bodies were counted in the town. The remaining enemy withdrew to the north toward BAD MERGENTHEIM.

Also, in order to improve the blocking positions, the town of ROTH was cleared during the day. The enemy harassed all

outposts during the night 6-7 April, mainly with small patrols which were continually probing and feeling out our dispositions.

#### C. CCB

Throughout the day, CCB was engaged in its mission of clearing the remaining enemy from the west side of the NECKAR RIVER south of HEILBRONN. However, at 1645 the combat command was returned to 10th Armored Division control.

CCB was ordered to disengage immediately, assemble, and march to the vicinity of ASSAMSTADT. The Combat Command was assigned the mission of holding open the MSR's between BAD MERGENTHEIM and CRAILSHEIM, and DORZBACH and CRAILSHEIM, and of relieving CCR and the 90th Cavalry in their blocking positions. This necessitated disengaging from the enemy under the constant pressure of enemy artillery fire from east of the NECKAR RIVER, marching over 70 miles at night over poor roads, and being committed immediately upon arrival. This was accomplished during the night of 6-7 April.

#### D. Short Recapitulation.

It would perhaps be well to stop at this point and recapitulate briefly what the division had accomplished in its enveloping movement. In less than 36 hours the division had moved over 70 miles and was positioned 35 miles behind the German lines. It had captured more than 300 prisoners and killed many more, and had destroyed or captured large amounts of enemy equipment. Because

of the speed of the attack, this had been accomplished at small loss to our own troops.

In capturing CRAILSHEIM, the division had grabbed the key point of the triangle formed by the cities of HEILBRONN, BAD MERGENTHEIM, and CRAILSHEIM. Elements of the division were now located only 40 miles southwest of NURNBERG and 95 miles northwest of MUNICH. As we shall see later, this was to cause a major change in German tactics.

It is small wonder that the enemy, although completely surprised to find this force in his rear, was quick to react with all the air and ground units available to him. The next four days were to see continuous and mounting pressure applied from all sides in an attempt to destroy our forces.

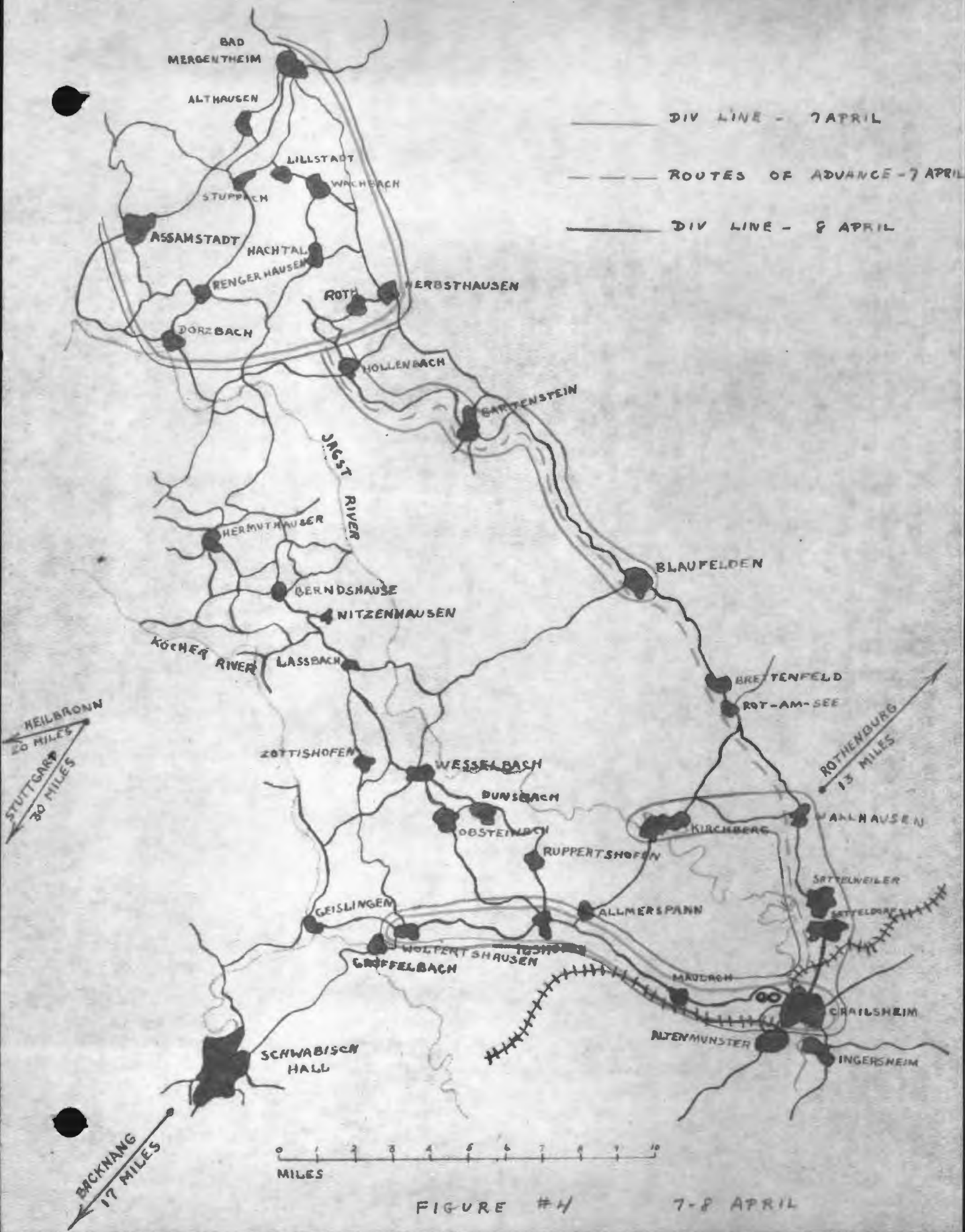
#### IV. 7 APRIL--THE START OF ENEMY REACTION AND BUILDUP<sup>10</sup>

##### A. CCA

During the night of 6-7 April, small enemy groups had infiltrated the route between the forward elements of TF Roberts and the rear elements of TF Riley. Thus the MSR, from the vicinity of HOLLENBACH to CRAILSHEIM, was cut for the first time. It was to remain cut, for all practical purposes, throughout the remainder of the operation. The only traffic on this road was by task

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<sup>10</sup> See Figure #4.



forces fighting their way through. This was to be a major factor in stopping the American drive.

