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**ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE
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**OPERATIONS OF THE V CORPS, FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY DURING
THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE IN THE SECTOR FROM BUTGENBACH,
NORTH OF ROTGON, 14-25 DECEMBER 1944 (ARDENNES-ALSACE
CAMPAIGN)**

**Type of operation described: A CORPS IN THE ATTACK BEING FORCED TO
THE DEFENSEIVE BY A VIOLENT ENEMY COUNTEROFFENSIVE
STRIKING ITS LEFT, CENTER, RIGHT FLANK AND RIGHT REAR DURING
WINTER OPERATIONS**

**Major Raymond S. Webster
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE**

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OPERATIONS OF THE V CORPS, FIRST US ARMY, DURING THE
BATTLE OF THE BULGE IN THE SECTOR FROM BUTGENBACH
NORTH TO ROTGEN, 13 DECEMBER 44 - 23 DECEMBER 44
(ARDENNES - ALSACE CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Corps General Staff Officer)

ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION (See Map A)

V Corps, US First Army, had arrived in EUPEN, BELGIUM (the locale as the narrative opens) after a long eventful trip from the English shores.

6 June 1944 found V Corps, part of US First Army, landing on the now famous OMAHA BEACH and fighting for its very existence against unexpectedly strong German resistance. It pushed into NORMANDY, through the hedgerow country and then took part in the great ST LO offensive. The Corps zone of attack pinched out between TINCHEBRAY and MORTAIN, FRANCE, and then made a great envelopment around the right flank of First Army and went into action with its divisions and corps troops to seal the ARGENTAN - FALAISE GAP.

Immediately thereafter it continued pursuit of the enemy through CHARTRES and then liberated the city of PARIS on 25 August 1944.

Pushing northward the Corps swept through the famous World War I battlefields of COMPIEGNE, SOISSONS, and ST QUENTIN. Then the Corps changed direction to the east, crossed the VII Corps zone and attacked eastward through MEZIERES and SEDAN. On through LUXEMBOURG and BASTOGNE it moved and became the first US unit of World War II to enter GERMANY and to break the SIEGFRIED LINE on the 11th of September 1944.

The pursuit phase now ground to a halt and during the following period, the Corps troops were readjusted, reorganized, and stabilized in their sectors.

The end of November found the V Corps holding a new sector with the VIII Corps taking over its old sector. The V Corps new sector had its right boundary passing just north of ST VITH and its left boundary,

including the HURTCEN FOREST, and with Corps Headquarters at EUPEN, BELGIUM. Here it was preparing to resume the winter offensive on First Army order. (1)

THE GENERAL SITUATION

Twelfth Army Group consisted of the First, Third, and Ninth Armies, disposed abreast, with the Ninth on the left, First in the center, and the Third on the right.

The Army missions were generally as follows:

1. Third Army was to continue advancing on its front;
2. First Army, to make the main effort in the center; and
3. Ninth Army to attack and support First Army's attack and protect First Army's left flank. (2)

The First Army front generally paralleled the SIEGFRIED LINE. This Line had been penetrated in strength in only a few places.

One was in the AACHEN area and the other was in the WILWERDINGEN area in LUXEMBOURG, plus a minor penetration in the MONSCHAU area.

The terrain was generally unsuitable for a large scale attack everywhere on the First Army front except in the AACHEN area. (3)

First Army planned for the VII Corps to make the Army main effort in the AACHEN - DUREN sector to reach the west bank of the ROER RIVER; V Corps to prepare an attack to seize the ROER and URFTT river dams on Army order, and to protect the right flank of VII Corps; VIII Corps to move forward enough to protect the right flank of V Corps; VII Corps to continue the attack to the east on Army order after V Corps secured the dams. (4)

The major obstacles to the attack plan were the ROER RIVER dams in the V Corps sector. The necessity of securing or destroying the ROER dams was recognized in September. The tactical importance of the dams as a major obstacle of any advance to the north over the open ground and

(1) Personal knowledge, A-2, pages 37-72, A-3, pages 55-315

(2) Personal knowledge, A-1, page 67, A-9, page 9

(3) Personal knowledge

(4) A-1, page 88

plains was readily apparent to all echelons.

There were four dams concerned, of which only two were of major importance. These were the URFTTALSPERRE DAM, located on the URFTT RIVER northwest of GEMUND, and the SCHWAMMENAUDEL DAM, located on the ROER RIVER directly west of HASENFELD. The construction of the dams was, respectively, a concrete gravity arch 177 feet high and an earth-filled dam with concrete core 180 feet high.

The Germans could, by raising the water gates, increase the width of the ROER at DUREN by a quarter of a mile and increase the depth of the river by four to five feet. This flooded condition might exist as long as a week or more.

Partial destruction of the SCHWAMMENAUDEL DAM by the Germans would cause a rise of water up to 25-30 feet at DUREN and would flood the area for a width of a mile and one-half. The speed of the current would be increased to 16 feet per second.

Destruction of the SCHWAMMENAUDEL DAM followed by the destruction of the URFTTALSPERRE DAM at a later date would make the ROER impassable for a period of several weeks.

It was, therefore, imperative to capture or destroy these dams before US units crossed the ROER north of or in the vicinity of DUREN.

British and US Air Force bombers dumped over 2000 tons of high explosive (including British 6-ton blockbusters) on the dams with little or no effect because of their solid construction.

Since air had failed, it was necessary for ground units to seize or destroy the dams. Accordingly, V Corps received an Army order on 6 December to attack not earlier than 13 December with the dams as the Corps objectives. (5)

(5) Personal knowledge, A-1, pages 95 and 96, A-3, page 329

The terrain in front of V. Corps and around the dams was very favorable to the defender. Observation of activities of US movements was excellent on the German side.

Initially the German Seventh Army with its LXXIV Corps was believed to oppose V Corps. It was known that the Fifth Panzer Army and the Sixth SS Panzer Army were in reserve behind Seventh Army west of the RHINE.

German units had demonstrated remarkable recuperative powers. Replacements, new equipment, training and shortened supply lines had restored much of the combat effectiveness to the badly mauled units. Impromptu fortifications had been erected in the SIEGFRIED LINE to strengthen it, and large bunkers afforded excellent shelter to troops not on duty.

Hedgehog defenses had been hastily constructed where our units had penetrated the SIEGFRIED WALL. (6)

Altogether the enemy's morale was the best noticed since NORMANDY. His troops were rested, his supply dumps well forward and well stocked.

Our units in the line about equaled the German. However, our veteran divisions had been in combat without relief for a considerable period of time and several had been badly chewed in the HURTIGEN FOREST.

Our new divisions were in excellent shape, but were not combat wise.

The veteran units were short of riflemen and suffered from lack of winter equipment; i. e., overshoes, heavy wool socks, sweaters, pile liners for the M1943 field jacket, and of winter camouflage material.

81-mm mortar, artillery shells of calibers from 75-mm through 155-mm were in short supply and were being rationed. Other items of shortages were brake fluid, brake linings, antifreeze, and engine assemblies.

Trench foot was a major problem and the casualty rate was high.

Terrain along the fronts was composed of wooded ridges and hills cut up by many streams and rivers and without adequate road nets. The

(6) Personal knowledge, A-3, pages 330 and 331

only piece of commanding terrain in V Corps sector was the ELSENBORN ridge or plateau.

The V Corps had three major obstacles in its zone of advance: the HURTTGEN FOREST, the ROER RIVER system with its dams, and the SIEGFRIED LINE.

The ELSENBORN ridge was heavily covered with snow and frozen hard. In the lower elevations, the ground was partially frozen or boggy. Mud was everywhere. Snow lay in varying depths in the lowlands and snow and/or rain fell intermittently over the entire area. Temperatures were low and skies heavily overcast. Very little sunshine was available for its meager warmth.

The air support was extremely limited due to heavy fogs, ground mist, and overcast skies. (7)

DISPOSITION AND PLANS OF FIRST ARMY (See Map B)

First Army had its three corps in line abreast from SCHOPHEVEN (near JULICH) south to include the Duchy of LUXEMBOURG.

On the left, VII Corps was to continue the attack on 10 December, to seize the west bank of the ROER RIVER, and then to await Army order before crossing. VII Corps was approximately three and one-half miles from the ROER.

In the center, V Corps, reinforced by the 2d Division and the newly arrived 78th Division, was to attack on Army order, not earlier than 13 December, and capture and secure the ROER dams. It was to protect the flank of VII Corps also and to proceed beyond the dams only on Army order.

On the right, VIII Corps, with the newly arrived 106th Division replacing the 2d Division, was to continue an aggressive defense of the Corps sector and be prepared to advance toward KOBLENZ on Army order. It was to protect the right flank of V Corps as V Corps moved forward. (8)

(7) Personal knowledge

(8) Personal knowledge, A-1, page 88, A-3, page 329

V CORPS SITUATION (9)
(See Map C)

A Corps G-2 estimate issued on 6 December estimated that the Germans had five infantry divisions and part of another opposite V Corps. It was suspected that two of these divisions' zone of responsibilities overlapped into adjacent corps zones.

These units were believed to be commanded by German LXXIV of Seventh Army.

The Volksgrenadier divisions were estimated at an approximate strength of 8,000 men while the infantry divisions were estimated at 7,000 men. The total estimate was 21,750 combat troops opposite V Corps (not including reserves in rear of Seventh Army).

These troops were not the elite infantry of 1941 and had been strengthened by experienced cadres. A high rate of attrition had been caused by the HURTTGEN FOREST fighting and replacements were thought to be less than casualties.

However, German units were in much better condition, morale, and training than at any time during the preceding months since the invasion.

