

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

ADVANCED OFFICERS CLASS #1

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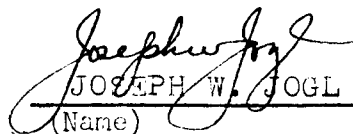
MILITARY MONOGRAPH

TITLE: HE ARMORED DIVISION MILITARY POLICE.

SCOPE: The effect of armored division employment on the  
methods of operation of military police.

42-18

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Recently the Army announced a change in the tables of organization for the armored division military police unit, increasing its size from a platoon of 3 officers and 84 men to a company of 7 officers and 167 men. In so doing, the Army has recognized the almost unanimous request from the various division provost marshals for a unit of company strength and organization. Most divisions found it necessary to reinforce their platoons to at least this strength. The question might be brought up as to the necessity for that many MPs.

The division military police has one major mission: to serve the command. This is accomplished by providing traffic control on marches, establishing and supervising the traffic circulation net in the division zone, operating prisoner of war collection points, controlling the circulation of civilians behind the lines, apprehending and detaining violators of army regulations and rules of conduct, protecting the soldiers in the rest areas from trouble emanating from various sources, as well as a number of odd duties pertaining to police and security.

The type of person required to actually perform these duties has obsoleted the practice of bestowing a man with an armband and expecting him to carry out the duties of an MP as impractical. The modern military policeman is a specialist as highly trained as a radio operator, gunner or mechanic. His place

on the division team is as important as that of the tanker or the infantryman, and after he has mastered his individual specialist training, every effort must be made to train him as part of the entire team. He must have intimate knowledge of the division organization, its style of marching, its commanders and individuals, and the manner in which it can be employed so that in the event that he is lacking full and complete orders, he can evaluate the situation from the information he has, to take appropriate action without depending on receipt of orders through channels. This requires a man of better than average intelligence, besides one physically capable of working long hours under any kind of strain or circumstance. Obviously, such selection and training take time, but the mastery of this knowledge can result in great value to the division when he is used in that capacity for which he was trained.

One daily service the military police perform for an armored division is the control of its traffic. With attachments and overstrength, a division has nearly 3000 vehicles; broken down roughly, there are about 1000 combat vehicles, 1000 two-and-one-half ton trucks with trailers, with the balance including all types from a quarter ton truck to a 40 ton tank recovery tractor semi-trailer. It requires from 150 to 240 miles of road space to move the division; moving at the rate of 15 miles per hour, the length of time past any given point extends from 10 to 16 hours.

The size and weight of the vehicles make every narrow spot in the route, every weak bridge, every poorly surfaced road an obstacle that must be considered in the traffic control plan. When the division is not on the road, but in a bivouac or assembly area, the constant flow of administrative and supply traffic requires close and constant supervision of the traffic net. Besides the stationary traffic posts and march column control, it is necessary to take steps to control reckless driving that will endanger other traffic, to restrict the movement of sightseers and others needlessly consuming gasoline on non-essential trips. Control of civilian traffic in the combat zone also comes under the traffic section.

Keeping in mind this background of the size and special characteristics of the armored division, let us consider how the traffic control plan for a road march is formulated with the provost marshal's employment of his military police in its execution. Normally, any movement of the division, other than a tactical one in its own zone, is ordered by a higher command. The G-3 and G-4 work together, and with technical advice from the engineer and provost marshal concerning roads, bridges and traffic conditions, issue the division march order. According to the field manuals, the engineers and the MPs should make a personal reconnaissance of the route before the order is issued. Actually, there are very few moves made where there is an oppor-

tunity for them to physically check more than the first few hours' march. They have to depend upon their knowledge of the route and a map study to formulate the plan for traffic control; then leaving enough in advance of the column to make a detailed survey of the route, they can revise the original control plan as they go.

An example based on an actual situation will demonstrate some of the problems with which an armored division provost marshal is faced.