The terrain along this MSR greatly favored the enemy. It was composed entirely of secondary roads which wound their way through the rugged, hilly country. A greater part of the road was bordered on both sides by heavily wooded areas, and was dotted throughout its length by small villages which made easily defended strong points. Because of the fire placed from both sides on troops attempting to use this road, the MSR was nicknamed the "Rollebahn" (bowling alley), by the German troops in the area.

Both task forces in CRAILSHEIM were reluctant to move out on the morning of 7 April. They had been out of communication with GCA since the night before, and the commanders were fearful of becoming strung out too far. As has been pointed out before, both units were far below normal strength, especially in armored infantry.

Also, the gasoline and ammunition supply in the units was fast becoming critical. The long march from BIBERACH to ASSAMSTADT had used the major part of the fuel carried in the unit trains. Then the operation of 6 April had further depleted the fuel supply, and especially in the case of TF Hankins, there was also a shortage of ammunition. Although the remaining supplies carried in the trains had been distributed equally among the vehicles of the task forces, neither Hankins nor Riley had sufficient supplies

for more than a few hours of combat operation. All trains had been sent to the rear for resupply, but because of the extended supply lines, it seemed unlikely that they would rejoin for some time.

In order to re-establish contact with the forward elements, the Commanding General of CCA flew to CRAILSHEIM in a liaison plane at dawn on 7 April. Prior to leaving ASSAMSTADT he ordered the immediate movement of TF Roberts, and the CP of CCA, to the CRAILSHEIM area. Upon arrival at CRAILSHEIM he ordered TF Riley to pass through TF Hankins, and he established a forward CP with TF Hankins until his own headquarters arrived.

TF Riley was late in moving out because of the absence of orders from CCA, and did not start the attack to the west until late in the morning. The task force attacked west toward SCHWABISCH HALL and by late afternoon had taken ILSHOFEN and WOLPERTSHAUSEN. Only light opposition was encountered, coming mostly from troops covering the hasty withdrawal of a German corps headquarters from ILSHOFEN. The task force was strafed and bombed by a small group of ME 109 fighter-bombers near ILSHOFEN.

The lead team of the task force had the unique experience of sighting a railroad train moving down the track toward CRAILSHEIM as the team attacked west out of the town. Tanks of the team waited until the train was close to their position, and stopped it quickly with a few well-placed rounds of cannon fire, after

which they riddled the train with fire. This incident further proves the extent in which the Germans were surprised by the armored thrust in their rear.

As the task force reached WOLPERTSHAUSEN a liaison plane reported a bridge intact across the KOCHER RIVER at CROFFELBACH, and a team was sent out to take it. The bridge at CROFFELBACH was set in a deep defile, and was blown just as the first tank raced up to it. The enemy immediately began to bring mortar fire on the bridge site, and enemy troops began to fire small arms and panzerfaust at the armored column from the high ground around the bridge. The tanks began to withdraw, but because the road was so narrow, there was no place to turn the vehicles around and they had to be backed out. The team was able to withdraw only after much difficulty. A medium tank in the column was actually knocked out by a panzerfaust shell, fired from the high ground, penetrating the top of the engine compartment! This illustrates the character of the terrain in the area. The team was finally able to withdraw from CROFFELBACH and was ordered to return to WOLPERTSHAUSEN and reorganize and consolidate for the night. This proved to be the deepest penetration made to the west during the operation, and carried to within about five miles of SCHWABISCH HALL.

During the day, TF Hankins improved its defenses at CRANSHHEIM and cleared the area surrounding the town. Several small villages were taken in order to give our troops better blocking positions.

In the morning it also cleared the airport outside of CRAILSHEIM, where 14 enemy planes were captured and destroyed.

Hq CCA and TF Roberts moved to CRAILSHEIM during the day, encountering vigorous opposition along the way from the enemy which had infiltrated across the MSR. The column also received mortar fire, and was strafed several times by ME 109 and ME 262 (jet-propelled) fighter planes. Several vehicles were destroyed by enemy ground and air action.

The air attacks which were encountered on 7 April proved to be the forerunner of the large scale attacks which were made throughout the area during the next three days.

B. CCB

On 7 April, CCB cleared the triangle BAD MERGENTHEIM-DORZBACH-HERBSTHAUSEN after some bitter fighting. Late in the afternoon the combat command, with TF Richardson leading, began to fight its way toward CRAILSHEIM, in order to reopen the MSR and get the much-needed supplies to the troops there.

C. CCR

The combat command had been ordered to disengage on the morning of 7 April, and proceed to CRAILSHEIM to take over its assigned mission.<sup>11</sup> The blocking mission was taken over completely by the 90th Cavalry Squadron, until the positions could be occupied by CCB.

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<sup>11</sup>Relieve TF Hankins and hold the shoulder at CRAILSHEIM.



The increasing enemy pressure made the withdrawal hard to accomplish, and it was necessary to set fire to the town of ROTH in order to disengage from an enemy force which was counter-attacking our troops.

After assembling its force, CCR followed TF Roberts to CRAILSHEIM, being harassed by enemy fire all along the route. It was impossible to relieve TF Hankins when CCR reached CRAILSHEIM because of the shortage of supplies in the task force. Therefore, CCA was given operational control of CCR, and TF Thackston of CCR was given the mission of keeping the MSR open between CRAILSHEIM and WOLPERTSHAUSEN. It was still planned to have CCR relieve TF Hankins as soon as supplies reached the town.<sup>12</sup>

D. 90th Cavalry Squadron.

The squadron was still blocking to the northeast, but was ordered to assemble as soon as relieved by CCB, and move to CRAILSHEIM. From there, it was to follow CCA and hold the line CRAILSHEIM-SCHWABISCH HALL, both exclusive, as soon as troops of the combat command had cleared it.

