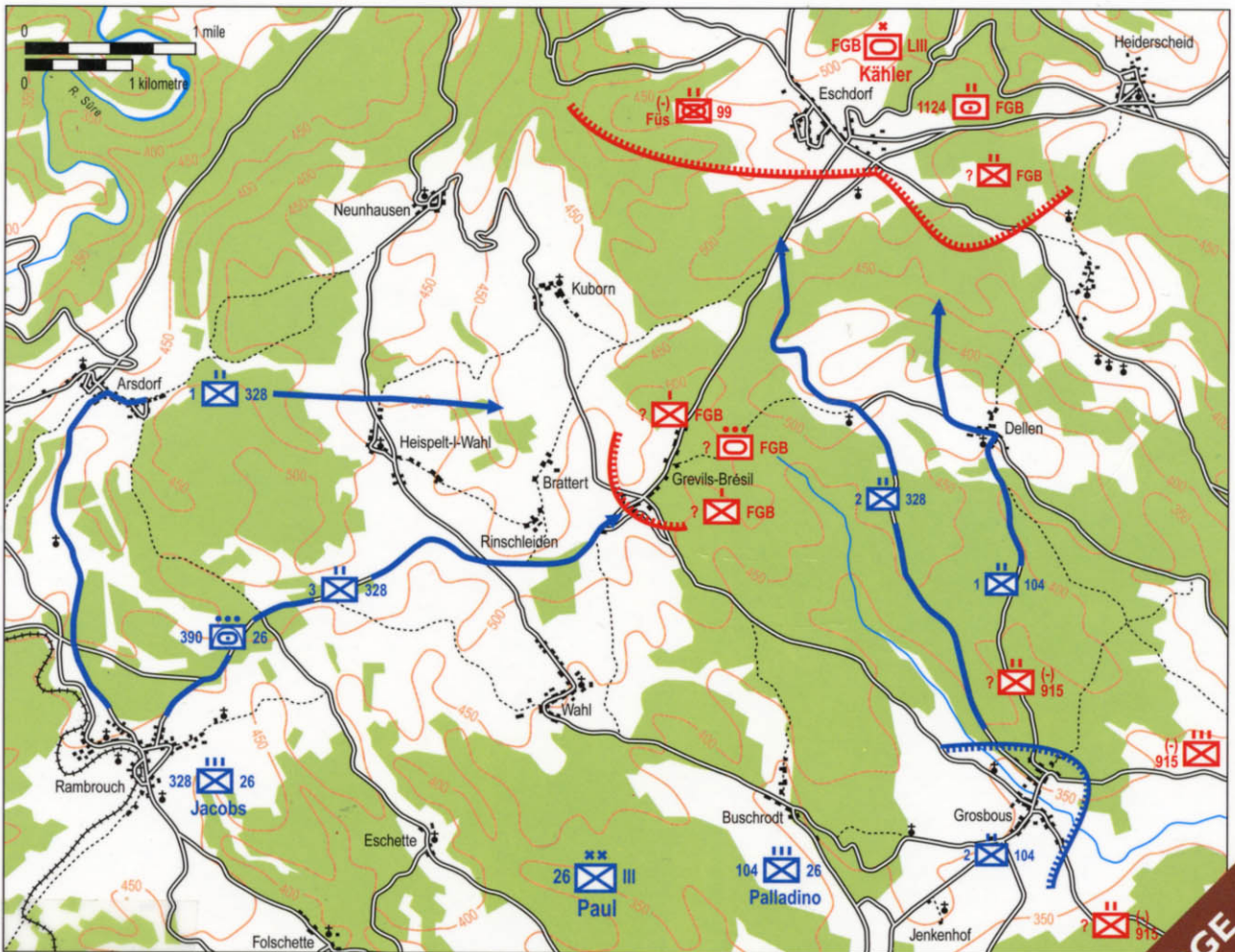


THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE

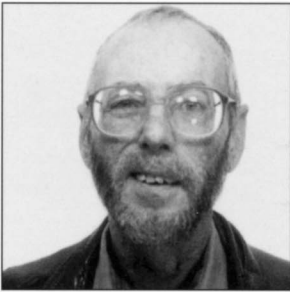
US III & XII CORPS



SOUTHERN SECTOR

Bruce Quarrie

INCLUDES LARGE
FOLD-OUT MAP OF
BATTLEFIELD



BRUCE QUARRIE graduated with honours from Cambridge University in 1968 and started work as a journalist with the *Financial Times*. He wrote his first book, on wargaming, in 1974. Bruce's principal interest is in World War II and his definitive *Encyclopedia of the German Army* was even translated and published in German.

SERIES EDITOR: JOHN MOORE

ORDER OF BATTLE 13

THE ARDENNES OFFENSIVE

US III & XII CORPS
SOUTHERN SECTOR

BRUCE QUARRIE



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Armour	Cavalry	Infantry	Airborne	Mountain
Artillery	Anti-Tank Artillery	Anti-Aircraft Artillery	Rocket Artillery	Fortress Artillery
Mortar	Flamethrower			
Engineers	Armoured Engineers	Bridging Engineers	Bridging Column	
Signals	Supply	Ordnance	Medical	Quartermaster
Unit Identifier	Parent Unit	Commander		

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The style of presentation adopted in the Order of Battle series is designed to provide quickly the maximum information for the reader.

Order of Battle Unit Diagrams – All 'active' units in the ORBAT, that is those present and engaged on the battlefield, are shown in black. Unengaged and detached units, as well as those covered in previous and subsequent volumes, are 'shadowed'.

Unit Data Panels – These provide a ready reference for all regiments, battalions, companies and troops forming part of each division or battlegroup and present during the battle, together with dates of attachment where relevant.

Battlefield Maps – In this volume, German units are shown in red and Allied units in blue.

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The top line bar defines the actual time of the actions being described in that battle section.

The middle line shows the time period covered by the whole action.

The bottom line indicates the page numbers of the other, often interlinked, actions covered in this book.

0800 hrs	0900	1000	1100	1200
pp45-47		48-49 & 52-55		50-51

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Editor's note

All individual battle maps are based on Government Survey 1:50,000 G.S. 4040 series dated 1938 and 1939, revised from aerial reconnaissance 1943, by permission of The British Library.

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STRATEGIC SITUATION IN THE SOUTH



The strategic situation south of Luxembourg in December 1944 was the result of a multiplicity of factors, both military and political, which would be further complicated at the beginning of the new year when, their offensive in the Ardennes already a shambles, the Germans launched a new operation, 'Nordwind'. The rationale was both pragmatic, to take some of the pressure off Heeresgruppe B, and 'idealistic', in that the recapture of Alsace-Lorraine would significantly boost the morale of the battered German populace. The region had historically been disputed for many years, having been annexed by Germany following the Franco-Prussian War, reverting to France in 1918, then being recaptured by Germany in 1940. As many place names are German as French and most of the population is bilingual, with divided loyalties. In fact, the reception received by the men of Lieutenant-General Alexander Patch's Seventh Army when they began advancing into the region in the autumn had in some instances been decidedly cool.

The Allied invasion of southern, 'Vichy', France was in itself both pragmatic and 'idealistic', military and political. In the eyes of its critics it distorted Allied strategy in the west, giving the Germans a short-term gain and the Soviet Union a major long-term advantage. In the eyes of its supporters, though, it was merely a logical extension of the 'broad front' policy. The concept was first discussed in detail at the Tehran Conference between Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin in November 1943. Initially it was intended that landings would be made on the Mediterranean coast of France in April 1944, as a feint to draw German forces away from the area chosen for Operation 'Overlord' in June. This idea certainly had merit, although whether Hitler and his generals would have been taken in by the ploy is doubtful. In the end, the logistic reality given the very short time span ruled the plan out, so consideration now turned to launching the Mediterranean operation as an 'anvil' to the Normandy 'hammer'. Again, though, logistics ruled this idea out as well. There were

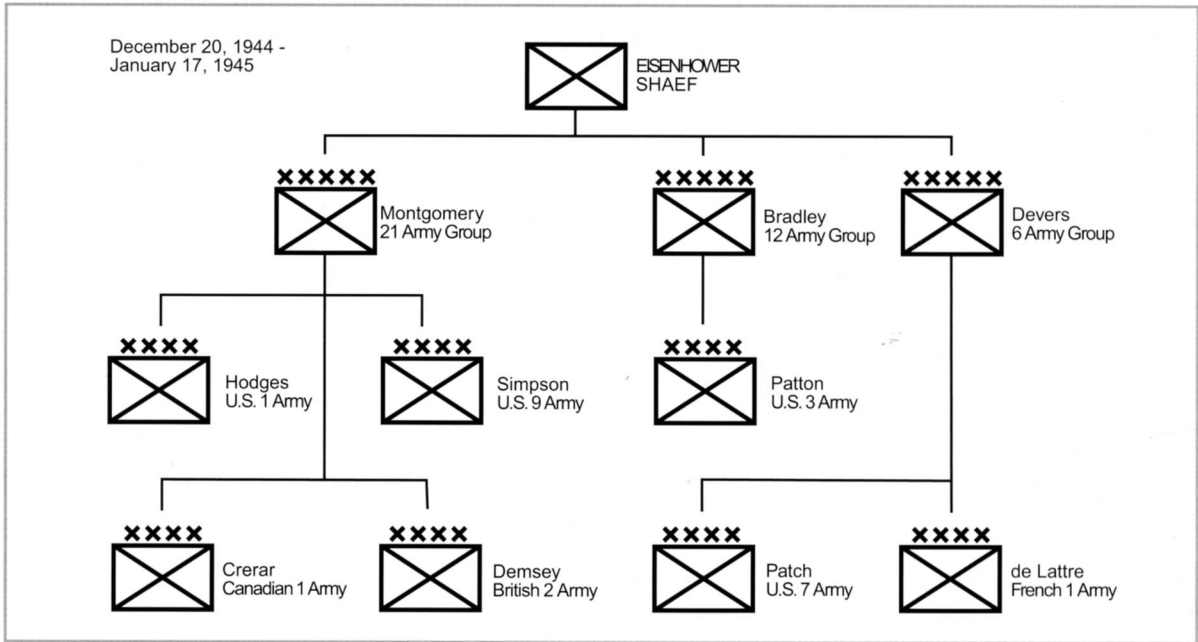


British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, on the bridge of HMS *Kimberley*, watched the landings in the south of France (which he had opposed) with boredom because of the lack of 'action' and retired to his cabin.
(Imperial War Museum)

simply not enough troopships and tank landing ships available to support two major amphibious operations simultaneously, even if the United States pulled some out of the Pacific theatre – which Roosevelt and the American Chiefs of Staff, headed by General George C. Marshall, were obviously reluctant to do.

Throughout all these deliberations, Churchill remained insistent that the Mediterranean operation was a mistake and that a far better strategy would be an amphibious assault in the Adriatic, landing troops in the north of Yugoslavia to drive direct on Vienna. Stalin, with his eyes firmly on the Balkans as well as the rest of eastern Europe, was totally opposed to this; and Roosevelt (bearing in mind Churchill's well-known obsession with the Balkans) sided 'big brother' fashion with the Soviet leader.

In the end, D-Day came and went without either operation being mounted, but Churchill continued to promote his own scheme. An invasion of southern France, he argued, could no longer serve any useful purpose and could have no effect on the campaign in



Normandy. Meanwhile, he asserted, the war in Italy had bogged down into a battle of attrition with no certain outcome. The Allies could keep sufficient troops in the front line to maintain the pressure and prevent the Germans from withdrawing any of their own forces for use elsewhere, but other Allied troops could be released for the Istrian operation. Churchill could probably have well done without Montgomery as an advocate! Disregarding personalities, however, by this time Marshall and Eisenhower were becoming desperately concerned at the Allies' inability to capture an intact deep-water port on the Channel or Atlantic coast. Marseilles and Toulon thus became increasingly attractive alternatives. Moreover, it was election year in the United States and Roosevelt knew the American public would oppose what they would see as a purely English 'adventure'. So, it was finally agreed that a combined airborne and amphibious landing would be launched on the French Riviera west of Nice: codename, 'Dragoon'.

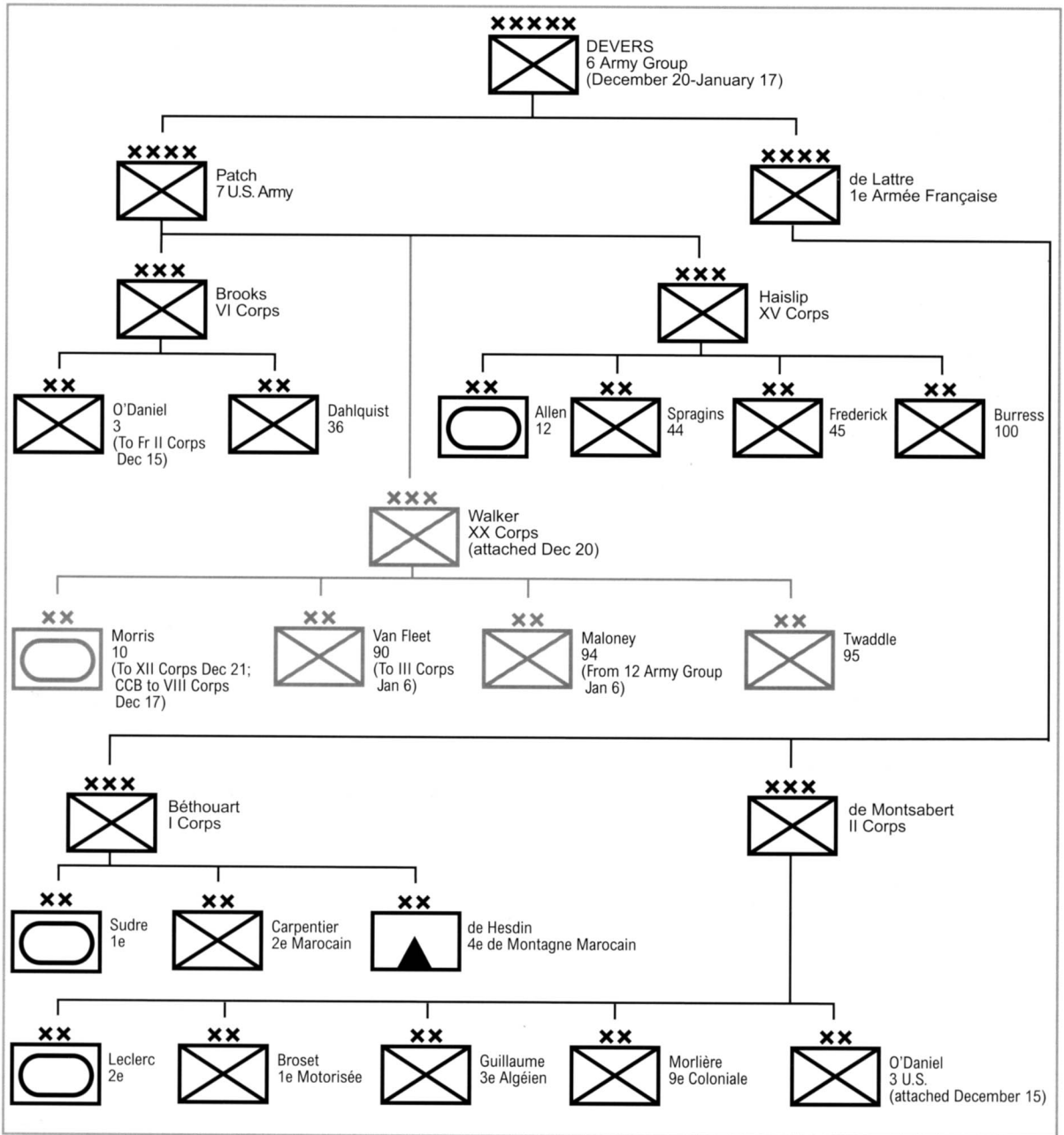
The head of the Free French forces, Général Charles de Gaulle, now stepped on to centre stage. In the event of such an operation being mounted, he insisted that French forces should play a prominent part. There were, he said, four French divisions in Italy which could be used. Eisenhower, unusually, agreed with de Gaulle with the result that French commandos

The 509th Parachute Infantry Battalion played a successful role in the Mediterranean landings but in December was all but annihilated in the Ardennes.
(U.S. Signal Corps)

would be first ashore on the flanks of the 35-mile (56km) stretch of coast chosen for the invasion. The French II Corps, commanded by Général de Lattre de Tassigny, would then land in the second wave of the assault, preceded by Major-General Lucian Truscott's U.S. VI Corps, both forming the principal constituents of Lieutenant-General Alexander Patch's Seventh Army. The objectives were to swing west to capture Toulon and Marseilles, then advance on two axes north up the Rhône valley west of the Basse Alpes, with the intention of linking up with Patton's Third Army in the vicinity of Dijon. D-Day was set for August 15.

The initial landings around St Tropez came as a complete surprise to the German Nineteenth Armee commander, Generalleutnant Friedrich Wiese.





Although the build-up for the invasion could not be concealed, German intelligence had been duped into believing that it was aimed at the Gulf of Genoa. Preceded by a massive air and sea bombardment, the landings were virtually unopposed, which was fortunate for the paras of Major-General Robert Frederick's 1st Anglo-American Airborne Task Force, who were widely scattered. The paras then wheeled east to take Cannes and Nice while the three U.S. VI Corps divisions (3rd, 36th and 45th) headed north. De Lattre's French II Corps' tough colonial troops, meanwhile, advanced rapidly on Toulon and

Marseilles, whose capture was greatly helped by the local maquis. Realising the futility of resistance, Wiese rapidly withdrew his solitary Panzer and seven understrength infantry divisions up the Rhône valley, although there were clashes at Montélimar and Bourg on August 28 and September 3. Contact was established with Patton's Third Army on September 12, when one of de Lattre's patrols very appropriately encountered a reconnaissance unit of Général Jacques Leclerc's 2e Division Blindé near Dijon at Châtillon-sur-Seine.

Leclerc's division now joined the French II Corps, commanded by Général de Montsabert with de

COMBAT COMMANDS – ‘HEAVY’ ARMORED DIVISION

COMBAT COMMAND A (HQ c. 100 men)
COMBAT COMMAND B (HQ c. 100 men)
COMBAT COMMAND R (No separate HQ – very ad hoc)

ARMORED REGIMENT (x 2) (c. 2,050 men)

HQ Company
I Medium Tank Battalion (c. 750 men)
HQ Company (1 x M4 [75mm])
A, B & C Companies (each 17 x M4 [75mm] & 2 x M4 [105mm])
II Medium Tank Battalion (c. 750 men)
HQ Company (as above)
D, E & F Companies (as above)
Light Tank Battalion (c. 550 men)
HQ Company (2 x M5/M24)
A, B & C Companies (each 19 x M5/M24)

ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT (c. 2,600 men)

HQ Company
I Battalion (c. 860 men)
HQ Company (1 x 81mm mortar, 1 x .50 HMG, 2 x .30 LMG & 2 x bazooka)
A, B & C Companies (each 1 x 75mm M3 GMC, 1 x 81mm mortar, 18 x M3, 3 x 57mm M1, 3 x 60mm mortar, 12 x .50 HMG, 10 x .30 HMG, 6 x .30 LMG & 18 x bazooka)
II Battalion (c. 860 men)
HQ Company (as above)
D, E & F Companies (as above)
III Battalion (c. 860 men)
HQ Company (as above)
G, H & I Companies (as above)

ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION (x3)

(c. 540 men each)
HQ Company (2 x M3 half-track)
A, B & C Batteries (each 6 x 105mm M7 GMC & 10 x M3)

ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION (c. 860 men)
HQ Troop (1 x M8, 2 x M3, 2 x .50 HMG & 2 x bazooka)
A, B & C Troops (each 14 x M8, 7 x M3, 1 x 81mm mortar, 9 x 60mm mortar, 7 x .50 HMG, 18 x .30 LMG & 9 x bazooka)
Light Tank Troop (17 x M5/M24)
Support Troop (6 x 75mm M3 GMC)

ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION (c. 700 men)
HQ Company (2 x M3, 2 x .50 HMG & 2 x bazooka)
A, B & C Companies (each 5 x M3, 6 x .50 HMG, 6 x .30 LMG & 9 x bazooka)

ARMORED MEDICAL BATTALION (c. 415 men)
HQ Company
A & B Companies (each 2 x M3 ambulance & 3 x surgical truck)

ARMORED SIGNAL COMPANY (c. 300 men)
(19 x M3, 13 x .50 HMG, 13 x .30 LMG & 24 x bazooka)

ARMORED MAINTENANCE BATTALION (c. 760 men)
HQ Company (1 x M3, 8 x .50 HMG, 4 x .30 LMG & 5 x bazooka)
A, B & C Companies (each 1 x M3, 10 x .50 HMG, 8 x .30 LMG & 10 x bazooka)

ARMORED SUPPLY BATTALION

(HQ Company c. 100 men)
(c. 35 x /– 2½-ton truck)

COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE CORPS DETACHMENT

(Data unavailable)

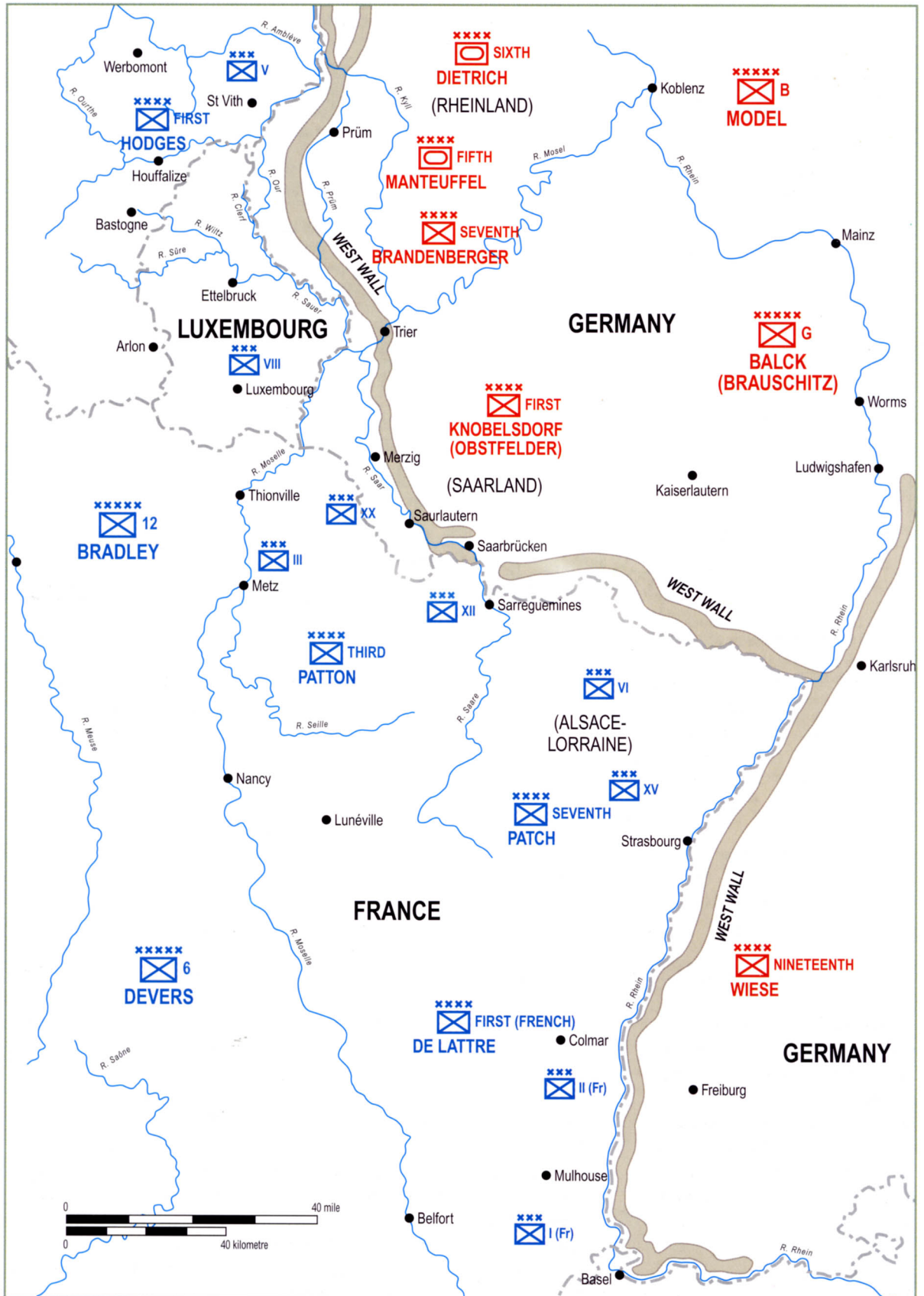
An M10 of an unidentified tank destroyer battalion (either the 601st, 636th or 645th) in a village near Montélimar during Seventh Army's drive north.

(U.S. Signal Corps)



Lattre's promotion to CO of the Première Armée Française; together with Patch's U.S. Seventh Army, this now constituted Lieutenant-General Jacob Devers' 6th Army Group for the autumn campaign in Alsace-Lorraine, alongside Patton's Third Army (12th Army Group) to its north.

During October and November, after the failure of Operation 'Market Garden', the headlong Allied advance, which had followed the breakout from Normandy, and the Mediterranean landings slowed. German resistance, which had been sporadic, now intensified as their forces were slowly, but inexorably, driven back towards the West Wall ('Siegfried Line'). There were major, drawn-out battles in the First Army sector at Aachen; in the Third Army sector at Metz; and in the Seventh Army sector in the Vosges through the Belfort Gap. In the south, progress across the rivers Moselle and Saare was hampered by numerous counter-attacks, as well as by pouring rain in which



U.S. 'TYPICAL' ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

(Establishment: Airborne – 410 officers and men; Armored – 708; Infantry – 666; Non-divisional – 1,118)

Companies: HQ & A-B (Airborne)

A-C (Armored & Infantry)

A-D (Non-divisional)

Strength variable and proportional to battalion but c. 200

Armament:

Airborne – 11 x .30 cal LMG, 18 x .45 cal SMG, 256 x .30 cal rifle, 138 x .30 cal carbine & 25 x bazooka
Armored – 20 x .50 cal HMG, 18 x .30 cal LMG, 103 x .45 cal SMG, 434 x .30 cal rifle, 153 x .30 cal carbine & 29 x bazooka

Infantry – 12 x .50 cal HMG, 18 x .30 cal LMG, 16 x .45 cal SMG, 565 x .30 cal rifle, 65 x .30 cal carbine & 29 x bazooka

Non-divisional – 915 x .30 cal rifle & 134 x .30 cal carbine

Vehicles

Airborne – 4 x diesel tractor, 1 x 2½-ton truck ('deuce and a half'), 4 x 2½-ton dump truck, 2 x air compressor trailer, 19 x Willys Jeep & 25 x motorcycle/scooter
Armored – 17 x M3 half-track, 3 x diesel tractor, 1 x 4-ton wrecker, 27 x 2½-ton truck, 18 x 2½-ton dump truck, 4 x air compressor truck, 8 x ½-ton weapons carrier, 26 x Jeep
6 x treadway prime mover (roadlayer)

Infantry – 4 x diesel tractor, 3 x 6-ton prime mover, 1 x 4-ton wrecker, 22 x 2½-ton truck, 27 x 2½-ton dump truck, 1 x 1½-ton truck, 4 x air compressor truck, 13 x ½-ton weapons carrier, 16 x Jeep, 1 x motorised workshop, 3 x 20-ton semi-trailer & 14 x assault boat

Non-divisional – 5 x M3 half-track, 1 x 6-ton prime mover, 8 x 4-ton wrecker, 8 x 2½-ton truck, 16 x 2½-ton dump truck, 5 x air compressor truck, 14 x Jeep, 2 x motorcycle, 1 x ambulance, 1 x road grader, 1 x powered shovel & 8 x bulldozer

In addition to the above, the U.S. Army also had specialist Mountain and Camouflage Engineer Combat Battalions, as well as non-combatant Aviation, Boat Maintenance, Construction, General Service, Heavy Pontoon, Railway Operating, Topographic & Water Supply Engineer Battalions. All, however, were armed, if only with rifles and carbines.

fighter-bombers could not operate, and which created thick mud to compound the delaying effect of minefields. Nevertheless, Devers' 6th Army Group troops were the first to reach the Rhein between the Swiss border and Strasbourg, although a strong pocket of German resistance would continue to hold out around Colmar until well into the New Year.

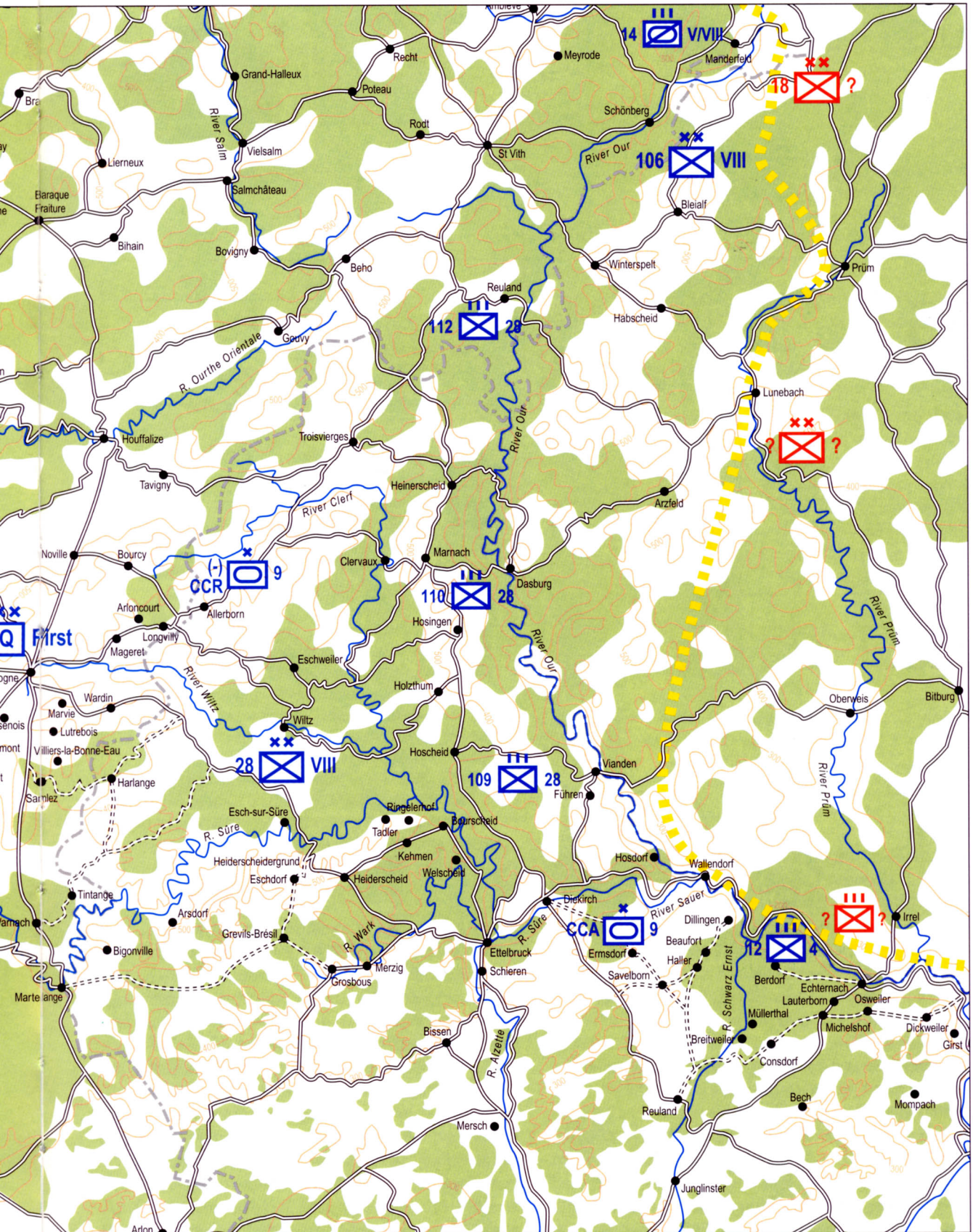
By the beginning of December the pace of operations had slowed even further, but Patton was determined that his Third Army would reach the Rhein before Courtney Hodges' First, and with this in mind planned a new assault through the West Wall around Saarbrücken and into the Saarland. Scheduled to

Left: Seen at this scale, the German concentration for Operation 'Herbstnebel' and the weakness of Hodges' First Army in the Ardennes are clearly apparent. When the attack began, Patton's XII Corps (Eddy) was preparing to launch its offensive through the relatively weak sector of the West Wall, around Saarbrücken. Instead, it was transferred to the Echternach front while III Corps (Millikin) went to the relief of Bastogne. XV Corps (Haislip) then took over the XII Corps' sector. XX Corps (Walker), although still part of Third Army, became, in effect, the left flank formation of Devers' 6th Army Group until the crisis was resolved.

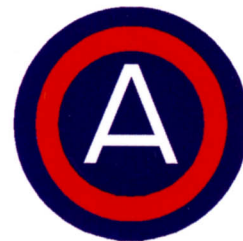
begin on the 19th, this would be spearheaded by Major-General Manton Eddy's XII Corps, with the more distant objectives of Koblenz, Mainz and Worms. However, Eisenhower and the 12th Army Group commander, Omar Bradley, regarded Patton's Saar offensive as something of a sideshow, placing more reliance on forcing a crossing of the Rhein in the New Year by Major-General William Simpson's Ninth Army north of the Ardennes, supported by Montgomery's First Canadian and Second British Armies in Holland. In fact, Bradley had already decided that some of Patton's strength would have to be drawn off in due course to support this, when the sudden German assault between Monschau and Echternach on December 16 caused a total reappraisal of the whole strategic situation.

