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Title: United States Army 7th Armored Division After Action Report

Abstract: U.S. Army 7th Armored Division After Action Report, January-March 1945, European Theater of Operations

Number of pages: 116

Notes: From the MCoE Armor Research Library's documents collection located at the MCoE HQ Donovan Research Library, Fort Benning, GA.

Document#: 807 AD 403

Classification: Unclassified; Approved for public release

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AFTER ACTION REPORT
SEVENTH ARMORED DIVISION

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~~SEVENTH ARMORED DIVISION~~ MARCH 45

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AFTER ACTION REPORT

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HEADQUARTERS 7TH ARMORED DIVISION
APO 257 U. S. ARMY

SUBJECT: After Action Report, 7th Armored Division,
Period 1-31 January, 1945.

TO : Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D. C. (Thru
Channels).

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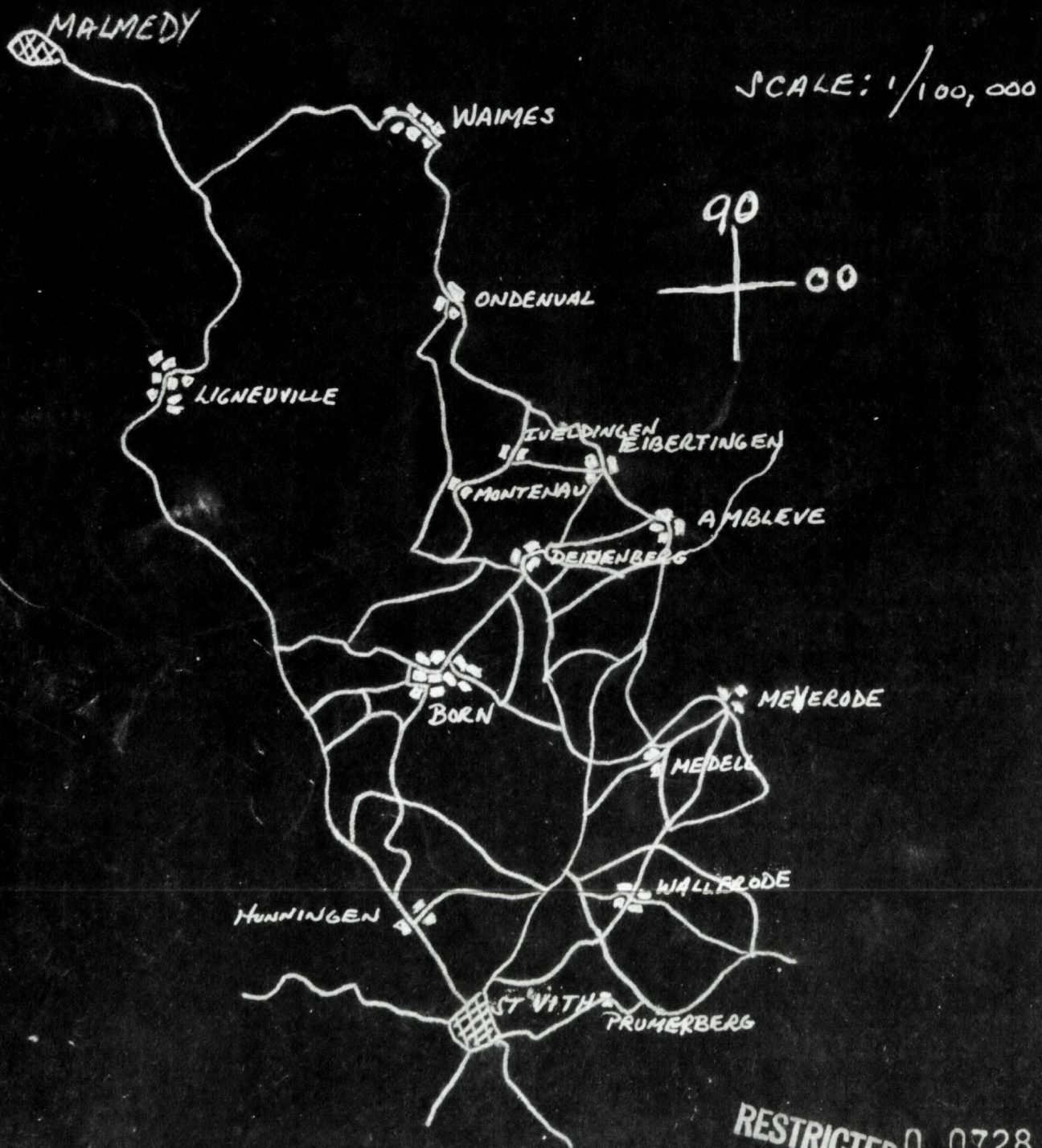
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7TH ARMORED DIVISION
AFTER ACTION REPORT
JANUARY, 1945
"THE RETURN TO ST. VITH"



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SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

The 7th Armored Division's stand at ST. VITH, Belgium from 17 to 23 December, 1944, had split Von Rundstedt's Ardennes offensive. Directed to withdraw from the ST. VITH sector, the Division was immediately committed in the vicinity of Manhay, Belgium until relieved on 30 December. January, 1945, saw the Division return to ST. VITH. As the month opened the Division was in an assembly area in the vicinity of AYWALLE in Corps reserve of the XVIII Corps (Airborne). The Division had not emerged unscathed from the "Battle of the Bulge". In spite of reinforcements, the effective combat personnel was down to 70%. The Division's effective medium tanks were 56% of normal strength. The Division absorbed reinforcements, rehabilitated personnel, and carried on maintenance of vehicles and equipment. On 20 January, an attack was launched against ST. VITH from the north. The towns of DEIDENBERG, BORN, and HUNNINGEN were taken successively in the course of the drive and ST. VITH was re-entered on 23 January. With this important road center secured, the Division continued operations to the South and East of ST. VITH until relieved on 28 January. The Division moved into an assembly area in the vicinity of EUPEN and on 29 January was attached to the V Corps. As the month closed, effective combat personnel was up to 80%, and medium tank strength was 78.5%. The Division was again in Corps reserve undergoing a period of rest, training and rehabilitation after its operations in the ST. VITH sector.

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RECOVERY AND PREPARATION

January, 1945, opened with the 7th Armored Division as Corps reserve of the XVIII Corps (Airborne) in an assembly area near AYNAILLE, Belgium. The division order of battle was as follows:

Combat Command "A"

17th Tank Bn.
23rd Arm'd Inf. Bn.
B/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.

Combat Command "B"

40th Tank Bn.
48th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
A/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.

Combat Command "C"

31st Tank Bn.
38th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
C/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.

Division Artillery

434th Arm'd FA Bn.
440th Arm'd FA Bn.
489th Arm'd FA Bn.
275th Arm'd FA Bn.
A & C/203rd AAA Bn.

Division Trains

129th Ord. Maint. Bn.
77th Med. Bn. Arm'd.
446th QM Tr. Co.
3967th QM Tr. Co.
1/D/203rd AAA Bn.

Division Troops

87th Cav. Rcn. Sq. Mecz.
33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn. (-)
203rd AAA Bn. (-)
14th Cavalry Group

Attached to the division were the 203rd AAA Bn., 446th QM Tr. Co., 3967th QM Tr. Tr. Co., 275th Arm'd FA Bn. (105 SP), and the 14th Cavalry Group. The 14th Cavalry Group, however, was released from attachment to the division at 011330 January. Attached to the division for administration only were CCB of the 9th Arm'd Div. and the 814th TD Bn., the latter of which was under tactical attachment of the 75th Inf. Div. The Division Artillery was also supporting the 75th Inf. Div.

During the ST. VITH operation and the ensuing action at MANHAY, in December, the division had suffered heavy losses in both men and vehicles. Early in January, reinforcements were received, trained and absorbed. New weapons were fired and new vehicles and equipment issued.

Problems that confronted the division in the first part of January were the snow and cold that made roads slippery and very difficult to travel, and the lack of suitable billets in the areas assigned to the division. To be within the Corps boundary, the division had to move all of elements west of the

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AYWAILLE-WERBOMONT road on 1 January.

Combat Command "A" was alerted to move on 1 hour notice after 012000 January, to block enemy penetration in the zone of the 75th Inf. Div. The alert was lifted at 020930 January upon Corps order.

A new XVIII Corps (Airborne) boundary was set and the division again had to move all of its elements that were south of the WERBOMONT-HAMOIR road to the area north of that road. In spite of difficulty in obtaining suitable billets, the move was completed by 031030 January.

In view of the fact that the terrain in which the division was likely to operate was close and rugged, the Commanding General ordered training in the use of small teams of infantry, tanks, and engineers. Where mass employment of tanks would be impossible, these small teams could operate over roads or trails to gain the rear of the enemy forces to make surprise seizures of important road centers or defiles.

The tank component of these teams was to be small; rarely, if ever, over a platoon. The infantry component was to be comparatively large to provide reconnaissance and security for the tanks, while the engineers were for mine detection, removal of road blocks, and pioneer work.

In compliance with these orders the combat commands organized small task forces and conducted special training and problems throughout the entire first half of the month.

The Division Artillery was relieved from the mission of reinforcing the 75th Inf. Div. and reverted to division control on 030900 January. On 051800 January, the 275th Arm'd FA Bn., was detached from the 7th Armored Division and attached to the 82nd Airborne Division. The 814th TD Bn. was returned to division control from the 75th Inf. Div. on 051100 January.

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A Camouflage Team from the First U. S. Army visited the division's tank battalions on 5 January to give technical advice and assist in camouflaging the vehicles. On 10 January, the division became the first unit in the First U. S. Army to paint its tanks white for camouflage.

The division was given a warning order by the XVIII Corps(Airborne) at 061430 January, to conduct a reconnaissance of the 82nd Airborne Division's zone for possible routes on which to employ parts of the 7th Armored Division. Combat Command "B" was alerted for the mission. The purpose of any attack that would see the division committed, would be to relieve the pressure in front of the 3rd Arm'd Division zone and on the BASTOGNE salient. The reconnaissance of the routes was completed on 7 January, but it was not necessary to commit the division.

Combat Command "B" of the 9th Armored Division, which had been attached to the division during the defense of ST. VITH, and remained attached for administration only, was relieved on 070001 January.

The training program continued and an officer and NCO school was held for selected members of each unit. Schooling in Chemical Warfare Defensive Measures and the proper technique of directing and sensing artillery fire was conducted.

It was discovered during the problems that the snow on the ground muffled the sound of the tanks. By careful movement, tanks were able to get to within 200-300 yards of an objective without being discovered. This information was passed to the division by Col. DWIGHT A. ROSEBAUM, Combat Command "A" Commander.

The alternate thawing and freezing of the snow had made the roads very icy. Grousers or similar traction aids for the division's full-tracked vehicles were badly needed, but could not be procured. Lt. Col. REGINALD H. HODGSON, G-4, and Lt. Col. GEORGE E. HUGHES, Division Ordnance Officer, together devised a cleat

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to be installed on the duck feet track extensions of medium tanks so that they might negotiate on an icy surface. This traction aid was the duck bill of a track extension cut in half with one half being welded into the edge of the track extensions to stick over the surface of the track $3/4$ of an inch. These cleats were placed on the medium tanks tracks, ten to a side, and upon demonstration proved very feasible makeshifts, although not expected to last for a long time. Distribution was made to the tank battalions, the FA battalions and the 814th TD Bn.

At noon of 11 January, the division began a two-day and one-night march by infiltration over two routes to an assembly area in the vicinity, VERVIERS-SPA. The 2nd Battalion of the 517th Parachute Inf. Regt and the 509th Parachute Inf. Bn., were attached to the division at 112900 January. The 275th Arm'd FA Bn., was returned to the division at 111200 January. The division was notified that the 503th Parachute Regt. (3 Battalions) would be available on call. A detachment of the 994th Engineer Treadway Bridge Co., was attached and the 29th Engr C Bn., placed in direct support at 121700 January. The movement to the new assembly area was completed by 131503 January.

Field Order #16 was published by the division at 131500 January, based on XVIII Corps (Airborne) Field Order #2 (112000 January). Corps was to attack at 130000 January to secure a line LA NEUVILLE-HOUVEGNEZ-RIES. The attack was to be continued to seize and secure ST.VITH and the high ground along the general line BEHO-MALDANCE-ST.VITH-AMBLEVE.

The 7th Armored Division was to remain in assembly area prepared to attack on Corps order. The division's mission was to "pass rapidly through 1st Infantry Division in zone of action; attack and destroy enemy wherever found in ST.VITH area;

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destroy his road traffic; seize ST. VITH; and on further Corps order, organize and defend this road center; reconnoiter to south and east of ST. VITH; protect Corps left (east) flank".

From 14 to 19 January, the division remained in Corps reserve and completed the final preparations for its attack. 1500 white mattress covers were issued to the units as snow camouflage garments on 14 January. 125 snow capes were also received and distributed. On 20 January, 1500 additional two-piece white camouflage suits were issued to bring the total distributed to an amount sufficient to equip each line infantryman with a mattress cover or camouflage suit, and in addition key personnel of tank battalions, artillery battalions, the Engineer battalion and the Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron were equipped.

At 181800 January B Co of the 73rd Tank Bn. (Mine Exploders) and the 957th FA Bn., were attached to the division.

The Combat Commands were grouped into the following task forces for the coming operations:

Combat Command "A"

Task Force W (Wempe)

17th Tank Bn. (-B, C, 1/D)
B/23rd Arm'd Inf Bn.
2/B/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn.
2/A/814th TD Bn.

Task Force R (Rhea)

23rd Arm'd Inf. Bn.
C, 1/D 17th Tank Bn.
1/B/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
1/A/814th TD Bn.

Task Force S (Seitz)

2/517th Pcht Inf Regt
B/17th Tank Bn.
3/B 33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
3/A 814th TD Bn.

Combat Command "B"

Task Force A (Chapuis)

48th Arm'd Inf. Bn. (-B & C)
A, D/31st Tank Bn.
1/A 33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
1/C 814th TD Bn.

Task Force B (Thomasik)

509th Pcht Inf. Bn. (-C)
B/31st Tank Bn.
B/48th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
3/A/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.

Task Force C (Erlenbusch)

31st Tank Bn. (-A, B, & D)
C/48th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
C/509th Pcht Inf. Bn.
Arm'd Engr. Bn.

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THE ROAD TO ST VITH

The task forces were organized and the division prepared to attack upon Corps order, when on 18 January the boundary between the 30th Inf. Div., and the 7th Arm'd Div., was changed by Corps ~~and~~ to the slow progress of the other attacking units. This change in boundary removed the ST. VITH ~~portion~~ portion of the division's objective which then extended from the high ground north of ST. VITH to the north and east to AMBLEVE.

The division CP moved to AIMS on 19 January and Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "B" moved into the final attack positions, closing in on the vicinity of AIMS during the night 19-20 January. A combination of hilly terrain, snow, and ice made the movement difficult.

At ~~20/730~~ January, the 7th Armored Division began its attack south through the sector held by the 1st and 30th Infantry Divisions. The day was cold with snow falling. The immediate objective of Combat Command "A" was the village of DEIDENBERG. TF WEMPLE attacked the village from the north and northeast at ~~0930~~, and as enemy resistance was light, had taken it by ~~1030~~. TF RHEA passed through TF WEMPLE and by ~~1530~~ had secured the high ground to the southeast of the village despite heavy enemy small arms fire from houses in that zone. No artillery or armor were encountered. TF SEITZ moved into position prepared to attack through the other two forces to take the ANF DER HAEDT woods to the south.

Combat Command "B" launched a coordinated attack against BORN at ~~1630~~. According to the plan of attack TF B was to attack astride the road from the east while TF C was to come in from the northwest. TF A was held in reserve prepared to support TF B. The tanks of TF C were held up by mines and impassable terrain so that the attack was launched with TF B and the infantry of TF C.

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Deep snow and cold caused a large number of frostbite casualties. It was estimated that the town was defended by 200 infantry supported by at least three tanks and assault guns. TF A was committed at 1715 and the attack continued through the night and during the day of 21 January. At 0800 the 38th Arm'd Inf. Bn., was released from Combat Command "R" to reinforce Combat Command "B" and A/38 was used to complete the mopping up from house to house entering BORN at 1700. By 1800 organized enemy resistance had ceased.

In the fall of snow flurries and continued cold weather, the elements of Combat Command "A" continued to advance on 21 January. TF SEITZ took the high ground to the south of DEIDENBERG meeting moderate enemy resistance in the form of small arms, mortar, and artillery fire. TF RHEA moved east to secure a more advantageous defensive position to the south of EIBERTINGEN. The 508th RCT began moving into the area as planned and upon detrucking was attached to the 7th Armored Division and Combat Command "A" at 1530. It relieved the Combat Command "A" task forces by 2325 and assumed the defense of the DEIDENBERG-EIBERTINGEN region. The team was composed of the 508th Pcht. Inf. Regt., the 319th FA Glider Bn., D/307th Engr. Bn., and B/80 AAA Bn.

On 22 January, Combat Command Reserve which had been in division reserve, occupied and assumed the responsibility of the defensive positions held by Combat Command "A". The 508th Pcht. Inf. Regt., was attached to Combat Command "R" at 0800, and the relief of Combat Command "A" was completed by 0930. Combat Command "R" also relieved elements of the 23rd Regimental Combat Team in the vicinity of MONTENAU and IVELDINGEN, completing the relief by 1540.

Combat Command "A", after being relieved, was to attack south to seize HUNNINGEN and the wooded area to the east of HUNNINGEN.

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A task force from Combat Command "B" was to assist in the attack. This task force known as TF BEATY, consisted of C/31st Tk Bn., B/48th Arm'd Inf. Bn., A/32nd Arm'd Engr. Bn., and 1/C/814th TD Bn.

Task Forces SEITZ and RHEA jumped off at 1700 and rapidly pushed south in the face of moderate resistance in the form of small arms and anti-tank fire. The speedy advance disorganized the enemy. Little artillery fire was received, and no contact with armor was reported, the enemy infantry bearing the brunt of the attack.

TF BEATY, attached to Combat Command "A" at 1735, pushed toward HUNTER and by 1700 had reached the village. TF SEITZ and TF RHEA reached the objective at 1745 and by 1800 the combined forces had ended all enemy resistance there. TF RHEA followed Task Forces SEITZ and SEALE, mopping up pockets of resistance that had been isolated in the rapid advance, and took up positions along the southern edge of the IN DER EIDT woods to the northeast of HUNTER. The division now controlled the high ground overlooking the pile of rubble that had once been ST VITH only 2,000 yards away.

Late on 22 January, the 7th Armored Division was ordered by Corps to seize ST. VITH and an adjusted boundary with the 30th Inf. Div., was to become effective at midnight of 22 January. "B" Co., of the 38th Arm'd Inf. Bn., was sent toward ST VITH as a reconnaissance in force during the night 22-23 January. They reached the outskirts of the town but were forced back upon encountering a road block defended by artillery and machine gun fire.