Late in the day, the 10th Armored Division CP moved to ASSAVSTADT where it remained for the remainder of the operation.

V. 8 APRIL--INCREASED AIR AND GROUND PRESSURE<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Since TF Thackston was the operational component of CCR, I shall refer only to the task force during the period in which it was attached to CCA.

<sup>13</sup>See Figure #4.

A. CCA

CRAILSHEIM received its first major enemy counterattack at dawn, when an estimated 700 SS troops struck the defenses at several different points. The attack was preceded by a heavy barrage of nebelwerfer (rocket) and mortar fire. The enemy overran several of the outposts, penetrated the CP area of TF Hankins, and reached a point 150 yards from the CP of CCA before it was stopped. The attack was finally repulsed, after heavy fighting which lasted through most of the morning. Before noon the blocking positions were restored again.

It was still impossible during the morning to relieve TF Hankins. In addition to the supply situation, the fact that some portion of the perimeter defense of CRAILSHEIM was constantly engaged with the enemy made any relief unfeasible. Therefore, TF Thackston remained on its road-clearing mission. As soon as elements of this force cleared a road, enemy would infiltrate behind them. For this reason, any movement of vehicles between CRAILSHEIM and TF Riley was made only with armored escort.

However, TF Riley was ordered to continue to the west, and it was hoped that it would be possible to relieve TF Hankins sometime during the day, so that it could pass through TF Riley in the vicinity of SCHWABISCH HALL. Division authorized CCA to bypass SCHWABISCH HALL to the north if necessary, and ordered the combat command to disregard the mission of attacking toward BACKNANG

from SCHWABISCH HALL. Instead the attack was to be made toward HEILBRONN to contact the 100th Infantry Division.

Liaison planes reported that the bridge across the KOCHER RIVER at GEISLINGEN was still intact, and a team of TF Riley attacked toward the town early in the morning. The team ran into enemy small arms and panzerfaust fire at the edge of town. This was quickly overcome and the tanks raced to the bridge only to have it blown as they approached it. Since the supplies in the task force would only support a maximum of four hours operation, the team was ordered back to WOLPERTSHAUSEN to await further orders, instead of attempting to force a crossing farther to the north.

TF Roberts, meanwhile, had attacked to the north from CRAILSHEIM to clear the area as far as the line KIRCHBERG-WALLHAUSEN. This was ordered to improve the defensive positions held in the area, and also in the hope of contacting elements of CCB fighting south toward CRAILSHEIM. This area was cleared by 1100 and the task force established blocking positions.

Orders were received during the morning from the Commanding General of VI Corps to evacuate immediately all prisoners of war held in the CRAILSHEIM area. Although it was considered extremely doubtful that vehicles could get through to the rear, a convoy was assembled in compliance with the order. All Cl III and Cl V supply trucks were assembled and the prisoners (about 550) were

loaded on them. Troop A, 90th Cavalry Squadron,<sup>14</sup> was assigned to escort the convoy to the rear, in the hope that they would be able to force their way through to contact TF Richardson of CCB. However, the column was ambushed in the vicinity of BLAUFELDEN and forced to retire. A number of vehicles in the convoy were destroyed, and most of the prisoners either escaped or were killed.

The CG of CCA also recommended to the CG, 10th Armored Division, that at least one battalion of infantry and one of artillery be attached to CCB, if it was to be expected to relieve CCA at CRAILSHEIM and hold the town.

Early in the afternoon CCA, seeing no promise of letup in the supply situation, requested that the troops at CRAILSHEIM be resupplied by air. Division was also informed that CCA had sufficient supplies for only four hours operation. The request for air resupply was approved and forwarded to higher headquarters, because of the slow progress CCB was making in its attempt to open the MSR.

Fortunately, the airport at CRAILSHEIM had a fair airstrip (1300' long by 40' wide), which made an air ferry operation possible. The combat command engineers were immediately ordered to improve it, and by the end of the day had enlarged it to 2200' long by 75' wide.

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<sup>14</sup>Attached to CCA.

Meanwhile, reports were received from enemy prisoners and civilians which indicated that an all-out effort to retake CRAILSHEIM would be made that night. Because of the critical supply situation, and the depleted strength of CCA and CCR, the CG of CCA ordered all troops to halt and prepare to meet the impending attack. Plans made for the defense were as follows: TF Riley to set up a perimeter defense in the vicinity of WOLPERTSHAUSEN, TF Roberts to hold the line KIRCHBERG-WALLHAUSEN, and one team of TF Thackston to keep the routes west out of CRAILSHEIM open, while the other aided TF Hankins in the defense of CRAILSHEIM.

However, at 1545, orders were received from division which altered the plans somewhat. Division ordered that CCA push TF Roberts to the northwest between the KOCHER and JAGST RIVERS. The task force was to seize any bridge intact over the KOCHER RIVER, and also to gain contact with the 63rd Infantry Division which was attacking south toward the 10th Armored positions. This move was ordered so that a supply route could be opened from the north. If TF Riley was unable to find a crossing over the KOCHER in its zone, it was to follow Roberts, prepared to take advantage of any bridge seized by Roberts, and then continue its mission to the west to contact the 100th Infantry Division. These orders caused the withdrawal of TF Roberts and the task force assembled at ILSHOFEN. There, supplies were transferred among vehicles in an attempt to make at least a short attack possible. By the end of the day,

TF Roberts was ready to move out on its new mission.

B. CCB

This combat command was engaged throughout the night of 7-8 April and all day 8 April in attempting to open and keep open the MSR from BAD NEURGENTHEIM to CRAILSHEIM. All available supply trucks had been placed in the column of TF Richardson, which was spearheading the attack.

