

**Maneuver Center of Excellence (MCoE) Libraries
HQ Donovan Research Library
Armor Research Library
Fort Benning, Georgia**

Report date: May 1945

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

Abstract: U.S. Army 7th Armored Division After Action Report, May 1945,
Includes G-2 notes

Number of pages: 38

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

Document#: 807 AD 404

Classification: Unclassified; Approved for public release

AR# 469

AFTER ACTION REPORT

7TH ARMORED DIVISION

831.26

~~27 OCTOBER thru~~

~~7 NOVEMBER 1944~~

~~"BATTLE OF CANALS"~~

1 - 20 May 45

~~14 AUG - 17 DEC 44~~

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF AND SHOULD BE RETURNED TO,
THE CLASSIFIED DOCUMENT SECTION, INTELLIGENCE DIVISION S-2,
BUILDING T-5, (T-1782).

807 AD 404

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

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

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

Numbered by A66ink
30 NOV 45

CLASSIFICATION
CANCELLED
BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
Cameron
DOWNGRADING COMMITTEE 16 Nov.

OCT 1 1945

8571 (Vol. II)

607-133.4

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Summary of Operations
2. To the Baltic
3. CC"B" Operation, 1-4 May
4. Occupation in Saxony
5. Appendices
 - I Administrative and Statistical Summary
 - II G-2 Notes
 - III List of Supporting Documents

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. The "Bewery Bum"
2. German Experimental Plane, JU 888
3. PW Camp
4. Lt. William A. Knowlton

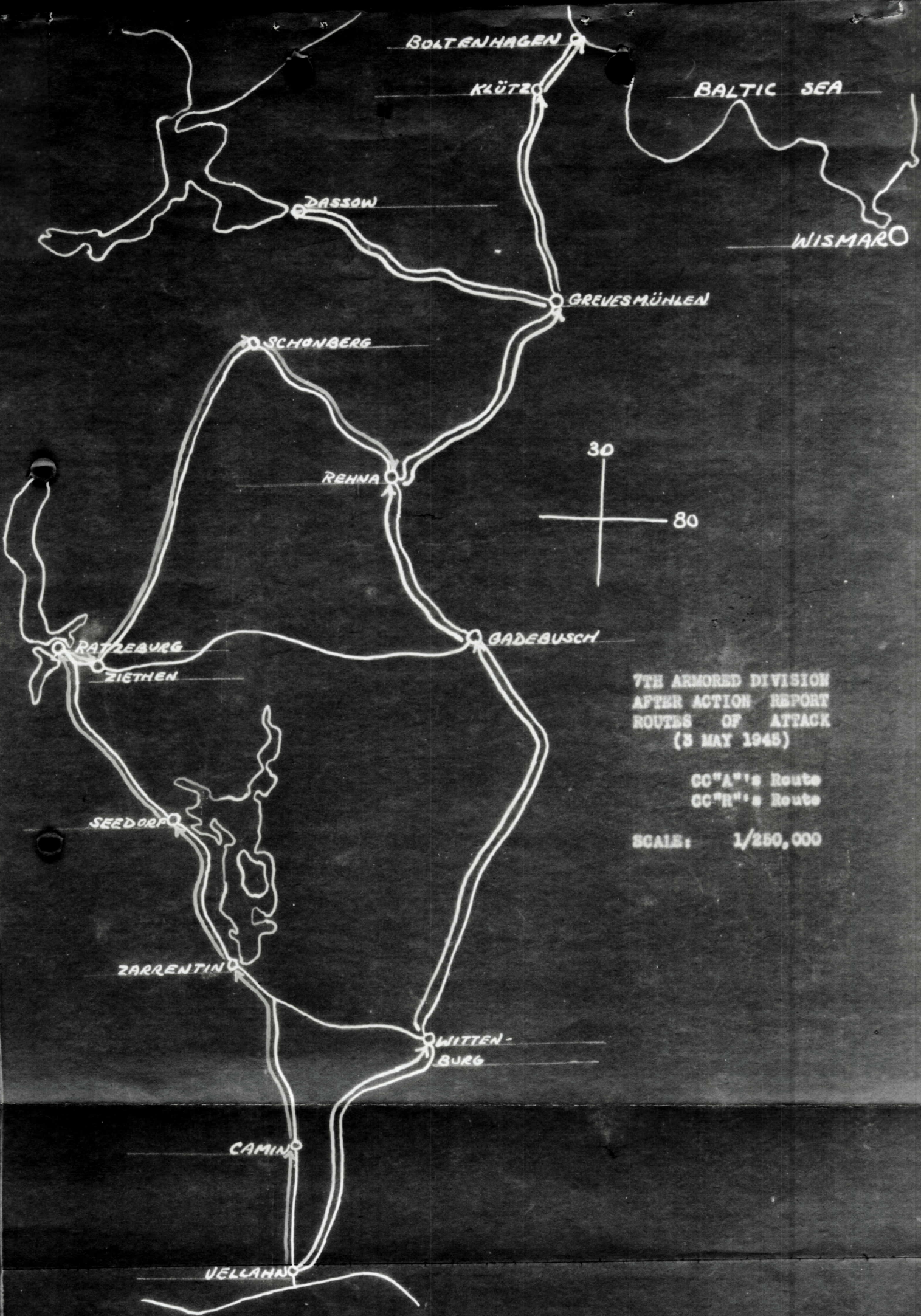


The "Bowery Bum", Sherman tank of the 17th Tank Battalion, 7th Armored Division, that travelled from OMAHA BEACH, FRANCE to the shores of the BALTIC SEA with the same five man crew. Shown near BOLTENHAGEN on the BALTIC.