In the fall and winter of 1944 the armored divisions arriving in France were moved from the beach to the front by road over a distance of about 500 miles. The route one of these divisions used (see Figure 1) started on the Normandy peninsula, crossed through the Falaise gap area, ran through Paris, Chalons and Verdun and into position in corps reserve north of Luxembourg City. It passed from the jurisdictional area of the Normandy Base Section into the British zone, through several base sections, DSEC, two army areas, a corps zone, ending in two divisional areas. The movement was coordinated through the theater headquarters who informed all of these organizations. However, contact with the Normandy Base Section traffic control unit indicated their information in regard to the size and movement of the division was not complete; the provost marshal was instructed to contact all traffic control agencies along the route of march to give them information concerning column arrival and clearance times in their areas as well as

# LEGEND

## ORGANIZATION

- 2- Police 3/4 ton W.C. - 7men each
- 18- Traffic 1/4 ton - 3men each
- 3- 1/4 ton - 1 officer and driver each
- 1- Half Track - Plat Hqs - 4men
- 1- Maint. 3/4 ton W.C. - 2 men
- 1- Supply - 2 1/2 ton 6x6 - 2 men

- National Roads
- Secondary Roads
- other hard surfaced roads
- - - Route of march
- ▨ Bivouac areas
- Ⓟ Police unit - 3/4 ton W.C. - (Planned)
- Ⓡ Traffic unit - 1/4 ton (Planned)

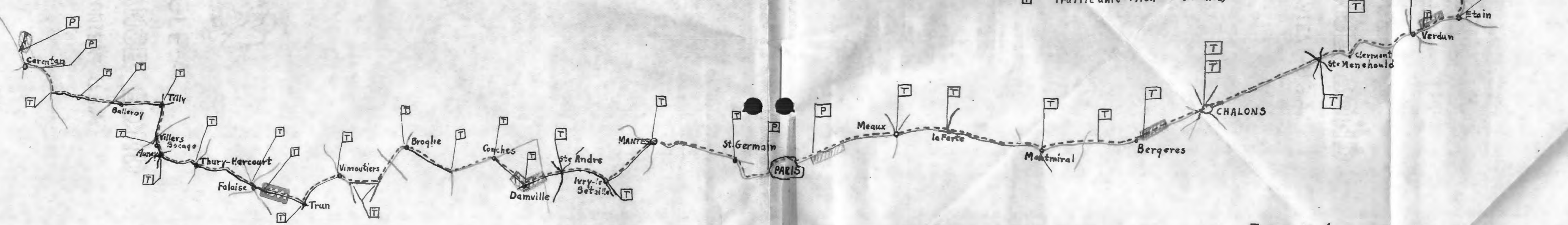


FIGURE 1  
TRAFFIC CONTROL PLAN  
ROAD MARCH

the column make-up. The Provost Marshal also used the opportunity of this contact to obtain road information and to determine what control would be furnished by the local detachments. By this means arrangements were made in Paris with that base section unit to provide a motorcycle escort for each company through the city; the success of this led to similar procedures through other large towns.

The march was made over one route with the division divided into two columns, each taking six days to complete it with the second column starting one day after the first. The daily march averaged about 75 miles, each column occupying about 110 miles of road space; which meant that the head of the column had finished its day's march before the tail of the column had left the bivouac, while the head of the second day's column was arriving in the bivouac before the first day's had cleared the area. Time prevented a full route reconnaissance, so traffic control plans had to be made from a map study which showed such a variation in the number of contemplated traffic control posts for each day's march that it was decided to use the platoon, less twelve men detailed to headquarters, as a unit. The platoon was to precede the first day's column by one hour to post the road. Each crew was to remain at its post until the platoon maintenance and supply section, which were the last vehicles in the second day's column, released it after refueling its vehicles and performing required maintenance.

The released crews then proceeded to the head of the first column to be available for the next day's march. With the platoon employed in this manner, the Provost Marshal had available the maximum number of men at the head of the column for use in emergencies, and still was able to insure uniform control over the road for both columns. A road reconnaissance covering at least the first three hours' march for the following day was accomplished the day before. The daily I.P. times were before daybreak so this was essential for an intelligent posting of the first few posts each morning, as well as to gain time and get ahead of the column to properly surbey the remainder of the day's march.