Severe resistance, in the form of road blocks, small arms, mortar, artillery, and AT fire was encountered all along the way. The enemy took advantage of the favorable terrain to resist to the last, and then withdraw; harass the body of the column, and close in behind the column, thereby cutting the road again. Also, the column was bombed and strafed throughout the day by ME 109 and 262 planes. By nightfall on 8 April, TF Richardson had just reached BLAUFELDEN, and the badly needed supplies were still far from CRAILSHEIM.

TF Chamberlain, of CCB, was following Richardson, and had the mission of keeping the road open. This task force fought bitterly throughout the day, and faced the almost insurmountable task of keeping the road open with a small force, in the face of constantly infiltrating troops. The road was kept open only when an armored column was fighting an it.

C. 90th Cavalry Squadron.

The 90th Cavalry was still holding the northeast shoulder of

the division positions generally along the line STUPPACH-HACHTAL-ROTH. However, the squadron was informed by division that it would be relieved by the 117th Cavalry Squadron,<sup>15</sup> as soon as XXI Corps moved up abreast of VI Corps. The squadron was then to proceed rapidly to CRAILSHEIM to take up its positions along the line CRAILSHEIM-SCHWABISCH HALL. This relief was finally accomplished on 8 April, and by nightfall the squadron was assembled at ROTH prepared to proceed to CRAILSHEIM.

At 1800, the 324th RCT<sup>16</sup> was attached to the division, and given the mission of relieving TF Chamberlain and holding the sector of road from BAD MERGENTHEIM to BLAUFELDEN. CCB was then to keep the MSR open from BLAUFELDEN to CRAILSHEIM with one task force, while keeping the remainder of the combat command in mobile reserve in the vicinity of KIRCHBERG.

Enemy air activity grew in intensity throughout the day, and was by far the greatest enemy air effort ever seen by the division. Small groups of fighters, both conventional models and the swift-darting, jet-propelled planes attacked troops in the entire division zone. Columns along the road and moving cross-country, and artillery positions bore the brunt of the attack. CRAILSHEIM

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<sup>15</sup>XXI Corps, Seventh Army.

<sup>16</sup>44th Infantry Division (part of Seventh Army Reserve).

itself was attacked again and again during the day, but the remaining towns in the area were not bothered much by the enemy air.

Repeated requests were made for air attacks on German troop concentrations and enemy planes. However, there was little friendly air available, and the enemy air force was operating practically at will, hampered only by fire from antiaircraft and other ground units.

VI. 9 APRIL--CONTINUED ENEMY PRESSURE AND RESUPPLY FROM AIR AND GROUND<sup>17</sup>

A. CCB

At 0500, TF Richardson finally broke through to CRAILSHEIM with the sorely needed supply vehicles in his column, after fighting for two nights and a day to get through. The task force had suffered heavy casualties in vehicles and men during this period, and several of the supply vehicles had also been destroyed by enemy fire. TF Roberts, which was moving out on its new mission, was halted and all of its vehicles were resupplied.

For most of the day, CCB attempted to keep the MSR open from HERBSTHAUSEN to CRAILSHEIM. The difficulties involved in this have been discussed before, and CCB was spread so thin along the way that even the CP of CCB held a sector of the road in the vicinity of ROT-AM-SEE. Late in the afternoon the 324th BCT

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<sup>17</sup>See Figure #5.



