

**THE REDUCTION
OF
FORTRESS METZ**

1 SEPTEMBER — 6 DECEMBER 1944

An Operational Report

U. S. Army Military History Institute

XX CORPS

UNITED STATES ARMY

CARLE

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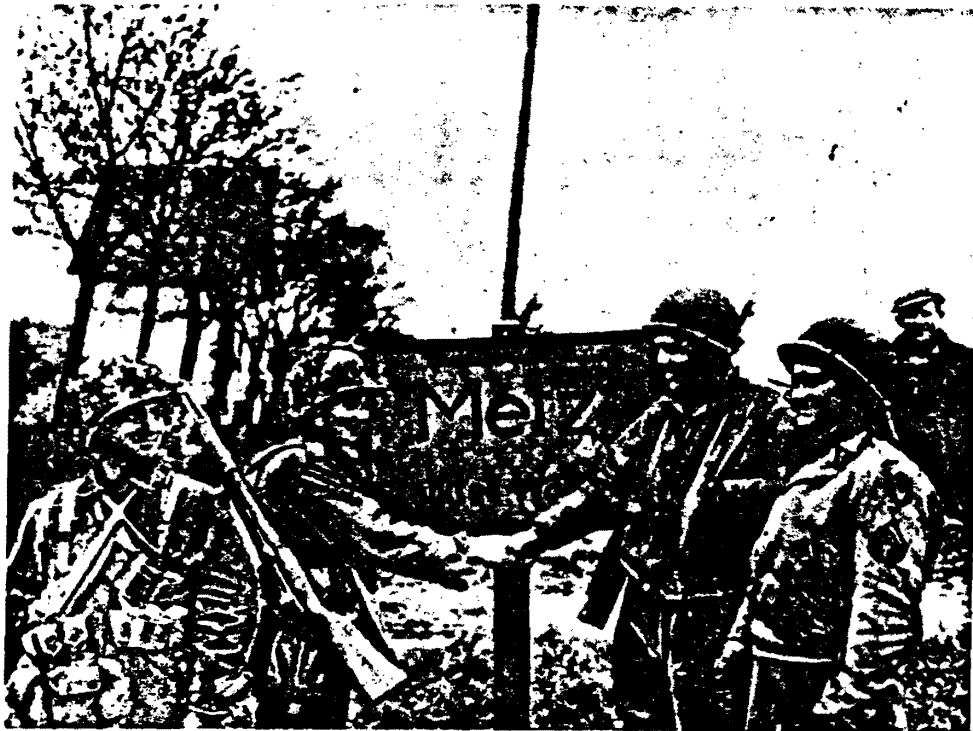
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METZ is Encircled as Contact is Made between Task Force BACON and the 10th Infantry just East of the City

PART I

MEETING THE METZ DEFENSE LINE

GENERAL SITUATION On 31 August 1944 XX Corps had reached VERDUN and was occupying a bridgehead east of the MEUSE River. Lieutenant General (then Major General) Walton H. WALKER, Commanding General of XX Corps, acting upon orders from General PATTON, directed his staff on the morning of 1 September to prepare plans for the next phase of advance. The 7th Armored Division and the 5th Infantry Division each had a combat team across the river and were grouping their troops around VERDUN. The 90th Infantry Division was outpostting REIMS, prepared to move forward on order, and the 3rd Cavalry Group was reconnoitering north and east to LUXEMBOURG and the MOSELLE River. At the time, XX Corps was leading the eastward advance of Third US Army.

VII Corps was driving from PARIS to SEDAN, and from there First US Army had ordered it to turn north in the direction of LIEGE. This would expose the north flank of XX Corps. XII Corps on the right was moving in the direction of NANCY on a broad front from TROYES.

General WALKER, in his directions to his staff, stated that he wanted a demonstration in force by elements of the 7th Armored Division in the direction of SEDAN to mislead the enemy into thinking that XX Corps was going due north in coordination with XII Corps. XX Corps was going straight east towards METZ. And from there the advance was to be continued to the RHINE River, where a crossing would be made at MAINZ for an attack on the final objective of FRANKFURT, 160 miles away. The intention of this plan was the rapid pursuit of the disorganized German Army to prevent the organization of a defense at either the SIEGFRIED Line or the RHINE River.

Supplies of gasoline, however, ran low on 28 August. Combat Command "R" (CCR) of the 7th Armored Division had been left in assembly areas east of REIMS during the attack on VERDUN. But in spite of this provision, many vehicles of the attacking command of the division had been immobilized on the road for lack of fuel. CCA stalled at VOUIERS on the AISNE. CCB just managed to get a spearhead into VERDUN by siphoning gas from vehicles left behind. The 5th Infantry Division had no gas supply when it completed its assembly around VERDUN, and the 90th Infantry Division remained in REIMS because there was no way to move it. On the morning of 2 September General GAFFEY, Chief of Staff of Third US Army, told General WALKER, "I hope the situation will improve this afternoon, but until gas arrives, you will have to limit movement in your area." With the main body of XX Corps immobilized at VERDUN, the 7th Armored Division, by draining all other vehicles, mounted task forces from CCR and CCB for a demonstration in the direction of SEDAN. These task forces, after reaching STENAY and MONTFAUCON on the afternoon of 3 September, were forced to stop for lack of gasoline.

RECONNAISSANCE PHASE The 3rd Cavalry Group was to use the 43rd Cavalry Squadron to cover the north flank of the Corps zone, while the 3rd Cavalry Squadron made a reconnaissance to the east and northeast in the directions of METZ and THIONVILLE. The cavalry was able to succeed on these missions because of their capture of 4,000 gallons of high octane gas on the night of 30 August at ETAIN. Two reconnaissance troops of the 3rd Cavalry Squadron had the specific task of seizing bridges on the MOSELLE River. The squadron left ETAIN at 0730 hours, 1 September.

A platoon of cavalry cut through retreating German columns to reach THIONVILLE that afternoon, seized and held the main highway bridge there for several hours but were driven out by armor and small arms fire when the German garrison recovered from its initial panic and surprise. Another cavalry platoon reached BRIEY but was forced into hiding by the large number of German troops moving through the town. Other cavalry elements reconnoitered CONFLANS — MARS-LA-TOUR in secrecy, reached HAUCONCOURT on the MOSELLE River eight miles north of METZ, and set up observation posts overlooking

the river. During 2 and 3 September these reconnaissance elements obtained information that the enemy was hastily organizing to defend METZ and the MOSELLE River line. The fortress system around METZ was to be used as the base of this defense, and the capture of METZ was to be prevented.

On the north enemy activity was observed by the cavalry setting up a defensive screen west of the MOSELLE in the THIONVILLE area.

Many disorganized German units, after falling back in confusion from the XX Corps offensive, had withdrawn towards METZ as a rallying point. In METZ there was a permanent German garrison, the 462nd Mobilization Division. Into this division there were incorporated the Fahnenjunkerschule (Officer Candidate School, Regiment VI), a number of battalions of the Stellung type incorporated into a regimental organization, and the 1010th Security Regiment, the remnants of which had fallen back on the city after their previous stand on the SEINE River, reinforced by straggler units. By 3 September the 462nd Division was manning the static defenses of METZ in a zone estimated to extend from MONDELANGE to ARS-sur-MOSELLE. The 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, which had fallen back from positions in the vicinity of ETAIN, was assigned the defense of the zone southwest of METZ. In the THIONVILLE sector, on the north, the 559th Infantry Division was mobilized to defend the MOSELLE line and to delay west of THIONVILLE as long as possible.

The strategy of a delay in force at METZ was to establish a hinge on which to organize the center of the western front. While the Germans were completely familiar with these opportunities, troops of XX Corps had little realization of the military strength of METZ. The rapidity of the advance to VERDUN had allowed no time to gather and disseminate information on the fortress system or the availability of troops to defend it. Troops were operating with maps which showed neither the fortifications nor the details of the terrain.

On 4 September C-47's flew in 110,000 gallons of gas to the REIMS airport and other stocks of gas were arriving by normal supply means. Sufficient gas was allotted to the 90th Infantry Division to bring them up from REIMS. The 3rd Cavalry Group and the 7th Armored Division were also supplied with fuel. The 3rd Cavalry Group organized task forces to force an opening to the MOSELLE and if possible to seize bridges for the passage of armor. On 6 September, five separate task forces of cavalry, on XX Corps order, jumped off to reach the river line in the zone from THIONVILLE to PONT-a-MOUSSON with the main effort being made along the GRAVELOTTE road. One task force reached ARNAVILLE, 10 miles south of METZ, by noon, but was forced to retreat in the face of 88mm artillery, fired point-blank from the opposite side of the river. Another force reached the river line at HAUCONCOURT. In the main effort the leading columns jumped off from MARS-LA-TOUR and reached the draw east of GRAVELOTTE. A road crater in this draw held up the vehicles and enemy artillery in and around Fort JEANNE D'ARC opened up on the forces. The column withdrew to REZONVILLE. The task force, reinforced, made a frontal attack on the high ground containing Fort JEANNE D'ARC and attempted to reach the woods and draw east of GRAVELOTTE. The attack, although reaching the edge of the woods, was unable to penetrate the terrain obstacles. Heavy and accurate artillery fire caused the loss of several vehicles and some casualties and forced a withdrawal.

While this reconnaissance in force of the METZ defense line was being made, the main force of XX Corps had been mobilized. On 5 September enough gasoline was available to mount both the 7th Armored Division and the 5th Infantry Division for an attack. The 90th Infantry Division displaced to ETAIN, prepared to attack THIONVILLE. General WALKER issued Field Order Number 10 (5 September — see Appendix Number 12), which implemented his intentions to drive through METZ to the RHINE River. The time of attack from the line of departure, a north-south line through MARS-LA-TOUR, was set for the 7th Armored Division at 1400 hours, 6 September and for the 5th Infantry Division at 0800 hours, 7 September. The 90th Infantry Division, as no armor was in front of it, was to begin attacking as soon as in position. The 7th Armored Division cleared VERDUN during the morning of 6 September with CCA on the north, CCB on the south, and CCR following CCB.

ACTION NORTH OF METZ The north column of CCA attacked east near MALANCOURT, overlooking enemy defenses, in an attack by night and reached the MOSELLE River at MONDELANGE by 0645 hours, 7 September. The reconnaissance by this column found neither a bridge intact nor a suitable site for an assault crossing. The south column moved east from CONFLANS and contacted enemy defenses near BATILLY. By-passing these positions to the northeast, this column came up

against increasing enemy artillery and infantry resistance in the vicinity of ST. MARIE. The column had reached ST. PRIVAT by 0845 hours the next morning, but heavy artillery fire prevented the intended advance to HAUCONCOURT and MONDELANGE to join up with the north column of CCA.

It became apparent as CCA's engagement northwest of METZ developed that the German garrison had built a defense on the high ground near ST. PRIVAT, and another defense west of THIONVILLE. CCA had found a soft area between these two defense stands and reached the river at MONDELANGE but were there drawn into an engagement on the south flank. A defensive screen was put out on the north to guard their rear until the 90th Infantry Division could cover it, and the north column, CCA, pushed south towards MAIZIERES-les-METZ, to cut behind the enemy opposition northwest of METZ.

The attack on MAIZIERES-les-METZ met artillery fire from three directions and bogged down from strong resistance in the north side of the town on 9 September and the forces secured their positions. In an attempt to penetrate the German positions further west, the southern column of CCA was not able to get beyond ST. PRIVAT. The 2nd Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division, following CCA, on the morning of 8 September attacked in the zone AMANVILLERS — VERNEVILLE straight east for the high ground near PLAPPEVILLE, while the armor continued to press their attack north for the same objective. On 8 and 9 September this attack made little progress against concrete fortifications defended by grimly determined Nazi officer candidates. A combined attack by the 2nd Infantry Regiment and an armored task force struck at the critical AMANVILLERS — ST. PRIVAT area. The 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, in spite of heavy casualties, reached AMANVILLERS at 1900 hours, 9 September after five hours of severe fighting against artillery and infantry resistance. The armored task force advanced just beyond ST. PRIVAT, but at the cost of 10 tank casualties. From prisoners taken during this attack XX Corps received its first detailed information about the fortified area in its sector, which included probably the strongest fortified positions in the METZ area.

From 10 to 14 September, an attempt was made to continue this attack on the northwest defenses of METZ. CCA continued the attack to penetrate the line at MAIZIERES and MIRANGE-SILVANGE. The 2nd Infantry Regiment attacked continuously in an attempt to get beyond AMANVILLERS and to reach the wooded draw east of VERNEVILLE. AMANVILLERS changed hands several times as the result of the frantic attacks by the Officer Candidate School personnel and a vast amount of enemy artillery fire. On the morning of 11 September CCR, disengaged at GRAVELOTTE and placed under the command of CCA, struck between CCA and the 2nd Infantry Regiment in an attempt to pierce through the line of forts barring entry into METZ. After reaching the ridge line north of MIRANGE-SILVANGE at BROMEAX, CCR was unable to advance further in the face of point-blank fire from the ridge line of the BOIS-de-FEVES (CANROBERT Forts) 1,000 yards to the front. The battle of the northwest on the fortress ring of METZ was pressed vigorously until 14 September, with heavy casualties of men and equipment. Fighter bombers and heavy artillery failed to reduce the concrete emplacements, and the Officer Candidate School troops manning the sector counterattacked fanatically any thrust at the defense positions. The attacking forces occupied positions 1,000 yards from the fortress ring, when, on Corps order, the main effort was directed to the south of METZ.

ACTION IN THIONVILLE The 90th Infantry Division moved on the north flank of XX Corps toward THIONVILLE with the three regiments abreast. The night of 7 September the division artillery command post received a raid by the newly equipped 106th Panzer Brigade, striking down from LUXEMBOURG in an attempt to cut through the rear of the division. The division mobilized its anti-tank defenses and knocked out most of the brigade before the following noon, but because of this surprise attack, the attack on THIONVILLE was delayed 24 hours. The advance continued on 10 September. On the divisional south flank the 357th Infantry Regiment moved east through HAYANGE with little opposition and reached the river line between THIONVILLE and UCKANGE on 12 September. The 358th Infantry Regiment got to the outskirts of THIONVILLE on the northwest. The division reported it was prepared to make plans for river crossings, but at this time General WALKER had decided not to make the crossing at THIONVILLE because of his extended front. The 90th Infantry Division was ordered to extend south and relieve the 7th Armored Division and the 2nd Infantry Regiment in the area northwest of METZ. The 43rd Cavalry Squadron was to contain the enemy in the THIONVILLE area while the 3rd Cavalry Squadron was to contain the fortified area GRAVELOTTE to GORZE. This relief was completed by 14 September, and the 90th Infantry Division took up the mission of holding the ground gained against the fortified area north of METZ.

ACTION ON THE SOUTH CCB, coming up behind the cavalry task forces at MARS-LA-TOUR on the afternoon of 6 September, attacked the center of the bulge at GRAVELOTTE, but met heavy artillery fire and decided to by-pass this resistance to the right, and continued on to GORZE, where mines and some artillery fire were encountered.

In GORZE, CCB cut through the enemy resistance and during the night a combat command pushed out to the river line at DORNOT. By 0700 hours, 7 September a small area on the river's edge was held in spite of artillery and mortar fire from three directions. CCR, following CCB, continued to attack the resistance in the vicinity of GRAVELOTTE, but was unable to progress. CCB was unable to cross the river as a result. General WALKER then issued instructions for the 11th Infantry Regiment, which had followed CCR on 7 September, to seize a bridgehead at DORNOT which CCB would exploit once the crossing was established. A small assault force from the 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion was taken across the river at DORNOT. The 70 men of this force received heavy artillery fire and several infantry sallies, and by dark were in serious position and attempting to withdraw. At 2200 hours on 7 September the 11th Infantry Regiment reached objectives on high ground west of DORNOT.

BRIDGEHEAD SOUTH OF METZ At this time the Corps Commander ordered an assault of the MOSELLE River line in order to strike at METZ from the south and rear. He wished to exploit his advantage by making the crossing at once in the DORNOT area. On the morning of 7 September a crossing was begun by the 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment, just east of DORNOT and the 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion 200 yards north of DORNOT. Mortar, machine gun and sniper fire harassed the bridge site and artillery from Fort DRIANT 3,000 yards to the northwest and Fort VERDUN 2,000 yards due east fired point-blank on the crossing operation. In spite of this six companies were crossed during the afternoon and made penetrations of 600 yards. F and G Companies of the 11th Infantry Regiment were able to advance directly uphill to the edge of Fort VERDUN, where they were able to observe the massive turrets of the fortified group. A further assault on the fort was prevented by a dry moat 30 feet deep. These two companies withdrew 600 yards to allow a 30-minute medium artillery concentration to be placed on the fort. This concentration had no effect, and the two companies, harassed by counterattacks on their rear, were forced to fight their way back to the river's edge.

A defensive position was prepared in a woods 100 yards deep and 75 yards wide on the far shore by the six companies. Due to the accurate and intense fire on the bridge site and on DORNOT, no further reinforcements could be crossed. The enemy closed in on the defensive positions in a series of sharp counterattacks with tanks and infantry. By the morning of 7 September it became apparent that the DORNOT crossing could not be expanded against this concentrated opposition. The Division and Corps Commanders decided to make another crossing at ARNAVILLE, 4,000 yards south of DORNOT, with the 10th Infantry Regiment while the DORNOT bridgehead held the enemy's attention.

From 7 to 10 September, the DORNOT bridgehead defense was held in the face of 36 separate counterattacks and continual harassing of artillery and sniper fire. The enemy lost an estimated 1,200 troops, but the bridgehead forces also suffered severe casualties. The evacuation was accomplished during the early morning hours of 11 September with three assault boats, expedient rafts and floats under a heavy concentration of defensive fire by supporting troops and artillery.

The 10th Infantry Regiment achieved a surprise crossing during the early morning hours of 10 September, by the diversionary action at DORNOT. The XX Corps plan at this time was to use the ARNAVILLE bridgehead as a base of operations for an armored attack, by-passing the METZ stronghold and striking on to the original objectives across the SAAR River in the vicinity of MAINZ. The Corps Commander had directed the 1103rd Engineer Combat Group to give direct support to the 10th Infantry Regiment crossing and Corps Artillery emplaced three field artillery groups of three battalions each for tactical support and counter-battery fire.

The two assault battalions of the 11th Infantry Regiment were temporarily halted by an enemy main line of resistance on the river bottom. At first light they made an attack by assault fire, overran the main line of resistance, and reached their initial bridgehead objectives along the ridge 3,000 yards east of the river. The Germans counterattacked immediately with tanks and infantry on the right flank and harassed the bridge site, so that during the first day the engineers could begin neither ferrying nor bridging operations.

The 3rd Battalion of the 10th Infantry Regiment crossed two rifle companies on the evening of 10 September and, after a bombardment by fighter bombers and Corps Artillery, seized the town of ARRY on the south flank. However, during the night the enemy infiltrated tanks and infantry back into ARRY and on the morning of 11 September launched a counterattack from the south and east designed to pinch off the bridgehead forces. This counterattack was beaten off by artillery and small arms fire, but with severe casualties.

During the second day the engineers prepared a ford 400 yards north of ARNAVILLE and began crossing tanks and tank destroyers. When the enemy counterattacked on the morning of 12 September, there were sufficient reinforcements to prevent a penetration and the initial bridgehead was considered secure. One battalion of the 11th Infantry Regiment crossed over to reinforce the north flank of the bridgehead opposite CORNY, and CCB of the 7th Armored Division began crossing into the bridgehead. By the afternoon of 12 September the engineers had completed one Class 40 bridge, and supplies and reinforcements were crossed into the bridgehead area 4,000 yards long and 3,000 yards wide.

The plans to expand the bridgehead were hampered by the continuous rain and low visibility. Artillery and air bombardment were prevented and the armor bogged down on the slippery hills and churned-up roads. On 14 and 15 September XX Corps regrouped its forces to exploit the bridgehead. On the morning of 15 September, in a fog which reduced visibility to zero, the 10th Infantry Regiment attacked to the critical objective, Hill 396, which dominated the terrain to the south and east to the SEILLE River. At the same time CCB advanced in two columns against organized enemy positions to seize MARDIGNY and VETTONVILLE on the south flank. Movement of CCR and CCA, 7th Armored Division, began immediately into the bridgehead, and the 11th Infantry Regiment sent over a second battalion to reinforce the north flank, where the enemy opposition was most intense. On 16 September CCB sent its infantry along the south slope of Hill 396 to attack MARIEULLES, but was thrown back by intense mortar and artillery fire. CCR, by-passing MARIEULLES on the south, attacked due east through road blocks in the woods west of SILLEGNY. On the morning of 17 September the enemy launched a major counterattack on Hill 396 to cut off the expanded bridgehead. In grim hand-to-hand fighting this attack was broken by the infantry and tanks of the 5th Infantry Division. CCB was then able to enter MARIEULLES, and CCR, reaching positions 1,000 yards west of SILLEGNY, began their attack to occupy the town and make a crossing of the SEILLE River in that area. On the south CCB, having been relieved by units of the 2nd Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division, struck out to the southeast to make contact with XII Corps units on the south and to breach the SEILLE River at LONGUEVILLE.

Units of the 5th Infantry Division relieved CCA in MARIEULLES, and CCA prepared to push out to the SEILLE River on the north flank and hold the line against the German forces which were threatening to strike south from METZ.

The enemy had direct observation along the SEILLE River in this zone from the fortified group LA MARNE, around which had been placed a large number of batteries of light and medium artillery. CCR, attacking SILLEGNY, came under this fire and for two days, from 18 to 20 September, could make little progress in assaulting the town. On the night of 20 September units of CCR penetrated into the western edge of SILLEGNY but came under an intense artillery barrage which pinned them down and prevented reinforcements from reaching them. That night the Germans enveloped SILLEGNY with tanks and infantry and these units were lost.

CCB attacking south of SILLEGNY reached the river line at LONGUEVILLE on the night of 20 September, in spite of the intense artillery fire. The next night a river crossing was made in that vicinity, but the attempt to bridge the river at the two sites was stopped by the accurate enemy artillery.

In the 5th Infantry Division sector the 10th Infantry Regiment, unable to advance north from MARIEULLES, pushed one battalion to the east to POURNOY-le-CHEVIVE and one battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment to COIN-sur-SEILLE. The battalion of the 10th Infantry Regiment entered POURNOY in a coordinated infantry attack at the cost of high casualties and held the town for two days under intense artillery fire and several major counterattacks of tanks and infantry. The battalion of the 2nd Infantry Regiment reached the western end of COIN-sur-SEILLE but were unable to penetrate the town due to the heavily fortified infantry positions there, covered by the artillery from Fort LA MARNE.

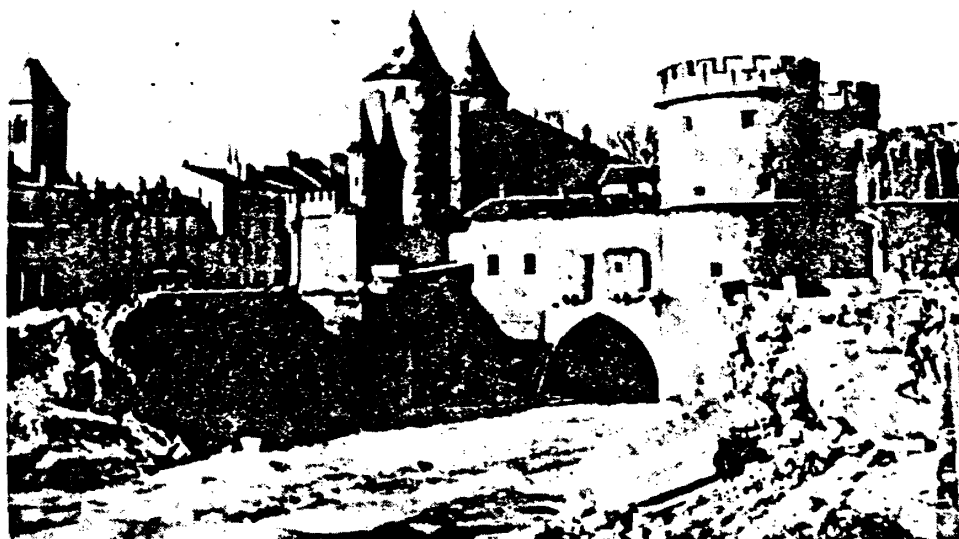
General WALKER was reorganizing his troops for a second drive on the SEILLE River when, on order from Twelfth Army Group, the 7th Armored Division was relieved from

XX Corps and Third US Army, to be employed in BELGIUM. This made it necessary to discontinue aggressive action in the ARNAVILLE bridgehead. The 5th Infantry Division, drawing back from their advance positions at POURNOY and COIN-sur-SEILLE, relieved the 7th Armored Division and established a defensive line on the high ground overlooking the SEILLE River. The positions held in the ARNAVILLE bridgehead, gained with considerable effort and casualties, had succeeded in outflanking several of the major fortress positions of the defense band around METZ. During the operation the enemy had lost approximately 10,000 troops and the armored striking power of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division had been used up against the ARNAVILLE bridgehead positions. And XX Corps had an advantageous position from which to strike at METZ when operations were resumed to reduce the fortress in November.

PART II

THE FORTIFIED REGION OF METZ

HISTORY OF METZ METZ, one of the oldest cities in central Europe, dates back to Celtic times. It was occupied and fortified by the Romans to defend the Gallic portion of their empire from the Huns, and remnants of their forts have been preserved in the METZ area to the present day. In 451 AD the city was devastated and occupied by the Huns, who then held it for 60 years. In 511 it became the capital of a small, independent nation, AUSTRASIE. In 843, after another series of wars, METZ was ceded to a conqueror of that time named LOTHAIRE, who made it the capital of his kingdom, LOTHARINGIA, which later was renamed LORRAINE. From 870 until 1200 METZ was ruled under the German Crown. In 1220 it attained the title of "Imperial Free Town," and the role of a



Ancient 16th Century Fort in METZ

city republic. Under HENRY II a French Army peacefully occupied the town and in 1552 the city was defended against Emperor CHARLES V, of GERMANY. The Germans retired after a bloody battle in which they lost 30,000 men. METZ, nevertheless, remained largely

independent under the protection of FRANCE until 1684, when the treaty of WESTPHALIA made it the capital of the Province of TROIS-EVEQUES (the Three Bishops), which included, besides METZ, the cities of TOUL and VERDUN.

Over 200 years of peace followed, the longest peaceful period in the history of this "City of Wars." In 1814 and 1815 two heavy attacks by the Germans were successfully repulsed. In 1870, during the Franco-Prussian Wars, three large German Armies invaded France. Marshal BAZAINE, commanding a large and well-equipped French Army, met and soundly defeated the one German Army that attacked METZ from the east, at BORNAY, four miles east of METZ. The other two German Armies were, in the meantime, making an encirclement of METZ from the north and south. The Germans blocked Marshal BAZAINE's withdrawal to the west and forced his capitulation without his making any organized attempt to save the city. The city remained under GERMANY until the end of World War I. On the day of the Armistice, American artillery was close enough to place under fire the forts surrounding the city. FRANCE again held METZ until its occupation by GERMANY in the present war, an occupation brought about not by siege but by the surrender of the French Government. Each of the warring forces that swept back and forth over this historic battle ground left the imprint of its military ingenuity and tactical inventiveness on the terrain by the construction of new fortifications and improvements on natural barriers.

THE TERRAIN AND THE MOSELLE RIVER The MOSELLE River forms one of the finest natural barriers of them all. Throughout the centuries its swift-flowing current had cut the LORRAINE Plateau to form a natural breastwork on the abrupt slopes of its western banks. To the east of the MOSELLE the banks are dominated by hills that have been cut out of the land by tributary streams, chiefly the SEILLE and NIED Rivers. Throughout the entire area, the hills and ridges formed by these rivers are steep and heavily wooded. It was upon the dominating terrain formed by the convergence of these rivers that the famous fortifications of METZ were built.

The imposing double belt of forts and fortified groups that ringed the naturally fortified city of METZ were carefully and cleverly emplaced so that full defensive advantage of the dominating terrain could be utilized. In all, there were 43 forts and fortified groups, with 128 artillery pieces of large caliber emplaced around METZ proper. These are exclusive of the MAGINOT Line fortifications, the forts around THIONVILLE, and the SIEGFRIED Line.

INNER RING OF FORTS The first complete circle of forts and fortified groups that afforded the outer defense of METZ were 15 in number. (See Appendix Number 1). Work on these venerable fortifications was commenced at the beginning of the 18th Century under the direction and supervision of VAUBAN, the celebrated French engineer. They were completed in 1866 under NAPOLEON III and were designed to withstand any ordnance or infantry of that particular military era. Originally and up until 1940 none of these old inner-ring forts had emplaced artillery, and it was the opinion of the French Army Engineers (as late as the spring of 1940) that the forts were not capable of receiving the heavy concrete structure necessary for heavy guns. The French commander of the artillery regiment that garrisoned the METZ forts in 1939, in discussing the plan for the defense of the METZ area against the Germans, stated in a meeting of officers that the first ring of forts was of no great military importance in spite of their natural position and would be useful only as observation posts for infantry positions.

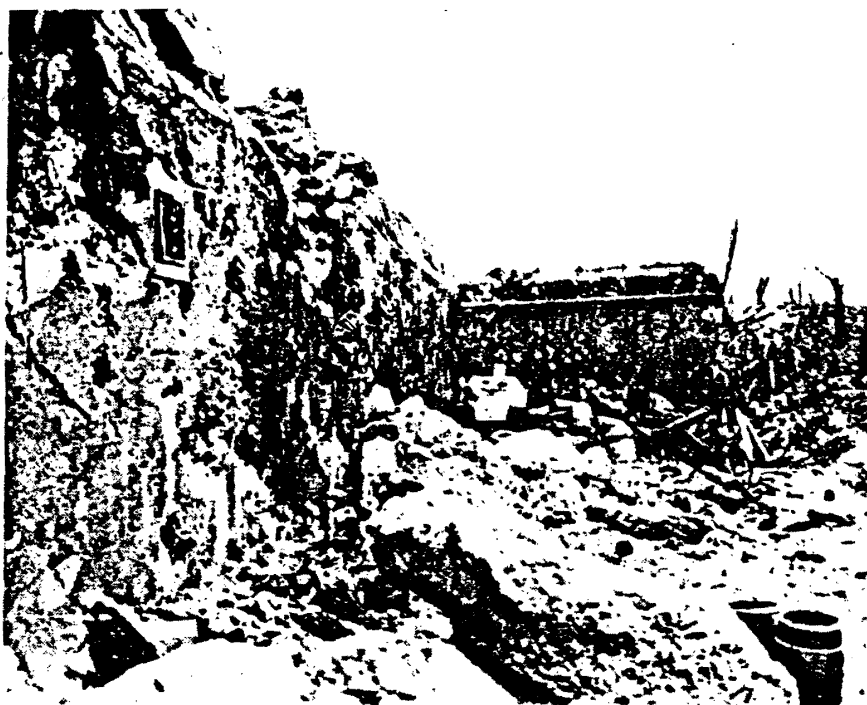
The Germans, however, were not content with this rather summary disposition of the old forts when they took possession in 1940. Neither were they satisfied with the existing state of the fortifications. The Germans immediately put their TODT Organization to work.

But work on the forts lagged as the German Army went from victory to victory, not, however, until old Fort ST QUENTIN on the west banks of the MOSELLE had been improved and modernized, and a radio station installed as a military signal center. Its two supporting forts, GIRARDIN and DIOU, built on adjacent hills, were similarly and ingeniously linked with Fort ST QUENTIN by a series of supporting bunkers, pillboxes, armored observation posts, heavily reinforced casemates, minefields and a trench system that completely extended around the military crest of the hill. Two 210mm guns were brought to Fort ST QUENTIN and installed with a protective, modern, revolving, steel observation post. 105mm self-propelled guns and anti-tank guns were also brought into the area and emplaced. Concrete-reinforced caves dug into the side of the hill were to protect these roving artillery pieces when not in use. Extensive, deliberate field fortification work was also done on the remainder of the 12 forts.