The original plan of attack gave Combat Command "B" the mission of taking ST. VITH. On 2300 the 48th Arm'd Inf. Bn., (-) and C/814th TD Bn., were attached to Combat Command "B". Plans were worked out calling for a coordinated attack

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employing the 87th Cav. Ron. Sq. Mech., the 48th Arm'd Inf. Bn., and two tank companies. At 0930, however, a change was made and Combat Command "B" was given the job of taking ST. VITH and the 48th Arm'd Inf. Bn., (-), C/814th TD Bn., and C/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn., were detached from Combat Command "R" and attached to Combat Command "B".

Combat Command "B" 's plan to take ST VITH involved the organization of three task forces as follows:

TF CHAPPUIS

48th Arm'd Inf. Bn (-B)
A & B/31st Tank Bn.

TF BEATY

B/48th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
C/31st Tank Bn.
1/C/814th TD Bn.
1/A/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.

TF RHEA

28rd Arm'd Inf. Bn. (-B)
C/17th Tank Bn.
1/D/17th Tank Bn.
1/B/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
1/A/814th TD Bn.

TF CHAPPUIS was to move parallel to the HUNNINGEN-ST.VITH road and west of it to occupy the southern portion of ST.VITH, while TF BEATY moved astride the HUNNINGEN-ST.VITH road to occupy the northwestern portion of the town. TF RHEA was to attack due south from his position in the woods to the east of HUNNINGEN to take the northeastern part of ST.VITH. Some of the artillery battalions were displaced to support the operation more effectively.

The attack against ST.VITH jumped off at 231415 January, after a heavy artillery preparation. Only moderate ground resistance of small arms and machine gun fire was encountered in the attack although artillery and nebelwerfer fire was very heavy. By 1745 ST. VITH was taken, and defensive positions established around the town. At 2015 an enemy counterattack of infantry and tanks from the southeast was broken up by artillery fire. Another attempt to regain ST.VITH made at 2125 using an estimated 200 infantrymen supported by at least two tanks, was again dispersed by the use of artillery. Once again at 2250 an attack of about a platoon of infantry was repelled.

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As had been previously planned, the 424th RCT with its attached 591st FA Bn., C/331st Medical Bn., and C/ 81st Engr. Bn., was attached to the 7th Armored Division at 231545 January, to relieve the 508th Pcht Eng. Regt. The relief was completed by 2045 at which time the 508th Pcht. Inf. Regt., reverted to the control of the 82nd Airborne Division. At 241100 January, TF BREA was returned to Combat Command "A" control from Combat Command "B".

On 24 January, Combat Command "B" was given the mission of seizing the high ground to the south and southeast of ST.VITH. Task Force THOMPSON (31st Tank Bn., (-A) and the 509th Pcht. Inf. Bn) and Task Force CHAFFUIS (40th Arm'd Inf. Bn., plus A/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn) jumped off at 1630. The snow was so deep and the terrain so bad that the tanks were unable to progress so the whole burden of the attack fell upon the infantry. Part of the objective was taken by nightfall. A task force led by Lt. Col. VINCENT L. BOYLAN, consisting of the 87th Cav. Recon. Sq. (Mech.), plus B and C of the 40th Tank Bn, reconnoitered to the southeast and east of ST.VITH. D/87th was attached to Combat Command "B" to aid in its attack at 1500.

Combat Command "A" had consolidated its positions on 24 January and prepared plans for an attack to seize and secure WILHELM. TF BREA was to take the town, TF GRIFFIN was to capture the high ground to the northwest of the town while TF SEITZ was to secure the high ground to the north of WILHELM. TF WILIE was held in reserve. At 251000 January, the attack began. The advancing troops met heavy small arms, machine gun, antitank, mortar and rocket fire, but continued until all task forces had taken their objectives by 1725.

The 424th RCT attacked at 240715 to take WILHELM and nearby heights. Heavy small arms, machine gun fire and assault gun fire was received but by 1400 the town was secured. During the day, the elements of Combat Command "B" continued to fight for and consolidate positions on the high ground to the south and southeast of ST.VITH.

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For the most part, 26 January was spent in consolidation. C/48th Arm'd Inf. Bn., was committed at 0700 and took PRUMBERG by 0810 in the face of light opposition. The 424th RCT jumped off at 0700 and by 1100 had taken MEYERODE and the high ground to the south of MEYERODE with little opposition taking the town but meeting heavy small arms and machine gun fire in securing the high ground. A limited enemy counterattack was repelled in disorder. Three patrols from the 87th Cav. Recon. Sq. Mecz., were dispatched from MEYERODE at 1300 to operate to the east. Two of the patrols ran into observed mortar and artillery fire after advancing 1000 yards to the east and were forced back to the line.

The division adjusted its positions on 27 January preparatory to withdrawing from the sector. The 424th RCT relieved the Second Bn., 517th Pcht. Inf. Regt. completing the relief by 1500, at which time that unit was released from attachment to the 7th Armored Division and reverted to its parent unit. The 424th RCT extended its zone of defense and consolidated its position.

In order that the 82nd Airborne Division which was to attack to the east through the positions of Combat Command "A", would have night flank protection, Combat Command "B" was given the mission of securing the high ground to the east of PRUMBERG. Elements of the Third U.S. Army had not come up for that purpose.

After a five-minute artillery preparation the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion commenced to attack at 271007 January, while the 509th Pcht. Inf. Bn., jumped off at 1025. Stiff resistance in the form of dug-in infantry supported by assault guns and artillery held up the attackers. At 1645 the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion was attached to Combat Command "B" from

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Combat Command "R", to aid in the attack. The 38th Arm'd Inf. Bn., passed through the lines of the 48th Arm'd Inf. Bn., and the 509th Pcht. Inf. Bn., at 280115 January, and seized the high ground by 0355. Elements of the three battalions mopped up, clearing and consolidating the area until 1806.

Relief of the division came on 28 January. Elements of the 82nd Airborne Division passed through the front lines of Combat Command "A" and the 424th RCT at 0600. The defense of the zone was assumed by the 82nd Airborne Division at 0815. Relief of Combat Command "B" by the 2nd and 3rd Bns of the 345th Inf. Regt., 87th Inf. Div., began at 2200, and was completed by 290815 January. The 424th RCT upon being withdrawn from the line was relieved from attachment to the 7th Armored Division and reverted to 106th Inf. Div. control at 261600 January.

After being relieved from the ST. WITH sector, the division was ordered to move to an assembly area in the vicinity of EPTEN. Combat Command "R" and Div. Trps. closed in the new assembly area on 28 January. Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "R" reached the new area at 290815 and 291030 January, respectively. On 291330 January, the 7th Armored Division was detached from the XVIII Corps (Airborne) and attached to the V Corps. The 808th Pcht. Inf. Bn. reverted to the control of the XVIII Corps (Airborne) upon withdrawal from the line. The 987th FA Bn., was detached in place at 290600 January and reverted to Corps control.

The month ended with the division conducting maintenance of vehicles and equipment, and rehabilitation of personnel.

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For the Commanding General:

Joseph P. Smith, Jr.
Colonel, G.S.C.
Chief of Staff

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APPENDIX I

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STATISTICAL SUMMARY

During the month of January, 1945, the 7th Armored Division was under the control of the First U. S. Army. On 281330 January, it was relieved of attachment to the XVIII Corps (Airborne) and attached to the V Corps.

Within the division there were also changes in the important positions. On 11 January, Col. WILLIAM S. TRIPLET succeeded Col. DWIGHT A. ROSEBAUM as CO of Combat Command "A". Major ROBERT L. SNYDER replaced Lt.Col. HERMAN P. MEYER as Inspector General on 11 January. On 20 January Major FRANK P. BRUSCH became Acting Judge Advocate in place of Lt.Col. JOHN P. OLIVER. Lt. Col. JOHN V. MAXWELL was replaced as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1, on 24 January by Major CHARLES R. GRANT.

Personnel losses of the division and attached units for the month are as follows:

Killed and Died of Wounds.....	89
Wounded in Action.....	406
Injured In Action.....	243
Missing In Action.....	22
Non-Battle Casualties.....	707

The enemy lost 1013 men taken as prisoners of war by the division during the month of January.

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APPENDIX I (CONT)

During the period 1 January to 31 January 1945 the Division used the following amount of supplies:

287,342 gal. fuel

5,003 gal. oil

6,001 lbs. grease

1,020 tons rations

374,320 gal. water

493 tons coal

52 cords wood

Ammunition:

Cal. .30, all types-----	203,245
Cal. .45, Ball-----	47,890
Cal. .50, M.G., 2-2-1-----	7,422
37mm Gun, all types-----	170
60mm Mortar, all types-----	524
75mm Gun, all types-----	1,114
76mm How, all types-----	257
76mm Gun, all types-----	654
81mm Mortar, all types-----	1,669
90mm Gun, all types-----	459
105mm How.all types-----	35,545
Grenade, all types-----	1,026
Rocket, H.E., A.T., M6A1-----	32
2" Mortar Smoke-----	128

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APPENDIX II

ROSTER OF STAFF AND UNIT CO. AIDERS

Commanding General	Robert J. Mashrouck,	Brigadier General
Chief of Staff	John L. Ryan, Jr.,	Colonel
G-1	Charles R. Grant,	Major
G-2	Everett J. Murray,	Lt. Colonel
G-3	Charles E. Leydacker,	Lt. Colonel
G-4	Reginald H. Hodgson,	Lt. Colonel
G-5	Rex Thompson,	Lt. Colonel
Adjutant General	Francis E. Carr,	Lt. Colonel
Inspector General	Robert I. Snyder,	Major
Judge Advocate	Frank P. Eresch,	Major
Signal Officer	Emerson L. McDermott,	Lt. Colonel
Finance Officer,	Jesse P. Bellamy,	Lt. Colonel
CMS Officer	Frederic W. Schroeder,	Lt. Colonel
Provost Marshal	James P. Daniel,	Major
Div. Arty. Command	Orville A. Martin,	Colonel
Division Surgeon	Stephen J. Karpenski,	Lt. Colonel
Division Chaplain	Lawrence H. Keating,	Lt. Colonel
CO, CCA	William S. Triplett,	Colonel
CG, CCR	Bruce C. Clarke,	Brigadier General
CO, CCR	Francis P. Thompkins,	Colonel
CO, Div. Trains	Andrew J. Adams,	Colonel
CO, 17th Tk Bn	John P. Temple,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 31st Tk Bn	Robert C. Erlenbusch,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 40th Tk Bn	John C. Brown,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 23rd AIB	Robert I. Rhea,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 38th AIB	Marcus S. Griffin,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 42th AIB	Richard D. Chapuis,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 434th AFA Bn	James G. Dubisson,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 440th AFA Bn	Norman E. Hart,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 489th AFA Bn	James V. Milner,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 33rd AEB	Glyde A. Keltner,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 77th Med. Bn. Arm'd	John E. Boland,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 87th Cav Ren Sq Mecz.,	Vincert I. Boylan,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 129th Ord. Maint. Bn	George E. Hughes,	Lt. Colonel
	<u>ATTACHED UNITS</u>	
CO, 203rd AAA Bn	George C. McFarlan,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 814th TD Bn	Robert B. Jones,	Lt. Colonel
CO, 275th Arm'd FA Bn	Roy U. Clay,	Lt. Colonel

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APPENDIX III

HEADQUARTERS 7th ARMORED DIVISION
Office of the Division Commander

AGO 257, U. S. Army
30 January, 1945

TO THE OFFICERS AND MEN OF THE
7th ARMORED DIVISION AND ATTACHED UNITS:

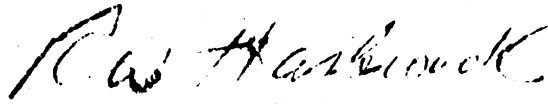
The past month has seen our Division play a major role in two difficult operations, one defensive the other offensive. The splendid manner in which you accomplished your assigned missions in both of these operations reflects great credit upon each officer and enlisted man in the Division and of those units operating with us.

During the period 17 December 1944, to 29 January 1945, you dealt the enemy a telling blow, the box score being estimated as follows:

3095 Killed	18 Self-propelled guns destroyed
1984 Wounded	11 Field pieces destroyed, 7 Captured
1188 Captured	68 Assorted vehicles destroyed
126 Tanks destroyed, 1 Captured	

Through your fighting spirit, courage and devotion to duty you have won the praise and respect of all the civilized world.

I wish to add my sincere, personal appreciation for your accomplishments and sacrifices that have won for the Division such an enviable record.


R. W. HASBROUCK
Brigadier General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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APPENDIX IV

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

JOURNALS AND MESSAGES

- G-1 Journal and Messages.
- G-2 Journal and Messages.
- G-3 Journal and Messages.
- G-4 Journal and Messages.

REPORTS AND ORDERS

- G-2 Periodic Reports.
- G-3 Periodic Reports.
- Operations Instructions.
- Field Order.
- General Orders.

THE AFTER ACTION REPORTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (JOURNALS, MESSAGES, ORDERS, AND OVERLAYS, ETC.,) OF THE FOLLOWING COMPONENT AND ATTACHED UNITS OF THE 7TH ARMORED DIVISION:

Combat Command "A"
Combat Command "B"
Combat Command Reserve
7th Armored Division Artillery
7th Armored Division Trains
7th Armored Division Quartermaster
23rd Armored Infantry Battalion
38th Armored Infantry Battalion
48th Armored Infantry Battalion
17th Tank Battalion
31st Tank Battalion
40th Tank Battalion
434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion.
440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
480th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
33rd Armored Engineer Battalion
77th Medical Battalion (Armored)
87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized
129th Ordnance Maintenance Battalion
147th Armored Signal Company
203rd AAA Auto Weapons Battalion (SP) (Attached)
275th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (Attached)

The report of the 814th TD Bn (SP) (Attached) has been submitted through other channels.

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G-2 NOTES

1 January - 31 January, 1945

No ground contact was made by the Division until the twentieth of the month. On January 1st, Division Artillery fired on a few targets in the general area to the south of MANHAY, and from that time until January 20, no physical contact was effected between troops of the Division and the enemy.

The period was spent by the intelligence agencies of the Division in preparing for offensive action against the Germans that were continuing their extrication of units from the "bulge" into the Western Front that had resulted from the winter ARDENNES counter-offensive. It was apparent that the enemy was withdrawing much of his motorized force and armor, and the problem at hand was to determine just what forces would be left behind and what line of action they would accept. All indications were that the Germans intended using the forces that had previously held the shoulders of the salient to gain time and space for the further extrication of more important forces. These forces appeared to remain basically unchanged from those that had previously been in contact along the shoulders, many of which had been in contact with the division before its withdrawal to the north of MANHAY - characteristically Volksgrenadier type forces. It further appeared that the armor was being pulled out, there being left behind only such strength as would be required to seal off American penetrations of the lines as they existed.

When the pending sector of operations was made known (that area to be generally to the S and SE of MALMEDY), extensive study was conducted in the area.

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Expected forces were met in the Division's drive on January 20. Action, too, was basically confirmatory of what expected. The forces met were not of the highest offensive type, although diligent in their efforts of defense, and followed the general lines^{as} recent action in defending against speedy progress on breakthrough, establishing successive strong points of infantry forces backed up by a minimum of armor, primarily assault guns. Artillery, generally speaking, was light; mines, generally speaking, were found only on normal approaches into enemy positions.

On January 20, our forces were able to take DEIDERTERG against only light resistance, but troops moving to the south of the town met with heavier resistance. Forces reported little more than small arms fire, mostly from houses in the southern part of the town; a little mortar and a negligible amount of artillery without the appearance of armor filled out the picture in the DEIDERTERG Sector.

Forces operating towards ECKW, however, experienced much stiffer resistance and were unable to occupy the town on January 20. The Germans were defending the town with a substantial force, utilizing small arms and mortar fire supported by an abnormal amount of fire from self-propelled assault guns. There were three tanks also reported in this area. One tank and one self-propelled gun were knocked out in this operation.

During the 20th of January, a total of 115 prisoners were taken, and from them the identifications of the forces on the Division front were found to be, basically, the 18 Volks Grenadier and 3 Parachute Divisions, plus stragglers of several odd units that had fallen back into the area and had been either absorbed into units disposed on the ground or formed into battle groups to defend critical points.

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A noticeable point of enemy security that had been previously encountered very little was discovered during the day. Many of the prisoners taken had either been completely stripped or had stripped themselves of all documents that would have aided in identifying their units. This lack of factual evidence, however, was a small factor in keeping Division interrogators from determining the units opposing the Division, for the enemy soldiers captured talked openly and freely. The status of morale as expressed in the opinions of the soldiers was generally low, the strengths of the forces to our front seriously depleted from previous engagements, and many of the units without knowledge of the situation - friendly or enemy.

During January 21, our troops moved well to the South of DEIDELBERG, meeting only token resistance, and forces were able to overcome the enemy resistance in BORN. Resistance was varied during the period over the entire sector of operations. At some points, the enemy heavily engaged our forces and fought until they were either killed or were forced to surrender; at other points, the enemy occupying positions in the path of our forces gave up without a struggle. It appeared that there was a noticeable lack of leadership at some of the points, and the hostile troops virtually awaited our coming so that they might surrender.

BORN was found, prior to final entry, to be occupied by an estimated 200 troops, supported by several assault guns and a few tanks. Artillery over the entire sector was much heavier than during the first day of operations in this area, and mortar fire was also quite heavy at several points. Some Nebelwerfer fire was recorded, too.

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During the 21st of January, our troops took 78 prisoners of war, destroyed at least 14 armored vehicles, and damaged several others by artillery fire.

Identifications added additional Divisions to the forces opposing our advance, but with the reduction of strength effected by our attack, probably did not increase the strength facing us to any material extent. The 25 SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 12 SS Panzer Division was identified, and it appeared that this force had been thrown in as a stop-gap unit until forces from other sectors could be put into the lines, for about at the same time of the identification of this regiment, there were indications that forces were being dispatched from more quiet sectors for the same job that was being done by this elite (so-called) force. In addition to confirming identifications of the 18 Volksgrenadier and 3 Parachute Divisions, the 246 Volksgrenadier Division was also identified during the day.

January 22 saw a repeat as far as the tactics of the enemy was concerned. Our forces were able to advance without too much difficulty, meeting only small arms and mortar fire, supported by a limited number of tanks and assault guns. There was some artillery fire, and some anti-tank fire was run into. There appeared to be a total reluctance on the part of the enemy to have his armor engage ours on the ground; the only appearances he made with his armor were at long range and then by supporting fire only. The enemy continued to defend critical focal points with Infantry, and usually gave these points up when our forces closed in on them.

Elsewhere within the salient, the enemy was retreating, in his withdrawal. Air reconnaissance showed at almost any hour of the day

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great columns of vehicles of all descriptions leaving the bulge on all roads that lead back to Germany. Many of the columns were actually moving close enough to the fronts of adjacent units for them to be engaged by ground weapons, and the air was attacking constantly all those out of reach of the guns of our neighboring formations. Casualties inflicted on the enemy in this retrograde movement were steadily mounting.