Pages 10-11: The Allies believed that German forces east of the river Sauer were thinly spread and low grade, but the sadly depleted 4th Infantry Division's 12th Regiment and CCA of 9th Armored Division were in fact each opposed by a full Volksgrenadier division. Similarly, to their north the 109th Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division was faced by a Volksgrenadier and a Fallschirmjäger division, shortly to be reinforced by a Panzer brigade.





U.S. THIRD ARMY



George Smith Patton, Jr, was not a happy man, but he could see a crisis when it arose and was more than sufficiently professional a soldier to respond with alacrity to the situation in the

While other senior officers usually tried to look spick and span for official photographers, Patton liked to show that he was a 'soldier's soldier', as in this shot taken in Bastogne early in 1945.

(U.S. Army)



Ardennes when it came about. A telephone call from 12th Army Group commander Omar Bradley at around 2200 hrs on December 16 alerted him to the fact that something untoward was happening in Courtney Hodges' First Army sector to the north. Told to send the 10th Armored Division towards Bastogne, he prevaricated, because he had his heart set upon his planned offensive through the West Wall around Saarbrücken, which was scheduled to begin in earnest on the 19th. Bradley, however, was firm, with the result that Colonel William Roberts' Combat Command B arrived at Bastogne in the nick of time to avert the loss of this pivotal road junction. Tackling crises was, however, nothing new to Patton.

Earlier in 1944, the Allied breakout from Normandy, promptly followed by the landings in the Riviera, had thrown Allied strategic planning into total disorder which was not helped by the victory, no matter how significant, in the Falaise Gap. All of a sudden, towards the end of August, American, British, Canadian, Free French and other Allied troops had burst across the river Seine, liberating Paris in the process. This, as seen earlier, put an enormous strain

U.S. THIRD ARMY

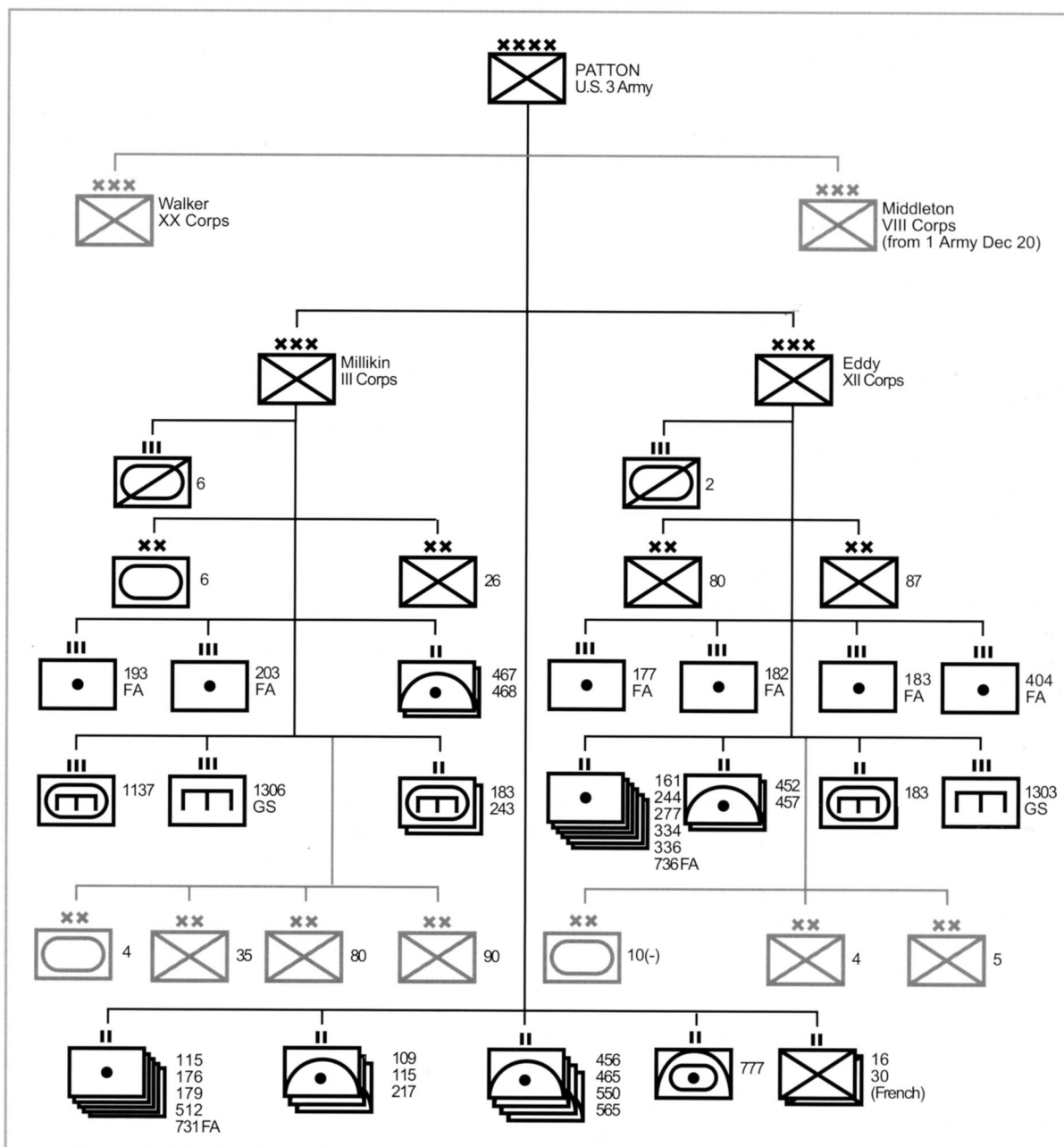
Lieutenant-General George Smith Patton, Jr.

Chief of Staff: *Brigadier-General Hobart R. Gay*

III Corps (Millikin)
 VIII Corps (Middleton) (from First Army December 20)
 XII Corps (Eddy)
 XX Corps (Walker) (to Seventh Army (Patch),
 6th Army Group (Devers), December 20)
 115 Field Artillery Battalion
 176 Field Artillery Battalion
 179 Field Artillery Battalion
 512 Field Artillery Battalion
 731 Field Artillery Battalion
 109 Anti-Aircraft Gun Battalion (Mobile) (90mm)
 115 Anti-Aircraft Gun Battalion (Mobile) (90mm)
 217 Anti-Aircraft Gun Battalion (Mobile) (90mm)
 456 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm)
 465 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm)
 550 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm)
 565 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm)
 777 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (M15/M16)
 16 & 30 Bataillons Chasseurs (-), 2 Régiment Parachutistes
 (Puech-Samson) (French) (attached December 21 as liaison
 with British XXX Corps)

on the logistic 'tail' of the advancing armies.

The United States' Third Army, comprising Major-General Wade Haislip's XV Corps and Major-General Walton Walker's XX, landed in Normandy during July 1944 in the second wave of the Allied invasion. Their original first task had been to sweep into Brittany, but by the time they became operational on August 1 the two new corps were not needed for this phase of operations. Instead, Lieutenant-General George Patton had temporarily assumed command of Major-General Troy Middleton's VIII Corps on First Army's right flank. This was deficient in armour so the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions from XV and XX Corps respectively had been attached to VIII Corps to speed



things up in a 'blitzkrieg'-style cross-country dash. Once Brittany had been cleared, VIII Corps reverted to Lieutenant-General Courtney Hodges' First Army and the 4th Armored, its services not wanted in the sieges of Lorient and St Nazaire, went instead to Major-General Gilbert Cook's newly arrived XII Corps, Third Army. The 6th Armored Division would rejoin it in the same corps on September 20.

After Cook fell ill on August 18, Patton replaced him with the highly experienced CO of the 9th Infantry Division, Major-General Manton Eddy. XII Corps at this stage formed the centre of Third Army, with

XV Corps to its north and XX Corps to the south. Now, while Haislip's XV Corps became involved around Argentan in the battle of Falaise, and then Mantes on the river Seine to the west of Paris, XII Corps, with the 4th Armored Division in the van, spurred eastward along the Loire valley. Patton's men captured Orléans on August 17, crossed the Seine at Troyes on the 26th, and established a bridgehead over the river Meuse near Verdun on the last day of the month.

Logistics now came into play, and an acute shortage of trucks compounded the supply problem (despite the creation of 'The Red Ball Express'

U.S. THIRD ARMY RESERVE

115 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
 176 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 4.5" M1 gun, tractor-drawn)
 179 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)
 512 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
 731 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1 gun, tractor-drawn)

one-way routing system) but, to Patton's chagrin, Eisenhower gave priority to Montgomery and Hodges. Third Army's headlong chase across France in a mere month had outstripped First Army on its left before the fuel shortage brought both advances to a temporary halt, and Eisenhower wanted to bring them back into line so that his 'advance in parallel columns' towards the Rhein could resume.

Third Army's early success was largely due to the determination, hard-driving leadership and simple impatience of one man – George 'blood and guts' Patton – who had already had an eventful but chequered career before assuming command of Third Army. Born in San Gabriel, California, in November 1885, he attended the Virginia Military Institute after leaving high school. West Point followed as a matter of course and, graduating in the class of 1909, he was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the cavalry. By the outbreak of the European war in 1914 his talents had made him a weapons instructor, and in 1916 General John Pershing chose him as an aide during the punitive expedition against Pancho Villa in Mexico.

Patton remained with Pershing when he sailed for France in May 1917 but, as a cavalryman, he was quick to spot the potential of the tank and in November was seconded to the new U.S. Tank Corps. After organising and briefly commanding the Tank School, Patton led the 1st Tank Brigade during the St Mihiel and Meuse–Argonne offensives in 1918.

The interwar years saw a succession of different appointments for Patton, including four years with the General Staff, and in January 1941 he was given command first of the new 2nd Armored Division, then of the shortlived I Armored Corps. After briefly commanding the Desert Training Center in early 1942, in November Patton led the Western Task Force ashore on the coast of Morocco during Operation 'Torch'.

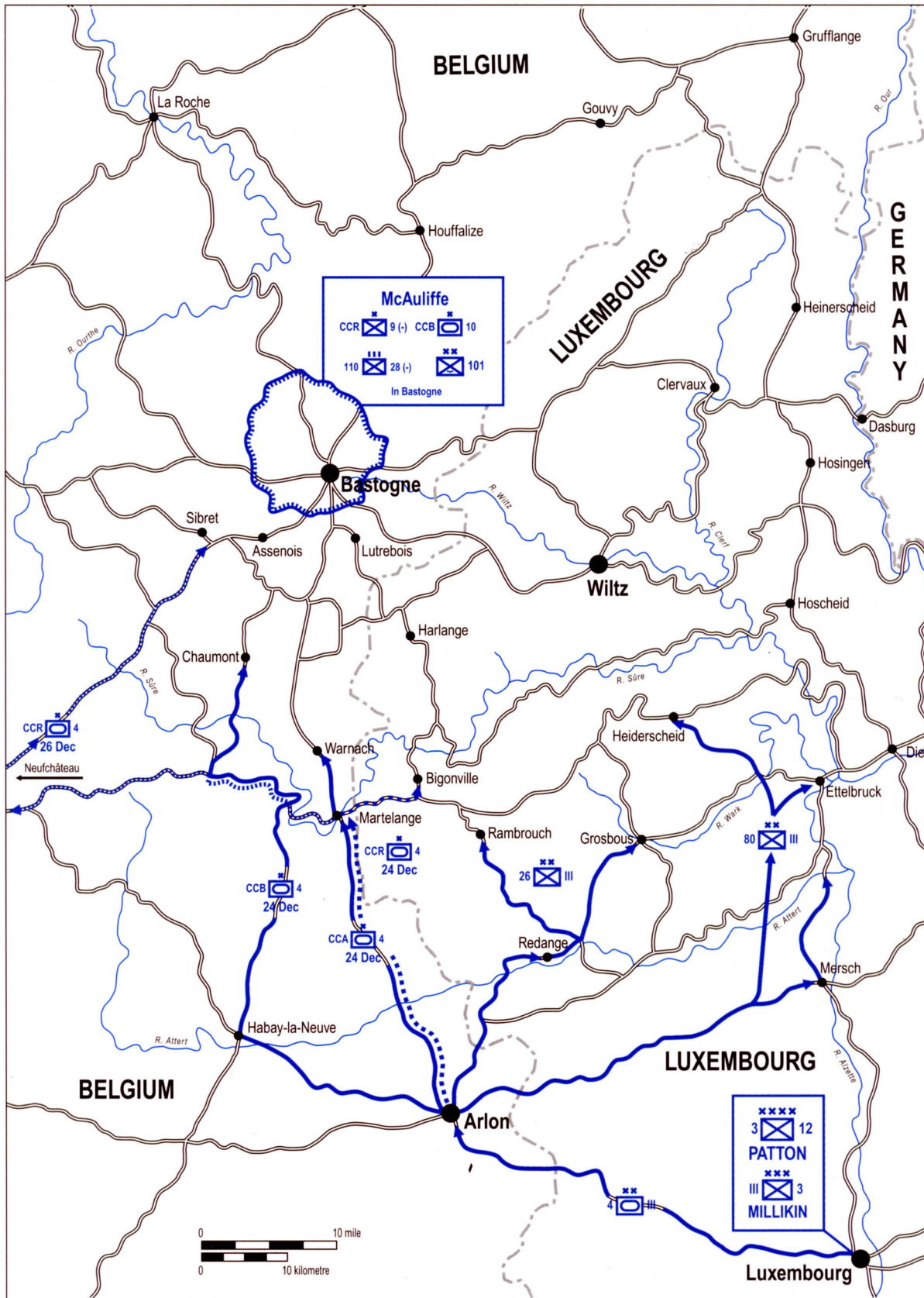
Following the bloody battle of Kasserine, he became CO of the demoralised II Corps and rapidly rebuilt its confidence before handing it over to Omar

The relief of Bastogne. At this scale, it is impossible to show German dispositions without obscuring geographical features referred to in the text. Where relevant, these are shown in the following III Corps' battles maps but, broadly speaking, the whole top half of the map from the rivers Wark and Sûre north could be painted red, apart from the enclave of the besieged forces in Bastogne. The routes taken by CCA and CCB of 4th Armored Division are shown as solid blue lines. The route of CCR to Bigonville is shown as dashes, and its diversion towards Sibret via Neufchâteau, which resulted in re-establishing contact with McAuliffe's garrison, is shown dotted. The operating areas of Millikin's III Corps' other two divisions, 26th and 80th Infantry, are also shown but not dated, to avoid confusion.

Bradley, when Patton himself was chosen to lead Seventh Army for the invasion of Sicily. It was during this campaign that the legendary rivalry with Montgomery began, because the latter, as the victor at El Alamein and commander of the British Eighth Army, wanted to beat Patton's Seventh to Messina. The rugged terrain around Mount Etna slowed the British advance up the east coast of the island and the prize went to the United States.

Patton's next job was a crucial one, even if he (and others) regarded it as a form of punishment for having struck a shell-shocked GI whom he accused of cowardice. Dwight Eisenhower, selected to head SHAEF, knew the Germans would expect Patton to be first ashore during the long-anticipated Allied invasion of France, so chose him to figurehead instead the '1st Army Group' in southeast England. This consisted of a huge armada of dummy landing craft, tanks and aircraft which was created to deceive the Germans into believing that the assault would fall on the Pas de Calais, using the shortest cross-Channel route.

The deception scheme, codenamed 'Fortitude', worked as well as the Germans' own later 'Wacht am Rhein', and Patton was rewarded with command of the real Third Army, which had been created on paper as early as 1942, although its staff did not arrive in England until January 1944. (His old Seventh Army, meanwhile, was still in Italy for the time being.) Patton's nose had, however, been put out of joint again by his old rival Montgomery's promotion to command not just of the Anglo-Canadian 21st Army Group but of all Allied ground forces in France; and by the fact that his former subordinate, Bradley, had been promoted over his head to command the 12th Army Group. This made Patton all the more determined to prove that he, and his Third Army, were the best.



When fuel supplies finally caught up with the Allied front-line forces early in September 1944, Third Army had changed shape slightly. The necessary reshuffling of corps and divisions which had become intermingled during the battle of Falaise had moved Haislip's XV Corps to the Army's right flank so, while Eddy's XII and Walker's XX Corps were battling at Verdun, Metz and Commercy, it was XV Corps' troops who made the first contact with Alexander Patch's Seventh Army, after its successful landing on the Riviera near Dijon in the middle of the month.

Compared with the exhilarating, if hot, dusty and exhausting, race across France to the Meuse, the three-month campaign through Alsace and Lorraine was a demoralising slogging match. While the city of Metz itself was entered by XX Corps troops on October 8, the final outlying fortress did not fall until the end of the month. During the same period XV Corps only made slow progress around Lunéville, while further south VI Corps of Seventh Army was battling toward St Dié and de Lattre's two French corps toward the Rhein between Basle and Mulhouse. Then, in a month, the defences suddenly collapsed and, apart from the German Nineteenth Armee pocket around Colmar, Patton's and Patch's forces had swept through most of Alsace and Lorraine to the West Wall along the line of the river Saar.

With XV Corps transferred to Seventh Army, and III Corps becoming established in Metz at the beginning of December, Patton's attention was focused on breaking through the West Wall either side of Saarbrücken, and driving northeast towards Worms, Mainz and Koblenz on the Rhein. Eddy's XII Corps

was to spearhead the assault, followed by Millikin's III Corps when the battle-weary divisions assigned to it had recovered sufficiently. The German assault through the Ardennes inevitably changed everything.

The first intimation Patton had that things were going awry for Hodges' First Army was that telephone call from Bradley ordering him to send the 10th Armored Division from XX Corps to VIII Corps' aid. Next day, December 17, a second phone call from Bradley alerted Patton that another two divisions might be needed, and he cancelled 6th Armored Division's scheduled attack at Forbach.

On the 18th, Patton learned the true gravity of the situation to his north when Bradley summoned him to a meeting in Luxembourg City. Asked what help he could provide, Patton replied that he could have three divisions moving north 'very shortly'. He telephoned his Chief of Staff, Brigadier-General Hobart Gay, and told him to abort XII Corps' attack next day, and to alert the 4th Armored and 80th Infantry Divisions for a move to Luxembourg. He also ordered Major-General John Millikin to move his headquarters from Metz to Arlon. Later that night, back in his own headquarters in Nancy, Patton received a third phone call from Bradley, who told him the situation in the Ardennes had got even worse. Eisenhower wanted to see all his senior commanders in Verdun in the morning.

Bradley and Patton, together with Lieutenant-General Jacob Devers, CO of the 6th Army Group, duly met with Eisenhower and his head of intelligence, Major-General Kenneth Strong, on the morning of the 19th. By this time CCB of 10th Armored Division had already arrived at Bastogne and deployed strong task



American troops duck as friendly artillery fire helps clear their path through a French town during Third Army's headlong eastward advance in August 1944.

(U.S. Army)

German infantry surrender to men of Major-General Lucian Truscott's VI Corps, Seventh Army, during their equally rapid advance from the Riviera up the Rhône valley to link up with Patton's forces near Dijon in the middle of September. Truscott later returned to Italy and at the time of the German Ardennes' offensive the corps was commanded by Major-General Edward Brooks. (U.S. Army)



forces to block the roads in an arc to the east of the town, and the 101st Airborne Division was similarly beginning to deploy. Eisenhower had in the meanwhile decided, in line with standard U.S. doctrine, that the first essential was to ensure that the shoulders of the 'bulge' would hold, giving time for Major-General 'Lightning Joe' Collins' VII Corps from Ninth Army to redeploy west of the river Ourthe and block any German attempt to cross the Meuse. Reinforcements had already been sent to Major-General Leonard Gerow's V Corps in the north, and to VIII Corps at St Vith. Apart from the incursion of Kampfgruppe 'Peiper', it was the situation in the south which caused the greatest concern, and the key question was what could Patton do about it?

The Third Army commander had, of course, already set the ball rolling and told Eisenhower that he could counter-attack towards Bastogne with three divisions on the 21st. That was only 36 hours away and 'Ike' said, 'Don't be fatuous, George,' concerned that a premature attack, going in piecemeal, would be ineffective. Besides, three divisions would probably not be enough. It was finally decided that the three divisions of Millikin's III Corps would begin the counter-attack with 4th Armored Division striking directly from Arlon toward Bastogne, and the 26th and 80th Infantry Divisions on its right broadening the corridor. Manton Eddy's XII Corps would also be brought into play, with Haislip's XV Corps from Seventh Army taking its place in the line, VI and XX Corps remaining where they were, and Devers taking over responsibility for the Saarbrücken sector. Similarly, Patton would take over command of Middleton's battered VIII Corps.

That night, Eisenhower took the bold – if unpopular – decision to give Montgomery overall command of all U.S. forces north of the 'bulge', and Simpson's Ninth and Hodges' First Armies passed to 21st Army Group control, leaving Bradley with just Patton's Third (including VIII Corps). Walker's XX Corps, while remaining part of Third Army, would similarly fall in effect under temporary control of Devers' 6th Army Group, but lost first the 5th, and later the 90th Infantry Divisions, respectively, to XII and III Corps.

Ten days after the German offensive had begun, Bastogne had been relieved, while in the centre the spearhead of Fifth Panzer Armee, 2 Panzer Division, had been decimated and, in the north, Kampfgruppe 'Peiper' had been destroyed. On January 3, 1945, after containing counter-attacks at Lutrebois and Sibret designed to break the Bastogne 'corridor', Third Army began the real counter-offensive, and troops from First Army's XVIII (Airborne) and Third Army's VIII Corps linked up east of Houffalize on the 16th.

With the end of the 'Battle of the Bulge' Eisenhower redrew the Allied front line, shuffling corps and divisions from south to north, so it was Patch's Seventh Army which finally made the assault over the Saar after repulsing the German First Armee offensive in January, while Patton's Third took over the former First Army sector in the Ardennes. After a slow start through the West Wall, the Third did reach Koblenz in March and, once across the Rhein, repeated its earlier successes by storming across eastern Europe into Czechoslovakia. George Patton did not live long to enjoy the fruits of victory, though, because he was killed in a car crash in December.

U.S. THIRD ARMY

U.S. III CORPS



Major-General John Millikin was a newcomer to Patton's command at the beginning of the 'Battle of the Bulge' and found him as intimidating as Patton himself sometimes found Millikin irritating. This was surprising, as both men had begun

Major-General John Millikin had joined the Army as a cavalryman, which should have made him a 'natural' for III Corps' task, but Patton had to keep impatiently pushing him to 'get a move on'. (U.S. Army)



their Army careers in the days of horsed cavalry, but instead of rising further – as Patton had done – Millikin ended the war demoted, in effect, as CO of a new division, the 13th Armored, which had not seen any combat until April 5, 1945. Millikin's first senior appointment had been as Brigadier-General in charge of the 2nd Cavalry Division (Horse) in June 1941, but this division had been inactivated in July 1942. After this, he led only the 33rd Infantry Division in jungle warfare training on Hawaii until October 1943, so had none of the first-hand combat experience at divisional level shared by other corps commanders engaged in the Ardennes. His staff were similarly inexperienced but, fortunately, the majority of the troops entrusted to his command were veterans with good leadership so, with constant prodding by Patton, III Corps did ultimately achieve its objectives. After the 'bulge' had been erased, however, Patton replaced Millikin with Major-General James Van Fleet, CO of the 90th Infantry Division during the battle.

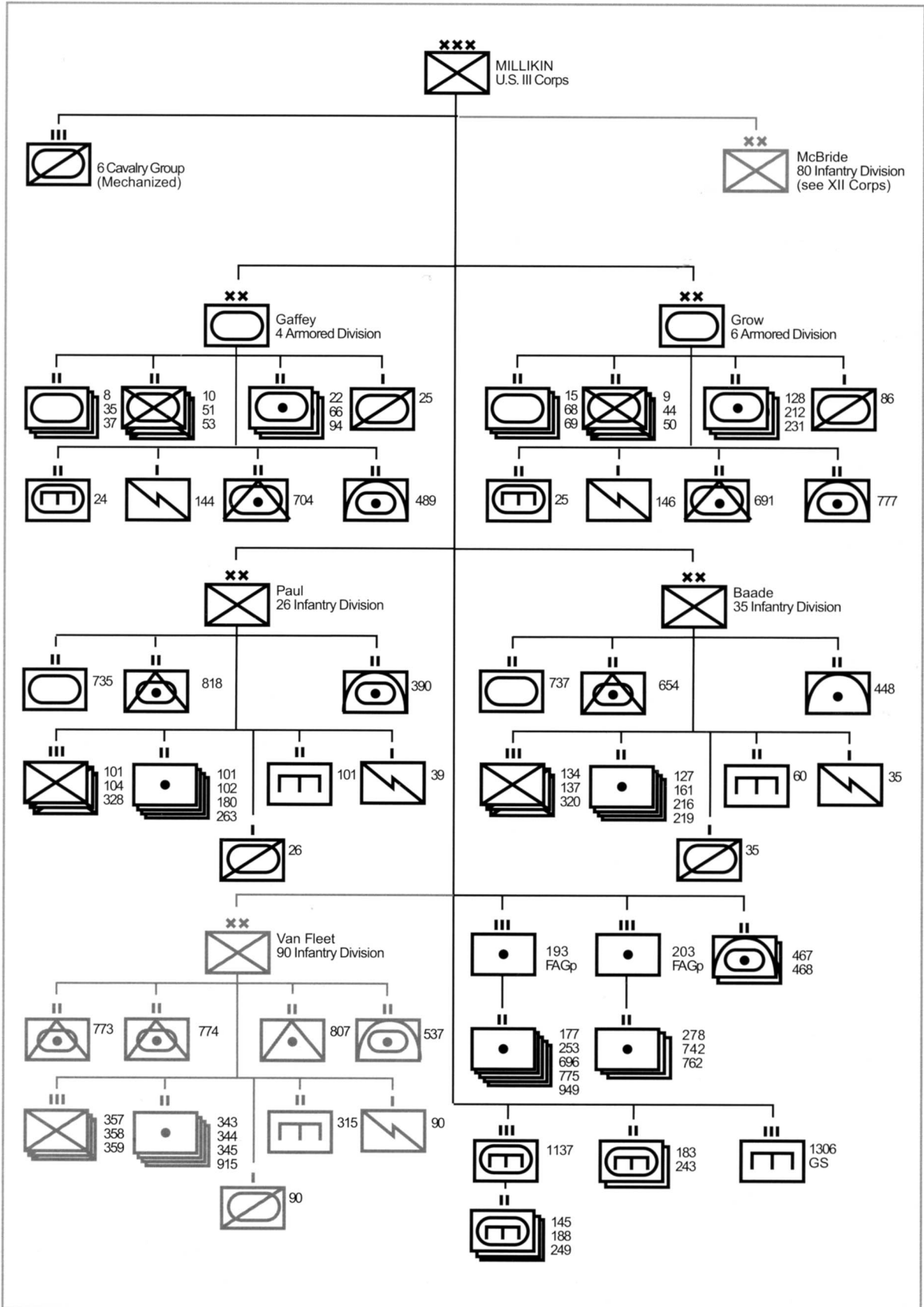
On December 18, even before anyone had a clear picture of the developing shape of the German thrust through the Ardennes, Patton directed Millikin to move

U.S. III CORPS Major-General John Millikin Corps Staff

4 Armored Division (Gaffey)
(from XII Corps December 20)
6 Armored Division (Grow)
(to XII Corps December 18, to XX Corps December 21, back to XII Corps December 25; returned to III Corps December 28)
CCA, 9 Armored Division (Harrold)
(from XII Corps December 26-27)
26 Infantry Division (Paul)
(from XII Corps December 12)
35 Infantry Division (Baade)
(from XII Corps via XX Corps December 23-26)
80 Infantry Division (McBride)
(from XII Corps 19 December; returned to XII Corps December 26)
90 Infantry Division (Van Fleet) (from XX Corps January 6)
6 Cavalry Group, Mechanized:
6 & 28 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons, Mechanized
193 Field Artillery Group: 177, 253, 696, 776 & 949
Field Artillery Battalions
203 Field Artillery Group: 278, 742 & 762
Field Artillery Battalions
467 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (M15/M16)
468 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (M15/M16)
1137 Engineer Combat Group: 145, 188 & 249
Engineer Combat Battalions
183 Engineer Combat Battalion
243 Engineer Combat Battalion
1306 Engineer General Service Regiment

Note: Some of the above formations are included under III rather than XII Corps, and vice versa, because of their zone of operations during critical stages of the battle. See text for further details.

his headquarters from Metz to Arlon with the vague injunction that he was to prepare for an attack to take place 'somewhere north of Luxembourg City'. At the time, Millikin had been principally concerned with the administration of battle-weary divisions sent back to Metz to rest and refit, and did not even know which



U.S. III CORPS TROOPS

6 Cavalry Group, Mechanized (c. 1,500 men)

Group HQ and HQ Troop

6 & 28 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons, Mechanized

HQ Troop (4 x M8, 2 x M3, 1 x .50 HMG & 1 x bazooka)

A, B & C Troops (each 12 x M8, 8 x M3, 1 x 81mm mortar,

9 x 60mm mortar, 8 x .50 HMG, 18 x .30 LMG & 10 x bazooka)

D (Light Tank) Troop (17 x M5/M24)

Support Troop (6 x 75mm M3 GMC)

193 Field Artillery Group

177 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

253 Field Artillery Battalion (data unavailable, believed 12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)

696 Field Artillery Battalion (data unavailable, believed 12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)

776 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

949 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

203 Field Artillery Group

278 Field Artillery Battalion (6 x 240mm M1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

742 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 8" M1 howitzer, truck-drawn)

762 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

formations he was to command, apart from the 6th Armored and 26th Infantry Divisions, which had only been transferred to him from XII Corps between December 11 and 12. As events proved, he was to get the bulk of his forces from the same source, and some of them would be bounced backwards and forwards so much between his own and Manton Eddy's command that it is almost better in following the course of the battle in the southern sector over the next few days to ignore corps boundaries and chains of command entirely! In fact, if you think of 'the Third Army attack' rather than 'the III and XII Corps attack' you would be closer to the truth, because Patton directed everything personally.

III Corps took centre stage between the tattered remnants of VIII Corps to the northwest on its left and XII Corps to the southeast on its right. The first phase of Millikin's counter-attack to be launched on December 22 was planned on a relatively narrow

30-mile (48km) front, and with the limited initial objective of opening and maintaining a corridor into Bastogne. There, the 101st Airborne together with CCB of 10th Armored Division and survivors from CCR of 9th Armored and the 110th Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division were thinly spread. A determined thrust at any one point of the perimeter by either of the two XLVII Korps' Panzer divisions, 2 and Lehr, would have gone through the defences like a knife through butter. Fortunately, they were single-mindedly determined on reaching the Meuse, leaving the investment of Bastogne principally to 26 Volksgrenadier Division.

By the time Millikin's relief operation got underway, however, further forces from the German Seventh Armee had moved in to bolster the southern shoulder of the 'bulge', using the natural boundary of the river Sûre. On top of this, the terrain is some of the most rugged in the Ardennes, and Millikin's forces had to attack largely across the grain of the ridges and deeply eroded river valleys. The result was that instead of getting through to Bastogne within a couple of days as planned, the operation took twice as long.

The second planned phase of III Corps' attack, once Bastogne had been relieved, was to widen the salient into German lines by shouldering the enemy out of the way on a broader front from the Sûre to the river Wiltz. This would, it was intended, provide a secure base for Third Army's northeast thrust to link up with First Army forces east of Houffalize, cutting off the tip of the 'bulge' and trapping any German forces still left within it.

The three divisions initially assigned to III Corps (6th Armored having temporarily reverted to XII Corps on December 18) were all out of the line, recuperating from prolonged periods of combat. All were tired and understrength, but they were Patton's and Bradley's natural choice because they were immediately available and did not have to disengage from an ongoing battle. And time was of the essence. Millikin's attack was spear-headed on the left by Major-General Hugh Gaffey's veteran 4th Armored Division, transferred to his command from XII Corps on December 20. Its axis of advance was the main Arlon-Bastogne highway, screened on the left by the 28th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, which maintained tenuous physical communication with VIII Corps. On its right (linked by the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron), Millikin had Major-General Willard Paul's equally experienced 26th Infantry Division, which had already shared many battles with 4th Armored; and on his far right, just to the west of the river Alzette, Millikin had Major-General Horace McBride's similarly 'blooded' 80th Infantry Division.



Much-published but still highly evocative study of a 4th Armored Division M4 Sherman in the 'Bastogne corridor' on January 3, 1945, alongside the crew of a .30 cal Browning M1919 machine-gun. (U.S. Army)

However, once CCR of 4th Armored actually reached Bastogne on December 26, XII Corps' boundary was itself extended west to embrace the 80th again. To replace it, Millikin received Major-General Paul Baade's 35th Infantry Division, which had begun moving into position on the 23rd to plug the widening gap developing between 4th Armored and 26th Infantry. Later, Millikin's Corps would be further reinforced by Major-General Robert Grow's 6th Armored Division; by Colonel Thomas Harrold's CCA of 9th Armored; and much later, in January, by Major-General James Van Fleet's 90th Infantry Division.

The first phase of III Corps' attack began badly. 4th Armored Division found not a single bridge over the Sûre at Martelange intact, and had to wait until engineers could construct a 90-foot (27m) Bailey bridge, and then the three combat commands ran into fierce opposition at Warnach, Chaumont and Bigonville. When told by some wit at McAuliffe's headquarters in Bastogne that there were not many shopping days left until Christmas, Hugh Gaffey was not amused. Nor was Patton, who telephoned Millikin to say, 'There is too much piddling around. Bypass these towns and clear them up later.'