The accuracy of the Michelin road map was such that the actual execution of the plan worked almost as laid out in the original study. There were several places in the bocage country where battle damage to towns and roads required adjustments in the plan. Near Paris the civilian traffic required more control than originally planned; this was particularly true on hills where it was necessary to prevent head-on collisions when division vehicles were passing the civilian charcoal-burning trucks. A small reserve was maintained to meet these unexpected obstacles. It was impossible to post every cross road, or road fork, so if a unit commander desired, he could use his own personnel to supplement the road control placed by the MPs.



To aid the movement into bivouac areas, a release point was designated where the MP column control ended and the billeting officers were assigned to meet their units to guide them into their bivouacs. The MP operating the point obtained detailed information concerning the location of the units, in order to be able to direct stragglers to their units; this post remained in operation 24 hours a day. The MP road patrol reported the location of all disabled vehicles and stragglers along the route of march. In this manner the battalion commander could determine the status of his stragglers and they in turn could receive directions to their bivouacs.

To undertake the task of controlling a movement of this magnitude was a challenge to the small platoon. Fortunately, the liaison established with the various traffic control agencies along the route of march assured the provost marshal enough aid to cover the route with only one exception - the city of Paris. The roads into Paris were so congested with civilian traffic that the platoon reserve was exhausted before the route through the city could be posted. The motorcycle escort provided by the city MP detachment did an excellent job, but the thrill of going through Paris and the opportunity to sightsee led a few vehicle drivers astray so additional guide posts were necessary. The men from the division who were detailed to help in this case actually were more of a hindrance than assistance. Unaccustomed

to working alone, they found their lack of training for the job resulted in little confidence in themselves and the ability to do what they were asked, so all it meant to them was a chance to spend a few days in Paris. It is literally impossible to detail men to do traffic control duty on the spur of the moment and to expect satisfactory results. That is one of the reasons for trained MPs.

From Paris to Luxembourg the road was straight and well travelled; all the large towns were staffed with MP detachments with whose help the division MPs were able to give adequate coverage to the column. In Luxembourg proper the infantry division MPs responsible for the city at the time had already efficiently signed the route and provided escorts for the column through the town.

This being the division's first march, the experience gained on it formed the basis for the procedure followed during the balance of its stay in the theater. On each march the provost marshal contacted all traffic control units along the route to fully inform them of the details of the division march order up to the release point which was therein designated. Until a means to reinforce the MP platoon with permanent personnel was found, the platoon was given additional men mounted in quarter ton trucks to help control the column; also, individual unit commanders were informed of certain "rules of the thumb"

regarding location of MPs: namely, if there was no MP at the intersection, the route lay straight ahead.

To illustrate the impracticability of using untrained personnel for traffic control duty to supplement the platoon-sized unit let us consider what happened when one division was being employed in making a penetration. As it gained momentum the number of prisoners captured each day grew, the supply lines lengthened and the platoon, operating with only 38 of its 84 men due to attachments to combat commands and division headquarters, could manage its simple traffic and prisoner collections and evacuations only by doubling up on duties. When calls came from G-2 and G-5 for security missions or special tactical movements, there were no men available; to provide for these, the division band was attached to the military police platoon.

But on the same day that this attachment became effective, the division accomplished a break-through, capturing a vital objective so important that four infantry divisions were passed through the division zone in the following five days. Units moved into the area from all directions with no regard to march unity; the road net was limited; destruction in the towns and to the roads restricted the movement of the traffic and made almost all roads open to one-way traffic only. This situation required well-trained clear-headed MPs. Working the entire day with no relief, there were still not enough men to fully handle the road net. The

bandsmen were placed at the secondary posts and for a while they were able to hold their own; but as soon as the officer or noncom would move down the road, the lack of confidence in themselves and their judgment began to show and the traffic at their posts became tangled. Albeit their willingness was unequalled, the fact that they were not trained for the job prevented them from giving adequate assistance. They were finally used in this operation to handle prisoners where supervision by seasoned MPs could be held to a minimum so that the balance of the police section might be available for traffic duty. Traffic was moved with but few minor disruptions in this operation only because the officers and the handful of men left for the operation of the platoon worked unrelieved and untiringly for the entire period.

Following this operation the division received a rest of almost two weeks during which time twelve of the best prospects from the band were given intensive training in traffic control; by the end of the war, two months later, these men were performing traffic duties in a highly satisfactory manner. The remainder of the band was trained to process prisoners of war, thus relieving the trained MPs for traffic control work.