51 prisoners were taken during the period, and their identifications revealed that the 3 Parachute Division was holding to its original sector (that is, to the east of DEIDENBERG, from which our forces had moved to the south), and that the responsibility of defense in the sector to our front was that of the 18 Volksgrenadier and 246 Volksgrenadier Divisions. No contact was made with the Regiment of the 12 SS Panzer Division as during the previous day, probably indicating that its relief had been accomplished and that it, as suspected, was moving to the east. Additional odd units, as previously contacted, continued.

On January 22, our forces captured intact seven 88mm anti-tank guns which had not been moved from their original emplacements. This, as much as anything that had been encountered to date, showed at what a low ebb the enemy's transportation facilities were. No attempt had been made at destruction of the pieces, and there was an ample supply of ammunition at the weapons' sites.

January 23rd brought about the first show of aggression that been made by the enemy during this operation. After our forces had pushed southward and had captured ST VITH against moderate resistance, the enemy began a series of movements up and down the line AMEL - ST VITH, said movements including both armor and infantry. Although nothing but the usual rear guard and resistance centers

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had been encountered by our troops up until night fall, the enemy actually launched into offensive action at several points along the front at or shortly after dark. There were no penetrations of our positions, and it seemed that most of efforts were made on a relatively small scale. Artillery and Nebelwerfer fire increased during the day, comparatively speaking.

157 prisoners were taken during January 23rd, 1 tank was destroyed, 4 assault guns were destroyed and 1 was captured intact. Identifications of prisoners revealed nothing particularly striking, except that there were more and more odd units appearing in the line. One identification of the 326 Volksgrenadier Division was made - a forerunner to many others that were to come if the suspected dispositions of the division were correct. This division was another of the "sacrifice" outfits protecting the withdrawal from the salient.

The enemy brought a halt to his aggressive operations after a few small-scale attacks on the outskirts of ST VITH after our occupation of that town, all shortly after midnight on 24th January. All of these attempts were in very small strength, and were probably effected for the sole purpose of determining what we were going to do with the town now that we had it. As it had long been a focal point of much of the enemy's activity in the salient because of its situation on the center of a far-reaching network of roads, it was probably believed by the enemy that we would put it to much the same use.

Artillery fire was rather heavier in this period than heretofore. It was believed that we were approaching the positions that had been taken up by the enemy's artillery, therefore bringing us within

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range of the pieces (rather than the enemy bringing up any additional artillery strength).

52 prisoners were taken on January 24th, and one 88mm anti-tank gun was captured intact. Two enemy tanks were found, abandoned but destroyed. Most of the prisoners came from the 18 Volksgrenadier Division and several were taken from the 326th, all in the immediate vicinity of ST VITH.

The enemy continued typical delaying tactics on January 25 against our general advance to the east. Numerous centers of resistance were hit - generally as had been encountered during previous days, with infantry forces occupying strong points with support of mortar and artillery fire. No contact with armor was reported except in MEDELL, where a single assault gun supported the infantry force defending the town. Otherwise along the front, the enemy supported the infantry forces with ^{arty} mortar, Nebelwerfer, and mortar fire.

Advances made by our forces south of ST VITH met with little or no resistance. Defending forces of WALLERODE offered heavy resistance before the town, but offered little organized fight in the town itself, winding up the day with little but sniping from a few of the buildings in the town.

A heavy toll of prisoners was taken during the day - 319. Of the total number prisoners taken, 183 were from the 404 Volksgrenadier Regiment of the 246 Volksgrenadier Division. The original estimates of strength of this regiment were around 250; the toll exacted during the day in prisoners taken, plus some killed and wounded, removed this formation from the formidable list of forces on the Division front. Most of the other prisoners taken were from odd units with recent affiliation to the Volksgrenadier Divisions in the area,

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having arrived as replacements within the past few days from other sectors and from inside Germany.

It appeared from prisoner statements and from all outstanding indications that the enemy had expected our primary attack to be due east from ST VITH, and when our larger force attacked towards the town of WALLERODE, it caught most of the enemy in a great state of unpreparedness. Thus caught, most of the enemy chose to surrender rather than fight from unprepared positions.

Against Division operations towards objectives to the east (MEYERODE and the high ground to the south thereof) on January 26, the enemy offered different tempos of resistance. Forces in MEYERODE gave up almost without a fight; those in defense of the high ground to the south were extremely determined, and even launched a small scale counterattack which disintegrated upon the appearance of our armor. Mopping up was continued in the vicinity of WALLERODE which had been occupied during the previous day; the only enemy activity was in the form of the intermittent artillery and mortar that fell on the town during most of the day. Troops moving to the east of ST VITH on the main road ran into road blocks and heavy small arms fire.

A total of 83 prisoners was recorded for the day. No new identifications were turned up, confirming further that the German was more interested in gaining time for extricating his forces rather than holding ground previously retaken.

It was on January 26th that a patrol of the troops of the Division operating to the East of ST VITH found a document substantiating to a great extent the theory that the enemy was drawing from the immediate sector all of the so-classified "elite"

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panzer troops. The order was issued by the commander of the Sixth SS Panzer Army, and it ordered the movement of four of the most widely known SS Panzer Divisions (1SS, 2SS, 9SS, 12 SS) from the front. The order was dated January 19, and subsequent developments had altered the effect of the orders, but the document afforded higher headquarters an insight on the enemy's intentions.

January 27 brought little change in the attitude of the enemy forces to the Division front. His defensive attitude was still paramount, and the nature and location of his little centers of defense indicate that he was playing for the time necessary to man a defense line in strength somewhere to the east, certainly the next logical line - the SEIGFRIED defenses. Sporadic mortar and artillery fire was recorded over the general front, primarily interdictory in nature, directed at the towns (and roads from them) that we occupied on the main roads running eastward. Severe resistance was offered to any attempt that we made to advance more to the east on the road from ST VITH.

36 prisoners were taken on January 27; no new identifications were made. Many of the prisoners had deserted to our lines, taking advantage of the Safe Conduct Leaflets that we had fired into their lines. Morale of the enemy prisoners was at a low ebb; they were suffering from the cold, had inadequate clothes, were without food and had been for varying periods, and were generally of the opinion that they were playing a losing game. It was interesting to note, however, that most of them were fairly well supplied with ammunition and that the weapons that they had were not below previous standards. It appeared that the enemy's supply system could not afford the front line soldiers all items that were needed, so their supply had been limited to the things that were necessary to the

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continuance of the individual fighting. Most of them were under orders simply to defend where they were until the last round had been fired.

On January 28, most of the troops of the Division were relieved in the line; only those forces astride the road to the east out of ST VITH remained in position. Troops, before being relieved, reported less artillery and mortar fire than during previous days, and the troops that remained in the line reported an almost total absence of both mortar and artillery by the time they had reached their most advanced positions. Heavy machine gun and rifle fire was encountered before the troops reached these points, however.

17 prisoners were taken during the period. Again, no new identifications were made of the prisoners taken.

Prior to the time of final relief of the remaining forces in the line on January 29, our troops reported nothing as to enemy activities except sporadic mortar and artillery fire and some small arms fire. Seven prisoners were recorded for this final day of action.

The remaining days of the month were spent in preparing for any eventual moves that might be made in the sector to the front of the corps to which the division was then assigned (VCorps). Activities of the enemy in the area had been quite parallel to those that the Division had been encountering. The basic differences in the picture in the new area of interest were that there were forces of the same type but in better defensive positions, and that terrain more highly favored the enemy's defense. Approaches into enemy territory led through the outer ring of the STIGFRIED defenses and to the ROER river line and the lakes that made up the river's head-waters. Enemy tactics were generally unchanged; it appeared that he was going to sell his troops for time and space.

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HEADQUARTERS 7TH ARMORED DIVISION
APO 257 U. S. ARMY

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SUBJECT: After Action Report, 7th Armored Division,
Period 1-28 February, 1945.

TO : Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D.C. (Thru
Channels).

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CLASSIFICATION CHANGED TO
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BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
Donald Barrer
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE 14 Aug 1945

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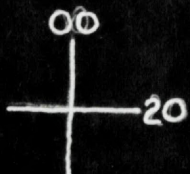
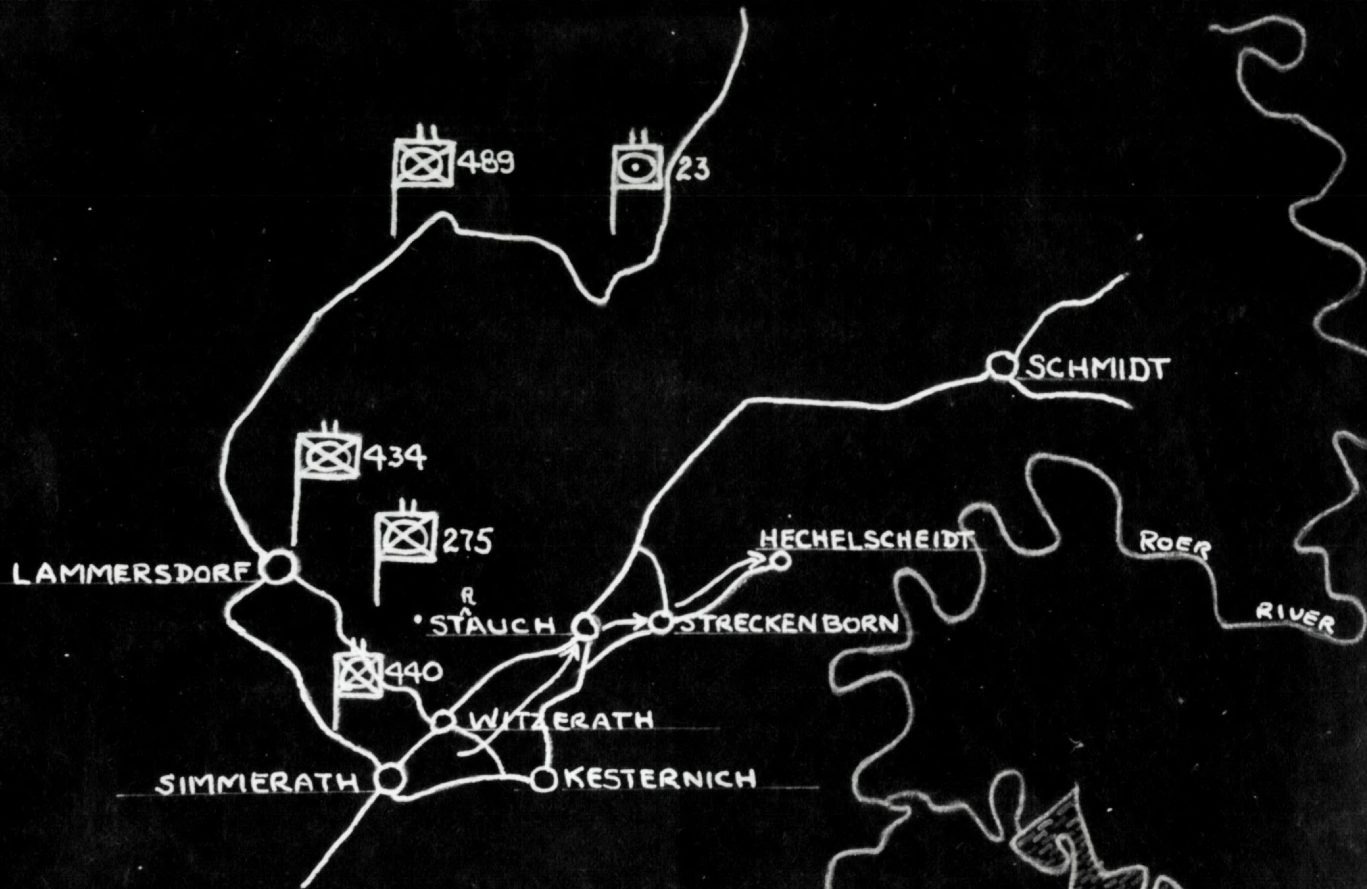
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- 5. Appendices:**
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 - II. List of Supporting Documents**

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7TH ARMORED DIVISION
AFTER-ACTION REPORT
SITUATION OVERLAY
042400 FEBRUARY, 1945
SCALE: 1/100,000
→ CCR'S ROUTE

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SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

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During the month of February, 1945, the 7th Armored Division was billeted in the vicinity of EUPEN, BELGIUM as Corps reserve of the V Corps, First U.S. Army. The division as a whole was never committed during this period although some of its battalions saw action under attachment to the 78th and 99th Infantry Divisions. Training and maintenance were carried on throughout the month and from 11 to 28 February, the division helped in the First U. S. Army road maintenance program. Division Artillery stayed in general support of the 78th Infantry Division from 4 February through the end of the period.

INTRODUCTION

7th Armored Division headquarters were located in the little Belgian border town of EUPEN throughout February, 1945. On 1 February, the order of battle was:

Order of Battle

Combat Command "A"

23rd Arm'd Inf. Bn.
17th Tank Bn.
B/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
A/814 TD Bn.
2/C/203rd AAA Bn.

Combat Command "B"

48th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
31st Tank Bn.
A/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
C/814 TD Bn.
C(-)/203rd AAA Bn.

Division Artillery

434th Arm'd FA Bn.
449th Arm'd FA Bn.
489th Arm'd FA Bn.
275th Arm'd FA Bn.
A/203rd AAA Bn.

Division Trains

129th Ord M Bn.
77th Med Bn., Arm'd.
446th QM. Tr. Co.
3967th QM. Tr. Tr. Co.

Combat Command "R"

38th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
40th Tank Bn.
C/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
B/814 TD Bn.
D(-)/203rd AAA Bn.

Division Troops

87th Cav. Rcn. Sq., Mecs.
33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn. (-).
203rd AAA Bn. (-).
814th TD Bn. (-).

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The attached units were the 203rd AAA Bn., 814th TD Bn., 275th Arm'd FA Bn., the 446th QM Tr. Co., and the 3967th QM Tr.Tr.Co.

The division's activities during the month can be broken down into three phases: units in combat, the First U.S. Army Road Maintenance Program, and a training and maintenance schedule.

UNITS IN COMBAT

At ~~030700~~ February, the 23rd Arm'd Inf. Bn., was detached from Combat Command "A" and attached to the 78th Infantry Division.

Under orders from that headquarters, they left 23rd Infantry HENRI - CHAPELLE, BELGIUM at 12~~00~~ and by 23~~00~~ had completed the relief of the 2nd Bn., of the 309th Inf. Regt. in their sector 2 1/2 miles to the northeast of LAMMERSDORF, GERMANY. From 4 to 10 February, their immediate front remained quiet and little enemy activity outside of an occasional mortar or artillery shell was reported. Aggressive action in the form of reconnaissance patrols brought in much valuable information as to the location of pillboxes, booby-traps, S-mines, anti-personnel mines, and barbed-wire entanglements. At 12~~00~~ on 10 February, the battalion was relieved from attachment to the 78th Inf. Div. and returned to the control of Combat Command "A".

Combat Command "R" played an important part in helping the 78th Inf. Div. seize the approaches to the vital SCHWAMMENAUER DAM at the headwaters of the ROER RIVER. At ~~031600~~ February, Combat

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Command "R" was attached to the 78th Inf. Div. and moved its advanced CP from EUPEN to the vicinity of KONZEN, GERMANY. Here it prepared attack in three task forces constituted as follows:

TF MCDANIEL
38th Arm'd Inf. Bn.
C/40th Tank Bn.
1/B/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
1/B/814th TD Bn. (Spt).

TF LUTZ
3/310th Inf. Regt.
B/40th Tank Bn.
3/B/303rd.
1/B/814th TD Bn. (Spt)

TF BROWN
40th Tank Bn (-B&C)
A/87th Cav. Rcn. Sq. Mecz
C/33rd Arm'd Engr. Bn.
B/814th TD Bn. (-)
D/203rd AAA Bn. (-)

The mission was initially to seize and clear the villages of STRAUCH and STECKENBORN thereby securing the 78th Division's south and southeast flank.

At 0630 on 5 February, TF LUTZ crossed the LD (WITZERATH - KESTERNICH road) under cover of darkness and by 0700 reported that it was in posi-

tion on Objective Dot (010245) without having met any opposition.

No Take Francis P. Tompkins
Strauch Col. William S. Triplett, the C.O. of GCR directed the Task Force
And to remain there until it received his orders to advance. The Com-
Stecken- manding General of the 78th Inf. Div. had cancelled the planned
born Artillery preparation as early reports showed all units were un-

opposed and reaching objectives with little or no organized resistance. At 0700 TF MCDANIEL launched its attack and by 0800 reported their position as 400 yards northeast of the Objective HEDY (STRAUCH) with no Germans seen. TF LUTZ now moved out again proceeding toward its next assigned mission, Objective Peggy (STECKENBORN). TF MCDANIEL completed the occupation of STRAUCH and by 1100, the battered little village was rid of the last sniper and secured. TF LUTZ in the meanwhile was meeting increas-

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ing opposition from enemy installed in pillboxes and strong points to the east of STECKENBORN. At 1300, TF LUTZ reported that it had moved into the western end of STECKENBORN and was being held up by a mine-field and by small arms fire from the pillboxes. Col. ^{Tompkins,} ~~Triplet~~ ordered immediate employment of available TD's and tanks for direct fire on strong points ----- and aggressive continuation of the mission. At 1645, the last enemy resistance was overcome and TF LUTZ radioed in that STECKENBORN was secured. The task force commanders were ordered to consolidate their positions for the night.

The plan for the following day was for CCR to assist in and support the attack on HECHELSHEID to be made by the 310th Inf. Regt. A platoon

of B/40th Tank Bn. was to be attached and the attack was to

Relief jump off at 0600 on the 6th. The next morning, the 310th
Of 78th At Inf. Regt. took HECHELSHEID. TF LUTZ was dissolved at
Hechelsheid 0915, its components reverting to their parent units. TF

MCDANIEL was reinforced by the following attachments: A/87th Cav. Rcn. Sq. Mecz., D/203rd AAA Bn., and 1/B/814th TD Bn. At 1315, this TF was ordered to relieve elements of the 78th Inf. Div. in HECHELSHEID and assume responsibility for that sector. Once there, TF MCDANIEL established a defensive position along the general line (023292 - 043273). From 7 to 10 February, Combat Command "R" remained in support of the 78th Div. Their primary mission was to mop up the areas that this division passed through. They also did some reconnaissance work and established a screen to the south and southeast of their sector. Combat Command "R"

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was released from the 78th Inf. Div. and returned to the 7th Armored Div. control at 101200 February.

Division Artillery was in general support of the 78th Inf. Div. during the greater part of the month. Seventh Armored's organic artillery bat-

talions plus the 275th Arm'd FA Bn., an attached unit, were

alerted on 3 February to move into the 78th Inf. Division's

The Artillery

sector. At 031400, February, 489th Arm'd FA Bn. left its bil-

In Action

lets in VERVIERS, BELGIUM and had closed in position in the

HURTGEN FOREST, 7000 yards NE of ROETGEN, GERMANY by 1800 that

evening. They were to furnish direct support to the 23rd Arm'd Inf. Bn.