On 4th Armored's right, Willard Paul's 26th Infantry Division set out on the axis Arlon–Wiltz but ran into similar opposition at Arsdorf, Grevils-Brésil and Eschdorf even before the leading regiments reached the river Sûre. To their right again, McBride's 80th, advancing on a five-mile (8km) front from the Arlon-Mersch road, relieved the 109th Regiment from 28th Infantry Division which had been driven back to Vichten. The division then had an unexpected stroke of luck when it fell upon the German 352 Volksgrenadier Division, which, all unsuspecting, was heading west in column along the road between Ettelbruck and Merzig. The 80th sliced through the centre of the column and headed on towards Heiderscheid, where, however, it ran into the elite Führer Grenadier Brigade.

After 4th Armored reached Bastogne on December 26 and 27, the shape of III Corps' battlefield began to change with the arrival of Paul Baade's 35th Infantry Division south and west of the town. However, at the end of the month, the Germans mounted a pincer attack by XLVII Korps' troops from the northwest and XXXIX Korps from the southeast, aimed at cutting the American corridor at Sibret. This resulted in another major battle around Lutrebois and Villers-la-Bonne-Eau, but by January 3 – the date set for the beginning of First and Third Armies' counter-offensive – III Corps had the situation under control, even though it had been 'nip and tuck' at times.

4th Armored Division



The distinction of being 4th Armored Division's first troops into Bastogne is usually awarded to 1st Lieutenant Charles Boggess' platoon of five M4s and an M3 half-track from Company C of CCR's 37th Tank Battalion at 1650 hrs on Boxing Day, December 26, 1944. In fact he had been pre-empted almost a full week earlier by a tiny task force from CCB's 8th Tank Battalion, commanded by its executive officer, Captain Bert Ezell.

The Allied situation between December 18 and 20, before Middleton's VIII Corps was assigned to Third Army and Montgomery was given command of Hodges' First and Simpson's Ninth U.S. Armies, was as seen earlier one of considerable confusion. Thus, when Middleton (having just gratefully seen the arrival at Bastogne of Colonel William Roberts' CCB from 10th Armored Division) received word that 4th Armored was also being sent to his assistance, he asked Hodges if he could use Brigadier-General Holmes Dager's CCB, 4th Armored, at Bastogne as well. Dager was with Middleton in Arlon at the time and only requested that his command be kept together, rather than parcelled out piecemeal as had happened with Roberts' forces.

Hodges, as uncertain as anyone at this time of exactly what was going on, referred the question to Bradley, who hedged and said that Middleton could use Dager's CCB, but 'only if necessary to hold his position'. It was hardly a satisfactory answer, because two corps commanders, Millikin and Middleton, each now thought on December 20 that CCB of 4th Armored was under his own control. Dager – who was later to command the 11th Armored Division – protested the order, because it split his command despite the prior agreement. Nevertheless, he was told to send a task force into Bastogne to ascertain the situation. Captain Ezell therefore set off at 1030 hrs that morning with one company of Shermans, a battery of M7s and a company of armored infantry, his only orders being to 'aid CCB of the 10th Armored Division'. Ezell duly reported to the 101st Airborne Division's Brigadier-General, Anthony McAuliffe, in charge of the Bastogne defences, who turned him over to CCB/10th's Colonel Roberts. Then, even while Roberts was working out how best to deploy this small, but welcome, addition to his command, a radio

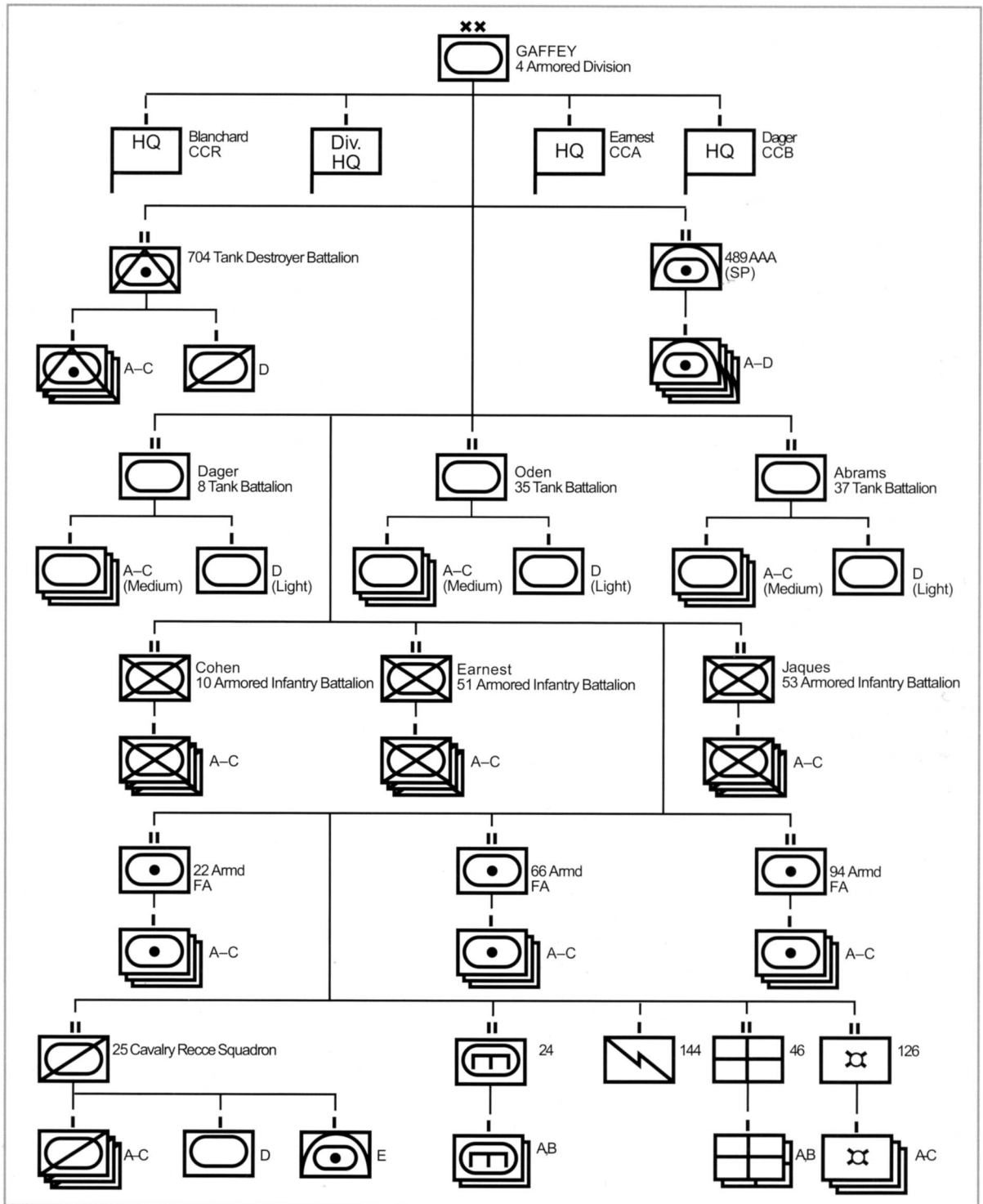
4th ARMORED DIVISION
Major-General Hugh J. Gaffey
 HQ Company and HQ Companies,
 Combat Commands A (Earnest), B (Dager) & R (Blanchard)

8 Tank Battalion (Dager)
 35 Tank Battalion (Oden)
 37 Tank Battalion (Abrams)
 10 Armored Infantry Battalion (Cohen)
 51 Armored Infantry Battalion (Earnest)
 53 Armored Infantry Battalion (Jaques)
 22 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (M7)
 66 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (M7)
 94 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (M7)
 25 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized
 24 Armored Engineer Battalion
 46 Medical Battalion, Armored
 144 Armored Signal Company
 126 Armored Ordnance Maintenance Battalion
 Military Police Platoon
 489 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (M15/M16)
 (attached)
 704 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M18) (attached)

message ordered Ezell to return at once and rejoin CCB at Habay-la-Neuve! By the end of the day the Germans had closed the last road into Bastogne, and one of the endlessly fascinating 'what ifs?' of the campaign remains unanswered: what if, indeed, CCB of 4th Armored had been committed in strength at this early juncture to hold a corridor open?

The 4th Armored Division was by this stage of the war both highly experienced and highly motivated under Patton's inspired direction, even though it was understrength when the Germans launched their Ardennes offensive on December 16. It had only just been pulled out of the line between December 7 and 10, after nearly five months of continuous battle and was still 21 M4s and 730 men short of establishment despite replacements, many of whom were 'green'.

On top of this, most of its vehicles were worn out and prone to breakdowns; and it had a new commander, Hugh Gaffey, although he was a veteran who had earlier commanded 2nd Armored Division on



Sicily, and few doubted his abilities.

The 4th Armored was one of the U.S. Army's 'light' or 'triangular' formations and used the structure formulated on September 15, 1943; only two divisions, the 2nd and 3rd (deployed with VII Corps in the Ardennes) retained the earlier 'heavy' configuration.

The 4th was subdivided into three Combat Commands, A, B and R (Reserve), each normally comprising a battalion of tanks, infantry and artillery with supporting reconnaissance troops and engineer companies. Tactically, these commands were themselves often broken down into A, B and C

Teams, named after their respective commanders.

The division had originally been activated at Pine Camp, New York, on April 15, 1941, its original commander being Major-General Henry Baird. His successor from May 1942 was Major-General John Wood, who shipped his men to England in January 1944 and landed with them in Normandy across 'Utah' beach on July 13 as part of XV Corps, Third Army. Temporarily reassigned to First Army's VIII Corps, the division's first major battle was for Coutances during Bradley's Operation 'Cobra', designed to break the deadlock of the costly and time-consuming bocage struggle. CCB captured the town on the 28th of the same month only after a ten-day struggle, but this opened the way through Avranches towards Brittany.

John Wood's 4th Armored burst through Avranches, captured the vital bridge over the river Sélune at Pontaubault and dashed across the base of the Brittany peninsula to seal it off at Vannes before wheeling towards Lorient. Here it met up with 6th Armored Division, which had taken the more round-about northwesterly route via St Malo, Morlaix and Brest before their paths converged. However, tanks – apart from the specialised 'funnies' of the British 79th Armoured Division which were being deployed on the northwest coast of France and Belgium after the belated breakthrough at Caen – were not needed in siege warfare, so 4th Armored was moved on, via Nantes and up the Loire valley through Orléans, to reach the river Meuse at the end of August. By this time it had been transferred back to Patton's Third Army, and rapidly established itself as one of his firm favourites.

Third Army was now pushing into the Lorraine triangle south of Luxembourg, and, between September

11 and 13, 4th Armored forced crossings over the river Moselle around Nancy. The next three months saw a succession of major battles as the division pushed slowly but inexorably towards Saarbrücken. CCB fought its way across the Marne-Rhein canal and CCR captured Lunéville over the 15th/16th, but the offensive now turned into a seesaw conflict around Arracourt, Moncourt and Coincourt which lasted until the end of the month. The division's losses were heavy and, on October 12, the 26th Infantry Division took over its lines so it could recuperate.

More of the same followed when the division was again committed to the attack on November 9, first seizing, then losing, then recapturing Rodalbe. After crossing the river Saare and rebuffing a counter-attack at Bärenndorf, it captured Wolfskirchen on November 27. At the beginning of December the division attacked towards Saare-Union, alongside the 26th Infantry Division, and captured Bining before being relieved by 12th Armored Division. Its commander, John Wood, was suffering from exhaustion and was repatriated to rest, his place being taken by Patton's Chief of Staff, Major-General Hugh Gaffey. The division's own respite was shortlived because in response to the German attack through the Ardennes it was now rushed 160 miles (250km) north to the vicinity of Arlon, on the main Luxembourg City–Bastogne highway. This forced march was a severe test for the mechanically weary vehicles, and the 8th Tank Battalion alone had 33 breakdowns en route.

Beginning on December 22, the division nevertheless spearheaded III Corps' drive to relieve Bastogne, with CCA (also under a new commander, Brigadier-General Herbert Earnest) advancing on the east flank



En route towards Bastogne, Private Frank Kelly from 4th Armored's Military Police Platoon shepherds disconsolate prisoners away from the front past a long column of M4s. However, the division's advance was far from a walkover as this photo suggests, but a bitterly contested race against time and a determined foe.

(U.S. Army)

Lieutenant-Colonel Creighton Abrams, commander of the 37th Tank Battalion, radios instructions from his M4 'Thunderbolt IV'. Although unlikely, this may even have been the occasion when he gave the OK for 1st Lieutenant Charles Boggess to break through to Bastogne on Boxing Day with his leading platoon of five Shermans. Certainly the sunshine is suggestive of this, and the sky that day was full of C-47s dropping supplies.

(U.S. Army)



along the main Arlon–Bastogne road, via Martelange and Warnach. Brigadier-General Holmes Dager's CCB, meanwhile, took secondary roads to the west from Habay-la-Neuve through Burnon and Chaumont. Next day, Colonel Wendell Blanchard's CCR followed CCA's route but diverted northeast towards Bigonville. All three ran into tough opposition which caused serious delays, to the dismay of the Bastogne defenders, who were under severe pressure from a series of concentric attacks between the 23rd and 25th. Fortunately, the skies had miraculously cleared and a massive airlift of supplies took a little of the heat out of the situation but, as the U.S. official history records, 'Christmas Day came and went leaving the 4th Armored Division toiling slowly towards Bastogne'.

The breakthrough came after CCR's battle at Bigonville. After a forced march laterally west towards Neufchâteau on Christmas night, to take up a new station on 4th Armored's left flank, it began a fresh attack towards Sibret via Remichampagne and Clochimont. Outside the latter village at about 1500 hrs on Boxing Day, the commanders of the 37th Tank Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Creighton Abrams, and 53rd Armored Infantry Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel George Jaques, held a historically fateful roadside conference. They decided to ignore Sibret temporarily, because it was known to be heavily defended, and would further delay their main mission. Boldly they agreed to strike like lightning through Assenois, and thus it was that the CO of Company C of the 37th, 1st Lieutenant Charles

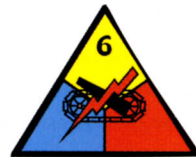
Boggess, broke through into the Bastogne perimeter. Next day the bulk of CCR followed suit (with the 37th Tank Battalion temporarily assigned to Colonel Roberts' CCB of 10th Armored, and on the 29th CCA finally cleared the Arlon– Bastogne highway. This ended the crisis, although the Germans continued with increasingly desperate and futile attempts to sever the corridor.

Over the next few days, 4th Armored refought battlefields familiar to others at Lutrebois, Noville and Bourcy before going over to the defensive in the middle of January 1945. Attacking again on February 22, now as part of XII Corps, the division seized the bridges at Sinspelt and Oberweiss over the river Prüm before capturing the high ground overlooking Bitburg. After further battles at Erdorf, Matzen and Fliessen, the division finally reached the Rhein on March 8. Crossing over at Worms on the 24th, it reached the river Main near Hanau next day, and took Darmstadt without a fight.

At the end of the month it forced a crossing over the Main at Grossauheim and reached Creuzburg on the river Werra on April 1. Now under its last wartime CO, Major-General William Hoge (who had so skilfully helped in the defence of St Vith while commanding CCB of 9th Armored Division), the division took Gotha on the 5th and crossed the river Saale south of the scene of Napoleon's famous victory over the Prussians, Jena, on the 12th. The division ended the war near Pisek in Czechoslovakia, and was later assigned occupation duties, rather sadly renamed the 1st Constabulary Brigade.

6th Armored Division

'Super Sixth'



Compared with the 4th Armored Division, Major-General Robert Grow's 6th was in fine fettle when the German onslaught through the Ardennes opened on December 16, 1944, being only a single M4 down on its TO&E of 186! At the time, having just been assigned from XII to III Corps, the division was resting in defensive positions near Saarbrücken prior to its planned attack through Forbach as part of Patton's offensive to clear the region between the Saar and Rhein. In response to the emergency, the attack was called off, and 6th Armored temporarily reverted to Manton Eddy's command, deployed on the Ettelbruck front, but played no part in the 'Battle of the Bulge' until it was again assigned to Millikin on the 28th.

Next day it moved northwest to reassemble with Colonel John Hines' CCA at Arlon, where it relieved CCA of 9th Armored, and Colonel George Read's CCB at Neufchâteau. This placed it on the left flank of 4th Armored, which had suffered so many inevitable battle casualties in addition to mechanical breakdowns, that it was now reduced to a mere 42 operable M4s. On the 30th, Hines' CCA rolled up the same road through Martelange for which 4th Armored had fought so hard, and through Bastogne to its assembly area southeast of the town. CCB had a more difficult journey because the 11th Armored Division (VIII Corps) was using the same road; so after a six-hour delay, General Grow ordered Read to turn off and assemble at Clochimont on the morning of the 31st. For the next fortnight both of 6th Armored's combat commands were heavily engaged clearing the area east of Bastogne, with vicious engagements against an increasingly desperate enemy over the old battlefields of Wardin and Mageret.

The 'Super Sixth' had been formed at Fort Knox, Kentucky, on February 15, 1942. Its first CO was Major-General William Morris, who in December 1944 commanded 10th Armored. Robert Grow succeeded him from May 1943 until the end of the war in Europe; the division's last peacetime commander was CCB's George Read, by then a Brigadier-General.

The 6th sailed to England in February 1944 and landed across 'Utah' beach on July 19 as part of XX Corps, Third Army. Like 4th Armored it was then attached to VIII Corps and assembled at La Mesnil on

6th ARMORED DIVISION
Major-General Robert W. Grow
 HQ Company and HQ Companies,
 Combat Commands A (Hines), B (Read) & R (unknown)

15 Tank Battalion (Lagrew)
 68 Tank Battalion (Davall)
 69 Tank Battalion (Kennedy)
 9 Armored Infantry Battalion (Britton)
 44 Armored Infantry Battalion (Brown)
 50 Armored Infantry Battalion (Wall)
 128 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (M7)
 212 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (M7)
 231 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (M7)
 86 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized
 25 Armored Engineer Battalion
 76 Medical Battalion, Armored
 146 Armored Signal Company
 128 Armored Ordnance Maintenance Battalion
 Military Police Platoon
 777 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (M15/M16)
 (attached)
 691 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M18) (detached December 23)

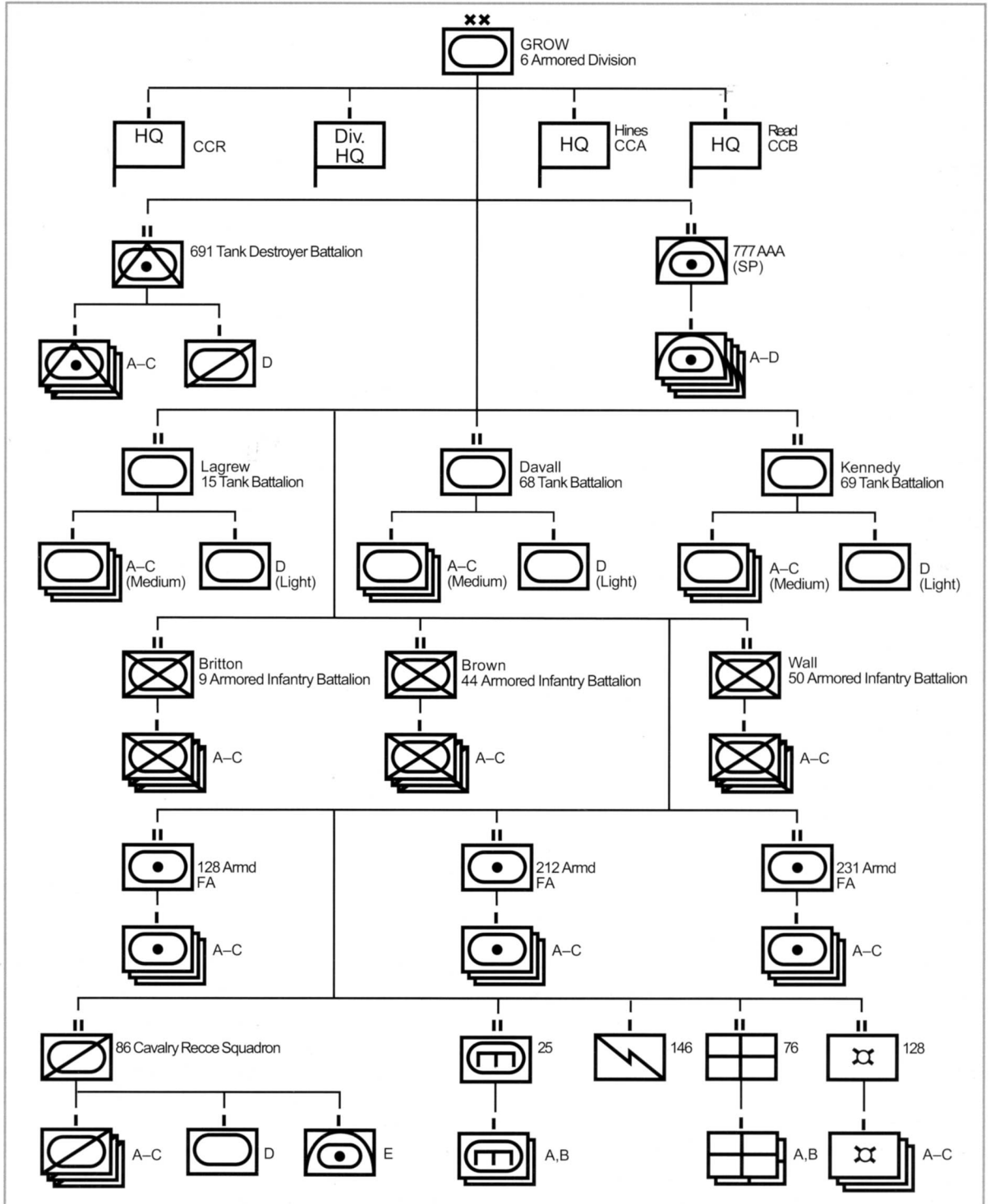
the 25th. At the end of the month it was in Avranches where 4th Armored had secured the bridge, opening the routes into Brittany. Next day Patton arrived at Grow's command post. 'Take Brest,' he ordered. 'Any intermediate objectives?' queried Grow. 'No.' 'That's all I need to know!'

The 200-mile (320km) drive through enemy-held territory to capture a fortress which was bound to be strongly defended went well until VIII Corps' commander, Troy Middleton, told Grow not to go any further than St Malo. This caused a 24-hour delay until Patton curtly overruled Middleton and told Grow to 'get on with it'. Leading elements of the division were still outside Brest by August 6. However, Patton's earlier injunction had left the bulk of the German 266 Infanterie Division behind 6th Armored in Morlaix, and they now attacked Grow's rear at Plouvien in an attempt to join the defenders in Brest. The surprise assault did them no good, and they were soundly defeated, with over 1,000 prisoners going into

the American 'bag', including their commander, Generalleutnant Karl Sprang.

Cracking the defence of Brest, very ably led by the renowned Fallschirmjäger Generalleutnant Bernhard Ramcke, was a different story, and it was obvious even to Patton that a full-scale siege was necessary –

which meant infantry and artillery, not tanks. And, in fact, the last defenders in Brest did not submit for over a month. So, while CCA continued to patrol the perimeter here and at Lorient, CCB and CCR pushed on to Vannes, relieving the 4th Armored Division, then continued north and west up the Loire valley at the





The usual date given for the end of the 'Battle of the Bulge' is January 28, 1945, just a week after these M3s of 6th Armored's 44th Armored Infantry Battalion were photographed near Mageret. (U.S. Signal Corps)

beginning of September.

The division was reunited in the middle of the month and, on the 19th, entered Lunéville, captured a couple of days earlier by 4th Armored. Next day, 6th Armored was transferred from Middleton's VIII to Eddy's XII Corps, Third Army, much to Patton's satisfaction. Both the 4th and 6th had ably proved themselves so far, and he was sure they would go much further. The going, however, was slow in the face of increasing opposition now the Allies were almost on top of the West Wall, with the Rhein a tantalising inch or so away on the maps. Thus, the 6th Armored endured a frustrating period during October and November. Heavy rain brought thick mud in addition to inevitable minefields to slow their progress, and every heavily contested yard through Sanry, Arraincourt, Remering and the Forêt de Pullange was a tank man's nightmare. Eventually it ended with the capture of Sarreguemines on December 6.

During the Ardennes counter-offensive, 6th Armored finally recaptured Wardin and Mageret before ploughing on towards the river Our, taking Kalborn on its second attempt on January 29, 1945. After engineers constructed a Bailey bridge, the division headed east again in February, now part of VIII Corps once more, relieving the 17th Airborne Division and penetrating the West Wall at Ober Eisenach on the

22nd, before capturing Muxerath two days later.

Transferred to a new area of operations west of the river Prüm, 6th Armored relieved the 90th Infantry Division on February 25 and CCA established a small bridgehead at Manderscheid while CCB, after an initial repulse, captured Lunebach on the 28th. After then crossing the river Nims near Schönecken on March 3, the division was taken into XV Corps' reserve and reassembled near Arzfeld.

After a fortnight's rest, offensive operations were resumed on the 20th, with CCA advancing from Homburg to reach the Rhein the next day at Rhein-Durkheim. The division, now with Manton Eddy's XII Corps again, crossed to the east bank at Oppenheim on the 25th, and headed towards Frankfurt-am-Main, coming under heavy fire from the flak towers in Frankfurt itself. After establishing bridgeheads over the river Main, the division bypassed the city to the north at the end of the month and, transferred to XX Corps, crossed the river Fulda at Malsfeld on April 2. It reached Mulshausen two days later, and captured Langensalza on the 6th. After reassembling again, 6th Armored crossed the river Saale southwest of Naumberg on the 11th and secured a bridgehead over the Zwick Mulde at Rochlitz on the 14th before being relieved by the 76th Infantry Division. Finally, reassigned to VIII Corps, 6th Armored maintained defensive positions in this sector until the end of the war on May 7 and finally returned to the United States in September under its last commander, Brigadier-General George Read, who had commanded CCB in the Ardennes.

26th Infantry Division

'Yankee'



Willard Paul's former Massachusetts National Guard division achieved two of the most applauded moral victories during the Allied counter-offensive in January 1945. First, it recaptured Wiltz on the 22nd, then Clervaux, with its bloodstained château, three days later. The latter achievement virtually closed the entire story of the 'Battle of the Bulge', but the 'Yankees' still had many more miles to trudge before they ended their short, but highly eventful, war in Czechoslovakia.

The division had been inducted into Federal service at Boston on January 16, 1941, under Major-General Roger Eckfeldt. Major-General Willard Paul took over in August 1943 for the remainder of the war, but the division's last commander was Robert Grow, CO of the 6th Armored Division in the Ardennes.

The 26th was a late entrant to the conflict despite its low number, and only landed in France, shipping direct from New York, on September 7, 1944. First assigned to III Corps, then XII, then III again just four days before the German onslaught began, the division had not seen action until a month after its arrival, when it relieved 4th Armored near Moncourt on October 12. The following battles in Lorraine, at Vic-sur-Seille, Rodalbe, Marimont, Diéuze, and particularly at the crossroads town of Albestroff in November; then at Honskirch and finally at Saare-Union with 4th Armored early in December, all took a heavy toll. When the division was withdrawn to Metz just before the Germans launched Operation 'Herbstnebel', it had lost nearly 3,000 men, and the replacements it received during its brief respite had virtually no combat experience.

Moved north towards Arlon on December 20 as Patton swung III Corps on to its new axis, the division

The old adage about a picture telling a thousand words is often right. The derelict Sherman in the background stands mute testimony to the desperate earlier defence along this barren road.

(U.S. Army)



26th INFANTRY DIVISION

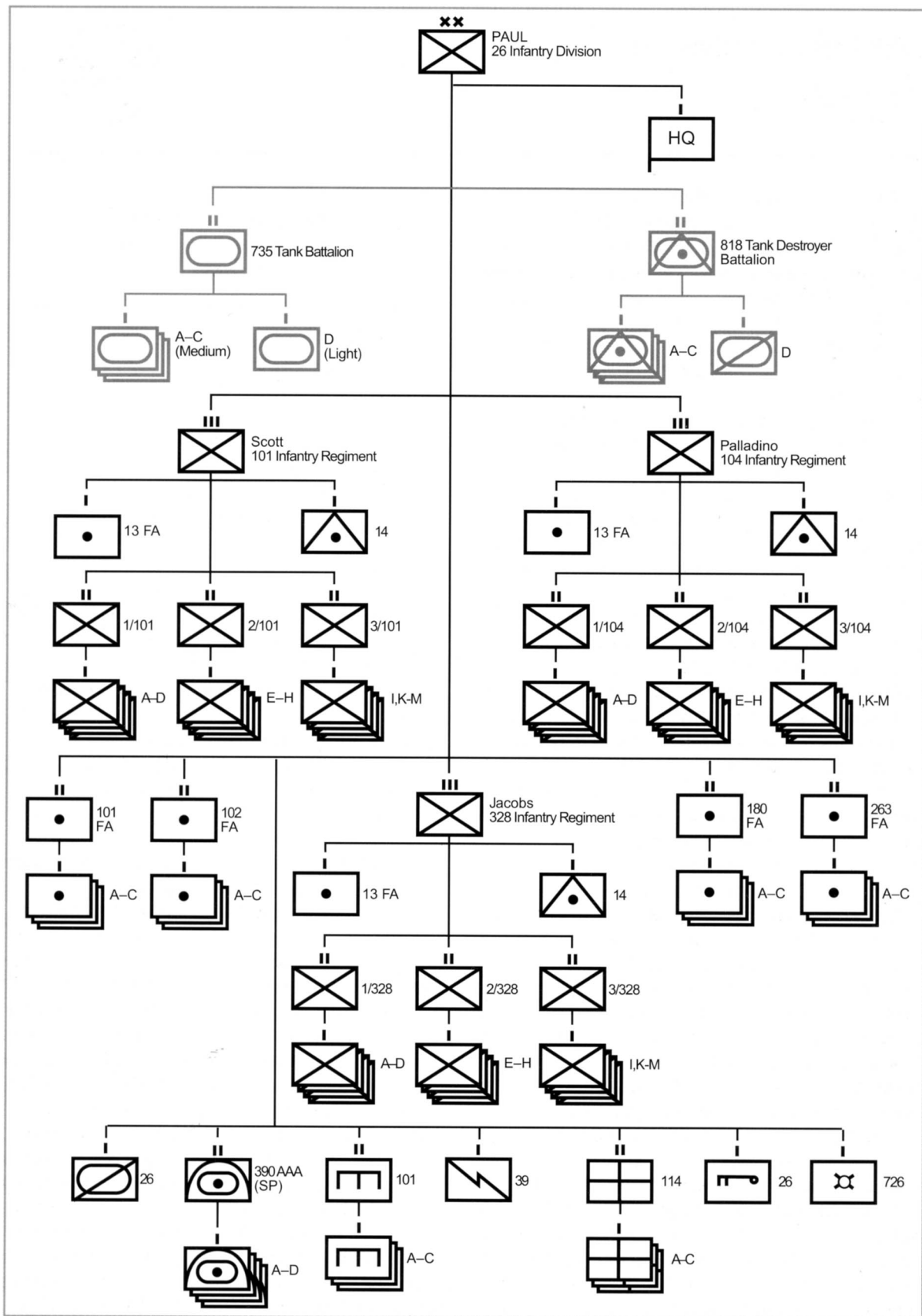
Major-General Willard S. Paul

HQ Company

101 Infantry Regiment (Scott)
104 Infantry Regiment (Palladino)
328 Infantry Regiment (Jacobs)
101 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
102 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm) (Kinney)
180 Field Artillery Battalion (155mm)
263 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
26 Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized
101 Engineer Combat Battalion
114 Medical Battalion
39 Signal Company
26 Quartermaster Company
726 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
Military Police Platoon
390 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (M15/M16) (attached)
735 Tank Battalion (attached December 21)
818 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10/M36) (attached from 5 Infantry Division December 21)

attacked through Rambrouch, Grosbous and Arsdorf against tough opposition, and reached the river Wiltz as the year drew to a close. This proved an even more formidable challenge and it was not until January 20, operating alongside the freshly arrived 90th Infantry, that the division managed to claw a bridgehead at Overwampach. Wiltz itself, former HQ of the 28th Infantry Division, was recaptured two days later, and Marnach and Clervaux on the 25th.

Transferred to XX Corps, the battered division had a respite in the Saarlautern area until the middle of March when it resumed advancing towards the Rhein, first clearing Merzig and Haustadt before crossing the river at Oppenheim on the 26th, now with XII Corps. After clearing Hanau alongside 4th Armored, the division next followed 11th Armored and took Fulda on April 2. Advancing cautiously into the Thuringer Wald on the 10th, its men followed the Danube southeast, crossed into Austria on May 1, captured Linz and, when the German surrender was announced, were heading towards the river Vltava.



35th Infantry Division

‘Santa Fe’



On December 16, Paul Baade's 35th Infantry Division, alongside Major-General Frank Culin's newly arrived 87th, began a 'clearing up' operation between the river Saar and the West Wall in preparation for Patton's major attack, scheduled to begin three days later. Opposition from the German outposts in the heavily wooded terrain was strong and, despite superior numbers and vastly more matériel, the two divisions' progress was slow, so it was almost with a sigh of relief that they learned on the 18th that they were to stop offensive operations and prepare to withdraw.

Although the 87th was in fine shape, and promptly ordered into SHAEF reserve while Bradley and Patton decided how best to redeploy it, the 35th was far from being in top-notch form. Most of its rifle companies were at little better than half strength, and its 737th Tank Battalion was now transferred to the 5th Infantry Division. (In fact, the 35th did not receive a replacement, the 784th Tank Battalion, until February 1945.)