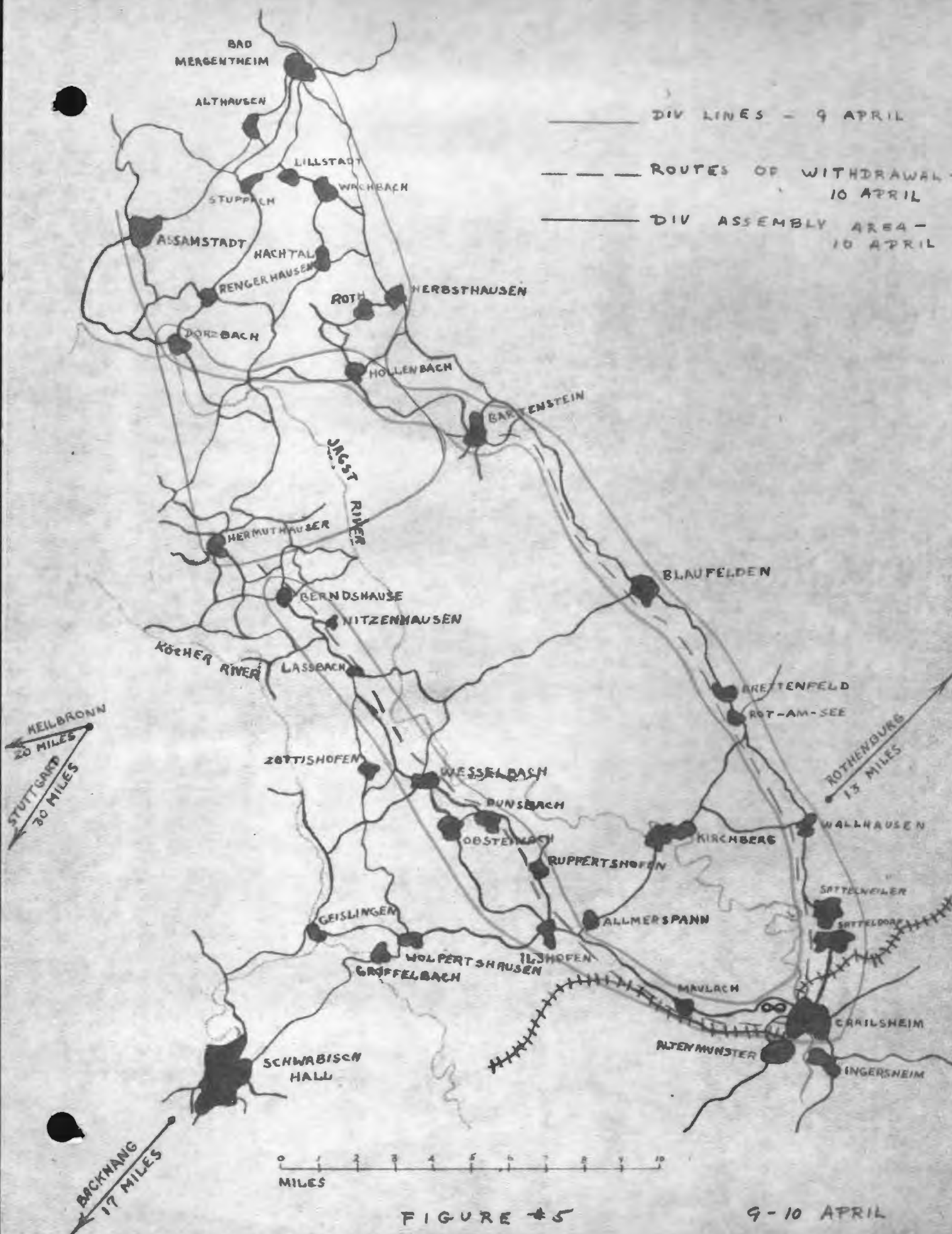


FIGURE #5

9-10 APRIL

completed the relief of TF Chamberlain from HERBESTHAUSEN to BLAUFELDEN.

B. CCA

The counterattack which had been expected at CRAILSHEIM did not materialize, although a heavy pre-dawn barrage of nebelwerfer and artillery fire was laid on CRAILSHEIM, ILSHOFEN, and WOLPERTSHAUSEN. Several direct hits were scored on CP of CCA, demolishing the building, and forcing the movement of the CP by infiltration to another part of the town. Also, CRAILSHEIM was bombed and strafed at 0630 by ME 109 and 262 fighter-bombers, and was shelled intermittently throughout the day. This early morning air attack was the first of many received throughout the division zone on 9 April.

TF Roberts attacked to the northwest early in the morning, followed initially by TF Riley. Although small pockets of resistance were encountered, TF Roberts advanced rapidly, overrunning all enemy in its path. At 0700, both forces were attacked by an estimated 25 enemy planes, which bombed them, and strafed the columns with machine gun and rocket fire.

TF Riley branched out on a parallel route at DUNSBACH, and the two task forces pushed to the northwest throughout the day, attempting to contact the 63rd Infantry Division, and also to capture a bridge over the KOCHER RIVER. By evening they had advanced 14 miles to a position south of HERMUTHAUSEN, where

contact with the 63rd Infantry was imminent.

TF Thackston had been ordered to keep the routes open between CRAILSHEIM and the forward elements of CCA, and was occupied throughout the day in accomplishing this mission.

CCA was notified in the morning that the first air resupply would be attempted on the afternoon of 9 April, and that approximately 25 C-47 cargo planes, with fighter escort, would land at CRAILSHEIM in the afternoon, loaded with G1 I, III, and V supplies.<sup>18</sup> Immediate plans were made to receive the planes and unload the supplies, and it was planned to evacuate by air the most seriously wounded of the casualties in the area. Coordination between ground and air was effected by marking the corners and sides of the airstrip with white and cerise panels. When the planes appeared over the area a smoke pot was burned to indicate wind direction to the pilots.

The first of the planes landed at 1715 while P-47 fighter planes flew cover over the airfield.<sup>19</sup> The unloading of supplies and loading of casualties was made extremely difficult by enemy ground and air action. The airfield was less than 1000 yards

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<sup>18</sup>C-47 planes were from 441st Group, 50th Wing, 9th Troop Carrier Command. This unit was later awarded a Presidential Unit Citation for its handling of this mission.

<sup>19</sup>P-47 planes were from 6th Fighter Wing, XII TAC.

from the front and a constant hail of mortar fire was placed on the field during the operation. Also, enemy jet-propelled planes flew in under our air cover to bomb and strafe the field. There were several casualties among the personnel engaged in unloading and loading the planes, and one C-47 was destroyed on the ground by enemy action.

Another group of C-47 planes landed the next day with more supplies. During the two-day air resupply, 60 cargo planes landed at CRAILSHEIM, and delivered a total of 20,000 gallons of gasoline, 7000 operational rations, 1000 rounds of 105 mm ammunition, and 100,000 rounds of small arms ammunition. A team of TF Thackston protected the airfield during the resupply.

Also, division liaison planes flew in medical supplies (mainly plasma), and additional medical personnel during the day.

#### C. 90th Cavalry Squadron.

The reconnaissance squadron moved rapidly from ROTH to CRAILSHEIM during the day, arriving in the town late in the afternoon. The column had been fired on all along the "Rollebahn," but because of its speed of movement, had suffered only light casualties.

Upon arrival at CRAILSHEIM the squadron was attached to CCA, and was immediately disposed, as follows, to bolster the defenses in the area: one troop holding a sector of the defense at CRAILSHEIM itself, one troop to aid TF Thackston in holding ILSHOFEN

and keeping the road open between CRAILSHEIM and ILSHOFEN, one troop to keep the road open between CRAILSHEIM and SATTELDOEF, and one troop held in mobile reserve.

At the end of the day, reports were received that there was a buildup of enemy troops in the woods east of CRAILSHEIM. The force was estimated to be about 3000 men, and their mission was to retake CRAILSHEIM and ILSHOFEN on 10 April. All troops were awaiting the attack at the end of the day.

#### VII. 10 APRIL—WITHDRAWAL<sup>20</sup>

At 0430 on 10 April, the enemy made his greatest bid to retake CRAILSHEIM, by attacking the town with an estimated 600 men from the southeast and northeast. The enemy penetrated the defenses of TF Hankins, and bitter hand-to-hand fighting raged through the streets of CRAILSHEIM during the early morning hours. At 0600, CCA notified division that it could not receive the supply planes until the attack had been repulsed. By 0830, the enemy were finally driven out of the section of town which they occupied.