On 4 February, the remaining battalions in Division Artillery moved into the zone of the 78th Inf. Div. closing in firing positions near LAMMERSDORF by 1800. The 440th Arm'd FA Bn. was in direct support of Combat Command "R" and was reinforced by the 275th. The 434th was in general support. The 489th remained with the 23rd Arm'd Inf. Bn. until relieved on 051500 February, when they moved to an open field on the hillside outside of KESTERNICH and went into general support. The 434th together with the 440th and the 275th displaced forward to the outskirts of the village of STRAUCH on 7 February.

The week of 6 February to 12 February saw as heavy firing as any the artillery had done since the initial landing in France. This consisted

Night And largely of TOT's and comprehensive all-night programs of har-
Interdictionassing and interdiction fires requested by the 78th Inf. Div.

Fires

The object of this intensive fire was two-fold: first, to

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support the 78th Inf. Div. in its attack on the bitterly contested little road junction of SCHNIDT, and subsequently to support both the 78th and 9th Inf. Divisions in the operations against the two dams in the vicinity of the HUR-URFT LAKES. Both dams, after a considerable struggle, were taken, but not until the enemy had dynamited the flood gates and caused a rise along the entire ROER RIVER.

After 12 February, the amount of fire called for diminished noticeably although from that date to the end of the month, enemy positions on the east bank of the ROER were pounded on a number of different occasions. The 275th Arm'd FA Bn. was relieved from attachment to the 7th Arm'd Div. ~~28/28~~ February. The other artillery units remained in their positions in the fields and were able to accomplish some training and a good deal of vehicular maintenance in addition to their continuous support of the 78th Inf. Div.

A & C/814th TD Bn., were released from Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "B" respectively and returned to battalion control on

~~071630~~ February. The 814th TD Bn., (-) was alerted to 814th TD Bn. move to the zone of the 99th Inf. Div. after ~~080800~~ February. At ~~081000~~ February, the 814th TD Bn., (-B) was detached from the 7th Arm'd Div. and attached to the 99th Inf. Div. The battalion was released from attachment to the 99th Inf. Div. and attached to the 69th Inf. Div. on ~~131000~~ February. On ~~162000~~ February, the 814th TD Bn. was released from assignment to the 69th Inf. Div. and reattached to the 7th Arm'd Div.

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There was a possibility that Combat Command "B" would see action when it was placed on a six (6) hour alert for employment anywhere in the V Corps C.C.B. sector at 041200 February. It was never called upon and relieved two days later on the sixth at 1430.

FIRST U. S. ARMY ROAD MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Operations Memorandum #3, Headquarters 7th Armored Division reads in part as follows: "The Commanding General desires that it be brought to the attention of each member of this command that the Army program to restore the roads to a normal useable state is an urgent necessity. Roads along the front must be able to support large scale operations before the next offensive can begin; at present the roads will not permit the launching of an offensive. Our 'fight' now is to put the road into proper condition and is of equal importance with actual combat."

During the month of February, the division was split into two parts, half were in the ROETGEN area of Germany helping the 78th Inf. Div. in its attack on the SCHWAMMENAUDEL DAM and the other half were in a rest area near EUPEN,

Reasons
For
Program BELGIUM. In between the two was a rolling countryside, criss-crossed by a network of secondary roads. The heavy traffic for which these back roads were never intended combined with continual rains and unseasonable thaw, soon made them nearly impassable to all traffic. Something had to be done and done quickly. The main supply route must be kept open and supplies and reinforcements flowing toward the front.

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Due to the poor condition of the roads both Combat Command "R" and the 23rd Armored Infantry Bn., were refused permission by corps to move back to the division area when they had finished their mission with the 78th Inf. Div. For the same reason, Division Artillery remained in position in general support of the 78th Inf. Div. throughout the month of February.

On 10 February Division was alerted for participation in First U.S. Army Road Maintenance Program. On 11 and 12 February, 2,000 men were furnished by the 7th Arm'd Div. to work under the direction and supervision of the 1111th Engr. (C) Gp. on road maintenance in the XVIII Corps (Abn) sector. The quota was upped to 2,700 men to work under the direction of the 1110th and the 1111th Engr. (C) Groups on road maintenance in First U.S. Army zone each day from 13 through 21 February. From 22 to 27 February, 2,446 men worked under three Engineer (C) Groups, the 1110th, 1111th, and the 1159th. On 28 February, the division was relieved from the program, furnishing 1,946 men on that date.

The units of the division were assigned a quota based on the idea of the relief of each individual one day in five. The working day was 0730 to 1730. The majority of shovels and picks were taken off the division vehicles and certain additional tools were furnished by the Army Engineers. All work groups were under the direct supervision of the officers and NCO's of the 7th Arm'd Div.

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TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Throughout the month, much emphasis was placed on Training and Maintenance Program for those units and men not actually engaged in combat, or at work on the roads. There were difficulties growing out of such fac-

We
Accomplished tors as a necessity for extensive vehicular maintenance under field conditions for certain units and the splitting up of other units in order to furnish the required quotas for road work.

Much was accomplished, however. A Division Communication School was set up and operated by personnel of the 147th Armored Signal Company. Selected students attended. Stress was laid on Orientation. A number of officers from the division attended the Army Information and Education Program Orientation Course at the CITE UNIVERSITY in PARIS and a divisional Information and Education drive was put into operation under the auspices of Major Otto L. McBride of the G-3 Section. The film "Germany", was shown to all men in the 7th Arm'd Div. during the first week of the month.

During the month effective combat personnel strength increased from 83% to 95% of T/O requirements. The number of medium tanks was brought Increases from 80.3% to 98.2% of the T/E allowance and Tank Destroyers In jumped from 83% to 100%. As the month closed the First U.S. Personnel And Army had swept across the ROER and was closing in on COLOGNE. Equipment The 7th Arm'd Div. still in V Corps reserve, was making preparations for action much further to the East.

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For the Commanding General:

John F. Ryan, Jr.
JOHN F. RYAN, JR.,
Colonel, G.S.C.
Chief of Staff

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APPENDIX I

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STATISTICAL SUMMARY

The 7th Armored Division was under the command of the V Corps, First U.S. Army during the entire month of February, 1945.

On 10 February, 1945, the Division's Commanding General, Robert W. Hasbrouck received confirmation of his promotion from Brigadier General to Major General as of 4 January 1945.

During the period there were several changes within the division. Brig. Gen. Bruce C. Clarke, Commanding General of Combat Command "B", was hospitalized on 9 February and was succeeded by Col. Joseph F. Haskell, who became Combat Command "B" Commanding Officer.

The Division Surgeon, Lt. Col. Stephen J. Karpenski, left the division on 8 February and Lt. Col. John E. Boland, CO, of the 77th Medical Battalion, Armored, took the position of Division Surgeon. Maj. John D. Williams became the CO of the 77th Medical Battalion, Armored.

The personnel casualties of the division and attached units for the month are as follows:

Killed and Died of Wounds-----	9
Wounded in Action-----	26
Injured in Action-----	15
Missing in Action-----	0
Non-Battle Casualties-----	433

The only division units in contact with the enemy reported the capture of 166 prisoners (162 by Combat Command "R" and 4 by the 23rd Arm'd Inf. Bn.).

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APPENDIX I (CONT)

During the period 1 February to 28 February 1945, the Division used the following amount of supplies:

116,365 gals. fuel

8,894 gals. oil

5,721 lbs. grease

990 tons rations

107,985 gals. water

Ammunition:

Cal. .30, all types-----	56,418
Cal. .45, Ball-----	4,000
Cal. .50, M.G., (2-2-1)-----	2,700
37mm gun, all types-----	412
60mm mortar, all types-----	262
75mm gun, all types-----	1,089
75mm how., all types-----	160
76mm gun, all types-----	361
81mm mortar, H.E., Lt-----	100
90mm gun, all types-----	348
105mm how., all types-----	51,590
Grenade, hand, all types-----	252
Rockets, all types-----	456
2" Mortar smoke bombs-----	20

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APPENDIX II

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

JOURNALS AND MESSAGES

- G-1 Journal and Messages.
- G-2 Journal and Messages.
- G-3 Journal and Messages.
- G-4 Journal and Messages.

REPORTS AND ORDERS

- G-2 Periodic Reports.
- G-3 Periodic Reports.
- Operations Instructions.
- General Orders.

THE AFTER ACTION REPORTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (JOURNALS, MESSAGES, ORDERS, AND OVERLAYS, ETC.,) OF THE FOLLOWING COMPONENT AND ATTACHED UNITS OF THE 7TH ARMORED DIVISION:

- Combat Command "A"
- Combat Command "B"
- Combat Command Reserve
- 7th Armored Division Artillery
- 7th Armored Division Trains
- 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion
- 38th Armored Infantry Battalion
- 48th Armored Infantry Battalion
- 17th Tank Battalion
- 31st Tank Battalion
- 40th Tank Battalion
- 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
- 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
- 489th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
- 33rd Armored Engineer Battalion
- 77th Medical Battalion (Armored)
- 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized
- 129th Ordnance Maintenance Battalion
- 147th Armored Signal Company
- 203rd AAA Auto Weapons Battalion (SP) (Attached)

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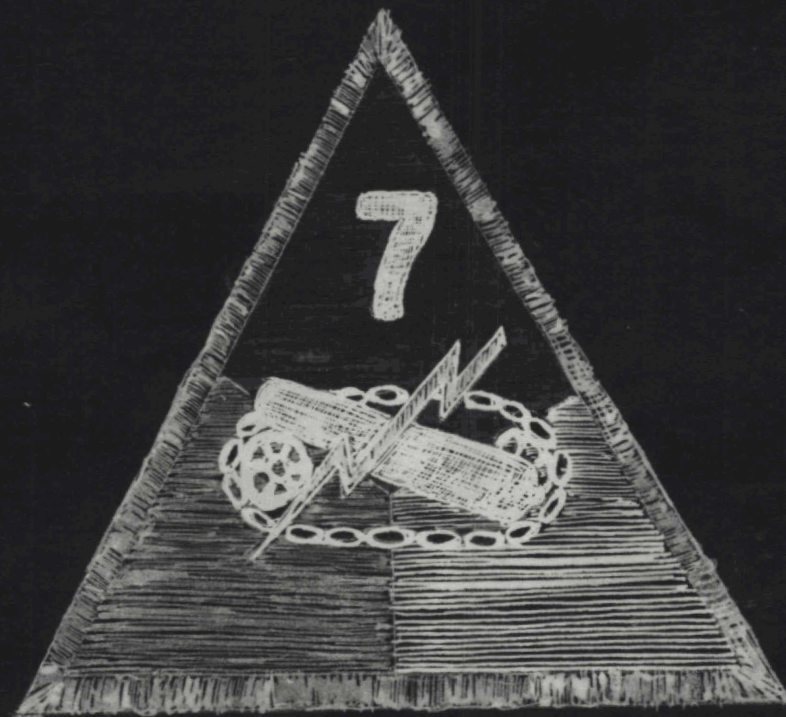
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7TH ARMORED DIVISION

AFTER ACTION REPORT

MARCH, 1945



Vol II

601-934

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Donald Cameron 14 Aug

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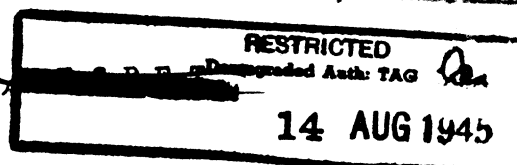
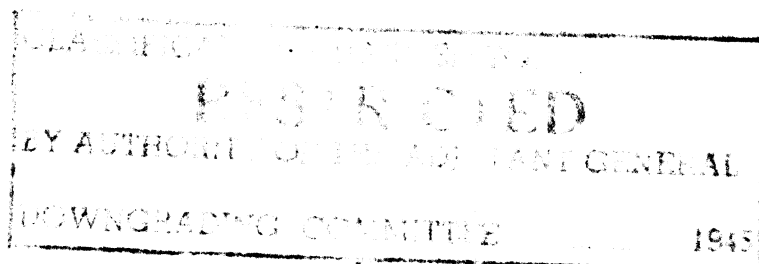
HEADQUARTERS
APO 257

~~RESTRICTED~~ 14 AUG 1945
HEADQUARTERS 7TH ARMORED DIVISION

U S ARMY

SUBJECT: After Action Report, 7th Armored Division,
Period 1-31 March, 1945.

TO : Adjutant General, Washington, 25, D.C. (Thru
Channels).



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WATCH ON THE RHINE -- 17th Tank Battalion soldier watching German positions on the east bank of the Rhine from an OP in the Dreeson Hotel, Bad Godesberg.

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3. Gudensau Castle.
4. 100,000th Round.
5. Firing on Barges.
6. Ferry to Island in Rhine.
7. Turn-in of Weapons.

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SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

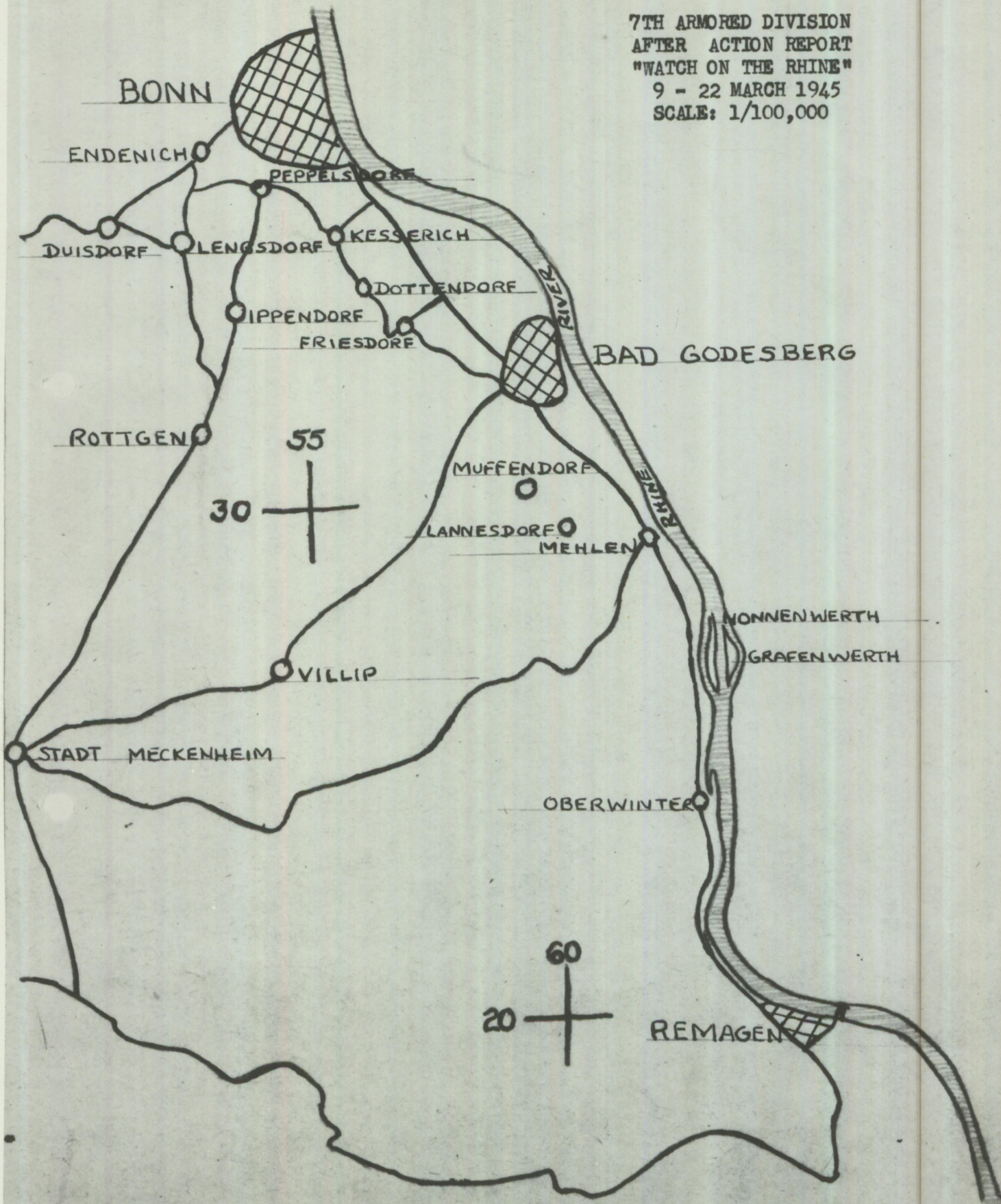
During the month of March, 1945, the Seventh Armored Division took part in two major breakthroughs with a two-week period in between in which they established and maintained an important defensive position. The first breakthrough came early in March when the Seventh, as part of the III Corps, pushed east from the ROER RIVER to establish a defensive position along the west bank of the RHINE. The second major breakthrough came when the Seventh, still under III Corps control, took part in an armored offensive intended to break the thin crust ringing the REMAGEN Bridgehead and overrun the rich farmland to the east and north. In four days (26-30 March), the division captured over 11,800 prisoners (a greater total than all the previous months put together). It overran the northern half of the ancient principality of NASSAU, and then, crossing the LAHN RIVER and turning north, it penetrated deep into HESSE, almost to the borders of WESTPHALIA. The Seventh came to a temporary standstill on the last day of the month after having crossed the EDER RIVER and captured intact the vital EDER SEE DAM. During the two weeks that the division maintained a watch on the RHINE, it had its first large-scale opportunity at Military Government and for that reason, the running of BAD GODESBERG has been set aside as a separate chapter in this account. The town was captured intact, few of its inhabitants had fled, and its problems and their handling were of importance and interest in view of the contemplated long-term occupation of Germany.

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7TH ARMORED DIVISION
AFTER ACTION REPORT
"WATCH ON THE RHINE"
9 - 22 MARCH 1945
SCALE: 1/100,000



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WATCH ON THE RHINE

During the first few days of March, 1945, the Seventh Armored Division was assembled in the vicinity of SIMMERATH, GERMANY (9824) alerted SUMMARY to drive eastward as part of the V Corps, First U. S. Army. The Division's objective was to be the KOMMERN (2824) - FIRMENICH (2626) - SATZVEY (2725) sector, but in the rapid advance of other First Army units this area was overrun before the Seventh Armored Division was ever committed. The Division then moved to an assembly area west of ZULPICH (2333) on 7-8 March, coming under III Corps control on 7 March. Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "B" were attached to the 9th Inf Div and took part in the breakthrough to the Rhine River. On 9 March the division took over the defense of the west bank of the Rhine from below BONN (5538) to the 22nd grid line north of REMAGEN (6420). Defensive positions were maintained until 22 March when the division was relieved. On 24 March, the Seventh Armored crossed the Rhine for a new drive into NASSAU and HESSE.

As the month opened, the Seventh Armored Division was astride the GERMAN - BELGIAN border with Division Headquarters set up in the battered ORDER OF BATTLE village of SIMMERATH, GERMANY. Combat Command "B" was closing in at LAMMERSDORF (9727). Division Artillery was continuing their previous month's assignment of reinforcing the fires of the 78th Inf Div till 4 March at which date they switched their attachment to the 2nd Inf Div whose fires they reinforced till midnight of the 5th. Combat Command's "A" and "B" were both in BELGIUM in the vicinity of the border town of

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EUPEN (8027). The division order of battle was as follows.