After the NORMANDY beachhead had been established by the Allies, the breakthrough made, and in August fast-moving columns of XX Corps had swarmed across the SEINE River in a power drive north to REIMS, the Wehrmacht made a careful reappraisal of the METZ fortifications and their possibilities as a defense line. From interrogations of high-ranking German Army officers taken in the capture of METZ, facts came to light about the importance of METZ and its fortifications in the overall strategic plan of the German High Command. The tactical experts reported to First German Army Headquarters that the defensive effort of the Germans should be concentrated east of the MOSELLE River line, and the forts west of the river should be used chiefly for delaying purposes only. METZ itself would be used as an administrative center to direct and repulse the advancing Americans. Later METZ would be used as a concentration point for the ammunition and weapons to arm the counter-offensive which was to be organized behind the MOSELLE River line. In spite of the general Army concurrence given this plan, Adolf HITLER personally ordered that all of the forts, including those west of the MOSELLE, be manned, improved as much as possible and held at all costs. Work began anew on the forts and as many artillery pieces as possible were emplaced. (See Appendix Number 2.)

OUTER BELT OF FORTS The second complete outer belt of 28 forts and fortified groups, located on the rim of a wheel of hills approximately six miles out from the hub of the city of METZ, was composed of permanent fortifications built by the Germans after 1871 and completed in the year 1912. (See Appendix Number 3.) The forts of this group were essentially fortified artillery positions, as distinguished from the inner belt, whose forts were primarily used as infantry strongpoints. There were no definitely designed fields of fire from the forts proper for direct fire of automatic weapons. Instead, an inter-defensive system of fire was devised whereby the deep moats that surround each fort or fortified group were covered by interlocking fields of automatic fire which effectively barred any infantry crossing. The German infantry positions protecting these highly fortified artillery positions were set up quite a distance out from the forts themselves in an all-around security design.

To prevent high velocity direct fire weapons from destroying the gun emplacements, the METZ forts were generally underground with their large caliber guns firing from rounded,



Rear of Main Casemate, Fort DRIANT, After the Attack

revolving, steel turrets that protruded slightly from the surface of the ground. Underground passages linked up the various forts in a group so that counter-battery artillery fire was ineffective and only a direct hit on a turret by an aerial bomb of 1,000 pounds or more could cause material damage. Even the overrunning of the surface of the position by infantry availed the attackers nothing, as was proven by the experience of the 5th Infantry Division when they assaulted Fort DRIANT. The enemy merely retired to the subterranean security of the forts while pre-registered heavy artillery concentrations from adjoining forts made the position untenable on top of the particular fort attacked. Complete surprise was impossible, for the German infantry was deployed as far out as possible from the forts themselves. Shells of the American 8-inch gun caused only temporary cessation of fire in the forts. As soon as the American artillery would lift, the Germans would resume fire.

The forts had been left in good condition by the Germans in 1918 and had throughout the intervening years been kept in excellent repair by the French. Each one of the outer ring of forts was composed of a main center fort with two or three smaller reserve forts, batteries of casemates. All forts or groups accommodated 2,000 or 3,000 men apiece and a crew of 150 or 200 men was required for each battery. The communications system was excellent and was such that the defenders of one fort had either direct communication with other forts or indirect communication with each other through a central exchange in METZ.

The string of seven minor forts, called by XX Corps assault units "The Seven Dwarfs" (See Appendix Number 4), connected the two fortified groups, JEANNE D'ARC and DRIANT. But these were intended by the French only as infantry positions. The Germans, however, had placed one 150mm howitzer in Fort MARIVAL and had numerous 88mm anti-tank batteries around and in the "Seven Dwarfs."

A string of four forts (See Appendix Number 5) southeast of METZ and east of the MOSELLE River, plus a bunker belt around the outer circuit facing toward the German border, had no occupied artillery emplacements, but there again self-propelled guns of 105 mm caliber and 88mm anti-tank guns were much in evidence before and during the attack on METZ.

MOSELLE FORTS AROUND THIONVILLE

Fort GUENTRANGE was northwest of THIONVILLE and was actually a part of the fortifications of that city. It had been occupied by the 90th Infantry Division in its September sweep east to the MOSELLE River. After the attack, it was vacated and left in good condition by the Germans retiring east of the MOSELLE. Its eight 100mm French guns, in the hands of cannoneers from XX Corps Artillery, later played an important part in the assault against the METZ fortified region.

Two other fortified groups were situated east of the MOSELLE River and 20 to 25 miles north of METZ. Forts KOENIGSMACHER and D'ILLANGE were located in the vicinity of towns of the same name. They were similar in construction and design to the outer belt of forts around METZ. These two fortified areas commanded the banks of the MOSELLE from the controlling terrain in the northern portion of the XX Corps zone of action and resembled in design a three-leaf clover. Each one had a battery of four 100mm guns. Another fort, Fort YUTZ, on the eastern banks of the MOSELLE in THIONVILLE, was very old, had fallen into considerable disrepair, and had no artillery emplacements, but was useful to the German defenders of THIONVILLE because of its position commanding the excellent road network leading east from the MOSELLE.

MAGINOT LINE

The nineteen fortified groups that composed the MAGINOT Line fortifications in XX Corps zone (See Appendix Number 6) were situated on a rugged ridge that started at KOENIGSMACHER and extended diagonally in a southeasterly direction toward BOULAY. This line of fortified groups was so constructed that the revolving gun turrets could be swung in a complete circle. The exposed sides of the casemates were defended by machine gun emplacements that generally fired west and south. Sufficient traverse in width, however, enabled the automatic weapons of one casemate to interlock with the fire from its adjoining casemate. This construction was designed to destroy small assault squads of infantry that would infiltrate on the flanks or to the rear of these gun positions. The first and northernmost fortified group in the MAGINOT Line east of the MOSELLE was the METRICH Group. It was located approximately 1,000 yards north of the old Fort KOENIGSMACHER, and its system of fire was tied in with that fort.

**THE ATTACK ON
FORT DRIANT**

(3 October —
13 October)

The 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division, having been withdrawn after its severe battle losses at the DORNOT crossing on the MOSELLE, was placed in the line to contain the enemy forces in Fort DRIANT. The Commanding Officer of the 11th Infantry Regiment proposed an assault on Fort DRIANT to the Commanding General, 5th Infantry Division, with the thought that an attack on Fort DRIANT could be successfully undertaken and that such an assault would prove an excellent morale booster after the withdrawal at DORNOT. Also, it would serve to give the reinforcements valuable battle indoctrination. After approval from higher headquarters, Major General IRWIN, Commanding General of the 5th Infantry Division, gave his consent to the assault.

The higher commands, XX Corps and Third US Army, endorsed the plan since Fort DRIANT was considered a keystone in the METZ fortified region and its reduction would open up the road for a tank attack north through the MOSELLE valley on METZ. The planning of the initial attack on 27 September was based on ground reconnaissance and aerial photographic information on the actual disposition of the enemy in Fort DRIANT.

Using the information thus gained and from additional engineering studies provided by XX Corps Engineers, the regimental commander decided to resume the assault on 2 October. The plan called for air preparation and then an artillery preparation from the casemate of the fort. The attack was deferred until the morning of 3 October to allow for additional engineer preparations. However, the scheduled assault for 3 October was delayed for three hours, until noon, awaiting the air support which appeared several hours after the attack was to be made. On the 5th Infantry Division's request the bomb loads were dropped on the VERDUN Group to silence their batteries. After the bombs fell German artillery fire resumed its unabated bombardment of the American unit.

The pre-arranged artillery preparation, however, was placed on the fort before the attack was launched. The triangular-shaped group of fortifications was located on the crest of a steep hill, with the main fort situated on the west side of the hill and commanding the western approaches. Three infantry assault companies, each reinforced by a platoon of medium tanks and self-propelled 105mm guns, were assembled in the wooded area southeast of Fort DRIANT. One assault unit was to execute a half circle to the west and attack the fort from the northwest; the other would strike straight up the hill and attempt a penetration from the southwest corner while the third team remained in readiness to exploit any breakthrough. The attempted penetration from the northwest was stopped by heavy and accurate German artillery fire from the adjoining forts. The other team occupied its



Frontal View of Fort DRIANT — Showing Disabled American Tanks

western objective, two underground barracks, and was on top of a casemate at the apex of the triangle. The reserve team was then sent through the opening and northeast to the rear of the main fort in a circling movement to seize the northern casemates. The reserve force, three-quarters of the way to its goal, had to fight its way back to the point of penetration when enemy infantry issued from the rear of the main fort in the developing darkness.

The following morning artillery fire from the adjoining forts forced the attackers into the cover of the underground barracks and also hampered the supply of assault units. No additional ground had been gained since the initial penetration. In fact, enemy counter-attacks periodically eliminated small infantry patrols that out-posted the underground barracks and knocked out four tanks by bazooka projectiles. The Commanding General of the 5th Infantry Division decided the afternoon of 5 October, after a conference with the Commanding Officer of the 11th Infantry Regiment, to organize Task Force DRIANT under the command of the assistant division commander, Brigadier General A. D. WARNOCK (See Appendix Number 7) and additional troops were placed in Fort DRIANT to eliminate enemy resistance.

The assault on the various casemates in Fort DRIANT continued under unceasing artillery fire from adjoining forts, especially the VERDUN Group and Fort MARIVAL. On two occasions American troops, in determined sallies, were able to get on top of the gun positions of the underground concrete artillery encasements located in the southern portion of Fort DRIANT, but the steel revolving turrets resisted all attempts to blow them with engineer charges. A carefully planned concerted assault by an infantry company, supported by tanks, to take the entire southern portion of Fort DRIANT, resulted in the capture of most of the company and its officers. Firing thereafter was cut down to the exchange of small arms fire and enemy counter-explosions of engineering charges in the tortuous subterranean passages that linked the various forts in Fort DRIANT. The infantry was now safe from the artillery fire, but the dust fumes stirred up by the explosions made unbearable the living conditions of the men in the crowded underground fort. Casualties continued to mount.

After a week's fighting only the two barracks in the southwestern portion of Fort DRIANT were in the hands of the task force, now called Task Force WARNOCK. The five casemates of the main fort were still held by the enemy. On the morning of 10 October, Major General Hugh GAFFEY, Chief of Staff, Third US Army, Major General WALKER, Commanding Gen-



Artillery Penetration of Main Casemate, Fort DRIANT

eral of XX Corps, Major General IRWIN and Brigadier General WARNOCK of the 5th Infantry Division decided, in a joint conference, after surveying the situation, to cease offensive action in Fort DRIANT. Sufficient forces were not available and to continue the attack would entail a needless loss of life. By the morning of 14 October all troops had been withdrawn from Fort DRIANT. The troops once more took up their position containing the fort.

PART III

PLAN, DEPLOYMENT AND OPPOSING FORCES

PLAN On the disengagement of troops from Fort DRIANT, the Commanding General, XX Corps, initiated planning for the reduction of the entire fortified region of METZ. The XX Corps plan, when perfected at the end of October, contemplated two distinct operations to be performed concurrently: First would be an attack to encircle and destroy the fortress and garrison of METZ; second would be the seizure of a bridgehead over the SAAR River in the vicinity of SAARBURG as a base to resume the attack to the northeast. Regarding the second operation General WALKER reasoned as follows: After the METZ operation had commenced and the enemy strength had been siphoned into the threatened area, an infantry division, crossing north of THIONVILLE, could proceed rapidly over the base of the SAAR — MOSELLE triangle and seize a bridgehead on the SAAR River at SAARBURG. The 83rd Infantry Division was to be attached to XX Corps for this mission. SAARBURG was the weakest part of the SIEGFRIED Line in the XX Corps zone of advance to the east. Interrogation of prisoners of war indicated that this particular region was lightly held by the enemy. The execution of this second operation was timed to coincide with the encirclement of METZ.

The METZ operational plan (Field Order Number 12, 3 November — See Appendix Number 13) directed the 5th Infantry Division to attack on the south from the ARNAVILLE bridgehead, by-pass the outer belt of fortresses, bridge the NIED River and attack north to seize the high ground southeast of BOULAY. This maneuver would protect the left flank of XII Corps attacking simultaneously on the south, and it would obtain pivot positions behind the fortified ring of METZ on which to develop a wide pincer movement. The 5th Infantry Division was to coordinate this initial attack with an armored task force from the 6th Armored Division, which was to move through the divisional sector on request of the Commanding General, XII Corps, to take advantage of the main east — west highway there. This armored task force was to precede the assault units of the 5th Infantry Division across the NIED River and there re-enter XII Corps zone. Across the NIED the infantry would re-group and prepare to move north on Corps order to meet the XX Corps units driving down from the north.

The XX Corps Commander directed the 90th Infantry Division to make an assault crossing over the MOSELLE River on the north, execute a flanking attack along the trace of the MAGINOT Line and join up with the 5th Infantry Division behind METZ in the vicinity of BOULAY. By attacking along the ridge line containing the MAGINOT forts, commanding ground would be held during the advance and the forts could be reduced, if necessary, one at a time without having the assault troops subjected to supporting cross fires of this fortified line.

From THIONVILLE northeast to the German boundary the MOSELLE River traverses a broad river plain with river banks varying from moderately abrupt to gently sloping. West of the MOSELLE, opposite the trace of the MAGINOT Line, the Forest of CATTENOM provided an assembly area for the initial river crossing operation although it had a military disadvantage in being located on the forward slopes of the valley hills. Between the forest and the river the ground was devoid of cover and completely under observation from the enemy-held high ground east of the river. The entry into and the assault from the woods was to occur under cover of darkness.

Across the river to the right of the CATTENOM assembly area stood Fort KOENIGSMACHER. To the left was the head of the ridge which contained the line of the MAGINOT forts. These two heights commanded the entire crossing area and provided the enemy with excel-

lent observation. The tactical effect of the entire terrain favored the enemy. It would force the infantry and armor of the XX Corps to canalize the attack between ridge lines of a hilly and heavily wooded terrain.

General WALKER, after making a personal reconnaissance of the northern portion of XX Corps zone, selected the area between MALLING and CATTENOM for the 90th Infantry Division crossing site. This division would first reduce Fort KOENIGSMACHER and then establish a bridgehead over the MOSELLE in this area. The 10th Armored Division would be passed through the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead and attack southeast to BOULAY, at the rear of the METZ fortified region, on the outside of the 90th Infantry Division. After these two divisions had swept forward on their assigned mission, the 83rd Infantry Division would be passed over at the same place and dispatched on its concurrent mission to the northeast. The 90th Infantry Division was to link up with the 5th Infantry Division south of BOULAY and thus complete the encirclement of fortress METZ.

It was planned that the 10th Armored Division would be passed through the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead on XX Corps order and sweep wide to disrupt communications, destroy reinforcements, and aid in the blocking of enemy escape routes from METZ. The more open ground east of the MAGINOT Line permitted greater freedom of movement for armored operations. Fort KOENIGSMACHER was to be reduced before the armor was passed through the bridgehead.

It was believed, from the available intelligence, that the river line opposite THIONVILLE was heavily defended by the enemy. Further south at UCKANGE there was an excellent crossing site. This was the logical place for a river crossing and it was thought that the enemy would be set for an attack in this area. With these considerations in mind, General WALKER ordered an infantry battalion of the 95th Infantry Division to make a demonstration in force at UCKANGE in order to distract the enemy's attention from the main effort of the 90th Infantry Division in KOENIGSMACHER.

The remainder of the 95th Infantry Division would be disposed to contain the German fortified salient west of METZ. The division would maintain constant pressure along this defensive perimeter until the encirclement had been accomplished or until a weak spot developed there. Then, on order of General WALKER, the 95th Infantry Division was to advance and capture the city of METZ. This plan was submitted to Third US Army for approval on 28 October. General PATTON believed that it would be possible for an armored task force of combat command size to make a surprise attack to the SAAR River in the vicinity of MERZIG and seize bridges intact there while the enemy's attention was concentrated in the defense of METZ. The vicinity of MERZIG was selected because there was a good road network up from the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead area. If this plan should fail, the effort to cross the SAAR would be diverted further south to PACHTEN or SAARLAUTERN. CCB of the 10th Armored Division was chosen to execute this portion of the plan.

Prior to the river crossing, the 3rd Cavalry Group would screen the MOSELLE River line north of THIONVILLE and cover the readjustment of the troops. After the bridgehead had been established, the cavalry would follow the 10th Armored Division across and release elements of the 90th Infantry Division on the north flank of the bridgehead to join the main effort to the south. The cavalry would then guard the north flank of XX Corps and maintain contact between CCB of the 10th Armored Division and the 83rd Infantry Division.

D-Day was set for 9 November 1944. The intervening two-week period was to be used in training troops for the assault of fortified positions and in the regrouping of units.

BATTLE OF MAIZIERES-les-METZ But during this period the 90th Infantry Division continued its attack on MAIZIERES-les-METZ, six miles northeast of METZ. The purpose of this attack was to eliminate the strongly held enemy position so that a drive could be made straight south into METZ, along the west banks of the MOSELLE where the defense system was weak. This enemy stronghold in MAIZIERES-les-METZ was reduced on 30 October after savage house-to-house fighting. Positions were thereby secured astride the main highway to METZ. (See Appendix Number 8 for a detailed account of the battle of MAIZIERES-les-METZ.)

DEPLOYMENT During October two new and unseasoned divisions, the 95th Infantry Division and the 10th Armored Division, were attached to XX Corps. The 95th Infantry Division was at once placed in the ARNAVILLE bridgehead to give it battle experience while the 5th Infantry Division was assembled in a rear area to conduct a ten-



Northern Edge of MAIZIERES - les - METZ

day intensive training program in the assault of fortified positions. When this was completed the 95th Infantry Division relinquished the ARNAVILLE bridgehead to the 5th Infantry Division, then moved north to take over the positions of the 90th Infantry Division on the northern perimeter of the METZ fortifications west of the MOSELLE. The 90th Infantry Division upon relief moved into the rear and conducted a one-week training schedule on river crossings and assault of fortified positions.

The 10th Armored Division was placed along the southern perimeter of the German salient west of the MOSELLE. This was done not only to give the division battle indoctrination, but also to confuse the enemy. The 4th and 6th Armored Divisions of XII Corps were being assembled in the vicinity of PONT-a-MOUSSON. It was believed by the XX Corps Commander that if the 10th Armored Division were put in this same locality the enemy would assume that a concentration of armor was to be employed in a drive south and east of METZ, a deceptive move which battle evidence later proved successful.

ENEMY FORCES During this period of relative quiet the enemy commanders had ample time to consider the strategic value of the METZ system and to organize their defenses. Four divisions, numbering in all 30,000 troops, were holding METZ and the MOSELLE River line. On the north, the 416th Infantry Division with a strength estimated at 8,300 men, held the sector from KOENIGSMACHER to the northern boundary of XX Corps. The 19th Infantry Division, with a strength of not more than 5,000 troops, held the MOSELLE sector from KOENIGSMACHER to within five miles of METZ. The 462nd Volksgrenadier Division commanded the fortified region surrounding METZ. This division with its Officer Candidate School personnel and special fortress troops, had a strength of approximately 9,000 men. South of METZ was the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, numbering approximately 6,000 men. Other General Headquarters units, such as flak and artillery battalions, totalling 2,000 men, were scattered throughout the area. The enemy had used up most of his tanks and self-propelled guns during the operations in September and October and was known to be light in anti-tank weapons. On 1 November

XIII SS Corps, in the METZ defensive sector, was replaced by LXXXII (82nd) Infantry Corps, commanded by Generaleutnant HOENNLEIN. Generaleutnant KITTEL, an expert in fortress defense, was brought from the eastern front to take command of the 462nd Volksgrenadier Division. He, however, did not arrive in METZ until the operation had begun. Upon his arrival he did what he could to dispose units to meet the attack and gave orders to defend at all costs, but by that time XX Corps had already breached the defense shell.

CAVALRY CAPTURE OF BERG The enemy held one small pocket across the MOSELLE on the northern portion of XX Corps' zone. This pocket was held by three enemy companies in the town of BERG and on the high slopes directly northwest of it. Their presence precluded a surprise attack in the KOENIGSMACHER area. The 3rd Cavalry Group, commanded by Colonel James K. POLK, which was patrolling in this area, was ordered by Corps on 4 November to wipe out the pocket. The attack was made in the early morning darkness of 5 November by a small armored-infantry team. This team penetrated the minefield that blocked entrance to the town of BERG and drove the enemy defenders there across the MOSELLE. This action isolated the remaining enemy company on the slope to the northwest of the town. Artillery concentrations on the slope paved the way for an attack by a small force of dismounted cavalry which captured the enemy and occupied the hill. This cleared the stage for the assembling of XX Corps units behind CATTENOM prior to the attack.

XX CORPS ARTILLERY PLAN AND PREPARATION The Commanding General of XX Corps Artillery (Brigadier General Julius A. SLACK) had available to supplement the normal division artillery, 18 2/3 field artillery battalions plus the light 100mm French guns of the captured fortress GUENTRANGE and captured German ordnance. (See Appendix Number 9.)

Because the two areas of initial assault for the encirclement of METZ were so widely separated (40 to 45 miles), the III Corps Artillery Headquarters and Headquarters Battery was placed in charge of XX Corps Artillery disposed to support the attack of the 5th Infantry Division in the southern bridgehead. The XX Corps Artillery allocated its 18 2/3 field artillery battalions (including the eight French 100mm guns of the fortress GUENTRANGE) to support the 90th Infantry Division attack. The 10th Armored Division Artillery under XX Corps Artillery control and two battalions of the 83rd Infantry Division Artillery also supported the attack of the 90th Infantry Division. One field artillery group and a field artillery battalion, manning captured enemy guns, reinforced the 95th Infantry Division in the area selected for its demonstration in force in the vicinity of UCKANGE. Security was of paramount importance in the movement of XX Corps Artillery to the new position areas; deceptive measures were adopted. Artillery remaining in old position areas increased their rate of fire to more than the same volume that all the artillery normally fired. Radios and observation posts were left in old position areas to maintain normal traffic and patrol. Reconnaissance and survey of the new position areas were restricted.

During the movement by the 90th Infantry Division to the MALLING—CATTENOM area, all vehicle markings and shoulder patches were changed to correspond with those of the 3rd Cavalry Group, which had been operating for several weeks in that area. As an additional deceptive measure, the 23rd Special Troops were assigned the job of maintaining the pre-existing artillery picture, and with their dummy rubber guns moved in under cover of darkness in the abandoned positions. Gun positions, camouflage, motor traffic, and radio communications of the old set-up were zealously maintained. Flashes of chemical powders were set off simultaneously with the firing of the one group of XX Corps Artillery that had remained behind to reinforce the 95th Infantry Division. The artillery supporting the 90th Infantry Division moved forward and was in position on the morning of 7 November, the day before the 90th Infantry Division commenced its movement under cover of darkness into the assembly area. Registrations were restricted to one gun per battalion the afternoon before the attack, 8 November. These registrations were covered by simultaneous fire from Fortress GUENTRANGE and the guns of two other field artillery battalions which had been in firing position for several weeks past in support of the 3rd Cavalry Group.

PART IV

PINPOINTING METZ

UCKANGE The 3rd Cavalry Group, reinforced by a battalion of tank destroyers, was spread over a front of 20.5 miles along the MOSELLE River, screening the troop movements to its rear, from THIONVILLE to the northern boundaries of XX Corps' zone. The 95th Infantry Division by 2 November had disposed its forces around the fortified salient west of the MOSELLE. The 379th Infantry Regiment relieved the 10th Armored Division from the southern portion facing Fort DRIANT, and on 8 November the armor began its move north to an assembly area behind the CATTENOM Forest, prepared on order of the Corps Commander to pass through the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead. The 378th Infantry held the western and northwestern portions of the enemy bridgehead. The 377th Infantry (less the 1st Battalion) was grouped in and around MAIZIERES-les-METZ, preparing to make a feint south of the town as a cover for the river crossing by the 1st Battalion. This battalion was poised at UCKANGE, ready to kindle the spark that would set the front ablaze and culminate in the destruction of the fortified barrier that stood like an armored shield between XX Corps and the SAAR River.

The 1st Battalion, 377th Infantry, made an assault boat crossing 500 yards north of UCKANGE at 2100 hours, 8 November, cut north and by-passed BERTRANGE to penetrate to positions commanding the crossroad 400 yards northeast of BERTRANGE.

Enemy reaction was as anticipated. The 1216th Grenadier Regiment, supported by tanks, was rushed to the high ground commanding the eastern approaches from UCKANGE, and it was held prepared to sweep down on a larger force that it momentarily expected to cross. Small units of the enemy regiment were sent to contain the 1st Battalion, but the enemy relied mainly on self-propelled guns and horse-drawn artillery to harass the crossing area. When the 1st Battalion, 377th Infantry, a week later became a part of Task Force BACON, the 1216th Regiment had already been pulled back and committed in support of the 19th Panzer Grenadier Division in an attempt to halt the 90th Infantry Division.

FLANKING THE SOUTHERN DEFENSES OF METZ

On 1 November the 5th Infantry Division took over the ARNAVILLE bridgehead from the 95th Infantry Division and reoccupied their previous positions along an extended front of 12,000 yards from the MOSELLE River at CORNY to the Corps right boundary south of LES MESNILS.

After the bridgehead was reoccupied patrols learned that the enemy had prepared a systematic defense works with mines, roadblocks and blown bridges. The enemy line was held by a regiment of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, two fortress machine gun battalions and several battalions of the Stellung type which outposted the river at night, but withdrew to strongpoints in the villages during the day. On 3 November the 5th Infantry Division was informed of its task in the XX Corps operation: To envelop METZ from the south. The initial mission was to effect a crossing of the SEILLE River and drive to the NIED River in the vicinity of BAZONCOURT. The 5th Infantry Division planned to attack east across the SEILLE River with two regiments abreast.

The 10th Infantry, on the left, was to cross at the bend of the SEILLE River north of CHEMINOT, cover LOUVIGNY and secure the north flank of the bridgehead. The 2nd Infantry, on the right, making the main effort, was to cross simultaneously at the bend of the river near CHEMINOT, converge on CHEMINOT and attack LOUVIGNY from the south. After LOUVIGNY the 2nd Infantry would continue on to the initial divisional objective, SILLY-en-SAULNOIS. The 10th Infantry, after securing the north flank of the initial bridgehead, was to extend and cover the flank of the 2nd Infantry as it carried the attack east. As the attack developed the 11th Infantry was to extend its right flank to the SEILLE River and prepare to advance on division order to destroy the enemy in the triangle between the MOSELLE and the SEILLE Rivers. The 5th Infantry Division was notified that CCB of the 6th Armored Division would come across XX Corps' boundary from the south into the zone of the 2nd Infantry east of LOUVIGNY. This move was designed to take advantage of the main highway to the NIED River where CCB was to turn to the south in accordance with the plans of XII Corps.

The enemy was known to have concentrations in LOUVIGNY and at VERNY and ORNY, around the stronghold of Fort L'AISNE. In addition to the artillery fire plan to cover these strongpoints, XIX Tactical Air Command was called upon for bombardment of the Fort L'AISNE position and other known strongpoints in the zone south of METZ. Two squadrons of fighter bombers were to provide tactical support on the initial days of the bridgehead operation. On 8 November the 5th Infantry Division was informed by XX Corps Headquarters that its portion of the operation would begin at 0530 hours, 9 November.

SECURING THE NORTH FLANK OF THE BRIDGEHEAD

On the afternoon of 8 November the SEILLE River began to rise as the result of the three-day period heavy rainfall. By midnight it had overflowed its natural banks and spread out to a width of 300—600 feet at the proposed sites for crossing. It was decided to cross all assault companies by assault boats instead of by employing foot bridges at the planned position. The assault crossing of the 10th Infantry was unopposed, but due to the high river level, construction of the infantry support bridge north of CHEMINOT was slow and difficult. The leading assault elements drew fire while proceeding along the ridge east of the SEILLE River. Leaving the advance units to engage the enemy, the remainder of the 10th Infantry, under cover of a smoke screen and early morning fog, rushed the slopes of the ridge to secure the wooded knoll that dominated Fort L'AISNE, 3,000 yards to the north. The enemy's reaction to the occupation of the hill was a heavy artillery concentration falling dead center on the wooded area, but the positions had been organized only on the edges of the woods and the concentration was not effective. The 10th Infantry had reached its objective in time to observe the air bombardment on VERNY, GOIN and POMMERIEUX and to witness the effect in breaking up enemy concentrations there.

ATTACK ON LOUVIGNY

In the 2nd Infantry zone the 1st Battalion began its crossing of the swollen river at 0530 hours, 9 November, just north of LONGUEVILLE. The crossing was made by assault boats and CHEMINOT was attacked and occupied without serious opposition by 0800 hours. Immediately after the assault crossing the supporting engineers put an improvised infantry support bridge across the river and the 2nd Battalion crossed this bridge at 0800 hours and moved to the east under cover of the southern ridge line. The leading company was pinned down by sudden bursts of small arms fire from ST JURE which prevented the execution of the planned surprise attack on LOUVIGNY from the south. ST JURE was on the boundary between XX and XII Corps, and the 80th Infantry Division, advancing on the south of this boundary in the concurrent XII Corps operation, had by-passed the town. At 1400 hours the battalion commander decided to attack LOUVIGNY with his two free companies while the other company remained to contain ST JURE. At 1500 hours the surprise attack jumped off from the cover of the ridge, breasted the ridge line in full view of the enemy and knocked out enemy machine gun crews southeast of the town, clearing it before the enemy was fully aware of the attack. The town was occupied at 1730 hours and an outpost front was extended to the railroad line to the east.

The 3rd Battalion had crossed into the bridgehead at 1000 hours on a mission to pass through the 2nd Battalion along the southern boundary to the high ground of LOUVIGNY. However, due to the skirmish at ST JURE the 3rd Battalion relieved the company of the 2nd Battalion, engaged the enemy at ST JURE and cleared them out by 2100 hours. The 3rd Battalion prepared to carry on the attack the next morning.

The bridging operation by XX Corps Engineers had been hindered more by high water than by enemy action. A plan to use prepared Bailey bridges became impracticable. At the highway bridge site it was decided to first construct a treadway infantry support bridge, capable of carrying light traffic while the longer operation of erecting a Bailey bridge was completed. This treadway bridge had progressed sufficiently by 0800 hours to carry the dismounted assaulting troops and by 1400 hours was reinforced to carry light vehicular traffic. Work on the 160-foot Bailey bridge was completed by 0230 hours the next night.

However, at the LONGUEVILLE bridge site operations did not progress so well, and after attempts to span the site with an M-1 treadway and later with a floating treadway bridge both of which proved unsuccessful as a result of the overflow of the MOSELLE River, an infantry support bridge was completed at LONGUEVILLE at 1600 hours securing two-way communications for the bridgehead.

By means of the Bailey bridge at the highway bridge site supporting tanks and tank destroyers for the 2nd Infantry were crossed at 0500 hours, 10 November. During the night

the 10th Infantry had wiped out the remnants of resistance along the ridge to the north and was prepared to support the 2nd Infantry in its attack to the east.

ADVANCE TO SILLY-en-SAULNOIS

During the night of 9—10 November, the 3rd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, contacted CCB of the 6th Armored Division in the vicinity of ST JURE and made arrangements to coordinate the assault schedule for the next day's attack. The 1st and 3rd Battalions were to secure the flanks of the highway by attacking PAGNY-les-GOIN and VIGNY. CCB was to move north, enter the highway at the crossroads east of LOUVIGNY and spearhead the advance to BUCHY and SILLY-en-SAULNOIS. At 0700 hours the 3rd Battalion moved towards VIGNY, but was taken under machine gun and mortar fire from ALEMONT on their right. Similar to ST JURE, ALEMONT was across XX Corp's boundary in the pocket left by the 80th Infantry Division. But the town was situated on a summit which commanded the entire 2nd Infantry zone of advance. XII Corps was contacted and it was learned that the area around ALEMONT was free of friendly troops. The 2nd Battalion, employing its attached tank company for close-in fire support, took the town by 1100 hours. One company then bypassed the town and captured the high ground to the southeast of VIGNY. The 2nd Battalion met little opposition on the ground, but as it took positions on the hill with the attached tanks supporting it, heavy artillery fire was received from enemy batteries near VERNY and CHERISEY. Charging through this fire curtain the objective was secured by 1225 hours.