So far, the traffic control considered has been typically administrative and confined to the division area behind the combat command. Control of tactical movements within the combat command

zone was quite another problem. The infantry divisions were able to organize small detachments of men whom they trained for use as RCT military police platoons. These were a part of regimental headquarters and provided both traffic control and prisoner of war processing personnel at that level. The armored combat command was not as well supplied with infantry personnel as the regular foot infantry and due to the flexibility of the combat command organization, it was not practical to organize these detachments. This resulted in the division MP platoon being called upon to send their men to the combat commands for these duties. There were not enough available to make this more than a token force, so other than minor traffic control around the combat command CP and in the nearby areas, they were of little help except at the supply point or in facilitating the trains in and out of bivouac. The provost marshal could do little to aid the combat commander beyond sending this detail.

In a wide open exploitation, the problem of traffic control was greatly simplified. Because the rate of movement was fast and the infantry had been left behind, there was no conflicting traffic on the road. Only critical turns and the narrow town streets needed supervision. The biggest obstacle was the congestion formed by the civilians and displaced persons who had to be kept off from the road. The axis of supply was marked with a distinctive sign so that liaison officers and supply

vehicles could readily and easily follow the division.

A withdrawal presented still another problem. Constant road reconnaissance to the rear was necessary so that the traffic officer would be fully familiar with the road net. Tight control of all traffic up to the battalion areas had to be maintained to insure rapid movement of maneuvering forces and unimpeded advance of reinforcements. The MPs remained at their posts until the last units of the covering force appeared.

The collection and evacuation of prisoners of war comprise one of the problems of the armored division which remained unsolved. The very nature of an armored team is such that each man is a cog in the machine; his absence reduces the efficiency of that team to the extent that the armored commander is reluctant to take prisoners. Yet the employment of armor results in the opportunity to capture far more prisoners in a shorter length of time than any other type of unit.

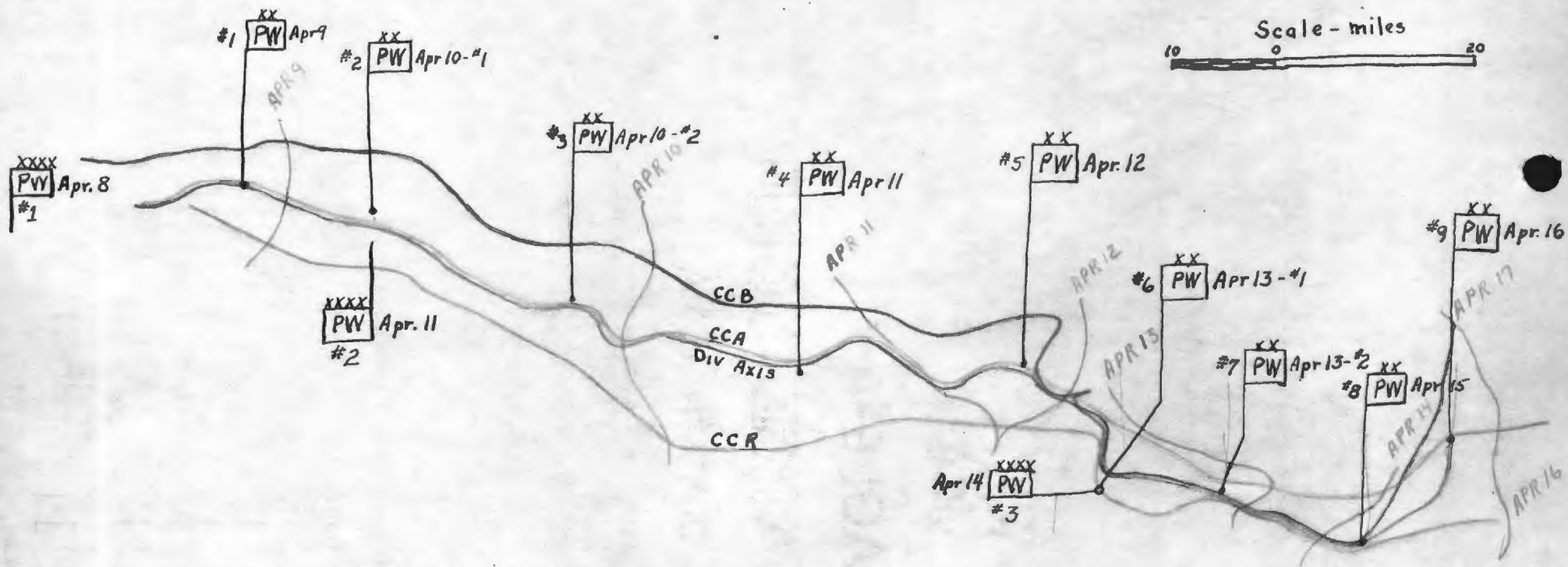
In a stable situation, it is possible to utilize the supply trains from the combat command area to the division and from the division to Army to evacuate the prisoners. This system was used to good advantage in the ETO.