Combat Command "A"

17th Tk Bn
23rd Arm'd Inf Bn
B/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
2/C/203rd AAA Bn

Combat Command "B"

31st Tk Bn
48th Arm'd Inf Bn
A/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
C(-)/203rd AAA Bn

Combat Command "R"

40th Tk Bn
38th Arm'd Inf Bn
C/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
D/203rd AAA Bn (-)
B/814th TD Bn

Division Artillery

434th Arm'd FA Bn
440th Arm'd FA Bn
489th Arm'd FA Bn
A & 1/D/203rd AAA Bn

Division Trains

77th Med Bn Arm'd
129th Ord M Bn
446th QM Tr Tr Co
3967th QM Tr Co
B/203rd AAA Bn

Division Troops

87th Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz)
33rd Arm'd Engr Bn (-)
203rd AAA Bn (-)
814th TD Bn (-)

The units attached to the division were the 203rd AAA Bn, 814th TD Bn, 446th QM Tr Tr Co., and the 3967th QM Tr Co.

The plans for the coming operation were outlined in Field Order #17. The division's mission was to follow the 2nd Inf Div across the FIELD ORDER #17 ROER RIVER at HEIMBACH (1126) and then move out towards their objective, the KOMMERIN (2824) - FIRMENICH (2626) - SATZVEY (2725) sector. Combat Command "R" was to cross the HEIMBACH Bridge and advance along three routes towards the objective. Combat Commands "A" and "B" were to follow as far as KOMMERN and then passing through Combat Command "R" continue the advance to the southeast. The initial jump-off was scheduled for 3 March. Operations Instructions were issued at ~~022100~~ to move the elements of the division still in BELGIUM to an assembly area in GERMANY. C(-)/203rd AAA Bn was detached from Combat Command "B" and attached to Combat Command "A" at ~~020800~~.

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Combat Command "R" had been reinforced by the attachment of the 48th Arm'd Inf Bn at 010900 and a detachment (72 feet) from the 990th Treadway

CC"R" Bridge Co at 021200. In preparation for the coming attack, ORGANIZES three task forces were organized to become effective at 021315. They were:

TF CHAPPUIS

48th Arm'd Inf Bn
A & 1/D/40th Tk Bn
1/B/814th TD Bn
1/C/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn

TF BROWN

40th Tk Bn (-A¹/D)
B & C/38th Arm'd Inf Bn
2/B/814th TD Bn
2/C/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn

TF GRIFFIN

38th Arm'd Inf Bn (-B,C)
A/48th Arm'd Inf Bn
B/814th TD Bn (-2 plats)
C/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn (-2 plats)
Det(72') 990th Trdwy Br Co

The Seventh continued to assemble its units along the west bank of the ROER on 3 March, Combat Commands "A" and "B" closing into their assem-

3 MARCH bly areas at 1445 and 2000 respectively. A/814th TD Bn was attached to Combat Command "A" at 1130 and C/814th TD Bn was attached to Combat Command "B" at 1215. Combat Command "A" organized two task forces:

TF R (RHEA)

23rd Arm'd Inf Bn (-2 cos)
C & 1/D/17th Tk Bn
1/B/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
1/A/814th TD Bn

TF W (WEMPLE)

17th Tk Bn (-2M cos & 1 Lt co)
B/23rd Arm'd Inf Bn
1/B/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
1/A/814th TD Bn

Suddenly on 3 March, the division was notified "The 7th AD show is postponed 24 hours." Enemy resistance had collapsed with surprising speed

EAST OF before the First Army onslaught and our original objective THE ROER had already been taken. Pending further instructions, the division continued to prepare. On 4 March, the roads toward HEIMBACH (1126) and GEMUND (1320) were reconnoitered. Operations Instructions issued on 5 March directed billeting details to reconnoiter the area around GINNICK (1734). On 6 March, the billeting details were sent out and on 7 March the division

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moved on Corps order to an assembly area west of ZULPICH (2333) in the vicinity of GINNICK.

Leaving behind the pine forests and misty lakes of the wild upper ROER country, the division columns streamed out into the COLOGNE plain on ASSEMBLY on 7 March. The countryside was very reminiscent of the AREA open, gently rolling farmland of northern France with its 7 MARCH tree-lined roads and church steeples of the next village always on the horizon. Division Headquarters had opened at the village of EMBKEN (1832) by 1400. Combat Command "R" and the 87th Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz) were closed in the division assembly area at 1220 and 1600 respectively. Later in the day, the division was notified of its release from V Corps and present attachment to III Corps.

Combat Command "A" had closed into the divisional assembly area at 1430 on 7 March but at 2130 were notified that they were now attached to CC"A" the 9th Inf Div. Early in the morning of 8 March, Combat ATTACKS Command "A" began a march to an assembly area near MIEL (4231). Here, they organized into three task forces: WEMPLE, RHEA, and GRIFFIN, and moved out at 1030 on the same morning. Combat Command "A" advanced in two columns spearheaded by TF WEMPLE and TF RHEA and with TF GRIFFIN following in support. The objective was the west bank of the RHINE RIVER. The two task forces met with no opposition and by 1800 on 8 March had completed the occupation of the west bank of this river from MEHLEM (6129) to UNKELBACH (603).

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Meanwhile, the First Army was sweeping across the plain towards the RHINE with unforeseen speed. COLOGNE fell on 6 March and late on 7 March,

TO THE RHINE the splendid news that the LUDENDORFF BRIDGE across the RHINE RIVER at REMAGEN had been taken intact was received. The heart seemed to have gone out of the German resistance along the west bank of the RHINE, their defenses had crumbled, and what was left of their decimated units were gladly surrendering. The Seventh moved rapidly forward to wipe out the last vestiges of resistance left in this area. On 8 March, Combat Command "B", the only major unit still under divisional control, moved from west of the ROER to EMBKEN (1832) and prepared to move east again to HEIMERZHEIM (4236). At 081715, the Seventh Armored took over responsibility for the 9th Inf Div sector and the following units from the 9th were attached:

60th RCT consisting of:

60th Inf Regt (-1 Bn)
C/15th Engr (C) Bn (-1 plat)
1 Co TD's (-1 plat)
1 Tk Co (-1 plat)
C/9 Med Bn
1 FA Bn (105 How)

39th RCT consisting of

39th Inf Regt
A/15th Engr (C) Bn
1 Co TD's
1 Tk Co (& A/G plat)
1 Med Co
1 FA Bn (105 How)
2 AAA Btrys
1 FA Bn (155 How)

Combat Commands "A" and "R" were returned to division control at 1735.

The division zone now extended along the west bank of the RHINE from south of BONN to the 22nd grid line, north of REMAGEN.

The 48th Arm'd Inf Bn plus 1/B/814th TD Bn launched the CC"R" attack at 0630 passing through elements of the 60th RCT along the general north-

CC"R south line (515338). The attack was made with two companies ATTACKS in the assault and one in reserve, assault companies echeloned to the right

rear. It progressed rapidly with no opposition and the battalion seized the high ground southeast of DUISDORF (5135), continued east to take IPPENDORF (5435), DOTTENDORF (5634) and FRIESDORF (5738) on the west bank of the RHINE. By this time, it had completed the relief of the 60th RCT in the northern sector of the division zone and this organization then reverted to the 9th Inf Div and proceeded south to the REMAGEN bridgehead. The 87th Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz) helped guard the Seventh's northern flank by patrolling the wide highway between BONN and BAD GODESBERG.

The evening of 9 March saw the enemy completely cleared from the division zone on the west bank of the RHINE. There had been no aggressive

DIVISION action on the enemy's part outside of an abortive attack
ZONE
CLEARED in the general area STALAG VI, to the southeast of BONN

by an estimated 150 troops, attempting to reach the RHINE and escape. The 39th RCT of the 9th Inf Div had marched into the prosperous resort town of BAD GODESBERG on the night of 7 March after the city had surrendered without a fight. By 9 March, it was under CC"A" control with TF WEMPLE occupying the town and the 39th RCT relieved from attachment to the Seventh Armored. A little further south in the CC"A" sector, the hills edged closer to the river and it was a country of orchards, resort hotels, and summer homes all perched precariously on steep hills. Division Headquarters had moved to CASTLE GUDENEAU, a large estate given by NAPOLEON to the family of the present owner, on the outskirts of VILLIP (5527).

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13
GUDENEAU CASTLE -- Seventh Armored Division Headquarters CP was set up
in this castle near Villip, Germany from 9-24 March, 1945.

The French government honored four of the division's ranking officers on 12 March, when Maj. Gen. ROBERT W. HASBROUCK, Commanding General; Col. JOHN L. FRENCH AWARDS RYAN, JR., Chief of Staff; Col. ORVILLE W. MARTIN, Division Artillery Commander; and Col. ANDREW J. ADAMS, Division Trains Commander, were awarded the French Legion of Honor, grade of Chevalier. The presentation was made by Lt. Gen. KOELTZ, deputy to General JUIN, Chief of the Armed Forces of France.

The next few days were spent consolidating the newly assigned defense sector. A series of strongpoints and road blocks were established on all likely avenues of THE DEFENSE OF attack. Observation posts were maintained by day and listening THE RHINE posts by night to report any enemy activity on the river. The roads along the river were patrolled and combat posts were maintained in the southeastern sector of the zone to prevent enemy penetrations to the REMAGEN bridgesite. Some re-adjustment in the Combat Command Boundaries was necessary. On 10 March Combat Command "B" moved to the vicinity of ROTTGEN and assumed responsibility for Combat Command "R"'s former sector. At the same time, the 48th Arm'd Inf Bn was attached in place to Combat Command "B". Combat Command "R" went temporarily into Division Reserve but on 11 March moved their CP to BAD GODESBERG to take over control of the town. BAD GODESBERG was originally under TF WEMPLE but had reverted to the 87th Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz) when that unit relieved TF WEMPLE and assumed responsibility for that area. The 87th came under CC "R" control at 1100 as did the 38th Arm'd Inf Bn.

By 10 March, all three of the division's organic artillery battalions, the 434th, 440th and 489th had moved to new positions in the vicinity of

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LEGION OF HONOR AWARDED -- Lt. Gen. Keelts of the French
Army pins Legion of Honor, grade of Chevalier, on Maj. Gen.
Robert W. Hasbrouck, CG, of the Seventh.

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BAD CODESBERG. The 434th was in direct support of CC"A", the 489th in

DIVISION
ARTILLERY direct support of CC"A", and the 440th was placed in general support. They were now in a most unusual and favorable situation. The battle was raging on the east bank of the RHINE as the troops in this shoulder of the REMAGEN bridgehead pushed slowly northwards. Our artillery sat directly on their flank, protected by a large expanse of water, and our observers were able to sit in their front-row OP's getting an excellent picture, through binoculars, of the battle as it progressed. They were able to pick up many targets of opportunity that could never have been seen by observers battling with the troops from south to north. This was quite in addition to the larger number of rounds expended on interdiction fires on all cross-roads and key terrain features in this area within our fire possibilities.

On the evening of 10 March, Division Artillery received instructions to utilize all tanks and tank destroyers together with its organic battalions to reinforce the fires of the Corps on the east side of the

TANKS AS
ARTILLERY RHINE RIVER. The 31st, 40th, and 17th Tank Battalions and A, B and C companies of the 814th TD Bn were placed under operational control of Division Artillery until completion of their assigned mission. On 11 March, the tanks and TD's completed their moves into firing positions and preparations were made for their employment in indirect fire. One tank battalion and one TD company were placed in a group under the control of each artillery battalion. During the period 13-20 March, Division Artillery

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17
100,000TH ROUND SINCE LANDING -- M-7 of "B" Battery, 489th Arm'd FA Bn
firing the 100,000th round this battalion has fired since going into
action in France, on German positions across the Rhine.

plus tank battalions and the TD's fired a total of 1,040 missions and 35,261 rounds in support of operations on the east bank of the RHINE. On the evening of 20 March, the three tank battalions, the 17th, 31st, and 40th, returned to the control of CC"A", CC"B" and CC"R" respectively, and the tank destroyers were released and reverted to their original combat commands. The bridgehead had been enlarged to a point where nearly all enemy positions were out of the Seventh's artillery range.

As the division sector lay just to the north of the LUDENDORFF BRIDGE, the Seventh was directly concerned with the safeguarding of that SEARCH vitally important link. A good deal of artillery fire was falling on the bridge and it was suspected that the enemy had both observation and a radio transmitter somewhere behind our lines. Combat Command "A" who held the steep hills in the southern sector of the division zone was given the task of combing all woods, church steeples, and houses in their area for any and all transmitters. The search was completed on 12 March, with one transmitter uncovered but no operator.

Precautions were also taken to guard the railroad bridge and the flanking pontoon bridges in the REMAGEN area against waterborne attack.

WATERBOURNE
ATTACK In the Seventh Armored Division zone, a net was placed across the RHINE south of the islands (6327), GRAFENWERTH (east) and NONNENWERTH (west). The division had the responsibility of guarding the net. A cable or boom was strung across the river from a small peninsula near the 24th grid line. It was completed at 141215 March. At

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FIRING ON BARGES -- Anti-tank gun of 23rd Arm'd Inf Bn firing on Rhine
Barges anchored on the east bank of the river.

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141715, 1/A/814th TD Bn and 1/B/814th TD Bn were attached to Combat Commands "A" and "R" respectively, and these TD platoons plus the assault guns of the 23rd and 38th Arm'd Inf Bns were placed in direct fire positions to intercept any traffic on the river. Barges on the east bank of the RHINE were disabled by these direct fire weapons to prevent their possible use by the enemy. A platoon of four CDL's (Medium Tanks M30 with searchlights) from C/738th Tk Bn was attached to the division at 142100 to light the waters around the net. On 16 March the CDL's were moved due to the construction of a bridge by VII Corps engineers who requested that there be no lights near the bridgesite. The cable remained in place until it was broken by a U. S. Navy patrol boat, between 1700 and 1900 on 17 March.

After the initial crossing at REMAGEN, III Corps became interested in locating other possible crossing sites. There were two small islands (6327), ISLANDS IN THE RHINE GRAFENWERTH and NONNENWERTH, lying directly across from each other in the river towards the southern part of the Seventh Armored's sector. The division was ordered to occupy the western one of these islands, NONNENWERTH, a low-lying sand-bar with only a large convent-hospital surrounded by a few willows on it. This was accomplished by 1600 on 10 March by a small boat platoon of 50 men of the 38th Arm'd Inf Bn carrying one mortar, 2 MG's. They met with no opposition and outside of receiving occasional S/A fire on the northern tip of the island, they held it unopposed. A ferry service to the island was soon established by the 33rd Engineer Battalion, and it wasn't long before the troops in the bridgehead had reached sufficiently far north to occupy GRAFENWERTH, the eastern island,

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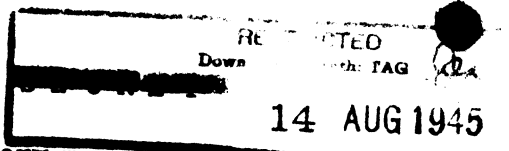
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FERRY TO ISLAND IN RHINE -- Ferry operated by the 33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
approaching Nonnenwerth Island in the Rhine then outposted by Seventh
Armored Division soldiers.

establishing contact between the two.

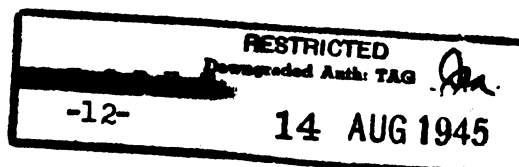
The general picture of the Seventh Armored's set-up for defense during the period 11 - 22 March was the 48th Arm'd Inf Bn manning the SETUP
11 - 22 listening posts and strongpoints for CC"B" on the left
MARCH (north) flank, the 38th Arm'd Inf Bn manning those for CC"R" in the center, and the 23rd doing the same for CC"A" on the right(south) flank. A, C, & D/203rd AAA Bn were under the operational control of the 11th AAA group and helped man the tremendously concentrated anti-aircraft defense covering the REMAGEN bridges from 12 to 20 March.

As this chapter in the Seventh's history neared an end, intelligence channels received the report that the Germans were going to attempt a counter-offensive against the bridgehead area. This was to involve a river crossing, large scale counter attack attempting to split the bridgehead and parachute landings on the west bank of the river in an effort to disrupt supply and communication. The INTERNAL SECURITY Seventh Armored Division was instructed to take strong defensive measures against any attempted parachute landings within the division sector. All units were alerted ~~201900~~ and internal security defense tightened. The tank battalions and TD's returned from Division Artillery to their respective combat commands. The 2nd and 3rd platoons of C/87th Cav Rch S₀ (Mecz) were released from Combat Command "R" and attached to Combat Commands "A" and "B" respectively at ~~201700~~. A, C & D/203rd AAA Bn were released from the defense of the REMAGEN bridges and returned to battalion control. Battery A of the 202nd AAA Bn was attached to the sector of Combat



Command "A" while "B" Battery moved to Combat Command "B"'s sector. Batteries "C" & "D" moved to Division Trains to aid in the defense of the rear areas. However, in spite of clear moonlit nights favorable to parachute operations, the attack never materialized. The Germans were probably too busy elsewhere.

The division was relieved from its responsibility for the sector at 1800 on 22 March. There was no longer any divisional front (bridgehead THE WATCH troops were in BEUEL opposite BONN), and the troops were ENDS ready to move east of the RHINE.



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BAD GODESBERG

From 9 March to 22 March, the Seventh Armored Division occupied the well-known GERMAN Spa of BAD GODESBERG (5932) on the west bank of the RHINE. It also occupied a number of smaller places, along the river, both north and south of this city, but BAD GODESBERG is of especial interest for a number of reasons. It was the first town of any size (40,000) the division had controlled since its entry into GERMANY. Further, as it had been surrendered without a fight by its garrison, it was taken intact and with its normal population still in residence outside of a few high NAZI officials who had good reason to flee. As the town remained part of the front line till 20 March, when the troops on the REMAGEN BRIDGEHEAD pushed north into OBERDOLLENDORF (6133) and NIEDERDOLLENDORF (6132) on the east bank of the RHINE, a tactical headquarters under CC"R" was set up to man our defensive positions and to control the civilian population. This headquarters was aided in its work by such divisional attachments as members of the G-5 section, the CIC Detachment, and the MP Platoon. All gained a great deal of valuable experience in meeting the problems of military occupation in a conquered GERMANY.

The two reasons BAD GODESBERG was surrendered without a fight were first the GERMAN Commander felt that he had insufficient troops and equipment to continue and secondly, that throughout the war, this city had been considered more or less open. It had no industries, fourteen hospitals, and a good many partial invalids who lived there year around on account of its favorable cli-

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mate(it has the earliest Spring and the latest Fall in GERMANY). As it was never bombed, its population swelled during the war from 30,000 to somewhat over 40,000. Historically, there is little of importance---an old castle, passing visits of QUEEN VICTORIA and PRINCE ALBERT---but in recent times, it suddenly became famous through DER FUHRER'S favor. HITLER had one of his few close personal friends in KARL DREESEN, proprietor of the DREESEN HOTEL, and he used to pay the resort a yearly visit. It was here, sitting on the balcony of his suite overlooking the RHINE, HITLER decided on the world-shaking blood purge of 1934, and it was here he met CHAMBERLAIN in 1938 to make the final arrangements preceding the infamous MUNICH PACT. In line with the master's interest, the little guidebook is full of photographs of torch-light parades and monster welcomes in honor of GOEBBELS, GOERING and HIMMLER.