At 0700 hours the 1st Battalion jumped off from LOUVIGNY under an artillery preparation to attack PAGNY-les-GOIN and secure the north flank for the main attack along the highway. PAGNY-les-GOIN had had its defenses softened by the air bombardment on the first day of the attack, but was still held by approximately one company of a fortress battalion equipped with automatic weapons. Temporary obstacles of logs, masonry and machinery blocked the entrance of the town. The 1st Battalion was closing in on the town when it was engaged by an enfilading fire of machine guns and mortars from GOIN, 2,000 yards to the northeast. GOIN was on the exposed left flank where neither the 10th Infantry nor the 2nd Infantry could operate against it. Later in the morning the division artillery serenaded the enemy positions, causing a decrease in fire. At 1130 hours the 1st Battalion cleared the obstacles and broke into the town.

During the morning CCB of the 6th Armored Division, moving north in column, prepared to attack east along the highway. Just after turning on to the highway the advance was blocked by a demolished bridge over the railroad and a detour to the north was planned through PAGNY-les-GOIN as soon as the town was cleared. Meanwhile, the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, which was mounted on tanks, prepared to follow CCB, was ordered to move one mounted company to the high ground north of VIGNY to guard against flanking fire on PAGNY-les-GOIN. The company was delayed due to the congestion of CCB vehicles but then moved quickly to the objective and captured it from a small enemy force. CCB followed quickly into VIGNY and pushed on to BUCHY. The remainder of the 2nd Infantry followed behind until the 10th Infantry brought its reserve 1st Battalion into the bridgehead and took over responsibility for the rear and north flank to PAGNY-les-GOIN and VIGNY.

The 1st Battalion, 2nd Infantry, was then given the mission of attacking across the 4,000 yards of open country from PAGNY to SILLY-en-SAULNOIS, to traverse the exposed right flank, and to take the regimental objective by nightfall. A light mist gave some cover for the attack and it went well until at 1600 hours the slope 200 yards from SILLY-en-SAULNOIS was reached. At that point heavy mortar fire and 20mm anti-aircraft fire was received from LIEHON, 1,00 yards to the north. The fire gave impetus to the forward elements to reach cover in SILLY-en-SAULNOIS. The town itself was defended lightly, since CCB during the afternoon had concentrated to the south of the town and by putting fire on it had caused the enemy to withdraw to the east. The 3rd Battalion moved up to outpost the north—south road at a point south of SILLY-en-SAULNOIS. Thus, with the town surrounded on two sides and attacked on the third, the 1st Battalion had little trouble in capturing the town itself and securing it by 1700 hours.

Through the rapidity of the 2nd Infantry attack and the effectiveness of the initial strike by the air and artillery, the Germans had lost their defenses along the SEILLE River. The enemy's reaction to the second day's attack indicated that he was attempting to build up a wedge defense against the southern fortresses along the VERNY — CHERISEY — PONTOY — SORBIEY line, while the garrisons in the towns further south attempted to hold up the encircling movement.

ADVANCE TO THE NIED RIVER

The plan of attack, to be resumed the next morning, 11 November, was to cover the remaining five miles to the NIED River and to establish a bridgehead in the vicinity of ANCERVILLE. CCB jumped off at 0630 hours to BEUX, and dividing into two columns proceeded to DAIN-en-SAULNOIS and AUBE. The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, mounted on tanks of the 735th Tank Battalion, moved up with CCB and seized the high ground flanking each side of the highway at BEUX. The 3rd Battalion supported by tanks, moved from SILLY-en-SAULNOIS across the ridge line to the north of the highway. The route of advance brought them under direct fire of the enemy batteries on the defense line 3,000 yards to the north. The 3rd Battalion passed to the left of the 2nd Battalion in the vicinity of BEUX and late in the afternoon reached the high ground north of AUBE, overlooking the NIED River. CCB followed by the 2nd Battalion moved to DAIN-en-SAULNOIS and on to positions overlooking the NIED River at ANCERVILLE. The 1st Battalion secured the town for the forthcoming bridgehead operations.

The bridge at ANCERVILLE had been blown. An engineer platoon sent up to prepare a crossing site came under mortar and machine gun fire from ANCERVILLE. The 1st Battalion was ordered by the 2nd Infantry commander to make an assault crossing that night to protect the far shore while the bridge was constructed. Elements of the battalion crossed, held a shallow bridgehead without difficulty, and during the night a treadway bridge was constructed. The next morning ANCERVILLE and the ground to the east was captured by the 1st Battalion. However, CCB while making a reconnaissance for a crossing had been able to seize the bridge at SANRY-sur-NIED just as an enemy patrol was about to blow it. The reconnaissance elements secured a small bridgehead during the night and CCB planned to cross at dawn the next morning.

THE NIED RIVER BRIDGEHEAD

According to the XX Corps plan for encircling METZ the 5th Infantry Division had the mission of securing the NIED River bridgehead, both to cover the turning movement of CCB back into the XII Corps zone and to be in position to cut the main escape route from METZ at COURCELLES-CHAUSSY. It was expected that the enemy would strongly contest this threat to his escape route. The 2nd Infantry planned to seize the towns of SANRY-sur-NIED, BAZONCOURT and VITTONVILLE. An agreement was made whereby CCB would aid in seizing these objectives, while the infantry guarded the exposed north flank. Then, the infantry would take over the area while CCB turned south at VAUCREMONT to their original axis of advance at VITTONCOURT. At 0130 hours the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, was ordered to the NIED River bridgehead. After a short fire fight the battalion moved into SANRY-sur-NIED at 0800 hours. CCB crossed the bridge but the mined road and heavy anti-tank fire from the left flank made the advance to VAUCREMONT difficult. CCB asked for infantry aid in clearing the north flank. Supporting artillery took the enemy positions under fire and drove out the anti-tank threat. The 2nd Battalion moved up slowly to VAUCREMONT with CCB. At 2100 hours the 2nd Battalion secured the town and CCB began their turn to the south.

The enemy made his counterattack on the SANRY-sur-NIED area the next day. Following a heavy artillery preparation the enemy attack came at 1400 hours against the right flank. The enemy formation was spotted as it left the cover of the woods and all available fire from artillery, mortars, tank destroyers, and tanks cut down the attacking formation. While this attack was being met on the right, a heavier counterattack was made from DOMANGEVILLE. Artillery fire came too late and the enemy overran the observation post on the western hill and reached to within 500 yards of the town. But the right flank defense placed a large volume of fire on the hill and forced the enemy to withdraw before it.

At 2200 hours another attack broke loose from the northwest and northeast under a heavy artillery barrage. At first, darkness prevented the forward observers from spotting the enemy attack formation. A house-to-house defense within the town stopped the counter-attack at close range and forced the Germans to pull back. There were no other large-scale attacks on the NIED River bridgehead. This initial objective of the 5th Infantry Division had been taken on 12 November and held until 14 November, when on order of XX Corps the direction of attack was changed to the north. By that time the 10th Infantry, through patrol action, had found that the southern forts were lightly held and the 90th Infantry Division, having established the bridgehead at KOENIGSMACHER, was prepared to close on METZ from the north.

THE KOENIGSMACHER BRIDGEHEAD The 90th Infantry Division, prior to its movement into a final assembly area in the CATTENOM Forest, had carefully implemented the XX Corps order. Briefly, the plan contemplated an assault crossing by two regiments, the 358th Infantry and the 359th Infantry, in order to develop the maximum strength of the division as quickly as possible. Engineer attachments from XX Corps joined and trained with the assault regiments in their training areas. The XX Corps Engineer's work was planned by the XX Corps Engineer to consist of the furnishing and manning of assault boats for the MOSELLE crossing and the construction of infantry support bridges, M-2 treadway bridges and floating Bailey bridges at each of the regimental crossing sites, CATTENOM and MALLING. Everyone was busy. Supply echelons prepared an operational plan to maintain and provide evacuation for their respective regiments by assault boats and motor boats if vehicular ferries or bridges failed. The problem of signal communications was also given careful consideration. In addition to a double tactical net, engineer and traffic control nets were organized and linked together. In realization of the unusual demands which would be placed on the radio system until such time as adequate bridging could be provided, extra stocks of batteries were accumulated. At the divisional level the supply agencies made their preparation for the movement of supplies considerably further forward than normal to all lower unit supply echelons so that these latter could concentrate their efforts forward of the regimental dumps.

By marching and shuttling its organic trucks (and those provided by G-4, XX Corps) the 90th Infantry Division moved at night to the CATTENOM Forest. By dawn of 8 November the entire division and supporting elements had closed quietly within the final assembly area and the defiladed area to its rear. The final steps and arrangements preparatory to the attack were made throughout the day of 8 November. Artillery battalions registered with but one gun per battalion preparing the firing data. Communications were extended forward and laterally throughout the divisional area. Lower echelon commanders surveyed from the high ground their far-bank objectives, established their initial phase lines and made their reconnaissance of routes of approach and crossing areas. Personnel concerned with traffic circulation and bridge control received their final instructions and went to their posts. In the afternoon every man in the 90th Infantry Division received a thorough briefing on the coming mission with emphasis being placed on its importance in the tactical plans of XX Corps and Third US Army. Under cover of an accelerated assault gun preparation by the 3rd Cavalry Group, the XX Corps Engineers moved forward at darkness to the best unloading points. Plans and preparation were finished. Their fulfillment remained.

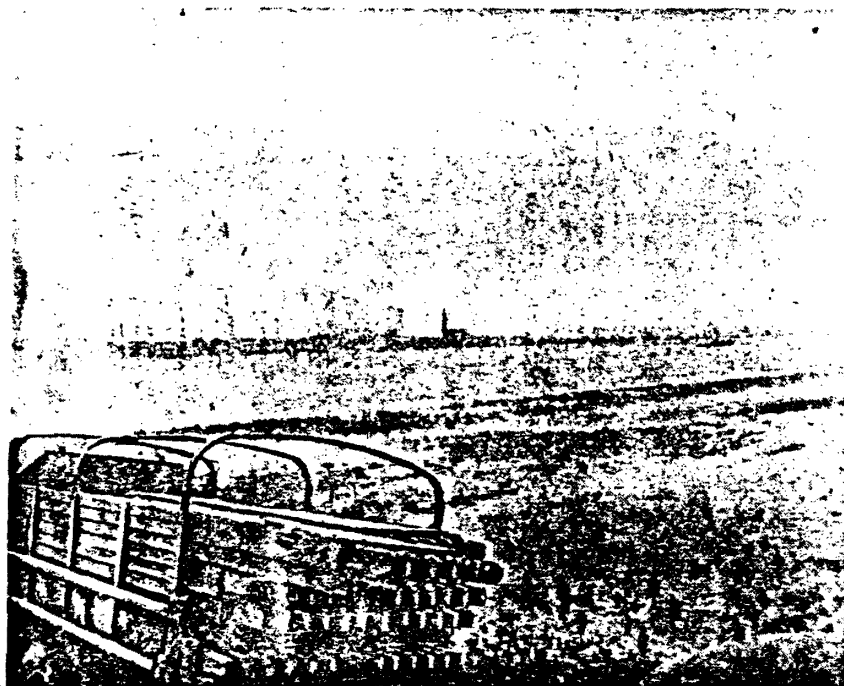
THE CROSSING AT KOENIGSMACHER Stealthily, and in complete blackout, the assault battalions of the 358th and 359th Infantry Regiments moved shortly after midnight from their assembly areas to the pre-established boat stations. After a 400-yard carry of the cumbersome boats over the open ground, the first waves crossed the rapidly-rising waters of the MOSELLE. The MOSELLE initially aided the assault, inundating the close-up enemy defenses, but the rapidly-rising river made the crossing more and more difficult.

The swift current swept boats far downstream. Foot-bridge cable could not be anchored and, to add to the difficulties, the enemy began dropping artillery fire and mortar shells on the near banks among the infantry waiting to cross and the engineers struggling with the boats. While the rear units experienced their crossing difficulties, the 1st Battalion, 359th Infantry, on the left, had at dawn by-passed MALLING and cut behind the main lateral road in two places around the outskirts of HUNTING. On its right the 2nd Battalion launched an assault on PETITE-HETTANGE and METRICH.

On the right the 3rd Battalion secured a foothold on the ridge that flanked Fort KOENIGSMACHER to the north. On the extreme right of the divisional zone, the 1st Battalion seized the town of BASSE HAM to protect the right flank of the division. While this fighting was going on, the reserve battalion of the 358th Infantry began to cross and the 3rd Battalion of the 357th Infantry moved into CATTENOM.

The enemy had been taken completely by surprise. The MOSELLE, rather than the enemy, became the more formidable foe. The river expanded 300 to 600 feet and by noon had swelled to 800 yards in width. More and more boats were lost. The six battalions of infantry across the river made progress but were fighting with hand-carried weapons only.

In the north the 359th Infantry made good progress, pushing straight east and north from HUNTING to reach the high ground northeast of KERLING. PETITE-HETTANGE, MET-



The CATTENOM Crossing Site on 9 November, Seen from the West Bank of the MOSELLE

RICH and KERLING were captured but the push was halted 1,000 yards from OUDRENNE to the southeast by minefields.

The 1st Battalion, 358th Infantry, was engaged in assaulting Fort KOENIGSMACHER, where it awaited the reduction of the fort. The 2nd Battalion of the 358th Infantry finally completed its crossing and assembled just west of KOENIGSMACHER. The hazardous crossing of the MOSELLE continued and in order to speed the deployment of the reserve regiment, the 357th Infantry, the 2nd Battalion went across the MOSELLE from GAVISSE and assembled in METRICH. Upon assembly, patrols sent into KOENIGSMACHER found the town unoccupied.

At the end of the first day's activities the 90th Infantry Division had moved eight battalions of infantry across the flooded river, had penetrated to a depth of two miles without armored support, overrun seven towns, penetrated a METZ type fort, and captured 200 prisoners. The initial bridgehead had been secured.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE KOENIGSMACHER BRIDGEHEAD

The enemy struck back in the early morning of 10 November. A strong infantry and tank force hit the outposts of the 359th Infantry at KERLING. The force of the counterattack smashed through KERLING and uncovered the road from KERLING to PETITE-HETTANGE. But weakened by the stubborn resistance, the enemy could not press his advantage past KERLING.

By the use of marching fire, the keystone fort, Fort METRICH was enveloped and reduced. The advance of the 358th Infantry on the right flank was being bitterly contested. The 3rd Battalion on the left of the regimental flank, after repelling counterattacks, advanced 500 yards to consolidate its positions on a ridge running parallel to Fort KOENIGSMACHER. The 2nd Battalion, attempting to swing along on the right flank of the 3rd Battalion, ran into the flanking fires from machine gun emplacements on the south side of Fort KOENIGSMACHER. It retired to take up positions in the area vacated by the advance of the 3rd Battalion. The 1st Battalion, 358th Infantry, met an impasse similar to the one at Fort



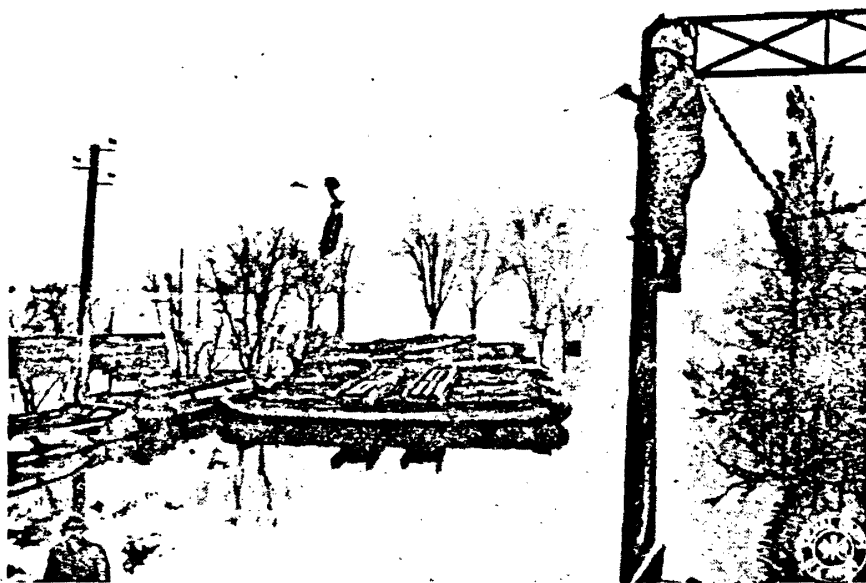
A View of the Northeast Corner of Fort KOENIGSMACHER

DRIANT. The Germans were snugly situated underground while the Americans on the surface were receiving mortar and artillery fire. But the lessons of Fort DRIANT had been learned. Explosives were needed at once. Supply by boat across the river was impractical due to the current and accuracy of the enemy's artillery fire on the crossing site so five liaison planes loaded with the new explosive compound "C 2" flew through enemy flak and dropped the explosives to the 1st Battalion. Entrances to tunnels were broken open on the south side of the fort. After the entry had been secured additional charges were placed in the subterranean passages and detonated. This procedure sealed the captured casemates from enemy re-entry, and the 1st Battalion maintained itself throughout the day safely inside the fort.

The rain continued and the river rose unchecked. The inundated area was now one and one-half miles wide, with water standing in the streets at both CATTENOM and GAVISSE. The eight infantry battalions on the far bank were still fighting with hand-carried weapons and needed armor to counter the infantry-tank teams that the enemy had collected and was prepared to throw into the battle at this particular stage. Battle casualties had been severe and the toll from exposure and trench foot was increasing steadily. A bridge was the only answer.

The Corps Commander, in an effort to employ the 10th Armored Division more quickly, planned a bridgehead at THIONVILLE since the river bed of the MOSELLE would be least felt. The 95th Infantry Division was ordered the morning of 10 November to send a battalion of infantry to force a bridgehead over the MOSELLE at THIONVILLE and remove hostile small arms fire from the area so as to permit construction of a Bailey bridge for passage of vehicular and armored traffic. The Corps Commander ordered the engineering work at MALLING to be continued with all speed and the MALLING bridge was completed by early morning on 11 November. The 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry Regiment (95th Infantry Division), was moved the afternoon of 10 November to THIONVILLE, where it met the supporting 135th Engineer Combat Battalion of XX Corps for an assault crossing.

In the center of the bridgehead the 357th Infantry drove forward the morning of 11 November through rugged, wooded terrain along the line of the MAGINOT forts and made excellent progress. But the rapidity of this forward thrust had exposed its flanks. At night-



The Flooded MOSELLE at CATTENOM, 10 November

fall the leading companies were on the high ground a half mile northwest of BRIESTROFF-la-PETITE with its battalions deployed at considerable depth to protect its flanks and a supply route through the center of the regimental zone. The 1st Battalion seized and blocked the main crossroads a mile northeast of RETTEL, securing the left flank of the 90th Infantry Division. The other battalions pushed past KERLING and through enemy small arms fire to seize the high ground north and west of KERLING and the ridge south of KERLING that overlooked OUDRENNE.

On the right of the bridgehead the 358th Infantry moved forward, leaving one company to retain the rear of Fort KOENIGSMACHER. The 2nd Battalion slipped past the machine guns which had denied its advance the previous day and took up positions along a wooded ridge on the right of the 3rd Battalion. At 0800 hours, 11 November, the 3rd Battalion was counterattacked. They annihilated the assault, and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved ahead, impeded by concentrated mortar fire and fanatical enemy resistance.

In Fort KOENIGSMACHER (See Appendix Number 10 for a full account) the assault teams from the 1st Battalion blazed their way through structure after structure and drove the enemy garrison into an ever-constricting area. In the afternoon the enemy garrison was caught retreating from the attack of the 1st Battalion. Three hundred seventy-two enemy survivors surrendered and Fort KOENIGSMACHER was clear of any living Germans. The 3rd Battalion, 358th Infantry, while this was going on, drove forward to commanding ground, while the 2nd Battalion to its right rear took up positions for an attack on LEMESTROFF.

At THIONVILLE (See Appendix Number 11 for a full account) the enemy was surprised by the assault crossing of the 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry, but recovered quickly and swept the crossing site with small arms fire followed by heavy artillery from Fort D'ILLANGE and mortar fire from Fort YUTZ. The remainder of the day was spent in pushing slowly forward, driving the enemy before it and consolidating positions won.

At 1800 hours, 11 November, the MOSELLE had reached its highest crest and began to subside slowly. But the river was still far too wide and the current too swift for bridging activities. The artillery on the western side of the river worked knee-deep in mud to

support the infantry on the far side of the MOSELLE and boxed off by fire the assault units from enemy counterattacks. By midnight the water in the causeway leading from GAVISSE to MALLING had receded sufficiently to permit the movement across the river of one Corps Artillery tractor pulling engineer trailers.

At 0830 hours on 12 November a combat group of the 25th Panzer Grenadier Division struck the 359th Infantry in the center of the left flank. The enemy had been forced by the continuous expansion of the bridgehead to commit his reserves in an all-out effort to smash it and split it in two along the PETITE-HETTANGE — KERLING road. The main effort of the enemy was directed along this road. The attack reached PETITE-HETTANGE. The fire of all 20 batteries of artillery available to the bridgehead was called for. The reserve battalion of the 357th Infantry was assembled and driven north in aid of the 359th Infantry.

Back at the river the water had receded to permit the movement of tank destroyers across the MOSELLE. Instead of supporting the 357th Infantry as originally planned, the first



The Bridge at MALLING, 10 November

two tank destroyers across were diverted to the 359th Infantry, and rolled on to PETITE-HETTANGE where before their movement stopped they had destroyed two enemy self-propelled guns and immobilized another. The Germans began withdrawing towards KERLING and as they did the counterattacking 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry, caught the enemy in the left flank and turned the withdrawal into a rout. Simultaneously the artillery lifted its fire and covered KERLING with a steady barrage.

Later in the day the 357th Infantry, now at full strength, beat off several minor counterattacks and resumed its push along the MAGINOT Line. BRIESTROFF-la-PETITE was overrun and the west half of the high ground that dominates the town of INGLANGE from the east was secured.

On the extreme right of the bridgehead the 358th Infantry pulled ahead to secure the line ELZANGE — VALMESTROFF by mid-afternoon. At THIONVILLE the 2nd Battalion of the 358th Infantry had encircled and swarmed over the heights of old Fort YUTZ and began routing out the entrenched enemy defenders. This was accomplished by noon on

12 November and the guns of Fort GUENTRANGE and XX Corps Artillery blanketed the artillery casemates at Fort D'ILLANGE. The constructing of a Bailey bridge for the 10th Armored Division was under way and the armor was ready to strike from an assembly area in the rear of the CATTENOM Forest.

The order from XX Corps to the 90th Infantry Division on 13 November was: "Continue the attack". Throughout the night of 12—13 November ferrying activity continued along with bridging operations. A smoke generator company of a chemical mortar battalion screened the CATTENOM site proper. The MOSELLE was receding rapidly and in doing so uncovered extensive minefields the Germans had planted along the river banks. Moving the submerged mines consumed five valuable hours. Other extensive minefields were encountered throughout the bridgehead area.

A minefield southeast of the METRICH Group of the MAGINOT Line had stopped the 357th Infantry in its attack along the MAGINOT Line. The 357th Infantry consolidated



90th Infantry Division Jeep Destroyed in Minefield Guarding MAGINOT Line

its positions and effected contact with the 358th Infantry on the right and the 359th Infantry on the left. The 359th had continued to press forward and one battalion retook KERLING while another battalion advanced through the heavy woods dominating OUDRENNE until it hit the same minefield which stopped the 357th Infantry. All attempts to locate by-passes failed.

On the right the 358th Infantry committed the 1st Battalion, which advanced upon a broad front along the southern portion of the bridgehead cleaning out the town of HAUTE HAM while the remainder of the 358th Infantry fought in INGLANGE and seized the high ground overlooking DISTROFF.

At 1740 hours the first vehicle crossed the completed CATTENOM bridge. The infantry was now beyond the range of the light artillery battalions and the continuation of the infantry drive was contingent on the displacement of the supporting artillery battalions. But the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead was now established.

A turning point in the entire METZ operation had been reached. The METZ defenses had been pierced in the north and south, and the strongest and most formidable obstacle, the

MOSELLE River, had been breached. In the north the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead forces were ready to surge forward and snap the enemy bonds. The armor placed itself so as to hurtle itself behind the enemy lines and sever the lines of communication. On the south, the Corps Commander, contemplating the action of probing patrols to the north, had prepared to turn the 5th Infantry Division directly north on METZ itself. XX Corps was ready to exploit its successes and deliver the final blow to the fortified region of METZ.

PART V

ENCIRCLEMENT AND ENTRY

NEW PLANS During the initial phase of the operation, adjustments to meet the ever-changing situation were being made at XX Corps Headquarters. The use of the 83rd Infantry Division to advance on SAARBURG was halted by Twelfth Army Group order (11 November). That division was hurried north to join First US Army. The mission of seizing SAARBURG was thereupon given to the 3rd Cavalry Group, which was reinforced by engineers, tank destroyers and a battalion of artillery. This task force was to be passed through the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead (Operations Instructions Number 33, 14 November — See Appendix Number 14). In the meantime the fighting continued on all sectors.

BREAKTHROUGH IN THE NORTH At THIONVILLE, the largest Bailey bridge (190 feet long, and of the double-triple span type) known to have been constructed operationally in the European Theater of Operations up to this time was being built by the 1306th Engineer General Service Regiment. The efforts of the 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry Regiment, 95th Infantry Division, to expand its THIONVILLE bridgehead had made good progress. HAUTE YUTZ airport north of THIONVILLE had been taken. The attack turned south the following morning, 14 November, overran HAUTE YUTZ and the woods south of HAUTE YUTZ and extended along the northern edge of the woods surrounding Fort D'ILLANGE. The engineers, now able to work without interference from enemy artillery and mortar fire, completed the THIONVILLE bridge at 1300 hours, 14 November.

Further north at CATTENOM all regimental transportation of the three regiments of the 90th Infantry Division plus the light artillery and the two tank destroyer battalions had cleared the bridge the morning of 14 November.

The 357th Infantry, now far in advance of the two flanking regiments, mopped up while the other two regiments advanced about two miles on both flanks of the 357th Infantry to expand the bridgehead south and east. FRECHING on the northeast fell to the 359th Infantry. The 358th Infantry on the south captured DISTROFF. It was found that the enemy garrison at INGLANGE had been heavily reinforced with armor and anti-tank guns and plans were drafted at regiment for a full-scale attack at INGLANGE the morning of 15 November.

In view of the change in plans of the 3rd Cavalry Group, and as the bridge at THIONVILLE was ready for the armor, the Commanding General, XX Corps, sent a squadron over the bridge at CATTENOM to relieve the 1st Battalion, 379th Infantry, on the north. To get the armor rolling as quickly as possible, CCB was routed over the bridge at THIONVILLE, up the river road, past KOENIGSMACHER to PETITE-HETTANGE, where the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 379th Infantry were outposting the assembly area for the armor. CCA, 10th Armored Division, prepared to cross the completed ponton bridge at MALLING and swing east of the MAGINOT Line on the left flank of the 90th Infantry Division.

The enemy made one more desperate bid to halt the breakthrough. A counterattack in regimental size originated in METZERVISSE and struck the 2nd Battalion, 358th Infantry, positions around DISTROFF at dawn on 15 November. One enemy infantry battalion with tanks and half-tracks attempted envelopment of DISTROFF from the east. Forward artillery observers saw it coming and called for artillery. The enemy battalion west of the road was stopped by the fire but two other battalions drove a wedge into DISTROFF and split the defenders in two. The 1st Battalion, in regimental reserve at VALMESTROFF, was alerted and the attack of the 3rd Battalion at INGLANGE was postponed to await develop-

ment of this new enemy threat. However, the tanks, tank destroyers and infantry at DISTROFF stood their ground. A reserve platoon of tank destroyers, under smoke screen cover, struck the Germans on their right flank. The enemy, after four hours of fighting, withdrew toward METZERVISSE under continual bombardment of the artillery which lifted to cover all routes of withdrawal. The attack on INGLANGE, however, was deferred until the next day due to the enemy thrust. Earlier that morning the 357th Infantry had plowed through the German defenses along the trace of the MAGINOT Line to reach the forward slopes of the hill overlooking the town of BUDLING. From this position the two leading battalions received heavy and sustained 75mm fire from the three guns of Fort HACKENBERG to their left flank. Tank destroyers proved ineffective against the reinforced concrete casemates of the enemy artillery bunkers, and even 8-inch and 240mm howitzers adjusted by liaison plane failed to diminish the enemy artillery fire. Further advances had to be called off until the guns of the fort were neutralized. Reconnaissance was immediately initiated by the assault battalions for the use of the two 155mm "long Toms" which were made available from division.

The armor was crossing and gathering to exploit the bridgehead. CCB had gone into an assembly area at KERLING, prepared for an attack toward MERZIG on the morning of 16 November. CCA started across at MALLING.

At daybreak on 16 November the 358th Infantry captured INGLANGE, secured the high ground southwest of BUDLING, and sent two strong combat patrols into METZERVISSE which found the railroad track west of the town heavily defended. Armed with this information of the enemy's dispositions, the 358th Infantry in the afternoon cut left in a wide swing across their front to secure the high ground east of the town. The assault battalions then abruptly turned to the right and fell on METZERVISSE from the east under the cover of XX Corps Artillery fire, hitting the enemy on their flank and quickly rolling them up. The two assault battalions of the regiment then spread themselves along the railroad track that extended east from METZERVISSE. At a range of 2,000 yards self-propelled guns in the 359th Infantry's zone on the left worked methodically on the HACKENBERG fortifications. Teamed with the 8-inch howitzer, these weapons soon silenced the enemy guns. Relieved of this flank threat, the two assault battalions of the 357th Infantry seized the steep, wooded ridge that runs from BUDLING to VECKRING. BUDLING and HELLING were secured while the ridge was being consolidated. On the right flank STUCKANGE and REINANGE were captured by cavalry elements. On the left flank of the division the 359th Infantry was now completely uncovered by the advance of the 10th Armored Division and had assembled at OUDRENNE. Earlier in the morning of 16 November, the armor had broken out of the crowded bridgehead to accomplish its dual mission. CCB had attacked due east from KERLING towards MERZIG in three task forces to bring the full weight of his guns and fire power to bear on the enemy.

The leading task force, Task Force CHAMBERLAIN, struck out at 0700 hours, followed by Task Force DESOBREY and swept through HAUTE SIERCK to reach LAUMESFELD. There the armor ran into elements of the 119th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, reorganized after its disastrous attack on DISTROFF. Information from prisoners of war taken at LAUMESFELD revealed that the Germans were forming at HARGARTEN to strike at Task Force CHAMBERLAIN. Task Force DESOBREY rushed the enemy formation before it could get started and captured HARGARTEN. Task Force CHAMBERLAIN, meanwhile, prepared to strike toward BOUZONVILLE in the morning. Another task force, Task Force STANDISH, ran south of KERLING, swept through LEMESTROFF, turned due east, and as darkness set in wrested ST MARGUERITE from the enemy.

The 90th Infantry Division on the west of the ridge between the MAGINOT forts not only kept pace with the armor but in the center of its move was well ahead of it. The 358th Infantry attacked at 0900 hours, 17 November, to seize the ridge running between METZERVISSE and METZERESCHE. METZERESCHE, to the southeast, was attacked and captured against light enemy resistance. The high ground east and slightly south of METZERESCHE was secured and combat patrols pushed out the road running west from HOMBOURG BUDANGE. On the left flank of the divisional zone the 357th Infantry secured ELZANGE and the ridge line east of it and then moved through BUDLING and cleaned out Fort HACKENBERG. Inspection showed that the direct fire from the 155mm self-propelled guns had demolished the walls and turrets, torn guns loose from mountings, and killed the occupants of the turrets and casemates. The advance continued: KEDANGE was taken and the wooded, high ground overlooking HOMBOURG BUDANGE was occupied. While this was occurring an enemy strongpoint at KLANG barred progress. A coordinated infantry — tank attack reduced KLANG. The enemy left his prepared positions at KLANG and fled towards KEMPLICH.

While the 90th Infantry Division was battling it out with the enemy on 17 November, the armor had moved rapidly on designated routes toward BOUZONVILLE. Task Force DESOBREY, attacking at dawn, found that the bulk of the enemy had withdrawn toward the SAAR River. Task Force DESOBREY advanced along the road past HARGARTEN and entered WALDWEISTROFF. Task Force CHAMBERLAIN swept forward through BIBICHE in the wake of an aerial bombardment by a squadron of fighter bombers, cleared BECKERHOLTZ and assembled on the high ground east of BECHERHOLTZ, poised for an attack on BOUZONVILLE on the morning of 18 November. Task Force STANDISH in the center, attacking along the eastern base of the region containing the MAGINOT fortifications, shot its way through KEMPLICH, captured MENSKIRCHEN and drove the surprised enemy defenders from DALSTEIN. There the force prepared for an attack on CHEMERY-les-DEUX in the morning.