On December 19, therefore, the 35th found itself in Metz to rest and have its strength rebuilt before it could be transferred from XII to III Corps to help Millikin expand the Allied corridor once 4th Armored had broken through to Bastogne. The respite was too short to have much beneficial effect, and, when the 35th began moving north towards Luxembourg on the 23rd, it was still understrength.

Like the 26th, the 35th was a former National Guard unit, its men coming from Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska. It had been inducted into Federal service at Lincoln, Nebraska, on November 23, 1940. Amongst its three earlier commanders, before Paul Baade took over in January 1943, was Major-General William Simpson, CO of Ninth Army in the Ardennes. It was Baade, however, who shipped his division to England in May 1944 and landed with it across 'Omaha' beach between July 5 and 8; he remained its commander until the 35th was inactivated in December 1945.

When it landed in Normandy, the division was first attached to Major-General Charles Corlett's XIX Corps and thrown into the bocage battlefield, its first objective St Lô. It reached the Pont Hébert–St Lô road on July 14, and the 134th Regiment gained Hill 122 next day. After defeating several strong counter-attacks, the division finally entered the town

35th INFANTRY DIVISION

Major-General Paul W. Baade

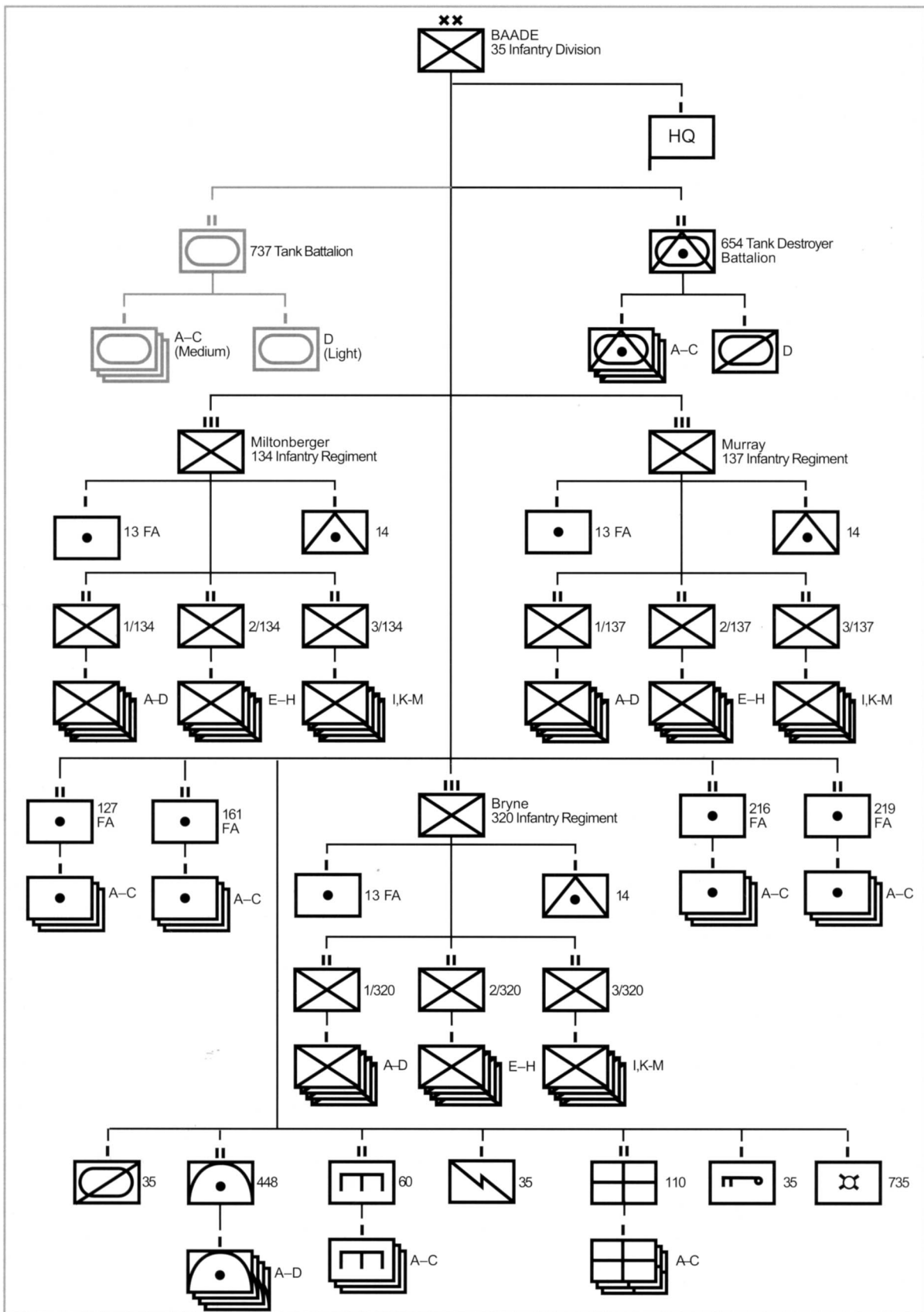
HQ Company

134 Infantry Regiment (Miltonberger)
137 Infantry Regiment (Murray)
320 Infantry Regiment (Byrne)
127 Field Artillery Battalion (155mm)
161 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
216 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
219 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
35 Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized
60 Engineer Combat Battalion
110 Medical Battalion
35 Signal Company
35 Quartermaster Company
735 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
Military Police Platoon
448 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm)
(attached)
737 Tank Battalion (detached December 22)
654 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10/M36)
(detached 22 December and re-attached December 26)

on the 18th, cleared high ground to the south and west and crossed the river Vire on August 2.

En route to XII Corps' assembly area, the division was briefly attached to VII Corps, in order to help contain the German counter-offensive at Mortain. Then, on August 13, it began driving east in the wake of 4th Armored, and captured Orléans five days later. The 137th Regiment forced a crossing of the Mosel at Crevechamps on September 11, while the 134th was fighting first near Nancy then, over 18-21 September, on the scene of an even more famous earlier victory at Agincourt. The division now faced a succession of strong counter-attacks in the Forêt de Grémecey which were only repulsed with the help of 6th Armored Division. The 35th reached the river Seille at Fossieux during the first week in October, then had a month out of the line to recuperate and make good its losses.

November was a hard month, with further battles east of the Seille in the Bois d'Amélecourt and Forêt





The price of victory is steep: stretcher-bearers from the 35th Infantry Division's 110th Medical Battalion carry wounded comrades out of what the official history calls the 'bloody mêlée' at Lutrebois.

(U.S. Signal Corps)

de Château-Salins, at Vivières and Morhange. The division reached Sarreguemines on December 6, finally taking the town after five days of hand-to-hand combat. It was now that the 35th began preparing the ground for the new Third Army offensive, with further tough encounters at Habkirchen and Breiterwald before it was withdrawn to Metz on the 19th.

The division reassembled north of Arlon over Christmas, and began preparing to begin a new attack on the 27th, northeast of the Sûre towards Harlange. This would both close the gap which was widening between the 4th Armored and 26th Infantry Divisions, and open up the road network southeast of Bastogne for the second phase of III Corps' offensive.

After short encounters at Surré and Livarchamps, which showed up the lack of the normal accompanying tank battalion, the division continued advancing slowly with III/134th Regiment entering Lutrebois during the evening of December 29. This placed the division smack in the path of the major German XXXIX Korps' counter-attack to rupture the Bastogne corridor.

Although the German assault ultimately failed, the 35th Infantry Division's casualties during the fortnight-long battle were very heavy indeed, and, its endurance severely tested, on January 18, 1945, it was sent back

to Metz again, in more need of rest than ever before. When it returned to the line on February 6, relieving the British 52nd Division on the river Roer (the Dutch continuation of the Rur) near Maastricht, the division at least had a tank battalion attached again. Three weeks later, now with XVI Corps, the 35th attacked across the river at Linnich, and the 320th Regiment captured Venlo on March 1.

Five days after this, the division finally reached the Rhein and, after mopping up in Rheinberg, pushed on through heavy resistance towards the river Wesel. Here, the 134th seized the psychologically significant Fort Blucher on March 11 before the division was given another fortnight's respite. Led by the 134th Regiment again, the division crossed the Rhein between March 25th and 26th and fought a battle at Kirchhellen which lasted until the end of the month.

During the first week in April, the division occupied defensive positions along the Rhein-Herne Canal before forcing a crossing on the 9th. After advancing beyond Gelsenkirchen to the river Ruhr near Witten two days later, the 35th was now transferred to XIII Corps, and took up new positions along the west bank of the Elbe – the 'stop line' agreed with the Russians – between Tangermünde and Grieben.

After a final battle to clear the Colbitz Forest, the division was posted to Hanover on April 26, and took up occupation duties there until the cessation of hostilities on May 7. The final casualty count at the end of the day was 2,485 killed in action and 11,526 wounded, of whom 462 later died from their injuries.

90th Infantry Division

'Tough Hombres'



Major-General James Van Fleet's 90th Infantry Division fought only one major battle with III Corps when, after cutting the Bastogne–Wiltz road at Doncels on January 11 and capturing Bras, it helped Willard Paul's 26th establish a bridgehead at Overwampach during the third week of the month. The division then fought its way across the river Clerf at Binsfeld before being transferred to VIII Corps, fighting its way across the Our at Oberhausen and Stupbach and taking Heckhusheid on February 1.

Despite its high number, the 90th entered the European war earlier than any of the other divisions in III Corps, since the 359th Regiment stormed 'Utah' beach on D-Day attached to Raymond Barton's 4th Infantry Division. The 90th had been formed only on March 25, 1942, at Camp Barkeley, Texas, but had no fewer than seven wartime commanders, including James Van Fleet from October 1944 to February 1945. Its final CO was Herbert Earnest, commander of 4th Armored's CCA at Bastogne. In the same way, the division rarely stayed with the same corps for long; between landing in France and being assigned to III Corps on January 6, 1945, it had 'belonged' to VII, VIII, V, XV and XX, and would end the war with XII Corps!

The 90th's campaign in Normandy began with the battle of Pont l'Abbé over 10-12 June, and ended on August 22 after it helped seal the Falaise–Argentan pocket at La Bourg-St Léonard and in the Forêt de Gouffern. Five days later, it followed in the tracks of 7th Armored Division across the Meuse, before becoming involved in the struggle for the fortresses around Metz, which finally ended with the capture of the Hôtel de Ville in Maizières-les-Metz on October 30.

More of the same intense close-quarter fighting ensued in November as the division assaulted across

90th INFANTRY DIVISION
Major-General James A. Van Fleet
HQ Company

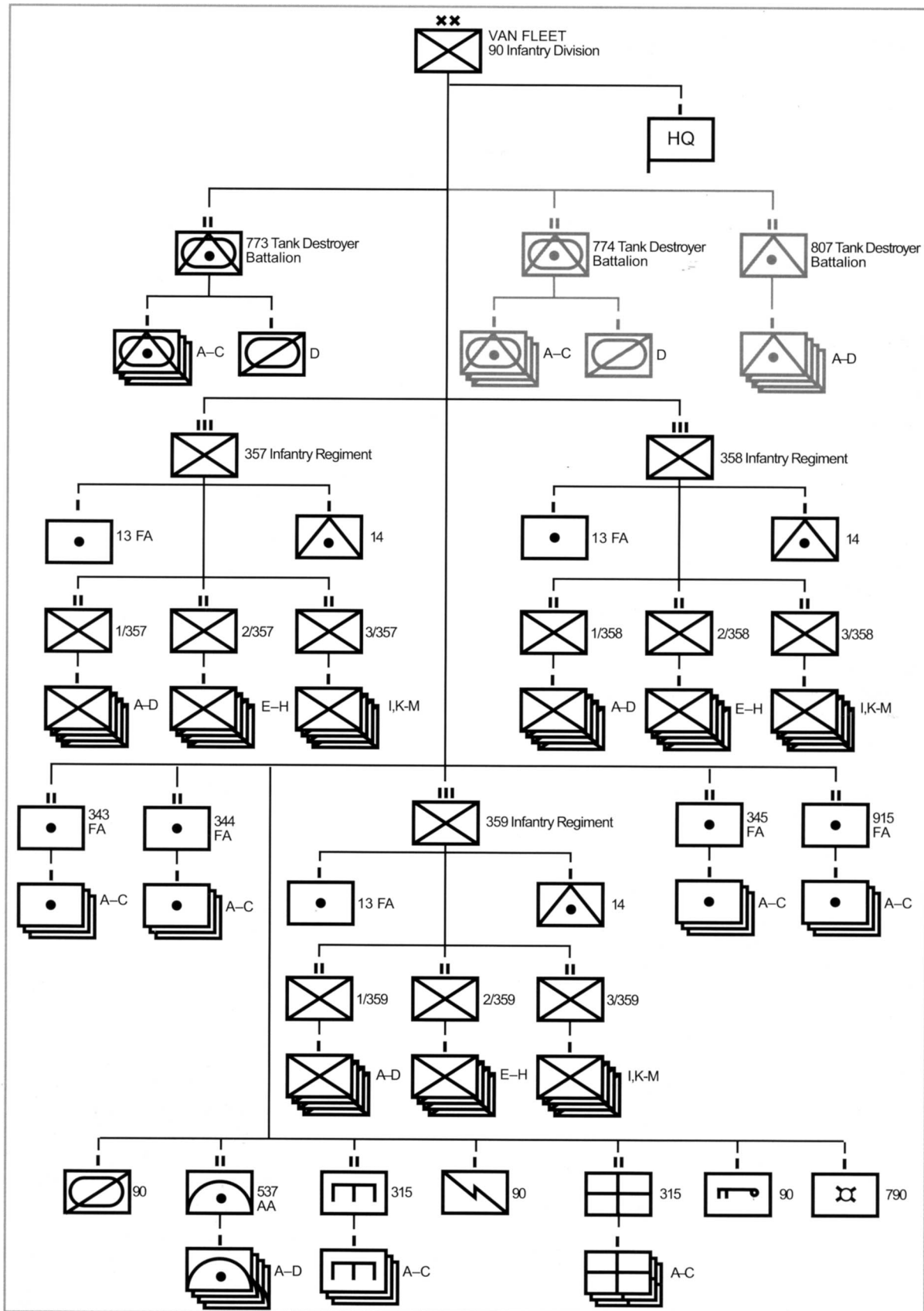
357 Infantry Regiment
358 Infantry Regiment
359 Infantry Regiment
343 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
344 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
345 Field Artillery Battalion (155mm)
915 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
90 Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized
315 Engineer Combat Battalion
315 Medical Battalion
90 Signal Company
90 Quartermaster Company
790 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
Military Police Platoon
537 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm) (attached)
773 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10/M36) (attached)
774 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M36) (attached December 21)
807 Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed) (attached from 5 Infantry Division December 21-24 only)

the Moselle and reached the Saar, south of Merzig, at the end of the month. The division had already commenced its part in Patton's Saar offensive by December 16 and was withdrawn from the Dillingen bridgehead to help III Corps in January. After finally crossing the Rhein on March 24, 90th Infantry was in the process of advancing on the Czechoslovakian capital, Prague, when hostilities finally ceased in May 1945.

Well strung out in case of snipers, men of the 357th Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry Division, pass a Panzer Lehr Panther knocked out during an earlier encounter in the hamlet of Harzy.



(U.S. Signal Corps)



U.S. III CORPS' BATTLES

CCA, 4th Armored Division

Martelange/Warnach – December 22–24

By the time Major-General Hugh Gaffey's 4th Armored Division began reassembling around Arlon on December 21 after its debilitating 160-mile (250km) journey from outside Metz, the plight of Troy Middleton's VIII Corps had deteriorated to such an extent that it was no longer capable of offensive action. Those units which had not already, in effect, been destroyed, were either in full retreat or barely hanging on by the skin of their teeth, and the situation in Bastogne had worsened overnight when the Germans sealed the last road into the town. On top of this, paratroops from Brandenberger's Seventh Armee had reached their assigned target of Martelange on the river Sûre, blocking the main road from Arlon to Bastogne along which Brigadier-General Herbert Earnest's Combat Command A was scheduled to advance.

At the time, however, this was not known by Earnest or anyone else on the Allied side because the disintegration of VIII Corps had left an intelligence vacuum. No one even knew whether there *were* any surviving pockets of American troops still holding out south of Bastogne. Earnest, and 4th Armored's equally newly appointed CO, Hugh Gaffey, had other problems as well. The division was still over 700 officers and men below full strength, and many of the tanks were worn out after the headlong drive from Normandy. Engines and gearboxes were on their last legs and had to be conserved, so the M4s could only travel at half speed, and in many instances the turret traverse motors, for example, no longer functioned. Patton's order to 'Drive like hell' was not, therefore, really practicable. Nevertheless, Earnest was determined to do his best.

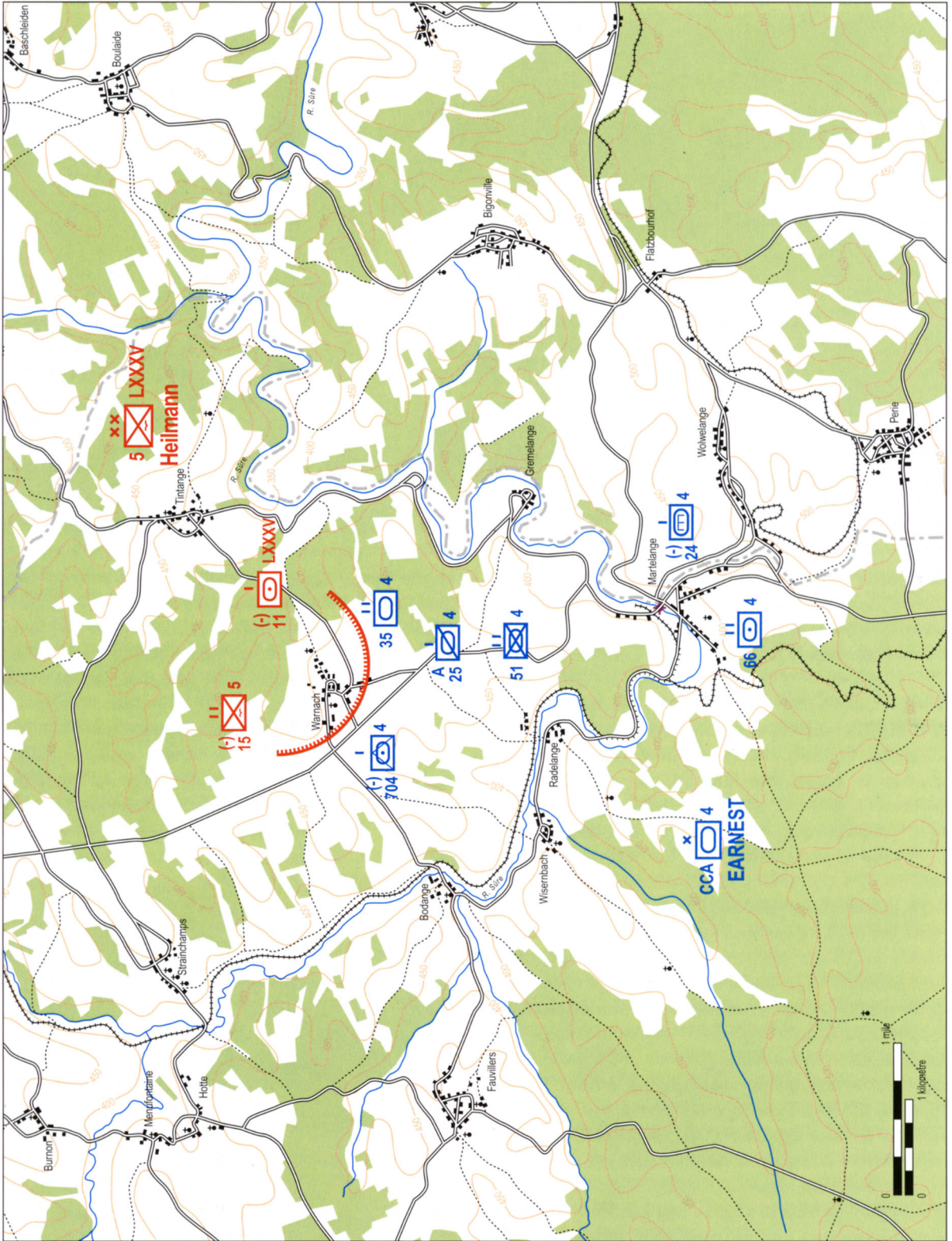
One fact that *was* known was that the bridges at Martelange had been demolished earlier by VIII Corps' engineers, so Earnest put his own combat engineers

almost in the van of his column, immediately behind A Troop of the 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. They set off at 0600 hrs on December 22, followed by Lieutenant-Colonel Delk Oden's 35th Tank Battalion, then the 105mm M7 GMCs of the 66th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, with Earnest's own 51st Armored Infantry Battalion at the rear. Their route basically followed a ridge line, but was interspersed by steep and narrow gullies which slowed them up, as did a large bomb crater in the middle of the road and small-arms fire from a company of 15 Fallschirm Regiment as they approached Martelange itself.

Both anticipating and recognising a superior force, the German paras did not offer any determined resistance at Martelange, because tanks could not cross the Sûre until an adequate bridge had been built. They withdrew during the small hours of the morning, but then Earnest's combat engineers found they could not construct a bridge suitable for armour with the available materials because of the depth and width of the ravine through which the Sûre flows at this point. Much of December 23 was therefore wasted, while III Corps reserve engineers laboured to bring up and assemble a 90-foot (27m) Bailey Bridge, and CCA's advance did not resume until about 1500 hrs. They had only 12 miles (19 km) to travel, and Millikin confidently reported to VIII Corps commander, Troy Middleton, that he expected to make contact with the Bastogne defenders 'by tonight'. It was not to be.

The stumbling block over the river Sûre at Martelange is evident, and it is surprising that the CO of the German 5 Fallschirm Division did not put up a more stubborn resistance here. Warnach, as can be seen, was on the flank of CCA's rout, and, because of the strength of German forces in and around it, could not simply be bypassed as Patton instructed.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84			45-46,76-77,85-88		39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		



16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		



Even while 4th Armored Division forces were struggling toward Bastogne, relief for the defenders came in the welcome sight of waves of C-47s airlifting urgently needed supplies. (U.S. Signal Corps)

Delk Oden's 35th Tank Battalion, with his handful of M4A3E2 'Jumbos' and a company of M18s from the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion now in the van, led off confidently across the new bridge, while overhead waves of C-47s thundered towards Bastogne to drop their precious cargoes of ammunition and medical supplies. Unfortunately for Earnest and Oden, however, the German paras who had pulled back from Martelange had not gone far, and opened fire from the next ridge. Fearing Panzerfausts, Earnest called up his artillery, which cleared the ridge, but it was getting dark by the time the head of the American column approached Warnach. This was actually the German parachute regiment's command post, and was defended by a full rifle battalion and a company of attached assault guns. However, they would pose too much of a threat to the flank and rear of the column for Earnest to dare bypassing the village as Patton had demanded – it had to be taken by assault.

The Germans repulsed the first two attacks – the first by light tanks and infantry and the second by M4s – with ease, and Earnest decided to wait for daylight

before trying again, contenting himself with sending men to clear the woods around the village. (During this phase, a dozen M4s ran into a marsh and had to be towed out later.) Then, as dawn broke, the M7s laid down a concentrated barrage and Oden's Shermans and M18s converged on Warnach from three sides, the infantry closely following behind each vehicle.

The German paras, even though largely untrained and ill-disciplined, proved that they were fighters if nothing else, and the battle disintegrated into a lethal bar-room brawl. As soon as Earnest's men cleared one house, it was fiercely counter-attacked, and a ferocious hand-to-hand battle see-sawed backwards and forwards all morning. As one of Earnest's men said afterwards, 'In their own way, these German paratroopers were saying "Nuts!" to us.' Four Shermans were lost to close-range shots from Sturmgeschütze and a fifth to a Panzerfaust, and when the German paras finally pulled out of Warnach at about midday, Earnest had lost 68 men killed or wounded. For their part, the Germans had lost twice that amount and a similar number captured. This still did not mean they were defeated, though, and, even though reinforced by the 1st Battalion of the 80th Infantry Division's 318th Regiment, Earnest's men had further battles to face at Tintange and Hollange before they did finally reach Bastogne.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54			47-48		49-51	

U.S. III CORPS' BATTLES

CCB, 4th Armored Division

Chaumont – December 23–25

Brigadier-General Holmes Dager's Combat Command B of 4th Armored Division was the first to arrive in the vicinity of Arlon following Patton's preemptory orders and, as we have seen, suffered the subsequent confusion of not knowing whether it was still part of Millikin's III Corps or had been re-assigned to Middleton's VIII. Almost as if in recompense, Patton decided that Dager's command would lead 4th Armored into Bastogne.

After Captain Bert Ezell's inauspicious foray into the town on December 20, the whole of CCB re-assembled just to the west of Habaye-la-Neuve to await more constructive orders. These came in the form of a communiqué from the divisional CO, Hugh Gaffey, which told Dager his mission was to 'drive in, relieve the [defending] force, and proceed from Bastogne to the north-east'. Even this early, Patton

and his peers were not just thinking about the relief of the 101st Airborne, but also about the subsequent counter-offensive to eliminate the 'bulge' entirely, and resume the drive towards the Rhein.

The route chosen for CCB lay to the west of that which CCA was to use, and ran from Habaye-la-Neuve itself north along subsidiary roads parallel to the main Arlon–Bastogne highway. This was hardly ideal for an armoured column, but it was forlornly hoped it would not be so heavily defended. Dager therefore set off earlier than Earnest, at 0430 hrs on December 22, and by midday his own 8th Tank Battalion – which had only 22 operational Shermans! – was in sight of the little village of Burnon, just seven miles (11km) from Bastogne. However, another blown bridge over one of the streams which feeds the Sûre caused a delay, and it was well after midnight before the platoon of German paratroops billeted in Burnon was dislodged.

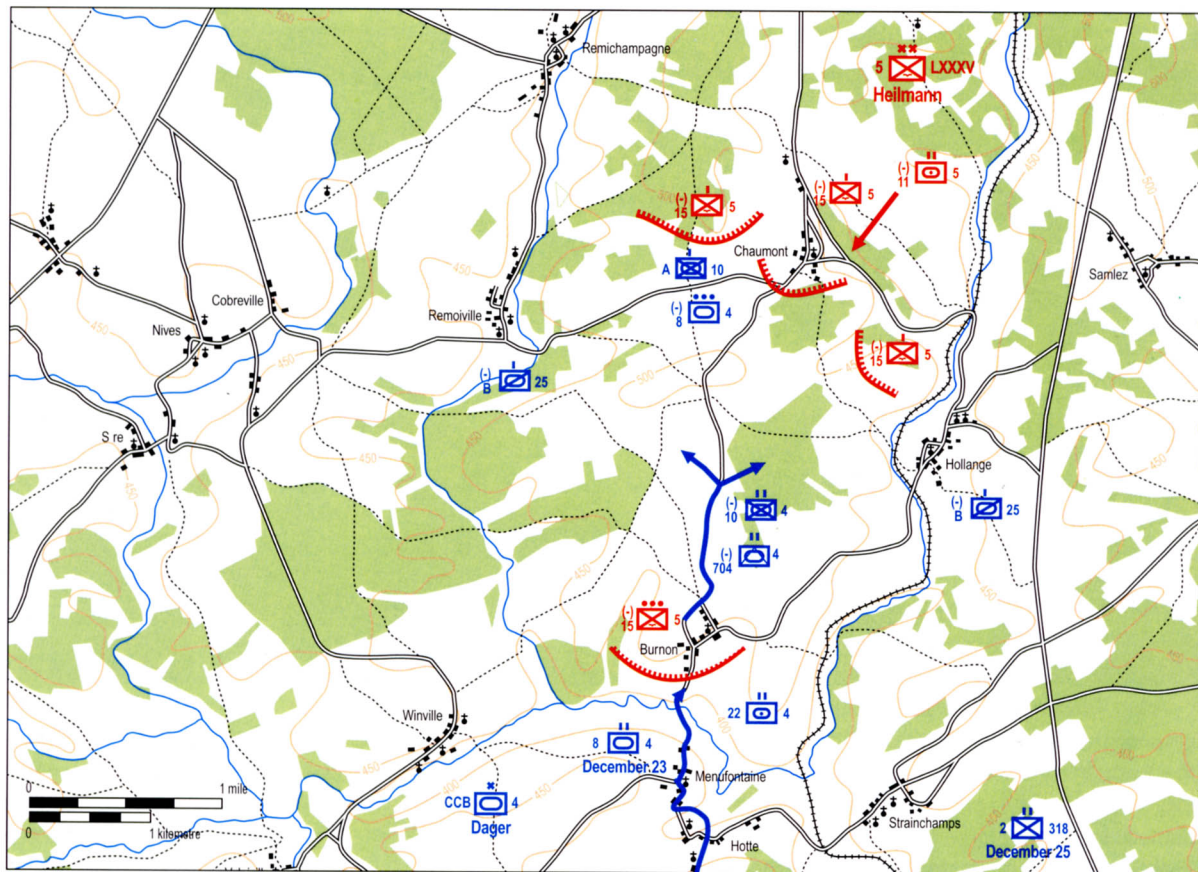
Bypassing Hollange, towards dawn Dager's column was approaching Chaumont, having so far lost only one M5 light tank and a couple of Jeeps, when German guns opened up from the surrounding hillsides. The village would have to be taken in a set-piece battle, so the M7s of the 22nd Armored Field Artillery Battalion began pounding the German positions while Dager's tanks and the dismounted men of Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Cohen's 10th Armored Infantry Battalion scoured the woods. Fighter-bombers from XIX Tactical Air Command detoured from their main mission of escorting C-47s and lent a hand, and at about 1330 hrs Cohen's A Company mounted on M4s charged the village from the west. Unfortunately, the sunshine which had brought the fighters had also thawed the ground, and the tanks bogged down, but within a couple of hours Cohen's men had cleared the village. It was a shortlived victory.

An M3 half-track from Harold Cohen's 10th Armored Infantry Battalion drives past the body of a comrade killed earlier on the road to Chaumont.

(U.S. Signal Corps)



16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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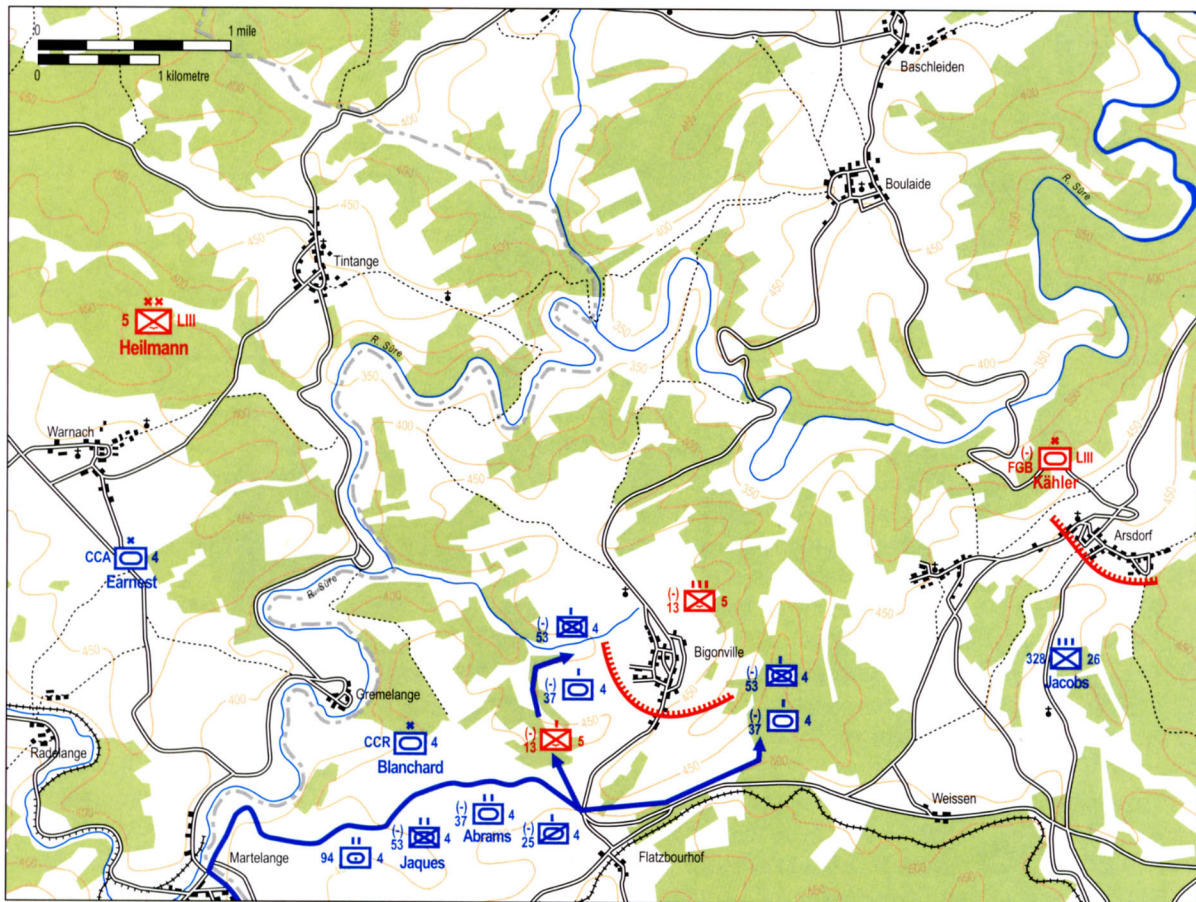
Surrounded by dense woods, the little village of Chaumont lies in a saucer-like depression. The map shows CCB's attack and 5 Fallschirm Division's counter-attack on December 23.