The evacuation from the division back to Army was primarily the concern of the division military police platoon, the procedure for which followed a set pattern. Both the Army and division collecting points were adjacent to or near the respective

class I dumps, making it possible to utilize the daily ration train to evacuate the prisoners with ut loss of time or needless travel. The normal number of trucks available was 12 holding a capacity of about 900 men if well packed! This was sufficient to take care of normal operations. But once the armor had forced a penetration and begun to move and expand the break-through, the system began to break down, as there were increased numbers of prisoners and the Army class I supply points did not keep up with the rapidly moving columns. Emergency rations were used so the normal ration supply vehicles were loaded with gasoline and ammunition, the only items on which there was a resupply. The dumps for these were established well ahead of the Army prisoner of war cages and too much time would have been lost had these convoys been used to evacuate prisoners.

The trail of an armored division could be traced by its prisoner of war collecting points until the momentum of the drive was halted. Then, with close cooperation from the G-4 and the quartermaster who provided transportation, these cages wer closed out. The MP platoon in one division had five 2½ ton trucks in excess of the normal number of authorized vehicles to carry the additional band men who had been assigned to them; using this pool of trucks, they managed to evacuate a large portion of their prisoners. Whenever Army established a new collecting point within a day's march of a division cage, the prisoners were marched

Figure 2  
PRISONERS OF WAR



#	OPENED	CLOSED	USED BY	EVACUATE TO	MEANS OF EVACUATION	Approximate Number PWs
1	091200	101200	CCA-CCB CCR	ARMY #1	Div. Sup. Trns	150
2	101000	111200	CCA-CCB CCR	ARMY #1 # 2	Plat Trns & Foot	275
3	101600	141200	CCA- CCB	ARMY #2	Plat Trns	500
4	111800	142000	CCA CCR	ARMY #2	Plat Trns Div Sup. Trns	1000
5	121800	141000	CCA	ARMY #3	Foot	800
6	131200	140900	CCR	ARMY #3	In PLACE	4000
7	131800	152000	CCR-CCA	ARMY #3	Div Sup. Trns Foot	2900
8	151200	170900	CCR-CCA CCB	ARMY #3	Div Sup Trns	1500
9	161400	212400	All Trps	ARMY #3	SPECIAL	5500

——— Front Lines  
 ——— Route of CCA  
 ——— " " CCB  
 ——— " " Div  
 ——— " " CCR



in.

The movement from the combat command to the division collecting points was far more difficult. The MP detachments working with the combat commands ran the collecting points there evacuating those prisoners. Frequently, in rapid movements, they needed help. The S-4 had to give full cooperation in furnishing transportation to the detachment as they had no vehicles suitable for moving large numbers of men. When the division column followed one of the combat commands, the latter's problem was negligible; there was plenty of supply traffic on the road and little trouble was encountered in closing out its cages. As long as the other combat commands were operating in contact with the one the division was following, the prisoners did not present too much difficulty. It was on the exploitations and independent actions that the situation became acute; the most practical solution was to make arrangements with the infantry division in the rear to take over their prisoners. Figure 2 shows the manner in which a division evacuated its prisoners in one operation.

Any plan for handling prisoners must include rapid collection from combat troops and expeditious evacuation from the division collecting point. If the time that is lost by battalion or combat command staffs begging for help is used to determine a means of evacuation instead, many of these problems will never

arise. To set up a basic plan until the load becomes too heavy for it, when it will become necessary to employ a little ingenuity, to keep the situation under control, is the only system at the present time that has been devised.