Throughout the action of the armor on 17 November, long columns of retreating enemy were observed filing along the ridge of the MAGINOT Line. The 76mm tank guns were kept busy cannonading the enemy, who either rushed along or hurried down from the heights to surrender.

The tightening noose around METZ was forcing the enemy to withdraw to the SAAR River line. The Corps Commander ordered the 90th Infantry Division to push south as rapidly as possible to effect a junction with the 5th Infantry Division coming up from that direction. This encirclement would also allow the Corps Commander to disengage CCA of the 10th Armored Division in its attack to permit committing it in support of the 3rd Cavalry Group, which had pushed north toward SAARBURG and was hacking at the fortifications in the SIEGFRIED Line which extended just north of the German border in the SAAR — MOSELLE triangle.

Upon receipt of the XX Corps order, the 90th Infantry Division directed the 359th Infantry to drive straight down the KEDANGE — ABONCOURT — ST HUBERT road. With a platoon of medium tanks attached, the 1st Battalion (motorized) of the 359th Infantry, pressed rapidly forward and overran bridges and underpasses before the enemy could demolish them. At ABONCOURT the 2nd Battalion, 359th Infantry, struck straight south through ST HUBERT and turned southeast to take up positions at CONDE-NORTHEN behind the 3rd Battalion. This latter battalion had followed the 1st Battalion through CHARLEVILLE-sous-BOIS in its drive south through CONDE-NORTHEN over the NIED River to seize the road junction south of the town at PONTIGNY.

On the left the 357th Infantry had found its path blocked by anti-tank ditches, road craters and numerous minefields. The 359th Infantry discovered a German supply point at BOCKANGE which it destroyed and outposted BOCKANGE for the night. Meanwhile, on the right of the divisional zone, the 358th Infantry advanced to LUTTANGE where it was relieved by the 90th Reconnaissance Troop. The cavalry troop drove past LUTTANGE and established itself at MANCY. A supporting platoon of medium tanks and a platoon of tank destroyers were placed on the high ground east of AVANCY and astride the highway. Late in the afternoon of 18 November an enemy battalion was caught between AVANCY and the high ground and blown to pieces by anti-tank guns and tank destroyers. During the night additional columns were jammed in the darkness against the wreckage of the first column. Tank destroyers and tanks went to work again and by morning of 19 November 500 prisoners were taken and 32 vehicles had been destroyed.

The armor of CCA had also pushed forward but was running into anti-tank ditches, minefields and destroyed bridges. Stopped by a blown bridge over the NIED River, Task Force CHAMBERLAIN seized a bridge further north at FILSTROFF. After minor repairs the bridge was ready for the passage of Task Force CHAMBERLAIN the morning of 19 November. Task Force STANDISH entered CHEMERY-les-DEUX and slipped through FREISTROFF to secure the bridge intact over the NIED River on the east side of the town.

Early on 19 November the 359th Infantry captured LES ETANGS in a surprise attack that plugged another escape route east from METZ. Two more long enemy columns moving east were trapped and the massed fires of the supporting artillery and fighter-bombardment destroyed 63 enemy vehicles. The 357th Infantry on the left occupied ROUPELDANGE, GUINKIRCHEN and HINCKANGE. The regiment was prepared to storm across the NIED River and capture BOULAY but the attack was cancelled on XX Corps order as the encirclement had already been completed by the junction of the 90th Reconnaissance Troop with elements of the 735th Tank Battalion in support of the 5th Infantry Division at VAUDREVILLE (1100 hours, 19 November).

METZ was now completely encircled. All its escape routes were blocked. The Corps Commander immediately directed the Commanding General, 10th Armored Division (Major General MORRIS) to recall CCA from its attempts across the NIED River around BOUZONVILLE and sent them north to take over the mission of the 3rd Cavalry Group and seize SAARBURG. Task Forces CHAMBERLAIN, DESOBREY and STANDISH were recalled in order to retrace their routes and begin movement north to breach the switch line fortifications of the SIEGFRIED Line.

TASK FORCE BACON On 13 November, while the 2nd Battalion of the 378th Infantry was expanding its THIONVILLE bridgehead, the 1st Battalion, 377th Infantry, at UCKANGE was across the MOSELLE and had occupied BERTRANGE and IMELDANGE. Enemy reaction to the occupation of BERTRANGE and IMELDANGE was sudden and violent. Two companies of the 1st Battalion were attacked at IMELDANGE and surrounded by the entire enemy force on the afternoon of 14 November and a small arms battle ensued.

North of this melee the enemy was sustaining a severe blow. Fort D'ILLANGE was falling to the concerted attack of the 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry. A 30-minute concentration of heavy artillery fire by two battalions of XX Corps Artillery, an infantry assault and the use of explosive charges of TNT smothered the resistance in the fort. Fort D'ILLANGE was entirely in the hands of the 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry, at 1040 hours on 15 November. The Corps Commander had been studying the situation on the eastern banks of the MOSELLE and had realized the military potentialities that existed in the area, particularly since intelligence and battle reports showed that the enemy had been forced to withdraw the bulk of his river line units and commit them in the zone of the 90th Infantry Division. Accordingly, the Corps Commander decided to take advantage of the enemy's dilemma and ordered the 95th Infantry Division to constitute a mobile striking force. This force would sweep the eastern banks of the MOSELLE along a three- to four-mile zone of advance and attack METZ from the north.

Colonel Robert L. BACON, a member of the 95th Infantry Division staff, was placed in charge of the two battalions of infantry east of the MOSELLE to be used as the base of the striking force. With attached reconnaissance, combat engineers, and tank destroyers, Colonel BACON took over at 1015 hours, 15 November, at THIONVILLE, with the mission of attacking south from Fort D'ILLANGE and clearing ILLANGE. After relieving the 10th Battalion, 377th Infantry, at IMELDANGE and establishing a platoon at the head of the bridgehead opposite UCKANGE, the task force would sweep south, clearing the east bank of the MOSELLE, and attack METZ from the north. The reconnaissance troops passed over the THIONVILLE bridge and moved out east of ILLANGE to screen the continuation of the attack to the south which captured ILLANGE at 1145 hours. Gathering the northern elements of his task force, Colonel BACON pushed south to attack IMELDANGE and relieve the surrounded 1st Battalion, 377th Infantry, at IMELDANGE. With the elimination of the enemy around IMELDANGE at 1700 hours, the 1st Battalion, 377th Infantry, joined Task Force BACON. Colonel BACON, after establishing his force into two self-sufficient assault teams built around each infantry battalion, outlined his plan to the unit officers. Each town was to be entered with tank destroyers firing point-blank at all points of resistance. Speed was essential and everything depended on the rapidity of the advance. The flanks were well protected. The MOSELLE River on the right and the 90th Infantry Division on the left would engage the full attention of the enemy. The task force would depend upon its speed, its fire power, its tank destroyers and a company of medium tanks (attached at 0300 hours, 16 November) and blast its way south into METZ.

The task force jumped off (0700 hours, 16 November) in twin columns. The 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry, moved south towards GUENANGE, while the 1st Battalion, 377th Infantry, used the western road to the right through BERTRANGE. Both columns converged on GUENANGE, quickly reducing the town, and jointly struck at BOUSSE. BOUSSE was cleared by 0900 hours. Thereafter, the 1st Battalion, reinforced, hooked left and hit RURANGE to the east, then turned south and occupied MONTRE-QUIENNE by nightfall. The 2nd Battalion continued south from BOUSSE, wresting AY-sur-MOSELLE from the grasp of an astounded company of enemy infantry, and then continued on to seize TREMERY by nightfall. On the morning of 17 November the two columns resumed the attack to the south. The left column (1st Battalion, 377th Infantry, reinforced), attacking from the town of TREMERY, blasted its way through ENNERY and CHAILLY-les-ENNERY to reach ANTILLY. The reconnaissance troop occupied CHIEULLES by nightfall. The right column shot its way through ARGANCY-OLGY and captured MALROY. At MALROY



Task Force BACON Driving Through ENNERY

Colonel BACON planned his attack for 18 November. Old Fort ST JULIEN stood astride the high ground commanding the two main roads and the northern approaches into METZ. The 95th Reconnaissance Troop reported that the enemy held it in force. Artillery support was arranged with a field artillery battalion of XX Corps on the west side of the MOSELLE, and bridging material was ordered forward. In spite of the presence of Fort ST JULIEN, Colonel BACON intended to cross the SEILLE River, which wandered along the periphery of the fortified region of METZ. The 2nd Battalion was to pass southeast from MALROY along the banks of the MOSELLE and strike the fort in its rear from the west. The 1st Battalion would move from ANTILLY along the main road, by-pass the fort, and seize the town of ST JULIEN. On the morning of 18 November, after a short artillery preparation, the two battalions jumped off on their assigned mission. The 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry, hit the fort at 0800 hours and fought through the day until it had entirely surrounded the fort by dusk. At darkness a 155mm self-propelled gun was fired point-blank across the moat at the iron gate barring entrance to the fort. The gate collapsed after 10 rounds and the fortress was quickly overrun.

During the fight at ST JULIEN left flank patrols of the 1st Battalion, 377th Infantry, reported that the German garrison of Fort BELLACROIX was abandoning the fort. Colonel BACON thereupon decided to attack immediately to the southwest and into METZ. Attacking from ST JULIEN at 1315 hours the 1st Battalion moved past Fort BELLACROIX, which was blown by the enemy as the 1st Battalion marched down the road to METZ. Colonel BACON then held his force until the 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry, had cleared Fort ST JULIEN (1230 hours, 18 November), and could come abreast of the 1st Battalion along the railroad line in the railroad yards of METZ. The two battalions in this extended formation prepared to enter METZ on the morning of 19 November.

REDUCTION OF THE FORTIFIED SALIENT WEST OF METZ

fantry, had begun the METZ operation with its drive across the MOSELLE at UCKANGE (8 November).

On the west side of the MOSELLE, containing the fortress system west of METZ, the 95th Infantry Division had committed all of its remaining battalions on the line. The 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry, was committed (10 November) in the THIONVILLE bridgehead, while the 1st Battalion, 377th In-

In conjunction with the river crossing at UCKANGE the 377th Infantry launched a night attack against the enemy between MAIZIERES and the MOSELLE. The attack was brief and unsuccessful, encountering dense minefields and intense small arms fire and the assault elements from the 377th Infantry withdrew to their original positions.

In an effort to divert as many of the enemy units as possible into the western section of the zone and also straighten out its front lines, which formed a convex hump with AMANVILLERS as its core, the 378th Infantry seized AMANVILLERS on the morning of 10 November.

The 95th Infantry Division plan called for the divisional main effort to be made from the north of the fortified area. The broad level land of the western banks south of MAIZIERES-les-METZ offered an ideal tank approach on METZ and was also an excellent area for infantry maneuver. The steep, heavily wooded ridges west of this area contained the various fortified groups and from this eminence heavy guns barred the military use of the flat valley land. The fortress ring had to be cracked and unhinged and the 378th Infantry's 2nd Battalion was selected for this mission. The 379th Infantry on the south would make a diversionary effort while the 378th Infantry would block out Fort DE FEVES and the CANROBERT Group so as to permit the 377th Infantry to attack behind the unhinged line of fortresses towards METZ. Two battalions of the 379th Infantry attacked early on 14 November, planning to flank Fort JEANNE D'ARC on both the north and south and eventually fight their way to positions in rear of the main German defenses. The initial objective — the high ground between Forts DE GUISE and JEANNE D'ARC — was taken by 1130 hours in spite of intense German fire. A sharp German counterattack was fought off but the two leading assault companies were cut off from the remainder of the regiment. Forts JUSSY (Nord) and JUSSY (Sud) were stormed and captured at 1200 hours by two more rifle companies of the 379th Infantry but again the German lines closed behind the two assault elements. Efforts to relieve the two small forces were ineffectual in the face of concentrations of artillery, mortar and automatic weapons fire from the complex system of fortifications. On the afternoon of 14 November seven artillery liaison planes initiated a series of hazardous flights to keep the troops supplied with food, ammunition and medical supplies for the next three days.

The northern system of fortified defenses was located on the steep wooded ridge that extended 3,000 yards to the northeast of a pivot strongpoint, the fortified group at AMANVILLERS, and in addition thereto consisted of the three CANROBERT Forts and Fort DE FEVES. The ridgeline dominated the terrain to the northwest. The lines of the 378th Infantry had been pushed forward to the valley northeast of the ridge and included the town of MARANGE-SILVANGE. The previous action of the 90th Infantry Division had pushed the enemy south of MAIZIERES-les-METZ and had uncovered the right flank of the CANROBERT Forts. Moving the bulk of two battalions to MARANGE-SILVANGE and leaving a miscellaneous group of three composite platoons to contain the eight-mile western portion of the zone the 378th Infantry (less the 2nd Battalion) prepared to attack. The 1st Battalion would hit Fort DE FEVES from the east while the 3rd Battalion moved through to exploit the opening and take the regimental objective — the high ground directly west of WOIPPY — a maneuver that was estimated by the Division Commander to take at least four days. However, the diversionary attack of the 379th Infantry in the south had served its purpose. The 1st Battalion, 378th Infantry, routed the defenders of Fort DE FEVES by small arms fire while the 3rd Battalion occupied the town of FEVES and moved south on SEMECOURT. The Germans' final protective line along the gully northeast of SEMECOURT was breached by B Company and the German defenders chased to the south. The northern half of the woods northwest of WOIPPY was then occupied by the company of riflemen. Realizing that the defensive crust had been broken, the 3rd Battalion was started down from the north to take the regimental objective (the high ground directly west of WOIPPY), an achievement accomplished in one day, three days less than the original estimate. An enemy counterattack to retake Fort DE FEVES was stopped by the 1st Battalion (less B Company). While the 1st Battalion of the 378th Infantry was striking at Fort DE FEVES, strong enemy positions and a row of houses southeast of MAIZIERES were stormed by a company of the 377th Infantry. Fighting was still in progress when the regimental commander of the 377th Infantry decided to by-pass the pocket of resistance and launch a major assault with the remainder of his two battalions. With the assistance of tanks the infantrymen broke through the outer shell of enemy resistance south of MAIZIERES-les-METZ and fanned out over the low ground west of the MOSELLE. Now free from the interference of the northern line fortresses, the 3rd Battalion, 377th Infantry, on the left, advanced three and one-half miles to occupy the town of LA MAXE. The 2nd Battalion had struck straight south to engage in a fight around WOIPPY

as darkness set in. The twin drives of the 377th Infantry and the 378th Infantry had disorganized the Germans and, although they made the ground gained expensive, the offensive was running ahead of schedule.

When the 377th Infantry jumped off again on 16 November, the regiment faced reinforced opposition. The 2nd Battalion cleaned up the town of WOIPPY, which had been the nerve center of the northern METZ defenses and was strongly defended. The 3rd Battalion cleared the area south of LA MAXE, but was repulsed with heavy casualties upon its attempt to assault Fort GAMBETTA. To its right the drive of the 378th Infantry was making great strides while the 1st Battalion contained the CANROBERT group of forts. The 3rd Battalion plus a tank platoon cleared the towns of NORROY, PLESNOIS and SAULNEY as well as taking the divisional objectives of LORRY and VIGNEULLES.

The four rifle companies of the 379th Infantry completely surrounded by Germans and dependent on air supply consolidated their strong positions and fought off recurring counterattacks. German resistance in the fortified salient had begun to crumble early in the morning due to the advancing units of the XX Corps east of the MOSELLE who were closing in on the city. The 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments to the north were now deeply behind the main German defensive strongpoints. The northern segment of the great METZ defensive ring had been shattered and was in the hands of the 95th Infantry Division. On the morning of 17 November (0630 hours) the 1st Battalion, 378th Infantry, cleared the remainder of the CANROBERT Forts, two of which were found unoccupied, and Fort D'AMANVILLERS.

On 17 November, the 379th Infantry, having improved its positions, was preparing to join in the final assault on the main fortified positions west of METZ. The 3rd Battalion had been shifted north on 16 November, after protecting the exposed right flank of the 95th Infantry Division against infiltrating forces moving north from Fort DRIANT, and at 1600 hours, 17 November, was committed in the zone of the encircled 2nd Battalion inside the complicated maze of forts and bunkers. Contact was finally established on 18 November with the four isolated rifle companies.

At mid-day on 17 November, XX Corps alerted FFI agents by a prearranged radio code signal to stand by to seize the switches controlling the enemy-laid demolitions on the bridges that crossed the MOSELLE at METZ. Orders were issued by the Corps Commander to the 95th Infantry Division to launch an all-out effort to drive into the city and seize the bridges intact. At 1330 hours, the 377th and 378th Infantry Regiments launched a coordinated attack that carried the 2nd Battalion of the 377th Infantry into the near suburb of METZ called SANBONNET. The 378th Infantry pushed its 3rd Battalion through resistance to take the high ground north of LONGUEVILLE. Both regiments were now within striking distance of the MOSELLE.

During the early morning hours of 18 November, patrols along the western side of the river could see huge fires raging in METZ. Just before dawn a series of heavy explosions rocked the city. The FFI had failed to reach the control switches and the Germans were blowing the MOSELLE bridges, abandoning the troops still garrisoning Forts DRIANT, JEANNE D'ARC, PLAPPEVILLE, and ST QUENTIN.

The 378th Infantry's 2nd Battalion was to attack on the morning of 18 November to the river line at METZ. The 3rd Battalion was assigned this mission. The 1st Battalion was ordered forward to clear or contain PLAPPEVILLE, which was causing considerable damage to the supply lines by sniper-ambushes. While working into positions for the attack, the 1st Battalion reported Forts KELLERMAN and DE CAEN unoccupied.

At 0730 hours, 18 November, G Company of the 377th Infantry, crossed over the sole remaining bridge, crossing the HAFEN Canal under cover of the tank fire on the houses that lined the south side of the river, and cleared the block of houses that surrounded the bridge. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 377th Infantry, crossed over the HAFEN Canal at noon, and cleared the cluster of houses in the small island formed by the canal and the MOSELLE River. Minefields delayed the advance, and the attack over the MOSELLE via assault boats was to be resumed the morning of 19 November.

The 3rd Battalion, 378th Infantry, had made its plans during the night of 17-18 November to seize the bridge that spans the MOSELLE River at the Island of ST SYMPHORIEN; patrols had reported it to be intact. But as the leading platoon got halfway across the bridge, it was blown by the Germans, killing eight men of the platoon.

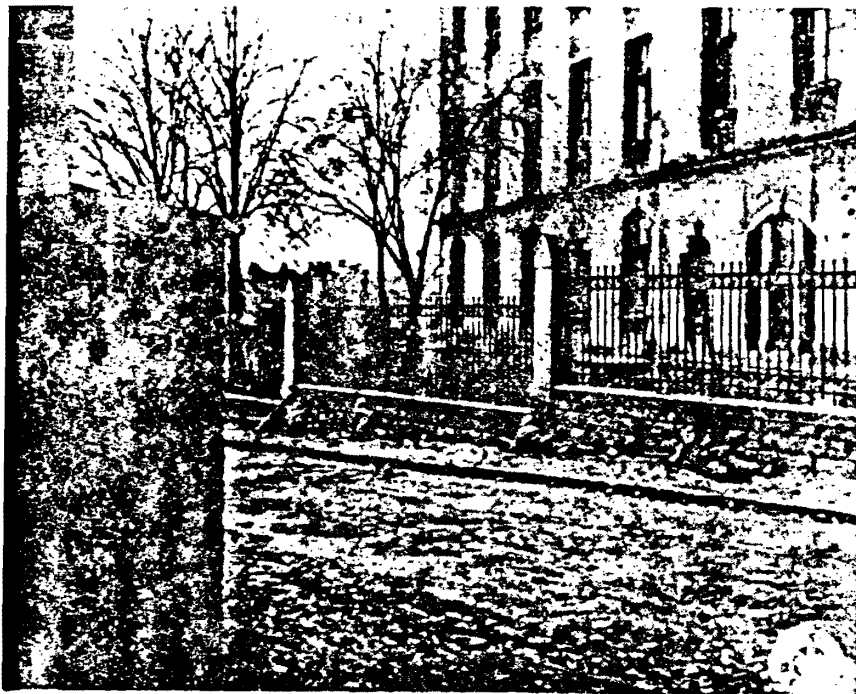
The three battalions of the 379th Infantry, although badly mauled in the fighting around Forts DRIANT and JEANNE D'ARC, had now successfully got behind the fortified outer belt. While the two other regiments battled at the northern edge of METZ, the 379th

Infantry launched an attack that carried it to the MOSELLE and cleared the Germans from eight towns.

While the remainder of the division was pressing in on the now doomed city of METZ, the 1st Battalion of the 378th Infantry was having its difficulties with Fort PLAPPEVILLE.

ACTION AT FORT PLAPPEVILLE A two-company attack on 18 November cleared the defenders from around the outside of the fort by 1600 hours, but then the Germans who had fled to the security of the fort directed a stream of automatic fire at anyone who appeared opposite the firing ports of the concrete casemates. It was growing dark, so the 1st Battalion withdrew to positions where they could contain the fort, and called for artillery interdiction on it. The attack was resumed the next morning, but although men were able to get into the fort, the heavy automatic fire again barred maneuver beyond the moats and made withdrawal necessary. Tank destroyers were called for and put to work on the exposed surfaces of the fort's casemates. On the second day, 20 November, 200 Germans came out to surrender, but still more of the enemy were holding out, and the 1st Battalion remained at the position until relieved on 21 November by elements of the 379th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, 378th Infantry, crossed over into METZ on that day and helped subdue the last vestiges of resistance.

METZ IS ENTERED Prior to this the 95th Infantry Division on 19 November launched its final assault on METZ. The 378th Infantry sent its 3rd Battalion across the MOSELLE in assault boats, under constant artillery fire from Fort DRIANT and machine gun and high velocity fire from Fort ST QUENTIN. Despite this the 3rd Battalion closed in on the Island of ST SYMPHORIEN, formed by the MOSELLE River and the METZ Canal, and quickly cleared the large park of the Germans. Using captured canoes and barges, elements of the 3rd Battalion crossed the canal and pushed on to clear three city blocks. The 377th Infantry (less the 1st Battalion) on the northeastern portion of the city initiated an assault-boat crossing of the MOSELLE at 1330 hours and began fighting against the troops under the personal command of Generalleutnant KITTEL.



378th Infantry, 95th Infantry Division, under Fire while Entering Western Portion of METZ

CLOSING IN ON METZ FROM THE SOUTH

While the 2nd Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division, was attacking for the initial objective of the 5th Infantry Division on the NIED River southeast of METZ, the 10th Infantry probed the strength of the switch line which the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division was attempting to hinge on Fort L' AISNE and extend to SORBÉY. Patrols sent out the night of 9—10 November reported that the towns of GRAND-BOIS-de-la-HAUTONNIERIE, GOIN and VERNY were lightly held. The next day POMMERIEUX and GOIN were occupied and the right flank of the 10th Infantry extended. PAGNY-les-GOIN was taken by the 1st Battalion and reconnaissance sent to the northeast to LIEHON and CHERISEY to cover the continuing advance of the 2nd Infantry.

That night, 10—11 November, the 2nd Battalion sent a combat patrol to VERNY to investigate the strength of the garrison in Fort L' AISNE. Unopposed, this patrol reached VERNY at dawn, reported the town clear of the enemy, and with the battalion commander's approval, proceeded along the road to the right of the fortress group and succeeded in gaining an entrance. The fort was occupied by only a few stragglers. It was learned the enemy had withdrawn its garrison of SS troops with the intention of relieving them with a fortress machine gun battalion. Through lack of coordination this relief was late in arriving, and it was during the interval between reliefs that the 2nd Battalion patrol had gained entrance and seized the fort. The battalion immediately secured the position in strength.

With this critical fortress position under control and the switch line unhinged, the Corps Commander decided to exploit the opportunity for an immediate thrust into the city through the apparent soft underside of the fortress system.

The 11th Infantry was to clean out the triangle within the SEILLE and MOSELLE Rivers. The 2nd Infantry was to hold the NIED River bridgehead until CCB had passed through it and secured the communications. The 2nd Infantry was then, on order, to change the direction of its attack to the north for a close-in encirclement of the city, with the aid of the 90th Infantry Division from the north. The 10th Infantry was to attack the city itself, moving along the east bank of the SEILLE River.

This second phase of the operation developed as a series of rapid movements and quick maneuvers within regimental zones, and sharp engagements with enemy delaying forces. The enemy's resistance was determined but uncoordinated. Generally the fortress strong-points were first enveloped and then, when reconnaissance was sent out, it was often found that the enemy garrison had withdrawn. None of the forts had to be taken by assault. Due to the 16-mile length of the front it was necessary to employ the entire strength of the 5th Infantry Division on the line, but after the operation started a steady rate of advance was maintained, and at no time did the division lose contact. Enemy resistance was largely from second-rate troops.

The principal problem was to get into METZ before the majority of the fighting troops were evacuated because of trench foot and exposure. All during the operation until 14 November, there had been continuous rain, and on the night of 14 November the rain turned to snow and sleet, covering the ground to several inches by daybreak. The wet, swampy ground canalized all motor traffic to roads. Entrenchments soon became flooded. In spite of every effort to shelter the troops during pauses in the advance, to issue them dry footwear, an estimated 40 per cent of the initial strength became casualties from trench foot, and under these conditions a continuous effort of leadership was required to keep the attack going. The terrain itself was not favorable; the large expanse of open ground offered no natural cover, the constant threat of a sudden defense from the forts, and the calculated small but sharp delaying actions from commanding ridge lines and from towns constantly threatened the advance.

ATTACK OF THE 10th INFANTRY

The 10th Infantry was in position to start its attack on METZ the morning of 13 November. The 2nd Battalion attacked FLEURY, moving along the highway across 2,000 yards of open, flat country. With support from artillery and tanks that had displaced forward, the enemy positions gave way, and the infantry occupied the town at 1030 hours. One hour later the attack had rolled on to take the town of POUILLY. The 2nd Battalion's commander redispensed his forces around the town, prepared to continue the attack, but the 1st Battalion, having run into trouble in its push through the BOIS DE L'HOPITAL, had not been able to keep up on the right flank. Enemy artillery had withdrawn to the edge of METZ and now registered on the 2nd Battalion's positions.

During the day the 1st Battalion moved into the southern half of the BOIS DE L'HOPITAL, found CHESNY (Sud) unoccupied, but upon approaching the northern point of the woods ran into a line of entrenchments running from CHESNY (Nord) in front of CHESNY to MECLEUVES where the enemy was making a stand. Darkness prevented an immediate assault on Fort CHESNY (Nord). But during the night a patrol discovered that the enemy had vacated the fort and the entrenchment. When the 1st Battalion moved in to occupy the fort the next morning they found it reoccupied and held by a small and determined force. In spite of artillery and infantry assault the fort continued to hold out during the morning.

While the 2nd Battalion was held up at Fort CHESNY, the 3rd Battalion cleared the northern edge of the woods the night of 15—16 November. The battalion continued attacking, taking the towns of CHESNY and PELTRE and occupying the woods northeast of PELTRE that afternoon. The morning of 17 November GRIGY and BORNLY, which commanded an escape route from METZ, were taken.

Fort DES BORDES was attacked by the 3rd Battalion the night of 17—18 November and occupied by morning. Contact was then established with Task Force BACON outside the town of VALLIERES.

While the 3rd Battalion had been moving up from the BOIS DE L'HOPITAL the night of 14—15 November, the 2nd Battalion in POUILLY, now having their flank secure, planned to continue their attack that night. Before the attack began the battalion was assigned the additional mission of clearing the bend in the SEILLE River which included the town of MARLY. This bend had been in the zone of the 11th Infantry, but due to the heavy resistance the area was reassigned to the 2nd Battalion, 10th Infantry. The enemy troops were concentrated along the river line prepared for a counterattack. A heavy concentration from division and Corps Artillery and an attack by one infantry company broke the enemy. Continuing the attack before dawn, the town of MARLY was cleared and positions moved up to the high ground southwest of MAGNY. MAGNY was taken by dusk on 16 November. The next day Fort QUEULEU was surrounded and taken under artillery fire. The 3rd Battalion joined forces with Task Force BACON of the 95th Infantry Division to clear out the area east of the SEILLE River by the evening of 19 November.

ATTACK OF THE 2ND INFANTRY When the southern defenses of METZ began to collapse and the decision was made to close in on the city, the 2nd Infantry was still engaged in holding the NIED River bridgehead against the heavy counterattacks of the 21st Panzer Grenadier Division. The zone assigned to the 2nd Infantry was 5,000 yards wide and contained the SORBIEY Forts, known to be strongly occupied, and the fortified group LA MARNE, one of the largest fortress groups in the METZ area. The 2nd Infantry's mission was to cut the escape routes from METZ.

Visibility was poor, but a heavy and accurate artillery preparatory fire was laid by map on the high ground west of the SORBIEY Forts and the SORBIEY Forts themselves. The attack began at 0900 hours and the town of MECLEUVES captured by 1300 hours. At 1345 hours the enemy garrison of the SORBIEY Forts made a sally through the narrow BOIS DE SORBIEY, and after a series of small raids was beaten back. A patrol sent into SORBIEY the next morning found the town evacuated. The SORBIEY Forts were 500 yards north of the town, and after an attack by tanks and infantry the small garrison was forced to surrender by 1600 hours, 16 November.

The fortified group LA MARNE was the final critical objective in front of the 2nd Infantry. The enemy had been falling back to the north in disorder, but there was the possibility that the LA MARNE Fort would be a rallying point where the stragglers would collect for a determined stand. However, it was thought that this might be forestalled by rapid action, a quick envelopment of the fort from three sides. Arrangements were made to evacuate the NIED River bridgehead and the responsibility for the one vital bridge over the NIED River at ANCERVILLE was turned over to the 6th Armored Division.

The 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry, was relieved from the bridgehead at 1800 hours, 17 November, and moved to PONTOY. On the early morning of 18 November the 2nd Battalion made a forced march through the BOIS DE L'HOPITAL in the 10th Infantry Regiment zone to a line of departure west of Fort LA MARNE at PELTRE, arriving there at 1400 hours.

During the morning of 18 November, the 3rd Battalion, in the center, pushed up to JURY, and was still holding FRONTIGNY and MECLEUVES. On the right, the 1st Battalion moved into COURCELLES-sur-NIED and through the GRAND BOIS DE CHAMPEL to

the edge of the woods facing Fort LA MARNE. With the fort contained on two sides, the 2nd Battalion assaulted it from the rear at 1400 hours and gained entrance into the fortified group without opposition. The small garrison surrendered without firing a shot.

With this last stronghold taken without resistance, it was certain that the enemy defenses on the east side of METZ had completely collapsed. The regiment next prepared to strike north and make contact with the 90th Infantry Division as quickly as possible. Before dark on the night of 18 November, elements of the 2nd Battalion had reached the woods north of ARS-LAQUENEXY and the 1st Battalion had occupied the town itself. Early the next morning the 2nd Battalion moved north to attack Fort LAUVALLIERE and found it unoccupied. Then the battalion set up roadblocks cutting off all the roads from METZ to the east. In the meantime, on the right, the 1st Battalion had cut the highways in their zone. After a German column moving east near RETONFEY had been stopped, an air squadron closed in and destroyed it.

11th INFANTRY IN THE MOSELLE - SEILLE RIVER TRIANGLE

As the 10th and 2nd Infantry Regiments folded up the right flank of the enemy resistance on the south, the 11th Infantry worked up against the more heavily defended positions in the triangle between the MOSELLE and SEILLE Rivers. This area, where the enemy was able to put up his most effective resistance, contained the VERDUN Forts, which still sheltered a strong defensive force, in spite of strong bombardment and heavy artillery siege. At the beginning of this operation it was necessary to swing the right flank of the regiment through a 90-degree arc, bringing all units up on line with Fort VERDUN. Then the regimental plan was to by-pass Fort VERDUN, assault AUGNY from two directions, capture or contain Fort ST PRIVAT, and enter the city of METZ.