Unknown to Dager, one of the divisional staff officers had taken a wrong turning somewhere during the preceding night, and the orders for CCB's attack had fallen into the hands of Oberst Heinz Kokott, CO of 26 Volksgrenadier Division, and in charge of the siege of Bastogne. He had promptly alerted Ludwig Heilmann, commander of 5 Fallschirm Division, and even as Cohen's men were rounding up their prisoners, a company of Sturmgeschütze was approaching Chaumont, their rear decks packed with paratroopers. Using the cover of the woods to screen themselves from the American fighter aircraft, the assault guns opened fire on Dager's immobilised tanks while the Fallschirmjäger charged into the village. Unfortunately, it was impossible to call down artillery fire to break up the German attack because the forward observer had

been killed in the earlier skirmish. Company A was forced to retire hastily, and eleven of Dager's tanks – half his strength – were destroyed or abandoned.

The rest of that day and the next passed uneventfully while Dager waited for the rest of his command to catch up and for replacement Shermans to arrive from the maintenance workshops. His Corps commander, Major-General Millikin, wanted an all-out assault on Christmas Day and to this end had assigned Lieutenant-Colonel Glenn Gardner's 2nd Battalion of the 80th Infantry Division's 318th Regiment to reinforce Dager. And it was II/318th which bore the brunt of the renewed assault on Chaumont on December 25. By this time Heilmann's Fallschirmjäger were well dug in, even though the StuGs had been ordered elsewhere, and it was a nightmare battle in the woods with bayonets and hand grenades. Slowly but surely though, as increasing numbers of Germans began to surrender, Chaumont was retaken and on the night of Boxing Day a patrol from II/318th finally reached Bastogne. However, they were not the first.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	41-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		



Because of the constricting nature of the ground, making it impossible to simply bypass Bigonville, and the determined German resistance, it took Wendell Blanchard's CCR 24 hours to advance a single mile.

brought up some of Creighton Abrams' tanks, but then found that the ground was sown with Teller mines (which a foot soldier could tread on with impunity). As it was now dusk, Blanchard called a halt to the advance, deciding to use the cover of darkness to get his combat engineers busy clearing the mines. In fact, they were allowed to work unmolested because the German paras pulled back to Bigonville itself, where they hoped the solidly built stone houses would give a measure of protection from the American artillery.

Finding the woods empty on the morning of Christmas Eve, Blanchard sent two companies of Abrams' M4s and two companies of Jaques' infantry working as paired teams, to infiltrate the woods either side of the village, while the artillery laid down a short,

sharp preliminary barrage. The German paras held their fire until the American troops were actually in Bigonville, then let rip at point-blank range with everything they had. Now 4th Armored's experience came into play. Abrams' tanks blasted each house in turn, and Jaques' infantry went in with bayonets and grenades. Incendiary rounds from the tanks' machine-guns set fire to barns and other outbuildings, and when one of the American teams burst through to the northern end of the village, the surviving Fallschirmjäger were trapped and 328 of them surrendered. The road north now lay open but III Corps commander, John Millikin, had other plans for CCR, and the Bigonville sector was handed over to Paul's 26th Infantry Division. Millikin then directed Hugh Gaffey, the 4th Armored CO, to pull Blanchard's CCR back along the Martelange–Neufchâteau road to take up a new position on the division's left. With CCA and CCB still embroiled in their own battles south of Bastogne, perhaps an attack from the west would succeed.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12													
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-40,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48								49-51

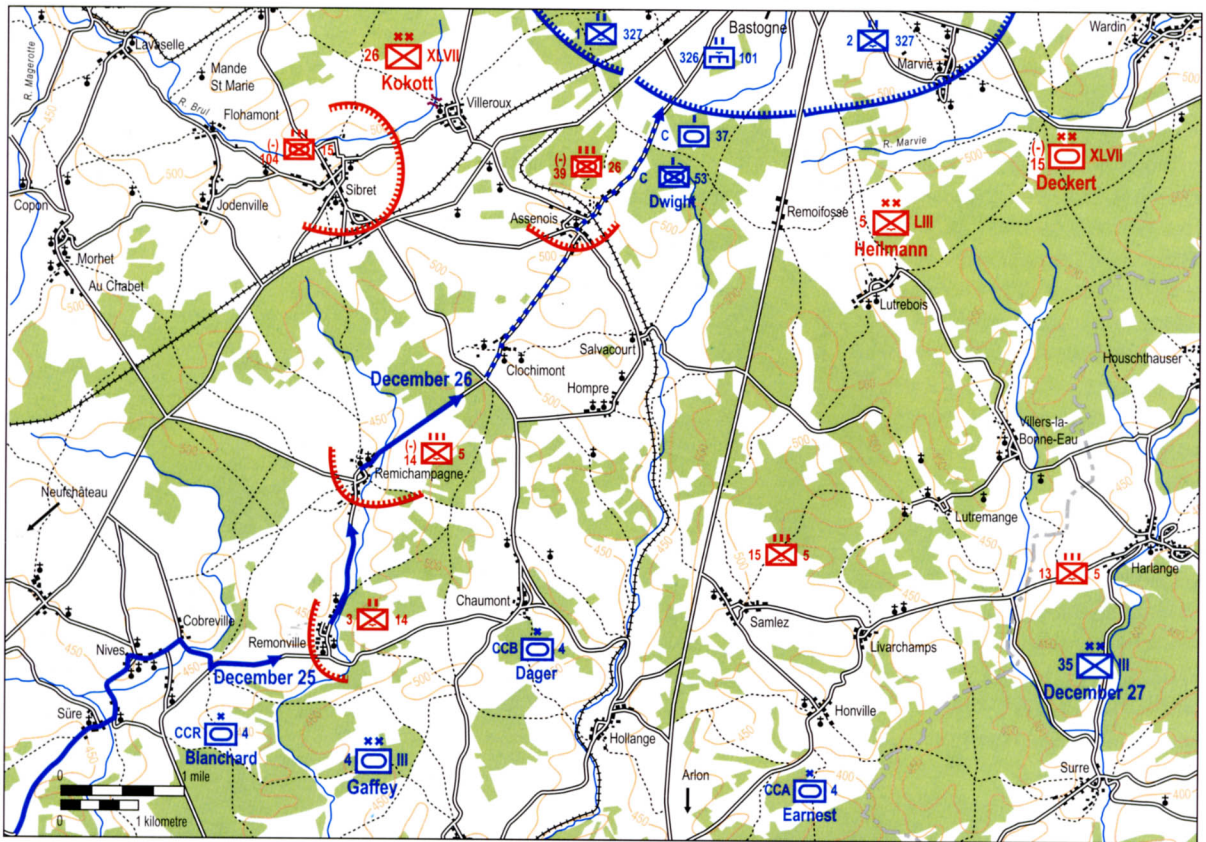
aerial support, and as CCR rattled forward over the hard-frozen ground on Boxing Day morning, P-47 Thunderbolts strafed and bombed Remichampagne so fiercely that the defenders (from 14 Fallschirm Regiment again) simply gave up when they saw the approaching tanks. Clochimont was next, but caution had to be exercised because CCR was now approaching the main cordon around Bastogne.

Blanchard sent tank and armoured infantry teams out to the flanks, ready for a counter-attack from the direction of either Sibret or Assenois, completing his initial dispositions at about 1500 hrs. It was now that Creighton Abrams – who had only 20 M4s still running – and George Jaques, who had lost 230 men in the battles for Bigonville and Remonville, held their fateful roadside conference. Abrams suggested, and Jaques agreed, that they punch a hole straight through to

Illustrating the tortuous route taken by CCR, the map shows the command assembled for the assault on Clochimont with the 'C Team' poised for the dash through Assenois to Bastogne.

Bastogne via Assenois, and deal with Sibret later. CCR's own 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion's guns were already zeroed in on Assenois, and Abrams asked the divisional artillery liaison officer for extra assistance from CCB's 22nd, as well as the 253rd and 776th from Corps' reserve, which were in range.

The task force chosen to lead CCR into Bastogne was Captain William Dwight's 'C Team', comprising essentially C Company of Abrams' 37th Tank Battalion, commanded by 1st Lieutenant Charles Boggess, and C Company of Jaques' 53rd Armored Infantry Battalion. The team moved out at 1620 hrs, and a quarter of an hour later Abrams called for a ten-round 'tot' from all the waiting artillery batteries. The eight German anti-tank guns guarding the approaches to Assenois were blown to pieces and, although a couple of tanks made wrong turns, and one was knocked out by a 'friendly' 155mm shell, the rest of Boggess' M4s ploughed straight through the village, leaving mopping up to the following infantry. The leading three tanks reached the 101st Airborne lines at exactly 1650 hrs, a fact which is indelibly etched in both divisions' records.



16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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U.S. III CORPS' BATTLES

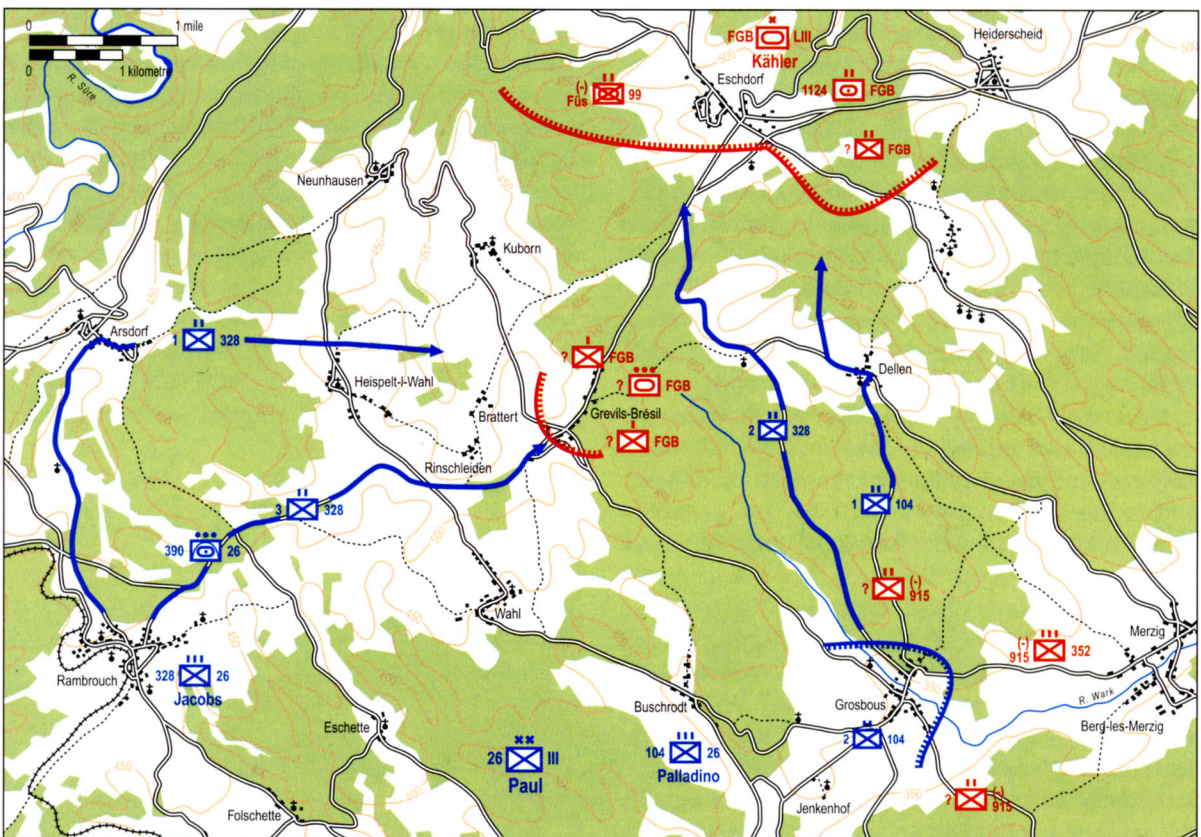
104th and 328th Infantry Regiments, 26th Infantry Division

Grevils-Brésil/Grosbous/Eschdorf – December 22–25

Major-General Willard Paul's 26th Infantry Division began moving north from its assembly area outside Arlon before dawn on December 22, with 4th Armored on its left, and the 80th Infantry Division on its right. As so often during the Allied comeback, there was precious little information available about the composition, strength or location of the enemy forces opposing the 'Yankees', so Paul's initial instructions to his regimental commanders were as vague as Millikin's

had been to him. With no clearly defined main road to use as the axis for the advance, the GIs had to move largely cross-country, taking advantage of country

The situation on December 24. While the 104th Regiment remained engaged against 915 Volksgrenadier Regiment around Grosbous and I/ and III/328th hit a snag at Grevils-Brésil, II/328th hooked around to attack Eschdorf but ran into further heavy opposition from the Führer Grenadier Brigade.



16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48	49-51			

lanes and tracks through the forests wherever they could find them. Their advance was, in effect, something more of a reconnaissance in force than a cohesive attack. This was nothing new to the veteran survivors of the Hürtgen Forest, but was disconcerting to say the least for the hundreds of newly arrived 'reinforcements', most of whom had only scanty training and had never heard a shot fired in anger.

The 26th set out behind a screen of skirmishers from the reconnaissance troop with Lieutenant-Colonel Jack Palladino's 104th Regimental Combat Team on the right, and Colonel Ben Jacobs' 328th on the left. The ground was largely unsuitable for deploying armour so Paul kept his newly attached 735th Tank and 818th Tank Destroyer Battalions in reserve, alongside Colonel Walter Scott's 101st Infantry Regiment, which was temporarily in III Corps' reserve.

The 104th RCT encountered only sporadic long-range rifle fire until it was within a couple of miles of Grosbous. Then the Germans struck in force. A full battalion of 915 Volksgrenadier Regiment, the vanguard of 352 Volksgrenadier Division, suddenly counter-attacked from the woods, throwing Palladino's leading companies back in disorder. Quickly rallying them, he brought the divisional artillery into action, which dispersed the German attackers. (During this engagement a small detachment of men from the 109th Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division, which had been holding out in Grosbous, took advantage of the confusion to rejoin friendly lines.) By this time it was getting dark and, leaving Company E, II/104th, to keep the surviving Volksgrenadiers pinned down in the woods, Palladino sent the rest of the battalion north, and Company G recaptured Grosbous after a short firefight just before midnight. Company E, however, found it had a hard fight on its hands, actually being outnumbered about two to one. In the end, Palladino had to commit Company L, III/104th, and a platoon from the 818th Tank Destroyer Battalion as well, but it was not until Christmas Day that the stubborn Volksgrenadiers were finally dislodged.

On the division's left flank, meanwhile, Colonel Jacobs' I/328th RCT had reached Arsdorf at dusk, but now disquieting reports began coming in from the reconnaissance troop of a strong concentration of Panzergrenadiers with what appeared to be about a battalion of tanks lying in their path. This was actually the spearhead of the élite Führer Grenadier Brigade,

newly released from reserve to reinforce Seventh Armee's offensive. This new situation worried General Paul, because a wide gap had opened between Jacobs' regiment and CCR of 4th Armored on their left, so to plug it he released Company K, III/101st, and Company A of the 735th Tank Battalion.

Quickly clearing Arsdorf, which was only lightly defended, Jacobs' I/ and III/328th now converged on Grevils-Brésil, where, however, they ran into at least two companies of Führer Grenadiers, supported by a platoon of Panthers. Bringing up the M15s and M16s of the attached 390th AAA Battalion to lend their support in the battle here, General Paul formed a task force around Major Albert Friedman's II/328th commanded by one of his staff officers, Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Hamilton, to hook around the obstacle and leapfrog the division's advance by attacking the important road junction at Eschdorf.

The task force set off through the 104th RCT's lines at Grosbous and debussed a mile or so south of Eschdorf after dark on December 23. As day broke on Christmas Eve, Hamilton's men could see furious activity in Eschdorf (the Führer Grenadier Brigade was actually heavily engaged further east around Heiderscheid) and the leading two companies probed forward cautiously. They came under such heavy automatic weapons fire from the ridge on the other side of the road that they had to go to ground, while unusually intense German artillery fire pounded the rest of the task force. Late in the day, P-47s bombed and strafed the ridge, but Hamilton was still pinned down and wanted to dig in. General Paul, however, was determined that Eschdorf should be captured quickly, so he began forming a new task force around Major Leon Gladding's I/104th RCT to lend a hand.

Accounts of the subsequent battle for Eschdorf are contradictory, with survivors from both task forces claiming the victory. What is known is that Companies E and F, II/328th, attacked the village from east and west during the night, while Company G, with three attached M4s, remained in support. Companies E and F ran into heavy fire, and many men went to ground on the outskirts of the village. When Company G tried to help, the tanks were stalled by a ditch and two were knocked out, but the diversion allowed E and F to get into the village. The firefight continued all day, but the Company E commander, Captain Vaughn Swift, is adamant that his men held the village when Company C, I/104th, arrived at daybreak on Boxing Day.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54			47-48		49-51	

U.S. III CORPS' BATTLES

134th Infantry and 51st Armored Infantry Regiments

Lutrebois – December 29–30

After their brief respite at Metz, the men of Major-General Paul Baade's understrength 35th Infantry Division were still weary when they were reassigned to Millikin's III Corps, and moved up to the vicinity of Arlon on December 23. Moreover, Colonel Butler Miltonberger's 134th Regiment had only two battalions in the line, and the division had lost its normal attached tank battalion the previous day. Nevertheless, the division was now urgently needed to plug the widening gap between 4th Armored on the corps' left, which was attacking towards Bastogne, and 26th Infantry, which was echeloned towards Wiltz. The division's task was to secure the road network southeast of Bastogne centred around Lutrebois, Villers-la-Bonne-Eau and Harlange. What no one had anticipated was that this would place the 35th smack

in the path of a major German offensive by a fresh Volksgrenadier Division, the 167th, reinforced by the 14th Regiment of 5 Fallschirm Division and what was left of 1 SS-Panzer Division.

Moving out on December 27, Colonel William Murray's 137th speedily captured Surré and Colonel Bernard Byrne's 320th entered Boulaide without encountering opposition. Next day, however, the opposition stiffened and Miltonberger's 134th was brought out of reserve to take up station on the division's left, or northern, flank, at Lutrebois. To its south, on the 29th, Companies K and L, III/137th, infiltrated Villers-la-Bonne-Eau, while the 320th was involved in a firefight for a farm outside Harlange. Then the Germans struck.

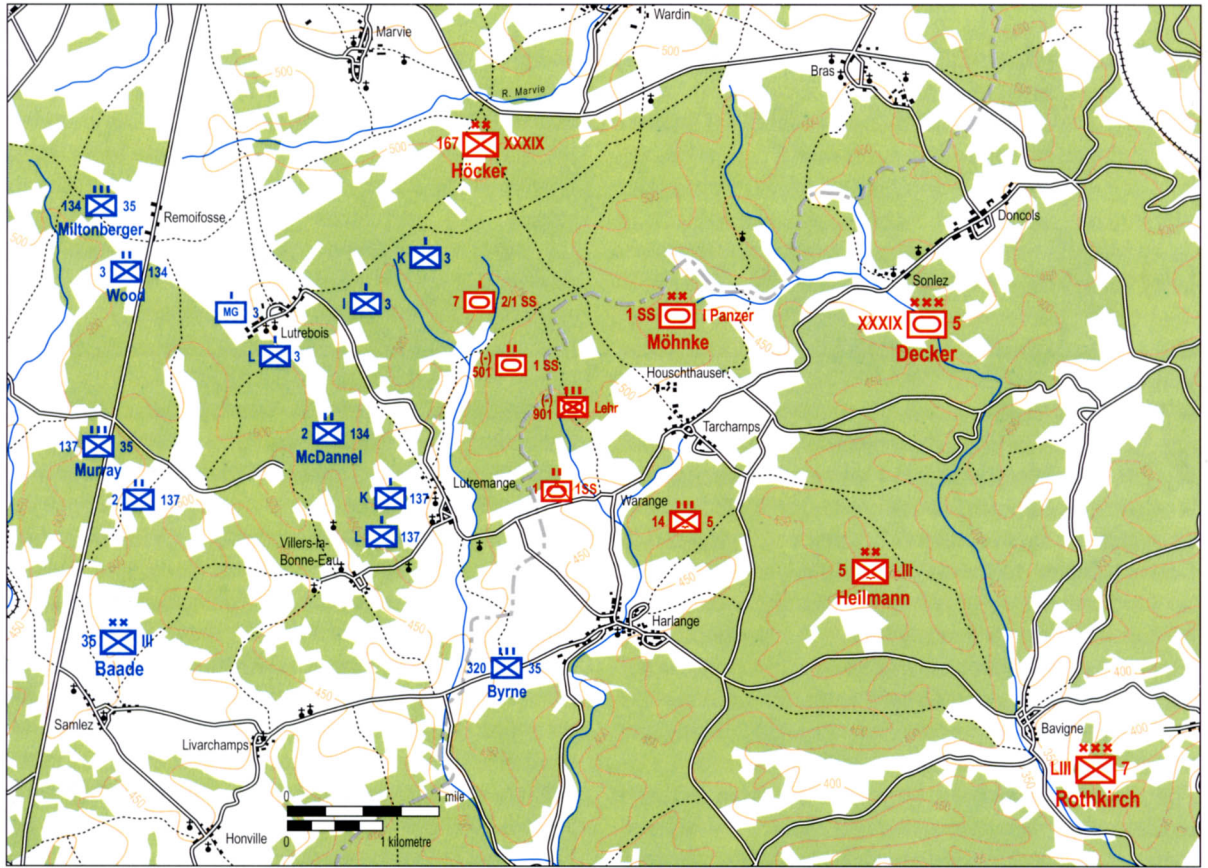
On the morning of December 30, Miltonberger's III/134th commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel W.C. Wood was dug in with Company L in Lutrebois itself, Companies I and K along the road east of the village and the machine-gun company to the west ready to give covering fire. Major C.F. McDannel's II/134th was deployed on the right. The 1 SS-Panzer Division attack began before dawn, tanks and long lines of Panzergrenadiers heading straight through Lutrebois towards their objective of Assenois. Company L was overrun and the machine-gun company delayed the advance only for about an hour. However, to their south, II/134th managed to hold firm, aided by the divisional artillery firing POZIT proximity-fuzed shells.

News of the attack quickly reached CCA of 4th Armored Division, and Brigadier-General Herbert Earnest promptly despatched a platoon of his 654th Tank Destroyer Battalion, whose M18s made short work of four German tanks. Artillery accounted for two more and one hit a mine. Meanwhile, Earnest sent his own 51st Armored Infantry Battalion to reinforce McDannel's II/134th. This arrived in the nick

A 35th Infantry Division machine-gunner in a foxhole southeast of Bastogne. The weapon is the .30 cal Browning M1919A4, which was standard issue to the infantry battalions. (U.S. Signal Corps)



16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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While Baade's 137th and 320th Infantry Regiments had their own hard-fought battles at Villers-la-Bonne-Eau and Harlange, the main assault fell on Lutrebois, but was checked with heavy German casualties.

of time because the leading battalions of 167 Volksgrenadier Division were into the woods southeast of Assenois. Firing from their half-tracks, the men of the 51st pinned the Germans in the trees, giving the American artillery gunners a field day because their shells were exploding in the treetops, which practically doubled their effectiveness.

The leading battalion of 167 Volksgrenadier Division was cut to pieces, but the battle was far from over because shortly before noon the main column of SS Panzers – about 25 tanks – was spotted approaching from Lutremange. Earnest's small force of tank destroyers was hopelessly outnumbered, but fortunately he had already called for air support and a wave of fighter-bombers made short work of another seven German tanks, while the others retired in haste.

Companies I and K of III/134th, still in their foxholes outside Lutrebois, had run out of bazooka ammunition by this time, but hastened the Panzers on their way with a fusillade of rifle fire.

Meanwhile, a second company of 13 German tanks had managed to reach the woods southwest of Lutrebois, where they were fortuitously noticed by an artillery spotter aircraft. By this time, though, Earnest had brought up Companies A and B of Lieutenant-Colonel Delk Oden's 35th Tank Battalion, and another platoon of M18s. Company B took up hull-down positions behind a slight ridge and, as the Panzers turned to engage Company A, the M4s took them in flank. As the Germans milled around in confusion, they were methodically destroyed. Another six which ventured out of the woods were quickly despatched in similar fashion, while the M18s accounted for three Jagdpanzer IV/70s. At the end of the day the Germans still held Lutrebois (and Villers-la-Bonne-Eau), but it was a hollow achievement because they had failed to break through to their objective.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54						49-51

U.S. III CORPS' BATTLES

CCA and CCB, 6th Armored Division

Arloncourt/Mageret/Wardin – December 31–January 5

Colonel John Hines was physically, as well as metaphorically, looking over his shoulder on the morning of December 31. He had assembled his Combat Command A of 6th Armored Division behind the lines of the 101st Airborne Division southeast of Bastogne the previous day, but there was still no sign of Colonel George Read's CCB, which was supposed to be assembling on his left. The plan was that Major-General Robert Grow's two commands would strike virtually due east in parallel columns, but in fact CCB had been seriously delayed by traffic congestion, because, through bad planning, 11th Armored was using the same road. Nor was there any sign of the 35th Infantry Division, which was supposed to be moving up on his right flank, because it was already heavily involved in its own battles. Meanwhile, German artillery fire was falling all around his vehicles, which had no cover to hide them. In the end, General Grow decided to start a limited attack without CCB.

Hines had split his command into two, rather than the more normal three, task forces for the operation. On the left, Lieutenant-Colonel Chester Kennedy's 69th Tank Battalion rolled easily through Neffe but Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Brown's 44th Armored Infantry Battalion got bogged down in the woods so, because the day was too overcast for fighter-bombers to operate, the first phase of the operation was aborted. Seven battalions of artillery created a lethal shield around Hines' force during the night, and by the following morning CCB had finally taken up station on his left. The day was spent on detailed planning with the main attack to take place on January 1.

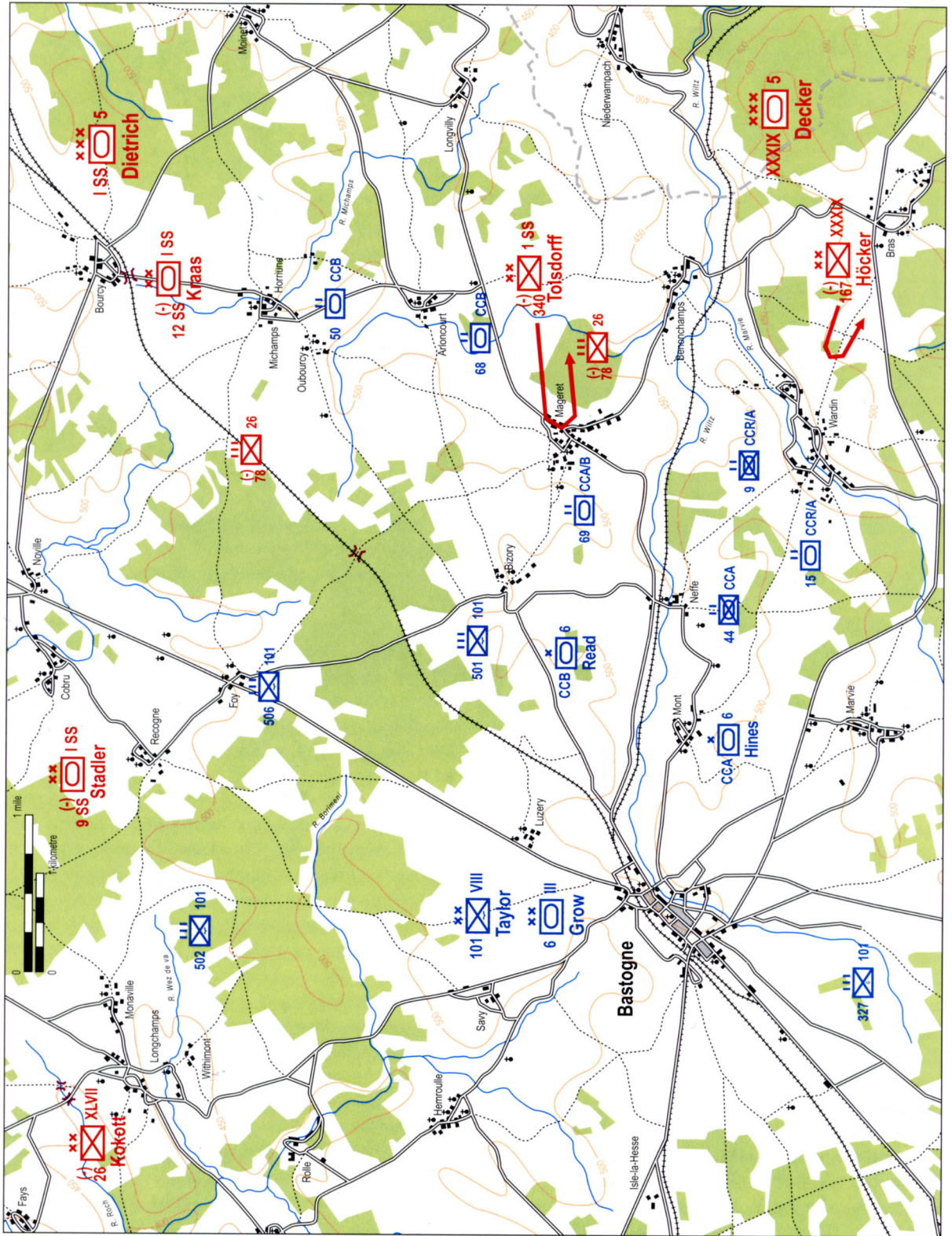
Like Hines, Read had split his own CCB into two task forces. On the left, Lieutenant-Colonel Arnold Wall's 50th Armored Infantry Battalion had the task of clearing the large forest north of Bizory, while Lieutenant-Colonel Harold Davall's 68th Tank

Battalion headed straight through the village toward Arloncourt, and beyond it, to Bourcy. Once again, the armour swept through the village, but then came under fire from Mageret and the wood just to the east of the village. Despite orders, this could not be ignored, so Davall wheeled his column into attack formation and charged. The enemy gunners (from 78 Regiment of 26 Volksgrenadier Division) and grenadiers fought hard for the village, but by mid-afternoon it was all over. Davall therefore turned back on to his original road while Kennedy's 69th Tank Battalion took over in Mageret.

The armoured infantry battalions on either flank of the tank task forces were, meanwhile, having a much tougher time. In the forest to the north of Bizory, Wall's 50th ran into prepared positions, and, hit by a counter-attack, was forced to fall back to its morning start line, leaving Davall's flank dangerously exposed as he approached Arloncourt. Here, the situation was far different from at Bizory or even Mageret. The enemy was present in force, with powerful artillery backup and, without Wall's infantry, Davall was forced to retire from the battle at nightfall. Similarly, on the division's right flank, Brown's 44th Armored Infantry Battalion was having a real struggle to get through the smaller woods south and east of Neffe, and by nightfall had only managed to get about halfway. Nor was there any help from the 35th Infantry Division, which was still battling in the Lutrebois-Harlange sector.

General Grow decided to broaden the division's front so, for the continuing attack on January 2, he brought CCR's 15th Tank Battalion and 9th Armored Infantry Battalions into play. (All the divisional artillery was already deployed close to the front line.) The two reserve formations went to reinforce CCA on the southern flank, while CCB 'inherited' Kennedy's 69th Tank Battalion. The Bastogne–Wiltz railway line

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48				



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pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54			47-48			

Tiger II from 501 schwere SS-Panzer Abteilung (attached to I SS-Panzer Korps) disabled by 6th Armored Division Shermans near Wardin early in January. (U.S. Signal Corps)



now defined the two Commands' zones of responsibility. It was a sensible arrangement but what no one knew was that they were facing a major counter-attack, because moving up against them were strong elements of 167 Volksgrenadier Division from the southeast and 12 SS-Panzer and 340 Volksgrenadier Divisions from the northeast.

The unfortunate leading battalion of 167 Volksgrenadier Division was spotted moving up from the direction of Wardin and, as at Lutrebois, the American artillery quickly broke it up, no fewer than nine battalions joining in the 'time on target' ('TOTs') salvoes. However, the understrength 340 Volksgrenadier Division actually broke into Mageret before it was bombed by the *Luftwaffe* before being ejected after a firefight lasting a couple of hours. As yet, though, there was no sign of the SS-Panzers, and Davall's 68th Tank Battalion set off for Arloncourt once more. The road was steep and treacherous with ice. Then the enemy, as well as the weather, struck. Company B, which was leading, ran into a hail of heavy metal which demolished eight M4s. Companies A and D raced forward to help, but themselves came under enfilading fire. Davall promptly called on the artillery

The situation on January 2, 1945, after Robert Grow committed CCR to the 6th Armored Division's assault. The original line of advance was bounded on the south by the river Wiltz, and on the north by the Bastogne-Bourcy railway line, but was then broadened to embrace Wardin so as to, hopefully, make contact with the 35th Infantry Division. The strong German dispositions on the flanks ruled out a straight thrust through Longvilly.

for a smokescreen and led the survivors back. On his left, Wall's 50th Armored Infantry Battalion seemed to be making good progress; they quickly cleared Oubourcy and headed on to Michamps. Here, again, the reception was too hot to handle and when, at dusk, Wall spotted tanks, he also withdrew.