German troop dispositions from north to south were roughly as follows: 344th Infantry Division, 275th Infantry Division, 89th Infantry Division (this was believed to have incorporated 275th Infantry Division due to excessive losses to both units), 272d Volksgrenadier Division (less one regiment), 277th Volksgrenadier Division, and one regiment of 18th Volksgrenadier Division, and LXXIV Corps Headquarters was southeast of GEMUND.

Fifth Panzer and Sixth SS Panzer Armies were in reserve west of the RHINE and panzer units of these armies could reach the zone of attack within twenty-four hours.

Shortly after the issuance of the estimate of 6 December, new intelligence reports revealed a new set of indications that changed the enemy's

(9) Personal knowledge, A-3, pages 330-334, A-2, pages 70-72

capabilities entirely. These indications were first thought to be defensive in nature, but, as evidence mounted, there was soon no question that the new indications pointed to a preparation for a major counteroffensive.

The new indications were: heavy rail movements of troops and equipment in early December; movements of armored divisions to sectors west of the RHINE in front of V and VIII Corps; considerable road movement of troops and vehicles toward corps south flank; movement of Sixth SS Panzer Army southeast of DUREN; TAC Air reports of tank and troop concentrations on 7 December in front of V Corps; interrogation reports from deserters and prisoners of war of arrival of new units from interior GERMANY, HUNGARY, NORWAY, DENMARK, EAST PRUSSIA, and HOLLAND during period 7 - 11 December (with armored units predominating); increased patrol activity; numerous enemy flares at night; reinforcement of troops in the line; reports of German villages filled with troops all the way to the RHINE; assault units being formed by divisions; rumors that a big counterattack was to be made; increase of over twelve battalions of enemy artillery on the corps front; artillery being moved forward; units moving into assembly areas well forward; TAC Air reconnaissance of 11 December noted heavy rail and road traffic in the AHR VALLEY and east of the ROER lakes. All this information was collected and disseminated on or before 11 December.

It was also reported that enemy supply dumps were being brought well forward and large quantities of supplies placed in them.

Terrain in the corps zone of advance was very unfavorable for use of armor or infantry. It was heavily wooded, rolling ridges and hills with many streams and rivers cutting them up, and a very limited road net. Only three roads were available for use in the corps zone of advance that were of any value.

The three key terrain features were the MONSCHAU HILL mass, the DREIBORN RIDGE, and the ROER RIVER system with its tributaries and dams.

The terrain was well compartmented into three main groups, all of which were favorable to the defenders. The river systems and ridges generally ran perpendicular to our route of advance and gave the enemy extremely strong natural defensive positions.

Frequent snowfalls and intermittent rainfall made the weather cold and wet. Visibility was often reduced to a few yards due to persistent ground fog.

V Corps received First Army's order for the attack late on 6 December and issued V Corps Field Order No 33 at 072300A December. The artillery and intelligence annexes were issued shortly thereafter.

Corps planned to use the period 8 - 12 December, inclusive, in mopping up the HURTGEN FOREST and in reorganization and preparation for the new attack.

New units arrived and were either ordered into assembly areas or relieved units in contact. Artillery units moved to new positions in order to support the attack.

The night of the attack, V Corps dispositions were as follows: 8th Division, reinforced by 311th Regimental Combat Team (78th Division), holding from the Corps left boundary to a point east of ROTGEN, with the 2d Ranger Battalion in reserve; south to MONSCHAU the sector was held by the 102d Cavalry Group and 78th Reconnaissance Squadron; the 78th Division (less 311th Regimental Combat Team) was in an assembly area behind the cavalry screen, in the vicinity of LAMMERSDORF; 99th Division held an extended front (15 - 16 miles) from MONSCHAU south to the Corps right boundary; the 2d Division was in an assembly area just northeast of ROCHERATH ready to attack; what was left of CCR, 5th Armored Division, was re-equipping in the vicinity of WALHORN and was Corps reserve.

Corps combat supporting units and service units were in position and ready. A total of fifteen battalions of Corps artillery, seven battalions of tank destroyers, two tank battalions, nine battalions of AAA, two

engineer groups, the 2d Ranger Battalion, and 86th Chemical Mortar Battalion were ready for action.

Condition and equipment of corps units were as follows: 78th Division was going into action for the first time and consequently was well equipped and had excellent morale; 99th Division had been in the lines only a short period of time and had seen little action, was in good shape except for casualties from trench foot; the 2d Division had just been pulled out of the lines and lacked equipment and personnel, but its morale was high and it was rated as an excellent combat division; 8th Division was not to participate in the attack during the early phase, its morale was good, but it had suffered heavy casualties in the HURTGEN FOREST, and it was a good combat division. All units lacked proper winter equipment.

V CORPS PLAN OF ATTACK (10)
(See Map D)

The corps plan as outlined in Corps Field Order No 33 dated 072300A December was an attack with all four divisions abreast. The 2d Division and 78th Division, attacking from behind a screen of friendly units, were to make a two-pronged effort with the 2d making the main effort on the right. The 8th Division and 99th Division and the 102d Cavalry Group were to support the attack and protect the flanks of the 2d and 78th Divisions. There would not be any preparatory artillery fires.

Corps objectives were the SCHWAMMENAUDEL and URFTTALSPERRE DAMS (Nos 3 and 5). D-day was set for the morning of 13 December and corps was not to pass beyond its objectives except on Army order.

Missions of the major units involved in the attack are quoted below from the Corps Field Order No 33 for the purposes of clarity and accuracy:

"a. 99th Inf Div:

- (1) Attached: 801st TD Bn (T) "D" Co, 86 Cml Bn
639th AAA AW Bn (M) effective on arrival

(10) A-3, pages 330-333

- (2) When passed thru by elements of 2nd Inf Div, 395th Inf will attack at H hour to secure objective #1 (see overlay). Protect right flank of 2nd Inf Div.
- (3) Maintain pressure against the enemy on balance of Division front.
- (4) Maintain contact with VIII Corps on the right. Protect Corps right (south) flank.
- (5) Clear such lanes through friendly minefields as may be desired by 2nd Inf Div.

b. 2nd Inf Div (Reinf):

- (1) Attached: 741st Tank Bn (M)
612th TD Bn (T)
462nd AAA AW Bn (M)
"C" Co, 86 Cml Bn
644th TD Bn (SP) (less 1 Co)
1 CC, 9 Armd Div
- (2) On movement from VIII Corps assemble in area Camp Elsenborn.
- (3) Attack at H hour to secure objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 as rapidly as possible.
- (4) Dam No. 5 at (069235) will be secured and held at all costs.
- (5) Maintain contact with the 99th Inf Div on the right.
- (6) Designate to 99th Inf Div lanes to be cleared through friendly minefields.

c. 78th Inf Div (less 311th RCT minus Arty Bn):

- (1) Attached: 893rd TD Bn (SP) (less Co A)
709th Tank Bn (less 1 Med and 1 Lt Tk Cos)
"A" Co, 86 Cml Bn (M)
- (2) On arrival V Corps area, assemble in area north and west of Rotgen.
- (3) Relieve elements "B" Co, 16th Inf, southwest of new boundary during darkness D-2 with 78 Rcn Trp.
- (4) Assault regiment relieve elements 16th Inf vic Lammersdorf prior to daylight D-2.
- (5) Pass through elements 102nd Cav Gp and attack at H hour, to secure objectives 1 and 2 as rapidly as possible. (Phase 1)
- (6) Phase 2 - Secure objectives 3, 4, and 5 on Corps order.
- (7) Phase 3 Operations - Secure objectives 6, 7, 8, and 9 on Corps order.
- (8) Maintain contact with 8th Inf Div on left.

- (9) Designate to 102nd Cav Gp lanes to be cleared through friendly minefields.

d. 8th Inf Div:

- (1) Attached: 1 Med & 1 Lt Cos, 709th Tank Bn (M)
817th TD Bn (T)
"B" Co, 86 Cml Bn
445th AAA AW Bn (M)
2nd Ranger Bn
1 Co, 644 TD Bn (SP)
311 RCT (-Arty Bn), 78th Inf Div.
- (2) Assist the attack of the 78th Inf Div by maintaining pressure against the enemy along the line of the Kall River. Be prepared to advance on the Kommerscheidt and Schmidt area on Corps order. (See overlay)
- (3) Maintain contact with VII Corps on the left. Protect the left (north) flank of the Corps.
- (4) Be prepared on Corps order to seize and hold objectives 1 and 2.
- (5) 2nd Ranger Bn - Division reserve.
- (6) CC "R", 5 Armd Div, move to assembly area vic Walhorn in Corps reserve for rest & rehabilitation upon relief effective 081800A December.

e. 102nd Cav Gp:

- (1) Upon relief of 16th Inf before daylight, D-2 assume responsibility for defense of sector.
- (2) Upon being passed through by 78th Inf Div, assemble 102nd Cav Sq in Corps reserve vic EUPEN and release Co "F", 395th Inf to 99th Inf Div. New boundary effective on passage of lines.
- (3) Maintain pressure in zone of 38th Cav Sq.
- (4) Maintain contact with 2nd Inf Div and 78th Inf Div on right and left respectively.
- (5) Clear such lanes through friendly minefields as may be desired by 78th Inf Div."

The 1171st Engineer Group was to support the 8th Infantry Division and the 1121st Engineer Group was to support the 78th, 2d, and 99th Infantry Divisions with one Engineer (C) Battalion per division in support of the 78th and 2d Divisions, and one battalion available to reinforce or assist the 99th Infantry Division.

The corps artillery provided combat support as follows:

1. 8th Infantry Division:

179th FA Gp Prov Bn, 105 How (German) for operations only

95th FA Bn, 105 How (Sp) - Rejoin CCR 5th Artillery Division on D
plus 1.