The attack began the morning of 13 November, after an artillery preparation that drove the enemy back from the town of SILLEGNY and enabled the 2nd Battalion to gain that town, and enter COIN-sur-SEILLE and POURNOY-la-CHETIVE before nightfall. Minefields in this area slowed the advance.

The 3rd Battalion attacked the Fort VERDUN group, and had little difficulty in reaching a position in the light woods 700 yards west of Fort SOMME, the south fort of the fortified group.

The 1st Battalion secured FEY and then put pressure on the northeast corner of Fort SOMME, in coordination with the containing action of the 3rd Battalion on the south and west. Although patrols of the 3rd Battalion found Fort SOMME to be lightly held, no attempt was made to force an entrance, since the orders to the regiment had specified that the forts be by-passed.

The morning of 14 November the 2nd Battalion moved quickly through COIN-sur-CUVRY, and CUVRY. But with the battalion moving so rapidly, casualties from trench foot began to show up, and it was estimated that 70 per cent of the 2nd Battalion casualties on 14 and 15 November were from this cause.

After the advances of the first day the regimental lines were drawn in a reverse arc with the majority of the enemy resistance cupped in front of the 2nd Battalion. The 1st Battalion attacked to AUGNY the next morning, and in coordination with the 2nd Battalion broke the enemy resistance and by 2100 hours had secured AUGNY and the high ground to its northwest.

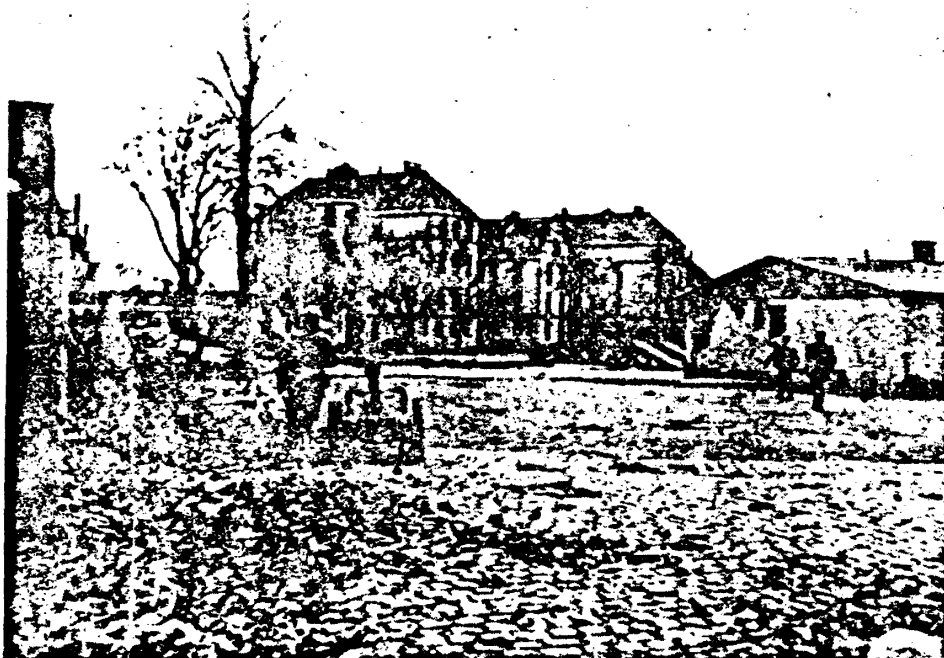
The next objective was the FRESCATY Airfield and Fort ST PRIVAT, which covered the airfield on the northeast side. The 1st Battalion jumped off at 0730 hours and was two-thirds the way along the western side of the airfield by nightfall. The 2nd Battalion had attacked from MARLY in conjunction with the 1st Battalion attack. Artillery fire from the railroad yard at METZ and the fire from Fort ST PRIVAT halted the advance 500 yards north of MARLY.

The next morning, the 1st Battalion drove up the main road that led into METZ and attacked the suburb of ST PRIVAT, but the enemy was still holding out there at dusk on 18 November. An attempt was made to enter Fort ST PRIVAT from the west after smothering it with heavy artillery, mortar and small arms fire, but no entrance could be found. The fort was being defended stubbornly.

During the attack on AUGNY and the FRESCATY Airfield, the 3rd Battalion had remained in positions containing Fort VERDUN. Patrols sent along the edge of the north fort found

JOUY-aux-ARCHES vacated. On 17 November the 3rd Battalion commander received orders to contain Fort VERDUN with one company and a platoon of another, while moving the rest of the battalion into METZ along the JOUY road and beside the MOSELLE canal. On the night of 17—18 November elements of the battalion moved into JOUY-aux-ARCHES. The next morning at 0800 hours the battalion surprised the enemy to their front and passed on to their final objectives in the CONSTANTINE and ALGER sections of METZ but became engaged in heavy house-to-house fighting. The next day at 1600 hours, with the assistance of a platoon of tanks, they reached their final objective, the railroad. On 19 November the 1st Battalion completed the house-to-house cleaning in ST PRIVAT and moved back on the rear of Fort ST PRIVAT, completely surrounding the fort. The night of 19 November the 11th Infantry was waiting south of the railroad tracks to make contact with the 95th Infantry Division units who were to clean out the heart of the city.

CLEARING THE CITY By noon of 19 November the 95th Infantry Division, on the north and west, and the 5th Infantry Division, on the south and east, had cleared the outlying parts of the city of METZ. What remained was the core of the city enclosed within the canals, the SEILLE River, and the major railroad lines. The 90th Infantry Division had taken positions astride the escape routes east of the city, just west of BOULAY, and was assembled with an all-round defense awaiting the clearance of METZ.



5th Infantry Division Soldiers Entering METZ from the South, 19 November

On 19 November, the 11th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division, was still engaged in mopping up around Fort ST PRIVAT. The 10th Infantry, leaving one company to contain Fort QUEULEU, crossed the SEILLE the morning of 20 November and cleared the SABLON area to the railroad lines. The railroad yards were captured in the afternoon.

That afternoon the 95th Infantry Division made its final crossing into the heart of METZ. Artillery fire from Forts DRIANT and ST QUENTIN opposed the crossing, but by evening the crossing from the Island of ST SYMPHORIEN by the 3rd Battalion, 378th Infantry, had been made and the buildings a few blocks back from the canal cleared. During the night the 379th Infantry relieved the 1st Battalion, 378th Infantry, containing Forts PLAPPEVILLE and ST QUENTIN, and this battalion joined the 3rd Battalion in the city.

Also on 19 November the 377th Infantry made an assault-boat crossing into the city from SANBONNET at 1130 hours but met determined resistance from snipers and machine guns emplaced in the barracks area northwest of METZ proper, a resistance personally supervised by General KITTEL, commander of the METZ garrison. Task Force BACON, finding a bridge across the SEILLE River intact, moved in and cleared out a portion of the northern part of the city that day.

On 20 November the final mopping up continued. During the morning the 378th Infantry Regiment, 95th Infantry Division, spreading out through the city, made contact with the



95th Infantry Division Patrols Searching for Snipers in METZ

11th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division, on the right and the 377th Infantry Regiment, 95th Infantry Division on the left. Snipers were rounded up and gradually the "die hard" resistance was pressed back into the area of barracks and military installations on the CHAMBERIERES and SAULEY Islands. There, a few hundred men, inspired by General KITTEL, continued to hold out. This retreating group fought on until the afternoon of 21 November, when General KITTEL was wounded. The last enemy resistance was routed out by mortars and hand grenades during the next morning, and the city was reported entirely clear at 1435 hours, 22 November.

The garrison of Fort QUEULEU had surrendered by this time, but in spite of several attempts by parley and intermittent siege by artillery, the garrisons of the by-passed Forts JEANNE D'ARC, DRIANT, PLAPPEVILLE, ST QUENTIN, VERDUN and ST PRIVAT still held out with an estimated 2,000 men holed-up underground, well-supplied with food and ammunition, and out of reach of our artillery and bombers.



Rounding up Prisoners of War in METZ



Prisoners of War Being Marched to the XX Corps' Cage in METZ

As soon as the center of the city was clear, METZ and the by-passed forts were taken over by the 5th Infantry Division. Then, while the 95th Infantry Division assembled along the French NIED preparing for their march to the SAAR River, the 5th Infantry Division took the first steps to rehabilitate the city and began their siege of the resisting forts.



The First XX Corps Tank Destroyer to Enter METZ, 20 November 1944

PART VI ACTION IN THE NORTH

THE ATTACKING FORCES

North and east of the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead the 3rd Cavalry Group (Task Force POLK) and CCB of the 10th Armored Division were striking across the German border in an attempt to reach their respective objectives. SAARBURG, the objective of Task Force POLK, was a straight-line distance of 20 miles northeast, through hostile territory. CCB had 11 miles to travel before it could fulfill its mission to seize a bridge intact over the SAAR River at MERZIG.

CCB had been organized into two task forces, Task Force CHERRY and Task Force WEINER. Their long-chance mission of seizing a bridge intact over the SAAR River at MERZIG had been personally selected by the Commanding General, Third US Army. If it were successful the rich military prize of the SAAR valley would be within the armored grasp of XX Corps.

Early on 15 November CCB rolled east through KERLING. The muddy terrain forced the teams to stay on the highway. Enemy artillery greeted the thrust to the east, but by dark CCB was coiled in the northern tip of the BOIS DE SIERCK commanding the main cross road three miles east of KERLING.

Limited by his light armament and equipment, Colonel POLK nevertheless adopted armored tactics on his drive to the north on 16 November. The 3rd Cavalry Squadron was able to push forward, using these tactics, to establish itself in three strong positions along the general line EVENDORFF — KIRSCH — SIERCK.

CCB had been stopped on 16 November by intense artillery fire and blown bridges over the stream at the foot of the high ridge they had taken the night before. While engineers were bridging the swollen stream, the armor laid plans to attack in three columns on 17 November. Task Force CHERRY would split into two columns to attack LAUNSTROFF and REMELING, while Task Force WEINER struck southeast at HALSTROFF.

THE CAVALRY ENTERS GERMANY

By mid-day of 16 November, Colonel POLK decided that CCB had pushed out sufficiently in the KOENIGSMACHER bridgehead for him to begin carrying out his assigned mission with both squadrons. The 3rd Cavalry Squadron was given a zone bounded on the left by the MOSELLE and on the right by a general line running from KIRSCH to BUSCHDORF and thence straight north to SAARBURG. Movement of the 105mm howitzer battalion across the MOSELLE began the evening of 16 November; the 43rd Cavalry Squadron crossed over early on 17 November, and prepared to swing into its zone the morning of 18 November.

Troops of the 3rd Cavalry Squadron crossed the German border the morning of 17 November (0927 hours) and seized MAIMUHLE and PERL; the town of MANDEREN was by-passed and elements of the squadron were in MERSCHWEILER in the evening.

The treadway bridge over the stream in front of Task Force CHERRY having been completed during the night of 16--17 November, one of the team's columns was sent north. It by-passed RITZING and halted at darkness 300 yards south of LAUNSTROFF. The southern column struck east, and after fighting three engagements with German delaying parties, took up positions 400 yards south of REMELING. Task Force WEINER attacked southeast and reached a blown bridge 200 yards from HALSTROFF.

In the zone of the 3rd Cavalry Squadron the dominating terrain in the entire area is the SCHNEEBERG hill. The enemy had realized the importance of it and had heavily reinforced its natural defenses. The 3rd Cavalry Squadron with an entire field artillery battalion in direct support committed all its troops to the line. On the right, high ground commanding EFT was captured after an hour's battle, and from this site enemy reinforcements could be seen moving forward. The entire field artillery battalion and the tank destroyers responded and drove the enemy north. EFT was then taken without further resistance. The attack in the center had carried to WOCHERN, and on the right to BESCH. The entire 3rd Cavalry Squadron had closed into GERMANY by nightfall, and on its right the 43rd Cavalry Squadron had reduced the enemy resistance in MANDEREN and RITZING. The 43rd Cavalry Squadron then continued its advance to occupy TUNTING and relieved elements of Task Force CHERRY of CCB, 10th Armored Division, in LAUNSTROFF.

During the day the armor of CCB had taken REMELING and LAUNSTROFF. Task Force CHERRY joined its forces at LAUNSTROFF and prepared to enter GERMANY in the morning. Task Force WEINER was now redesignated Team HUSTEAD and reached SCHWERDORFF, where, after the enemy had been driven away, it went into an assembly area for the night.

THE SIEGFRIED SWITCH LINE

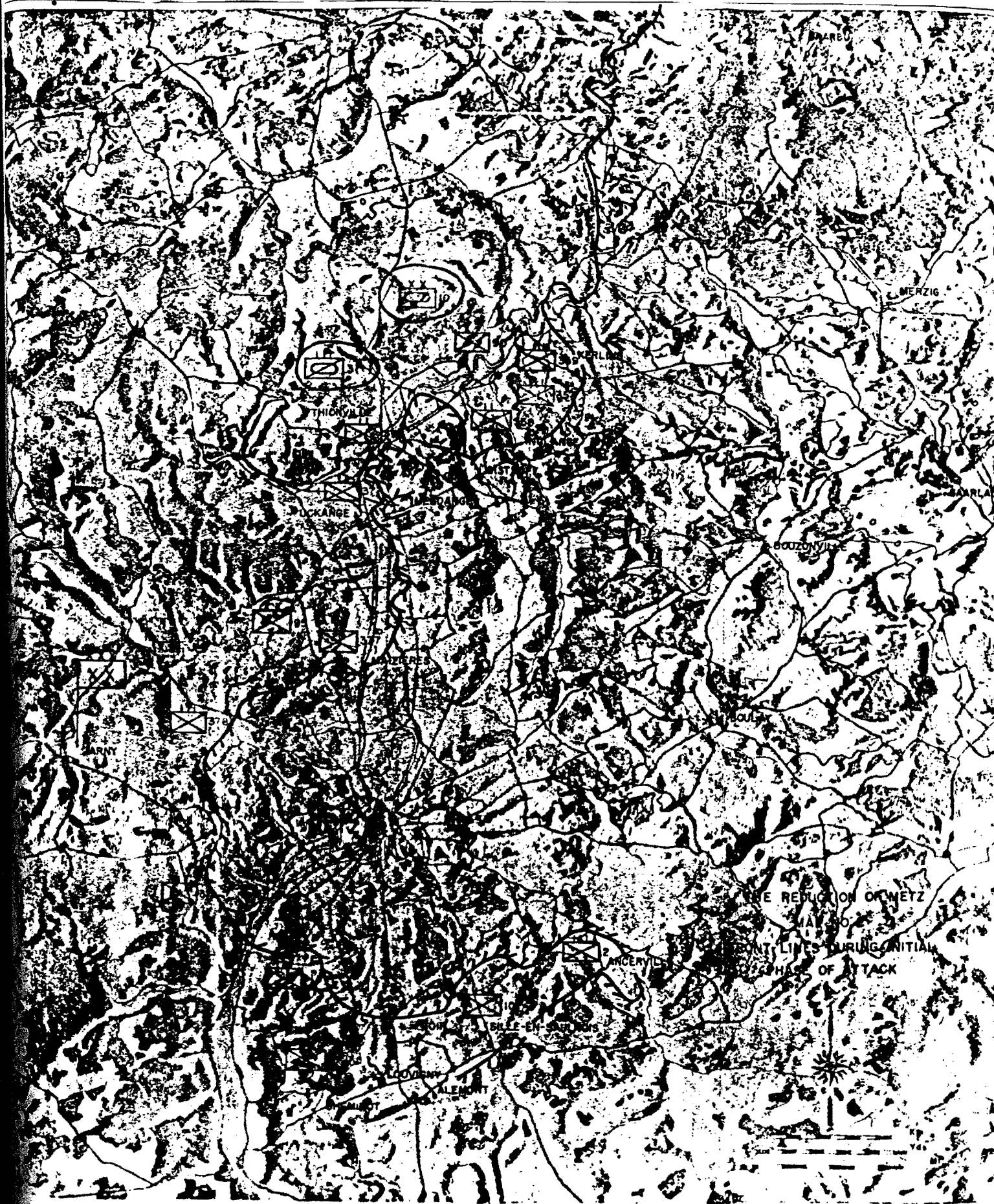
On 19 November, when XX Corps' units were entering METZ from five different directions, the cavalry assault in the north had come into contact with the switch line fortifications of the SIEGFRIED Line.

While the much vaunted "West Wall" of the Germans extended in depth along the eastern banks of the SAAR, the enemy had in addition erected a switch line of coordinated, mutually supporting pillboxes along the SAAR — MOSELLE triangle. The eastern end of this continuous obstacle was anchored at BESCH, while the western end ran into the SAAR River near ORSCHOLZ. Superb camouflage had made spotting of the pillboxes practically impossible from the air, and the light tanks of the 3rd Cavalry Squadron, after taking TETTINGEN the morning of 19 November, had no warning of the line until they were stopped in their tracks shortly afterwards. The 43rd Cavalry Squadron on the right, however, had not run into the line as yet and had put the light tanks at the head of its advance. The assault brought the squadron through OBERTUNSDORF, MITTEL, and into UNTER-TUNSDORF, after it had overrun BUSCHDORF earlier in the day. Colonel POLK thereupon ordered the entire group, during 20 November, to consolidate positions won, while reconnaissance teams probed the line barring the advance to SAARBURG, eight miles away.

On 19 November the armor of CCB was also being stopped in its thrust from LAUNSTROFF by similar tank defenses situated one-half mile inside the German border. Upon crossing the German border south of BUDINGEN, Task Force CHERRY was forced to bridge an anti-



THE REDUCTION OF METZ
MAP NO. 3
ENCIRCLEMENT AND ENTRY



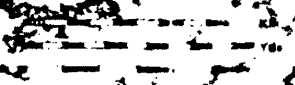
THE REDUCTION OF METZ
AND THE
POSITIONS OF THE
FRONT LINES DURING INITIAL
PHASE OF ATTACK



CROSSING AREA

COVER AREA

THE REDUCTION OF METZ
MAP OF
PLAN DEPLOYMENT AND
OPPOSING FORCES





General MORRIS thereupon decided to commit the 358th Infantry. On the morning of 23 November (0600 hours) the 358th Infantry jumped off through the woods west of TETTINGEN. In spite of the close support given by the tankers, the German 416th Infantry Division was able to repulse every effort of the infantry to storm their fortified positions. The fight eddied around TETTINGEN, until finally, after beating off three counterattacks, the infantry entered and seized the town at 1800 hours, 24 November.

Viewing the cavalry efforts in the north and wishing to exploit the German withdrawal of its forces west of the SAAR, to the security of the SIEGFRIED Line, the Corps Commander ordered (Field Order Number 13, 22 November — See Appendix Number 15) the 90th and 95th Infantry Divisions to attack east and obtain a crossing of the SAAR between DILLINGEN and SAARLAUTERN.

PART VII

MARCH TO THE SAAR

THE PLAN The original plan of XX Corps for a drive towards SAARBURG and MERZIG had been changed in order to exploit the enemy collapse after the capture of METZ. The terrain approaching the SAAR River is undulant, rolling in a series of gentle slopes to a high plateau and then dropping sharply away into the SAAR BASIN. The area is laced by two rivers, the French and German NIED, and their minor tributaries, and each stream has carved out a well-defined valley. There are wooded areas, and northeast of ST AVOLD and north of WALLERFANGEN there are dense forests of tall, straight evergreens, but most of the land is open and carefully cultivated. The 90th Infantry Division was in position west of BOUZONVILLE facing generally south, and the 95th Infantry Division was assembling along the French NIED, facing generally northeast. XX Corps decided to take the most direct route to the SAAR, and directed the 95th Infantry Division to "attack northeast, making the main effort on the left flank, to destroy the enemy within zone and seize crossings of the SAAR River between SAARLAUTERN and PACTHEN." The 90th Infantry Division on the north would reassemble northeast of BOUZONVILLE in the area previously cleared by CCB, 10th Armored Division along the French NIED, attack northeast to the SAAR River line abreast of the 95th Infantry Division, assist the crossing of the 95th Infantry Division with fire, and "prepare to bridge SAAR River within zone in bridgehead established by the 95th Infantry Division." The 10th Armored Division was directed to continue its attack on the northeast and clear to the SAAR River line. The 5th Infantry Division would remain in XX Corps reserve initially, containing the unsundered forts, and then would come up to secure the Corps right flank while the 95th Infantry Division made its crossing.

On 24 November, as the 5th Infantry Division took over the METZ area, the 90th Infantry Division, with the 359th Infantry on the north and the 357th Infantry on the south, moved to its new assembly areas. The 95th Infantry Division pushed two regiments forward to the line of the NIED. The 377th Infantry was on the left, in vicinity of ARS-LAQUENEXY, and was directed to cross the river, maintaining contact with the 90th Infantry Division on the left. The 378th Infantry was also ordered to cross the NIED in the vicinity of BAZON-COURT, and to maintain contact with XII Corps on the right. Each regiment of the 90th and 95th Infantry Divisions was reinforced by a company of medium tanks, and six Corps field artiller; groups were in position to support the combined attack. The reinforced 2nd Battalion, 379th Infantry, was motorized and sent to the division left flank to take over positions held by the 90th Infantry Division, from which it would support with fire the initial advances of the 377th Infantry. The remainder of the 377th Infantry was in the process of turning over the contained METZ forts to the 5th Infantry Division, and as soon as released, would be assembled in division reserve. The 358th Infantry was still attached to the 10th Armored Division.

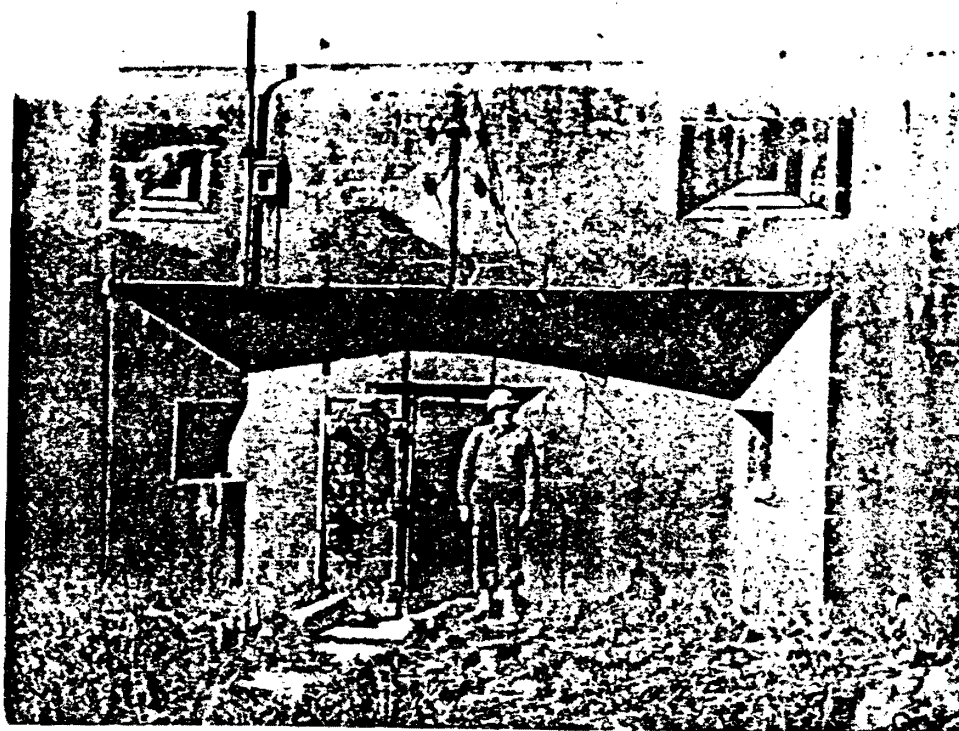
The two regiments of the 90th Infantry Division, reaching their assembly positions during the afternoon of 24 November, and with only 1,000 yards to go before reaching the SAAR River, began moving on initial objectives before nightfall. While movement was made difficult for the motorized elements because of numerous obstacles such as blown bridges, roadblocks and mines, there was little opposition on the ground. By the night of 25 Novem-

ber, the 359th Infantry on the north had advanced one-half the distance to the SAAR and entered GERMANY. The 357th Infantry on the south, meeting more obstacles and slightly heavier resistance along the north side of the German NIED, did not reach the border of GERMANY until 26 November. By this time both regiments had observation posts overlooking the SAAR River. Considerable engineer rehabilitation and mine clearance had to be done in the captured region and artillery and mortar fire from the east bank of the SAAR began to harass the area. While the 359th Infantry held its positions, the 357th Infantry began a maneuver to clear the pocket along the NIED River.

THE ATTACK OF THE 95th INFANTRY DIVISION

The two regiments of the 95th Infantry Division crossed the French NIED at dawn on 25 November, and although immediately engaged by light German holding forces, pushed rapidly forward in their initial formations. By dark both regiments had advanced almost four miles and had reached their initial objectives before the MAGINOT Line. The Germans made no stand anywhere, but they had skillfully employed their artillery and mortars to delay the advancing troops, and there had been spirited skirmishes with rear guards in the towns in the vicinity of BOULAY and NARBESFONTAINE.

The MAGINOT Line, even though its forts were faced in the wrong direction, offered an opportunity for an enemy delaying action of some force with troops that had escaped the enclosure of METZ. The two regiments moved against the MAGINOT forts at dawn on 26 November, attacking initially on a broad front. The 377th Infantry found the lowland east of EBLANGE flooded, and was forced into a column of battalions. No siege operation



A Fort in the MAGINOT Line

was necessary, and the initial thrust carried completely through the fortified belt. But the sites of the forts had been mounted with mortars and light artillery which took the battalions under flanking fire as they passed through, and this action, coupled with small-scale delaying forces in the towns of VELVING and TETERCHEN, cost the two assaulting battalions 175 casualties in the day's fighting. The 378th Infantry, meeting the same type of resistance, was also able to breach the line of forts with its initial attack, rounding up 201 prisoners as it pushed on to DENTING and NIEDERVISSE. At DENTING the Germans abandoned a large hospital containing 1,325 seriously ill Russian prisoners of war.

The enemy continued to retreat throughout the next day, delaying with artillery, mortars, occasional machine guns and mines and blowing all bridges and culverts along the limited road net. The 377th Infantry mounted riflemen of its 2nd Battalion on medium tanks and sent them northeast to clear the town of BOUZONVILLE and the villages before it. The 3rd Battalion continued the attack to the east, capturing the towns in its zone to the German border in the vicinity of VOELFLING. The 378th Infantry on the right had a more difficult time. The 1st and 2nd Battalions met harassing artillery from COUME, which was overrun by a platoon of supporting tank destroyers, allowing the advance to continue on 27 November to DALEM, HARGARTEN and FALCK, towns situated in deep valleys cut from the eastern LORRAINE Plateau.

Up to this point the division flanks had been reasonably secure, although it was attacking on a ten-mile front. In the original Corps directive the division boundaries had been parallel, running at right angles to the SAAR. But the 80th Infantry Division of XII Corps, attacking on the 95th Infantry Division's right, altered its axis of advance south of HALLERING and attacked due east, while the 95th Infantry Division's axis remained to the northeast. XX Corps had planned to put the 5th Infantry Division into this wedge-shaped area, containing the extensive LA HOUVE, ST AVOLD, and CARLSBRUNN Forests, but since the 5th Infantry Division was still maintaining the siege of the METZ forts, the 95th Infantry Division was informed that it must assume responsibility for this flank for the time being. The 3rd Battalion of the 378th Infantry was motorized and pushed along this flank to the group of barracks south of CREUTZWALD. To furnish additional flank security the 3rd Battalion of the 5th Infantry Division's 10th Infantry was attached to the 95th Infantry Division with the provision that it would remain in defensive positions in the vicinity of ZIMMING at the point of the wedge. The division reinforced the attached battalion with the 95th Reconnaissance Troop, a company of light tanks, and a company of tank destroyers. By 27 November the force had relieved elements of XII Corps' 2nd Cavalry Group, which had been maintaining contact between the 80th and 95th Infantry Divisions.

On the morning of 28 November, the 378th Infantry was counterattacked from the LA HOUVE Forest on its exposed right flank. Just after the 1st Battalion had jumped off in its attack on MERTON, a strong German force moved out of the woods southeast of FALCK, and seized the steep hill dominating the town. The 3rd Battalion was already behind these woods near CREUTZWALD, and began to work through the forest from the rear, but encountered tenacious resistance. The Regimental Commander, Colonel Samuel L. METCALFE, sent his regimental scouts, a picked group of two officers and 60 men, especially trained as commandos, to drive the Germans out. They accomplished their mission, storming the hill with automatic weapons and beating back a superior enemy force made up largely of fanatical youths from the German Air Force who had been pressed into service as infantry. But the scouts were organized and equipped for raiding missions, not for defense. Just before dark a counterattacking force that outnumbered them more than two to one drove them from the hill with heavy losses. The 3rd Battalion was recalled to HARGARTEN and attacked to retake the hill early the next morning. But during this time, the enemy had seriously harassed the communication of the 1st Battalion, whose attack on MERTON had been caught in a defensive fire from the town. An entrance was gained by night on 28 November and the town was finally cleared during the night of a number of determined snipers.

North of this battle on the flank, the 377th Infantry had advanced 3,000 to 4,000 yards into GERMANY and was prepared for the final attack to the river. The 1st Battalion, 378th Infantry, had reached positions on the edge of the LORRAINE Plateau above ALT-FORWEILER. The 379th Infantry moved up behind the 377th Infantry during the day, closing into an assembly area in the vicinity of MOMERSTROFF. The attached 3rd Battalion, 10th Infantry, with Corps approval, was directed to displace forward to L'HOPITAL but its employment was still limited to the defensive.

On 29 November German resistance stiffened along the entire eastern edge of the plateau. The 377th Infantry moved into GUIRINGEN and took a commanding hill southwest of ST BARBARA, against a determined delaying action and increasing artillery from the east of the SAAR. During late afternoon enemy tanks, identified as belonging to the 21st Panzer Division, spearheaded a counterattack at ST BARBARA and overran two 57mm anti-tank guns. By dark the regiment had spread along the wooded edge of the plateau, and elements of the 3rd Battalion were fighting at OBERFELSBERG, a village clinging to the precipitous slope that falls away to SAARLAUTERN on the floor of the valley. Further south along this slope the 2nd Battalion, of the 378th Infantry received counterthrusts from ALT-FORWEILER by armor and infantry. The 1st Battalion cleared MERTON, and the 3rd Battalion, reinforced with medium tanks, mopped up the woods northeast of FALCK.

However, the bitter resistance to this threat against SAARLAUTERN continued on 30 November. The 378th Infantry passed the 3rd Battalion with its tank support through the 2nd Battalion and seized the high ground northwest of ALT-FORWEILER. The 1st Battalion fought its way along the ridge north of MERTON but was ambushed by a strong enemy force on the KLAREICHEN, a cone-shaped hill south of BERUS. The 377th Infantry mopped up the enemy resistance along the ridge line and cleared the enemy from ST BARBARA. At 1420 hours the 3rd Battalion jumped off in a coordinated attack against the Germans in FELSBURG, and by dark had cleared the town and taken most of the houses on the slopes below.

The next day, 2 December, the 378th Infantry attacked the KLAREICHEN from the north with the support of a platoon of tanks. The garrison broke from their positions in the face of encirclement and withdrew towards the river. With two battalions abreast the regiment followed up the retreat over the low ground toward the river in the direction of LISDORF.

As the 95th Infantry Division approached the river, the 90th Infantry Division on the north, followed up their patrols to occupy the west bank of the river. The area was heavily mined but by 1 December the river line was occupied on the north through the 10th Armored Division zone to SCHWEMLINGEN, where the switch line of the SIEGFRIED defenses hinged to the west. There was still a pocket of resistance along the German NIED. While elements of the 1st Battalion, 357th Infantry, crossed over and worked up the south side of the river through BUREN, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions cleared the north bank. But on 2 December all attempts to reach REHLINGEN, the final obstacle west of the river, were thwarted by a thick belt of mines of all descriptions ringing the town. All the engineer parties were methodically picked off by flat-trajectory weapons from the far bank, but during the next night a path was cleared into the town, and the town occupied without resistance. During this time the 90th Infantry Division had been implementing a fire plan to support the crossing of the 95th Infantry Division with three field artillery groups and an extensive fire base of automatic weapons and mortars sited for direct fire on the fortifications east of the river. The 90th Infantry Division was at the same time preparing for a later crossing of its own to reinforce the 95th Infantry Division. By this time the open right flank of the 95th Infantry Division was covered by Task Force BELL, a strong force built around the 10th Regimental Combat Team, 5th Infantry Division. This unit was moved up to ZIMMING on 30 December and attacked to the northeast the next morning to clear out the LA HOUVE and CARLSBRUNN Forests, meeting stubborn resistance along the railroad line from FALCK to L'HOPITAL. However, with the assistance of Task Force FICKETT (28th Cavalry Squadron, 6th Cavalry Group) and the 5th Ranger Battalion, steady progress was maintained until 6 December, when the high ground west of the SAAR River in the vicinity of VOLKLINGEN was reached.