In the CCA sector south of the railway, Lieutenant-Colonel Embrey Lagrew's 15th Tank Battalion and Lieutenant-Colonel Frank Britton's 9th Armored Infantry Battalion now moved forward to relieve Brown's 44th in the battle through the woods south of Neffe towards Wardin. As at Arloncourt and Michamps, however, the enemy was waiting. Lagrew lost seven M4s to anti-tank guns on the high ground south of the village, but managed to get a platoon into the houses. Britton's infantry suffered nearly 25 per cent casualties from machine-gun fire while trying to force a crossing of the river Marvie, southwest of Wardin, before being forced to fall back. The 6th Armored Division had regained Mageret and Wardin, but had suffered, and was no closer to a breakthrough.

On January 3, the Germans struck back with elements of 12 SS-Panzer Division occupying Oubourcy and 340 Volksgrenadier Division a large slice of the woods north of Bizory. The next day 12 SS-Panzer Division struck in force through Arloncourt and Mageret, and General Grow had to order a withdrawal for the first time in the division's history. Two factors influenced the final outcome: the continuous American artillery fire, which constantly devastated the German infantry; and Hitler's decision on January 5 to begin withdrawing the SS-Panzer divisions for redeployment in Hungary. 6th Armored had not lost the battle, but neither could the men yet class it a victory.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54			47-48			

U.S. III CORPS' BATTLES

101st and 104th Infantry Regiments, 26th Infantry Division

From the Sûre to the Wiltz – December 26–January 2

Patton's orders to Willard Paul's 26th Infantry Division called for his men to get across the river Sûre as quickly as possible, the goal being the recapture of Wiltz, but the battles at Grevils-Brésil and Eschdorf were causing considerable delay. After the former was finally cleared on December 24, Lieutenant-Colonel Arthur Tillison's III/328th RCT pushed on to Bonnal where the retreating German grenadiers blew the stone bridge before the battalion could assault across it. Meanwhile, Lieutenant-Colonel W.A. Callanan's I/328th retraced its path to Arsdorf, intending to take the more westerly road to the north. At Arsdorf, however, the GIs found that a contingent of the Führer Grenadier Brigade had re-infiltrated the village. It took all night to eject the Germans even when General Paul threw in II/101st, but Arsdorf was finally clear by midday on the 25th, and I/328th resumed its northward march. Not for long, however, because Millikin now agreed to release the remainder of the 101st Regiment from Corps reserve and Paul recalled the three battalions of the 328th to catch their breath and lick their wounds.

Although the bridge at Bonnal, on the division's left flank, had been blown, as had a span on the one on the right flank at Heiderscheidergrund, there remained hope of one in the centre of the line, at Esch-sur-Sûre. It appeared that the Führer Grenadier Brigade intended to make its main stand here though, and at Heiderscheidergrund, for the latter gave direct access to the main road from Ettelbruck to Wiltz.

Clear skies and sunshine at daybreak on Boxing Day nevertheless revived American spirits and Willard Paul decided that this was going to be the day. Combat engineers with inflatable assault boats reached Lieutenant-Colonel James Peale's III/101st at a loop in the river just to the west of Bonnal. The men were fresh, but also mostly new replacements who

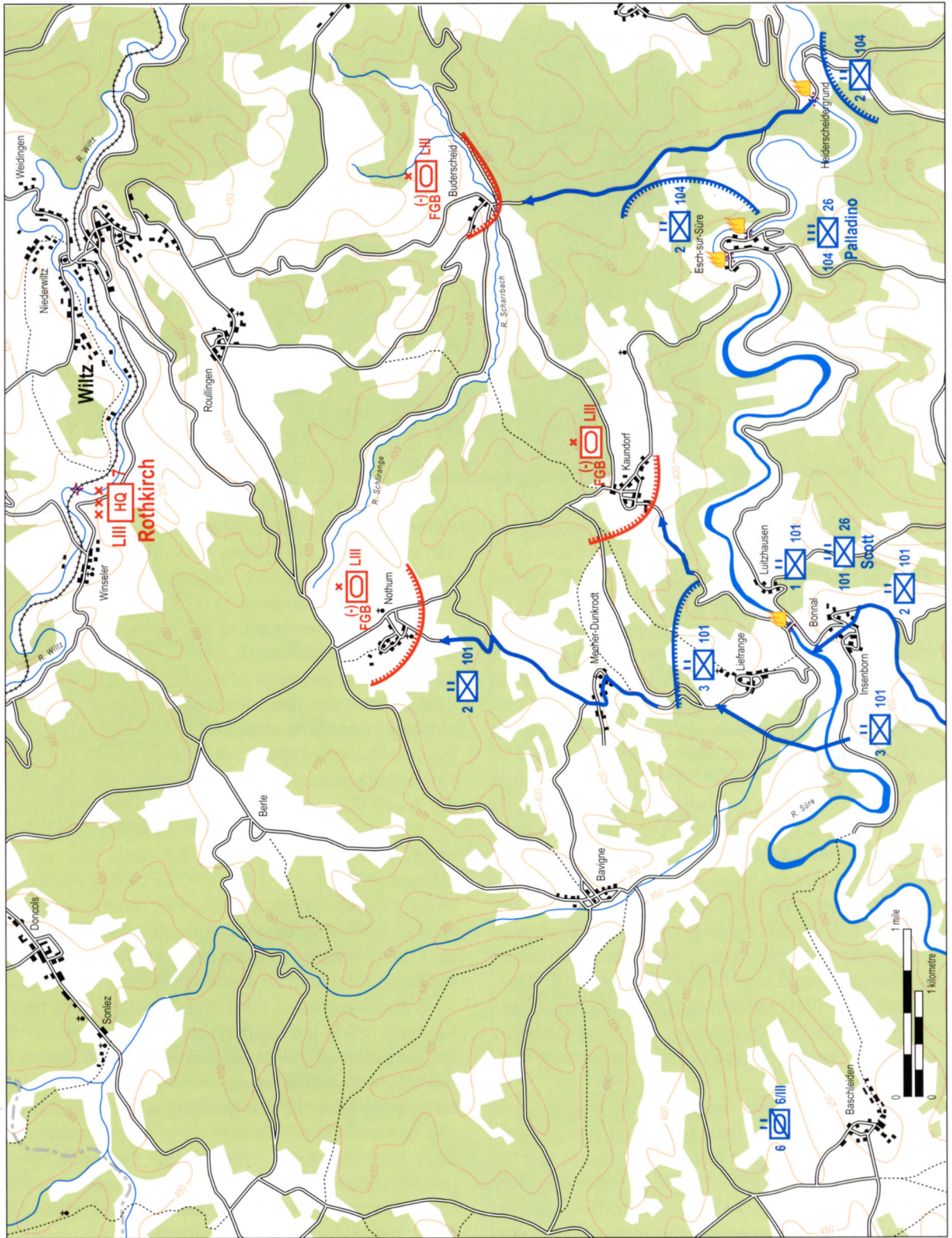
were reluctant to board the boats, knowing the steep opposite bank was probably crawling with Germans. To get them moving, the regimental commander, Colonel Walter Scott, got into a boat himself with one man to paddle him the 30 yards (25m) to the other side, and returned unscathed. Suitably abashed, the battalion crossed without incident, and pushed on to Liefrange, which the men also found unoccupied.

It was the same story at Bonnal itself, where the German pickets on the far bank quickly made themselves scarce, and Major Albert Gramm's I/101st made a similarly uneventful crossing. Engineers were soon at work constructing a Bailey bridge over the still standing stone supports of the old bridge. The lack of opposition seemed surprising, but in fact the Führer Grenadier Brigade had suffered very heavy casualties over the previous four days, and was itself about to be taken into reserve while new units took over its lines.

On the newly arrived 101st Regiment's right flank, meanwhile, Lieutenant-Colonel Ralph Palladino's 104th had also reached the Sûre with the 1st and 2nd Battalions deployed either side of Heiderscheidergrund. Here, rather surprisingly, the Führer Grenadiers sortied out twice over a hastily erected trestle bridge and managed to get four tanks and an assault gun across the river. American artillery once more proved decisive, and the vehicles were abandoned. Palladino then sent I/104th across the Bonnal bridge, the battalion wheeling quickly east as if to secure the heights above Esch-sur-Sûre, where both bridges had in fact been destroyed. This forced the Germans to fall

The situation on December 27 looked promising, with the leading battalions of the 101st and 104th Regiments in an apparently strong position to recapture Wiltz, but the appearance was deceptive, and it would take another three weeks to cover those last couple of miles.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44				47-48		49-51	



16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44				47-48		49-51	



U.S. XII CORPS

Major-General Manton Eddy's XII Corps was already in action on the Sarreguemines sector when the German onslaught hit First Army on December 16. As the Third Army spearhead in Patton's planned offensive due to start in three days time, it was the task of the 35th and 87th Infantry Divisions to clear the German outposts in front of the West Wall so that 6th Armored Division would have an unimpeded passage. Opposing them were elements



Major-General Manton Eddy was a far more experienced leader than John Millikin, having commanded the 9th Infantry Division through the campaigns in North Africa, Sicily and Normandy before being given XII Corps.
(U.S. Signal Corps)

of both 36 Volksgrenadier and 17 SS-Panzergrenadier Divisions from XIII SS-Korps of General der Panzertruppen Otto von Knobelsdorff's First Armee. The Germans were veterans and, despite being outnumbered, resisted stubbornly, although Knobelsdorff knew that, if an all-out assault materialised, they would be unable to hold. However, to the German commander's relief, the pressure suddenly eased.

In response to the emergency in the north, Patton cancelled 6th Armored's planned attack and, after first despatching 10th Armored to aid Middleton, he transferred the uncommitted 4th Armored and 80th Infantry Divisions to III Corps and ordered the 35th and 87th Infantry to stop any further forward advance. Shortly afterwards, the 87th was taken into SHAEF reserve before later being reassigned to VIII Corps, while the 4th Infantry Division, on VIII Corps' right flank, became Eddy's responsibility. With XII Corps' shift north, XV Corps from Seventh

U.S. XII CORPS

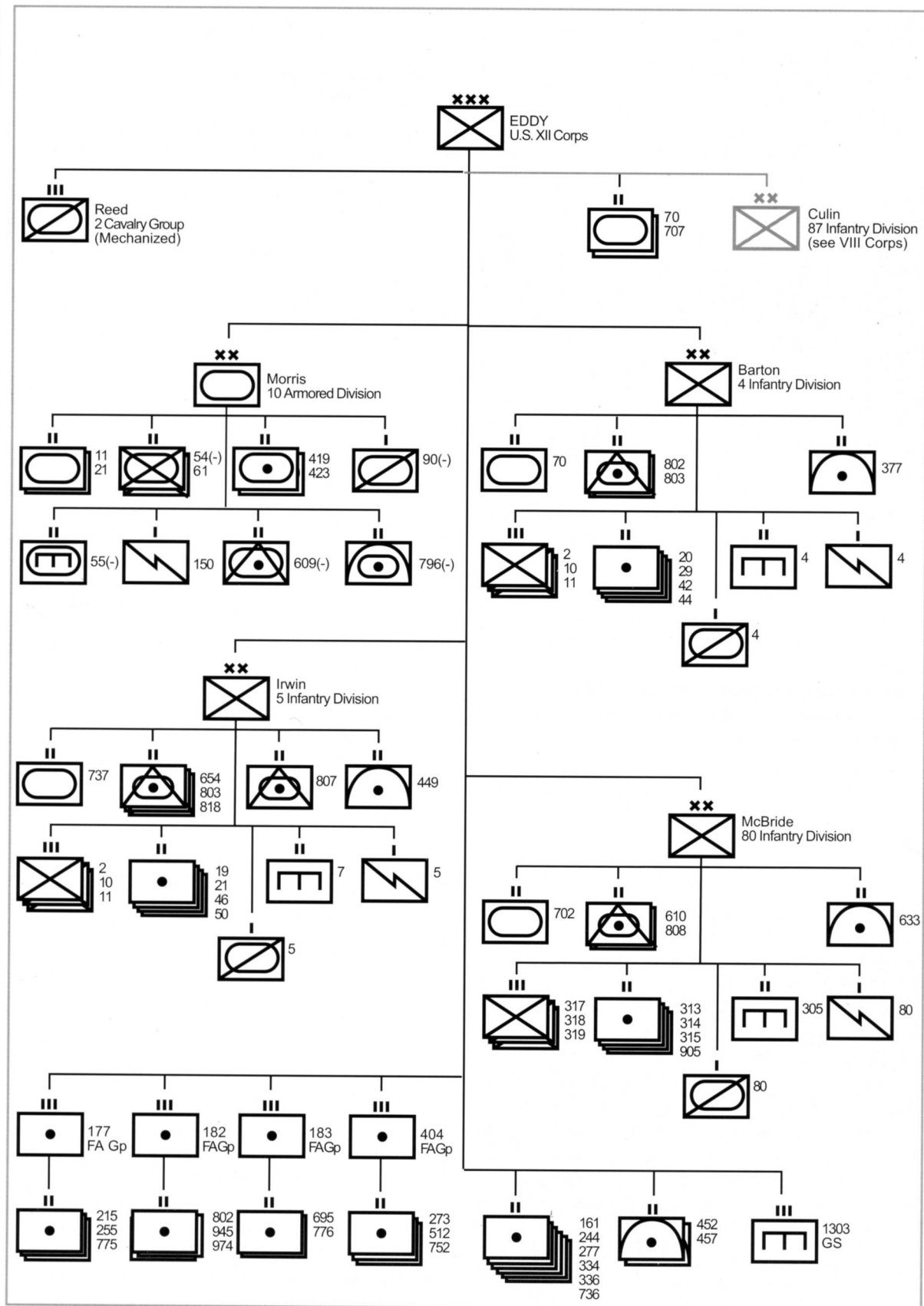
Major-General Manton S. Eddy

Chief of Staff:

Lieutenant-Colonel George Dyer

4 Armored Division (Gaffey) (to III Corps December 20)
CCA, 9 Armored Division (Harrold)
(from VIII Corps December 21; to III Corps
December 26-27)
10 Armored Division (Morris) (from XX Corps December 21;
returned to XX Corps December 26-27 except CCB (Roberts),
attached to VIII Corps December 17)
4 Infantry Division (Barton/Blakeley)
(from VIII Corps December 21)
5 Infantry Division (Irwin) (from XX Corps December 21)
35 Infantry Division (Baade) (to III Corps via XX Corps
December 23-26)
80 Infantry Division (McBride) (to III Corps December 19;
returned to XII Corps December 26)
87 Infantry Division (Culin) (to VIII Corps December 29)
109 Infantry Regiment (Rudder) (from 28 Infantry Division,
VIII Corps, December 21)
2 Cavalry Group, Mechanized (Reed):
2 & 42 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons, Mechanized
177 Field Artillery Group: 215, 255 & 775
Field Artillery Battalions
182 Field Artillery Group: 802, 945 & 974
Field Artillery Battalions
183 Field Artillery Group: 695 & 776
Field Artillery Battalions
404 Field Artillery Group: 273, 512 & 752
Field Artillery Battalions
161 Field Artillery Battalion
244 Field Artillery Battalion
277 Field Artillery Battalion
334 Field Artillery Battalion
336 Field Artillery Battalion
736 Field Artillery Battalion
452 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (Colored)
(40mm)
457 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm)
1303 Engineer General Service Regiment

Note: Some of the above formations are included under XII rather than III Corps, and vice versa, because of their zone of operations during critical stages of the battle. See text for further details.





Fortunes and tragedies of battle. After his men re-entered Echternach (*above*), General Eddy was forced to run for cover from German shellfire, but survived the encounter. (U.S. Army)

Colonel George Randolph (*below*), CO of the 702nd Tank Battalion (80th Infantry Division), was less fortunate. (U.S. Signal Corps)



U.S. XII CORPS TROOPS

2 Cavalry Group, Mechanized (c. 1,500 men)
Group HQ and HQ Troop

2 & 42 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadrons, Mechanized
HQ Troop (4 x M8, 2 x M3, 1 x .50 HMG & 1 x bazooka)
A, B & C Troops (each 12 x M8, 8 x M3, 1 x 81mm mortar, 9 x 60mm mortar, 8 x .50 HMG, 18 x .30 LMG & 10 x bazooka)
D (Light Tank) Troop (17 x M5/M24)
Support Troop (6 x 75mm M3 GMC)

177 Field Artillery Group

215 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)
255 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
775 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 4.5" M1 gun, tractor-drawn)

182 Field Artillery Group

802 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
945 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)
974 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

183 Field Artillery Group

695 Field Artillery Battalion (data unavailable, believed 12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
776 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

404 Field Artillery Group

273 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M1A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)
512 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
752 Field Artillery Battalion (12 x 155mm M2A1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

Field Artillery Battalions

161 (12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
244 (captured weapons - see note)
277 (6 x 240mm M1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)
334 (12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
336 (12 x 105mm M2A1 howitzer, truck-drawn)
736 (12 x 8" M1 howitzer, tractor-drawn)

Note: The 244th Field Artillery Battalion was formed on August 8, 1942, at Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Mississippi. It shipped to England on July 2, 1944, and landed in France on the 31st. Originally equipped with 105mm M2A1s and then 155mm M1s, it was used in Europe as an evaluation unit for captured equipment from the German 8.8cm Flak 18/36 up to the French 155mm L Schneider! What part, if any, the battalion played in the Ardennes campaign has eluded research, but further information is welcomed.

Army took over its sector of front opposite Saarbrücken. Finally, while 6th Armored also went to III Corps and, after being pulled out of the line, the



Before the battle for Echternach, men from Company C of the 457th Anti-Aircraft Auto-Weapons Battalion (from Corps' reserve) stand alert with their 40mm M1 Bofors on the southeast edge of the town. (U.S. Signal Corps)

35th Infantry Division did as well, Eddy got the 80th back, plus the 5th Infantry Division from XX Corps (a move which had already been planned as part of Third Army's Saar offensive). By this time Eddy had moved his headquarters to Luxembourg City, where Patton had also transferred his from Nancy to have closer control over the battle.

Even though Patton was a cavalryman and Manton Eddy an infantryman, with differently cultivated battlefield instincts, they respected each other and worked well together, having been through the same earlier campaigns. Eddy had taken command of the 9th Infantry Division in August 1942, and led it during the 'Torch' landings in French northwest Africa, at which time Patton was commander of the Western Task Force. After the victory in Tunisia in May 1943, Eddy's division shipped to Sicily, with Patton again in overall command. Finally, Eddy landed with the 9th in Normandy on June 10, 1944, and was a logical successor to Major-General Gilbert Cook as CO of XII Corps when the latter fell ill during the Falaise–Argentan battles in August.

Now, in December, Eddy faced a not unfamiliar situation and, just as SHAEF had come to grips with the strategic situation in the Ardennes, he was quick to regain the initiative on his own sector of the front, which ran from southwest of Diekirch to east of

Echternach. His first priority was to stabilise the situation in the 4th Infantry Division sector and drive the German Seventh Armee forces back across the Sauer; then, from west of Wallendorf where the river becomes the Sûre, to battle his way north to secure III Corps' right flank.

Between December 22 and 26, while III Corps struggled towards Bastogne, Colonel Thomas Harrold's CCA of 9th Armored Division, on the new XII Corps' left flank, had stabilised the situation around Ermsdorf and Savelborn, having been forced back out of Dillingen and Beaufort during 276 Volksgrenadier Division's initial assault. Brigadier-General Edwin Pilburn's CCA of 10th Armored now moved up in support, with Major-General Stafford Irwin's 5th Infantry Division on its right, linking with Major-General Raymond Barton's depleted 4th Infantry Division. The 5th pushed through the lines which Barton's 12th Infantry Regiment had been forced back into at Consdorf and Scheidgen, with the 2nd Regiment aiming at Berdorf and the 10th at Echternach. By the time 4th Armored Division reached Bastogne, XII Corps had its own opponents well on the run. The villages of Haller and Waldbillig were cleared on Christmas Day, and Berdorf after a sharp fight some 24 hours later. Echternach, which Company E of Chance's 12th Infantry Regiment had held so doggedly until the 20th, was found to be empty of opposition, although it continued to be shelled until well into January. The 4th and 5th Infantry Divisions assaulted across the Sûre/ Sauer on the 18th of that month and recaptured Diekirch, eliminating virtually the last vestige of 'The Bulge'.

4th Infantry Division

'Ivy'



Raymond Barton's 4th Infantry Division, which had led the way across 'Utah' beach on D-Day, was on the southeast flank of VIII Corps when the Germans launched Operation 'Herbstnebel' on December 16. Like the 28th Infantry Division in the Corps' centre it was thinly spread; and as in the centre, the main blow fell on one regiment with company-size detachments manning 'hedgehog' defences in tiny villages behind a tortuous river line. In this case it was Colonel Robert Chance's 12th Infantry Regiment which faced the same ordeal as Colonel Hurley Fuller's 110th in the middle of the 28th Division's line – but there was a difference because Brandenberger's Seventh Armee had virtually no armour, whereas Manteuffel's Fifth Panzer Armee had plenty. This was to prove decisive.

Barton's division had endured a long, hard six months of combat before it was relieved by the 83rd Infantry Division on December 3, and transferred from VII to VIII Corps to take up station west of the rivers Sauer and Moselle. Originally formed at Fort Benning, Georgia, on June 1, 1940, the peacetime division had a succession of commanders including



Major-General Raymond Barton was one of the very few senior men in VIII Corps who sensed 'something in the wind' before the German onslaught, and did all he could to recall men from leave in the hours before it struck.

(U.S. Signal Corps)

Major-General Lloyd Fredendall, who later led II Corps in North Africa at the time of Rommel's lunge through the Kasserine Pass. Major-General Raymond Barton assumed command in July 1942 and led the 4th ably until he fell ill over Christmas 1944 and had to be flown back State-side to recover. He was succeeded until the end of the war by Brigadier- (later Major-) General Harold Blakeley.

The 4th Infantry Division shipped to England in January 1944 and, assigned to VII Corps, assaulted

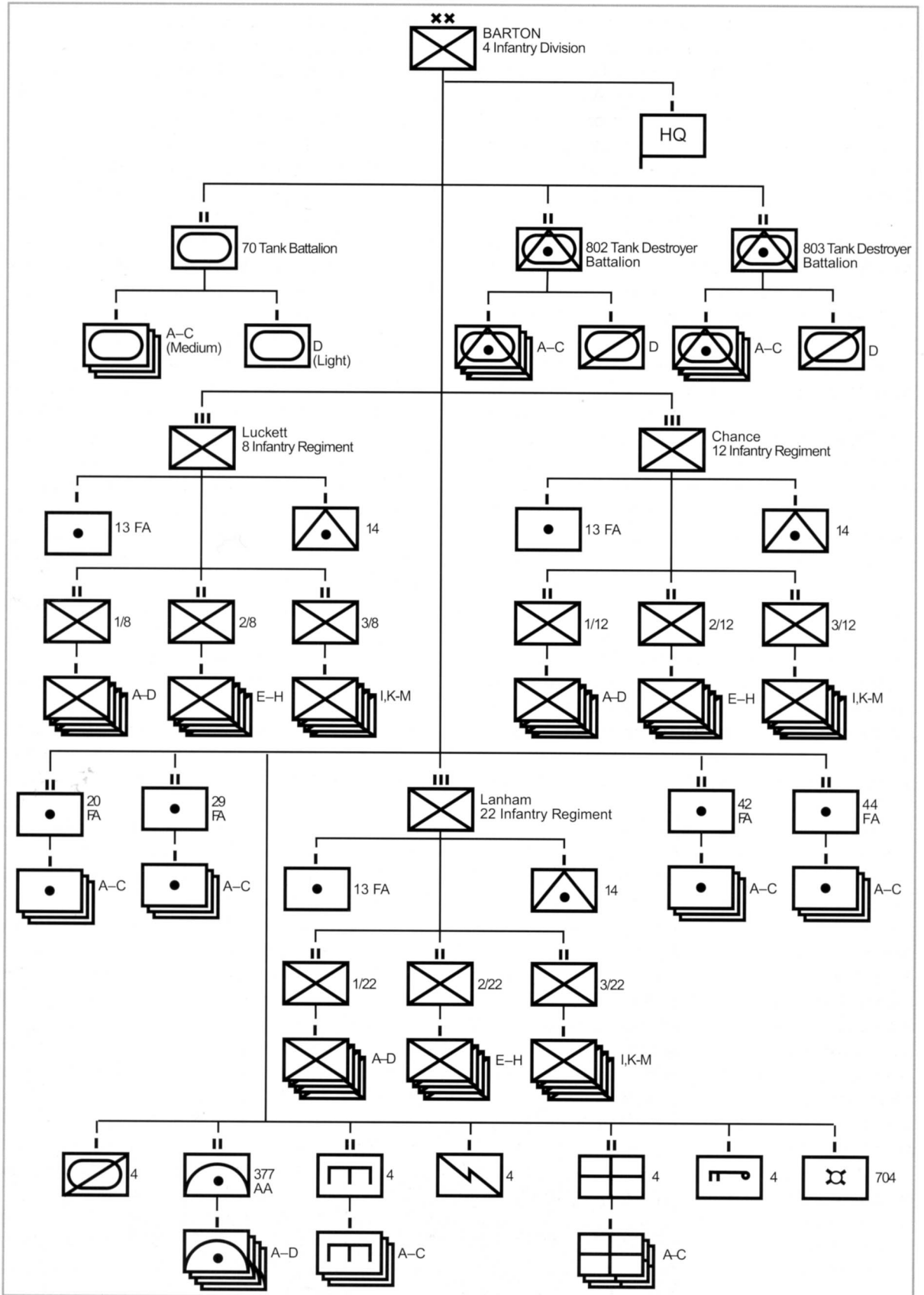
4th INFANTRY DIVISION

*Major-General Raymond O. Barton/
Brigadier-General Harold W. Blakeley
HQ Company*

8 Infantry Regiment (Luckett)
12 Infantry Regiment (Chance)
22 Infantry Regiment (Lanham)
20 Field Artillery Battalion (155mm)
29 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
42 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
44 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
4 Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized
4 Engineer Combat Battalion
4 Medical Battalion
4 Signal Company
4 Quartermaster Company
704 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
Military Police Platoon
377 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm) (attached)
70 Tank Battalion (attached)
802 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10) (attached)
803 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10/M36) (detached to 5 Infantry Division December 25)

across 'Utah' beach on June 6, accompanied by the 359th Regiment from the 90th. The landings here were virtually unopposed, and the division suffered only eight fatalities on D-Day itself, but this luck did not last long. The 8th Regiment went to the immediate assistance of the 82nd Airborne at Ste Mère-Église, and helped contain several German counter-attacks before the division as a whole began moving up the Cotentin peninsula towards Cherbourg. The port fell after a three-day battle on the 25th, and at the beginning of July the division moved south and attacked towards Périers before participating in the 'Cobra' breakout through Avranches a month later. Its men had a glimpse of Paris on August 25 while briefly attached to V Corps. Then, accompanying 5th Armored (with many men riding on the tanks), the division pushed through Chauny, reassembled near Mézières, and reached the Meuse on September 6.

In the middle of the month the division attacked through the West Wall in the Schnee Eifel but was unable to exploit the breach. (This left a shallow salient which in December would be defended by the



106th Infantry Division). After a month fighting in this sector the division was moved north to Zweifall and, reunited with VII Corps, relieved the 28th Infantry Division in the first week of November. A further month of heavy combat followed in the notorious Hürtgen Forest. Furious German counter-attacks cut off part of the division and drove a wedge between the 8th and 22nd Regiments. Progress was desperately slow, and during one five-day period the division only succeeded in advancing a mile and a half (2.4km), but on the 23rd it captured Grossahau and, on the 30th, the 8th Regiment at last reached the edge of the forest.

The division had incurred over 5,000 battle casualties during this struggle so, on December 3, it was relieved by the 83rd Infantry Division and transferred to the right flank of VIII Corps to recuperate. This was the 'quiet front' where nothing ever happened, so the fact that the division was very thinly spread over a 35-mile (50km) stretch of river did not unduly worry Middleton or Bradley, and it enabled Barton to send many men on leave to Luxembourg City or even Paris. However, the situation *did* worry Barton because most of his rifle companies were at little better than half strength, while the attached 70th Tank Battalion had only 11 Shermans left operational. However, he did the best he could, maintaining only a thin outpost line along the rivers with the parent companies based in small villages further back – villages which would soon become major battlefields for Robert Chance's 12th Regiment in the Echternach sector on the division's left. (Colonel James Lockett's 8th was in the divisional centre and Colonel Charles Lanham's 22nd on the right

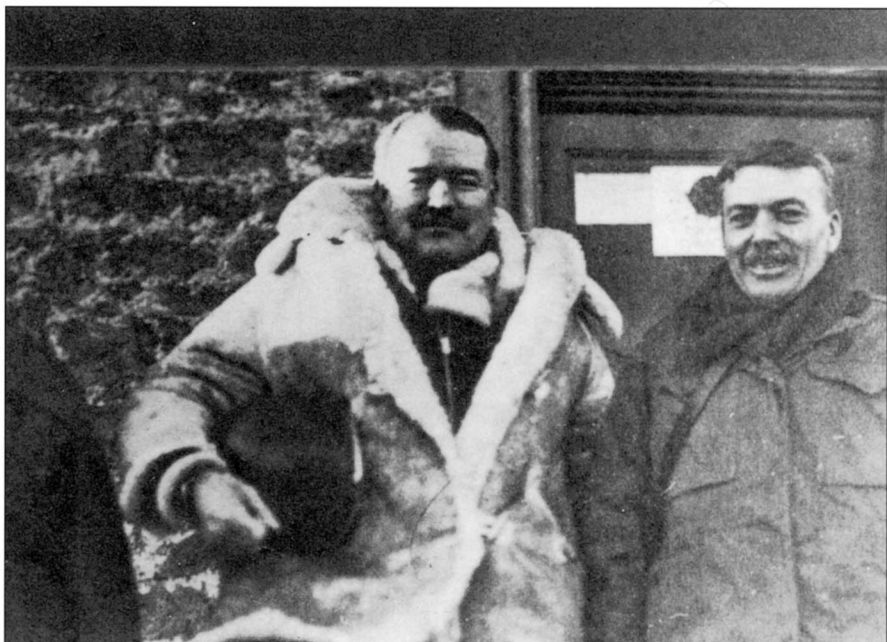
where First and Third Armies abutted.)

The opposing German forces were believed to consist of little more than low-grade fortress troops, but in fact on December 16 the 12th Regiment was faced by the whole of 212 Volksgrenadier Division, which was rated by Seventh Armee commander, Erich Brandenberger, as his best formation. When it came, the German blow was contained only at the expense of very heavy losses but, with the division's logical transfer to XII Corps and the arrival of the 10th Infantry Regiment from the 5th Division and CCA from 10th Armored Division, the enemy was driven back behind his start line by the end of the month.

After a brief respite, the 4th was relieved by the 87th Infantry Division and reverted to VIII Corps. Now commanded by Harold Blakeley, it crossed the river Our at Bettendorf on January 22, breached the West Wall near Brandscheid on February 4 and captured Prüm on the 12th. The division now went over to the defensive until the end of the month when it assaulted across the river Prüm. After a fierce week-long battle, 11th Armored was able to exploit the bridgehead, and 4th Infantry marched in the tanks' wake to Kyll on March 6. For the Rhein crossing at the end of the month the division was re-assigned to VI Corps of Lieutenant-General Alexander Patch's Seventh Army and now followed 12th Armored to the river Main. There was fierce fighting in the woods around Königshofen in early April. Then the division took Rothenburg and Ansbach before crossing the river Danube on the 25th. It ended the war on occupation duties at Neumarkt.

'For Whom the Bell Tolls.'

Almost exactly ten years after this photograph was taken, Ernest Hemingway (on left, with Major-General Raymond Barton) won the Nobel Prize for Literature. The writer accompanied 'Buck' Lanham's 22nd Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division through many of its exploits from Normandy to the Ardennes. This picture was taken in Junglinster on December 20. (U.S. Signal Corps)



5th Infantry Division

'Red Diamond'



Despite three months' battling for the outlying fortresses around Metz, Major-General LeRoy Irwin's 5th was in relatively good shape when it relieved the 95th Infantry Division (XX Corps) in the Saarlautern bridgehead on December 16. Four days later, it was on the move again towards Luxembourg with no clear idea of why except that it should be prepared to attack north or northeast or counter-attack southeast! The leading regiment, Colonel Robert Bell's 10th (which had been the divisional reserve), moved out first on December 20 with the 735th Tank and 818th Tank Destroyer Battalions. Next day the 735th and 818th were transferred to the 26th Infantry Division, III Corps, and Irwin's division received the 737th and 654th in replacement, just adding to the prevalent confusion, especially when the latter was swapped for the 803rd on Christmas Day. To further compound matters, the 5th lost the towed guns of its 807th Tank Destroyer Battalion to the 90th Infantry Division, which would later join III Corps, and the forward positions of its 2nd and 11th Regiments were taken over again by elements of the 95th, which they had just relieved!

Even while the various components of Irwin's division were assembling north of Luxembourg City around Rammeldange and Reuland on December 21, no one seemed to have any clear idea of how, where or why his men were to be deployed. In the end Colonel Paul Black's 11th Regiment was used to fill the vacuum left by the departure of the 80th Infantry Division to help in III Corps' counter-attack southeast of Bastogne, while Bell's 10th was attached to 4th Infantry Division in the battle to retake Echternach and Colonel Worrell Roffe's 8th formed the new divisional reserve.

The 5th Infantry was the second United States division to be created after the beginning of the war in Europe, and was activated at Fort McClellan, Alabama, on October 16, 1939. LeRoy Irwin was its fifth commander, and led it ashore over 'Utah' beach on July 11, 1944, then as part of V Corps, First Army. Transferred to XX Corps, Third Army, at the beginning of August, the division advanced towards Nantes, took Chartres on the 18th, crossed the Seine on the 24th, reached Reims on the 30th and established a bridgehead across the Meuse at Verdun next day.