Civilian circulation is one other problem which requires special handling by the Mps. Those of us who were in Europe can remember the constant shifting of the peoples. As the Allied armies rolled across France and gave every indication of going on into Germany, the French population started a movement to return home. Every road was crowded with every type of transportation imaginable; this constituted a serious threat to Army movement; it was countered in the rear areas by designating certain roads for military use only.

The Mps duty was to keep military thoroughfares free from civilian traffic. In the divisional area there were more troops so it was possible to better control this civilian movement when the situation was normal.

Towns along the front were evacuated by cooperation with the division G-5. Civilians had to be controlled; and if it became apparent that there was to be a mass civilian exodus or influx or if the military situation required a mass evacuation, a definite plan had to be formulated to handle this, a collection or assembly point set up and an orderly evacuation accomplished, using secondary routes or empty transportation returning to rear

areas.

During the Bulge the problem of refugees was extremely serious; they came from the Bulge area on every road pushing carts, baby carriages, in wagons drawn by oxen and in motor vehicles. Every one had two things in common: first, each was overladen with his dearest possessions; and second, each was utterly terror-stricken and anxious to hasten as far away from the Germans as possible. It required cool, calm and firm action by the MPs to channel these people into the evacuation routes designated for their movement. The success of the reinforcement of the battle line to counter the German threat depended upon open roads as that was the means by which the reinforcements arrived. The plan for handling the refugees worked nicely and the unfortunate circumstance of May and June of 1940 was not repeated.

The functions of the armored division military police mentioned herein are those which are most affected by the characteristics of that type of division; in addition, they must operate town patrols, perform other normal police duties and activities. There are no special aspects to these that are not common to all military police units; these are well covered in the manuals.

There was one serious oversight in the equipment allotted to the military police platoon in the ETO. There was no radio or

wire communication authorized. An outstanding example of the necessity to provide the MPs with a means of communication other than messengers is pointed up by an incident which occurred immediately following the capture of the Remagen Bridge. The attached map, Figure 3, illustrates the road net into Remagen with the traffic circulation plan and control points on the route used to move the major units up to the bridge.

Traffic control headquarters, located at Stadt Meckenheim, was to allot all road priorities. Troops of all types were moved in as fast as the roads could take them. Bombing had made the route through Rheinbach and Stadt Meckenheim open to one way traffic only, while the rubble and bomb holes made the road extremely rough, necessitating traffic to move slowly; coupled with air attacks, there were periods when the bridge had to be closed for traffic.

A regulating post was established at point A on the map on the first day. A man with a pair of field glasses could observe the bridge and determine whether it was opened to traffic. If it was closed, he could hold the column under cover of the heavy woods until he saw traffic moving over the bridge again. This was done to prevent a concentration of men and vehicles in the town.

The only drawback was that the rest of the posts in the chain could not be notified to hold up their traffic accord-