THE SAARLAUTERN CROSSING

By 1 December, the 95th Infantry Division was in position to launch an attack that would take it across the SAAR River. While the two attacking regiments continued their advance, behind them, in the division zone, preparation was made for support. The division's normal tank, tank destroyer and anti-aircraft attachments had been bolstered by the attachment of an additional battalion and battery of medium field artillery, a combat engineer battalion and two light equipage platoons, and three companies of chemical mortars. In addition, the artillery of III Corps, which was not yet operational, was placed in direct support of the crossing, as were the 4th Tank Destroyer Group, the 1103rd Engineer Group, and elements of the 119th Anti-aircraft Artillery (Gun) Battalion.

The division had had little choice in selecting its crossing site. The city of SAARLAUTERN was on the west bank of the river, but its suburbs, ENSDORF, FRAULAUTERN and SAARLAUTERN RODEN lay across the river where the ground was flat and the river spread into an area of marshes. There was no weak spot in the German defenses; an observer looking down into the basin from the plateau could pick up through his glasses the endless maze of pillboxes and bunkers that rimmed the east bank of the river and extended over the hills beyond. There were two possible crossing sites, and the division elected to use them both. The 379th Infantry, which had been held in reserve for the purpose, would pass through the 377th Infantry, seize the city of SAARLAUTERN and force a crossing there. South of SAARLAUTERN, the 378th Infantry would cross at LISDORF and expand the bridgehead to the south. The 377th Infantry, after clearing the river bank of enemy in the northern sector of the division zone, would revert to division reserve.

Although the division now held the commanding ground it needed to begin the operation, it was still two miles from the crossing sites, and there were Germans holding strong

defensive positions across the entire division front west of the SAAR and in the crossing area. Intelligence reports indicated that the SIEGFRIED defenses were now being fully manned. Requests were approved for medium aerial bombardment to precede the crossing. The division's air plan called for bombardment after the river bank had been cleared so that the assaulting troops could exploit the shock of the bombs, but the limited availability of aircraft dictated the date of the air strike. At 1100 hours on 1 December eight groups of medium bombers pounded the crossing area, and, with an artillery preparation taking up where the bombers left off, the two regiments resumed their attack at 1235 hours.

The 3rd Battalion, 377th Infantry, cleared the enemy from FELSBERG after stubborn fighting, and pushed on to PIKARD at the outskirts of SAARLAUTERN before dark. At ST BARBARA, the Germans were throwing in tanks again, and the 1st Battalion fought them off throughout the afternoon. The 379th Infantry, moving in column of battalions, passed through the 377th Infantry late in the afternoon, joined in the attack on PIKARD and jockeyed into position for its attack into the city of SAARLAUTERN.

The attacking forces held fast the next morning 2 December, for they were crowding the bomb safety limit and another medium bombardment of the crossing site was scheduled. Between 1000 and 1145 hours ten groups of medium bombers (approximately 400 planes) unloaded over SAARLAUTERN and its suburbs, and immediately behind them fighter bombers pinpointed the barracks and military installations at the western edge of the city. The 379th Infantry resumed its attack and by 1600 hours the 2nd Battalion had pushed into the outskirts of the city. The 1st Battalion swung north and took over the shattered barracks which had been the fighter bombers' targets.

The 377th's 3rd Battalion had turned northeast towards the river, and during the afternoon cleared the Germans from BEAUMARAIS and pushed on to the outskirts of WALLERFANGEN. The 1st Battalion rooted the last Germans out of ST BARBARA and pushed on toward WALLERFANGEN from the west, moving slowly along a road littered with mines and roadblocks.

SEIZURE OF THE BRIDGE AT SAARLAUTERN

During the late afternoon the Germans unleashed the first of the tremendous concentrations of artillery that were to make the SAARLAUTERN area all but untenable for weeks to come. In the streets of the city, where the 379th Infantry was fighting from house to house to expand its foothold, shells rained incessantly and casualties were heavy. It was apparent that clearing the enemy from the SAARLAUTERN crossing site was going to be a long and difficult operation and the commander of the 379th Infantry, Colonel Robert A. BACON, decided to gamble on seizing intact the permanent bridge that still spanned the SAAR behind the defending Germans. During the night, under cover of a series of TOT missions fired by the Division Artillery, assault boats were assembled at the barracks north of the city by the 320th Engineer Battalion. The 1st Battalion of the 379th Infantry moved silently down to the river and at 0545 hours, 3 December, the first boats pushed out from the west bank. In exactly 11 minutes the entire battalion had crossed the SAAR, and not a single German outpost had been alerted. A park lay between the river bank and the eastern approaches to the bridge and the infantrymen crossed it quickly, disposing of the few sentries they encountered with knives or garottes. Just short of the bridge the advance elements of the battalion found a German armored car and bayoneted the radio operator inside before he could reach his key to flash a warning. Another German, standing in the shadows beside the car, turned and dashed for the bridge. The Battalion Commander's shot, which dropped him five feet from the switch controlling the demolitions emplaced in the bridge, was the first fired in the surprise attack. An engineer platoon which had accompanied the leading infantrymen immediately raced onto the bridge, cut all demolition wires and fanned out with mine detectors. Four 500-pound American aerial bombs, wired together in the center of the bridge, were disarmed and rolled into the water. Alerted at last, four German guards attempted to reach the bridge from the west side of the river and were killed by the fire of the engineers. A machine gun opened up then and the platoon was forced back to the east bank where the 1st Battalion was deploying to guard the bridge approaches. (Two days later, when the Germans had abandoned their frantic efforts to retake the bridge, and their constant artillery barrage had slackened the engineers found and removed 6,400 pounds of TNT buried in eight 25-foot deep chambers built into the stone piers of the bridge.)

In conjunction with the crossing of the 1st Battalion, the 3rd Battalion had sent a reinforced rifle company racing forward to seize the west end of the bridge. Charging directly

down a city street, the riflemen fought from block to block and overran the old French bunkers guarding approaches to the bridge. By 0830 hours the company controlled the streets leading to the bridge and had gained contact with the 1st Battalion on the east bank. The enemy in SAARLAUTERN, disorganized by the sudden, fierce assault, still resisted stubbornly and the 2nd Battalion was heavily engaged throughout the day. The 378th Infantry, advancing slowly against bitter, last-ditch resistance, entered the SAARLAUTERN suburb of LISDORF and reached the SAAR. Despite the constant pounding of massed German artillery, the regiment began clearing the river bank in preparation for an assault crossing, and the supporting engineers began moving their equipment forward. The 377th Infantry cleared the river line north of the city, outposted it, and pulled back into division reserve.

Shortly before dark the engineers, working methodically under the hammering of German artillery and mortars, removed the last mines scattered across the surface of the captured bridge. Tank destroyers of the 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion and supply trucks crossed to the east bank and the 547th Anti-aircraft Artillery Battalion set up guns to ward off possible bombing attacks on the bridge. The tank destroyers arrived in time to assist the 1st Battalion in turning back a German counterattack spearheaded by tanks. One enemy tank, loaded with explosives, attempted a suicide run onto the bridge, but was blasted by a destroyer less than two hundred yards from its goal.

By the night of 3 December the SAARLAUTERN bridgehead consisted of only a few city blocks, and it was still subject to the counterattacks that were to continue until the March offensive of XX Corps, but behind it there was a bridge, a great stone structure that would stand despite the heaviest concentrations of German artillery. This bridgehead was eventually reinforced by the 378th Infantry crossing from LISDORF and a supplementary crossing made by the 90th Infantry Division in the DILLINGEN area. From these bridgeheads, XX Corps was enabled to carve a substantial segment out of the SIEGFRIED Line and deny the Germans the use of a large and valuable area of the rich SAAR BASIN.

APPENDIX No 1
THE METZ FORTS: THE INNER RING
Inner Ring of Forts

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Fortified Group ST QUENTIN | 9. Fort DE LAUVALLIERE |
| 2. Fort PLAPPEVILLE | 10. Fortified Group CHAMPAGNE |
| 3. Fort DEROULEDE | 11. Fort DES BORDES |
| 4. Fort GAMBETTA | 12. Fort LA CHENE |
| 5. Fort ST JULIEN | 13. Fort DE CAEN |
| 6. Fort ST PRIVAT | 14. Fort DIOU |
| 7. Fort BELLACROIX | 15. Fort GIRARDIN |
| 8. Fort QUEULEU | |

APPENDIX No 2
ARTILLERY EMBLACEMENTS IN THE INNER RING OF FORTS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Fortified Group ST QUENTIN.
One battery of two 210mm guns. | 4. Fort QUEULEU
One battery of four 150mm howitzers. |
| 2. Fort PLAPPEVILLE
Two batteries of four each 150mm
howitzers.
One battery of five 105mm howitzers
(outside the fort proper). | One battery of four 150mm howitzers
(outside the fort proper). |
| 3. Fort DEROULEDE
Two batteries of two each 150mm guns. | 5. Fort La CHENE
One battery of two 105mm howitzers.
One battery of four 105mm howitzers. |

APPENDIX No 3
THE METZ FORTS: THE OUTER BELT

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Fortified Group DRIANT | 15. Fort CANROBERT Number Three |
| 2. Fort ST BLAISE* | 16. Fort AMANVILLERS |
| 3. Fort SOMME* | 17. Fortified Group LORRAINE |
| 4. Fortified Group L' AISNE | 18. Fortified Group KELLERMAN |
| 5. Fortified Group LA MARNE | 19. Fortified Group DE GUISE |
| 6. Fort CHESNY (North) | 20. Fortified Group JEANNE D'ARC |
| 7. Fort CHESNY (South) | 21. Fort ST HUBERT |
| 8. Fortified Group L'YSER | 22. Fort JUSSY (North) |
| 9. Fort DE SILLY | 23. Fort JUSSY (South) |
| 10. Fort DE MONT | 24. Fort BOIS LA DAME |
| 11. Fortified Group SORBEY | 25. Fort VAUX (North) |
| 12. Fort ST BARBE | 26. Fort VAUX (South) |
| 13. Fort CANROBERT Number One | 27. Fort MARIVAL |
| 14. Fort CANROBERT Number Two | 28. Fort DE FEVES |

*These two forts comprise the Fortified Group VERDUN.

APPENDIX No 4
THE "SEVEN DWARFS"

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Fort ST HUBERT | 5. Fort VAUX (North) |
| 2. Fort JUSSY (North) | 6. Fort VAUX (South) |
| 3. Fort JUSSY (South) | 7. Fort MARIVAL |
| 4. Fort DE LA DAME | |

APPENDIX No 5
STRING OF FOUR FORTS SOUTHEAST OF METZ

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Fort CHESNY (North) | 3. Fort DE MONT |
| 2. Fort CHESNY (South) | 4. Fort DE SORBEY |

APPENDIX No 6
MAGINOT LINE FORTS

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. METRICH Group | 11. BOVENBERG Group |
| 2. BILLIG Forts | 12. Fort DENTIG |
| 3. HACKENBERG Group | 13. GOUME Group |
| 4. Fort MT COUCOU | 14. Fort MOTTENBERG |
| 5. Fort MT de WELCHES | 15. KERFENT Group |
| 6. Fort MICHELSBERG | 16. Fort BAMBEACH |
| 7. Fort HOBLING | 17. Fort EINSELINGERBERG |
| 8. Fort BOSSE | 18. LAUDREFANG Group |
| 9. Fort ANZELLING | 19. Fort TETTING |
| 10. Fort BERENBACH | |

APPENDIX No 7
COMPOSITION OF TASK FORCE WARNOCK

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3rd Battalion, 2nd Infantry (-I Company) | C Company and 1st Platoon, D Company, |
| 1st Battalion, 10th Infantry (-A Company) | 735th Tank Battalion |
| 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry (Reinforced) | C Company, 7th Engineer Combat Battalion |

APPENDIX No 8
THE BATTLE OF MAIZIERES-les-METZ
8 September — 30 October 1944

The steel mining town of MAIZIERES-les-METZ with its extensive mill district on the western approaches had an estimated population of approximately 3,000. It was located on the west banks of the MOSELLE six miles northeast of METZ and sat squarely astride the best and most direct route from the north into METZ.

CCA of the 7th Armored Division had occupied the large wooded area (BOIS DE L'ABBE) just northwest of the town on 8 September. From 10—14 September CCA and CCR of the 7th Armored Division made repeated sorties into the town but artillery, mortar, and anti-tank fire from east of the MOSELLE and from the top of the two huge slag piles that dominated MAIZIERES-les-METZ had forced the armor to withdraw to the BOIS DE L'ABBE.

When the 357th Infantry, 90th Infantry Division, relieved CCA and CCR (14 September), the infantry took up positions along the ridge one-half mile north of the woods and the armor withdrew through it to be committed in the ARNAVILLE bridgehead. Due to the extended (14 miles) front of the 357th Infantry, the issue of MAIZIERES-les-METZ was tabled for four days (15—19 September) while the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 357th Infantry, unsuccessfully assaulted Fort AMANVILLERS. Heavy artillery and mortar fire zeroed in on all the draws and road approaches to the fort and together with supporting fires from adjoining fortress groups effectively barred penetration by the two battalions.

Thereafter, from 19 September until 3 October, this portion of the line was quiet while the main effort of XX Corps was directed at ARNAVILLE, south of METZ, in an unsuccessful attempt to by-pass METZ and drive on towards the RHINE River.

While the 2nd Battalion, 11th Infantry, 5th Infantry Division, prepared to assault Fort DRIANT at noon 3 October, elements (C and G Companies) of the 357th Infantry attacked at 0430 hours, 3 October to secure MAIZIERES-les-METZ in an effort to gain positions at the opposite end of the base of the enemy bulge west of METZ.

By mid-day 3 October the two companies had cleared the BOIS DE L'ABBE and gained control of the huge slag pile that towered over the town to the northwest (See Sketch). These positions were held against four counterattacks ranging from platoon to company size and incessant artillery fire of 150mm caliber. Then the addition of the 83rd Infantry Division to XX Corps (5 October) permitted a shortening of the regimental lines and plans were made for a coordinated attack.

Details were covered in Field Order Number 16, issued on 5 October by Colonel BARTH. They were: Beginning at 061300 October the 1st Battalion (using B and C Companies) would extend its territory to include the southern boundary of the BOIS DE L'ABBE. The following morning at 0500 hours the 2nd Battalion would attack: E and G Companies would move from the assembly area along the west side of the slag pile into the town with 3rd Platoon, C Company, 712th Tank Battalion, and 1st Platoon, A Company, 607th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached. The 3rd Battalion would provide artillery, mortar, and small arms fire beginning at H-hour plus 45 minutes or when the enemy began using artillery, whichever occurred first. During the attack the Regimental Cannon Company would support the 2nd Battalion and upon completion of the operation it would revert to divisional control. The 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry, implemented the order as follows: F Company from its position on the south edge of the slag pile would support the attack by fire and thereafter would relieve E Company in the northern half of the town. E Company, from

a forward assembly position between the BOIS DE L'ABBE and the slag pile, would attack due east and south of the slag pile to cut the town in two, block to the south and mop up the northern half. G Company was to follow E Company east to the railroad tracks, then turn south and capture the factory area.

During the morning of 6 October, B and C Companies moved up to occupy the woods against light resistance and at 1730 hours that afternoon a squadron of P-47's from XIX Tactical Air Command bombed the town with good results. G Company on the right was to maintain contact with B Company on its left. As the two assault companies worked their way through the woods, they came upon a platoon-sized strongpoint with three emplaced light machine guns lying between them. Bitter fighting developed and in the course of it, contact was lost and never regained. Consequently a 200-yard gap existed between B and C Companies in the BOIS DE L'ABBE. That night, 6-7 October, an enemy counterattack in company strength hit the gap between B and C Companies and B Company became involved in some heavy fighting. The 3rd Battalion was ordered (0515 hours) to alert I Company for movement by kitchen trucks in event of further action, while a platoon from A Company (in reserve) was sent (0645 hours) to the rear of B Company to wipe out any enemy who had infiltrated behind its positions. While this situation was being developed, the 2nd Battalion from its assembly area west of the slag pile jumped off at 0545 hours against MAIZIERES-les-METZ. Just prior to the attack the enemy directed a strong counterattack in company size against F Company on the top of the slag pile which that company repulsed.

This enemy move greatly simplified the attack of the 2nd Battalion. E Company moved around the base of the slag pile, cut behind the attacking Germans and crossed the railroad to mop up the northern part of the town while G Company moved directly south into the steel mill area on the west side of the railroad tracks from the town. By 1030 hours F Company moved from its slag pile positions to relieve E Company which in turn moved south to come abreast of G Company. At this point resistance in front of E Company stiffened as the enemy brought up reinforcements to replace the force previously trapped between F and E Companies. The struggle then developed into house-to-house fighting, while G Company on the west, not faced with the same type of resistance, advanced to seize the factory district.

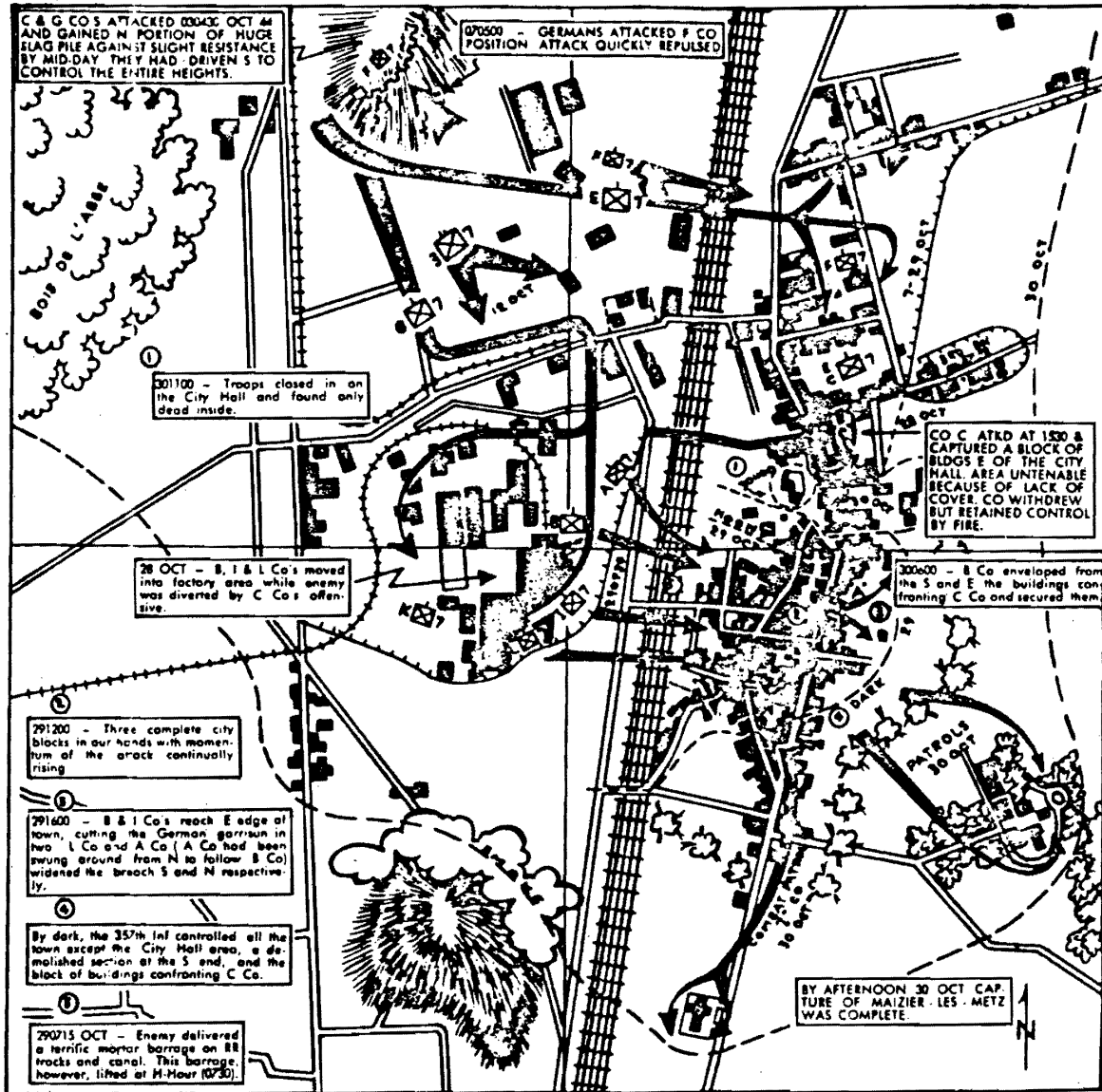
The tense situation in the woods of the 1st Battalion zone had been brought under control by the platoon from A Company, which cleaned out the enemy that had infiltrated to the rear of B Company. At noon, Colonel BARTH personally assumed command of C Company and formed contact with B Company.

However both B and C Companies, now badly disorganized, had sustained casualties in the woods fighting. The rapid reinforcement of the enemy in the south portion of the town and his determination to hold at all costs forced the operation into a systematic house-to-house engagement.

For the next three days, the 2nd Battalion, in the northern portion of the town, beat off the daily counterattacks thrown against it by special groups hastily assembled at METZ and sent to retake the town. The German practice of placing a small group of from four to eight men in each house with orders to fight to the last man made the job increasingly difficult. The 3rd Battalion's complete occupation of the factory district on the second day of the operation did provide excellent observation. Still, the 2nd Battalion's lack of sufficient force to outflank the north-south row of houses forced the fighting to progress down the longitudinal axis of the town. The buildings themselves were of sturdy concrete and stone construction, with walls one to two feet in thickness. Numerous garden walls, court yards, and side streets made the reduction of each house a separate undertaking.

At a meeting between Colonel BARTH and Lieutenant Colonel WARD (Commanding Officer of 2nd Battalion, 357th Infantry) on 11 October, it was decided that at least 2 battalions of infantry would be required to take MAIZIERES-les-METZ. The 1st Battalion, which had been badly disorganized in the BOIS DE L'ABBE fighting was to be pulled out for reorganization preparatory to an all-out assault on MAIZIERES-les-METZ. The 3rd Battalion replaced the 2nd Battalion (12 October), which in turn relieved the 1st Battalion for reorganization. However, on 13 October a Third US Army order, which froze all artillery ammunition above three inches in caliber, forced the plans for a coordinated attack to be abandoned.

Until 18 October, the battalion, assaulting with never more than one company and usually with only one platoon, was able to make no progress against the centrally located City Hall, which was strongly held by a determined enemy. From 19 October to 23 October a 155mm self-propelled gun was used to fire on the City Hall building. Although one wing was eventually demolished and the roof torn off, still the enemy occupied the fortified barrier.



BATTLE OF MAIZIER-LES-METZ

357TH INFANTRY

3 OCT - 30 OCT - 1944

The fact that the enemy continued to hold part of this key town, the occupation of which was a preliminary step in XX Corps' plan for the reduction of METZ, was a disappointment to the Corps Commander. Finally on 24 October XX Corps halved the regimental front and secured an adequate ammunition allowance from Third US Army for the use of the 357th Infantry in the reduction of resistance in MAIZIERES-les-METZ.

Detailed plans were made by the 357th Infantry for an attack at 0730 hours, 29 October, and Field Order Number 18 was issued.

The 3rd Battalion, attacking with I and L Companies, plus one platoon of E Company, would move east against the town from the factory district. The 1st Battalion, from its positions in the northern part of MAIZIERES-les-METZ facing the City Hall would attack with C Company to take the area surrounding the City Hall. The 345th and 343rd Field Artillery Battalions, the Cannon Company of the 357th Infantry, and the 81st Chemical Battalion were to be in direct support of the attack and to fire counter-battery fire for 15 minutes before H-hour. The artillery would then train its fire on all known enemy artillery positions. The 3rd Battalion would make a feint to the east while other units of the 90th Infantry Division carried out similar diversionary efforts. The town of MAIZIERES-les-METZ proper was divided into sections and each platoon was assigned a specific group of houses with successive objectives designated in advance.

The assault schedule was followed scrupulously. The attack began promptly at 290730 October with the planned artillery preparation and took the enemy by surprise. At 0715 hours the enemy had laid a ten-minute mortar concentration of 50mm, 81mm and 4.2cm caliber on the 3rd Battalion in the factory district, but the attack was launched immediately upon the lifting of the barrage. B, I and L Companies, abreast in that order from north to south, attacked to the east from the factory district, while C Company maintained pressure on the north. Confronted by the fully developed fire power of four companies, the enemy began to fall back in confusion. Artillery support and heavy machine guns on the flank blocked the enemy's escape routes to the south and east, and his forces began to withdraw into an ever-constricting area in the south-central part of MAIZIERES-les-METZ. By noon three complete city blocks had been captured. By 1600 hours B and I Companies had thrust straight through the town to cut the enemy garrison in two. A Company had been alerted at 0840 hours to exploit the anticipated success of the thrust and now L Company followed B Company on its right, to widen the breach to the south and north respectively. The enemy, now disorganized by the assault, began to surrender in groups of from six to thirty men.

On the north, the opposition to the attack of the 1st Battalion had been stronger. C Company had not been able to make any progress until noon, when the enemy was disorganized by the thrust of the 3rd Battalion (plus A and B Companies) to his rear. C Company gained approximately 100 yards and was then held up at 1500 hours by "die hard" resistance in a blockhouse on the eastern edge of the town. By 291800 October the bulk of MAIZIERES-les-METZ was occupied, leaving in enemy hands a few houses between B and G Companies on the eastern edge of town, the City Hall, the row of houses on the southwest edge of town, and a few buildings at the southern tip. Seventy-four prisoners of war were taken during the day.

At 0600 hours, 30 October, B Company, 357th Infantry, enveloped from the south and east the group of buildings facing C Company and secured them. A combat patrol from L Company moved south at 0830 hours to occupy the cemetery capture 11 prisoners of war, and discover emplacements behind the cemetery wall. At 1100 hours troops closed in on the City Hall and found only dead enemy soldiers inside. Patrols at the same time reported the woods and buildings at the southeastern tip of the town as clear. The capture of MAIZIERES-les-METZ was now complete.

In this operation the 357th Infantry killed or captured the equivalent of a German battalion at the cost of 55 casualties. Moreover, XX Corps was now in a position to cut the supply route to the fortified bulge and to exploit one of the best approaches to the inner defense of METZ.

APPENDIX No 9

XX CORPS ARTILLERY PARTICIPATING IN THE METZ OPERATION

XX Corps Artillery, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.
III Corps Artillery, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.
7th Field Observation Battalion (reinforced with a flash and sound battery).
Six field artillery headquarters and headquarters batteries.
Seventeen and two-thirds field artillery battalions.
One battalion manning the following captured guns:

Four 76.2 Russian gun-howitzers.
Three 122.2 Russian gun-howitzers.
Four German 88mm guns.
Three German 105mm guns.
Three German 150mm infantry howitzers.

APPENDIX No 10

THE REDUCTION OF FORT KOENIGSMACHER

(The part played by the 1st Battalion — commanded by Lieutenant Colonel C. A. LYTTLE — of the 358th Infantry Regiment in the KOENIGSMACHER operation is a combination of a river crossing and an assault on a fortified position. Other elements of the 90th Infantry Division were involved but the role of the 1st Battalion is indicative of the nature of the whole operation.)

From 3 November until noon of 7 November the 1st Battalion of the 358th Infantry underwent some hurry-up training for its next mission, the crossing of the MOSELLE and the assault on Fort KOENIGSMACHER. This fort was an important point in the northern defense line of the METZ region. Casemates and pillboxes of the old MAGINOT Line were used for assault training and some demonstrations of river-crossing methods were put on. All equipment and weapons were inspected and new issues were made when necessary. Commanding officers of all companies were briefed by Colonel CLARKE (Commanding Officer of the Regiment) and aerial photos, maps, and large scale engineer sketches were distributed. The crossing date was set for the period prior to daylight on 9 November, and during the two days prior to 9 November detailed reconnaissance from the west side of the MOSELLE River was made by all officers and non-commissioned officers in command of the assault troops.

The plan of the 358th Infantry Regiment called for an assault crossing with the 1st Battalion on the left and the 3rd Battalion on the right. The 2nd Battalion was to remain initially in reserve, subsequently crossing to relieve the 3rd Battalion, which was to contain the town of KOENIGSMACHER. The 1st Battalion had the mission of taking Fort KOENIGSMACHER by storm.

For this operation the 358th Infantry had the following elements attached:

A Company, 81st Chemical Battalion
A Company, 712th Tank Battalion
B Company (less one platoon), 135th Engineer Combat Battalion
C Company, 315th Medical Battalion
Four battalions of artillery were in direct support of the regiment.

The plan for the 1st Battalion was as follows: A and C Companies were to make an assault crossing over the MOSELLE River prior to daylight. C Company was then to attack the town of BASSE HAM, before light came, and thus block the approaches to Fort KOENIGSMACHER from the southeast. B Company would cross behind the two assault companies. At daylight A and B Companies would advance and seize Fort KOENIGSMACHER. One platoon of B Company, 315th Engineer Combat Battalion, was attached to the 1st Battalion for the crossing and the assault on the fort.

The road net on the east, or enemy side of the river could be easily seen from the west bank, and after reconnaissance it was decided that a railroad running along the east bank would be the reorganization point for the assault companies. The crossing was planned and executed as a series of four waves. The first wave consisted of two rifle platoons from each of A and C Companies. The second wave was made up of the weapons platoon of A and C Companies, the attached engineer units, and the reserve platoons of A and C Companies. B Company was put across in its entirety in the third wave, along with the combat command group of the 1st Battalion. The fourth wave consisted of the remainder of D Company, Headquarters Company, and the Medical Detachment. The Battalion Surgeon, Captain McEVOY, insisted in the original planning that the battalion aid station be moved to the east side of the river with the fourth wave. The 1st Battalion was the only one in the division to make this arrangement, which proved very valuable after the action commenced. The Battalion S-4 and the Motor Officer were left behind to expedite the movement of supplies across the river.

On 7 November the battalion moved by truck from MORFONTAINE to HAYANGE, where a hot meal was served, and thence into a previously reconnoitered and assigned assembly area, with the rest of the regiment, in the CATTENOM Forest. This move covered about 22 miles. In the assembly area the men were briefed by their officers and that night and the day of 8 November were spent in last-minute preparations.

Arrangements had been made with the 179th Engineer Battalion for the rubber assault boats, which were to be used in the crossings, to be left in the little village of HUZANGE, which was about 1,500 yards from the MOSELLE River. Under cover of darkness on the night of 8-9 November, the 1st Battalion moved out of the cover of the woods and marched to HUZANGE, two and one-half miles away. Here the infantry and engineers picked up the assault boats and began the long haul to the river. (In subsequent reflection on the action the battalion agrees that it was a mistake to make such a long haul because the men became tired from carrying the boats, had to rest frequently, and the noise of the movement was considerable.) All the men of the assault companies had been carefully briefed on their positions in the boats and special arrangements had been made to separate the personnel of the weapons and engineer squads so that an artillery burst would not eliminate an entire unit of specialists.

The battalion had been stationed at THIONVILLE, prior to the crossing, and there had charted the current of the river, but by the time of the crossing the river had risen steadily, as the result of a continuing rain, and the current had increased far beyond anything that had been expected.