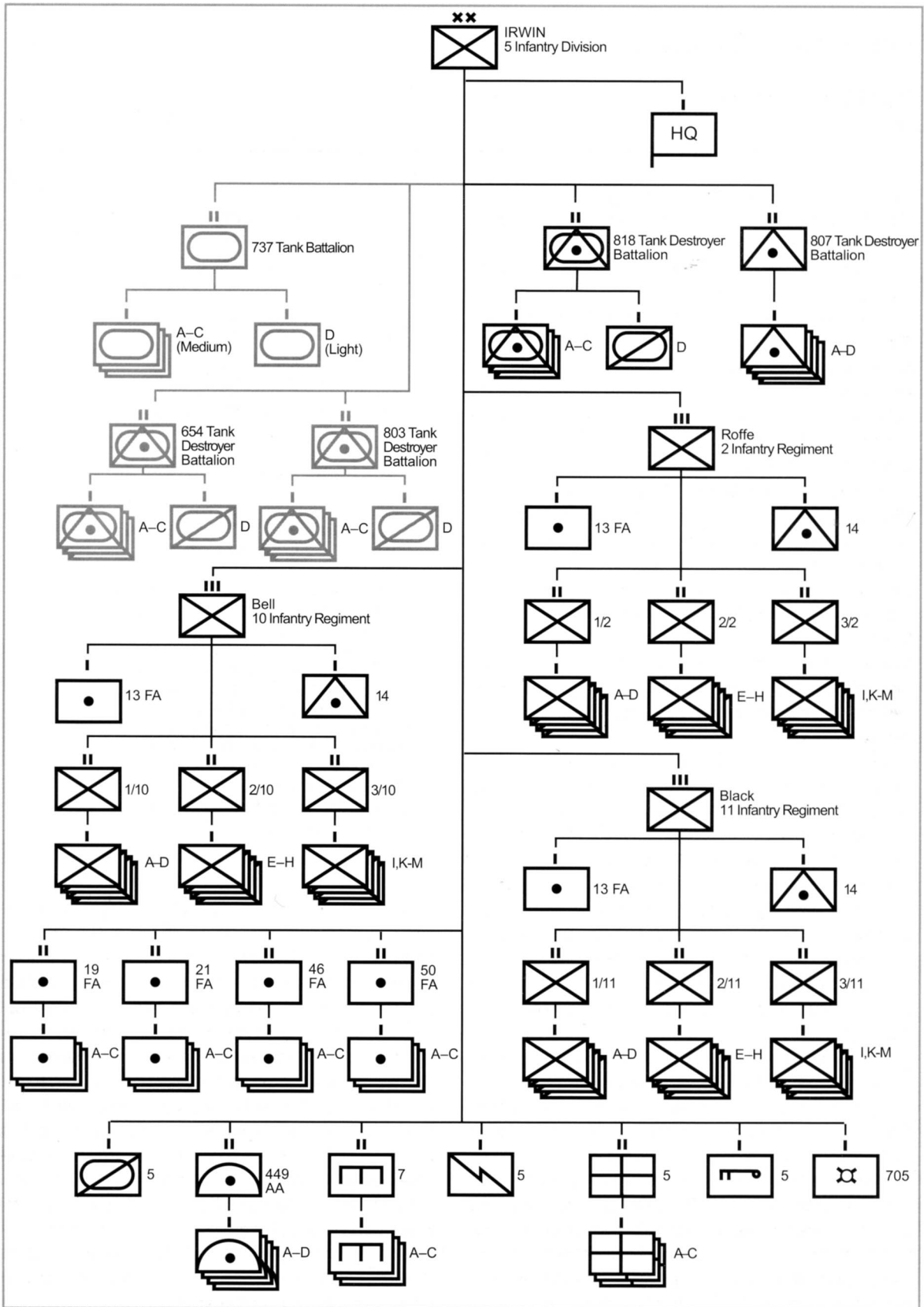
5th INFANTRY DIVISION

Major-General Stafford LeRoy Irwin

HQ Company

2 Infantry Regiment (Roffe)
 10 Infantry Regiment (Bell)
 11 Infantry Regiment (Black)
 19 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 21 Field Artillery Battalion (155mm)
 46 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 50 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 5 Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized
 7 Engineer Combat Battalion
 5 Medical Battalion
 5 Signal Company
 5 Quartermaster Company
 705 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
 Military Police Platoon
 449 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm)
 (attached)
 735 Tank Battalion (detached to 26 Infantry Division
 December 21)
 737 Tank Battalion (attached December 23)
 654 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10/M36)
 (attached December 22-25 only)
 803 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10/M36)
 (attached from 4 Infantry Division December 25)
 807 Tank Destroyer Battalion (towed)
 (detached to 90 Infantry Division December 21)
 818 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M10/M36)
 (detached to 26 Infantry Division December 21)

The division's part in the battle for Metz was long and hard and began on September 7. The final fortress of St Quentin did not surrender until December 6. In between lies a story of constant attacks and counter-attacks, particularly at Fort Driant, but the German fortifications were gradually captured, and the division entered Metz itself on November 18. Then, after a brief respite, 5th Infantry was assigned to XII Corps for the Ardennes counter-offensive, and finally crossed the river Sauer near Echternach in February 1945. Crossing the Prüm, the division established a bridgehead over the Kyll at the beginning of March, then the Mosel, before crossing the Rhein on the 22nd. It captured Frankfurt on April 9 and continued east through Westphalia into Austria, where it was still advancing alongside the 4th Armored Division when hostilities ceased.



10th Armored Division

'Tiger'



Major-General William Morris' 10th Armored was the first Third Army division to begin reinforcing VIII Corps, moving north from Thionville towards Luxembourg on December 17 (at just the same time as 7th Armored from Ninth Army was moving south for the same reason). Morris drove at the head of his column to confer with VIII Corps' commander, Troy Middleton, in Bastogne. Here he learned that there were two pressing needs, one of which was to help the sorely beset 28th Infantry Division in the Corps' centre and protect the vital road junction at Bastogne itself. To this end Morris committed Colonel William Roberts' CCB, reinforced by one company of tanks and one of armoured infantry from CCA. This arrived the following day and was deployed in three task forces – Cherry, Desobry and O'Hara – to defend the eastern approaches to Bastogne at Longvilly, Noville and Wardin.

The second urgent requirement was to assist the hard-pressed 12th Regiment of the 4th Infantry Division in the Berdorf–Echternach sector, and to this end Morris committed Brigadier-General Edwin Pilburn's CCA. This, again, was split into three task forces. The left-hand one, under Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Chamberlain, was to head past the 12th Infantry Regiment's headquarters at Junglinster (the home of Radio Luxembourg) through the Schwarz Ernst gorge between Beaufort and Berdorf.

The centre force, under Lieutenant-Colonel Miles Standish, would take the road through Consdorf towards Berdorf, while the one on the right, under Lieutenant-Colonel John Riley, proceeded through Scheidgen towards Echternach. Finally, CCR was amalgamated with Colonel Thomas Harrold's CCA of 9th Armored Division to form CCX, which was placed under Morris' command, along with the 109th Regiment from 28th Infantry Division, further to the northwest along the river Sûre (which becomes the Sauer when it crosses the German border).

It was not unusual for the 10th Armored to be split into separate task forces for specific missions, because much the same had happened when it entered the battle for Fort Driant at Metz alongside the 5th Infantry Division at the beginning of November. The 10th had only, in fact, arrived in Europe at Cherbourg on September 23 and spent a further month

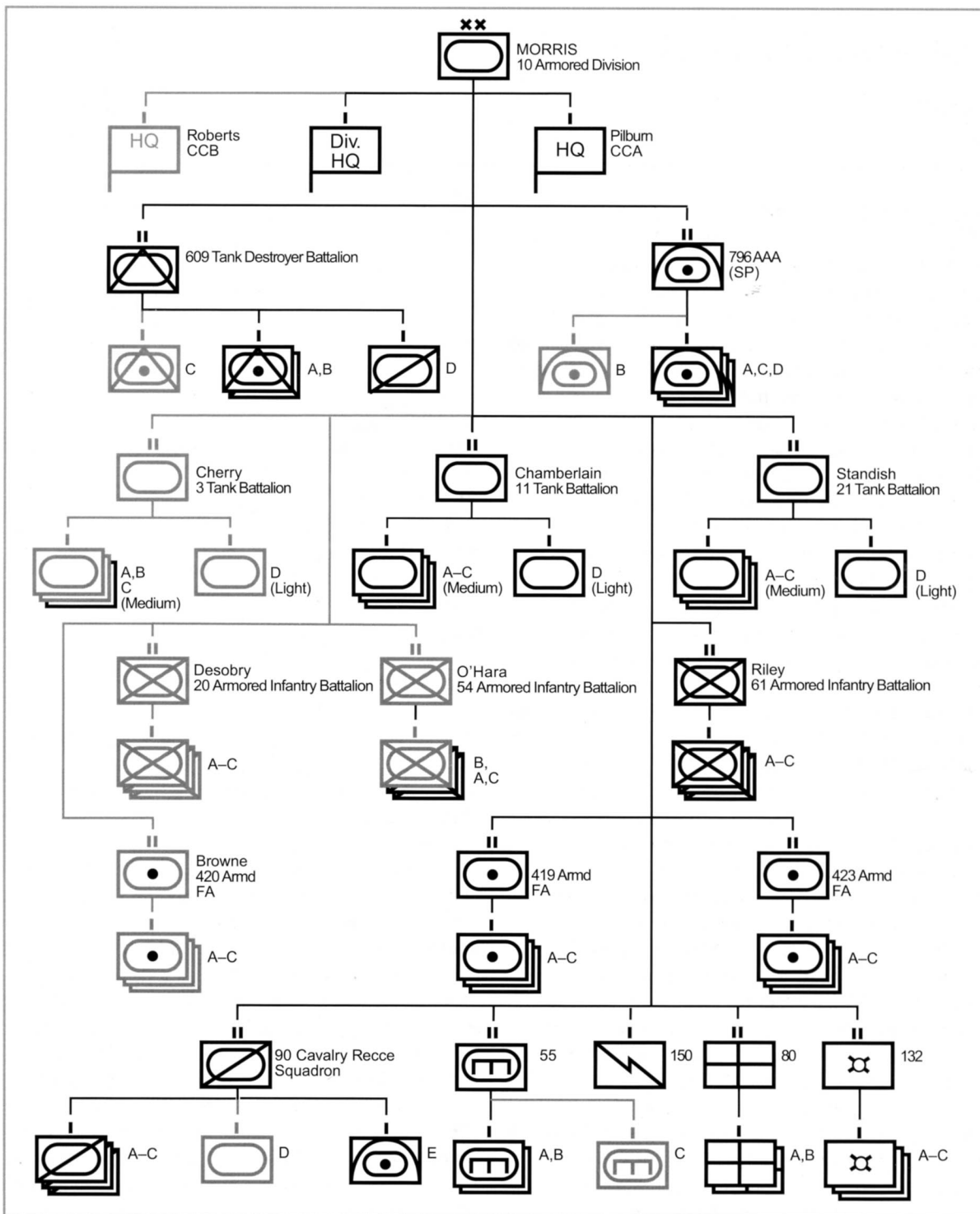
10th ARMORED DIVISION
Major-General William H. Morris, Jr.
 HQ Company and HQ Companies,
 Combat Commands A (*Pilburn*) &
 B (*Roberts* - with VIII Corps)

C Company, 3 Tank Battalion
 11 Tank Battalion (Chamberlain)
 21 Tank Battalion (Standish)
 54 Armored Infantry Battalion (-B) (O'Hara)
 61 Armored Infantry Battalion (Riley)
 419 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (M7)
 423 Armored Field Artillery Battalion (M7)
 90 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Mechanized (-D)
 55 Armored Engineer Battalion (-C)
 80 Medical Battalion, Armored
 150 Armored Signal Company
 132 Armored Ordnance Maintenance Battalion
 Military Police Platoon
 796 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (M15/M16)
 (-B) (attached)
 609 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M18) (-C) (attached)

Note: For CCB details and operational history during the siege of Bastogne, see Order of Battle The Ardennes Offensive – US VII & VIII Corps and British XXX Corps – Central Sector.

training before being committed to battle. (Although it had been formed, at Fort Benning, Georgia, on July 15, 1942, many of its personnel had been assigned as 'reinforcements' to other divisions.) Leaving its training area at Teurtheville on October 25, the 10th was thrown into the battle for Metz at Fort Driant on November 2, but within a fortnight was heading into the Saar–Mosel 'triangle' as part of XX Corps, attacking through Thionville. The division met stiff opposition around Merzig and Tettingen and was forced to retire. Tettingen was not captured until November 25 but then the division had to repel several counter-attacks before reaching the river Saare. After capturing Dreisbach on December 2, 10th Armored was pulled back to Thionville to recuperate before it was thrown into the battles for Bastogne.

Once the 'Battle of the Bulge' had been won, the 10th Armored returned to XX Corps and reassembled outside Metz in February 1945. It renewed its offensive in the Saar–Mosel triangle, securing bridge-heads over both rivers at Saarburg and Trier at the



end of the month. Early in March CCB established bridgeheads over the rivers Kyll and Salm near Ehrang and Dorbach, before the division reassembled again at Trier. Next it assaulted through the 80th and 94th Infantry Divisions, bypassing Kaiserlautern but crossing the Rhein on the 28th after storming Landau.

At the beginning of April, it attacked across the river Neckar and fought at Heilbronn and in the Crailsheim salient, cleared Swäbisch Hall in the middle of the month, established a secure bridgehead over the river Rems on the 19th, and crossed the Danube over the 23/24 April, ending the war at Innsbruck in Austria.

80th Infantry Division

'Blue Ridge'



The 80th Infantry Division was moving out of its rest area at St Avold on December 18, to take its place alongside 4th Armored near Zweibrücken in XII Corps' attack across the river Sauer towards the West Wall, when its advance was halted. Both divisions were more urgently needed elsewhere, and at dawn on the 19th the 80th set off on the 160-mile (250km) march towards Luxembourg City. Next day it was temporarily assigned to III Corps, and took up station alongside the 26th Infantry Division, with its right (eastern) flank resting on the river Alzette. Advancing towards the river Sûre on the 22nd, the division relieved the 109th Regiment from 28th Infantry Division, which had been steadily driven back to Vichten from the vicinity of Diekirch. By a stroke of luck the division's 319th Regiment (Colonel William Taylor) next encountered the German 352 Volksgrenadier Division, which was heading west in column along the Ettelbruck–Merzig road. The surprised Germans tried to deploy to face this threat on their left flank, but the 319th sliced straight through them before veering right to attack Ettelbruck itself. Here, however, and at Merzig and Heiderscheid, the division ran into tougher opposition which took much longer to subdue. It did not get across the Sûre, at Heiderscheidergrund, until January 6 (having been returned to XII Corps on December 26), but from then on its advance was continuous.

The 80th had been activated at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, on July 15, 1942. Its first CO was Major-General Joseph Patch, who commanded Seventh Army in Alsace, but Horace McBride took over from March 1943 until the end of the war. Landing in Normandy across 'Utah' beach on August 3, 1944, the division unusually stayed with XII Corps almost throughout its career, although it was with XX for a fortnight in August and III for a week in December. Its first action was a mopping-up operation around Le Mans, after which it helped close the Falaise Gap and captured Argentan on August 20.

Following 4th Armored across the Meuse at Commercy on September 1, the division next encountered opposition on the Mosel at Toul and Fort de Viley-le-Sec. It finally got across on the 12th and defended the bridgehead against counter-attacks; then there were further pitched battles as the division

80th INFANTRY DIVISION

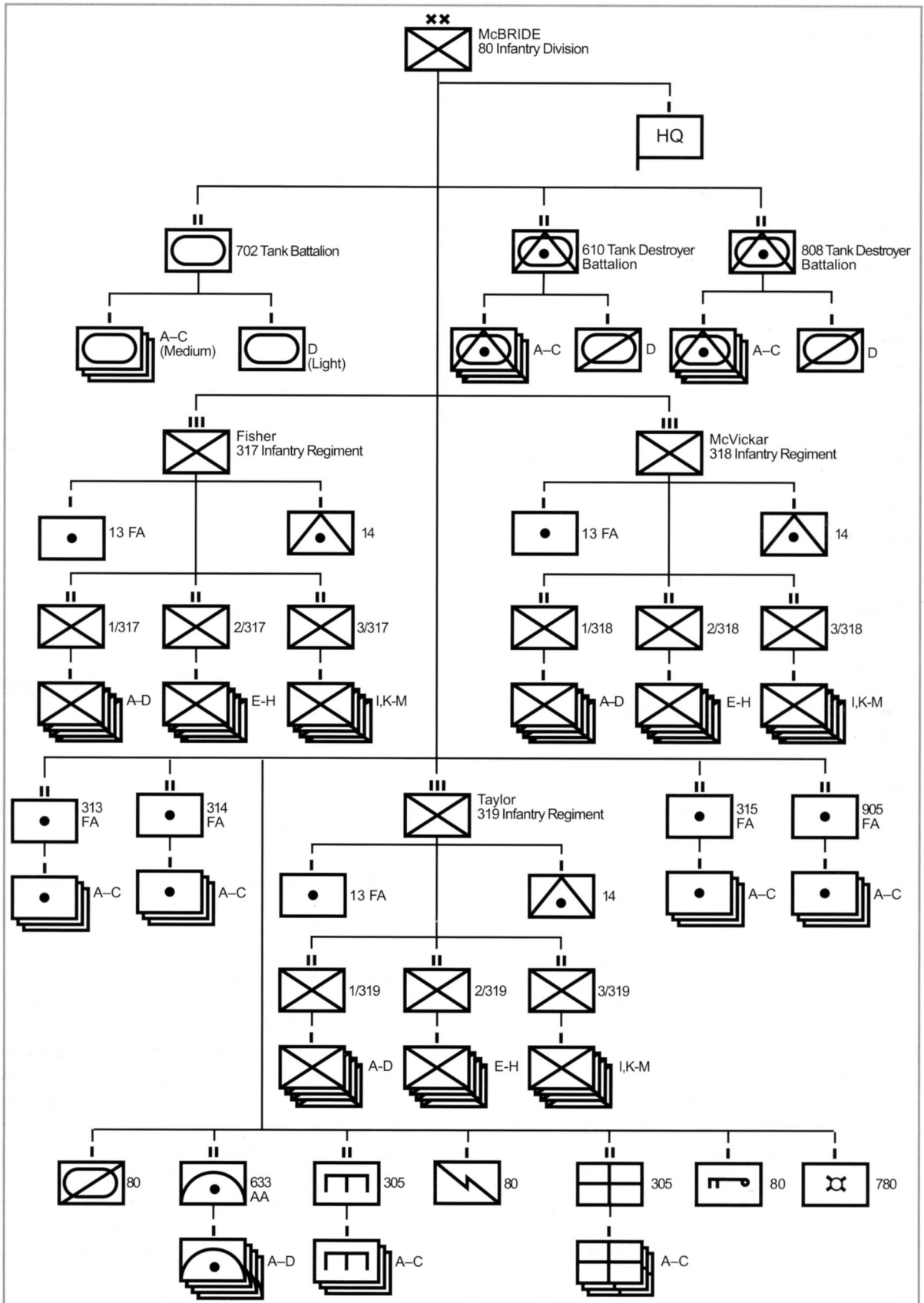
Major-General Horace L. McBride

HQ Company

317 Infantry Regiment (Fisher)
 318 Infantry Regiment (McVickar)
 319 Infantry Regiment (Taylor)
 313 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 314 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 315 Field Artillery Battalion (155mm)
 905 Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
 80 Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized
 305 Engineer Combat Battalion
 305 Medical Battalion
 80 Signal Company
 80 Quartermaster Company
 780 Ordnance Light Maintenance Company
 Military Police Platoon
 633 Anti-Aircraft Artillery Auto-Weapons Battalion (40mm)
 (attached)
 702 Tank Battalion (attached)
 610 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M36) (attached)
 808 Tank Destroyer Battalion (M36) (detached December 21)

approached the river Seille in October, the 319th Regiment in particular suffering heavy casualties. Once across on November 8, the 80th seized a bridge over the Nied Allemande on the 20th and entered St Avold a week later. Here it received priority in replacements and was in good shape to play its part in the Ardennes counter-offensive.

After finally crossing the Sûre, the division encountered further tough opposition, getting across the Wiltz between January 21 and 23, then the Clerf, but recaptured Hosingen and assaulted across the Our and Sauer at Wallendorf and Dillingen on February 7. The West Wall in this sector proved a tough nut to crack, but the 317th Regiment cleared the Bollendorf region and by the end of the month the division had reached the river Prüm. Transferred to XX Corps in the Saar sector on March 7, the 80th took Weiskirchen and Kaiserlautern, crossed the Rhein at Oppenheim on the 27th then helped 6th Armored capture Kassel at the beginning of April. Weimar and Jena followed before the division reassembled at Nürnberg. It then crossed the rivers Danube, Isar and Inn to reach Kirchdorf when hostilities ended in May.



U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

Company E, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division

Echternach – December 16–20

Arriving in Luxembourg on December 13 to recuperate after losing nearly 5,000 men in the Hürtgen Forest, Major-General Raymond Barton's 4th Infantry Division swapped places with the 83rd Infantry Division, taking over a 35-mile (56km) stretch west of the river Sauer and south of the Schwarz Ernst Gorge. This part of the front line had seen little activity over the previous few weeks and promised to provide the period of rest and relaxation which Barton's men needed so badly. Those of Colonel Robert Chance's 12th Regiment on the division's left around Echternach, however, barely had time to catch their breath before they were embroiled in battle once more. Apart from the 11 M4s and 13 M5s remaining in Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Davidson's 70th Tank Battalion, the only immediate support the regiment had were two companies of the 159th Engineer Combat Battalion from VIII Corps' reserve – plus the 15 105mm guns of the 42nd Field Artillery Battalion positioned on the high ground between Herborn and Mompach.

Allied intelligence knew before December 16 that Barton's division was opposed by Generalleutnant Franz Sensfuss' veteran 212 Volksgrenadier Division, but did not know that its entire strength (minus one regiment in Armee reserve) was amassed against Chance's regiment east of the Sauer between Bollendorf and Mompach and, as everywhere else along the whole front, the German assault on December 16 came as almost a total surprise. Something, some sixth sense perhaps, had alerted General Barton himself, because the day before he had begun recalling men from leave.

The German artillery bombardment before dawn on the 16th was unusually severe but, even so, the first real intimation Barton had that something was afoot was a phone call from VIII Corps' commander, Troy

Middleton, at 0929 hrs warning that the 28th Infantry Division to his north was under attack. (The 4th Infantry Division at this stage, of course, still fell under VIII not XII Corps.) The first direct intelligence Barton received was a report from Company F, II/12th, in Berdorf, that a German patrol had been sighted. The German artillery fire had severely disrupted phone lines, which was to pose a constant problem during the opening phases of the battle.

More or less in the centre of the 12th RCT's lines, Echternach itself was held by Captain Paul Dupuis' Company E of Major John Gorn's 2nd Battalion, and had a little warning. The 320 Volksgrenadier Regiment's assault companies had found the river current at Echternach too swift for their rubber boats, so had crossed at Edingen to the east instead, and Dupuis' outposts were able to fall back to the hat factory in the town. However, the grenadiers were in no hurry to attack, being more concerned with outflanking the town and forcing the field artillery to fall back out of range of their bridging points. Dupuis did not see the enemy until about 1100 hrs, but even then they contented themselves with taking long-range potshots, and Dupuis was able to consolidate his defence.

During the night the Germans brought searchlights up to help their engineers construct a bridge over the stone piers of the old medieval one, but artillery fire soon put paid to their efforts. At daylight, on December 17, General Barton had the other three battalions of the division's field artillery moving up to reinforce the 42nd, and other reserves were also moving into position. However, the enemy did not attack Echternach this day either, being content to encircle it. Late in the afternoon, two M4s and two squads of infantry from CCA of 10th Armored Division rolled into Echternach, to the garrison's total surprise. They offered to cover Company E's withdrawal, but Dupuis

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 70-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		

U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

Companies B and F, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division

Berdorf – December 16–19

With his radio in the workshop for repair and his telephone line severed by the preliminary German artillery barrage, it was not until 1015 hrs that 1st Lieutenant John Leake was able to get a message through to Colonel Robert Chance, back in the 12th Infantry Regiment's HQ in Junglinster, that his Company F was under attack. In fact, by that time three of his four outposts on the western bank of the river Sauer had already been overrun, leaving just the 21 men of his 2nd Platoon and two forward artillery observers in a stone-walled farmhouse a mile or so to the east of Berdorf. All that remained to Leake was about 60 men in the village itself with a single .50 cal heavy machine-gun and just one BAR to supplement their rifles. The Germans had already captured all the company mortars.

After spotting the first German patrol at about 0945 hrs, Leake pulled his tiny garrison into the three-storied reinforced concrete Parc Hôtel – where the telephone miraculously still worked – and prepared for a siege as more and more of the enemy appeared. They were from the 1st Abteilung, 423 Grenadier Regiment, the right-hand formation of 212 Volksgrenadier Division, whose assault companies had crossed the Sauer below Bollendorf before first light.

As the situation clarified around midday, and it became apparent that a full-scale attack and not just a 'reconnaissance in force' was underway, General Barton authorised Chance to deploy both Lieutenant-Colonel Oma Bates' reserve 1st Battalion, and the few tanks remaining to the attached 70th Tank Battalion, to go to the assistance of the beleaguered 2nd and 3rd Battalions between Berdorf and Dickweiler. The strongest contingent was sent to Berdorf – Bates' Company B along with five M4s and five M5 light tanks. This relief force arrived mid-afternoon but was checked by the Volksgrenadiers who had by now

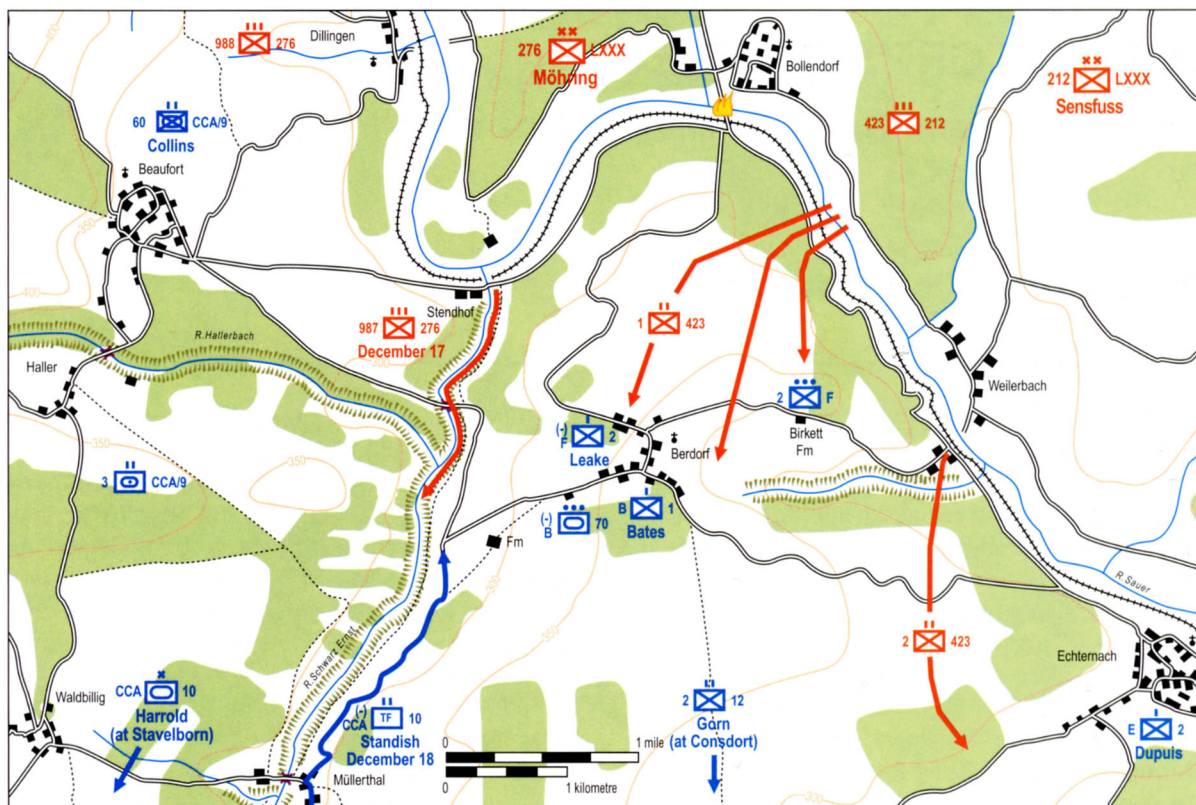
occupied all the village apart from the hotel. At dusk, the infantry fell back, retaining two tanks for support while the others returned to Consdorf to refuel and re-arm.

General Barton was in something of a quandary at this point. Not knowing the full strength of the German attack, nor whether they might have uncommitted reserves which could include Panzers, he was loathe to commit too much too soon. So far his 8th and 22nd Regiments had not been attacked. As a precaution, he ordered II/22nd to Junglinster, along with a company of Shermans lent by the 19th Tank Battalion from CCA of 9th Armored Division to his north. He also began moving the division's 20th, 29th and 44th Field Artillery Battalions north to assist the 42nd between Herborn and Mompach, and moved the 4th Engineer Combat Battalion and Cavalry Reconnaissance Troops to the hamlet of Breitweiler to block being outflanked towards Consdorf through the Schwarz Ernst gorge.

Early on December 17 the tanks which had gone back to Consdorf returned and began an immediate assault to relieve Company F in Berdorf. Unfortunately, they began shelling the hotel until one of Leake's men found an American flag and unfurled it on the roof. However, the village was still swarming with Volksgrenadiers armed with Panzerfausts and, although the relief force reached the hotel, there it had to stop. Amazingly, so far Leake's company had suffered only one man wounded. By the following morning, though, there were only six of the original tanks still intact, but further help was on its way.

Patton's Combat Command B of 10th Armored Division was already well on its way to Bastogne, and now Brigadier-General Edwin Pilburn's CCA had arrived to help Chance's 12th Infantry Regiment. A task force led by Lieutenant-Colonel Miles Standish arrived in Berdorf mid-morning on December 18, but

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-69,72-75	82-84					36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51	



Berdorf was the most northerly outpost of Colonel Chance's 12th Infantry Regiment and, although at one point it was almost completely cut off, the defenders tied down a whole German battalion for four vital days.

the German resistance was so strong that by nightfall only 75 (68m) yards had been regained.

The next 24 hours saw the enemy gradually forced back, but it was a house-to-house struggle and Standish's tanks had to be redeployed to help in the defence of Consdorf. By December 19, the Germans had lost all except a handful of houses on the north edge of the village, despite which they launched another assault on the Parc Hôtel during the night. A demolition charge blew in part of a wall but hand grenades and sub-machine-guns stopped the enemy getting any further. Then came the surprise discovery that the explosion had opened up a hidden cellar full of vintage bottles of wine, cognac and a barrel of beer. Lieutenant Leake put the cellar out of bounds – a decision he was later to regret, because most of its contents fell into German hands!

Later the same day, the Volksgrenadiers renewed their assault and very quickly recovered all the ground they had lost earlier. In the mêlée Standish's forward artillery observer's tank was hit by a round from a Panzerfaust which put the radio out of action, but the telephone in the hotel was still miraculously working so Leake was able to call for supporting fire, which sent the Germans diving for cover. This, however, was virtually the last round of the battle.

With the 4th Infantry Division passing from VIII to XII Corps, General Barton was under orders to redress his lines in readiness for a co-ordinated counter-attack, which meant that after all of Company B's and F's efforts, Berdorf had to be abandoned. It was therefore with mixed feelings that the 79 survivors of the battle clambered after dark on to the deck plates of Standish's remaining 11 Shermans or piled into his accompanying half-dozen M3 half-tracks and headed back towards Consdorf. As they looked back at the burning wreckage of 'their' village, though, some of the more enterprising men began passing round bottles they had liberated from the concealed cellar, so all was not lost!

[REDACTED]														
16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-69,72-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		

U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

Companies A and G, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division

Lauterborn – December 16–20

The tiny village of Lauterborn, staunchly defended primarily by Company G of Major John Gorn's 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, found itself rather like the 'pig in the middle' after the German offensive opened on December 16. Lying on the main road between Echternach and Scheidgen, Lauterborn became in effect a miniature Bastogne – an irritating thorn in the flesh of the Wehrmacht and a rallying point for the Americans.

The garrison was hit by elements of 2 Bataillon, 423 Volksgrenadier Regiment, and by 1130 hrs on December 16 was fighting for survival from a mill on the northern edge of the village, while a platoon from the battalion weapons company hung on to a couple of houses on the western side. They were quickly surrounded because the bulk of the German regiment pressed on towards Scheidgen with the intention of linking up with 320 Volksgrenadier Regiment, which had attacked from southeast of Echternach.