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

The beginning of May found the 7th Armored Division in an assembly area on the LUNEBERGER HEATH as part of the XVIII U. S. Corps (Airborne) under the British 2nd Army. On 2 May, the 7th Armored Division (minus Combat Command "B") moved across the ELBE to an assembly area in the bridgehead held by the 82nd Airborne and 8th Infantry Divisions. Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "R" advanced to the north from assembly areas in the vicinity of WITTENBURG on 3 May with the mission of destroying enemy resistance in the division zone forward of the line GADENUSCH-RATZBURG. No resistance was encountered as our forces raced to the BALTIC SEA and the only hindrance to the advance was the endless columns of mounted and dismounted PW's streaming south to the division cages. The official PW total for the operation ELBE-BALTIC was 61,218 which brought the division total for operations since landing to 113,041. At 011500, Combat Command "B" had been attached to the 82nd Airborne Division and moved eastward into their area across the ELBE. The combat command assembled its task forces as quickly as possible and attacked to the east on 2 May to seize LUDWIGSLUST. At 1500 on the same date, "B" Troop, 87th Cav Ren Sq Meos, was given the mission of contacting the Russians. This was accomplished at 030025 near the town of HEPPENTIN where Lt. WILLIAM KNOWLTON, CO of "B" Troop, contacted elements of the Russian 191st Infantry Division. At 041200 Combat Command "B" reverted to 7th Armored Division Control. From 4 May to 19 May, the Seventh was busily employed with the occupation and Military Government of its sector in the province of MECKLENBERG at which time it was relieved by elements of the 8th Infantry

and 82nd Airborne Divisions. On 20 May, the Division began movement south and east to a new security sector in the provinces of ANHALT and SAXONY where, on 21 May, it became part of VII Corps, Ninth U. S. Army. Upon arrival, the Seventh relieved the 104th Infantry Division, which operation was complete by noon on 23 May. From 23 May to the end of the month, the Division assumed responsibility for civilian control, security measures and the guarding of 79 key installations within its area and further carried out an extensive training and rehabilitation program.



7TH ARMORED DIVISION
AFTER ACTION REPORT
ROUTES OF ATTACK
(3 MAY 1945)

CC'A's Route
CC'H's Route

SCALE: 1/250,000

~~SECRET~~

TO THE BALTIC

The first day of May found the Seventh Armored in the LUNENBERGER HEATH region of Germany, prepared to cross the ALBE, and here, breaking out of the SUMMARY bridgehead held by the 82nd Airborne and 8th Infantry Divisions, attack north to the BALTIC. The Seventh was attached to the U. S. XVIII Corps (Airborne) operating under the British 2nd Army, but remained assigned to the Ninth U. S. Army. There was a tense feeling of expectancy in the air. On 27 April, the Americans and Russians had linked at TORGAU, on 31 April to the roll of muffled drums, the German radio electrified the world by announcing "This afternoon . . . our FUHRER died," Mussolini was already dead and on display on the public square in MILAN. It couldn't last much longer.

The division order of battle was:

ORDER OF BATTLE

Combat Command "A"

17th Tk Bn
23rd Armd Inf Bn
489th Armd FA Bn
A/814th TD Bn
B/33rd Armd Engr Bn
1/A/203rd AAA Bn
1 sec/87th Cav Rcn Sq Mecz

Combat Command "B"

31st Tk Bn
434th Armd FA Bn
C/814th TD Bn
A/33rd Armd Engr Bn
B/87th Cav Rcn Sq
Mecz

Combat Command "R"

40th Tk Bn
38th Armd Inf Bn
440th Armd FA Bn
B/814th TD Bn
C/33rd Armd Engr Bn
1/B/203rd AAA Bn
1 sec/87th Cav Rcn Sq
Mecz

Division Troops

33rd Armd Engr Bn (-)
814th TD Bn (-)
203rd AAA Bn (-)

Division Trains

77th Med Bn Armd
129th Ord M Bn
446th QM Tr Co
3967th QM Tr Co
A/87th Cav Rcn Sq
Mecz

Division Reserve

87th Cav Rcn Sq Mecz (-)
48th Armd Inf Bn

Division Artillery

Hq and Hq Btry
A (-) & B (-)/203rd AAA Bn

[REDACTED]

Combat Command "B" was relieved from division control and attached to the 82nd Airborne Division at 2200 on 1 May. Earlier that night at CC"B" 1745, they moved into the 82nd's area and now, continuing Detached east across the ELBE at BLICKLE, they closed in a bridge-head assembly area near SUMTE at 020515. The Combat Command remained under 82nd Airborne Division control until 1200 on 4 May at which time, it returned to the Seventh Armored.

At 012300 an operations instruction was issued directing all units of the division, less Combat Command "B", to begin movement across the ACROSS THE ELBE to a new assembly area in the vicinity of VELLAHN. ELBE Billeting details were sent out and by early morning of 3 May, all units had closed in the new area. The division was now in MECKLENBURG, a sparsely populated agricultural province in the north German plain where the local set-up had been characterized as feudal even by BISMARCK. The sandy Geestlands and peat bogs of the LUNEBERGER HEATH had given way to a country of lakes and impermeable clay. It was a region of undulating irregular relief with rounded ridges and hummocks interspersed by low-lying pockets containing lakes or marshes. There were a few scattered woods throughout the area, but the greater percentage of the land was cultivated under a mixed farming system of cereals, potatoes, sugar-beets and dairy farming.

The 3rd of May at 0300 an operations instruction was issued directing the 7th Armored Division (-CC"B") to attack on corps order from their OPERATIONS present positions to the BALTIC SEA. They were to INSTRUCTIONS destroy the enemy in the zone and contact British VIII Corps elements near PUTSNITZ (098998) upon reaching their objective.

Combat Command "A" was to attack on the right and Combat Command "R" on the left. German PW's, refugees, and displaced persons were not to be permitted to flow west out of the division zone but every effort was to be made to keep them in place. Units were to set up collecting points for PW's within their own areas of responsibility and were to initiate searches for enemy military personnel and high Nazi officials.

The disintegration of the once great German Army was already well under way. A glance at the G-2 periodic reports for these days and you

AN ARMY
COLLAPSES

find such telling remarks as: May 1st-"No system of defenses was encountered anywhere in the corps sector"; May 2nd "XVIII Corps (Abn) - No front line exists. Elements of the corps have ranged almost at will in their assigned sectors during the period..." On 2 May elements of the British 11th Armored Division entered LUBECK and elements of the XVIII Corps (abn) went into LUBECK thereby sealing off all avenues of entrance into the corps pocket and splitting the North German Army Group in two. On 3 May, the 7th Armored Division went back into action and the following is the G-2 summary of the situation: "Our forces advanced from assembly areas Vic WITTENBERG (2151) with the mission of destroying enemy resistance in the Div zone forward of the line GADEBUSCH (2372) - RATTZBURG (0171). No resistance was encountered as our forces raced to the BALTIC SEA within our zone. The only hindrance to our advance was the endless columns of mounted and dismounted PW's who streamed south on our routes of advance."