At 0330 hours on 9 November the first wave put its boats in the river and the crossing began. The first and second waves each used eight assault boats, manned by boat squads of three engineers and 12 infantrymen. The crossing of the first two waves was made without mishap, except for difficulties in the mud on the near bank, and received no fire from the enemy. However, the swiftness of the current had been misjudged and carried the boats approximately 1,000 yards downstream from their intended landing point opposite Fort KOENIGSMACHER. The enemy rifle pits along the banks were flooded out and the mine fields there were covered by the rising river. No resistance was encountered as A and B Companies reorganized along the railroad track. The engineers returned the assault craft to the other shore. However, some mistake was made and the waiting third and fourth waves at HUZANGE were not informed by the engineers, who, believing their job ended, went back to the command post at CATTENOM. The men of the third and fourth waves waited for about an hour in the pitch darkness and heavy rain. When no boats were reported, two five-man searching parties were sent to investigate. They found the unattended boats on the west bank of the MOSELLE and made the crossing as planned. As a result of this delay, the fourth wave landed at daylight (0715 hours). A and B Companies assembled on the railroad and at 0515 hours moved out in a column of platoons, crossing the open space northeast of BASSE HAM and closing in the woods just to the west of Fort KOENIGSMACHER. Here A and B Companies reorganized in the darkness. A Company then skirted the base of the hill (See Sketch) to the north and in squad column formation turned towards the fort and took up its positions for the final assault. B Company, on the right, formed up in the woods. Just at daybreak (0715 hours) A and B Companies, in skirmish line formation with two platoons abreast, charged up the gradual incline of the hill and advanced on the fort. The assault passed over the first strands of double-apron barbed wire surrounding the out-works of Fort KOENIGSMACHER and reached the open trench system (See Sketch). The initial stage of the assault was made with such speed that no opposition was met until A Company was in sight of the trenches. Here a sentry in an armored observation post fired on A Company and apparently gave the alarm. Both A and

B Companies now took cover in the trench system. B Company had reached the trenches on the southeast with little enemy fire. (At daybreak C Company had attacked BASSE HAM, to the south, as planned.)

At the sound of the alarm the enemy apparently withdrew into the underground fortifications system and mortar fire began to fall on the attackers. The assaulting forces called for artillery to be put on the Germans, but the enemy had zeroed in his mortars from positions within the main fortified area and 50mm mortar fire began to drop into the trenches. This fire appeared to have been adjusted by observers in the armored observation posts, who were also able to enfilade part of the trench system with machine-gun fire. (The battery of four 100mm guns on the fort could not be brought to bear on the attackers.)

Further movement by the assault forces was stymied until the armored observation posts could be knocked out. This phase of the attack was begun by the engineer platoon (commanded by First Lieutenant MARTIN) from the 315th Engineer Combat Battalion and two assault teams under Lieutenants KILPATRICK and NEAL of A Company. The observation post which had given the alarm when A Company attacked was demolished by a 17-pound satchel of Composition "C2" placed at its base. Most of the day was spent in the systematic reduction of the westward armored observation posts by the same means and in attacks on the shelter points, or sally ports, which guarded the entry into the underground portion of the fortifications.

Generally, the shelter points consisted of a one-story concrete pillbox projecting out of the hillside. From the shelter points, each with one small entrance protected by a guard room, a corridor led to staircases descending to the basement floors and underground corridors of Fort KOENIGSMACHER. Shelter points Numbers Four and Five in B Company's sector were eliminated in a manner which became typical. Under cover of machine-gun, BAR, and rifle fire a two-man team, carrying two satchels with 34 pounds of Composition "C2", rushed the ferro-concrete door to the pillbox, or shelter point, crawled into the tunnel past the guard room and placed the charges on the staircase leading further underground. They then withdrew and the charge was exploded. In this way the staircases leading down to the basement floors were destroyed and the exits blocked, preventing the enemy from infiltration back onto the top of the fort.

A search was also made for any exposed ventilating ports. One was found and a satchel charge was dropped on the enemy below. The blast was so terrific that it blew one of the enemy back up through the ventilating port. A ventilating port was found at shelter point Number 10 and two five-gallon cans of gasoline were poured through the ventilating port, followed by a thermite grenade. As the day wore on gasoline was used in other portions of the fort, but so much explosive material was required that the supply was exhausted by nightfall. A hurry-up call was made to the division and 500 pounds of explosives were delivered by an artillery liaison plane and dropped by a field expedient parachute along the road leading into the fort from the south.

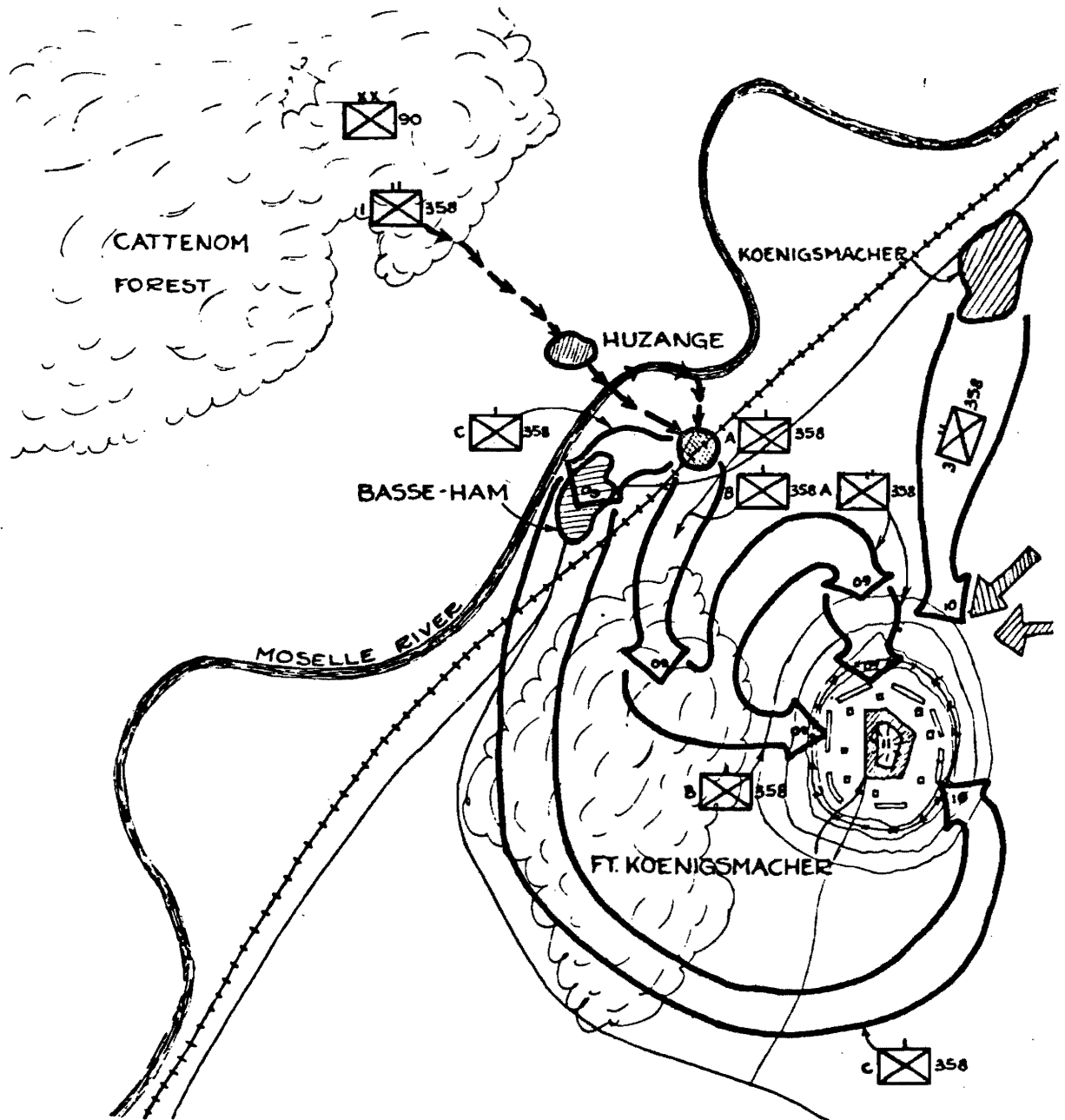
During the early morning of 10 November C Company, at BASSE HAM, was relieved by Headquarters Company and elements of D Company. C Company, in column of platoons, then advanced towards the fort and attacked from the southeast, with the first and third platoons deploying in the unoccupied trench system to the rear of Fort KOENIGSMACHER. The top side of the fort was now completely overrun and the last armored observation posts were knocked out by noon 10 November. Composition "C2" again had run short and more deliveries were made by cub plane.

In the afternoon the enemy attempted a counterattack from the northeast corner of the fort, which they still held (See Sketch). The attack was made with approximately 50 men but was easily beaten back by small arms and automatic weapons fire from the 1st Battalion assault force. The enemy lost about 28 men killed and withdrew into the tunnels. During this day a few half-hearted attempts to relieve the beleaguered garrison were made by enemy infantry outside of the fort. However, these attacks were beaten off by other elements of the 358th Infantry who were containing the town of KOENIGSMACHER.

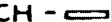




On the morning of the third day the 1st Battalion proceeded to mop up the remnants of resistance by the simple expedient of pouring a large quantity of gasoline into the lower floors and tossing thermite and white phosphorus grenades in after it. At this point the remaining Germans lost heart and 120 of them surrendered.

The 1st Battalion estimates that it had killed or captured 300 of the enemy at Fort KOENIGSMACHER; (that is, the entire 1st Battalion, 74th Infantry Regiment, 19th Infantry Division). Its own casualties were 21 killed, 85 wounded and five missing.

At 1350 hours the battalion passed into regimental reserve. C Company remained on the fort and B Company outposted the area between the fort and the town of BASSE HAM, while A Company held BASSE HAM and covered the right flank of the regiment.



~LEGEND~

- OPEN TRENCH - 
- FORTIFIED SHELTER - 
- REORGANIZATION AREA - 
- DOUBLE-APRON BARBED WIRE - 
- GERMAN COUNTER-ATTACKS - 

~SKETCH~

REDUCTION OF FT. KOENIGSMACHER
 1ST BN. - 358TH INF. REGT.
 09-11 NOV., 1945

APPENDIX No 11

THE THIONVILLE CROSSING AND THE REDUCTION OF FORT D'ILLANGE

The 2nd Battalion, 378th Infantry, 95th Infantry Division, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Autrey J. MAROUN, was in divisional reserve, under XX Corps control, at the beginning of the METZ operation. At 1400 hours on 9 November 1944 Colonel MAROUN received the battalion mission; it was: "The Commanding General, XX Corps, directs that a bridgehead vicinity THIONVILLE be seized by your battalion. Entire battalion will cross the river and keep direct fire off site where main bridge will be installed."

On the night of 10 November the battalion (motorized) moved 11 miles to THIONVILLE, while Colonel MAROUN, his S-3, and company commanders made a reconnaissance of the crossing site, whose location had been obtained from the 1306th Engineer Group. The terrain west of the MOSELLE River, at the crossing site, was generally rough but the opposite bank was flat and level. The river, generally 300 feet in width, had reached flood-stage proportions, with a fifteen-mile current, due to heavy rains. However, at THIONVILLE the river was deeply channelled and split into two courses to form an elliptical island 200 yards wide and one mile long.

Two fortified groups commanded the crossing site on the eastern bank. Old Fort YUTZ (built in 1857) was situated immediately east of the river and, although useful only as an infantry strongpoint, it had been reinforced by a connecting series of machine-gun pillboxes along the river's edge. Fort D'ILLANGE, one and one-half miles south of THIONVILLE, was an ingeniously constructed group of three forts situated on the dominating terrain in the area. It had a known artillery complement of four 100mm guns.

At 0400 hours, 11 November, Colonel MAROUN assembled his officers, discussed his plans and issued his orders: E Company would make the initial assault at 0830 hours, 11 November, and secure the low ground bordering the MOSELLE as a crossing point west of the river. F Company would pass through E Company, cross the MOSELLE north of the island, in infantry assault boats, and secure Fort YUTZ. G Company would initially be in reserve and then, with E Company on its left, would cross and establish a bridgehead 1,000 yards east of the river. The battalion would be supported in the operation by the 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion, the 135th Engineer Combat Battalion and medium artillery.

E Company moved up at 0600 hours, 11 November and found the western side of the river unoccupied. F Company then handcarried its boats to the river's edge and under cover of artillery smoke shells launched the first of three assault-platoon waves of infantry across the MOSELLE, by-passing the island. The first wave received no small arms fire. The second and third waves, however, had to cross under severe small arms fire from the island, automatic fire from the three pillboxes along the eastern banks of the river, mortar fire from Fort YUTZ, and artillery fire from Fort D'ILLANGE. E Company then moved across the first 200-foot water barrier at 1100 hours, and had cleaned out the enemy resistance on the island (6th Company, 74th Infantry Regiment, 19th Grenadier Division) by 1800 hours.

F Company assembled the first platoon on the far bank and began the reduction of the northern machine-gun pillbox while tank destroyers from across the river fired directly on the other two. Forts YUTZ and D'ILLANGE were simultaneously blanketed with artillery fire. Throughout the day the remainder of the pillboxes were reduced and the balance of F Company, with a heavy machine gun section from H Company, closed east of the MOSELLE, and on the morning of 12 November moved north to attack Fort YUTZ.

F Company (Captain Robert E. ADAIR) attacked from the northwest at 0700 hours, with two platoons abreast, under heavy small arms fire. The company crossed over the moat surrounding Fort YUTZ by way of two intact bridges and entered the fort at 0825 hours.

G Company had crossed the MOSELLE at 0715 hours and two platoons of its riflemen were attached to F Company. Captain ADAIR sent (0915 hours) the remaining rifle platoon of F Company and one platoon from G Company east and to the rear of Fort YUTZ to eliminate an enemy 50mm mortar section and force an entry from the south. Another platoon from G Company, plus the heavy machine gun section from H Company, attacked along the line of demolished pillboxes. At 1215 hours Captain ADAIR had five rifle platoons and a section of heavy machine guns in Fort YUTZ. While F Company (reinforced) engaged in a grenade-throwing, small arms contest with the enemy (5th Company, 74th Infantry Regiment, 19th Grenadier Division), E Company crossed the river, by-passed Fort YUTZ and attacked north, expanding the bridgehead to a depth of 400 yards.

On 13 November all resistance ended in Fort YUTZ and plans were made for a night attack on HAUTE YUTZ, three-quarters of a mile east of THIONVILLE, with G Company. F and E Companies would thereafter attack through G Company to assault Fort D'ILLANGE on the morning of 14 November.

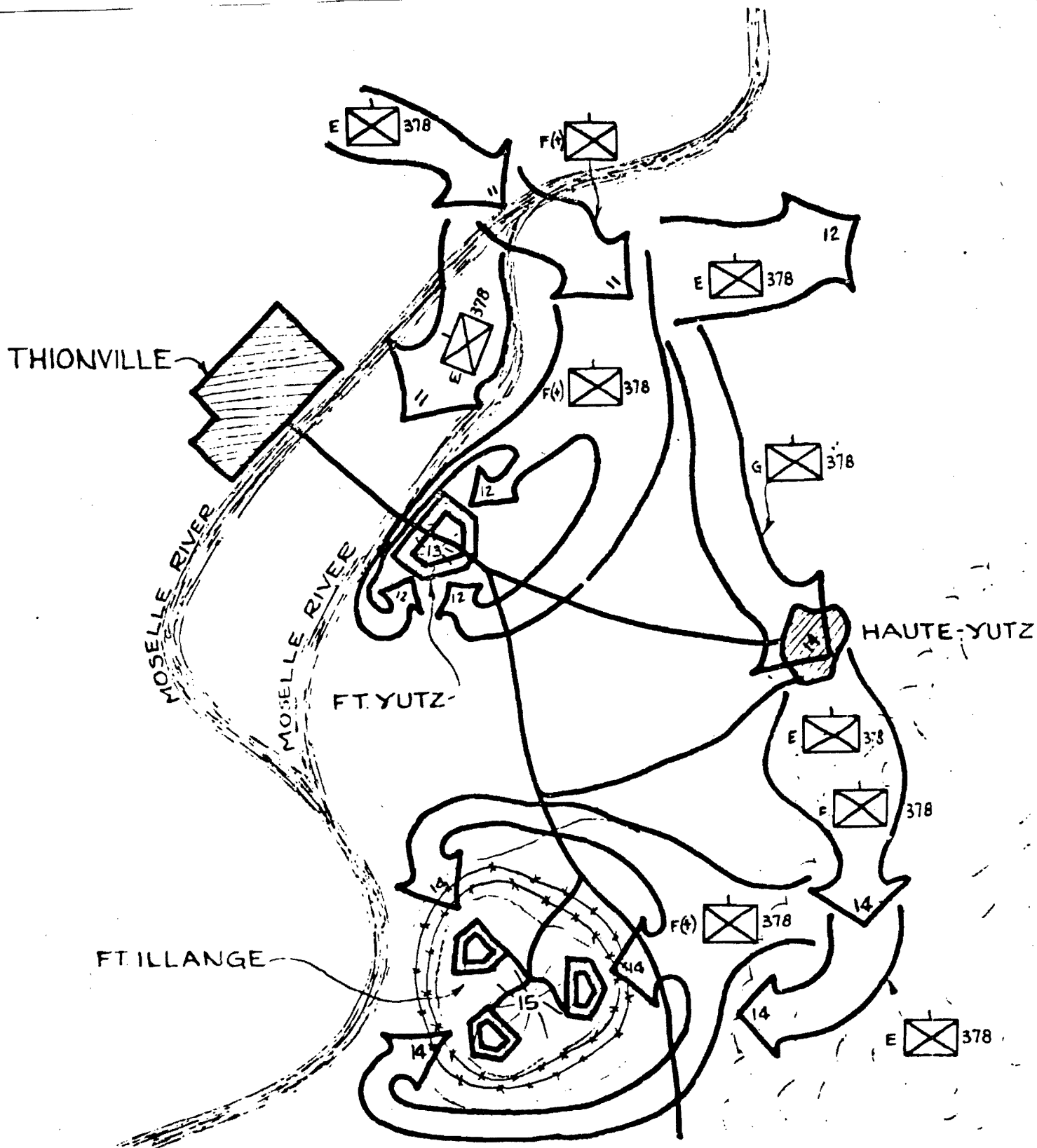
G Company took HAUTE YUTZ in a night attack against limited resistance. F and E Companies, passing through (0830 hours) HAUTE YUTZ attacked (0900 hours) through the woods south and east of the town towards Fort D'ILLANGE. F Company on the right attacked with two platoons abreast. Further reinforced by a light machine gun section and a 60mm mortar section attached to the left platoon and a heavy machine gun section and an 81mm mortar section attached to the right platoon, the company worked its way through a booby-trapped area under heavy artillery and mortar fire from Fort D'ILLANGE and at 1015 hours took the intermediate objective, a wooded hill south and 400 yards east of Fort D'ILLANGE. First Lieutenant BILLINGS of E Company advanced with a white flag and demanded the surrender of the fort. The German captain, (commanding the 3rd Company, 74th Infantry Regiment, 19th Grenadier Division), admitted being outflanked but would not surrender. The attack was then resumed at 1345 hours after three artillery battalions (medium) had laid a 45-minute concentration on Fort D'ILLANGE. Clearing the woods F Company double-timed in two waves across the open space between the woods and the wooded fringe surrounding the base of the hill upon which Fort D'ILLANGE was situated and here reorganized for the final assault. E Company (First Lieutenant James R. PENDERGRAST) on the left was unable to penetrate the enemy's forward positions along the edge of the woods, and so deployed to give fire support to F Company.

A preparation of 155mm, 240mm, and tank destroyer fire of 30 minutes' duration was called for and given. F Company placed its 81 mm mortars on the outside edge of the woods surrounding the fort and its 60mm mortars and light machine guns well forward in defile. With this base of fire, at 1500 hours it attacked up the hill, two platoons abreast, and penetrated the two parallel barbed wire defenses, consisting of six double-apron wire entanglements, 66 feet in depth, that completely encircled the hill. The second platoon of F Company followed in a drainage ditch west of the fort and entered from the rear; while the third platoon, in a line of skirmishers, advanced with marching fire and was in the fort by 1614 hours. While working their way through the booby-trapped barbed wire entanglements the two platoons had received sustained mortar fire from the rear of the fort and Captain ADAIR sent his first platoon east of the fort, where it knocked out the mortars and completed the encirclement of the fort. At 1630 hours, G Company which had followed F Company, moved to the base of the hill and two rifle platoons were attached to F Company.

By darkness, one-third of the fort was under control and the remainder was being probed under enemy machine gun and sniper fire. At 0200 hours on 15 November "beehive" charges were carried into the fort and the work of destroying the concrete bunkers began. At 0730 hours, 15 November, half of the fort was in the hands of F Company. The assaulting units now were receiving fire from machine guns placed atop the remaining bunkers and casemates. The 81mm mortars in the woods, directed by field telephone from the fort, soon reduced this fire.

The work of demolishing the bunkers proceeded. Captain ADAIR would send two men forward to a bunker or casemate, one carrying a 10-pound "beehive" which he would place against the steel door while the other threw hand grenades into the machine gun slits. After the "beehive" charge had been detonated, a four-man crew, armed with "thread charges" consisting of three 10-pound TNT packets strung on a primer cord, would then come forward and push the "thread charge" through the hole blown by the initial charge and detonate the explosive.

At 1040 hours the 3rd Company, 74th Infantry Regiment, 19th Grenadier Division, had been eliminated. Sixty-seven prisoners of war were taken and 74 enemy had been killed or wounded.



~LEGEND~

DOUBLE APRON BARBED WIRE ★★
 NUMERAL IN ARROWHEAD REPRESENTS
 DATE IN NOVEMBER, 1944

~ SKETCH ~

2ND BN. 378TH INF. REGT
 11-15 NOV. 1944

APPENDIX No 12
FIELD ORDER NUMBER TEN

HQ XX CORPS
APO 340, US ARMY — 052300 B Sept 44

FO 10

Maps: Map of FRANCE, 1/250,000
Opns Overlay.

1. a Annex 1 — Int.
 - b (1) Third US Army atks to seize crossings of the RHINE R between MANNHEIM and COBLENZ (excl).
 - (2) XII Corps atks E to seize crossings of the RHINE R in its Z.
2. XX Corps atks E on Corps O:
 - a. To seize brhd E of MOSELLE R, capturing METZ and THIONVILLE.
 - b. To seize brhd over RHINE R in vic of MAINZ.
 - c. Prepared to continue adv to seize FRANKFURT on Corps O.
Bdrys — Overlay.
Formation: 7 Armd Div leading, followed by 5 Inf Div on the S and 90 Inf Div on the N.
3. a. 3 Cav (atchd Co A, 150 Engr C Bn)
 - (1) Rcn to RHINE R without delay.
 - b. 7 Armd Div. Atchd:

814 TD Bn (SP)
204 AAA AW Bn (SP)
206 Engr C Bn (-1 Plat)
991 Engr Twy Br Co

 - (1) Adv E in multiple clms; seize crossings over RHINE R (overlay).
 - (2) Cities and strong en positions by-passed by main clms will be contained with minimum forces until relieved by elms of the Inf Divs.
 - c. 5 Inf Div, (- 1 Bn CT Mtz). Atchd:

449 AAA AW Bn (Mbl)
735 Tk Bn
818 TD Bn (SP)
241 FA Bn
284 FA Bn

 - (1) Adv E in Z behind C elms of 7 Armd Div, destroying en where found, capture METZ and continue adv to the RHINE.
 - (2) Maintain contact with XII Corps and 90 Inf Div.

- d. 90 Inf Div. Atchd: 712 Tk Bn
607 TD Bn (T)
537 AA Bn (Mbl)
282 FA Bn
- (1) Adv E in Z behind C elms of 7 Armd Div, destroying en where found, capture THIONVILLE and continue adv to the RHINE.
- (2) Maintain contact with 5 Inf Div and V Corps.
- e. XX Corps Arty. Supports the Corps atk.
- (1) 5 FA Gp. Atchd: 274, 695, 558 FA Bns (SP)
Reinforce 7 Armd Div; follow C elms 7 Armd Div.
- (2) 193 FA Gp. Atchd: 204, 949 FA Bns.
Reinforce 90 Inf Div; follow C elms of 90 Inf Div.
- (3) 204 FA Gp. Atchd: 177, 943, 773 FA Bns.
Reinforce 5 Inf Div; follow C elms of 5 Inf Div.
- (4) Balance of Corps Arty:
Hq Btry XX Corps Arty
7 FA Obsn Bn
195 FA Gp; 689, 733, 736 FA Bns
4 TD Gp: 774 TD Bn
Gen Support. Follow the Z of 10 Inf Div
- (5) Coordinate with march elms of Corps Engrs and AAA.
- (6) See FO No. 12 Hq XX Corps Arty.
- (7) 33 FA Brig: 270 FA Bn (240mm How)
277 FA Bn (240mm How)
739 FA Bn (8-inch How)
989 FA Bn (155mm G)
999 FA Bn (8-inch How)
- Gen support. Move on Corps O on routes to be designated.
- f. Engrs.
- (1) 1139 Engr C Gp (-206 Engr C Bn and 991 Engr Twy Br Co, both atchd 7 Armd Div):
(a) Gen support Corps Opns following 90 Inf Div.
(b) March Order — Coordinate with 90 Inf Div.
- (2) 1103 Engr C Gp:
(a) Gen support Corps Opns following 5 Inf Div.
(b) March Order — Coordinate with 5 Inf Div and Corps Arty.
- g. 112 AAA Gp.
- (1) Protect crossings over defiles.
- (2) Protect Corps Arty.
- (3) March O — Coordinate with Corps Arty.
- h. Corps Res: 1 Bn CT (5 Inf Div) Mtz.
- (1) Move to initial position vic ETAIN.
- (2) Prepared to furnish combat patrols and mop up Corps rear area.
- x. (1) Local Bomb Line will be included in any request for close air support missions.
(2) Reports to Corps: Use Map report code, for reporting locations.
4. Adm O — See current Adm Orders.
5. a. (1) Map report code (overlay).
(2) SOI 1—25.
- b. Ax Sig Com.
XX Corps: Present CP (U220610) — PINTHEVILLE (U465590) — GRAVELOTTE (U755580) — VIGY (U955675) — BEDERSDORF (Q210790) — ST WENDEL (Q590965) — LAUTERECKEN (L900165) — STADECKEN (M290460)

7 Armd Div: Present CP (U250630) — thence same as XX Corps.

5 Inf Div: Present CP (U235625) — MOULETTE (U540575) — GRAVELOTTE (U755580) — VIGY (U955675) — BOUZONVILLE (Q125780) — SAARLAUTERN (Q230800) — DIRMINGEN (Q475920) — KUSEL (L760040) — ALSENZ (M060250) — EBERSTUN (M340470).

90 Inf Div: Present CP (U495740) — BRIEY (U695735) — METZERVISSE (U950810) — WALDWISSE (Q140920) — DAGSTUHL (L390035) — BIRKENFELD (L590170) — KIRN (L800320) — ARGENSCHWANG (L970430) — BINGEN (M120520).

c. CPs

XX Corps: vic VERDUN (U220610)

7 Armd Div: vic VERDUN (U250630)

5 Inf Div: vic VERDUN (U235625)

90 Inf Div: vic ETON (U495740)

d. Radio: Special attention to security.

OFFICIAL:

SNYDER

G-3

WALKER

CG

COLLIER

C/S

APPENDIX No 13

FIELD ORDER NUMBER TWELVE

HQ XX CORPS
APO 340, US ARMY

3 Nov 44

FO 12

MAPS: 1/100,000 Map of FRANCE
Opns Overlay

1. a. Annex 1 — Int.
 - b. (1) Third US Army resumes offensive on D-Day at H-Hour to seize the DARMSTADT — FRANKFURT area.
 - (2) (a) XII Corps atks on the right (S) fl of XX Corps to seize that portion of Army obj within its Z, and to assist XX Corps to isolate and destroy the METZ garrison.
 - (b) 80 Inf Div (XII Corps) atks to cross SEILLE R and seize FAULQUEMONT (FALKENBERG) (Q170498).
 - (c) 6 Armd Div (XII Corps) passes through brhd of 80 Inf Div to atk FAULQUEMONT.
 - (3) III Corps concentrates vic ETAIN.
 - (4) XIX TAC supports atk of XX Corps (see Annex 3 — Air Support).
2. XX Corps atks on D-Day, to encircle and destroy the garrison of METZ fortified area, and to seize brhd over the SAAR R vic SAARBURG. To reconnoiter in force to seize crossings over the SAAR R intact. Prepared to resume the atk to the NE.
Trs: Annex 2, Tr List.
D-Day: To be announced.
Formation, bdries, and obj: Opns Overlay.
LD: Existing line of con.
3. a. 5 Inf Div (reinf — Annex 2).
 - (1) On Corps O, atk to seize high ground (overlay), making main effort on right (S) fl (overlay).
 - (2) Within Z block all routes of withdrawal from METZ and prevent any en reinf of the METZ garrison.
 - (3) Establish and maintain con with 90 Inf Div and XII Corps.
 - (4) Protect brhd over MOSELLE R with minimum force, coordinating with 95 Inf Div for use of one mtz inf bn of that div for br protection purposes, on Corps O.
- b. 95 Inf Div (reinf — Annex 2).
 - (1) On Corps O, relieve elms of 10 Armd Div containing en brhd W of MOSELLE R.
 - (2) In coordination with 90 Inf Div make vigorous demonstration of crossing MOSELLE R vic UCKANGE, commencing at 1500 hours on D-Day and continuing for a minimum of fifteen hours. Trs will cross the MOSELLE R during this demonstration. Demonstration will build up, and not be permitted to taper off, until time of cessation.