At the same time, elements of TF Thackston, which were holding ILSHOFEN, were attacked by a force of 100 men supported by three self-propelled guns. This enemy force was completely annihilated, all men being killed or captured.

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<sup>20</sup> See Figure #5.

All available reserves were committed in these actions, and it became apparent that if the CRAILSHEIM area were to be held, reinforcements would be required. It was feared that the counter-attacks would continue growing in intensity, and that the troops at CRAILSHEIM, which had been far below strength at the start of the operation, and had been further depleted by heavy losses since, would be unable to withstand them.

Therefore, the Commanding General of CCA again requested that infantry reinforcements be sent to CRAILSHEIM. He also stated that if VI Corps desired to hold CRAILSHEIM, it would have to attack through CCA in force that day to destroy the enemy troops which were concentrated around the town.

The message to hold the planes back until the counter-attack was over was not received in time, and the second group of cargo planes began landing at 0630. The airport had been held as a result of a special effort by the troops in the area, and the resupply was accomplished despite the heavy fire that was being brought on the field at the time.

During the morning, TF's Roberts and Riley, which had been attacking throughout the night, contacted elements of the 63rd Infantry Division west of HERMUTHAUSEN, and were ordered to stop pending further instructions. The routes from CCA to these forces had been cut by enemy infiltration, and both task forces were temporarily detached from CCA and placed under divisional

control.

At 1030, corps decided to withdraw the troops from the CRAILSHEIM area. This decision was reached because of the constant enemy pressure at CRAILSHEIM, and because there were insufficient troops in the corps to properly support the 10th Armored Division in holding the area. Division was ordered to withdraw the troops at CRAILSHEIM to an assembly area to the north, and be prepared to cross the KOCHER RIVER on 11 April and attack west toward HEILBRONN.

The 324th RCT was relieved from attachment to the 10th Armored Division and VI Corps and was attached, in place, to XXI Corps.

The following plan was made to accomplish the withdrawal. Troop A, 90th Cavalry Squadron was detached from CCA and reverted to squadron control. CCB and 90th Cavalry were ordered to cover the withdrawal of the troops in the area, and then to withdraw over the "Rollebahn" to the division assembly area.

As soon as 90th Cavalry had completed the relief of CCA, the Combat Command began to withdraw, following the route taken by Task Forces Roberts and Riley. CCB and 90th Cavalry were able to cover the withdrawal effectively, although the enemy was constantly infiltrating throughout the area, especially in the vicinity of ILSHOFEN. These troops then withdrew to the division assembly area during the night of 10-11 April, bringing

to a close the bitter fighting in the CRAILSHEIM area.

#### VIII. RESULTS OF OPERATION

At this point, I should like to review the results of the CRAILSHEIM operation, both from our own and the enemy point of view.

The division captured approximately 2200 prisoners during the operation and killed an additional 1000 Germans. Also, an extremely large amount of enemy equipment was destroyed or captured during the action. This was accomplished at a cost to the division of 11 officers and 316 enlisted men killed, wounded, or missing. Among those killed were the commanding officers of 10th Armored Division Artillery, 93rd Field Artillery Battalion, and Task Force Roberts.

The operation disrupted vital German rear communications and diverted large enemy forces from making a main effort elsewhere along the front. The importance that the enemy placed on this operation can be judged by the determined counterattacks he repeatedly launched throughout the area, and by the fact that he committed nearly 12,000 troops in an effort to retake the CRAILSHEIM sector.<sup>21</sup> The pronounced effect the operation had on German tactics is illustrated by the following quotation taken from Order of Battle Reports:

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<sup>21</sup>See Appendix #2.



The surprise capture of CRAILSHEIM and its four-day defense by the 10th Armored had at least four outstanding and far-reaching effects on German tactics.

1. Two German divisions were withdrawn from the defense of HEILBRONN and moved out of what must have appeared to the Germans as the beginning of an American encirclement of that area when the first part of the wedge was driven south to CRAILSHEIM.<sup>22</sup>

2. The operation forced the commitment of two German divisions at a spot midway between the objective towns of STUTTGART and NURNBERG and left them uselessly there when the U. S. armor was able to disengage and strike further to the west.<sup>23</sup> (U. S. penetration to the strategically important road and rail center was a surprise threat against STUTTGART, NURNBERG, and MUNICH itself, which the Germans could not afford to overlook.)

3. The move outflanked several rehabilitation centers which Germans had set up for divisions practically destroyed in the RHINE crossing.

4. The rapidity of advance split communications of the 9th V.G. Division in two, with battalion and regimental CP's on one side of the road and smaller units cut off to the west.<sup>24</sup>

Also, it was later verified from captured documents that the CRAILSHEIM operation constituted the major effort of the Luftwaffe on the Western Front during this period. A quotation from the

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<sup>22</sup>17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division and 2nd Mountain Division.

<sup>23</sup>212th V.G. Division and 2nd Alpen Jaeger Regiment (an embryo division--at least of brigade size).

<sup>24</sup>Order of Battle Report, Headquarters, 10th Armored Division, 4-11 April 1945.

"Beachhead News" reiterates the above in the following manner:

To emphasize the effect of the operation on the German defense plans for this sector, the Luftwaffe came out in strength for days--bombing and strafing any and all targets in the vicinity. The reaction was the greatest seen by Corps troops since the days at ANZIO and was decidedly the major air effort on the entire Western Front during this phase of the operation.<sup>25</sup>

More than 200 sorties were flown by enemy planes in the 10th Armored Division sector during the period 7-10 April. Although a few large groups of enemy planes attacked our troops, the attacks were made mainly by planes flying alone or in small groups. ME 109 planes usually flew in groups of four to six, while ME 262 (jet propelled) fighters attacked singly or in pairs. At least nine of the enemy planes were shot down by tank and antiaircraft fire.