At 1100 on 3 May, Combat Command "A" and Combat Command "R" left

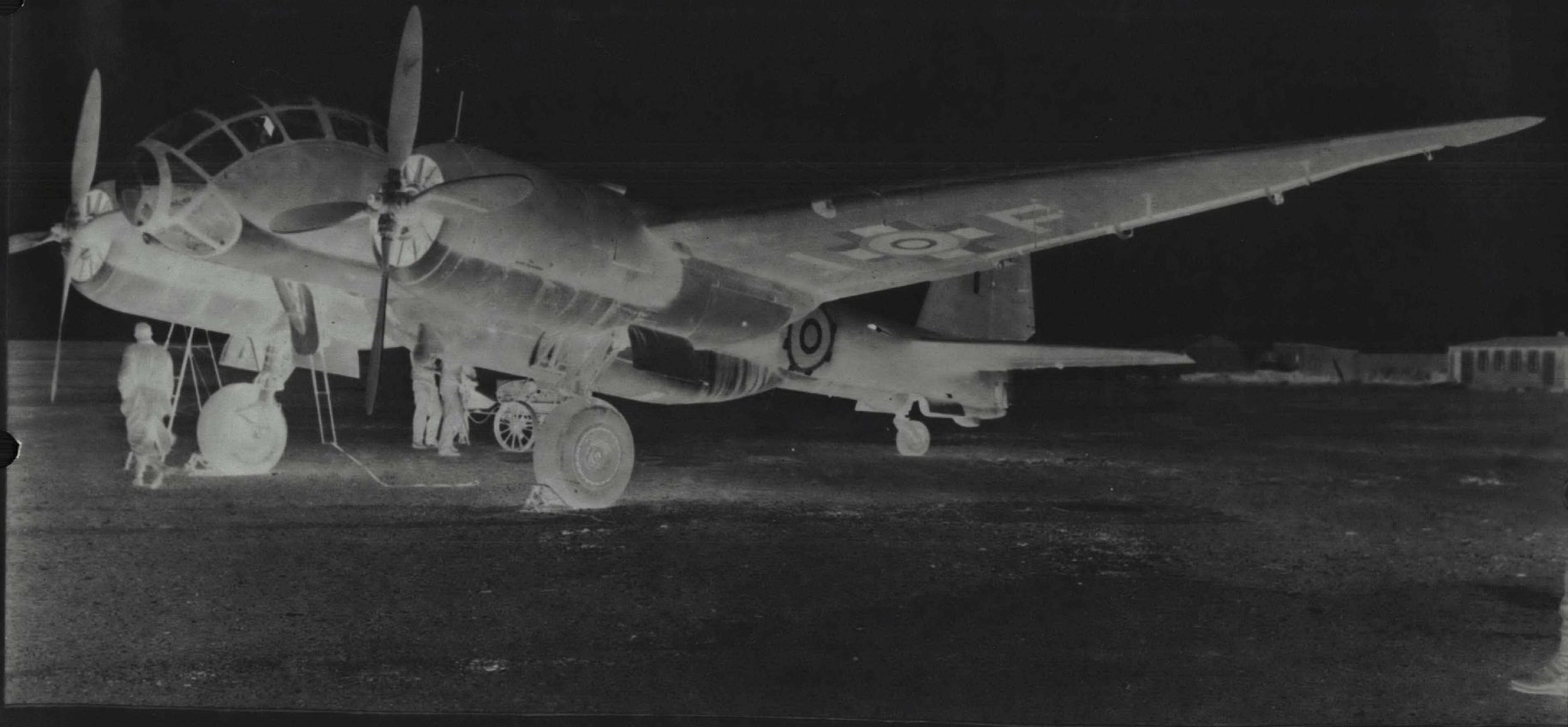
[REDACTED]

their respective assembly areas at KLODNO and GOLDENKOW and advancing against no opposition whatsoever, reached their objectives on the coast

TO THE
BALTIC

by 2400. The entire day's advance was made along a road packed for miles with a solid stream of German vehicles streaming in the opposite direction. It was probably one of the most motley collection of vehicles the world has ever seen. Absent were the beautiful cars and tanks of the propaganda movies but there was everything else, diesel and wood-burning trucks emitting blue puffs of smoke, long lumbering farm carts with an incredible cargo of humans and household goods, little Opels reserved for only the highest rank, surreys, the inevitable baby buggies and little carts of the refugees who travelled on foot, and even an occasional fire-engine. Once the soldiers reached the haven of American PW cages hastily improvised in the open fields, it was as if the clock had been turned back a hundred years. The grimy, dust-covered men in grey-green uniforms gathered around a hundred little campfires, soup was being ladled out of old-fashioned field kitchens, an occasional nurse's uniform flashed in and out among the soldiers, and everywhere as far as the eye could see were hundreds of thin, sorry-looking horses who had been unharnessed when there was no further need for them and were now milling about aimlessly in the nearby fields. It might have been the end of the Civil War instead of World War II. Two more events worthy of note during this, the division's final day in combat in Europe, were establishing contact with elements of the British 5th Infantry Division in DASSOW and receiving word that all German forces in ITALY had surrendered. In

[REDACTED]



First JU 388, German experimental observation plane, to be seen by experts of the RAF. It was captured intact by the 7th Armored Division at TARNEWITZ on the BALTIC.

~~SECRET~~

our own sector, it was only too apparent that the Germans considered all lost and were now doing their utmost to surrender to British or American troops before they fell into Russian hands.

On 4 May the division received orders to assume the responsibility for the zone from the ELBE RIVER to the BALTIC SEA between the British

ORGANIZING
THE AREA

VIII Corps on the left or west and the 8th U. S.

infantry on the right or east. German military personnel continued to be placed in organized PW camps and a search was made for all Nazi officials. Road blocks were established, civilian control measures enforced and security patrols set up. Refugees and displaced persons were not allowed to circulate into or out of the area.