- (3) In conjunction with demonstration vic UCKANGE, reduce en pocket E of MAIZIERES to the MOSELLE R; both efforts to be so coordinated as to create the indication of a major atk.
 - (4) Vigorously contain en within Z. Maintain constant pressure on en, and rapidly follow-up any en withdrawal.
 - (5) On Corps O atk and seize the city of METZ.
 - (6) Be prepared on Corps O to assist 5 Inf Div in protection of brs over MOSELLE R with one inf bn, mtz from 95 Inf Div transportation.
- c. 90 Inf Div (reinf — Annex 2).
- (1) Under cover of darkness, nt of D+1, pass through TF POLK and cross MOSELLE R in vic of KOENIGSMACHER (overlay), coordinating with 95 Inf Div demonstration vic UCKANGE.
 - (2) Seize high ground (overlay), making main effort on left (E) fl.
 - (3) On Corps O pass 10 Armd Div, 83 Inf Div (— 1 RCT), and 3 Cav Gp (reinf), (in O listed) through brhd over MOSELLE R.
 - (4) Within Z prevent en withdrawal from METZ area, and in conjunction with 10 Armd Div, prevent en reinf of the METZ garrison.
 - (5) Establish and maintain con with 5 Inf Div, 10 Armd Div and 83 Inf Div.
- d. 10 Armd Div (reinf — Annex 2) (initially less Div Arty).
- (1) Upon relief in Z containing en brhd, by 95 Inf Div, move to initial assembly area vic of MARS-la-TOUR (overlay). Displace to forward assembly area (to be designated), on Corps O.
 - (2) On Corps O atk through 90 Inf Div brhd to seize high ground (overlay), making main effort on left (E) fl.
 - (3) (a) Upon passage through 90 Inf Div brhd, reconnoiter to SAAR R with one C Comd, to seize intact, crossings over R, from MERZIG (vQ205935) (Incl) to the S.
 Priorities of reconnaissance:
 - 1 MERZIG area
 - 2 PACHTEN (vQ245845) — DILLINGEN (vQ275838) area
 - 3 SAARLAUTERN (vQ285800) area
 - (b) Any brs seized intact will be protected and held at all costs.
 - (4) Prevent en reinf of METZ garrison from the E or NE, and in conjunction with 90 Inf Div, prevent en withdrawal from METZ area.
 - (5) Establish and maintain con with 90 Inf Div, 83 Inf Div and elms of XII Corps.
 - (6) Protect E fl of Corps.
- e. 83 Inf Div.
- (1) With 1 RCT continue protect LUXEMBOURG and contain en in N of Z. Div (-1 RCT) initially remain present positions, concentrating with maximum secrecy in area to be designated, on Corps O.
 - (2) TF POLK (3 Cav Gp reinf), atchd 83 Inf Div, on Corps O, to relieve 330 Inf Regt containing W bank of MOSELLE R.
 - (3) On Corps O, pass elms of Corps through SAARBURG brhd. as directed.
- f. XX Corps Arty (Annex 2 — Tr List).
- (1) (a) 5 FA Gp.
 Gen support Z 90 Inf Div initially.
 Reinf 10 Armd Div when Div crosses MOSELLE R.
 - (b) 40 FA Gp.
 Reinf 90 Inf Div.
 - (c) 195 FA Gp.
 Gen support Z 90 Inf Div and 10 Armd Div.
 - (d) 193 FA Gp.
 Reinf 95 Inf Div

- (e) III Corps Arty Hqs.
 - (1) 203 FA Gp
Gen support Z 5 Inf Div
 - (2) 204 FA Gp
Reinf 5 Inf Div
- (f) 10 Armd Div Arty.
Gen support Z 90 Inf Div under Corps control initially.
Revert to 10 Armd Div prior to Div crossing MOSELLE R.
- (g) 4 TD Gp (Annex 2 — Tr List).
Gen support Z 90 Inf Div.
- (h) Arty fire plans will be planned and coordinated with Div Arty Comdrs by
Corps Arty Comdr.
 - (2) Annex 4 — FA.
- g. XX Corps Engrs (Annex 2 — Tr List).
 - (1) (a) 1139 Engr C Gp: Direct support R crossings and assault opns 90 Inf Div,
10 Armd Div and 83 Inf Div.
 - (b) 1103 Engr C Gp: Direct support 5 Inf Div.
 - (2) Annex 5 — Engrs.
- h. 3 Cav Gp (TF POLK) (Annex 2 — Tr List).
 - (1) Contain en in Z, securing LD of 90 Inf Div.
 - (2) Upon assault crossing of 90 Inf Div, assemble vic EVRANGE (vP885015). Atchd
to 83 Inf Div, on Corps O.
- x. (1) Primary mission of all trs is the destruction or capture of the METZ garrison,
without the investiture or seige of the METZ Forts. All leaders are responsible
for maint of aggressive, mbl attitude within their comds.
 - (2) After reaching their objs, all units XX Corps to be prepared for offensive action
to the NE or E.
 - (3) After reaching their objs, all inf divs (except 83 Inf Div) to be prepared to
furnish one mtz RCT for atchmt to the 10 Armd Div, on Corps O.
 - (4) Utmost secrecy will be exerted prior to resumption of opns to prevent en
knowledge of change in Corps dispositions or intentions.
 - (5) Local bomb line to be furnished by units requesting close air support.
 - (6) Upon con with German civilians, non-fraternization policy to be rigidly enforced.
NO civilians will be permitted to interfere with military opns. Passage of lines
will be strictly prohibited to all civilians.
 - (7) Inf Divs to thoroughly mop up areas through which they pass.
- 4. Adm O No 10.
- 5. Sig Com.
 - a. Current SOI.
 - b. Ax Sig Com.
 - XX Corps: — JARNY (vU650635) — AUMETZ (vU700925) — THIONVILLE (vU860855)
— SAARBURG (wL140130).
 - 95 Inf Div: — MOYEUVRE GRANDE (vU770737) — to be reported.
 - 90 Inf Div: — ZOUFFTGEN (vU838970) — BOCKANGE (vQ045720).
 - 5 Inf Div: — VILLERS-SOUS-PRENY (vU730398) — LOUVIGNY (vU865415).
 - 10 Armd Div: — MARS-la-TOUR (vU650570) — FREISTROFF (wQ097765).
 - 83 Inf Div: — BONNEVOIE (vP850111) — SAARBURG (wL140130).
 - c. CPs.
 - XX Corps: — JARNY (vU650635).
 - 95 Inf Div: — MOYEUVRE GRANDE (vU770737).
 - 90 Inf Div: — ZOUFFTGEN (vU838970).
 - 5 Inf Div: — VILLERS-SOUS-PRENY (vU730398).
 - 10 Armd Div: — MARS-la-TOUR (vU650570).
 - 83 Inf Div: — BONNEVOIE (vP850111).

d. Rad Transmissions.

- (1) AAA units: W of MOSELLE transmit only when opnl necessity exists.
- (2) 5 Inf Div and 95 Inf Div: Normal.
- (3) 90 Inf Div: Rad silence W of MOSELLE; transmissions E of MOSELLE held to necessary minimum.
- (4) 10 Armd Div: When relieved by 95 Inf Div, rad silence W of MOSELLE; transmissions E of MOSELLE held to necessary minimum.
- (5) 83 Inf Div: Rad silence for units W of MOSELLE not in con; lift silence E of R on en con or Corps O.
- (6) Corps Trs: Rad silence, except Cav and Arty units remaining in old positions. Lift silence on en con or Corps O.
- (7) No Adm traffic to interfere with tactical net opn.

e. Special attention to Sig Security.

OFFICAL
SNYDER
G-3

WALKER
CG
COLLIER
C/S

APPENDIX No 14
OPERATIONS INSTRUCTIONS NUMBER THIRTY-THREE

HQ XX CORPS
APO 340 — U. S. ARMY

141130 Nov 44

TO: CG 5 Inf Div
CG 10 Armd Div
CG 90 Inf Div
CG 95 Inf Div
CO 3 Cav Gp
CO 1139 Engr C Gp

(Confirming Oral and Fragmentary Orders)

1. BOUNDARY: New bd between 90 and 95 Inf Div, per Opns Instr No. 32, HQ XX Corps, 13 Nov 44, is effective at time 10 Armd Div initiates crossing over the THIONVILLE br.
2. 95 Inf Div.
 - a. Within new bd, atk S in conjunction with 90 Inf Div, to clear the E bank of the MOSELLE R.
 - b. Maintain con with 90 Inf Div on left (E) flank.
3. 90 Inf Div.
 - a. Pass 3 Cav Gp (reinf), and 10 Armd Div thru brhd as soon as practicable.
 - (1) 3 Cav Gp (reinf) via CATTENOM br.
 - (2) 10 Armd Div via THIONVILLE br.
 - b. Priority of movement in brhd:
 - (1) One Sq of 3 Cav Gp (reinf)
 - (2) 10 Armd Div
 - (3) Balance of 3 Cav Gp (reinf)
 - (4) If 10 Armd Div is delayed in crossing THIONVILLE br, additional elms of 3 Cav Gp may be passed over CATTENOM br until such time as continuation of Cav movement might interfere with movement of 10 Armd Div.
 - c. In atk to Div Obj, maintain con with 95 Inf Div on right flank.
4. 10 Armd Div.
 - a. Cross MOSELLE R via THIONVILLE as soon as br is open.
 - b. Execute FO 12.
5. 3 Cav Gp (reinf).
 - a. Cross one sq via CATTENOM br as soon as possible and relieve elms of 90 Inf Div on left (S) flank of brhd. ◆
 - b. Balance of force prepared to cross MOSELLE R as soon as practicable (see par 3b, above).
 - c. Upon completion crossing, execute mission per Opn Instr No. 32, HQ XX Corps, 13 Nov 44.

6. THIONVILLE Br.

- a. Initially under XX Corps control until passage of 10 Armd Div.
- b. After passage of 10 Armd Div, on Corps O, control passes to 90 Inf Div.
- c. Elms of 95 Inf Div E of MOSELLE R will be supplied over THIONVILLE Br.

7. Troop Assignments.

Unit	Relieved From	Atchd To
241 FA Bn	90 Inf Div	3 Cav Gp
135 Engr C Bn	1139 Engr C Gp	3 Cav Gp
614 TD Bn	(Estimated arrival 19 Nov)	95 Inf Div

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G-3

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APPENDIX No 15
FIELD ORDER NUMBER THIRTEEN

HQ XX CORPS
APO 340 — U. S. ARMY

220400 Nov 44

FO 13

Maps: 1/100,000 Map of FRANCE
Opns Overlay.

1. a. Annex 1 — Int.
 - b. (1) XII Corps (Third US Army) continues atk to the NE.
 - (2) VIII Corps (First US Army) remains in present position.
 - (3) XIX TAC supports atk of the XX Corps and coordinates preplanned med bomb support with 9th Air Force.
2. XX Corps atks on Corps O to destroy en within Z W of the SAAR R and cross the SAAR R, prepared to exploit penetrations of Z, and resume the atk to the NE.

Formation: Divs abreast (overlay).
LD: Existing front lines.
Bds: Overlay.
Trs: Annex 2, Tr List.
3. a. 95 Inf Div.
 - (1) Atk NE in Z making main effort on left (N) flank to destroy en within Z and seize crossings of the SAAR R between SAARLAUTERN (wQ285800) and PACHTEN (wQ256850) (both incl).
 - (2) Establish brhd in crossing area and expand brhd to the N uncovering REHLINGEN (wQ240874) to facilitate bridging opns 90 Inf Div.
 - (3) Maintain contact with XII Corps on the S.
- b. 90 Inf Div. (- RCT 358).
 - (1) Atk NE in Z making main effort on right (S) flank to destroy en W of the SAAR R.
 - (2) Assist crossing opns of the SAAR R by the 95 Inf Div with maximum fire support.
 - (3) On Corps O, br SAAR R within Z in brhd established by 95 Inf Div.
- c. 10 Armd Div (RCT 358 atchd).
 - (1) Continue atk NE to seize crossings of the SAAR R vic of SAARBURG and MERZIG, destroying en W of SAAR R in Z.
 - (2) Protecting brhd over SAAR R with minimum necessary force, atk SE (on Corps O) to seize area PRIMSTAL (wL450040) — BUWEILER (wL415075) — WADERN (wL390050) — NUNKIRCHEN (wQ350988) — NIEDERHOFEN (wQ430000).
 - (3) Prepared to exploit between SAAR R and div obj on Corps O.
- d. 5 Inf Div.
 - (1) Contain isolated en installations in METZ area with not to exceed one RCT (reinf).
 - (2) 5 Inf Div (-1 RCT) prepare plans to:
 - (a) Atk in any portion of Corps Z on six hrs notice.
 - (b) Destroy en in Z W of SAAR R and maintain con with XII Corps on the S.
 - (c) Br SAAR R within Z to continue attack to NE.
- e. 3 Cav Gp.
 - (1) Protect N flank of Corps.
 - (2) Maintain con with VIII Corps on N.

- f. XX Corps Arty: supports the Corps atk.
- (1) Btry A, 7 FA Obsn Bn: Support Z 10 Armd Div.
 - (2) 5 FA Gp: Reinf 10 Armd Div.
 - (3) 40 FA Gp: Reinf 90 Inf Div.
 - (4) 195 FA Gp: Gen support Z 10 Armd Div.
 - (5) III Corps Arty:
 - (a) 7 FA Obsn Bn (- A Btry)
A Btry 286 FA Obsn Bn
Support Z 90 and 95 Inf Divs.
 - (b) 193 FA Gp: Reinf 95 Inf Div.
 - (c) 203 FA Gp: Gen support 90 and 95 Inf Divs
 - (d) 204 FA Gp: Gen support 90 and 95 Inf Divs
 - (6) 5 Inf Div Arty (-): Gen support 95 Inf Div.
 - (7) CG XX Corps Arty will coordinate fire plans and posn areas of Arty with the Corps.

g. XX Corps Engrs.

- (1) 1103 Engr C Gp: Direct support river crossing Opns of 95 Inf Div, including Cons two (2) Class 40 Brs over SAAR R in vic SAARLAUTERN (Q285805) — ENSDORF (Q305790).
- (2) 1139 Engr C Gp: Direct support Opns 90 Inf Div and 10 Armd Div, including Cons of M-2 Tdwy Br over SAAR R in Z of 10 Armd Div.

h. 4 TD Gp: Gen support 95 Inf Div.

i. 112 AAA Gp:

- (1) Protect crossings over defiles.
- (2) Protect Corps Arty.
- (3) Be prepared, on Corps O, to furnish direct fire on Siegfried Line emplacements, with elms of 119 AAA G Bn.

- x. (1) Units requesting close air support furnish local BL with request for mission.
- (2) Upon completion of mission, all units prepared for further offensive action to the E or NE.
- (3) Non-fraternization policy and strict control of civilians to prevent interference with military opns, will be rigidly enforced.

4. See Adm O No. 10 with Changes 1 and 2.

5. Sig Coms.

a. Current SOI.

b. Ax Sig Com.

XX Corps: — THIONVILLE (vU860865) — DILLINGEN (wQ270840)
 90 Inf Div: — VECKRING (wQ011830) — OBERESCH (wQ152893).
 95 Inf Div: — BORNLY (vU898578) — BOULAY-MOSELLE (wQ098658) — BRETT-
 NACH (wQ149739) — SAARLAUTERN (wQ285800).
 10 Armd Div: — APACH (wQ012965) — SAARBURG (wL140130) — NUNKIRCHEN
 (wQ370995).

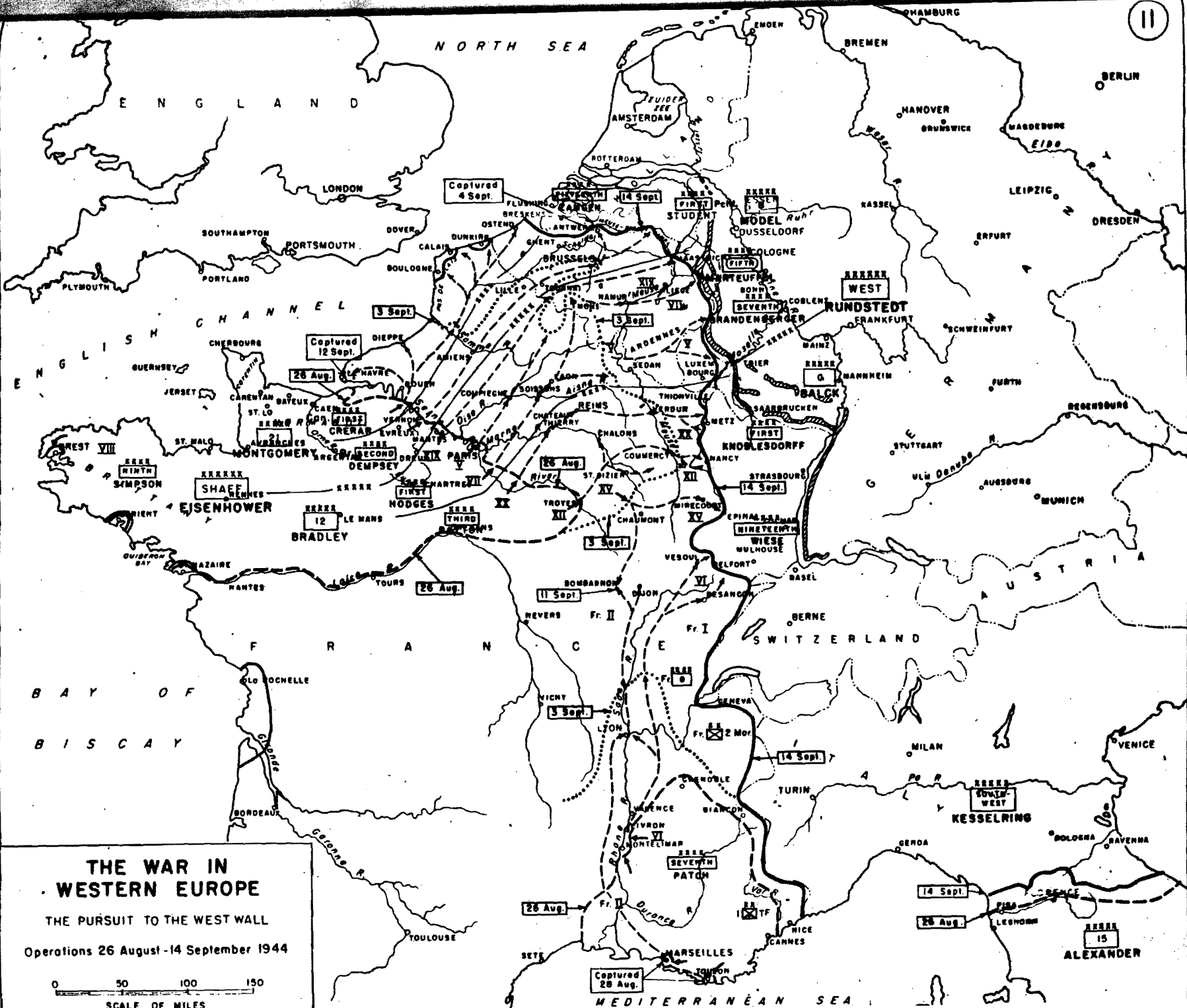
c. CP's.

XX Corps: — THIONVILLE (vU860865).
 90 Inf Div: — VECKRING (wQ011830).
 95 Inf Div: — BORNLY (vU898578).
 10 Armd Div: — APACH (wQ012965).
 5 Inf Div: — to be reported.

d. Radio Security Normal.

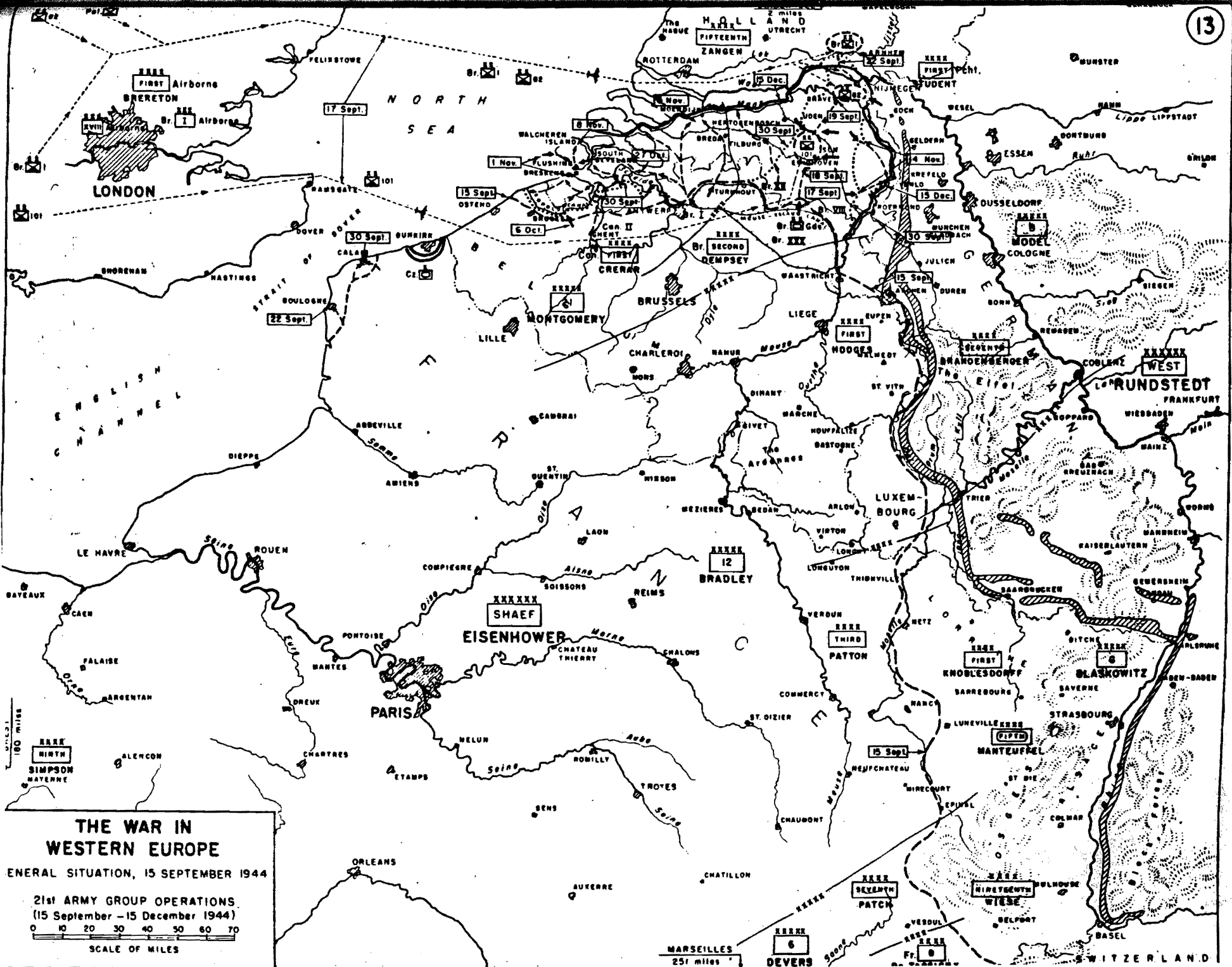
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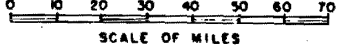
THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE
 THE PURSUIT TO THE WEST WALL
 Operations 26 August - 14 September 1944

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 SCALE OF MILES

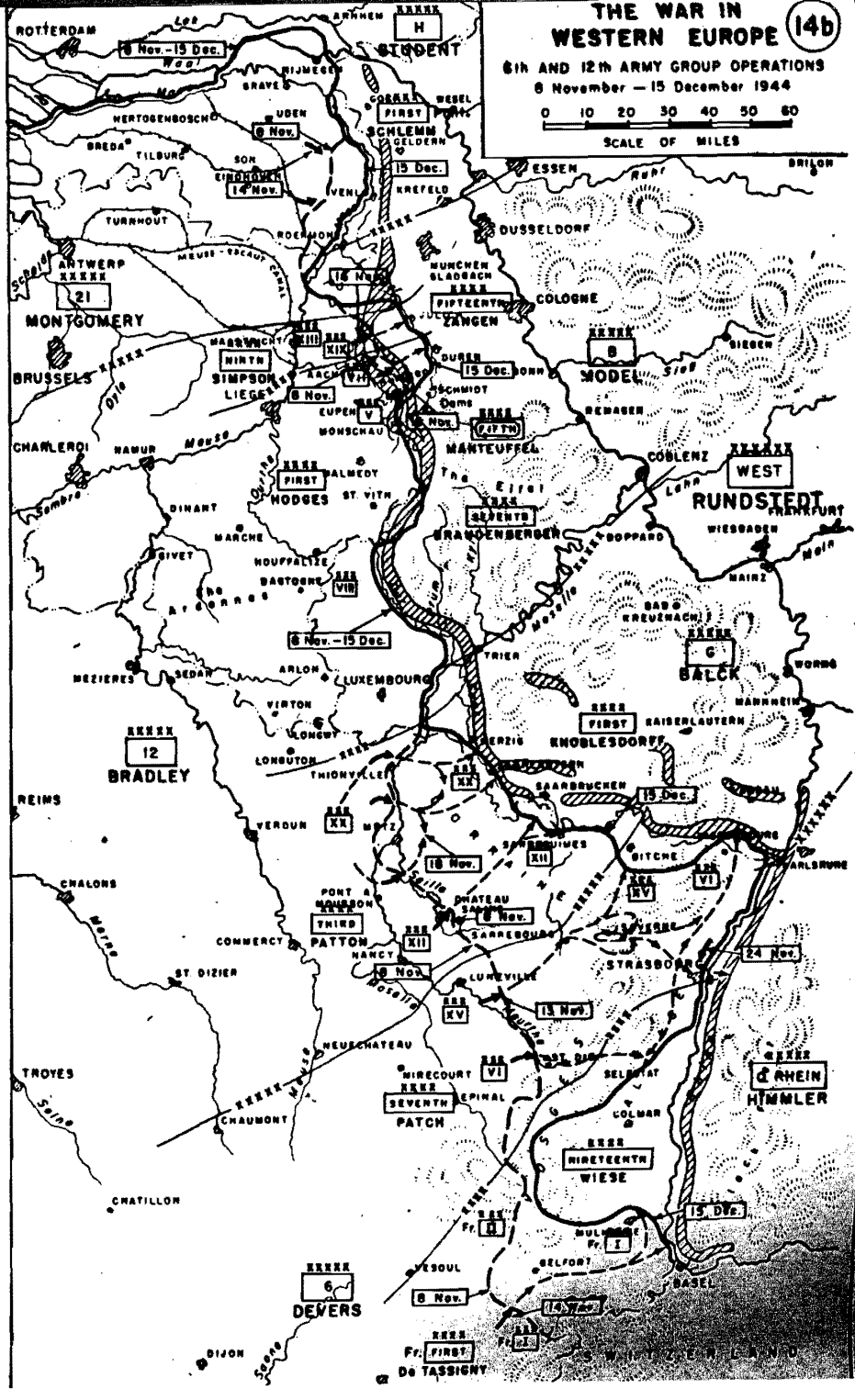
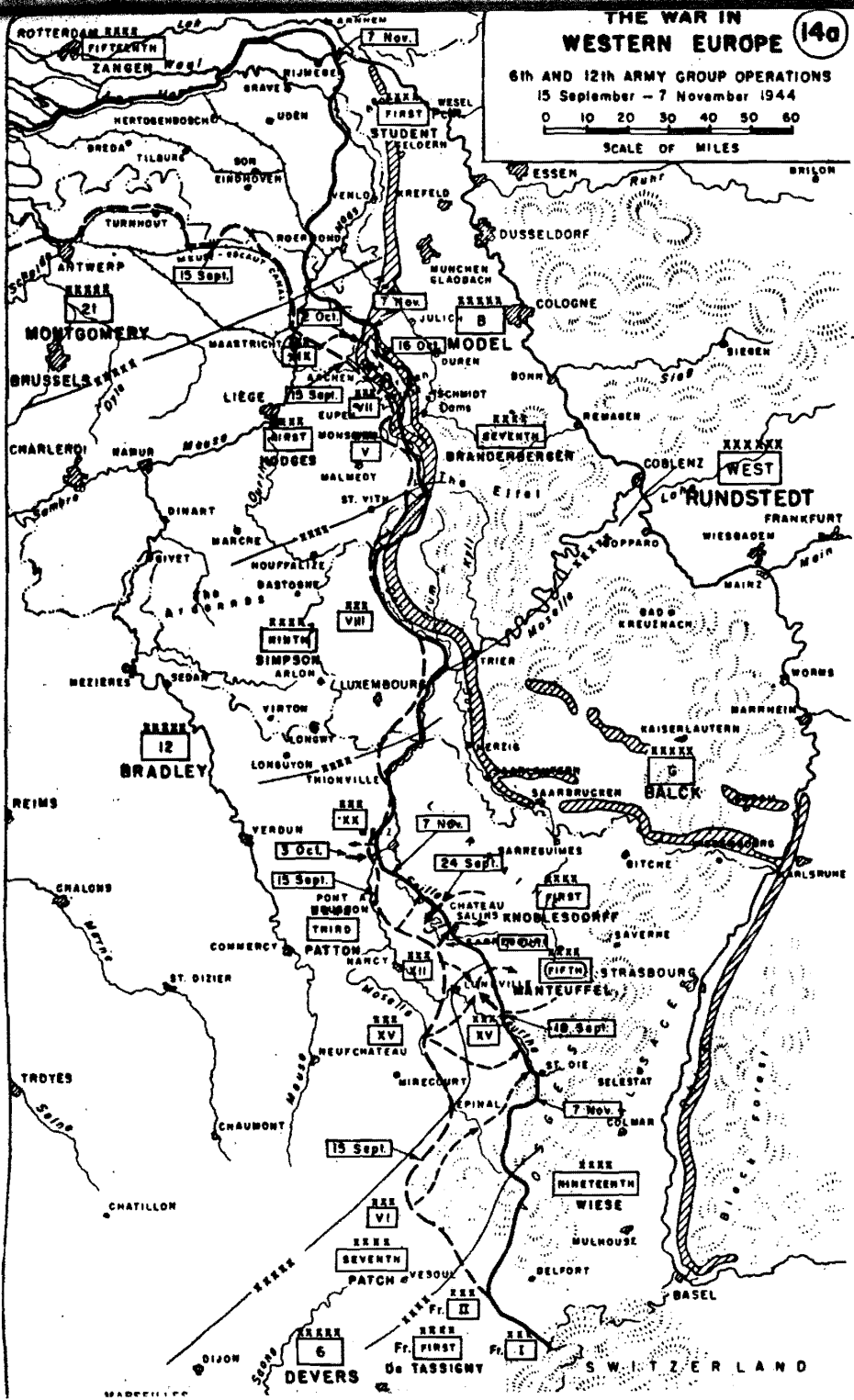


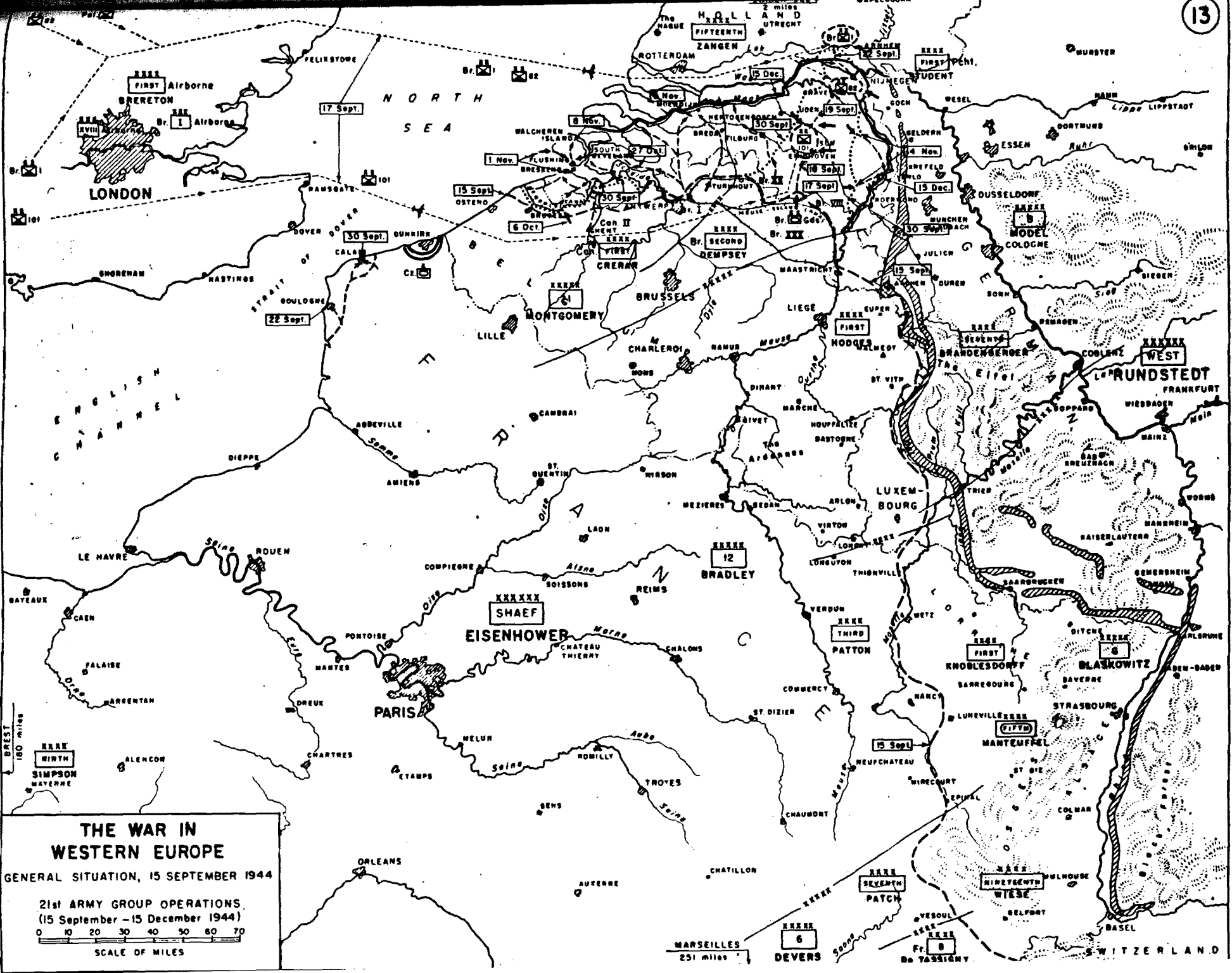
THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE
 GENERAL SITUATION, 15 SEPTEMBER 1944

21st ARMY GROUP OPERATIONS
 (15 September - 15 December 1944)



MARSEILLES 251 miles
 DEVERS





THE WAR IN WESTERN EUROPE
 GENERAL SITUATION, 15 SEPTEMBER 1944

21st ARMY GROUP OPERATIONS.
 (15 September - 15 December 1944)

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 SCALE OF MILES

MARSEILLES 251 miles
 DEVERS

FR. 8
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