On 7 March, the American First Army columns, that had rapidly been over-running the RHINELAND since launching their drive across the ROER two weeks before, had pushed to within a few kilometers of BAD CODESBERG. The GERMAN General in charge had decided to surrender and enlisting the aid of the SWISS Consul, the General sent this neutral along with his aide and a member of the city council out to find the Americans. Walking west towards VILLIP, the SWISS Flag between two white ones, they soon found troops of the 9th Inf Div. The terms of surrender were quickly agreed on and that night the GERMAN General had given himself up to the CG of the 9th Inf Div. In the early morning of the 8th, troops of this division had completed occupation of the town but as this was only a temporary arrangement(the Seventh

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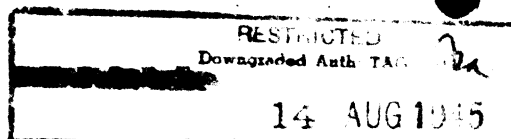
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Armored Division was to take over responsibility for this sector as rapidly as practicable) these troops were accompanied by Military Government Officer of the Seventh, Lt. Col. REX THOMPSON and members of the Seventh's CIC Detachment. By 9 March, CC"R" had relieved the 9th and was manning the river-front defenses.

Lt. Col. REX THOMPSON, G-5 of the Seventh Armored, took charge immediately upon entering of the city and issued the SOP proclamation and orders, MILITARY all arms and ammunition were to be surrendered, all GOVERNMENT members of the GERMAN Armed Forces were to turn themselves in, TAKES OVER a dark-to-dawn curfew would be in force till further notice, and severe restrictions^{were} laid down on circulation. A BURGOMEISTER was chosen and a capable civil servant found in the person of a man who prior to '33 had been BURGO-MEISTER of BORNHEIM and since had occupied only a very minor position on account of outspoken anti-Nazi views. The BURGOMEISTER was asked for an estimate on the food, fuel, and hospital situation. It was found that the local food stores had sufficient stocks on hand for any immediate need and that the town, located as it was in a rich and undamaged farming district, should never have a real food problem. Fuel was low and it was imperative that some be located for both cooking needs and heating for the sick. A large supply was uncovered 21 miles from town, and as the municipality had a number of charcoal - burning trucks and busses, it was an easy haul---and no gas problem. The hospitals were in good shape but typhus was far more prevalent than expected. Many of the slave-laborers working on government projects were infected with the louse-bearing this disease..A great many active TB

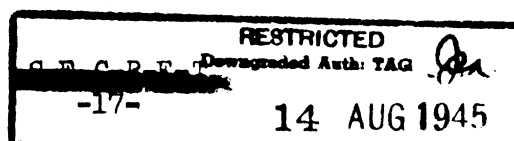
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patients had taken^a house in town, and it was found necessary to put them together in a hospital because of the unsanitary conditions arising from the billeting of the large number of troops in town, which in turn forced two and three GERMAN families to share the same house. 21 doctors were given a very limited supply of gas to make the necessary calls on the hospitals and their sick and injured. The Fire Department was checked and found ready to operate in case of a bombing or shelling. Two days after our entry on 9 March the banks were reopened under severe restrictions. No large money transactions were allowed but the local housewife could draw enough to pay the farmer and the storekeeper.

One of Col. THOMPSON'S first acts was to summon the local police force and have them turn in their arms and NAZI insignia. They were then required to take a pledge to aid the Allied forces by enforcing the old

POLICE GERMAN Civil law concerning persons and property minus the race discrimination clauses. Any infraction of this pledge was to be punished most severely. All took the required oath. They were allowed to remain in uniform because since they were now our agents, it was desired to make them as effective as possible. Previous experience had shown that with only the little white armband inscribed "police", they lost authority over the community and were also not recognized by our own troops. The old uniform is too close to the military to be entirely desirable from a psychological standpoint and one simpler in design but easily recognizable from a distance is probably the answer. But as this last was not available, the temporary expedient of letting them wear what



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they had worked very well.

At first the people were allowed on the streets from 0800 to 1800 but after four days, circulation in town was restricted from 0800 to 1200. The reasons for this move were first to make clear to the people CURFEW of this undamaged town that they were a conquered people and secondly to impress on the troops that as conquerors of GERMANY the people must be docile and obedient to the Military. It was not intended to maintain this rigid restriction indefinitely. It would be eased from time to time but if it was found that the lifting of restrictions brought a laxity in obedience, it would not only be put back but doubled. The first day was difficult and a large number of people were picked up with the usual excuses (that they hadn't heard of the restriction, their watches didn't keep good time) but when they saw it was meant, there was no further trouble.

BAD GODESBERG had rather less displaced persons than a big military or industrial town but those there were informed that they were now free. A few made a tentative endeavor to act up by looting but they were quickly

DISPLACED PERSONS told liberty meant no license. As there was no transportation for them at the moment and no place to go, the BURGOMEISTER was told to give them food and shelter on a level with the rest of the population. A good many felt that now that they were free, there was no necessity for further work. However, Allied officers speaking their own language made them understand that they were now United Nation's "soldiers of production" and, in the absence of GERMAN manpower, and, in order to avert chaos behind our lines, they would be expected to continue until such time as it was

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TURN-IN OF WEAPONS -- Part of a vast stock of weapons turned in by the citizens of Bad Godesberg to the MP platoon of the Seventh Armored Division.

possible to send them home. All proved very willing to return---in this case to the farms---to help with the crops once this was explained.

Naturally, precautions against sabotage were of vital importance to our effort. Military Government issued an immediate proclamation that SABOTAGE suspicious persons and adjacent property would be ruthlessly dealt with in any effort of this sort. This way the population could be expected to police themselves in order to safeguard their own interests. Weapons were called in by the Military Police and the turn-in was satisfactory. Everything from the medieval mace and halberd to the most modern small-arms in the GERMAN arsenal flowed into MP Headquarters. To make doubly sure, house-to-house spot checks were instituted with the limited MP personnel available. The CIC interrogated all former members of the WEHRMACHT (500 - 600 persons) and by this method caught 60 men in civilian clothes who were still actually part of the GERMAN Army. The veterans of World War I came into the CIC office willingly, enough but most of the 60 POW's were caught by the sharp-eyed MP's on lookout for men of Military age. It is not believed the majority of those planned to engage in undercover work but had merely hoped to return home directly without the necessity of become a prisoner. A careful investigation was also made of all men recently dismissed from the WEHRMACHT for seemingly insufficient reasons.

The only serious attempt at large-scale spying and sabotage was uncovered when three boys between 14 and 16 years of age were picked up hiding in a bunker by the RHINE by soldiers of the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion.

HITLER YOUTH

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These boys were brought to CIC headquarters and found to have a perfect alibi with only one flaw---it was a little too perfect. The places, persons, and dates mentioned dovetailed together without contradiction but all three told the same story in almost identical words. Under prolonged questioning, one of the boys broke down and revealed their plan. They were members of a Hitler Youth gang of seven and had been planted in BONN posing as bombed-out refugees. Here, they contacted a priest, who, taking pity on their seemingly homeless plight, farmed them out to local homes. These three had come to BAD GODESBERG and, when caught, were waiting for nightfall to attempt to cross the RHINE with detailed information as to the American Army troops dispositions. He further admitted they had a considerable stock of sabotage equipment buried in the woods but as yet had received no instructions as to where it was to be used. This equipment, two heavy boxes filled with explosives, was promptly dug up, the four other members arrested in BONN, and the whole unhealthy group shipped back to Corps CIC where it was hoped further questioning might unearth an even larger ring of juvenile spys and saboteurs.

As has already been stated, most of the rabidly fanatical NAZIS had already fled town by the time the Seventh Armored arrived. And at first, little

WAR CRIMINALS information was forthcoming from the townspeople about possible Gestapo or died-in-the-wool party members. The front line was just across the river and their fear of these organizations was by no means stamped out. However, seizure of the records of the NSDAP yielded much interesting information, and first, American and British women married to Germans and the

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neutrals, then, the clergy, and finally, the German people themselves gave some good leads. ROBERT VON STEDMAN, head of the LANDRAT, rural leader of the KREIS, was found hiding on a farm. FRAU RICHTER, head of all NAZI women's organizations about BAD GODESBERG, and her daughter, a blonde buxom girl of seventeen and leader of the JUNG MAEDEL, were among various others subsequently unearthed. Most maintained a discreet silence but FRAU RICHTER let her displeasure of her arrest be known in no uncertain terms. When asked for her party membership card, she said she had sent it deeper into GERMANY to avoid having anything so "sacred" fall into the hands of the "despoiling American swine."

BAD GODESBERG was the first large town with the population not evacuated that the Seventh had to deal with inside GERMANY. In governing it,

SUMMARY the Division Commander's policy was one of disciplining the people and avoiding the pitfalls of, on the one hand, wet-nursing them or on the other, of subjecting them to barbarous treatment. The town had surrendered and it was not to be looted or wantonly destroyed. It could encourage other cities to surrender but only if the people in these other places did not have cause to say: "Well, look at the example of the city of X"---and then decide to go wearily on fighting to the bitter end. Then, while the people must be made to understand that the American troops came as conquerors, Only small stocks and supplies were available. Starvation and its brother, plague, was to be avoided as a serious threat to the Allied war effort and acting with this in mind, it was necessary the people govern themselves in a large part. The people responded to this treatment

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willingly enough in a meek, submissive, obedient way, and with no serious trouble encountered, the policy was a definite success.

NOTE: The material from this section was compiled from interviews with:

Lt.Col. REX THOMPSON, G-5, 7th Arm'd Div.
1st Lt. LLOYD ROBERTS, CIC Detachment, 7th Arm'd Div.
1st Lt. HENRY LOUGEE, MP Platoon, 7th Arm'd Div.

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7TH ARMORED DIVISION
AFTER ACTION REPORT
"Into Nassau and Hesse"
25 - 31 March 1945

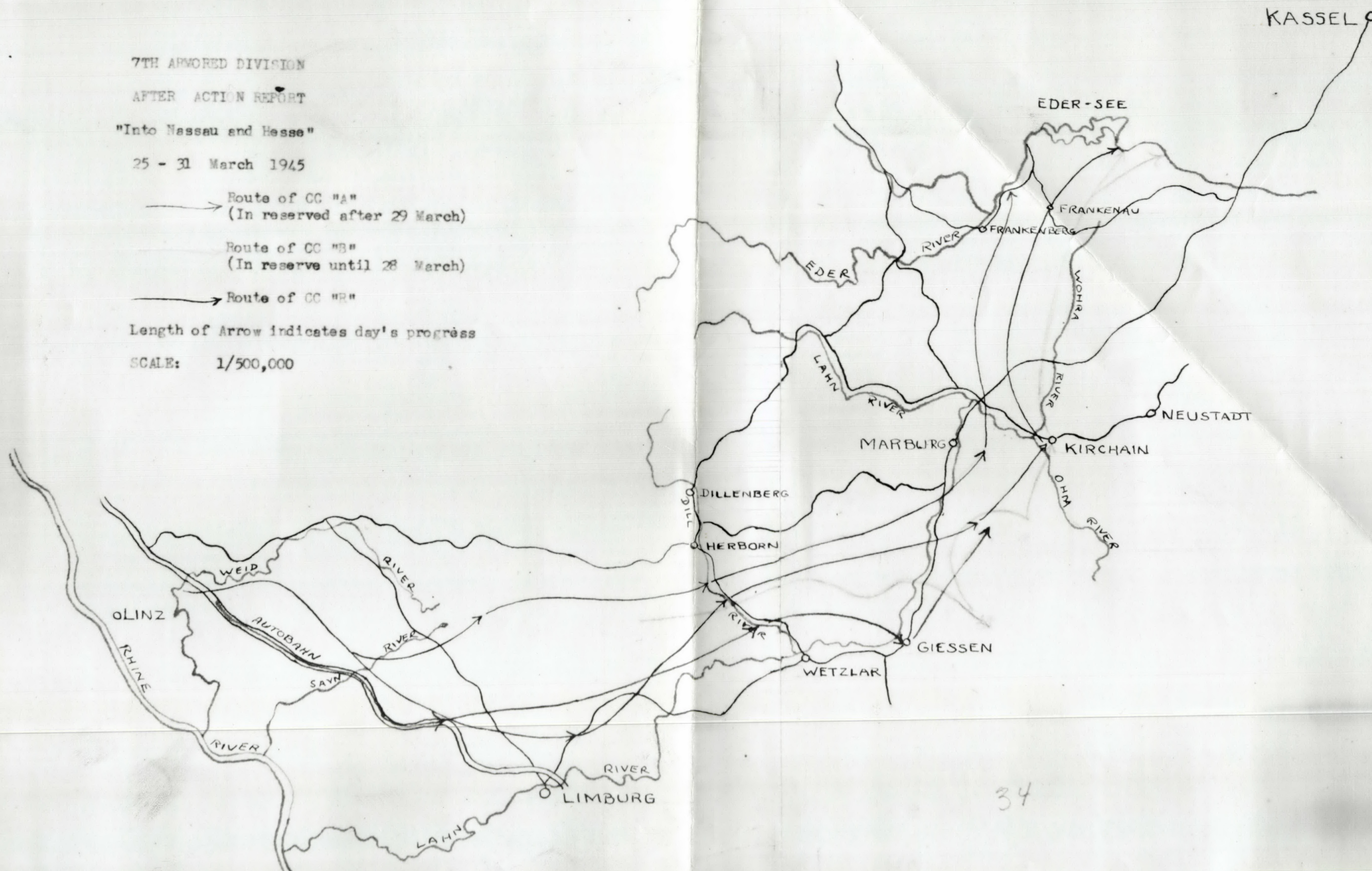
→ Route of CC "A"
(In reserve after 29 March)

→ Route of CC "B"
(In reserve until 28 March)

→ Route of CC "R"

Length of Arrow indicates day's progress

SCALE: 1/500,000



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THROUGH NASSAU AND HESSE

The Seventh Armored Division jumped off at 0400 on 26 March in an attack that was to carry it almost without a halt and by many devious routes, to the

SUMMARY EDER DAM, 140 kilometers distant, by mid-afternoon of 30 March. The attack (or series of correlated attacks) involved the crossing of the DILL, LAHN, and EDER RIVERS and was made through a course of three distinct changes in direction. The number of prisoners taken on this 4-day drive exceeded by several thousand, the combined figures of all the prisoners taken during the Seventh's previous months in combat. From 26-31 March the division processed 11,800 prisoners through PW channels. The division liberated tremendous numbers of Russians, Polish, French and Belgium slave-laborers and PW's and freed several hundred American and British soldiers. Resistance ranged from moderate to negligible along the route. It came from hastily organized remnants of combat units that once held the fringe of the REMAGEN BRIDGEHEAD, from units engaged in the anti-aircraft defense of rear areas, and from half-trained units rushed into the breach from the comparative quiet of DENMARK and NORWAY. The German defense was characteristically that of defending isolated points that were of more or less importance to our advance---usually towns, where troops could be quickly assembled and supplied. Indeed, the speed of our advance was so great that many bridges were captured intact, thereby eliminating as serious obstacles the rivers that interlaced the division zone.

On the morning of 22 March, orders were put out to send billeting details to a division assembly area east of the RHINE. The billeting details selected

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23-24 positions and instructions were given for all units to be prepared to move the nights 23-24 March and 24-25 March to those areas. The division was relieved of the responsibility for the defense of the west bank of the RHINE as of 221800. Combat Command "A" and Division Artillery led the way on the night of the 23-24, Division Artillery reinforcing the fires of the 9th Inf Div on the morning of its arrival. CC"B" and CC"R" did not finish closing in till the early morning of 25 March. The Seventh had now left spring and the RHINE VALLEY and inching its way east past the twisted shadow of the LUDENDORFF BRIDGE, it had assembled for the new push in the rolling hill-country behind the RHINE.

The morning of 25 March, Field Order #18 was issued. Third Corps was given the objective of breaking through the bridgehead in conjunction with

FIELD
ORDER
#18

a coordinated push to be made by all units of First Army. They were to take the city of LIMBURG (2398) and the high ground stretching north to the town of NEUNKIRCHEN (2616). The 9th Inf Div on the left and the 99th Inf Div on the right were to make the main effort initially while the Seventh Armored Division was to attack through them, generally along the axis of the AUTOBAHN, seize the corps objective, and concentrate on the communications centers and bridges across the LAHN RIVER in the LIMBURG - STOCKHAUSEN (4116) area. Upon securing these objectives, we were to be prepared to advance to the northeast in the direction of GIESSEN(6621). It was decided that when the Seventh received the corps order to attack, two of the combat commands would move out along three different routes down the axis of the AUTOBAHN. The third combat command would remain in reserve prepared to attack through either of the

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other two and continue the attack. CC"A" and CC"B" were chosen to make the initial assault with CC"B" in reserve. Orders were issued to by-pass resistance whenever possible and make every effort to take the bridges intact.

Combat Command "A" was to attack astride the AUTOBAHN, capture LIMBURG, and seize crossings over the LAHN RIVER. It was organized

C. C. A. into the following task forces:

TF RHEA

23rd Arm'd Inf Bn (-B,C)
C & 1/D 17th Tk Bn
1/A/814th TD Bn
1/B/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
1/489th Arm'd FA Bn
48th Trdwy Bdg Co.

TF WEMPLE

17th Tk Bn (-B,C, & D less 1 plat)
B/23rd Arm'd Inf Bn
1/A/814th TD Bn.
1/B/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
1/489th Arm'd FA Bn
24th Trdwy Br

TF KING

B/17th Tk Bn
D/17th Tk Bn (-2 plats)
C/23rd Arm'd Inf Bn
A/814th TD Bn (-2 plats)
489th Arm'd FA Bn (-2 btrys)

Combat Command "A" closed in a forward assembly area in the vicinity of EHLSCHIED (8113) at 2230, preparatory to the jump-off.

CC "R" was given additional forces and assigned the two northern routes. It was to protect the division left flank, seize the communications centers of OBERTEIFENBACH (2706), HECKHOLZHAUSEN (3010),

C. C. R. NEUNKIRCHEN (2616) and LAGENDERNBACH (2215), and take crossings on the LAHN RIVER. At 0900 on 25 March, the following attachments were made to CC"R":

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Combat Command "R"

C/31st Tk Bn
 A/48th Arm'd Inf Bn
 C/814th TD Bn (-2 plats)
 B/87
 72 feet Trdwy Br Co

Three task forces formed:

TF BROWN

40th Tk Bn (-A, 2 plats D)
 A & B/38th Arm'd Inf Bn
 B/814th TD Bn(-1 plat)
 1/C/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn

TF GRIFFIN

38th Arm'd Inf Bn (-A,B)
 A & 1/D/40th Tk Bn
 C/31st Tk Bn
 A/48th Arm'd Inf Bn
 1/B/814th TD Bn
 C/814th TD Bn (-2 plats)
 1/C/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn

TF JORDAN

B/87th Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz)
 1/D/40th Tk Bn
 C/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn(-2 plats)
 72 feet Trdwy Br Co

Combat Command "R" had closed in a new assembly position at NOTSCHEID (7223) at 250020.