76th FA Bn, 105 How

2. 78th Infantry Division:

62d FA Bn, 105 How (Sp) - Rejoin 102d Cav Gp on 12 hour notice

987th FA Bn, 155 Gun (Sp) (less Batteries A and C)

3. 2d Infantry Division:

196th FA Bn, 105 How

Battery C, 987th FA Bn, 155 Gun (Sp)

18th FA Bn, 4.5" rockets (for operations only)

4. 99th Infantry Division:

Battery B, 987th FA Bn, 155 Gun (Sp)

5th FA Bn, 155 How

In addition, under corps control, were an additional ten battalions plus some odd batteries in general support.

The mission of the corps artillery was counterbattery, interdiction, scheduled and observed fires. No preparatory fires were planned.

MOVEMENT TO LINE OF DEPARTURE (11)

All units involved in the attack plan either moved from their assembly areas to their attack positions or were already in position, late on 12 December 1944.

The weather was very cold with heavy falls of snow on the ELSENBORN ridge and wet muddy conditions on the lower ground. Ice, mud, and snow made vehicular and foot movement treacherous.

(11) Personal knowledge

NARRATION

THE ATTACK (13 December - 15 December, inclusive) (12) (See Maps C and E)

The attack jumped off as scheduled the morning of 13 December 1944. In order to achieve surprise, the attack was made without benefit of preliminary artillery preparatory fires.

The 78th Division (-) attacked through the 102d Cavalry Group and 78th Reconnaissance Squadron screen in the vicinity of LAMMERSDORF at 0600A hours.

The 78th Division (-) attacked with two regiments abreast (310th Regiment and 309th Regiment), with the 309th on the right. Initially the advance met little resistance. 310th Regiment captured ROLLESBROICH, and 309th Regiment captured SIMMERATH and BICKERATH. They continued the attack towards KESTERNICH but met heavy and increasing enemy resistance, i. e., strong points, minefields, heavy automatic weapons fire. Finally heavy mortar and artillery fires, together with machine gun fire, stopped the advance just short of KESTERNICH by nightfall of the 13th.

The 2d Infantry Division attacked at 0830A hours through the lines of the 99th Infantry Division several thousand yards north and east of ROCHERATH. Initially the advance of the 2d Infantry Division was practically unopposed. It advanced with the 9th Regiment leading, the 38th Regiment following, and the 23d Regiment in reserve awaiting commitment. It advanced over 4000 yards before the 9th Regiment ran into a strong German defense point at a road junction east of MORSCHRID. This road junction was defended by concrete emplacements, concrete pillboxes, wire, AT and AP minefields and well covered by fire from the German automatic weapons and supporting weapons. The 9th Regiment reached this position about 1230A hours and spent the rest of the day in development of the position.

(12) Personal knowledge, A-3, pages 334-338, A-2, pages 69-72

The 99th Division made a limited objective attack. The 395th Regiment attacked at 0830A hours on the right flank of the 9th Regiment. It reached its objective with little resistance until almost on the objective. The 393d Regiment moved forward at 0835A hours to protect the flanks of the 395th Regiment. Resistance stiffened against the 99th Division towards evening.

There was minor action on the rest of the Corps front. The 8th Infantry Division (A) managed to make some small advances, otherwise units of the Corps held their position.

The lack of resistance, the lack and inaccuracy of enemy counterfires assured the Corps that the enemy had been surprised. The initial enemy artillery and mortar fires were inaccurate and wide of their target. It wasn't until afternoon that German resistance stiffened and became effective.

German POW's captured confirmed the belief that the attack caught the enemy by surprise.

Bad weather on the 13th prohibited air support.

CCB of 9th Armored Division arrived in the Corps sector to act as Corps reserve, but only to be used on Army order. They went into an assembly area vicinity of FAYMONVILLE.

The day's combat revealed new German units in contact and new information of the movements of 10th SS Panzer Division was received.

Advances from 200 yards to two miles had been made during the day.

The night of 13 - 14 December was quiet.

Since the attack had gone more or less as planned, Corps made no changes in its orders and resumed the attack on 14 December.

The 78th Division (-) continued its attack to capture KESTERMICH. Strong enemy groups and heavy automatic weapons fire prevented capture of the town. Therefore the 309th Regiment was reinforced by a battalion from the 310th Regiment to assist in capturing KESTERMICH. This battalion was also pinned down and had to dig in about 500 yards short of the town by

nightfall. Both regiments utilized the day to mop up scattered resistance groups in the area they had captured on the 13th.

The 9th Regiment, 2d Division, continued the attack against the fortified position after a preliminary fifteen-minute artillery preparation. It assaulted the position with all three battalions abreast, but managed only minor gains. The effectiveness of the enemy defenses and heavy fires prevented any penetration. Therefore at 141415A the lines were slightly withdrawn and plans made for an assault on the 15th behind coordinated fires of aviation, artillery and mortars. The 23d Regiment and 38th Regiment still had not been committed.

The 99th Division continued its attack. The 395th Regiment made limited objective attacks and pushed the front north and east on the right flank of the 9th Regiment. The 393d Regiment attacked and captured a local strongpoint. The rest of the 99th remained in position. Resistance against the advances of the 99th on this date was very heavy.

The other units of the Corps held their positions without trouble.

Combat Command R, 5th Armored Division, was placed on a two-hour alert with a mission of counterattacking in the event of enemy penetrations in the ROTGEN area. The combat effectiveness of CCR was very low due to the extremely heavy casualties incurred by this unit in the HURTGEN FOREST.

Reports were received stating that numbers of tanks and vehicles had been heard in the MONSCHAU area. One POW reported having seen elements of the 2d SS Panzer Division just east of MONSCHAU. Considerable enemy activity was reported from UDENBRETH to the Corps south boundary. A Nebelwerfer Regiment was identified on the southern front and more enemy artillery batteries were located by Corps artillery.

Resistance on the 14th had been considerably stronger than on the 13th. Heavy artillery fires and mortar and machine gun fires were encountered. The enemy had excellent defenses and they were hard to crack.

Corps continued the attack on the 15th.

The 78th Division (-) attacked with the 709th Tank Battalion and units of the 309th and 310th Regiments and captured KESTERNICH after overcoming heavy resistance. A strong German counterattack was repulsed at 1700A hours.

The 78th Division had captured objectives 1 and 2 with the capture of KESTERNICH. Therefore Corps ordered Phase 2 into effect and the 78th Division prepared to attack and seize KONZEN, EICHERSCHEID, AND INGENBROICH (objectives 3, 4, and 5 of Phase 2).

The 2d Division and 99th Division dug in and reconnoitered the enemy position to the front. Patrols of the 9th Regiment located routes of infiltration through the German position.

The 99th Division held its positions with the exception of the 395th Regiment and part of the 393d Regiment. These units destroyed several pillboxes in the path of the advance and made some small gains.

The planned bombing mission had to be cancelled because of the weather. Visibility was very poor. Corps artillery was very busy and fired a considerable number of rounds in support of the attack.

A captured POW informed Corps that the 277th Infantry Division and 272d Infantry Division were forming assault units and being reinforced preparatory to an attack.

Additional information of vehicular and tank movements was reported from MONSCHAU from the east and southeast.

Another POW captured from 326th Infantry Division reported that his unit was forming assault forces. The 1st SS Panzer Division was reported on our front. Corps artillery reported seven battalions of enemy artillery had displaced well forward to the RUHRBERG - DEEDENBORN area.

Also reports were received of supplies being moved forward in large amounts. Unusually large numbers of flares were noticed during the night.

During the night of 15 - 16 December, elements of the 9th Regiment, 2d Division, infiltrated through the German defenses and seized the road

junction in rear of the German positions. The German defenses were captured and destroyed and the 9th Regiment pushed on to its objective No 2 (the area around road junction on the HOFEN - ROCHERATH road). The 38th Regiment was then passed through the 9th Regiment and attacked toward objective No 3 and had gained about 1000 yards against heavy resistance when Corps ordered the advance halted at about 1200A hours on the 16th due to an enemy penetration in the 393d Regiment area, and much uncertainty as to situation in the area of 394th Regiment.

The 99th Division had continued the attack on the 16th. The 395th Regiment had advanced on the right flank of the 9th Regiment and had captured enemy installations in their zone of advance and maintained contact with the 9th Regiment on their left.

The 78th Division found that the enemy had infiltrated into KESTERNICH during the night of 15 - 16 December and the 309th Regiment had to mop up the town again. As soon as it was secured, additional German attacks hit the 309th Regiment and the battle lasted all day. Meanwhile the 310th Regiment had been forced back from the high ground north of ROLLESBROICH but managed to hold the town. The 78th Division fought all day to hold the ground they had won.

As the situation developed throughout the Corps sector, the Corps Commanding General requested permission to cancel the attack and concentrate forces against the strong threat on the Corps right flank. First Army Commander refused the request and ordered the Corps to continue the attack. However, the Corps Commander had already halted the attack and before it could be resumed, it had become imperative to move forces to the south. Officially the attack was still ordered continued on the 17th.

The initial penetration in the 393d Regiment area was believed to be a local counterattack, but it soon was revealed as a major enemy counter-offensive.

The major success of the enemy south of the 394th Regiment was not known to Corps - that these units had lost contact wasn't known - in fact, reports from 99th Division reference the 394th Regiment were very indefinite.

THE COUNTEROFFENSIVE BEGINS - 16 December 1944 (13)

Between 0530A and 0600A hours on the morning of 16 December shell reports began flooding into Corps Headquarters. It soon was determined that a heavy artillery preparation was falling all across the V Corps front and in the rear areas, with the heaviest fires falling on the southern front.

The first report of enemy action was received from the 102d Cavalry Group. This unit's sector was attacked at 160615A hours in the vicinity of MONSCHAU by over 300 men. The cavalry had dug in their crackerbox light tanks, erected wires, booby traps, AT and AP minefields, and held excellent positions even though widely dispersed. The first attack was repulsed by the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. The cavalry group moved up reinforcements consisting of the light tank company of the 102d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and Company A of the 146th Engineer (C) Battalion. It was estimated that over 1000 rounds of enemy artillery fell around these positions during the day.