By 6 May, a total of 12 PW cages holding 70,046 prisoners was established in the division area. The official 7th Armored Division total for

THE
TAKE

the operation ELBE-BALTIC was 51,212 and the additional 19,428

were added when we assumed control of several cages previously under the British. The ranking prisoner was Major General SIEVERT, commander of the 58th Infantry Division, who drove into one of the division cages on 4 May. The grand total of prisoners taken by the division since entering combat to the end of hostilities numbered an impressive 113,041. Among the more notable installations overrun by the Seventh's troops were a fully equipped seaplane base with twenty planes intact, a hundred new engines, and an undetermined number of partially assembled planes, and also an airdrome with a few serviceable land planes and about twenty-five unserviceable craft in addition to a large amount of spare parts and



Task Force Brown's PW Camp near GREVESMUHLEN, MECKLENBURG. One of many in the 7th Armored Division area after the collapse of the northern German armies.

[REDACTED]

miscellaneous equipment. Other prizes were an electrical equipment warehouse, an aircraft engine warehouse, and an airphoto laboratory, all crammed with the latest equipment.

The Military Government detachment of the Seventh accompanied the troops in and as usual, found the entire area in administrative chaos.

MILITARY
GOVERNMENT

In all of the large towns, i.e., GROVESMUELEN, SCHONBERG, and DASSOW, the population was inflated to four times its pre-war level and there were consequent knotty problems of housing and food to be solved. The greatest trouble was caused by Russian and Polish slave laborers who immediately began looting German property and stores upon the arrival of the American troops. However, a firm policy by the military police and the eventual evacuation of all Russian nationals to a pre-arranged exchange point remedied this situation. A great number of German refugees throughout the zone of responsibility were put to work on farms where labor was sorely needed. On or about 9 May, the stores were reopened and the banks began transactions. Deposits in the banks were greater than withdrawals for the remainder of our stay. The clothing stores operated under the ration system in effect before allied occupation. Arrangements were made with the CALLIAS Wholesale Grocery in LUBECK to supply stores in the area. At the end of the period all the utilities which had been shut off upon our arrival were restored and operating.

At 0512~~00~~ May, the following attachments and detachments were effected: 48th Armd Inf Bn was detached from Combat Command "A" and attached to

[REDACTED]

Combat Command "B". A/48th Armd Inf Bn was attached to Combat Command "B" from Combat Command "K". Companies "A" and "B" of the 814th Td Bn ATTACHMENTS were detached from Combat Commands "A" and "K" respectively and returned to battalion control at 051400. C/814th TD Bn was returned to battalion control from Combat Command "B" at 070700 May. The 489th Armd FA Bn was detached from Combat Command "A", and with the 87th Cav Rcn Sq Mccs was attached to the Division Artillery at 090600 May.

On 7 May, the following TWX message was received from SHAEP:

" A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GERMAN HIGH COMMAND SIGNED THE UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER OF ALL GERMAN LAND, SEA AND AIR FORCES IN EUROPE TO THE ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE AND SIMULTANEOUSLY TO THE SOVIET HIGH COMMAND AT 0241 HOURS CENTRAL EUROPEAN TIME SEVEN MAY UNDER WHICH ALL FORCES WILL CEASE ACTIVE OPERATIONS AT 0001 HOURS 9 MAY.

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY ALL OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS BY ALLIED EXPEDITIONARY FORCE WILL CEASE AND TROOPS WILL REMAIN IN PRESENT POSITIONS. MOVES INVOLVED IN OCCUPATIONAL DUTIES WILL CONTINUE. DUE TO DIFFICULTIES IN COMMUNICATION THERE MAY BE SOME DELAY IN SIMILAR ORDERS REACHING ENEMY TROOPS SO FULL DEFENSIVE PRECAUTIONS WILL BE TAKEN.

ALL INFORMED DOWN TO AND INCLUDING DIVISIONS, TACTICAL AIR COMMANDS, AND GROUPS, BASE SECTIONS AND EQUIVALENT. NO RELEASE WILL BE MADE TO THE PRESS PENDING AN ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE MEANS OF ALL THREE GOVERNMENTS."

The war was over. All ranks had been expecting it daily for some time and as a result, there was but a mild celebration. Still, May 7 was a warm, beautiful day, appropriate for the great announcement, and the general feeling was one of "All's right with the world."

At 1500 on 8 May the following operations instructions were issued. In all probability the division would remain in its present sector for a period

of three weeks. Evacuation of German PW's would be accomplished as rapidly as higher echelons could provide facilities for their reception. A search

OPERATIONS
INSTRUCTIONS
8 MAY

for and the collection of enemy equipment was to be concurrent with the segregation and control of allied displaced persons. If and when, the Seventh was assigned to a zone of occupation, that zone was to be divided into four sectors, each controlled by Combat Command "A", Combat Command "B", Combat Command "R", and Division Artillery respectively.

On 11 May a liaison officer was dispatched from the Seventh to the 5th British Infantry Division on order of the CG of the XVIII Airborne Corps

ADJUSTING
BOUNDARY

to begin arrangements to shift troops in accordance with the international boundary. According to operations instructions issued at 1900 this date the Seventh Armored Division was to move its troops so as to make its left (west) boundary uniform with the corps overlay. The responsibility for the new sector was to become effective at 1300. The day of 12 May was given over to making mutual arrangements with the British Commanders for the relief of the troops in the areas involved by the change in boundary. On 13 May the relief was undertaken and the adjustment of the left boundary was completed by 1100 on 14 May.

A rest, recreation, and rehabilitation center for the men of the Seventh was opened on 15 May. The facilities of a large German airport at TARNOWITZ

REHABILITATION
CENTER

on the BALTIC were utilized for the camp. Each of the division's organic and attached units were given quotas and sent groups of men to the modern buildings built in a pine grove on the shores of the BALTIC. The morning was devoted to training, calisthenics, and

S-1-0-3-12

close order drill, while the afternoon and evening were given over to recreation. An extensive program of athletics, swimming, and boat rides on the Baltic were included in the itinerary. Other features were two stage shows and a movie each night, and band concerts by the Division Band, assembled for the first time since the division left England. A PX, branch APO, and Red Cross office contributed to the facilities. The center closed on 18 May as the division prepared to move south to a new sector in SAXONY.