This constant attack by enemy air greatly hampered the movement of our troops. Also, the lack of friendly air in the area was a hindrance to the division. Although requests were made constantly to higher headquarters for friendly planes to attack air and ground targets, very few friendly planes were available until 9 April. Even then there were not enough American planes to properly support the division.

In describing an operation it is unfortunate that we often fail to give full credit to the supporting troops which are so

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<sup>25</sup>Beachhead News (VI Corps), Sunday Supplement, 12 May 1945.

essential in any successful operation. However, this was certainly not due to a lack of appreciation of the outstanding work performed by the supporting units of the division, both organic and attached. I have already spoken of the magnificent work done by the engineers at the airport in CRAILSHEIM. This was typical of the excellent manner in which the engineers participated in the operation. They were busy constantly, erecting and reducing obstacles, clearing mined roads, etc., the greater part of which was done under enemy fire.

An indication of the indispensable part played by the artillery can be gained by noting a partial list of missions fired during the operation.<sup>26</sup> Organic and supporting artillery fired 587 missions and expended 11,504 rounds of ammunition.

Despite the decision to withdraw the division from the area, the operation can certainly not be called a failure. In addition to the results already pointed out, the operation opened the way for the rapid drive by VI Corps to the DANUBE, the National Redoubt Area, and through AUSTRIA to the Italian border.

#### IX. LESSONS LEARNED

No study of a combat operation is complete or of value unless an evaluation is made of the good and bad features of it. The observations which follow are the personal opinion of the writer,

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<sup>26</sup>Figures not available for the 939th Armd. F.A. Bn. and 59th Armd. F.A. Bn.

arrived at after a study of all records available, and also from personal recollections of the operation. Any misconceptions which I may have received are due to the fact that my own experiences in the operation were largely confined to the operations of one of the task forces of the division.<sup>27</sup> It is not always possible to gain a complete knowledge of an operation from a study of records, and I may have missed some of the considerations which caused certain actions on the part of higher commanders. However, I shall list some of the conclusions arrived at from my study of this operation.

1. The whole division should have been crossed over the north bridge on 4 April when it became apparent that the enemy was planning to defend HEILBRONN and the NECKAR-JAGST line. Had this been done, I believe that the division could have quickly reached its objective. When an armored division is on exploitation it is important to keep up the momentum of the attack, and give the enemy no opportunity to set up a defensive line. Also, when an armored division is employed as a unit it is far more capable of utilizing fully its inherent characteristics of fire power, mobility, and shock action.

2. An armored division on exploitation must be followed closely by infantry which can consolidate and hold the ground

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<sup>27</sup> Executive Officer of Task Force Riley.

that has been gained. It must be remembered that in this operation, VI Corps was hampered by a lack of troops, and had insufficient troops for an encircling movement. Also, the war was in its final stages, and many unusual risks could be taken. However, I believe that the Corps plan of sending an armored division out to seize and hold ground without provision being made to keep the supply routes open behind it, was tactically unsound.

An armored division without gasoline is of little value. It can hold ground but is not so well suited as an infantry division to go on the defensive. Of course, supply routes behind an armored division will often be cut, but infantry must be following close enough in the rear so that supplies can be pushed through when needed. I believe that the fact that an enemy who was already beaten could effectively stop an armored drive, offers us a good lesson in the future employment of armor. Had the division been facing an enemy who was well-equipped and in excellent condition, I have no doubt that unless reinforced it would have been annihilated.

3. Air resupply of an armored division can be extremely effective under certain conditions. Naturally, in this instance, the airport in existence at CRAILSHEIM made an air ferry operation possible. However, the fact that it was quickly enlarged demonstrates that a great deal of improvisation is possible. Also, this operation was carried out while enemy fire, both from ground and

air, was being placed on the field. It is believed to have been carried out closer to the front lines than any other air ferry operation during the war. In any future war, similar resupply missions will probably be common. The pilots won't like it, but it can be done.

4. All commanders must be well forward where they can see the situation and influence the action. In this operation the corps commander never visited CRAILSHEIM. The Command Post of the 10th Armored Division remained at ASSAMSTADT, and the Commanding General did not visit CRAILSHEIM until 10 April when he issued orders to withdraw. If the higher commanders had seen for themselves just how critical the situation was, some of the orders issued would undoubtedly have been changed. An example of this was the insistent and repeated order from Corps to evacuate all prisoners in the area when it was evident that no convoy could get through.

Another example was the continuous urging from Corps to continue the attack to the west when the lack of supplies, and enemy action, made such a move unfeasible. Had CCA become any more strung out it would have probably been destroyed in detail.

5. A combat command commander must always keep his command post up with his forward units. An illustration of failure to do this occurred on 6 April when CCA CP remained in ASSAMSTADT and lost contact with its forward elements. The result was that no

one moved on 7 April until contact was reestablished. I believe that this was the only serious error made by the Commanding General of CGA. His masterful handling of the situation at CRAILSHEIM is evident in even a quick study of the operation. At one time he had the whole division under his command with the exception of CCB.

6. Armored commanders must be aggressive at all times. An example of lack of aggressiveness involves the same situation given above—when the forces at CRAILSHEIM did not move out on 7 April. Granted the supply situation was almost critical, there was danger of becoming strung out too far, and there was no communication with higher headquarters. However, the order had been given before, that TF Hankins was to block at CRAILSHEIM while TF Riley turned west, and there should have been no doubt as to what to do.

7. A reconnaissance unit, when properly employed, is a highly valuable and effective force. I know of no other armored division operation where the reconnaissance squadron performed more of the missions that are visualized for it. During the operation, the 90th Cavalry Squadron was assigned, and successfully accomplished, all of the following missions: exploiting on a separate axis of advance, protecting a division flank, holding a sector of a defensive position, escorting supply convoys, keeping roads open, and covering the withdrawal of the

division. It proved to be invaluable as an economy force.

These are only a few of the combat lessons that can be learned from this operation. Further study of the operation should be invaluable to all armored commanders, because of the peculiar nature and the many good and bad features, of the April campaign at CRAILSHEIN.