CC "B" was to be the reserve combat command initially. Its troops were divided as follows:

C.C.B.

TF CHAPPUIS

48th Arm'd Inf Bn (-A,B)
 B/31st Tk Bn
 1/C/814th TD Bn
 1/Plat/A/814th TD Bn

TF ERLENBUSCH

31st Tk Bn(-B,C,D)
 B/48th Arm'd Inf Bn
 3/C/814th TD Bn
 1/Plat/A/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn

CC RESERVE

A/33rd Arm'd Engr Bn
 (-2 plats)
 D/31st Tk Bn(- 1 plat w/tns)

On the night of 24-25 March, CC"B" crossed the RHINE RIVER and went into an assembly area near LINZ(6819).

Division Artillery had been augmented by the 400th Arm'd FA Bn (105 SP) and "A" and "B" batteries and one platoon of "C" battery of the

DIVISION 203rd AAA Bn. The 400th was formed into a group with the ARTILLERY 440th Arm'd FA Bn and placed under their control. Both the above were

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attached to CC"R" when this combat command passed through the firing positions of Division Artillery in the vicinity of WILLROTH. The 489th was attached to CC"A" and the 434th was held in general support under the control of Division Artillery. At 1200 on 25 March, the 987th Arm'd FA Bn (155 Gun SP) was attached to the division. However, as plans were completed for the attack already, it was evident that the 987th would have difficulty in joining the division before it shoved off. So it was decided that the Seventh would do without them unless a situation developed in which additional artillery was needed.

The Seventh jumped off at 0200 on 26 March. Once our forces were through the thin crust of enemy ringing the bridgehead, opposition was 26 MARCH offered only at scattered points. The town of DIERDORF SUMMARY (9417), just off the AUTOBAHN, was fanatically defended, and the town itself presented a serious obstacle to our tanks as our own bombing had filled the streets with rubble making them quite impassable. Some three or four hours of bitter fighting took place here. Otherwise, the main trouble encountered by our troops was a series of demolitions carried out on the AUTOBAHN along the way to LIMBURG, the initial objective. However, these were not particularly well defended, and our troops were able to make rapid progress until halted to change the direction of their attack. During the course of the fighting on 26 March, one of the forces of the division, TF BROWN of CC"R", ran into the rear of the columns of German troops retreating from the RHINE sector and did an immeasurable amount of damage. It was estimated by several observers

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that there was enough equipment destroyed to completely outfit two German divisions. Numerous positions were overrun, and the number of prisoners taken was very large. Their identification was an OB headache. A simple message read: "Have 69 prisoners, 31 units identified." The weather was cool and partly cloudy with intermittent showers.

On the 26th of March at 0420, CC"A" attacked through the 99th Inf Div and pushed forward over 25 miles against light to moderate resistance. Driving with speed, carrying out the order to by-pass, encircle, rush, they moved rapidly down the AUTOBAHN towards the objective, LIMBURG.

CC"A" ATTACKS Nearly every over-pass and bridge on this smooth-flowing super highway had been blown by the enemy forcing the column to by-pass the great piles of shattered concrete barring the way. By 1500 the head of the column had reached MONTABAUER (0703) where contact was made with the 9th Armored Division. At this time, the advance was halted, the combat command forces were regrouped, and preparations were made to move to the new objective---bridgeheads across the DILL RIVER at EHRINGSHSN(4523), WERDORF (4822) and ASSLAR (5721).

CC"R" moved from their assembly position at 0200 attacking through the 9th and 99th Inf Divs with two task forces abreast. TF BROWN under

CC"R" ATTACKS Lt.Col.JOHN C. BROWN crossed the IP (VETTELCHASS) (7225) at 0200 and attacking from a march column, had reached DIERDORF (9417) by 0700. Here, the tanks could not enter the town because of the debris and the great craters in the streets. Nor was it possible to by-pass close

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by as the bridge over the HOLZ RIVER was blown and covered by anti-tank fire. A small force under MAJOR EMERSON WOLFE, Executive Officer of the 40th, was detached and a crossing of the HOLZ at WIZNAU was effected. By 1600, the entire force had by-passed the town. After breaking the crust, TF BROWN travelled at such great speed that it overtook the rear of a retreating enemy column, catching them completely off guard. Large concentrations of German troops were trapped in bivouac and encouraged by a little machine-gun fire, they flocked out to surrender. One Mark V and two Mark VI tanks, five 75mm SP guns, 100 motor transport, five 150mm guns, six 105mm guns, fifteen 240mm guns, eleven 88mm AAA guns, two 88mm SP guns and over 100 horse-drawn vehicles were among the wreckage left strewn along the roads. Many more vehicles could be seen abandoned in the pine-woods off the highway---their drivers having fled. By 1700 TF BROWN had taken both its objectives, OBER-TIEFENBACH (2809) and HECKHOLZHAUSEN (3010). Meanwhile, the other CC"R" task force, TF GRIFFIN crossed the VITTESCHASS IP at 0245 and attacking from a march column made rapid steady progress all day. By 1835, they closed into bivouac at AILERTCHEN.

Because of a change in the corps boundary, the direction of our attack was shifted from east to northeast. At 1400 on 26 March TF GRIFFIN had

CHANGE
IN PLANS

changed the direction of its attack and at 1900 TF BROWN did likewise. CC "A" with LIMBURG as an objective, also had to be diverted as this town now fell in the area of the adjacent corps. At 261830, new Division Operations Instructions were sent out. The Seventh Armored was to secure crossings on the DILL RIVER and then establish local internal security in its zone. It was further to contact friendly elements both

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to the north and south.

27 March saw much the same sort of fighting as on the previous day ---scattered pockets of isolated troops offering either token resistance or none at all and then, surrendering in great numbers.

27 MARCH
SUMMARY

The greatest bother came from snipers and bazookas. Generally speaking, resistance was broken by columns that by-passed the main groups, forcing them to surrender or be cut off. On the south of the division sector, some small arms fire and anti-tank fire was received by our troops from across the LAHN RIVER and some anti-tank fire fell on the roads taken by our columns in reaching the DILL RIVER. This river was reached and crossed in strength against minor resistance. There was no artillery fire received during the period and no armor was active against the division. Vast numbers of slave-laborers and POW's, Russians, Poles, French, Yugoslavs and others were being set free by our drive and as motley a collection of uniforms as imaginable congregated in the little village squares to cheer our men. The Germans, for the most part, stayed indoors and peered out the windows, torn between fear and curiosity. The weather was partly cloudy with occasional rain, but the temperature remained mild.

In the early morning of 27 March CC"A" continued the attack in their zone advancing during the day up to 15 miles. They seized and secured

C. C. A. crossings over the DILL RIVER at ASSLAR (5122) and HERMANN-STEIN (5320) and by the end of the period were preparing to continue the attack east and northeast to capture GIESSEN. The plan was for TF WEMPLE to attack successive objectives between WETZLAR and GIESSEN and to protect

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the axis of advance as TF RHEA passed through them, entering GIESSEN from the west. TF KING was to enter GIESSEN from the south.

During the night of 27-28 March, Col. WILLIAM S. TRIPLET, Commanding Officer of Combat Command "A", was wounded when his vehicle was hit by

CC "A"
COMMANDER
WOUNDED

an enemy anti-tank gun. Despite a harrowing night spent in fighting off the attempts of two German soldiers to take him prisoner and in finding his way back to his CP alone and on foot, he remained in the field the following day, directing his command's operations in the taking of GIESSEN. He was then evacuated and replaced by Col. ANDREW J. ADAMS.

CC"R" continued the attack in its zone, making an advance of 18 miles. TF GRIFFIN secured crossings of the DILL RIVER at SINN (4229) and

CC"R"
&
CC"B"

EDINGEN (2126) and TF BROWN secured one at KATZENFURT(2424). Plans were now made to continue east and seize crossings of the LAHN RIVER at BELLNHAUSEN(6935), ROTH (6938) and NEIDER WEIMER(7041). CC"B" remained in Division Reserve displacing forward to assembly areas on the west side of the ULM RIVER.

On 28 March our forces moving up to and across the LAHN RIVER from generally south of KIRCHHAIN (8348) to GIESSEN encountered no great

28 MARCH
GENERAL difficulties in the northern portion of the zone. To the south, on the approaches to GIESSEN, Combat Command "A" ran into the former anti-aircraft defenses of the city, and here the defense was both determined and well-coordinated. In the fight for GIESSEN, over 25 flak guns that had been hastily converted to meet our ground attacks were either

captured or knocked out. By the end of the period, our troops had broken through the enemy's perimeter defense and were in the town rounding up the usual large number of prisoners. A considerable amount of military equipment was found to be cached in GIESSEN'S depots, warehouses, railcars, and dumps. By the end of the second day the Seventh had overrun the northern half of NASSAU, and was ready to turn north in a drive deep into HESSE and Central GERMANY.

CC"A" in the southern part of the division zone ran into continual resistance along the LAHN RIVER from WETZLAR to GIESSEN. By early afternoon, GIESSEN TAKEN They had reached GIESSEN, but it was not to be taken without a fight. The first enemy resistance was encountered about two kilometers west of the town and consisted of S/A and A/W fire. Overcoming this, it was discovered that the bridge over the LAHN RIVER was partially demolished and impassable to vehicles so the attack had to be continued by the infantry on foot. Resistance consisted mostly of S/A and A/W, converted anti-aircraft guns, bazookas, and hand grenades. By 1630, the engineers had put in a treadway bridge over the ruins of the old one and the tanks, TD's and halftracks rolled in to assist the infantry. By midnight enemy resistance, except for a few snipers, had folded and 675 prisoners had been taken.

At 0200 on 28 March, Col. HASKELL, Combat Commander of CC"B", returned from Division Headquarters with the following order: CC"B" was to march east,

CC"B" seize crossings of the LAHN RIVER north of GIESSEN, and secure road centers beyond. At 0600, the head of the column crossed the IP. Resistance was encountered southeast of RODHEIM in the form of anti-tank guns. This was by-passed to the north, and the column continued eastward to WISSMAR (6627),

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where the advance guard was fired upon by bazooka men in the cellars. Reconnaissance to the north and south of the town revealed terrain obstacles that prevented its being by-passed. Tanks and infantry from TF ERLENBUSCH, combined with heavy concentrations from the 434th FA Bn, subdued the town. Thereafter, TF ERLENBUSCH preceeded east again and by 2000 had taken both his objectives, the bridge at (6725) and WIESECK (6824). TF CHAPPUIS turned off at WISSMAR and taking a string of small towns on the way, was in ALTEN BUSECK by 2100. TF ERLENBUSCH now passed through TF CHAPPUIS, seized GROSEN BUSECK (7225) and closed shop for the night.

TF CHAPPUIS of Combat Command "B" had the pleasant experience at 281500 of liberating about 300 British officers, including 14 Generals,

LIBERATION held prisoner in OFLAG 12B. This German prisoner of war
OF POW'S camp located near LOLLAR had actually been in Allied hands about an hour before the leading elements of the task force reached it. At that time, the German commander had assembled his guards, numbering about 100, taken up all their weapons and turned himself and his men over to the British officers in formal surrender. As the rear of the column passed, the British flag could be seen waving from the enclosure pole.

CC"R" pressed forward meeting only light resistance and seized crossings over the LAHN RIVER in its assigned zone. By the afternoon, one task force

CC"R" had captured several communications centers 7,000 yards east of
CROSSES the river and the other task force, in spite of stiffer resistance, was rapidly approaching their objectives. Physical contact with 3rd Armored Division was made at MARBURG at 1330.

LAHN

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On 29 March, the division continued its attack to the north advancing up to 13 miles and reaching the general line KIRCHHAIN(8348) - BURGEIN(7651)

29 MARCH

GENERAL

with advance elements as far north as BRACHT (7858). The Seventh met with some definitely coordinated defenses around the city of KIRCHHAIN. A unit newly arrived from DENMARK (166th Inf Div) was identified in the KIRCHHAIN sector, and because they still had some semblance of organization offered more determined resistance than any met with to date. This, however, did not help them much as they were troops of a very inferior quality who in the current crisis had been upgraded from training to infantry division and promptly shipped out of DENMARK to the Western Front. They had only one officer per company and one experienced man (platoon leader) per platoon. All but four men per company were in the 18-year-age bracket. However, the town had actually to be stormed and fought over thoroughly before the garrison gave up the struggle. The Luftwaffe was extremely active over the division zone during the day. The weather remained cool and cloudy with little squalls of rain at odd intervals.

Towards the end of the day on 28 March, instructions had been given to all elements of the division to assemble in a general area north of MAREBURG prepared to attack north and northeast. Operations Instructions were received the morning of the 29th to attack to the north and seize the dam and crossings of the EDER RIVER. For this operation CC"R" was given two routes of advance on the left (west) flank leading to crossings over the EDER. Combat Command "B" had the mission of attacking on the right and seizing the dam and bridges across the river in ^{the} its general

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vicinity near the dam. The 87th Cav Rcn Sq (Mecz) was relieved of its previous assignment of guarding the division's prisoners and given a new one of protecting the Seventh's right flank by blocking the main avenues of attack into the division zone. CC"A" was retained in reserve and was to be prepared to repel any counter attacks that might be attempted by the enemy.

The morning of the 29th all elements of the division, with the exception of CC"R" made reconnaissance and began moving to the new assembly ASSEMBLY AREA area north of MARBURG in order to attack north ^{to} of the EDER SEE DAM and the EDER RIVER. As CC"R"'s assembly area had not been cleared, this combat command left the evening of the 28th to liquidate any resistance encountered there. At 0430 on 29 March, CC "R" launched its attack to secure their part of the assembly area in the vicinity of AMONEBURG, KIRCHHAIN, and MARBURG. Meeting only scattered resistance they were able to occupy the center and southern portion of this area by 0630.

TF BROWN struck directly at KIRCHHAIN but the town proved to be heavily defended by approximately 700 men of the 661st Inf Regt., 166 Inf Div. The KIRCHHAIN bridge approaching the town had been mined and was covered by heavy mortar fire and by small arms fire from deep foxholes. The small arms fire was silenced by the tanks while the artillery pounded the heavy mortars. The town was then set on fire by white phosphorus concentrations. In the ensuing confusion, the infantry established a bridgehead over the stream and the engineers cleared the bridge. Even though the task force was now well in the town, the enemy chose to defend it to the last, and it proved to be a matter of clearing every house. TF BEATTY was attached to Combat Command "R" at 1130 to help finish the job.

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By 1600 TF BEATTY had completed an envelopment from the north and had entered the northern fringe of the town. Meanwhile CC "B" had arrived at a point just south of KIRCHHAIN and as the troops of TAF BROWN were still fighting in the town, the operational control of these troops passed to CC"B" by verbal order of the Division Commander. There was further understanding that once KIRCHHAIN was captured, TF BROWN would revert to CC"R", move west into CC"R"'s sector, leaving TF BEATTY attached to CC"B". One task force of both CC"B" and CC"R" then by-passed the town and attacked north against stiffening enemy resistance, while the other task forces were left to clear it. KIRCHHAIN was entirely in the Seventh's hands by 291800 and at this time, TF BROWN was relieved and moved out to rejoin CC"R". CC"B" was ordered to outpost the town for the night and continue the march at first light on 30 March.

CC"A" was relieved by 394th Inf Regt., in GIESSEN at 1000 and shortly after moved to their new assembly area near LIEDENHOFEN in task force formation. Some resistance in the form of an enemy road block on the edge of a small woods near WERMERTSHAUSEN was encountered, but it was swiftly overcome, and CC"A" closed in bivouac by 1900.

On 30 March, the Seventh Armored advanced 25 miles to the EDER RIVER, seized crossings and secured the EDER DAM. Little difficulty was met until the dam site itself was reached. The dam was defended by elaborate anti-aircraft positions strategically located on the surrounding hills, but the AAA weapons were quickly traversed to meet the threat of our advancing columns, and engaged them in a brief but furious firefight. Our troops quickly stormed the enemy positions and in the speed of the

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attack, the dam was captured intact, as were the numerous bridges over the EDER RIVER. In capturing this objective, the Seventh gained possession of a dam with the largest water capacity in Europe. Its fifteen turbines had generated power for a system serving Western Germany from HANOVER to FRANKFORT-ON-MAIN. In the words of Col. JOSEPH HASKELL, CC"B" Commander, at a flag raising ceremony held a short time after the capture of the dam: "The Seventh Armored was given the mission of capturing this dam intact before Germans could destroy or damage it. That is normally a very difficult operation. But with lightning speed and daring resourcefulness the dam was stormed by our troops and the enemy driven off so quickly that he had no chance to wreck or destroy it."

At ~~300600~~, CC"B" attacked to the north from the vicinity of KIRCH-HAIN, marching in two columns. At LOHBACH a task force made up of some

SEIZURE
OF THE DAM

of the light tanks, infantry, and engineers of TF ERLENBUSCH, called TF LOHSE, was formed and given the mission of seizing the dam and putting reconnaissance across the lake as quickly as possible. However, TF WORFE, under Major EMERSON WOLFE, had reached ROSENTHAL (7964) at ~~0650~~ that morning. At ~~0900~~, they received verbal instructions from CC"R" to continue on past its present location and seize the EDER'SEE DAM. The TF encountered numerous partially prepared road blocks in the form of deep ditches and logs. The tank dozer was placed in the lead and the road blocks were reduced with a minimum of delay. Approaching the dam, leading elements of B/40 were temporarily held up by AA-A/T guns. The Assault Guns and the advance guard battery of artillery went into position at NEU BRINGHAUSEN (8886). The ensuing action was an excellent example of the coordination of artillery and tank

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attack. The Artillery Air Observer, Lt. MARVIN GRAFF of the 440th Arm'd FA Bn. spotted two 88mm flak guns and three 40mm flak guns near the road just ahead of the advancing column. He radioed this information to the artillery FD who passed it on to the lead tank, thereby bringing the column to a halt. Lt. GRAFF then asked the advance guard battery, "C" of the 440th, to go into position. In two minutes, the first round of the adjustment was on the way, and after a two round adjustment, the battery was brought in and the 88's silenced. Shifting to 40mm flak positions, time fire was used with devastating effect. The ammunition exploded in the guns pits and the crews were either seriously injured or killed outright. From the time the guns were first spotted till they were destroyed a little under ten minutes had elapsed. Preceding on, TF WOLFE seized the dam at 1330 and a bridge below it. They then crossed the river with tanks and infantry and established a bridgehead on its north banks. At the end of the day, the south bank of the EDER SEE was in our hands, CC"B" to the east and CC"R" to the west. Outposts were already established on its far side.