The second report of enemy action of a major character came from the 99th Division which reported that the center and right flanks of the 393d Regiment had been hit by enemy attacks at 160710A. Initially, the enemy made little headway, but his attacks increased in vigor and force, and by 1200 hours the enemy had gained a penetration about one mile deep on a one and one-half mile front. However, the penetration was halted at this point.

(13) Personal knowledge, A-3, pages 341-344, A-2, pages 72-73

Meanwhile other elements of the 393d Regiment were hit by the same attack and held until 161700A hours when the enemy made a penetration of 2000 yards.

The 394th Regiment was hit at 160912A and had a day of continuous fighting with attacks all along the front. It was necessary for one battalion to withdraw about one mile to get out of an exposed salient where it had been attacked from three sides. By nightfall the enemy was still being contained. The enemy attack was in the form of a two-pronged envelopment.

The 3d Battalion, 395th Regiment, which was north of the 2d Infantry Division, was attacked at 160755A on the center of its front near HOFEN. This attack and another at 161625A were repulsed, but neither attack had been made in great strength.

The 8th Infantry Division had only minor action on its front.

Reports of the divisions and the rapid development of the attack on the Corps right flank caused a Corps order to the 2d and 99th Infantry Divisions which resulted in the attachment of the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 23d Regiment (2d Division) to the 99th Infantry Division during the afternoon of the 16th. The 3d Battalion moved to support the 393d Regiment, 600 yards east of R~~5~~ in the vicinity of ROCHERATH, and the 1st Battalion to support the 394th Regiment in the vicinity of MURRINGEN.

Corps Headquarters initially had no knowledge of the situation on the right flank of the 99th Infantry Division. The 394th Regiment and consequently the division did not report that it had lost contact with elements of the 14th Cavalry Group of VIII Corps. Also, the 14th Cavalry Group pulled out without reporting loss of contact to VIII Corps. Consequently, the extent and seriousness of the penetration on the flank of the Corps was unknown at Corps Headquarters. In fact, it wasn't even considered as serious and the reinforcing elements of the 23d Regimental Combat Team were kept north of the right flank of the 394th Regiment, thus allowing the

Germans to exploit this open flank.

However, VIII Corps knew it was in trouble and First Army ordered V Corps to release CCB of 9th Armored Division at 161030A December to VIII Corps. As the day developed and the threat to V Corps right flank grew, First Army was requested to provide V Corps with some reserve. Therefore, at 162400A, First Army attached the 26th Regimental Combat Team (A) of the 1st Division to V Corps and it was ordered to CAMP ELSENBORN.

Corps ordered CCR, 5th Armored Division, to move from WALHORN to ROTGEN for use as Corps reserve for counterattack in the 78th Infantry Division sector. CCR was in extremely poor shape, both in personnel and equipment, due to its recent savage combat experience along the VOSSENACK - BERGSTEIN ridge. This unit was short on 9 December 23 tanks, M4; 3 tanks, M5A1; 3 tanks, assault, with 105-mm howitzers; 1 1/4-ton truck; plus many other items of equipment. Much of this equipment had been issued by the 16th, but unit still was being rehabilitated and re-equipped.

G-2, V Corps, received information during the evening of 16 December that enemy parachutists could be expected in the Corps sector. Therefore all divisions and major Corps units were alerted for this possibility by a message sent out at 170040A hours.

Captured enemy documents and POW's began to give a picture of the enemy offensive plans. Nightfall of the 16th, the situation on the Corps right flank was unknown since the 99th Division had not reported loss of contact with VIII Corps units. Therefore no action was taken against this critical point. |x

THE GERMAN PLAN (14)
(See Map C)

The actual plans and orders of the Germans weren't fully known until capture of German documents and POW's on 20 December 1944. However, to orient the reader and to give better understanding of what happened, a

(14) Personal knowledge, A-2, pages 72-74, A-3, pages 355-356, A-5, pages 103-105

brief orientation reference the German plan on the V Corps front seems indicated.

Initially, the German Seventh Army had responsibility for the troops on the V Corps front. These troops remained the same when the attack began, but Seventh Army sideslipped south and was used as a containing force against US attempts to flank the penetration in the south. Fifteenth Army took over units left in place by Seventh Army and employed LXVII Corps of infantry to support the attack of Sixth SS Panzer Army. LXVII Corps was to establish a line on the northern flank of the penetration and prevent US forces from hitting at the base of the penetration.

The counteroffensive was the main effort of Sixth SS Panzer Army and Fifth Panzer Army with the Sixth SS Panzer Army making the main effort in the north.

Sixth SS Panzer Army, commanded by Oberstgruppenfuehrer Sepp Dietrich, had I and II SS Panzer Corps with LXVII Corps to furnish the infantry support and hold flanks.

The Sixth SS Panzer Army planned to attack with I SS Panzer Corps - (1st and 12th SS Panzer, the assault divisions). The 12th SS Panzer Division to attack over the northern routes A, B, and C; the 1st SS Panzer Division to attack over the southern routes D and E. In addition I SS Panzer Corps had the 12th Infantry Division, three parachute divisions, and elements of three panzer grenadier divisions and the elite Brigade Grossdeutschland (150th Panzer Brigade).

The LXVII Corps had three divisions to support the Sixth SS Army: 277th, 246th, and 326th Divisions.

The routes were as follows:

Route A: HOLLERATH, ROCHERATH, ELSENBORN, CAMP ELSENBORN, SOURBRADT, MONTE RIGI, PETERSHAUS, POINT 598, JALHAY, JEHANSTER, POLLEUR.

Route B: KRINKELT, WIRTZFELD, BERG, WEYWERTZ, ROBERTVILLE, OVIFAT, LONGFAYE, XHOFFRAIX, HOCKUI, COKENFAYNE, PRIESVILLE, SART.

Route C: LOSHEIMERGRABEN, BULLINGEN, BUTGENBACH, WEISMES, MALMEDY, FRANCORCHAMPS, SPA.

Route D: LOSHEIM, LANZERATH, HONSFELD, SCHOPPEN, FAYMONVILLE, TIRIMONT, LIGNEUVILLE, BELLEVAUX, STAVELOT, AMBLEVE.

Route E: KEHR, KREWINKEL, MANDERSFELD, ANDLER, HERRESBACH, HEPPENBACH, MIRFELD, BORN, RECHT, LOGBIERLE, WANNE, TROIS - PONTS.

The I SS Panzer Corps was to spearhead the advance that was to bypass LIEGE and reach ANTWERP.

Also it was planned to drop six companies of approximately 1200 paratroopers on the EUPEN - MALMEDY road to prevent reinforcement of the southern front.

This was the plan of Sixth SS Panzer Army that V Corps had run into within its attack to seize the ROER DAMS.

THE 17TH OF DECEMBER (See Map F)

As the seriousness of the penetration and fighting developed throughout the 16th, Corps requested Army for additional reserves as the Corps reserves, CCR, 5th Armored Division, were in poor combat condition. All available help was moved to the threatened area by Corps, and First Army ordered the 26th Regimental Combat Team of the 1st Division attached to V Corps as of 162400A December. The 26th Regimental Combat Team was immediately ordered to an assembly area at CAMP ELSENBORN.

Due to the urgency of the situation on the right flank, Corps instructed the 26th Regimental Combat Team to prepare counterattack plans to be used in the sectors of the 2d and 99th Divisions. These plans were to be submitted to Corps and implemented only on Corps order.

Early on the morning of the 17th, reports were received of the landing of enemy parachutists in the Corps sector - principally along the EUPEN - MALMEDY road sector. Reports received from different sources indicated the landings were well dispersed, but information as to strength was lacking.

CCR, 5th Armored Division, was ordered to the vicinity of EUPEN - searching for parachutists as it came from ROTGEN - and was ordered to organize defenses and search for enemy parachutists. Service units, administrative installations, Corps Headquarters, and all units furnished men to be employed in the search for paratroopers. CCR, 5th Armored Division, was to control this miscellaneous group.

By 0530A, 99th Division was reporting movement of tanks on its right flank. At 0610A, Corps was notified that tanks were in HONSFELD after penetrating the 394th Regiment and were driving on the Regimental CP. By 0700A, thirty tanks with infantry were reported south of BULLINGEN by elements of 254th Engineer (C) Battalion, who promptly engaged the enemy. It was imperative to hold BULLINGEN as it was the key to the withdrawal of the 2d Division from its exposed front down the WAHLERSCHIED road. This was the only road available to the 2d Division.

The tanks engaged by the 254th Engineer (C) Battalion had reached their position by penetrating in the VIII Corps zone in the vicinity of LOSHEIM and then coming into the V Corps rear over roads leading up from VIII Corps.

2d Division ordered a company of tank destroyers to assist the 99th Division. This company was destroyed by the Germans, as orders it received from an officer of the 99th gave the Company Commander an entirely false picture of the situation.

By 0900A, enemy troops attacking from the south and against the Corps flank had managed to infiltrate into KRINKELT and HUNNINGEN and were attacking in strength in the vicinity of BULLINGEN. Tanks were reported operating between BULLINGEN and BUTGENBACH. At 0930A, 99th Division reported HUNNINGEN practically encircled, but the town was held until 1530A when the troops were forced to withdraw.

By 1100A, tanks had reached points southwest of BULLINGEN.