On 16 May a warning order was issued that all units should be prepared to turn over their sectors to the 82nd Airborne Division when a relief was ALERTED FOR officially announced. The Seventh continued controlling MOVEMENT its sector until 19 May at which time it prepared to move south and east to the province of SAXONY and LBEH1 and the 82nd moved in. The long trip from the Normandy Beaches to the Baltic had come to a peaceful end.

O SCHWERIN

7TH ARMORED DIVISION AFTER ACTION REPORT

CC"BB's Route of
Attack (1-4 May)

Route of B/87 Cav Rem Sq
to link-up with Russians

SCALE: 1/250,000

KAROW

LjBZ

PARCHIN

NEUSTADT

LUDWIGSLUST

MEYENBURG

VELLAHN

HAGENOW

TF ERLENBUSCH

TF MAJOR

TF BEATY

2/

81

COMBAT COMMAND "B" OPERATION

1 - 4 May 1945

At 2200 on 1 May, Combat Command "B" was attached to the 82nd Airborne Division and alerted for movement eastward into their area. The combat

CC "B" command moved east across the Elbe River at BLECKEDE and ATTACHED 82nd AB DIV closed in an assembly area in the vicinity of SUMTE at 020515. On the march "C" company of the 814th Tn Bn was attached to the 325th Glider Regiment and "D" company of the 31st Tk Bn was attached to the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. The 2nd Bn of the 325th Parachute Infantry Regiment was attached to Combat Command "B" at 020500.

The troops were divided into task forces as follows:

ORDER OF
ENTRY

TF KLENBOSCH

E/2/325th Para Inf Regt
31 Tk Bn (-)
1/A/33rd Armd Engr Bn

TF BEATY

G/2/325th Para Inf Regt
C/31st Tk Bn
2/A/33rd Armd Engr Bn
1/B/87th Cav Rcn Sq Mecs

TF MAJOR

2/325 Para Inf Regt (-)
B/31st Tk Bn
3/A/33rd Armd Engr Bn

CC Troops

Hq & Hq Co, CC "B"
B/87th Cav Rcn Sq Mecs (-)
A/33rd Armd Engr Bn (-)

Combat Command "B"s mission was to assemble task forces as quickly as possible and attack to the east -- objective LUDWIGSBURG. The plan was to

MISSION attack in three parallel columns, Task Force "E" on the left (north), Task Force "B" in the center, and Task Force "M" on the right (south). "B" troop, 87th Cav Rcn Sq Mecs (-) moved out at 0800 on the morning of 2 May to make a reconnaissance of the three routes for the condition of the roads and for possible enemy strong points. According to plan, Task Force "M" moved out at 0930, followed by Task Force "B" on the center route. The 434th Armd FA Bn also moved along the center route



Lt. William A. Knowlton, B Troop, 87th Cav. Rcn. Sq., Mecz., CO of the troop that effected a link-up with the Russians at Lubz on the Elde River, on 03 May, 1945.

after Task Force "A" had moved out.

The route for all task forces was from SUMTE to NEURAU, then NE to CH east of BIRSEBING where Task Forces "B" and "E" turned north and

ROUTE Task Force "A" turned east at LOBINIA to PROEST SEAR to LOBBENLOF to BELCH to ALT KRENZLIN and to GUELIN at 1345. They were ordered to remain there at that time and at 1500 Task Force "A" was dissolved, the 2nd Bn, 325th Para Inf Regt reverting to its parent unit while 5/31st Tk Bn and 3/4/3rd Armd Engr Bn were placed in Combat Command troops. From GOLDENITZ, Task Force "E" went NE to WARLITZ to KUNSTERDORF, then SE to BIRSEBING, and to PICHAR where at 1400 they were ordered to discontinue the attack.

The attack was executed with maximum speed. All task forces encountered disorganized columns of enemy infantry, cavalry, armor, and miscellaneous

RESISTANCE vehicles retreating in confusion before the advancing
COLUMNS Russians. The speed at which the task forces were advancing

allowed no time for the disorganized enemy columns to establish resistance.

It became necessary at 1100 to recall "B" troop of the 87th Cav Reg Bq Mees from their reconnaissance mission and give them a new job of controlling P W's pouring back so that the traffic might continue to the east. At 1500 Combat Command "B" was relieved of the responsibility for the security of LUDWIGSLUST.

At 1500 on 2 May "B" troop of the 87th Cav Reg Bq Mees was given the mission of proceeding eastward to make contact with the Russian Army. 1st

PLAN FOR Lt. WILLIAM A. ANGLTON, CO of "B" troop, was briefed by Col.
LINK-UP JOSEPH F. HASKELL, CO of Combat Command "B" before leaving and

told that advanced Russian spearheads were reported to be between LUDWIGSLUST

and LUBZ. The commander of the German 12th Army which lay between the American and Russian lines had indicated an unwillingness to fight our troops while still defending tenaciously along the Russian front. Lt. KNOWLTON was warned against getting himself too entangled as there would be no help immediately available to him, and told to report his progress to higher headquarters over a radio set open for that purpose. Having contacted the Russians, he was to return to the American lines with one of their staff, giving sufficient advance warning so that a suitable reception could be ready.

At 1700, the troop moved out with two platoons and four headquarters platoon vehicles -- 2 armored cars and 2 1/2-ton -- leaving instructions for the other platoon NEUSTADT to catch up when they arrived in LUDWIGSLUST. Passing through the American lines, they found the going extremely rough at first as fleeing Germans were packed in three columns of vehicles going west. A good many were drunk and upon seeing the white star, would shout and throw away their weapons. Their actions seemed to keynote the situation and Lt. KNOWLTON decided to push on as fast as possible. Reaching NEUSTADT, they found the roads so hopelessly jammed that all the officers were needed to walk at the head of the column to our vehicles off the road. For the first time, SS began to appear among the troops but even they were strongly cooperative. A German MP unit under a 1st. Lieutenant of the SS helped clear the path through town.