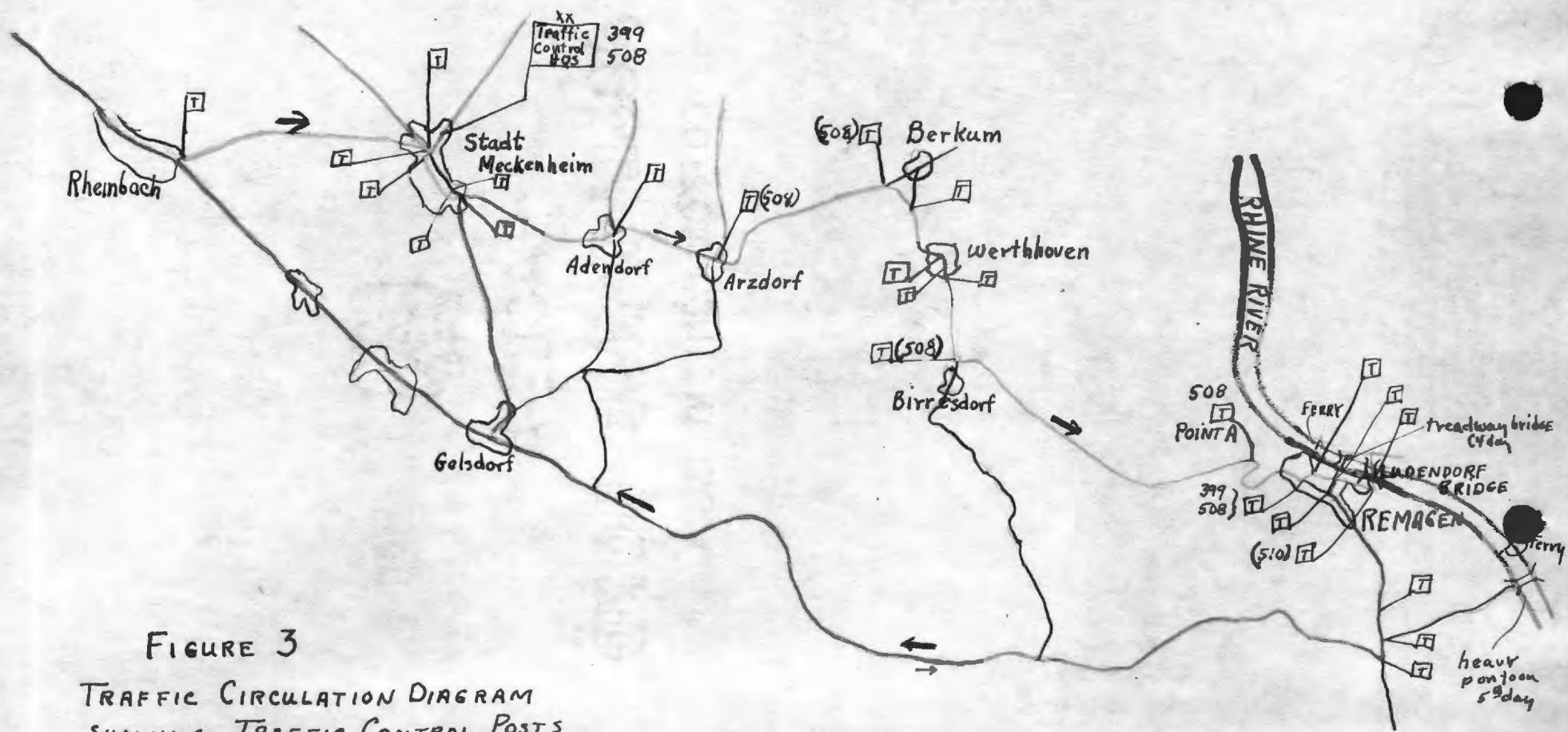


FIGURE 3  
 TRAFFIC CIRCULATION DIAGRAM  
 SHOWING TRAFFIC CONTROL POSTS  
 AND RADIO CAR LOCATIONS FOR  
 TRAFFIC COORDINATION AT REMAGEN

Scale 1:100,000

ingly. This resulted in considerable confusion: double banking and long queues of vehicles lined up bumper to bumper.

On the second day, a 399 Radio was sent into Remagen to work with a similar set in Stadt Meckenheim; enough vehicles were detailed from the reconnaissance squadron to place one at Arzdorf, Berkum, Birresdorf, Point A, the near side of the Remagen Bridge and at the two 399s. With this communication net, traffic on the north road was effectively controlled.

The difference between traffic flow with radio control and without it was such that it enabled the platoon to procure 510 radios as soon as it was relieved from its traffic duties at Remagen.

Despite the handicaps of too few men handling too many duties, the lack of communication and other deficiencies in equipment and organization, the armored division MP platoon as constituted in the ETO rendered excellent service. It was guided by the principles outlined in this paper and the examples cited really did work. There is no doubt that better solutions to the problems encountered can be found especially with the newly authorized strength of organization, and in any future conflict, we should find the division military police unit ready and able to give its parent organization all the service it might require. Every member of the unit should be well acquainted with the goal of the military policeman and the

manners in which he can be of service to his division; also every commander and staff officer in the division should recognize the limitations of the MP unit so that it can be used to the best advantage for the division as a whole. With this unity of spirit and purpose the value of the military police unit can be unsurpassed.