The CP of the 2d Division at WIRTZFELD was almost surrounded and the Headquarters personnel were fighting for the CP while other personnel destroyed the bulk of their documents. German tanks were visible from the windows and a sharp fight ensued. At this juncture, the 2d Battalion, 23d Infantry, came to the rescue. In BUTGENBACH shells were falling in the town and the enemy was only one and one-half miles away, ASP, 126~~4~~, three miles northwest of BUTGENBACH held 6000 tons of ammunition and was in imminent danger of capture. BUTGENBACH held Class I and III supply points with large quantities of supplies. x

The Corps Commanding General ordered the 2d Division to abandon its attack and concentrate against the threat to the south. Using the 2d Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron to act as a screen, the 2d Division began this difficult disengagement at once. The new line to be established, as per Corps order, ran generally north of ROCHERATH, KRINKELT, WIRTZFELD, and west to the lake east of BUTGENBACH.

The 2d Battalion, 23d Infantry, was already moving along the ridge forming the new line and tank destroyers and other elements were already in position. (15) The 3d Battalion of the 23d Infantry had held its positions in front of the vital crossroads at the rear of their position until its ammunition was exhausted and it was hit by an overwhelming force of tanks and infantry. They held long enough for approximately 200 survivors of a battalion of 393d Regiment (who were all that remained of 900) to pass through their lines to the rear, after effecting a long and desperate defense - it also allowed the 2d Division time to withdraw the 9th and 38th Regiments and employ them on the new defense line.

It is to be noted that artillery support to the 3d Battalion, 23d Infantry, by the 99th Division Artillery had been extremely limited. Few shells were fired even when the battalion was engaged in a desperate last

(15) Personal knowledge, A-2, pages 74-75, A-3, pages 344-349

ditch defense, supposedly on the excuse of shortage of ammunition. Ammunition allocations were in effect, but there were 6000 tons of ammunition in a nearby ASP and Corps G-4 never refused a request for additional ammunition for emergency expenditures. (16)

While all the severe fighting was going on on the southern front, the northern front was also in trouble. Failure of the 12th SS Panzer Division to effect a penetration on the 16th had led it to try and move into MONSCHAU and thence down the excellent highway from MONSCHAU to EUPEN.

The forces holding this area consisted of the 102d Cavalry Group of two squadrons. The 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron bore the brunt of the fighting which began about 0615A. The Germans mounted a major attack of armor and infantry, initiated by a heavy artillery fire. The Germans mounted several attacks during the day, but only succeeded in making a slight penetration at 171145A with about a battalion of troops (all that remained of a strong attack force) that was shortly mopped up. The reason that this cavalry squadron was able to defeat so many and powerful attacks was the artillery support it received.

Corps recognized the weakness of this position and had set up heavy artillery reinforcements available if necessary. When the attacks began, Corps artillery began concentrating massed artillery fires on the Germans. These massed fires were extremely successful against the German armor and infantry. Sixteen battalions of artillery plus a battery of 8 inch guns were brought to bear against these attacks: Five battalions of 105-mm howitzers, six battalions of 155-mm howitzers, one battalion of 4.5 inch guns, two battalions of 155-mm guns, two battalions of 240-mm howitzers, and one battery of 8 inch guns. (16a)

The threat from the MONSCHAU sector caused the Corps to move CCR, 5th Armored Division, to cover the MONSCHAU road at 1212A and at 1235A,

(16) Personal knowledge, A-7, pages 90-91, A-13, period 13 Dec-17 Dec 1944
(16a) A-9, page 21

the 893d Quartermaster Fumigation and Bath Company was ordered to reinforce with all available men; the 8th Division was ordered to put all reserves on a two-hour alert; and the 41st Replacement Battalion furnished a unit of 130 riflemen with officers.

However, after the last attack had failed, no further major attacks were made against the cavalry.

During the attack on the cavalry, the 78th Infantry Division had also been hit by tanks and armor, but successfully repulsed it.

8th Division had only minor action on its front.

Meanwhile the round-up of enemy parachutists went on, causing the diversion of troops that could ill be spared.

The heavy enemy shelling during the day knocked out wire communications and radio was the main link between Corps Headquarters and the 2d and 99th Infantry Divisions.

The 99th Division CP was moved back to CAMP ELSENBORN except for a small advance party.

At 1400A, Corps ordered the 26th Regimental Combat Team to attack from BUTGENBACH and relieve the 254th Engineer (C) Battalion which held DOM BUTGENBACH against heavy odds.

During the day's fighting, First Army had also been busy. At 1128A, First Army informed V Corps that the 30th Division was released from Ninth Army and attached to V Corps. Also the 47th Regimental Combat Team of the 9th Division was moving from VII Corps to V Corps. Corps ordered it to assemble in the vicinity of ROTGEN just north of MONSCHAU, but later changed this order to have it assemble in the vicinity of EUPEN.

At 1300A, the Corps issued a Letter of Instructions which contained instructions for Corps units generally as follows: 30th Division was to assemble northeast of EUPEN and be prepared to counterattack to the east and relieve 18th Regimental Combat Team on 18 December; CCR, 5th

Armored Division, to assume responsibility for the 102d Cavalry Group sector (less 38th Squadron) plus one battalion of the 8th Infantry Division attached; the 47th Regimental Combat Team, plus the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron attached, was ordered to clear the EUPEN - MONSCHAU road and restore and hold the MONSCHAU positions, to tie in its defense with the 2d Division on its right, 3d Battalion, 395th Infantry, was to come under command of the 47th Regimental Combat Team; the 1st Division (less 18th and 26th Regimental Combat Teams) was to assemble in CAMP ELSENBORN prepared to extend the Corps right flank to the west; 18th Regimental Combat Team was to assemble and to move in the vicinity of EUPEN and prepare defense positions along ELSENBORN ridge and locate German paratroopers.

By nightfall the situation was still very fluid and German attacks continued to hit heavily all along the line.

Generally, the Corps had strengthened its positions with reinforcements. The 26th Regimental Combat Team had been attached to the 99th Division after reaching DOM BUTGENBACH. The 394th Regiment was out of contact and Corps knew nothing of its situation; the 393d Regiment had suffered heavy casualties and was short of ammunition and rations; the 395th Regiment had maintained itself well and was withdrawing to a new defense line.

The 2d Infantry Division had completed an extraordinarily difficult disengagement, moved southward, and set up a new defense line which, despite heavy casualties, had stopped the Germans.

At 1915A, Corps ordered the 30th Division to begin moving south to MALMEDY to stop the Germans from turning the Corps right flank and also to be prepared to counterattack east or southeast. The 30th Division moved out immediately with the 117th Regiment leading.

The 78th Division and 8th Division held their initial positions at the end of the day.

Corps artillery had been extremely active and very effective. It had halted many attacks before the Germans could get them started.

At 2200A, a new Letter of Instructions was issued ordering movement of the 30th Division, putting 1st Division into action with its regiments, less 18th Regimental Combat Team, and extending the west flank line through BUTGENBACH, WEYWERTZ, and ROBERTSVILLE. (17)

THE 18TH OF DECEMBER (18)
(See Map G)

The night of 17 - 18 December was relatively quiet except for aggressive enemy patrolling.

The German attack by the 1st SS Panzer Division had been a success, but the 12th SS Panzer Division had been completely stopped in its two-day effort to open the routes provided for it in the German plan. The 1st SS Panzer Division pushed ahead unaware of the complete failure of the 12th SS Panzer Division and, thereby, passed up a golden opportunity to secure the gas dumps at FRANCORCHAMPS. It mistakenly believed that the 12th SS Panzer Division would soon move in on it.

On the 18th, the 12th SS Panzer, plus reinforcements, again attempted to open the northern routes A, B and C.

Early in the day, Corps ordered 30th Division to include STAVELOT as well as MALMEDY in its defense plans. Accordingly, a battalion of the 117th Regiment was sent to hold STAVELOT until the rest of the division came up.

During the 18th, enemy pressure was strong against the whole Corps front.

The main enemy effort of the day was against the positions held at KALTERBERBERG and HOFEN. The 3d Battalion, 395th Regiment, was hit at dawn by a strong enemy attack which was successfully repulsed. However, another was soon forthcoming and, supported by tanks, it managed to make a slight

(17) Personal knowledge, A-2, pages 74-75, A-3, pages 344-349

(18) Personal knowledge, A-2, pages 75-76, A-3, pages 349-352

penetration. This was sealed off and the enemy within the penetration area was captured or destroyed.

These attacks by the 12th SS Panzer Division were renewed twice more during the day, but quite unsuccessfully. The 3d Battalion, 395th Regiment, was operating under the command of the 47th Regimental Combat Team, and this unit prepared forces to reinforce the 395th Battalion if it was necessary. Corps artillery caused many casualties to the attackers and aided materially in the defeat of these attacks.

Strong pressure was exerted all along the new right flank of the Corps, and as the Germans were unable to penetrate to the north, they would push on to the west.

The 1st Division (less 18th Regimental Combat Team) assembled in the SOURBRODT area during the day, and the 16th Regiment was pushed forward to fill the gap between the 26th Regiment and the 120th Regiment of the 30th Division. ~~J. F.~~ Davidson of 1st Division attacked and seized WEDDES and prepared defenses of this position.

Meanwhile the 2d and 99th Divisions were still under strong enemy pressure and the lines were readjusted to better defensive positions during the day. KRINKELT and ROCHERATH were still held by our forces at this time. Many units southeast and east of the new Corps defensive line which had been cut off and encircled by the German advance successfully withdrew to the new defensive line.

ROCHERATH was attacked during the night, and elements of the 277th Infantry Division were in the town at daylight. Three more attacks were made during the day, but all were repulsed. The enemy attempted to seize KRINKELT late in the day, but Corps artillery broke up the attack before it began.

99th Division was attached to the 2d Division by Corps order and the Commanding General of the 99th Division became Deputy Division Commander.

This was done because of intermingling of units and because of command failure in the higher echelons of 99th Division. It was necessary to replace certain officers of the 99th Infantry Division, including the Division G-3. This was no reflection on the combat ability of the battalions, as they had fought hard and well.