APPENDIX #1

Organization for combat of the 10th Armored Division and attached units during the Creilsheim operation.

1. Units attached to 10th Armored Division

609th TD Bn  
796th AAA AW Bn (SP)  
405th FA Group  
93rd Armd FA Bn  
59th Armd FA Bn  
634th FA Bn (155 How)  
141st FA Bn (155 How)  
939th FA Bn (4.5 inch gun)  
59th AAA AW Bn  
31st Engr (C) Bn (-Co "C")  
2827th Engr (C) Bn  
3 Tactical Air Control Parties (XII Tactical Air Command)  
442nd QM Truck Co  
448th QM Truck Co

2. Combat Organization 10th Armd Div (Maj Gen Wm. H. H. Morris, Jr., Commanding)

A. CCA (Brig Gen Edwin W. Piburn)

Task Force Hankins  
(Maj Curtis Hankins)

61st Armd Inf Bn (-Co "A")  
Co "A", 3rd Tk Bn  
1 Plat, Co "B", 609th TD Bn  
1 Plat, Co "A", 55th Armd Eng Bn

Task Force Riley  
(Lt Col John R. Riley)

21st Tk Bn (-Co "B")  
Co "A", 61st Armd Inf Bn  
1 Plat, Co "B", 609th TD Bn  
1 Plat, Co "A", 55th Armd Engr Bn

Task Force Roberts  
(Lt Col Wm. T. S. Roberts--KIA 9 April)  
(Capt Richard Ulrich)

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54th Armd Inf Bn (-Cos "A" and "C")  
Co "B", 21st Tk Bn  
1 Plat, Co "B", 609th TD Bn  
1 Plat, Co "A", 55th Armd Engr Bn

CCA Control

Tr "A", 90th Cav Ren (Mech)  
Co "A", 55th Armd Engr Bn (-)  
Co "B", 609th TD Bn (-)  
Co "A", 80th Armd Med Bn

Supporting Artillery (Division Artillery Fire  
Direction Center)

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419th Armd FA Bn (Lt Col R. C. McCabe)  
(D/S TF Riley and TF Roberts)  
420th Armd FA Bn (Lt Col Willis D. Crittenberger, Jr.)  
(D/S TF Hankins)  
634th FA Bn (G/S CCA--1 Btry attached to 419th FA Bn  
on 7 April)

B. CCB (Col Basil G. Thayer)

Task Force Chamberlain  
(Lt Col Thomas Chamberlain)

11th Tk Bn (-Co "C")  
Co "C", 20th Armd Inf Bn  
1 Plat, Co "A", 609th TD Bn  
1 Plat, Co "B", 55th Armd Engr Bn

Task Force Richardson  
(Lt Col J. J. Richardson)

20th Armd Inf Bn (-Co "C")  
Co "C", 11th Tk Bn  
1 Plat, Co "A", 609th TD Bn  
1 Plat, Co "B", 55th Armd Engr Bn

CCB Control

Co "A", 609th TD Bn (-)  
Co "B", 55th Armd Engr Bn (-)  
1 Plat, Co "D", 11th Tk Bn  
Co "B", 80th Armd Med Bn  
Co "A", 132nd Armd Ord Maint Bn

Supporting Artillery (405th FA Group Fire  
Direction Center)

423rd Armd FA Bn (Lt Col William Beverly)  
93rd Armd FA Bn (D/S TF Richardson)  
141st FA Bn (G/S CCB)

C. CCR (Col Wade C. Gatchell)

Task Force Thackston  
(Major Wheeler Thackston)

3rd Tk Bn (-Co "A")  
Cos "A" and "C", 54th Armd Inf Bn

Supporting Artillery

59th Armd FA Bn (D/S CCR)<sup>28</sup>

D. Division Control

90th Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz) (-Troop "A")  
(Lt Col Cornelius G. Lichirie)

939th FA Bn (G/S 10th Armd Div)  
55th Armd Engr Bn (-)  
796th AAA AW Bn (SP) (-) 29  
609th TD Bn

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<sup>28</sup>When CCR was placed under control of CCA, 59th Armd FA Bn reverted to D/S TF Thackston until the withdrawal from CHAILSHEIM. During the withdrawal, the 59th supported the 90th Cav Sq.

<sup>29</sup>Antiaircraft units were attached mainly to artillery battalions.

E. Division Trains (Col Thomas M. Brinkley)

80th Armd Med Bn (-)  
132nd Armd Ord Maint Bn (-)  
442nd QM Trk Co  
448th QM Trk Co

APPENDIX #2

Enemy Order of Battle during the CRAILSHEIM operation.

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Strength</u>
9th V.G. Div	850 men
212th V.G. Div	2200 "
Jaeger Regt, Alpen 2	2400 "
646th Bridge Constr Bn	650 "
K.G. Dirnagal (SS)	2500 "
553rd V.G. Div	650 "
Misc Units (Bn and Regt size)	<u>2590 "</u>
Total	11840 men

The following units were withdrawn early in the operation and there are no strength figures available:

17th SS Panzer Grenadier Div  
2nd Mountain Div

Most enemy units were made up of men who had been gathered together from units which had ceased to exist. However, the large percentage of SS troops in the enemy organizations served to bolster them, and made them effective fighting forces. The troops encountered in this operation were far better than the average Germans who were still fighting at this stage of the war.

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  - CCB, 10th Armored Division
  - CCR, 10th Armored Division
  - 3rd Tank Battalion
  - 11th Tank Battalion
  - 21st Tank Battalion
  - 20th Armored Infantry Battalion
  - 54th Armored Infantry Battalion
  - 61st Armored Infantry Battalion
  - 90th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz)
  - 419th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
  - 420th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
  - 423rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion
4. Maps: Germany 1:100,000, Mannheim (U3), Rothenburg (U4), Karlsruhe (V3), and Ellwangen (V4) sheets.