The last day of the month found the division remaining in the same general area south of the EDER DAM. Defensive positions were established

31 MARCH and civilian control enforced throughout the division zone. The men were glad for a breather. To most, the past few days had recalled memories of the sweep through FRANCE in August, 1944. The Division had gone over 106 miles in four days. It was now in HESSE where long ago, KING GEORGE III had recruited his mercenaries and where only yesterday, HITLER had recruited his finest Legions. It was an old score and there was pleasure in settling it. Having closed this account

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to its own satisfaction, the division could now turn its eyes west to the final phases of what General EISENHOWER was to call "The Battle of the RUHR."

For the Commanding General:

John L. Ryan, Jr.
JOHN L. RYAN, JR.;
Colonel, G. S. C.
Chief of Staff

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APPENDIX I

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STATISTICAL SUMMARY

The Seventh Armored Division was attached to three Corps in the First U.S. Army during the month of March, 1945. It was under the command of the V Corps until 7 March. Then it was transferred to III Corps, under whose control it remained till the end of the period except for 12 hours (192400-201200 March) when it was attached to VII Corps.

There were some changes in command within the division during the period. On 7 March, Maj. FRANK P. ERESCH, was succeeded as Judge Advocate, by Maj. JOHN R. PARKINSON. Col. WILLIAM S. TRIPLET, Combat Command "A" Commander was wounded and evacuated, on 28 March. Col. ANDREW J. ADAMS, was transferred from Division Trains Commander to the command of Combat Command "A" on the same date. From 19-23 March, Col. FRANCIS P. TOMPKINS was in command of the division while Maj. Gen. ROBERT W. HASBROUCK was in ENGLAND.

The personnel casualties of the division and attached units for the month are as follows:

Killed and Died of Wounds-----	39
Wounded in Action-----	169
Injured in Action-----	8
Missing in Action-----	63
Non-Battle Casualties-----	407

For statistics on enemy losses see APPENDIX III, G-2 Notes.

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APPENDIX II

C-O-P-Y

HEADQUARTERS V CORPS
APO 305
Office of the Commanding General

12 March 1945

SUBJECT: Commendation

TO : Commanding General, 7th Armored Division, APO 257, U. S. Army.

1. Upon the relief of the 7th Armored Division from attachment to the V Corps, I desire to express my personal thanks and appreciation to all members of your organization for the highly efficient and cooperative manner in which they functioned while serving under my command.

2. Your artillery was called upon to reinforce the fire of the 78th Infantry Division. Your Combat Command "R" was attached to that division and supported the 309th Infantry Regimental Combat Team in the capture of Kommerscheidt on 7 February 1945. The wholehearted and energetic manner in which nearly a third of your command participated in the maintenance of roads in the First U. S. Army area, when the results of an early spring thaw threatened to render them useless, was an outstanding example of the esprit de corps and solidarity which pervades the United States Army.

3. My personal thanks and best wishes go with each and every one of you.

/s/ C. R. Huebner
/t/ C. R. HUEBNER,
Major Gen., U.S.Army,
Commanding.

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G-2 NOTES (1 March - 31 March 1945)

No ground contact with the enemy was made by troops of the Division under Division control before March 8. On that date, troops were dispatched on the mission of cleaning a portion of the area between the ROER and the RHINE Rivers, generally South of BONN and to just north of the REMAGGEN bridgehead. Contact was light, as the defenses had been completely broken by troops already having passes through the area, and the banks of the RHINE River were gained almost without making contact. The units contacted were already badly decimated, either through battle losses or through escape to the East bank of the river. The stream of prisoners into the cages was extreme - the flow increasing as our troops advanced to the banks of the RHINE and denied the enemy any way of escape. The units represented were many and varied, representative of most of the units that had at one time or another held more or less firm defensive positions to the East of the ROER River.

The only aggressive action undertaken by the enemy during the period was an abortive attack in the general area of STALAG VI, to the southeast of BONN by an estimated 150 troops, attempting to reach the RHINE and escape. These attempts were easily contained, and most of the troops were processed through the PW cages before the end of the period.

On March 9, the Division completed the occupation of the banks of the RHINE in the sector assigned, and for the most part, the occupation, per se, characterized the action participated in by the troops of the Division for the next few weeks. There was almost no enemy activity noted on the friendly side of the river during the period, but numerous sightings of the enemy were made on the opposite shore of the river - the enemy pulling back to the northward and preparing defense against the advance of the friendly troops from the north shoulder of the REMAGGEN

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bridgehead. Several pieces of enemy equipment were destroyed by fire on the opposite shore, and the number of prisoners taken during the period (primarily those that had been left behind by the retreating forces) numbered 188, exclusive of the numbers taken by the infantry Regiments working under Division control in the occupation of the river bank.

From the 9th of March to the 17th, no activity of any importance took place in the Division sector. There was occasional shelling of area on the West side of the River from those positions that were still held by the enemy on the opposite shore, but most of this was of a harassing nature. Patrols on the river line were occasionally fired on by enemy small arms, and there was a constant observation of movement and preparation of the enemy on the opposite side of the river. The activities of the German population in the Division sector was for the most part, and the greatest bother was occasioned by problems involving the screening of the civil population for Military Government assignments. It might be generally said that the enemy, as far as passive warfare was concerned, was inactive within the sector.

Counterintelligence agencies were more than occupied in taking care of the civil population, and in the process of screening the population, many prisoners were turned up, these soldiers having deserted the armed forces to escape duty or were discovered ~~by~~ in their homes, being caught here on furlough, etc. Not a day passed that some prisoners were turned over^{to}/the Division PW enclosure.

On March 17, the Division felt, to a minor degree, the enemy's V-attempt to liquidate the bridgehead, receiving in the Division area several of the V-2 missiles that the enemy sent in from the North to destroy (or attempt to destroy) the bridgehead. A great deal of damage was done by the missiles, but fortunately, all of it was ex-

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clusive of military material and personnel. The campaign was short-lived, and not more than a half-dozen projectiles crashed in the Division area.

The 18th and 19th of March passed without unusual incident. Again the troops of the Division were spectators of the battle raging on the opposite shore of the river, watching the enemy being pushed northward in the process of the expansion of the REMAGGEN bridgehead. There was a little artillery fire recorded in the Division area, and a great deal of activity was noted across the river, but still there was nothing of any consequence happening in the area occupied by the Division troops. The only thing that amounted to more than a passing thought was the occasional interdictory artillery fire that fell on the roads in the sector. This was neither effective nor intense, and for the most part was of light caliber.

On March 20, the first conclusive evidence of the enemy's attempts to organize forces to the rear of the front line came to light with the arrest of several members of the HITLER JUGEND was made by CIC personnel in FAD CODESEURG. These youngsters had been left behind by the German forces for the purpose of committing such acts of sabotage as possible, but were apprehended before the commitment of a single hostile act. They were equipped with elaborate demolitions kits that had been buried, and were evidently prepared to do their work efficiently. Their training had been inadequate, but there was a semblance of organization, and it appeared that there was a definite organization of the youths on the West bank of the RHINE.

Other than the above break in the monotony of activity in the Division sector, there was no activity recorded until the Division moved across the RHINE River into the bridgehead area on 24 March. True, troops along the river were constant observers of the activities on

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the opposite shoreline, and an occasional round artillery fell in areas occupied, but by March 24, all of the area along the river occupied by the Division was covered by the advance of troops on the far shore. Little activity was visible to our troops prior to or after this period.

Prior to 26 March, when the Division attacked to the East through friendly Infantry formations on the fringe of the bridgehead, the dispositions of the enemy forces on the current front were fairly well tied down, and the job confronting the Division was studied with this information and the terrain and trends of past activities in mind. It appeared that the major enemy elements forming the barrier to future advances to the east were composed of what was left of the 326 VG Division, the 11 Pz Division, the 277 VG Division, and the 5 Parachute Division, which was reported to have been reforming in the LIMBURG area to the southeast of the present area being occupied by troops, other than the above, had been forced to either the north or the south of the bridgehead by the aggressiveness of friendly forces - the majority evidently having moved to the north to or near the SIEG River, from which area they were offering stubborn resistance against all efforts. There had been few permanent defensive works encountered by the 9th and 99th Infantry Divisions, through which the Division was to pass in the attack to the East, nor had there been any armor other than single tanks or assault guns reported for a short period before the Division was to attack. Few mines had been reported, and road blocks were few and far between. The only extensive system of obstacles to be foreseen was the demolitions program that had been rather effectively carried out along

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the AUTOBAHN to the SE of the area now under friendly control. There was an apparent shortage of combat personnel under the control of the Division's forming the defensive crust around the eastern portion of the bridgehead area.

The Division jumped off at 0400 on 26 March on an attack that carried it in devious directions, almost without a halt, to the EDER DAM, over a route that measured over 140 kilometers - all accomplished by mid-afternoon on March 30. The attack (or series of correlated attacks) involved the crossing of the DILL, LAHN and EDER Rivers, and was made through a course of three distinct changes in direction. The destruction wrought and the number of prisoners taken in this drive far exceeded all that had been accomplished in the months of previous combat combined. Resistance varied from moderate to negligible along the route. Primarily, the resistance that was offered came from hastily organized remnants of the combat units that had once held the fringe of the First US Army bridgehead over the RHINE River, and from units that had been previously engaged in anti-aircraft defense of rear areas, and units that had been brought in quickly from fields afar to stem the tide of the Allied advances into the heart of the Fatherland. The pressure was so great on so great a front that the enemy was unable to concentrate his forces for a major stand at any one place, and such efforts as he was able to bring to an effective bearing were made by what troops there were on the ground. The speed of our advance was so great that many of the bridges were captured intact, removing the streams in the zone of action from the classification of serious obstacles.

The enemy's defense was characteristically that of defending isolated points that were of more or less importance to our advance - principally towns, where ~~XXXX~~ troops could be quickly congregated and supplied, or along the routes of our advance.

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On March 26, once our forces were through the crust of the bridgehead defending force, opposition was offered only at scattered points. The town of DIERDORF was fanatically defended, and the town itself presented a serious obstacle because of the fact that our own bombing had strewn the streets with rubble that made the streets impassable. Some three or four hours of bitter fighting took place in this town. Otherwise, the basic trouble encountered by our troops was found in the series of demolitions effected on the AUTCLAIN on the way to LIMBURG, the initially assigned objective. These were not particularly well defended, and our troops were able to make rather rapid progress until they were halted to change direction of attack.

It was during the course of the fighting on 26 March that one of the forces of the Division moving to the SE toward LIMBURG ran into the tails of the columns of troops retreating from the RHINE sector and did an immeasurable amount of damage. It was estimated by several observers that there was enough equipment destroyed to completely outfit two German divisions. Numerous positions were overrun, and the number of prisoners taken reached astronomical figures.

The units represented among the prisoners taken were numerous - too numerous, as a matter of fact, to mean anything as far as any organization was concerned. 272 VG, 277 VG, 11 Pz, 26 VG Divisions yielded prisoners, as well as did numerous non-divisional units and more rear echelon and line of communication troops than interrogation personnel could process.

March 27 saw much the same sort of fighting as on the previous day - scattered pockets of isolated troops that offered token resistance or little at all, and surrendered in great numbers. The greatest bother came from scattered groups that utilized small arms fire and

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bazookas to delay our forces. Generally speaking, resistance was broken by columns that by-passed the main groups, and surrender ordinarily followed. On the South of the Division sector, some small arms fire and anti-tank fire was delivered on our troops from across the LAHN River, and some anti-tank fire was delivered on routes that our columns took in reaching the DILL River, which was reached and crossed in strength against minor resistance. There was virtually no artillery fire received during the period; all that was received was from light caliber weapons. No armor was active against the Division, but several single tanks and assault guns were seen on the east side of the DILL River during the late afternoon. In addition, air observation revealed two concentrations of vehicles during the period, one to the immediate East of Division positions, and the other well to the South. Both were sizeable concentrations, and both caused some concern. Later developments, however, revealed that these forces were evidently mustering to effect a more speedy withdrawal from the battle area, for they made no appearance on the Division front in such strength on the following days.

The identifications of the prisoners taken during the day (which totalled more than 2000) ran in the same varied vein as on the previous day, with several divisions being represented, plus miscellaneous units of less than divisional strength - and more service elements than could be conveniently handled by evacuation processes.

On March 28, our forces moving to and across the LAHN River from generally south of KIRCHMAIN to GEISSEN encountered no material difficulty in the northern portion of the Division sector, but in the south, on the approaches to GIESSEN, forces ran into the former anti-aircraft defenses of the city, and the defense was both determined and well-coordinated. Our columns, in reaching the outskirts of the city, ran into

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continual resistance along the LAHN River from WETZLAR to the GIESSEN. Original breakouts from the positions that had been gained across the DILL River were rather bitterly contested, as well, by small arms and bazooka fire.

In the fight for GIESSEN, over 25 Flak guns that had been hastily converted to form the defense against our ground attacks were either captured or knocked out. By the end of period, our troops had broken the shell of the perimeter defense and had gone through the town, again picking up a tremendous number of prisoners.

Troops on 29 March met with some definitely coordinated defenses around the city of KIRCHHAIM, and a great deal of anti-tank fire in moving east from GIESSEN in the general vicinity of DEERENDACH. A unit, newly arrived from DENMARK (166 Inf Div) was identified in the KIRCHHAIM sector, and offered more determined resistance (only because of some semblance of coordination) than had been offered during the attack to date. The town actually had to be stormed and fought over thoroughly before the garrison gave up the struggle. Otherwise in the Division sector, the same miscellaneous toll of prisoners was noted, with little or no resistance being offered except from occasional diehards who offered token resistance before giving themselves up. Some who occupied village strongpoints offered determined resistance until their positions were stormed over by our advance columns.

Enemy air was extremely active over the Division sector during the day, particularly towards last light of day, though few hostile acts were reported by the troops on the ground. Most of the activities of the Luftwaffe were directed at extensive reconnaissance of the Division sector. One plane, an ME-109, was shot down in the middle of the day.

Troops of the Division advanced to the EDER River, and secured the

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EDER Dam with little difficulty until the dam site itself was reached. A little sniper fire was encountered by leading elements, and occasional bazooka fire was placed on columns, but generally speaking, no resistance of an organized nature was run into by the Division until the dam was reached.

Protection of the EDER DAM had been established primarily with the view of protection from air attacks, but the weapons being utilized for this purpose were quickly traversed to meet our advancing columns, and engaged them in a brief but furious firefight. Our troops scored their success by quickly storming the weapons positions, and following the speed of the advance and the attack, the dam was captured intact, as were numerous bridges over the EDER River in the vicinity. The short but furious battle netted the Division something like 600 prisoners and about 100 killed and wounded, plus several weapons captured and more destroyed.

After the Division settled along the shore of the EDER lake, after having captured the dam and the several bridges in the area, little activity was evidenced by the enemy, except the occasional appearance of stragglers formations - some of whom engaged our troops in limited firefights, others of whom surrendered without a fight. The main interest, beginning with the complete occupation of the Division objective and carrying through the end of the month, was the threat that mounted from the west - from the enemy forces that had been pocketed by the encircling activities of the friendly troops both to the north and the south. The concern was centered around the fact that there were sufficient forces in the pocket to create a formidable defense, and moreover, a force capable of major attempts to make breaks for the non-occupied areas to the east of the corridor that had been driven to the north by the forces to both the right and left of the Divisions.

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drive. There were prevalent rumors to the effect that two of the major formations in the pocket to the immediate west of the Division sector would make a concerted effort to break out to the east - namely, 130 Pz and 3 Pz Grenadier Divisions. This information came from various sources, the prime one among them, statements of prisoners that were captured from the Divisions. This mounting threat on the flank of the Division occupied the thoughts of all concerned as the month came to an end - for there was certainly every reason to believe that the forces so cut off from the inner and still unoccupied Germany would attempt, at one time or another, to make their break for freedom (?)

(NOTE: As supplement to these notes, there is appended a breakdown of the casualties inflicted on the enemy on the drive from the bridge-head area east of the RHINE River to the EDER DAM, covering the period from 26 to 30 March 1945)

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CASUALTIES INFLICTED ON THE ENEMY
(26-31 March 1945)

PRISONERS OF WAR: - Officers NCO's Enlisted Men Total
148 1618 10,041 11,807

(NOTE: The above figures do not include as estimated 500 prisoners that were turned over to Infantry Divisions, nor does it include the medical staffs or the patients of 4 German Military Hospitals that were left under guard as the Division advanced.)

TANKS: -14 Tanks (all types) were destroyed; 2 Mk V Tanks captured.)

OTHER VEHICLES: * - Half-tracked Vehicles destroyed - 9.
Motor Transport: 595 destroyed, 13 captured.
Horse-drawn Transport: 102 destroyed.

ARTILLERY PIECES: - Destroyed - 75mm - 9.
105mm - 30.
150mm - 5.
170mm & 240mm - 25.
SP 75mm - 2.
SP 105mm - 5.
16" RR - 2 captured.

AA/AT GUNS:

	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Captured</u>
20mm	9	
47mm	3	4
75mm	6	
88mm	45	9
105mm		3

AIRCRAFT: One ME-109 destroyed; two bi-motored bombers captured.

MISCELLANEOUS: (All overrun and captured)

- (1) 60 RR cars of miscellaneous military equipment.
- (2) 31 RR cars of ammunition (all calibers)
- (3) 4 military hospitals (complete with equipment)
- (4) One ammunition dump (All calibers of ammunition.)
- (5) Underground Munitions Factory (with 2500 gallons of fuel)
- (6) 4 wagon-loads of miscellaneous military equipment.
- (7) One storeroom of miscellaneous Chemical Warfare equipment.
- (8) One storehouse of German QM material (utensils and blankets)
- (9) One storehouse of miscellaneous Signal equipment.
- (10) Searchlights and range-finding equipment (1 battery)
- (11) Unestimated amounts of abandoned personal equipment and weapons, plus phenomenal amounts of military equipment abandoned by the Germans in the various towns not occupied after capture by the Division.

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APPENDIX IV

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Not Read
me 26 May 45

G-1 Journal and Messages.
G-2 Journal and Messages.
G-3 Journal and Messages.
G-4 Journal and Messages.

- G-2 Periodic Reports.
- G-3 Periodic Reports.
- Operations Instructions.
- General Orders.

THE AFTER ACTION REPORTS AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS (JOURNALS, MESSAGES, ORDERS, AND OVERLAYS, ETC.,) OF THE FOLLOWING COMPONENT AND ATTACHED UNITS OF THE 7TH ARMORED DIVISION:

Combat Command "A"
 Combat Command "B"
 Combat Command Reserve
 7th Armored Division Artillery
 7th Armored Division Trains
 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion
 38th Armored Infantry Battalion
 48th Armored Infantry Battalion
 17th Tank Battalion
 31st Tank Battalion
 40th Tank Battalion
 434th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
 489th Armored Field Artillery Battalion
 33rd Armored Engineer Battalion
 77th Medical Battalion (Armored)
 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized.
 129th Ordnance Maintenance Battalion
 147th Armored Signal Company
 203rd AAA Auto Weapons Battalion (SP) (Attached)
 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion (SP) (Attached)
 400th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (Attached)

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