The 99th Division had suffered heavy losses in personnel and equipment. However, many of the men listed as missing later reported in, and a man with a discerning eye would have noticed that many of the missing trucks of the 99th Division could have been found in possession of the property conscious 1st and 2d Divisions, partially camouflaged to be sure. X

With the arrival of the 1st Division in SOURBRODT, the 26th Regimental Combat Team was relieved from attachment to the 99th Division and reverted to the 1st Division at 1400A.

The 18th Regimental Combat Team of the 1st Division was retained in the vicinity of EUPEN as Corps reserve and as a defense against the German parachutists in the area.

First Army notified Corps Headquarters that the 9th Division (less the 60th Regimental Combat Team), the 82d Airborne Division, and CCA, 3d Armored Division, were to be attached to V Corps. CCA, 3d Armored Division, had restrictions tied on it by First Army and could not be utilized without Army permission. Therefore, it was to be employed as Corps reserve.

Also First Army changed the boundaries between V and VII Corps so that V Corps could focus its attention on the more dangerous areas. The 78th and 8th Infantry Divisions were relieved of attachment to V Corps and attached to VII Corps in place.

With all these changes, it was necessary for additional instructions be issued, and a Corps Letter of Instructions was issued at 182000A December, which stated missions generally as follows:

1. The 9th Infantry Division was to defend the Corps left sector as per boundary indicated in overlay. One battalion of the 39th Regiment was to be moved immediately over the EUPEN - MONSCHAU road to a position in the vicinity of KALTERBERG. The 47th Regimental Combat Team was to revert to control of 9th Division when the division assumed control of the sector.

2. The 2d Division (with 99th Division attached) was to defend its positions, reorganize and rehabilitate as much of its units as possible in assembly areas directly in rear of front.

3. The 30th Division was to hold the MALMEDY - STAVELOT - TROIS-PONTS line and maintain contact with 82d Airborne Division on the right.

4. The 1st Division was to defend the sector of BUTGENBACH, DOM BUTGENBACH, FAYMONVILLE, WEIMES, and maintain contact with 2d Division and 30th Division.

5. The 82d Airborne Division was to assemble in the vicinity of WERBOMANT and organize defense positions there.

6. CCA, 3d Armored Division, was to relieve the 18th Regimental Combat Team of 1st Division as Corps reserve in the vicinity of EUPEN at daylight of the 19th of December. The 18th Regimental Combat Team was to revert to 1st Division control and, enroute to join the 1st Division, clean up any groups of enemy parachutists along the EUPEN - MALMEDY road.

The 30th and 82d Airborne Divisions were to attack as soon as the situation warranted and regain contact with elements of VIII Corps to the south or southeast.

The end of the day, 18 December, found the Corps reinforced strongly with more reinforcements on the way.

The 12th SS Panzer Division for the third consecutive day had failed to effect any penetration over the three routes noted in its orders. It had tried and failed at HOFEN.

The 1st SS Panzer Division had effected its penetration and pushed on unknowing of the true status of affairs of the 12th SS Panzer Division.

The day was chiefly one of movement, reorganization, resupply, and reinforcement.

Air support had been very active and had achieved excellent results against enemy columns.

Corps artillery had continued its very effective fire support and had stopped many enemy attacks before they even reached the assault stage. They also introduced the Pozit fuze to the Germans this date.

This day brought the first news of the MALMEDY massacre of US troops - 150 men who were mainly from Battery B, 285th Field Artillery Observation Battery.

THE 19TH OF DECEMBER (19)
(See Map H)

The German 1st SS Panzer Division continued to drive west through the night and 12th SS Panzer Division, plus units originally in the line and some of LXVII Corps, maintained strong pressure and minor attacks to effect a penetration over the ELSENBORN plateau or down the MONSCHAU - EUPEN road.

The heaviest fighting on the 19th was on the Corps right or south flank. The 30th Division had an exceedingly hot day as its elements were engaged all along their front. The battle for STAVELOT by the 117th Regiment was very savage and the town was won and lost several times during the day. At 1230A, however, the enemy was driven back across the river at the edge of town and the bridge blown, thus insuring the defense of the town. The German troops captured in these attacks indicated that the Germans were using a benzedrine type drug as a stimulant to counteract the cold and fatigue.

Here civilians were killed by the advancing Germans.

(19) Personal knowledge, A-2, page 76, A-3, pages 352-354

The town of STOU MONT west of STAVELOT was the scene of extremely savage fighting as the 119th Regiment was finally driven from the town only after all the tank destroyer weapons were destroyed.

The Germans lost heavily in tanks and infantry in gaining the town and the 119th Regiment held the German advance of the 1st SS Panzer Division in the hills, north and northeast of the town.

The 120th Regiment in the vicinity of MALMEDY had some fighting, but the brunt had been borne by the 117th and 119th Regiments.

The 82d Airborne Division west of the 30th Division patrolled without making any major contact.

The 1st Division in the sector of the 26th Regiment received small attacks throughout the day. The 16th Regiment attacked south to straighten the line between the 26th Regiment and the 120th Regiment, 30th Division. The 16th Regiment reached its objectives with little resistance, but were counterattacked later in the day several times, but unsuccessfully.

The 26th Regiment and units of the 2d Division on the left were attacked by enemy groups of 40 - 50 men supported by tanks. These attacks gained no ground and prisoners taken were identified as members of 3d Paratroop Division.

The 2d and 99th Divisions continued reorganization and rehabilitation as per Corps order. By nightfall of 19 December, the 2d Division had 38th Regiment and elements of 23d Regiment in the line with the 9th Regiment in reserve.

The 99th Division had the 395th Regiment (less one battalion) and the 393d Regiment in the line with the 394th Regiment in reserve.

The Corps left sector was relatively quiet. An enemy attack forming in the MONSCHAU area was stopped cold by Corps artillery before it made much headway.

Prisoners of war taken during the day indicated I SS Panzer Corps

was attempting to force a penetration down the EUPEN - MONSCHAU road and over ELSENBORN - VERVIERES road.

First Army notified Headquarters V Corps that XVIII Airborne Corps was to become operational and would take over the 82d Airborne Division and the 119th Regimental Combat Team of the 30th Division at 1500A.

CCA, 3d Armored Division, completed the relief of the 18th Regimental Combat Team at 1310A and the 18th Regimental Combat Team moved to join the 1st Division, sweeping the EUPEN - MALMEDY road for paratroopers as it went.

Thus ended the fourth day of the counteroffensive for V Corps. The 9th Division had assembled at ELSENBORN at 1930A and was preparing to take over its sector. All units concerned were preparing to move back to the stronger defense line during the night of 19 December, as required by the Corps Letter of Instructions of 182030A December.

The northern sector was relatively stable and had been reinforced with the arrival of a battalion of the 39th Regiment.

Air support had been very limited due to poor visibility and fog.

Corps, in a Letter of Instructions of 190100A, had indicated that the general line to be held at all costs was MONSCHAU - ELSENBORN - BUTGENBACH - FAYMONVILLE - WEIMES - MALMEDY.

THE 20TH OF DECEMBER (20)
(See Map I)

The Germans began the 20th with a series of desperate attacks to widen the base of the salient and to gain the routes of advance so essential to their plan.

The 2d Division withdrew all the 23d Regiment and left the 38th Regiment on the line. Thus its regiments were echeloned to the rear.

The 99th Division had withdrawn the 395th Regiment (less one battalion) and placed the 394th Regiment in the line.

(20) Personal knowledge, A-2, page 77, A-3, pages 354-355

The German attacks against the 2d and 99th Divisions had been savage, insistent, and continuous. Also the MONSCHAU - HOFEN - KALTERBERBERG area had seen heavy fighting.

However, the Germans finally gave up hope of smashing through in the north and decided to move the remainder of the 12th SS Panzer Division and other elements of I SS Panzer Corps to the south over the route of 1st SS Panzer Division and try to attempt a thrust through the American lines to the north somewhere between BUTGENBACH and MALMEDY.

Therefore the 20th dawned with the heaviest fighting to be experienced with the 1st Division. Up to now, the main fighting had been on the eastern and southeastern fronts, but now the southern front was to bear the brunt of the German attack, principally by the 1st Division.

By this time, 1st Division had the 16th and 26th Regiments in the line and the 18th in reserve.

The attacks by the Germans began in the early hours of the morning, but met with no success. At 0630A, a strong enemy attack of armor and infantry was repulsed by the 1st Division and eight German tanks destroyed. Artillery fire helped knock out much of the infantry.

Another attack that struck along the boundary between the 16th and 26th Regimental Combat Teams was repulsed by noon after heavy fighting and caused severe losses to the enemy.

The 117th Regiment of the 30th Division on the 1st Division right also repulsed several attacks during the morning.

An attack of tanks and infantry against 393d Regiment of 99th Division in the ROCHERATH area was defeated. Several attacks were beaten off, but a minor penetration was achieved and it wasn't until 2040A that all enemy elements had been destroyed or repelled and the position restored. Units making this attack were from the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division.

Meantime the 9th Division had assumed control of its sector in the north by 0730A and taken over the defense of the left front and flank of the Corps. This sector was fairly quiet during the day.

The remainder of the 30th Division was detached from V Corps and attached to XVIII Airborne Corps at 1300A.

The 18th Regiment completed its job of searching for enemy paratroopers and went into division reserve in the vicinity north of ROBERTSVILLE with one battalion moving into the line.

The lines of the 2d and 99th Divisions were withdrawn to previously prepared positions as per Corps order - this line about 1000 yards from the original positions. This gave a much stronger defense position and mine barriers were very effective.

Corps issued a Letter of Instructions at 1300A which gave a summary of action of the Germans to the date and notified units of recent attachments and detachment of units and their effective time.