The roads were in similar condition all the way to PARCHIM. Many thousands of troops surrendered, ranging all the way from tank and assault gun units, to horse PARCHIM trains for supply work. Occasionally, there would be a tense moment when the troop came in sight of a new group. Some Germans would lower their guns, aim and then stop puzzled as the Americans remained seated in the top of their turrets, and made no move towards their weapons. Then the German, remembering he was retreating towards the American lines, and that this was probably the vanguard of a much larger force, would shrug his shoulders, and lowering his gun, would come towards the enemy. The surrendering soldiers were formed into battalions and regiments under 22

~~SECRET~~

their commanders, told to stack their weapons alongside the road, and then to proceed to LUDWIGSLUST. As the troop rode through PARCHIM they were greeted by cheering crowds of German soldiers and civilians, foreign slave laborers, and prisoners in groups of five hundred, still under armed SS guards. Most seemed to be under the mistaken impression that for some reason the Americans were advancing to attack the Russians.

Everywhere they stopped along the way to ask the whereabouts of the Russians, the inevitable reply came back, "20 Kilometres." Upon entering Lubz just at

NIGHT
IN
LUBZ

dark, Lt. KNOWLTON found out from some SS officers that the Russians were still a good fifty kilometres away. As it was now night, gas was running low and the Russians were still many miles away, it was decided to radio for instructions. The special CW set was out of all contact with Combat Command "B". The situation grew steadily more tense. LUBZ was jammed with troops -- the Germans had three divisions in and around the town for defense against the Russians, and they were undecided whether to shoot or not. German officers came over to demand what the Americans were doing there as they were under no orders not to shoot them. There was no retreat possible now, so there seemed to be nothing to do but stay there and bluff it through.

At this point, a German major and staff, along with the burgomeister, came up and surrendered the town to Lt. KNOWLTON. Immediately, seeing the advantage

TURN-IN
OF
WEAPONS

their move gave him, he set up a headquarters in the SS traffic control point, ordered all civilians indoors, organized a police force of SS and parachutists from the famed HERMAN GOERING Division, and taking over a brewery as an arms collecting point, ordered all weapons turned in there. As the steady stream of soldiers from the east continued to pour through town, they filed past the brewery and discarded their small arms.

Soon both stories of the brewery, the largest building in LUBZ, were completely full, and three more collecting points had to be organized. The Germans were permitted to keep their tanks, assault guns and cannon larger than 88 MM as they were riding on them, and the traffic problem was already acute. The commandant of PARCHIM was called by phone and told to collect the weapons of all troops passing through his town, but this order was difficult to enforce as there were no Americans within twenty miles of that town, and the Germans knew it. At about ~~0100~~ of 3 May, the Brigade Commander of the Panzer Marine Brigade, defending a line from PLAU south, informed Lt. KNOWLTON that he intended to fight the Russians there and that he would not turn in his weapons. Lacking the necessary troops to disarm the brigade by force, a compromise was reached allowing him to keep his troops east of LUBZ armed, but still disarming all troops coming west through the town.

By morning, the situation had come to a head. The German High Command had correctly guessed that no more American troops were within 50 kilometres SITUATION of Troop "B"'s position, and General FRONHEIM issued orders CRITICAL for all German troops to retrieve their weapons immediately and go forward to meet the Russian onslaught. They were to attack the Americans if they demurred. Despite these orders, it was still possible to control the situation in LUBZ and freeze all weapons. In PARCHIM, where there were no American troops and where the General's headquarters were, the situation probably disintegrated.

At ~~0800~~ on 3 May, the commander of the Panzer Marine Brigade informed the troop that the Russians were closing in on PLAU from north and south.

LINKUP
WITH
RUSSIAN
191st
DIVISION Forming a patrol with the 3rd Platoon, Lt. KNOWLTON started towards PLAU. Forced to bypass to the south on account of a blown bridge, he suddenly saw a column of horses and horse drawn vehicles silhouetted against the sky on a hill beyond the town. He

switched from his armored car to a $\frac{1}{2}$ ton, and went forward to investigate. It was the Red Army, and at 0925 official contact was made with elements of the Russian 191st Infantry Division in REPPERTIN. A Russian Major guided the American jeep forward along the column to the Colonel commanding it and when this individual was reached, he halted the column and set up a CP. He called the Division Commander, a full colonel, who said he would come forward immediately. The Division Commander arrived at 1145 at the CP which was in a farmhouse by the canal east of SCHLEMMIN. While there, word arrived that the commander of a Russian tank division had contacted other American troops near NEUSTADT. The Russian Commander conveyed his respects to the American Commanding General and agreed to meet him at LUBZ at 1900, Moscow time. Lt. KN WILTON then left the Russians and started the return trip. He decided to leave his 1st and 2nd platoons in LUBZ and return with his 3rd platoon. It was not half an hour after he left this town that the Russians entered simultaneously from north and south.

As the Americans proceeded back, they found Russian tank elements had cut the road east of NEUSTADT. Passing through the Russian lines

FIRST and out again, they found that they had also occupied
CONTACT
NEUSTADT. Finally arriving back at the 82nd Airborne Division CP at LUDWIGSLUST, the entire results of the mission were reported to Major J. C. H. LEE, the assistant G-3, who before troop B's arrival had believed that contact had first been made near LUDWIGSLUST about 1630 by reconnaissance elements of the 82nd Airborne. In addition to making the first contact with the Russians, Lt. KNOWLTON and the 100 officers and men of "B" Troop at LUBZ managed in a daring game of skill and bluff to cause 250,000 German soldiers to lay down their arms in the belief

that large American troops were behind their tiny spearhead.

The days of 3 and 4 May were spent in enforcing security measures in the Combat Command's area near BRESEGARD and in controlling the move-

ment west of thousands of PW's and displaced persons.
CC "B"
REVERTS
TO 7TH ARMORED C/814th TD Bn was detached from the 325th Glider Regt. and reverted to Combat Command "B" control at 031030 and D/31st Tank Bn was detached from the 504th Para Inf. Regt. and reverted to Combat Command "B" control at 031830. "B" troop, 87th Cav Recon Sq Hecx returned from LUBZ and closed in the Combat Command "B" area at 040930. At 041200, the Combat Command was relieved from attachment to the 82nd Airborne Division and reverted to 7th Armored Division control.