At the end of the day, Corps was in a much better position. It occupied strong defensive positions, large mine and wire barriers had been constructed, strong and veteran forces held the line, and adequate reserves were now available.

Corps artillery had again provided exceedingly wonderful supporting fires, but the air had again been handicapped by the weather.

Already supplies to replace lost items of equipment were flowing to the 99th and 2d Divisions. Special efforts were made to re-equip these units. Some unorthodox.

THE 21ST OF DECEMBER (21)

The enemy used extremely heavy artillery preparations prior to attacking in the zone of the 1st Division.

The day began early on the front of the 26th Regiment, 1st Division. The enemy launched strong attacks in an effort to penetrate to the north.

(21) Personal knowledge, A-2, page 77, A-3, pages 355-356

Several attacks of tanks and infantry were made and some minor penetrations made. The 26th Regiment fought hard and well, and succeeded in stopping the Germans and ejecting them from positions they had won. The 18th Regiment moved a company of infantry up to support the 26th Regiment, and by nightfall all was under control. In this sector alone, nine German tanks were destroyed and enemy suffered heavy personnel casualties.

The concentration for an attack against positions of the 393d Regiment in the vicinity of ROCHERATH had been broken up and dispersed by well placed artillery fires.

On all other parts of the Corps front, the situation was relatively quiet with no major action by the enemy. Continuous pressure was exerted all along the lines by the Germans.

The 4.2 inch mortars and artillery of division and Corps were of excellent aid in stopping the attack against the 26th Regiment.

The CCA of the 3d Armored Division in the vicinity of EUPEN was relieved at 1500A by the CCR of the 5th Armored Division.

Rehabilitation and reorganization of all units not in contact continued. Supplies and equipment continued to flow to the 99th and 2d Divisions, and at this date, the 2d was in good shape as far as equipment was concerned and the 99th Division's major shortages were radios and wire equipment.

Again on the 21st air activity had been limited, due to fog, mist, and poor visibility.

THE 22D OF DECEMBER (22)
(See Map J)

The 22d of December marked the last great drive by the Germans to break the northern anchor of the Bulge. They made one desperate, final effort to break through the defenses of V Corps.

The attacks were made in two prongs; one striking hard and heavily at the positions near MONSCHAU and HOFEN; and the other in the BUTGENBACH area controlled by the 1st Division.

(22) Personal knowledge, A-2, page 78, A-3, pages 356-358

The 99th Division pulled the 395th Regiment and elements of 393d Regiment out of the line, and the 394th Regiment and major elements of 393d Regiment held the division front.

The 2d Division had the 38th Regiment on the line and the other two regiments echeloned to the rear.

The 1st Division had the 16th Regiment, 26th Regiment, and part of the 18th Regiment up to the front.

The enemy, aided by fog, succeeded in establishing a penetration approximately 800 yards wide and 200 yards deep in the area of the 26th Regiment. One battalion of the 18th Regiment, plus elements of the 26th Regiment, counterattacked to restore the position. Close-in, savage fighting took place, and it wasn't until an all day and night fight that the 1st Division succeeded in ejecting the enemy on the morning of the 23d of December. However, this assault had been extremely costly to the Germans in personnel and equipment.

The 1st Division was now receiving the heaviest of all attacks on the Corps front. The success of the 1st in defeating these attacks was aided materially by artillery.

Late in the day, beginning at 1300A, the enemy attacked in strength after heavy preliminary artillery preparations, and by nightfall had succeeded in capturing some high ground from the 9th Division. A penetration of approximately 500 yards was made, but this was successfully contained and the lines restored.

Poor visibility again stopped the Air Force from rendering much air support.

THE 23D OF DECEMBER (23)

The repulse of the German counterattacks of the previous day, the recovery by the 9th Division of the high ground lost on the previous day, plus some additional ground was the summary of the day's activity.

(23) Personal knowledge, A-2, page 358

It soon developed that the enemy had quit. No further attempts were made by the enemy to penetrate the northern shoulders.

Patrols found that the Germans were establishing defense positions 1000 - 1500 yards in front of our lines.

The 60th Regimental Combat Team of the 9th Division closed in the 9th Division area at 2000A.

The 5th Armored Division was assembled in the Corps area as Corps reserve, but to be employed only on Army permission.

The Corps units continued to rest, rehabilitate, reorganize, and prepare for the next effort.

SUMMARY

The German attempt to reach ANTWERP through the positions of V Corps had been completely stopped. The units of the V Corps, its divisions, artillery, engineers, service units had rendered superior service.

Corps artillery with its excellent massed fires had defeated and stopped many heavy German attacks before they could get started.

The valiant resistance of small islands of men, separated from their units, had enabled the major portions of units to set up a defense line.

In spite of a few blunders, the overall action had been magnificent.

(24)

"The 2d Division", to quote General Eisenhower's 'Crusade in Europe', "met the issue with great skill and determination, and during the ensuing three days fought one of the brilliant divisional actions of the war in Europe. The attack caught the division while it was advancing towards the Roer Dams. General Hodges, First Army Commander, at first did not sense the extent of the threat and directed the American attacks to continue. But General Robertson, on the spot, soon sized up the situation and acted decisively." (25)

(24) Personal knowledge

(25) A-6, page 379

The loss of the V Corps positions would have allowed the Sixth SS Panzer Army to exploit its armor in its dash to the coast at ANTWERP.

As it was, the V Corps bottled up his armor, Dietrich himself aided in congesting it and thanks to V Corps, he was not able to capture the First Army's huge supplies of gas and rations. He came very near but did not succeed. (26)

From the viewpoint of casualties, it is easily noted from the following tables that the 2d and 99th Divisions bore the brunt (period 16 December 1944 to 14 January 1945):

1st Division	- 850
2d Division	-2137
8th Division	- 134
9th Division	- 499
30th Division	- 414
78th Division	- 693
99th Division	-2536
Corps troops	- 538 (27)

It is interesting to note that recapitulation of losses first reported by the 99th Division were in almost every instance highly exaggerated, both in personnel and equipment.

It is also very interesting to note that the 2d Division and the 1st Division were unofficially discovered to be operating jeeps and $2\frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks that had poorly erased 99th Division markings on them.

Naturally this equipment was never seen again by the 99th. Also the 1st Division managed to acquire some $2\frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks of the 2d Division that had been abandoned after German tanks cut the road and were recaptured by the 1st.

The smaller units of the 99th Division fought hard and well, but certain deficiencies appeared in the higher command. It was necessary

(26) Personal knowledge

(27) A-3, page 363

to replace several commanders and key staff officers, including the Division G-3. Loss of communications and inability to maintain contact contributed to failure of the division. (28)

One company of infantry of the 99th Division was stopped by the Corps straggler line in the vicinity of EUPEN - purportedly seeking new defense line.

One battery of field artillery was discovered north of VERDUN. This battery had reported as overrun. (29)

The antipersonnel and antitank mines were used in tremendous quantities for the first time during the war. As a result ammunition stocks were totally insufficient and all mines became controlled items. A rather serious note to be remembered - that one must always be ready to go over to the defense.

The introduction of the Pozit fuze was extremely successful. The Corps artillery with sixteen battalions of artillery stopped many major German attacks with its serenades. The position at MONSCHAU was saved by the extremely heroic stand of the small cavalry group, tank destroyer, and Corps artillery.

Re-supply of lost or destroyed equipment was almost complete by the 29th of December. (30)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

1. CORPS PLAN OF ATTACK

The Corps plan of attack for the ROER DAMS was excellently planned and conceived.

It made use of a minimum number of troops in the line to utilize the maximum number in the attack. The 2d Division and 78th Division were assembled in the rear of the front while the 99th Division held a sector approximately 15 - 16 miles wide, and cavalry units held another large

(28) Personal knowledge

(29) Personal knowledge; reported by Captain Robert Brady, Commanding Officer, 803d MP Company, Major Shannon, Assistant Corps G-3, and Lieutenant Schmidt, Assistant Corps G-1

(30) Personal knowledge

sector of the front. This allowed the concentration of forces in the rear.

The use of the assembly areas in rear of the front deceived the enemy as to our true intentions. It had been the habit of the Corps to rehabilitate troops in this area and thus caused no undue alarm. It also concealed and deceived the enemy as to the direction and strength of the attack.

The attack of two divisions in mass from behind a screen of friendly units and on narrow fronts achieved surprise and mass of firepower and strength.

This offensive combined a high degree of cooperation and maneuver between units involved and yet the essential plan for each unit was quite simple and so stated.

The objectives were clearly defined and the mission of each unit was well known.

The artillery, engineers, chemical mortar battalion, tank destroyer, and tank units were all employed in support of the offensive.

The German reaction clearly indicated that the attack caught them by surprise and the two-pronged attack deceived them as to which effort constituted the Corps main threat. Thus the Germans were not able to concentrate against any one prong of attack, but had to meet each as best as possible.

Therefore the 16th of December found the 2d Division through the German defenses and well on the way to exploit their penetration. The use of armored combat command would have been quickly used to fully exploit the infantry penetration.

This plan was defeated by the German counteroffensive.

However, the Corps plan of attack was excellently conceived and developed and met with considerable success.

2. INTELLIGENCE

It is very clearly shown that all the various agencies of the V Corps intelligence plan were collecting information from the 1st of December right up to the date of the attack, which gave clear indications of the German plans.

Confirmation of indications obtained from Corps sources was obtained from TAC Air Reconnaissance and from information received from VIII Corps on the right.

Although this information was properly disseminated and information was furnished higher headquarters as to the Corps concern over the situation, all incoming information to Corps from Army and higher sources nullified this information and failed to correctly evaluate and interpret it.

This was not a failure of operations based on the so-called "calculated risk" but a failure of intelligence to correctly interpret and evaluate the information that was on hand and confirmed.