[REDACTED]



7TH ARMORED DIVISION
AREA OF OCCUPATION
(23 MAY thru 31 MAY)

Temporarily held
by 104th Inf Div

SCALE: 1/250,000

D E

27

OCCUPATION OF SAXONY

SUMMARY

At 0600 on 20 May the 7th Armored Division began a movement over two routes to a security area comprising part of the German provinces of SAXONY and ANHALT. The division was relieved from the XVIII Airborne Corps and attached to the VII Corps, Ninth U. S. Army effective 21 May. By 221800, it had closed in the new area and had commenced relief of the 104th Infantry Division which had been occupying the new area prior to the 7th's arrival. This relief was completed by noon of the 23rd at which time the 7th assumed responsibility for the entire sector, continuing civilian control, security, military government and the guarding of key installations. There were 4271 men on duty, guarding 79 key installations. Approximately one-third of the command was maintained as a tactical emergency reserve, units being supplied by the major commands as follows:

CC "A"
C/17th Tk Bn

C/23rd Armd Inf Bn

C/33rd Armd Engr Bn

DIV ARTY

Hq/ 434th Armd FA Bn

Sv/434th Armd FA Bn

Hq/440th Armd FA Bn

Sv/440th Armd FA Bn

C/489th Armd FA Bn

D/203rd AAA Bn.

CC "B"
B/31st Tk Bn

A/48th Armd Inf Bn

A/814th TD Bn

1106

Hq & Sv/ 237

Hq & Sv/238

Hq & Sv/49

CC "R"
A/40th Tk Bn

B/38th Armd Inf Bn

E/87th Cav Recon Sq Meos

1120

Engr Co/294

Engr Co/297

The composition of troops during this period was:

ORDER
OF
BATTLE

CC "A"

17th Tk Bn
23rd Armd Inf Bn
33rd Armd Engr Bn

CC "B"

31st Tk Bn
48th Armd Inf Bn
814th AD Bn

CC "R"

40th Tk Bn
38th Armd Inf Bn
87th Cav Recon Sq Meos

DIV ARTY

434th Armd FA Bn
440th Armd FA Bn
489th Armd FA Bn
203rd Armd FA Bn

DIV TMB

77th Med Bn Armd
129th Ord Maint Bn
446th Tr Co
3967 Tr Tr Co

SELP ENS

DEq (Fwd & Rear)
1106 Engr Co. Gp
1120 Engr. Co. Gp

The 780th Tank Bn was attached to the 7th Armored Division from the 104th Infantry Division at 2200001 May and further attached to Combat Command "R" at 261200. The 1106 and 1120 Engineer Combat Groups were attached to the 7th Armored Division at 231200 May but for security and military government purposes only.

After the 7th had been relieved in the RECHLENBERG sector by elements of the 5th British Infantry Division, the 8th Infantry Division, and the 82nd Airborne Division, it moved via two routes to the general

MOVEMENT vicinity of KOTLEN where it was in turn to relieve
TO
SAXONY the 104th Infantry Division. Route "A" passed through the towns of UELZEN, BRAUNSCHWEIG, ACHERSLEBEN and HALLE and Route "B" DANNENBERG AND MAGDEBURG. Billeting parties preceded the main body by one day and made all necessary arrangements to effect the relief of the 104th, and to billet the divisional troops when they arrived.

All units bivouaced overnight on the way down in assembly areas designated

for the purpose. The move was smooth and uneventful and the destination turned out to be a flat plain ringed by smokestacks -- rather like an industrial KANSAS. By noon of 23 May all units of the Division were in their new area and had completed relief of the 104th Infantry Division.

Operations instructions issued 21~~00~~ on 23 May designated the division area of responsibility as the area DESSAU (E4024) --HECKLINGEN (D6167) -- NOLFERODE (D6230) -- KASSEN (E4024) excluding the area in the vicinity of HALLB. Commanders were to so dispose their troops as to provide a reserve of one company in their battalion area. This reserve was to be rotated weekly commencing Wednesday, 30 May, and was to be ready to move on one hour's notice to quell any riots or disorder in the division zone. There was to be no movement across the MULLE RIVER except for prearranged exchanges of Allied PWs and DPS, and such United States and Russian military personnel as were engaged in effecting the transfer. An officer was placed in charge of each of the three bridges at DESSAU, RAGUEN and EILENBURG. Migrants (civilians of any nationality with baggage) were not permitted in division area. The curfew was to be from 21~~00~~ to 21~~00~~ and was to be strictly enforced. German military personnel without the proper United States discharge papers will be taken into custody and delivered to the division PW cage.

The most important single problem that the Seventh Armored took over when it moved into its new security area was the repatriation of displaced

EXCHANGE persons and prisoners of war. Through transfer points at
OF
PRISONERS EILENBURG and DESSAU, two of the most important along the entire Russian-American line, passed an almost steady stream of former "slaves" and prisoners. French, Dutch, Belgian and Luxembourg nationals

went west, Russians east, while trains were operated to the south with displaced Czechs and Italians. After being brought into Dessau by train from many sections in western Germany, the displaced Russians were then carried by truck to the river, where Russian officers checked off each person by roster and sent them across the footbridge. Westbound displaced persons were checked by divisional CIC before being permitted to cross. The trains which had carried the Russians to DESSAU were then used to carry the French, Belgian, and Dutch home. At EILENBURG, truck transport was used and transport planes landing at HALLE airport were used to move the former forced laborers in either direction. No Germans were permitted to cross the river.

A training program was instituted with three main objectives, to maintain a high state of military discipline, health, and morale, to correct unit deficiencies and perfect all units in basic techniques necessary for TRAINING accomplishment of their primary mission, and to prepare units administratively for redeployment including personnel readjustment. Military discipline, marksmanship, and gunnery, and physical conditioning were stressed. In addition an aggressive Information and Education program was planned and all men were given every opportunity to participate in the current educational drive in keeping with their military duties.