Perhaps too great a sense of security, a feeling of contempt or superiority, induced by the continued successes of US arms had led US intelligence officers to badly underestimate the Germans' military ability.

Whatever the reason, it is quite clear that the Germans achieved complete surprise in the Battle of the Bulge - even though all necessary information was available and confirmed by various sources. In other words, the intelligence system failed completely in this situation.

The signs were there, the reports were there, prisoners of war talked freely and boastfully of the coming offensive, even indicating approximate dates, air reconnaissance, espionage agents, line crossers, enemy activities, all confirmed the indications of a major action, yet, incredibly, none of these indications were correctly interpreted, evaluated, or estimated.

Corps was concerned and so reported. Prior to the last few days, it was very concerned and so reported to Army Headquarters. However, the weight of intelligence flowing from rear to front indicated the opposite of information coming from divisions and corps, so nothing was done.

This was a bad failure of intelligence. Collection and direction of enemy information were excellent, but the failure - and failure it was - came in the processing and use of this intelligence.

3. SUPPLY AND EVACUATION

Although artillery ammunition was being rationed and winter equipment was in short supplies, the supply situation at the time of the Bulge was the best it had been in months.

The depots of Advance Section, Communication Zone, had been moved well forward; the First Army depots were well filled and well stocked; and the Army supply points in the V Corps area carried adequate supplies.

These supplies proved not only sufficient to meet the requirements of the US attack, but also for the tremendously great needs of stopping the German offensive.

One of the great factors that helped the Corps to hold its ground was the fact that supplies never failed to come forward in adequate amounts.

Through special efforts of the Corps supply staff and in conjunction with First Army, re-supplies and equipment were pouring in to the hard hit 99th and 2d Divisions almost as soon as the reports of losses were received.

The Corps G-4, acting through the Corps Quartermaster, sent an officer back to the Advance Section to see what they could do in furnishing essential quartermaster supplies, i. e., ranges, blankets, overshoes, overcoats, shelter halves, sweaters, etc. Although not according to Hoyle, the depot of Advance Section furnished everything needed and even provided all the transportation so that Corps supplied divisions with all shortages. This bypassed Army and it was almost a month later before First Army could furnish items needed. It was necessary to tell Army that these items were already supplied. However, this unorthodox method had made the 99th and 2d combat effective very much sooner than if Corps had waited for normal re-supply.

All in all by the 29th of December, the 2d and 99th had received replacement for almost all the major losses and the 2d was in excellent shape

with the 99th Division still lacking radio and wire equipment. However, this too was soon supplied.

Corps service units were cannibalized of all items not essential to them that were needed by the combat units. Everything possible was done to keep the combat units supplied.

Preliminary precautions of stockpiling and close watch over supplies had paid off for the V Corps. The well trained and excellent service rendered by the service troops was an unsung story of the Bulge. They not only served as service units, but fought as well when necessary. Engineers particularly rendered extraordinarily able service.

The Corps medical battalion packed up and moved out of its location right under the guns of tanks of the 1st SS Panzer Division and safely made its way, with all wounded, to BUTGENBACH from an area just north of ST VITH.

The medical service and evacuation system stood up well under this sudden and severe strain. The town of EUPEN became the focus for most of the evacuation hospitals and other medical installations in the Corps area.

Traffic was controlled by radio traffic posts using Slidex messages. This speeded up highway transportation and prevented any serious traffic jams or confusion during the movement of so many units in the Corps sector.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Communications never failed, although hard pressed at times. The initial attack by the Germans with its heavy artillery barrages destroyed many wire lines. The German paratroopers cut many wire lines and thus the signal units had a tough job. Sometimes the only contact between Corps and the 2d and 99th Divisions was radio and radio link telephone.

The utilization of both wire and radio and alternate and parallel circuits aided materially in keeping vital communications intact and kept a constant stream of reports flowing back to Corps Headquarters.

This enabled Corps to make effective use of current information and maintain effective tactical control of its units.

5. ARTILLERY

Initially the attack against the ROER DAMS was made without preparatory fires. However, artillery rendered excellent support thereafter.

It wasn't until the German counteroffensive began that the Corps artillery came into its own.

Corps artillery had developed its plan so that they could mass the fires of over 16 battalions of artillery, plus several other batteries on targets within range.

The Corps Commander had been particularly interested in artillery concentrations in the MONSCHAU - HOFEN area since the Corps had only a small screening force holding this area.

When the big German attack came against this position with the units of the 12th SS Panzer Division reinforced attacking, the Corps artillery turned all fires on this attack and so damaged and destroyed tanks and personnel that no serious attack ever hit the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in strength.

Again and again Corps artillery and division artillery, by massing fires, stopped or dispersed German tanks and infantry attacking US forces. Many times enemy concentrations were disrupted before they even went into the assault.

The primary thought here is that artillery with massed fires can stop enemy armored attacks. Especially did this become true when the Pozit fuze was employed for the first time. These shells increased the personnel casualty producing effect of the shells almost ten times.

6. GERMAN PARATROOPERS

Although the German paratroopers never employed over 800 - 1200 men, and though this force was badly scattered and without proper orders, they were a definite menace. Hindsight reveals the German commander never succeeded in gathering more than 300 of his men and even these had lost most of their equipment.

However, the mere threat of these landings tied up forces over and above the strength of a Regimental Combat Team up to the 25th of December.

The existence of these enemy forces, even without knowledge of their numbers and without contact with them, made it necessary to hold forces available to counteract them that were desperately needed on the front.

The paratroopers never attacked in strength or attempted any mission, but they succeeded admirably in diverting large numbers of men from the front lines. They caused a great deal of confusion among the US troops.

7. THE 2D DIVISION and 102D CAVALRY GROUP

The action of these units is very notable.

The 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in the vicinity of MONSCHAU was one of the unsung heroes of the war. This unit, with the very able assistance of Corps artillery, stopped the northern advance of the German I SS Panzer Corps cold. The German units attacking this unit never moved it, although they were much superior in equipment and numbers.

Several times did the enemy beat against this unit and each time it was repulsed.

It was actions like this that brought about the downfall of the Germans.

The 2d Division performed one of the notable feats of the war when it disengaged from the attack on the ROER DAMS to move to the west and south to take up new positions and contain the German counteroffensive.

It not only took over the defense of this sector from the 99th Infantry Division but also took over command of the 99th Division. Thus the division revealed the tremendous capabilities of its command and staff leadership.

This division was hit very hard and suffered much, but at no time did it stop making the enemy pay dearly for every inch he gained.

The tactical job this division did has never been adequately recognized. It ceased an attack while in contact with two regiments abreast, made a daylight and night disengagement with the enemy, moved to the west and south and took up new positions of defense even while its units were engaged

in a new fire fight. The Division Cavalry Squadron held the relinquished front against heavy odds.

This division clearly rated the accolade paid it by General Eisenhower when he said it fought one of the most brilliant divisional actions of the war. It must also be considered that this was all done in the face of not second quality German units but Hitler's elite fighting force, the Sixth SS Panzer Army under Dietrich the Butcher.

8. FAILURE TO MAINTAIN CONTACT

One of the prime requisites of warfare is to maintain contact either with friend or foe. It is always essential to report immediately laterally, and up and down loss of contact or gaining of contact.

This primary tenet of the military soldier's bible was neglected.

The 99th Division had the mission of maintaining physical contact with the VIII Corps on the division's right. This was in turn delegated to the 394th Regiment.

However, when the attack by the Germans came on the 16th of December, Corps Headquarters was unaware of the fact that the 394th Regiment lost contact early in the morning of that day. In fact, it was unaware that anything serious was developing on the right due to no reports on the matter.

That a small penetration had been made between the 393d Regiment and 394th Regiment was known, but the vital fact of loss of contact on the right was never reported. VIII Corps was also unaware of this loss of contact at the border of the units.

Therefore the Germans were in the rear of elements of the 99th Division before either the Division or Corps Headquarters ever knew that the flank had been turned. This was a serious error and only through the heroic actions of the Corps 254th Engineer (C) Battalion was the enemy contained by Corps long enough to move up reinforcements.

Otherwise the German tank thrust would have had clear sailing to BUTGENBACH and the ELSENBORN plateau.

9. NECESSITY OF ALL GROUPS TO CONTINUE THE DEFENSE

The action of individual and isolated groups of US troops in continuing to fight until overwhelmed or until they were able to fight their way back to the US lines materially aided in establishing of new defensive positions.

The toll of Germans and the delay exerted was enough to enable the defenders to establish a new line of defense that stopped the Germans.

Again and again isolated groups of US forces held out against the Germans and held up their advance and by so doing brought dearly needed time for the hard pressed defenders.

LESSONS

1. The unit attack plan must be conceived and built upon age old concepts of the military, i. e., surprise, deception, aggressiveness, mass, movement, simplicity of execution, economy of force, and cooperation.

2. The production of intelligence is useless unless all phases of the intelligence production cycle are effectively carried out. In this case, the collection and direction of enemy intelligence information were excellent, but a complete failure came in the interpretation and evaluation.

3. Well planned evacuation and logistical support with well trained service troops insure success in combat under any conditions.

4. Good communications are the keystone of success in modern battle. Every effort must be made to utilize all channels of communications available.

5. The fires of massed artillery are capable of stopping enemy armor and infantry in the attack. Massed fires are also capable of stopping an attack before it can even get started.

6. Paratroopers can cause the employment and usage of large bodies of troops by the mere threat of their existence. This diverts troops

that would otherwise be available for combat duty at the front.

7. A well trained unit, with excellent esprit de corps, that has excellent commanders and staff can accomplish much against great odds.

8. Loss of contact must be reported immediately to higher headquarters.
Failure to do so can be very disastrous.

9. All units, whatever their size, must continue to resist and strive to reach their lines. Time is often worth its weight in gold to a hard pressed defender.