In addition to minor acts of espionage including wire cutting and deflating tires, a serious incident which still remains a mystery, occurred WEREWOLF during the month. At ~~1100~~ on 28 May, one of two sentries ACTIVITIES posted on the MULDE RIVER near DESSAU left the other to awaken the next relief sleeping about 200 yards away. He returned five minutes later to find that the man he had left on post had disappeared. A searching party was organized, but no trace of the missing man was to be found.

SECRET

Four days later, the body of the missing man was found in the MULDE RIVER. The body was fully clothed with the man's trench knife still in his boot. A preliminary medical examination revealed some marks on the body. The results of a complete autopsy are still pending.

A Division Officer's School under Colonel ANDREW J. ADAMS, Trains Commander, was planned to start the first day of June. It was to instruct

DIVISION all officers who had obtained battlefield appointments, in
OFFICER'S
SCHOOL the fundamentals of non-tactical military subjects, and in addition to serve as a refresher course for all company grade officers.

The last few days of May saw little new. Division Artillery Headquarters along with the 434th and 440th Armd FA Bns moved to the airport

END OF at HALLE and relieved elements of the 104th Infantry Division.
MONTH On 30 May, Memorial Day services were held throughout the division to pay tribute to American soldiers killed in action in this and former wars.

FOR THE COMMANDING GENERAL:

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

~~SECRET~~
APPENDIX 12

ADMINISTRATIVE AND STATISTICAL SUMMARY

During the month of May, 1945, the 7th Armored Division remained assigned to the Ninth U. S. Army. From the beginning of the month to 21 May, the division was attached to the XVIII Corps (abn) operating under the British 2nd Army. On 21 May, it was attached to VII Corps under which attachment it remained through the end of the period.

From 9 May to 14 May, Colonel FRANCIS P. THOMPkins assumed the command of the division in the absence of Major General ROBERT W. HASBROUCK, Commanding General. Brig. Gen. BRUCE C. CLARKE returned from the hospital to the division on 27 May and assumed the position of Assistant Division Commander.

There were no battle casualties among the personnel of the division during the period.

During the period 1-31 May, 1945, inclusive, the division used the following amount of supplies:

351,820 gals fuel

5,425 gals oil

3,990 lbs grease

997 tons rations

1,096,300 gals water

Ammunition:

Cal. .30, all types - - - 3,000

Cal. .50, MG, (2-2-1) - - - 630

75mm gun, all types - - - 4

76mm gun, all types - - - 40

G-2 NOTES

1 May - 31 May, 1945

No physical contact was made with an organized enemy until 3 May, though the Division was engaged in policing the area that was being occupied, and in rounding up stray members of the German military machine; 97 prisoners were apprehended during this period.

On 3 May, as the Division moved from assembly areas in the vicinity of WITTENBERG, Germany, with the mission of destroying enemy resistance in the Division zone forward of the line GADENBURCH - DANEBURG, no organized resistance was encountered initially or during the race that carried the troops to the BALTIC SEA. There were thousands of prisoners guided into Division cages, however, as the area was quickly overrun. The roads were crowded with German military personnel moving rearwards to await capture. The numbers were so great, as a matter of fact, that a count was impossible until the prisoners were put into temporary cages - a process that engaged a majority of the command for several days. Not only was there personnel on the roads, but the vehicles that had once belonged to the organized forces. The greatest majority of the vehicles were used by the reporting prisoners for their own transportation to the cages.

There was still no show of resistance on 4 May, and with the announcement of the negotiated surrender of all of the German forces in northwestern Europe, it was expected that there would be no future show of resistance by the enemy that remained in the Division's area that were not already under the control of the troops operating collecting points and enclosures. Although the count of prisoners had

not been completely verified, the best estimate available of those ex-members of the Wehrmacht under divisional control by the end of the day (4 MAY) was 48, 458. The take of equipment was phenomenal. Typical of military installations that had been overrun in the quick race to the Baltic was a seaplane base at DASSOW, where 20 intact planes were found, plus extreme amounts of allied equipments. There were, in addition, laboratories of all descriptions, assembly plants, rail yards filled with equipment, warehouses with all manner of supplies and equipment, training facilities for the German military, and a tremendous number of vehicles of all descriptions.

The debacle that had been vested on the German in this final move by the division brought to light the many things of which the members of the division had heard. There were reserves of all manner of material and equipment, and machines of war that were idle because of total lack of fuels. Facilities that were overrun were revealing - many had gone undamaged through the aerial onslaughts that had been thrown against the enemy nation, others showed little damage or almost total repair of that which installations had suffered.

The lists of prisoners that turned themselves in to the custody of the Division were not impressive. The prisoners were the military personnel that had been caught in the area, and they represented all classes and units. The only outstanding personality apprehended during the cleanup was Major General (General Leutnant) SIEVERT, who was driven to one of the enclosures in his own automobile.

The period 4 May to 7 May was spent by troops of the Division in rounding up additional military personnel that had either been overlooked in the original searches or had taken the ruse of civilian

clothes to evade capture. By midnight 5 May, the number of prisoners on hand in Division enclosures had reached the astounding total of 51,218, this number representing the "take" from the ALBE River to the BALTIC Sea, and brought the total prisoners for the Division's entire period of combat on the European Continent to 113,041.

There were a few isolated cases of continuing resistance in the Division area, but none of these efforts were on a large or an organized scale. On the night of 4 May, a patrol entered the town of BUNNENDORF and was met by a wild-eyed populace who reported that SS troops were raising havoc in the town. The patrol quieted the town and returned on the following morning, to become engaged with the SS garrison, consisting of 3 men, who were all killed. Much was exemplary of the uprising in the area.

The much taunted WEREWOLF was active to a certain extent as well, although precise proof of their activities was lacking. There were some incidents involving civilians or soldiers in civilian clothes reported, but none of them of serious consequence. The spirit of the German military and para-military organizations was evidently broken.

The remainder of the month was spent in the total occupation and policing of the area, and the caretaking of all of the prisoners that had been apprehended by the Division and those turned over to the Division by other units in adjacent areas. No problems of enemy action of a serious nature were reported for the remainder of the month.

§§§§§§§§§§

APPENDIX III

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, 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
49th 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)
750th Tank Battalion (Attached)