The American artillery, which proved so decisive on many occasions during the Ardennes campaign, was at this point of little help to Company G, since the 15 105mm howitzers of the 42nd Field Artillery Battalion were already overworked, the observer in a liaison aircraft having reported, 'the area is as full of targets as a pinball machine'. However, help was on its way. Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Davidson, having already sent most of his 70th Tank Battalion's meagre strength to Berdorf, now despatched a platoon of five M5 light tanks, together with Company A from Lieutenant-Colonel Oma Bates' 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, down the road from Consdorf through Scheidgen to ascertain the situation. Surprisingly, they met only scattered opposition and reached the village early in the afternoon, after dropping off a platoon to hold the hill dominating the southern approach to the village. In Lauterborn the

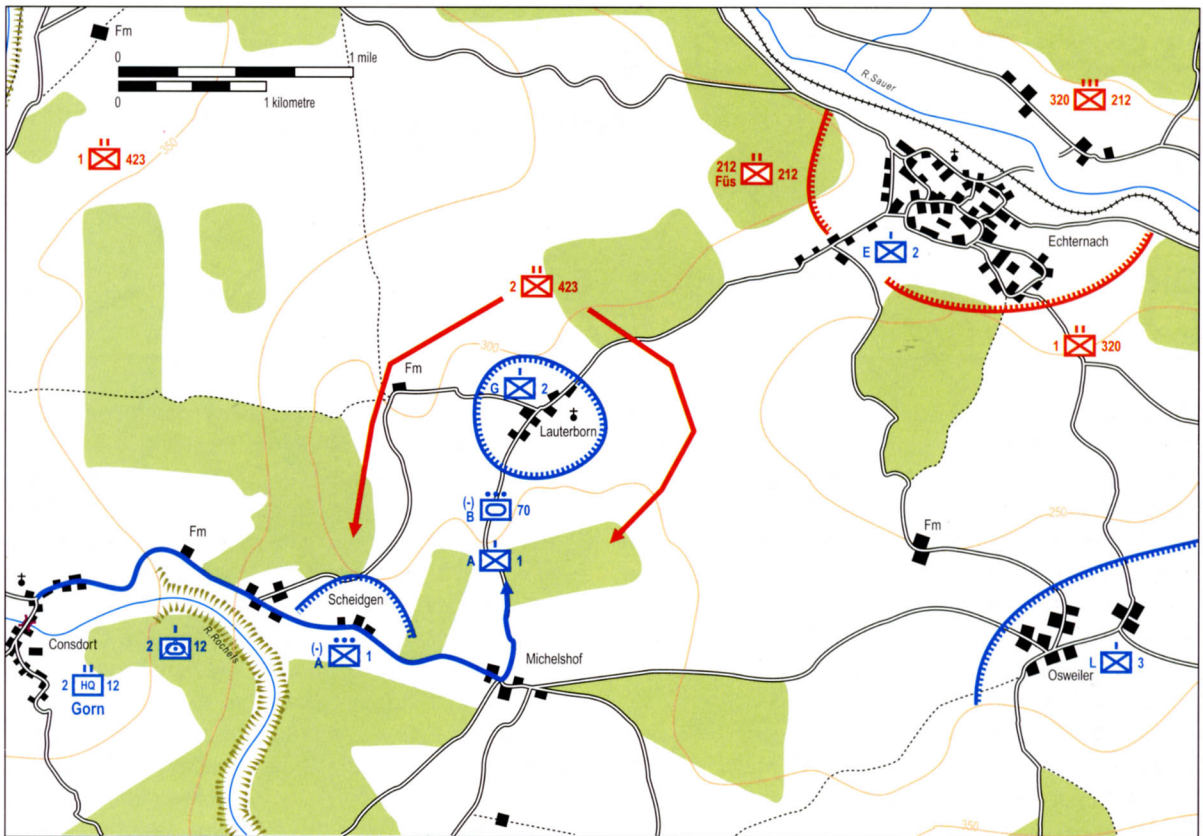
new arrivals quickly drove the Germans (from 7 Kompanie, II/423 Volksgrenadier Regiment) back and freed 25 of Company G's men who had been captured. They then dug in for the night rather than risk pressing on to Echternach in the darkness. As elsewhere in the southern sector of the front, the lack of German armour was already making its effect felt.

On the second day of the battle, the Lauterborn garrison attempted to break through to the aid of Company E in Echternach, but the 212 Volksgrenadier Division's commander had now committed his Füsilier Bataillon and a shock company from his reserve

For once during the 'Battle of the Bulge' American artillery was not decisive in the 12th Infantry Regiment sector except in delaying German bridging operations over the river Sauer. (U.S. Signal Corps)



16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-71,74-75	82-84					36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51	



Although surrounded early in the battle, the men of Companies A and G of the 12th Infantry Regiment managed to hold out in Lauterborn until help arrived and only evacuated their position when all hope for the garrison in Echternach was abandoned.

316 Regiment to the centre of his front, and the tiny American force – about 100 men all told – was unable to make any headway. They returned to Lauterborn but, in the meantime, the platoon that had been left on the hill to the south had been forced to pull back to Scheidgen, where it was simply overwhelmed. At the end of the day only the 60-odd men of the regimental anti-tank company stood between Scheidgen and the 2nd Battalion command post in Consdorf.

By early on December 18, Combat Command A of 10th Armored Division had arrived in the 12th Infantry Regiment sector and a task force commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Riley quickly recaptured Scheidgen and, with five M4s accompanied by two companies from the 159th Engineer Combat Battalion, attempted to recapture the hill south of Lauterborn.

However, a thick fog rolled in, thwarting this first attempt, although the hill was seized later in the day. More of Riley's tanks rolled into Lauterborn itself, reaching the Company G command post in the mill, while a small contingent re-established contact with Company E in Echternach.

Balked at Dickweiler and Osweiler on his left flank, and with Consdorf on his right now securely in American hands, the German commander concentrated his efforts on December 18/19 in the comparative vacuum between them, still aiming to dislodge the artillery (now grown to four battalions) behind Herborn and Mompach. This put the garrison in Lauterborn out on a limb but, since Company E in Echternach had twice refused to evacuate the town, the village had lost its importance. Moreover, with further reinforcements arriving all the time, the 4th Infantry Division's CO, Major-General Raymond Barton, was trying to consolidate and shorten his lines prior to a properly planned counter-attack. Company G – by now reduced to 40 men – was therefore recalled, with Company A and Riley's task force, to the vicinity of Consdorf.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1	
pages 68-7,74-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54			47-48		49-51		

U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

Companies I, L and C, 12th Infantry Regiment and
 Company F, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division

Dickweiler/Osweiler – December 16–20

Just as it was the stubborn defence of the twin villages of Krinkelt and Rocherath which blocked Sixth Panzer Armees assault on Elsenborn ridge in the northern sector of the Ardennes front, so it was the equally determined resistance in the twin villages of Dickweiler and Osweiler which did more than anything else to baulk the German Seventh Armees offensive. As in the north, it was also the quick response to the threat and prompt reinforcement which helped work the trick.

On December 16, the villages were defended respectively by Companies I and L of Major Herman Rice's 3rd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment. Because of the delay forced on the opposing 320 Volksgrenadier Regiment, because it had to find a crossing place over the Sauer at Edingen instead of at Echternach as planned, the American battalion was forewarned of the attack, and the two companies were able to withdraw into the villages. Company I thus had mortars and a .50 cal machine-gun to greet the two companies of German infantry who attacked late in the morning, and rapidly drove them back half a mile to the shelter of some woods. Alerted to the new attack, though, Colonel Chance reacted promptly, but Osweiler had so far not even been touched when Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Davidson sent the last three M4s remaining to his 70th Tank Battalion, plus a squad of infantry, down the road from Herborn.

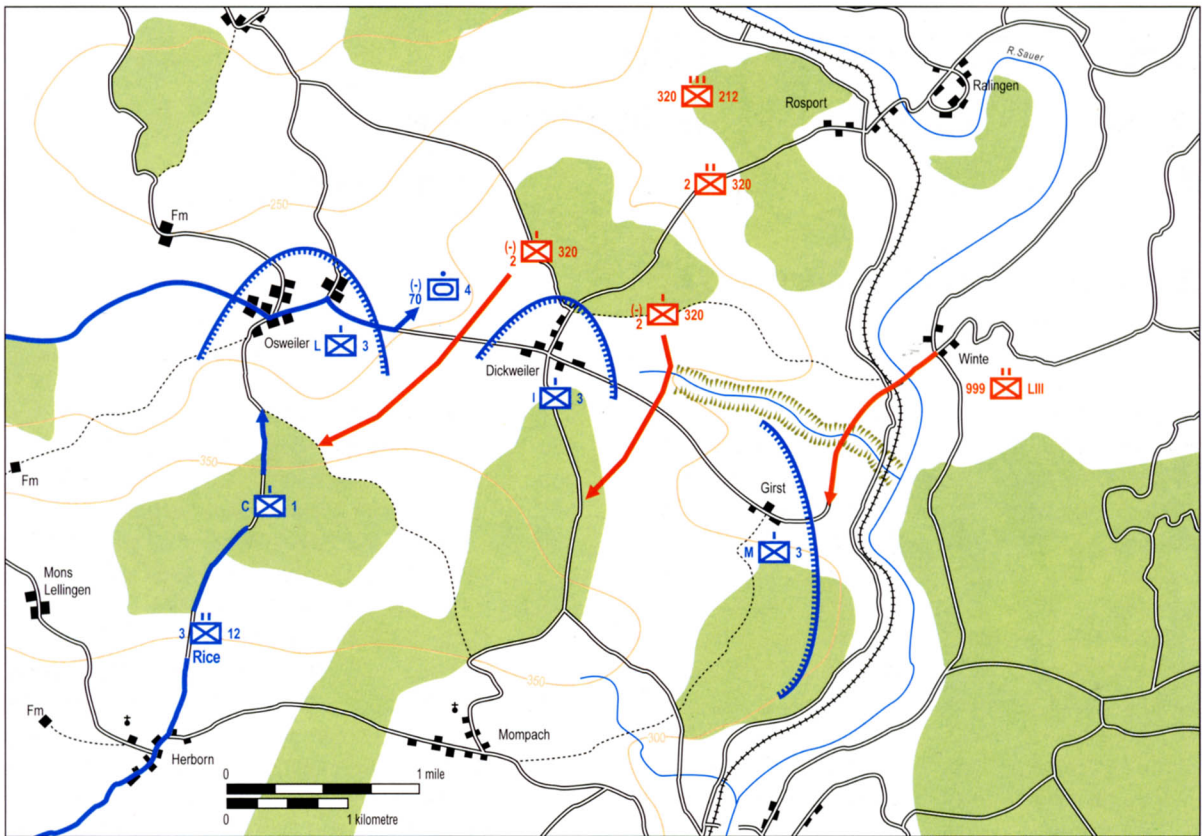
As Davidson's tanks arrived, word came in that Dickweiler was under assault again, so the tiny force set out to give battle. It was fortunate that the Germans had no armour, for the tanks were able to run the gauntlet of artillery fire and fall on the flank and rear of II/320 Volksgrenadier Regiment as it was moving forward in attack formation, while the men of Company I in the village opened up with every weapon they had. The two leading German companies lost about

50 killed, including one company commander, and another 35 men surrendered, including the second company commander. After this, the battalion seemed to lose all stomach for the fight.

Despite the major setback, though, by nightfall the German 320 Volksgrenadier Regiment had the two villages completely surrounded and Major Rice asked for help, saying, 'Situation desperate.' The CO of the 12th, Colonel Chance, sent his last remaining reserve, Company C of the 1st Battalion, to Osweiler but, as they worked their way through the woods, one platoon ran straight into II/320 Volksgrenadier Regiment and was virtually wiped out, although a few men were able to surrender. Further help, however, was on its way. General Barton had released Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Kenan's 2nd Battalion from the 22nd Regiment, and Shermans were also arriving from the 19th Tank Battalion of 9th Armored Division to the north. Company F, II/22nd, mounted on half a dozen tanks and headed for Osweiler, punching their way through after a short fight just south of the village. Thus reinforced, Rice's men began digging in a new defensive line on the high ground just east and south of the two villages, extending their perimeter. An attempt to reinforce them still further with the bulk of II/22nd RCT later in the day failed because the companies ran straight into a strong German force heading towards Scheidgen, got separated in the mêlée and dug in for the night.

The energetic Colonel Davidson, meanwhile, had managed to get a further eight of the 70th Tank Battalion's M4s running and, accompanied by what men of II/22nd they could pick up en route, they headed for Osweiler. Nearing the village, they were mistaken for Germans and the 19th Tank Battalion's Shermans already there opened fire on them. It took two hours, and a number of casualties, before a

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-73	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		



Although they were surrounded early in the battle, it proved possible to get sufficient reinforcements to Companies I and L in Dickweiler and Osweiler so that the whole German effort in the south was crippled.

platoon carrying a white flag got close enough to be recognised.

East of Dickweiler earlier in the day, the Germans had tried to outflank the village by sending a battalion across the Sauer at Girst. This was in the LIII Korps' sector and the U.S. official history identifies it as 23 Festungs Bataillon, which does not appear in the Korps' order of battle. It was probably 999 Festungs-Infanterie Bataillon. Regardless of which it was, however, the battalion ran into the Company M, III/12th, lines south of Dickweiler and was unable to make any further headway. To the south and west of the two villages, however, the Germans had penetrated the 12th Infantry Regiment's lines as far as Geyershof and Mons Lellingen, threatening both the 2nd Battalion command post in Consdorf and that of the 3rd Battalion in Herbhorn. Their 316 Volksgrenadier

Regiment, which had been in Seventh Armee reserve, was also now moving up to reinforce 320 and 423 Regiments of 212 Volksgrenadier Division. Neverthe-less, Osweiler and Dickweiler were left in comparative peace during December 18/19, apart from a few brushes in the woods around the two villages.

The German Korps commander, General Franz Beyer, already knew that his two Volksgrenadier divisions had achieved just about all they were capable of, and was preparing to go on to the defensive to meet the impending counter-attack by Patton's Third Army. As a preliminary, though, he ordered that the American outposts still holding out behind German lines be eliminated, resulting in further fighting around Berdorf and Lauterborn and in Echternach itself. Dickweiler had already proved impervious to direct assault, so Beyer contented himself with using his limited artillery ammunition to try to shell them out. It was a futile attempt, but resulted in one of the few humorous episodes of the entire battle when a toilet and sink from an upper-storey bathroom landed on an M4, provoking ribald comment about the local sanitation!

	16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-73		82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54			47-48		49-51	

U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

318th and 319th Infantry Regiments, 80th Infantry Division

Ettelbruck – December 22–24

It would have been nice to have recaptured Ettelbruck in a fair fight, after the stubborn battle the depleted 109th Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division had fought to preserve it, but blocking the German LXXXV Korps' use of the road west from Diekirch was far more important. This, Colonel Lansing McVickar's 318th RCT of Major-General Horace McBride's 80th Infantry Division achieved with distinction, and the men of III/318th enjoyed the satisfaction of occupying the little town at the junction of the rivers Alzette, Sûre and Wark two days after battle had been joined.

The newly arrived 80th, temporarily transferred to III Corps' control, lined up along the Arlon–Mersch road for the start of its counter-attack on December 22, with Colonel William Taylor's 319th RCT on the left abutting the 104th RCT of the 26th Infantry Division, and McVickar's 318th on the right, following the natural northward line of the river Alzette. Lieutenant-Colonel Elliott Cheston's 317th RCT formed the divisional reserve.

December 22 kicked off promisingly with Taylor's 319th relieving the exhausted survivors of the 109th in Vichten – to which they had been forced to fall back after evacuating Ettelbruck. Taylor's men then had the unbelievable luck to fall on the tail end of 915 Regiment from 352 Volksgrenadier Division, which was heading west via Merzig, catch it in flank and force its CO to leave a rearguard in Merzig. This meant that the 26th Infantry Division's 104th RCT had fewer opponents to contend with around Grosbous than would otherwise have been the case. The 319th's leading 1st Battalion then pressed on through Oberfeulen and Niederfeulen towards Kehmen while the 2nd headed for Heiderscheid, leaving Merzig to be dealt with by the reserve 3rd Battalion.

On their right, McVickar's 318th was constricted to

advancing in column because of the river on the right and the steep, forested ridge on the left, but made good time and was approaching Ettelbruck well before midday. At this point it came under artillery fire from the east bank of the Sûre, where the remainder of 352 Volksgrenadier Division was approaching from Diekirch. Counter-battery fire from the 314th Field Artillery Battalion soon put a stop to the cannonade, but the German commander sent his 914 Regiment into Ettelbruck itself.

As night fell, the commander of the 318th's leading 1st Battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel A.S. Tosi, launched a series of attacks which cleared the heights overlooking the town, and Company B actually got into the houses on its western edge. As daylight came on December 23, Tosi launched Companies A and C in three successive assaults, which were driven back with heavy casualties. In the afternoon, a few M4s from the 702nd Tank Battalion arrived to help and this time the assault almost succeeded, resulting in the capture of about 50 prisoners. However, the Germans still held the eastern edge of the town and, with Tosi wounded and all his company commanders killed, General McBride called off the attack. For the next 24 hours the divisional artillery plastered the town, forcing the Germans to pull back. Now I/ and II/318th were sent to reinforce 4th Armored Division, and it was the 3rd Battalion which moved in to occupy the town.

With the 26th Infantry Division on its left, the 319th RCT relieved the 109th in Vichten and, bypassing Merzig, hit the tail of 915 Volksgrenadier Regiment in flank, before heading towards Heiderscheid and Kehmen. Merzig was later captured by III/319th. The 318th, advancing in column alongside the river Alzette, reached Ettelbruck at the same time as 914 Volksgrenadier Regiment, resulting in a prolonged battle.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,85-88	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		

U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

319th Infantry Regiment, 80th Infantry Division

Heiderscheid – December 23–24

After slicing through the tail of 915 Volksgrenadier Regiment as it moved west on the Ettelbruck–Merzig road, Lieutenant-Colonel Hiram Ives' leading 1st Battalion of the 319th RCT turned right, up the road through Oberfeulen and Niederfeulen and then veered northwest towards Kehmen. Lieutenant-Colonel Paul Bandy's II/319th then trucked up to Oberfeulen, debussed and at about midnight began moving on foot towards Heiderscheid.

The leading two companies came within sight of the village at about 0230 hrs on December 23, but the bright moonlight revealed them to the men of the Führer Grenadier Brigade, who had themselves only just occupied the village. Machine-gun fire and high explosive shells from a Sturmgeschutz forced Bandy's men to take cover, although some of them crawled forward close enough to engage the machine-gunners with their own BARs. Two M4s from the 702nd Tank Battalion moved up in support, but were checked by a minefield just south of the village. However, when the StuG fired at them it gave away its position and a

return shot set it ablaze. Some of Bandy's infantry then charged into the village and occupied the gendarmerie. At about the same time, an artillery shell exploded in the minefield, fortuitously clearing a path for the Shermans, which ground into the village. By midday, the last of the Führer Grenadiers had been evicted and two of Bandy's companies started moving north towards Heiderscheidergrund.

Now, however, they were counter-attacked from the west by two companies of the German brigade's Füsilier Bataillon. A few of Bandy's men broke and ran, but the rest stayed firm and repulsed the assault. However, a more serious threat emerged as 11 Panzers hove into sight. Two were promptly despatched by a bazooka team led by 2nd Lieutenant Michael Hritsik, then a platoon of M36s from the 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion arrived. They quickly accounted for four more Panzers and a fifth succumbed to a shot from one of the M4s, forcing the survivors to retreat.

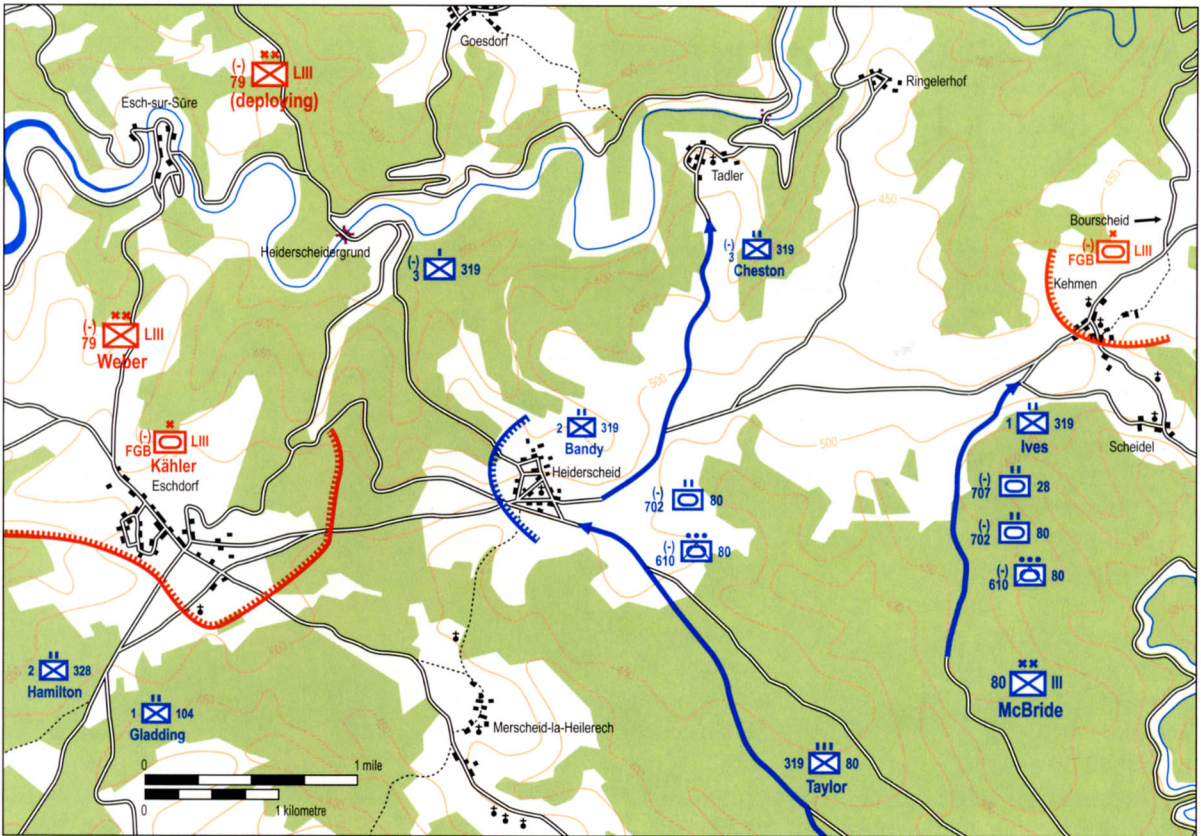
Lieutenant-Colonel Elliott Cheston's III/319th now arrived on the scene, having spent the earlier part of the day dealing with the rearguard of 915 Volksgrenadier Regiment in Merzig. He then led his battalion on towards Tadler, where the Germans blew the bridge and contented themselves with pounding the village with Nebelwerfer fire. After dark, Cheston sent a company to ascertain the situation at Heiderscheidergrund, where his men found the bridge still intact and busy with German traffic.

Meanwhile, Hiram Ives' I/319th had reached the hill overlooking Kehmen from the south late on December 23. From here he could count 24 Panzers rolling toward Heiderscheid, but his attached platoons of M4s and M36s put paid to the leading two vehicles, blocking the road and forcing the rest to return to Bourscheid. Kehmen itself was still occupied by a

After the battle for Heiderscheid (the church can be seen in the background), a GI from II/319th examines a knocked-out SdKfz 251. (U.S. Signal Corps)



16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,80-81	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		



The situation at nightfall on December 23. The three battalions of the 319th are deployed in a triangle with a single company of the 3rd Battalion at Heiderscheidergrund. The two battalions from the 26th Infantry Division attacking Eschdorf are on the left.

company of grenadiers with a platoon of tanks, but after dark ten M4s arrived from the 707th Tank Battalion (previously attached to the 28th Infantry Division), and with their help the village was soon in American hands. In the early hours of Christmas Eve the battalion was ordered west, Colonel Taylor's aim being to swing it north to Ringelerhof (Ringel Hill) on the right of Cheston's Battalion at Tadler. However, at the road junction a single Panzer knocked out the leading two M4s and it was not until about 0930 hrs that one of the attached tank destroyers managed to sneak forward to despatch it. The delay was lucky, as it happened, for Bandy's II/319th in Heiderscheid had been hit by the main German counter-attack, and Cheston could protect it from encirclement.

A new German division, Alois Weber's 79

Volksgrenadier, had arrived to reinforce the Führer Grenadier Brigade and, after a ten-minute artillery bombardment, at least two battalions of infantry, supported by armoured cars and half-tracks, launched an assault from Eschdorf. The M4 guarding the road junction west of the village was knocked out and the firing mechanism of Bandy's one M36 was damaged. The German armour raced backwards and forwards through the village firing wildly at everything in sight, while Bandy's men shot back with every weapon to hand. Then the Volksgrenadiers poured into the village. There was nothing else for it, and Bandy's forward artillery observer called for 'fire on me'. Within seconds 155mm shells from the 315th Field Artillery Battalion were crashing into Heiderscheid. Out in the open, the Volksgrenadiers had no protection, and within half an hour the survivors had fled, leaving 76 dead behind them. It was the last serious attempt to retake the village, because the German Korps commander began recalling his men behind the Sûre, demolishing the central span of the Heiderscheidergrund bridge behind him.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12		23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

317th Infantry Regiment, 80th Infantry Division

'The Bourscheid Triangle' – December 23–25

Although both his 318th and 319th Regiments had made good progress on December 22, they each encountered stiff opposition next day. To sustain the momentum of the drive towards the river Sûre, therefore, on the afternoon of the 23rd, Major-General Horace McBride decided to unleash the 80th Infantry Division's 317th RCT to plug the gap between them at Welscheid and Bourscheid. Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Fisher's regiment had been following the 318th along the line of the river Alzette and now, leapfrogging I/318th embattled at Ettelbruck, he carried on north.

The leading 2nd Battalion encountered the same problem as that experienced by II/319th at Heiderscheid. As they approached the loop in the river Wark at Welscheid over the rugged slopes that night, the battalion's men were silhouetted against the snow by the bright moon and scythed down by machine-guns. What no one knew at the time, of course, was that Bourscheid, just over a mile (1.6km) to the north, was the centre of the newly arrived 79 Volksgrenadier Division's assembly area; nor that its prudent

commander, Oberst Alois Weber, had already put a battalion of his 266 Regiment into Welscheid and would put the second into Kehmen the moment Hiram Ives' I/319th vacated it.

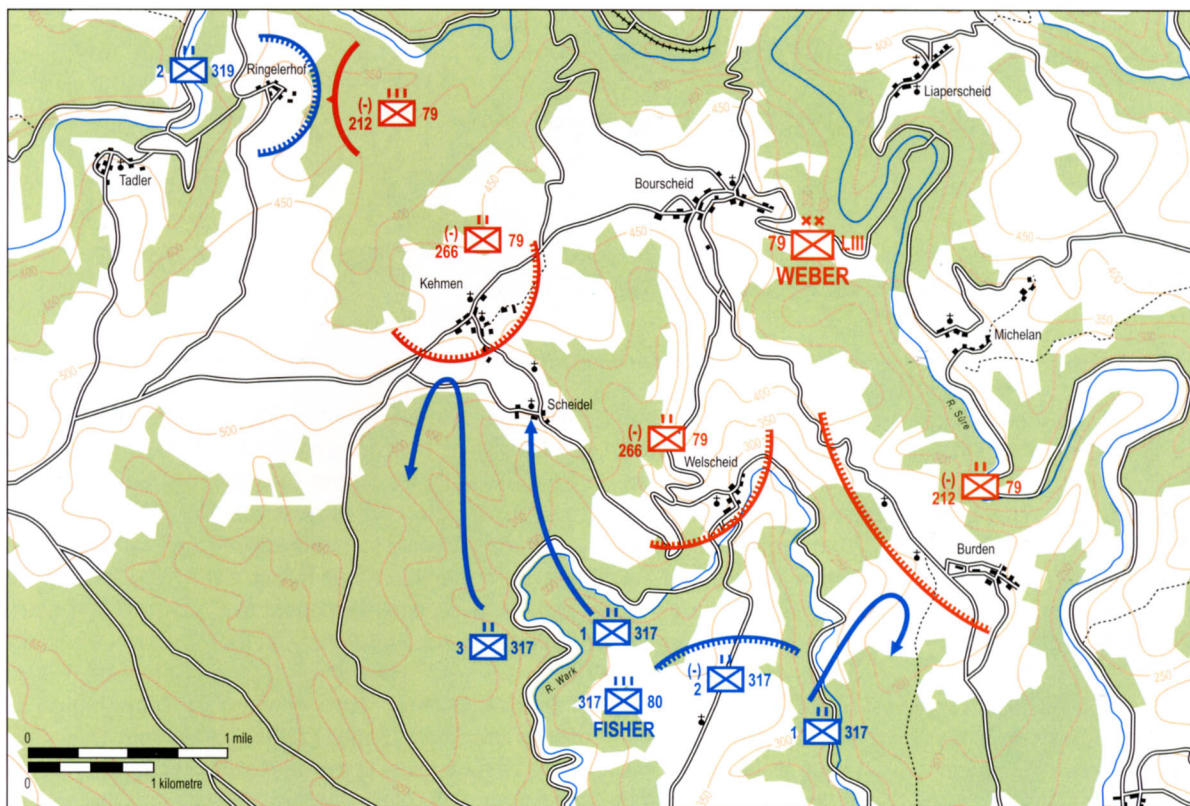
The net result at Welscheid was that two companies of II/317th were pinned down for the best part of Christmas Eve, and even Colonel Fisher later complimented the Volksgrenadiers for their excellent marksmanship. At the time, however, he was more concerned with getting around the obstacle, and attempted to send I/317th looping round to the north-east. Weber had, of course, manned the Burden ridge, anchoring his left flank on the Sûre, and this attack also failed; as the GIs tried to cross the open ground on top of the ridge, they also came under flanking artillery fire from Kehmen. The battalion fell back a full half mile (0.8km) carrying nearly 200 wounded.

On Christmas Day, leaving his 2nd Battalion merely pinning the Volksgrenadiers in Welscheid, Colonel Fisher tried the other tack and sent I/ and III/317th looping around towards Bourscheid from the southwest. They very quickly overran the German



**After failing to get across the river Sûre, but safeguarding the flank of the 26th Infantry Division on their left, the men of McBride's 80th did have the satisfaction of marching through Wiltz after its recapture on January 22.
(U.S. Army)**

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-88	39-42,78-79	43-44	52-54		47-48		49-51		



The German defence of the 'Bourscheid Triangle' proved too strong for the 317th RCT but, although it lost heavily at Kehmen, Welscheid and on Burden ridge, the opposing 79 Volksgrenadier Division's assault on Ringelerhof was equally fruitless.

company outpost in the village of Scheidel, but ran into another withering hail of fire from the battalion in Kehmen and from the wooded heights to its northwest. After several attempts, General McBride called off the assault but, again, there were nearly 200 casualties.

Colonel William Taylor's 319th RCT re-enters the story at this point. After falling back from Tadler to help II/319th if needed in its battle for Heiderscheid, Lieutenant-Colonel Elliott Cheston's III/319th re-occupied the village. Then Paul Bandy's 2nd Battalion passed through its lines, supported by fire from the 90th Field Artillery Battalion, to secure the hilltop hamlet of Ringelerhof. However, 79 Volksgrenadier Division's CO also needed this hill overlooking the Sûre to safeguard his own right flank.

On Christmas afternoon the GIs dug in around Ringelerhof could only watch with amazement as an

orderly column of German infantry approached them out of the woods to the east. Were they surrendering? When the men made no reply to the challenge but kept on marching forward, a machine-gun speedily sent the survivors packing. They were, in fact, an unfortunate detachment of engineers whom the Seventh Armee commander himself, General Brandenberger, had ordered to seize the hill.

Weber, the 79 Volksgrenadier Division CO, made a more realistic effort shortly afterwards. Assembling the best part of his 212 Regiment, he attacked out of the woods east of Ringelerhof but General McBride welcomed his men with the concentrated fire of all four of the 80th Division's field artillery battalions. Most of Weber's own artillery was still held up in traffic jams miles away, and those pieces he did have were short of ammunition, so the attack failed. The battle of the 'Bourscheid Triangle' ended as a stalemate costly to both sides. The Germans lacked the strength for any further efforts, and were content to hold on to what they had already, while, with its command reverting to XII Corps on Boxing Day, the 80th Infantry Division was also ordered on to the defensive until January 5.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

Task Forces 'Chamberlain' and 'Lockett'

Breitweiler/Müllerthal – December 17–20

Just before midnight on December 16, the 4th Infantry Division commander, Raymond Barton, received a very welcome phone call from VIII Corps' CO, Troy Middleton, telling him that Combat Command A from Third Army's 10th Armored Division would be on its way to his assistance first thing in the morning. Barton was still concerned about one thing, though, quite apart from the plight of his scattered 12th Infantry Regiment's companies, beleaguered in isolated villages south and west of the river Sauer, and that was the steep defile of the Schwarz Ernst gorge.

This pointed like an arrow right in between the 4th Infantry Division and CCA of 9th Armored, which held the relatively narrow sector around Beaufort to his northwest. It was just a miracle the enemy had not infiltrated it already. As a precaution, therefore, about three hours before dawn on December 17, Barton sent his 4th Engineer Combat Battalion and 4th Reconnaissance Troop to Breitweiler, a tiny hamlet overlooking the logical exit points from the gorge. There, they had time to dig in, because the opposing commander of the German 276 Volksgrenadier Division, General Kurt Möhring, did not exploit this avenue by releasing his 987 Regiment from reserve until a little later in the day.

Between about 1000 and 1100 hrs, the Germans could clearly be seen probing cautiously along the wooded banks of the river Schwarz Ernst, but by this time the CO of the 70th Tank Battalion had managed to get a few of his Company C tanks running again, and eight were promptly sent to Breitweiler. A mortar team, the recce company from the 803rd Tank Destroyer Battalion and Lieutenant-Colonel George Mabry's 2nd Battalion of the 8th Infantry Regiment (which had been rushed north overnight) were also organised as an impromptu task force to defend the exit from the gorge at Müllerthal, overall command

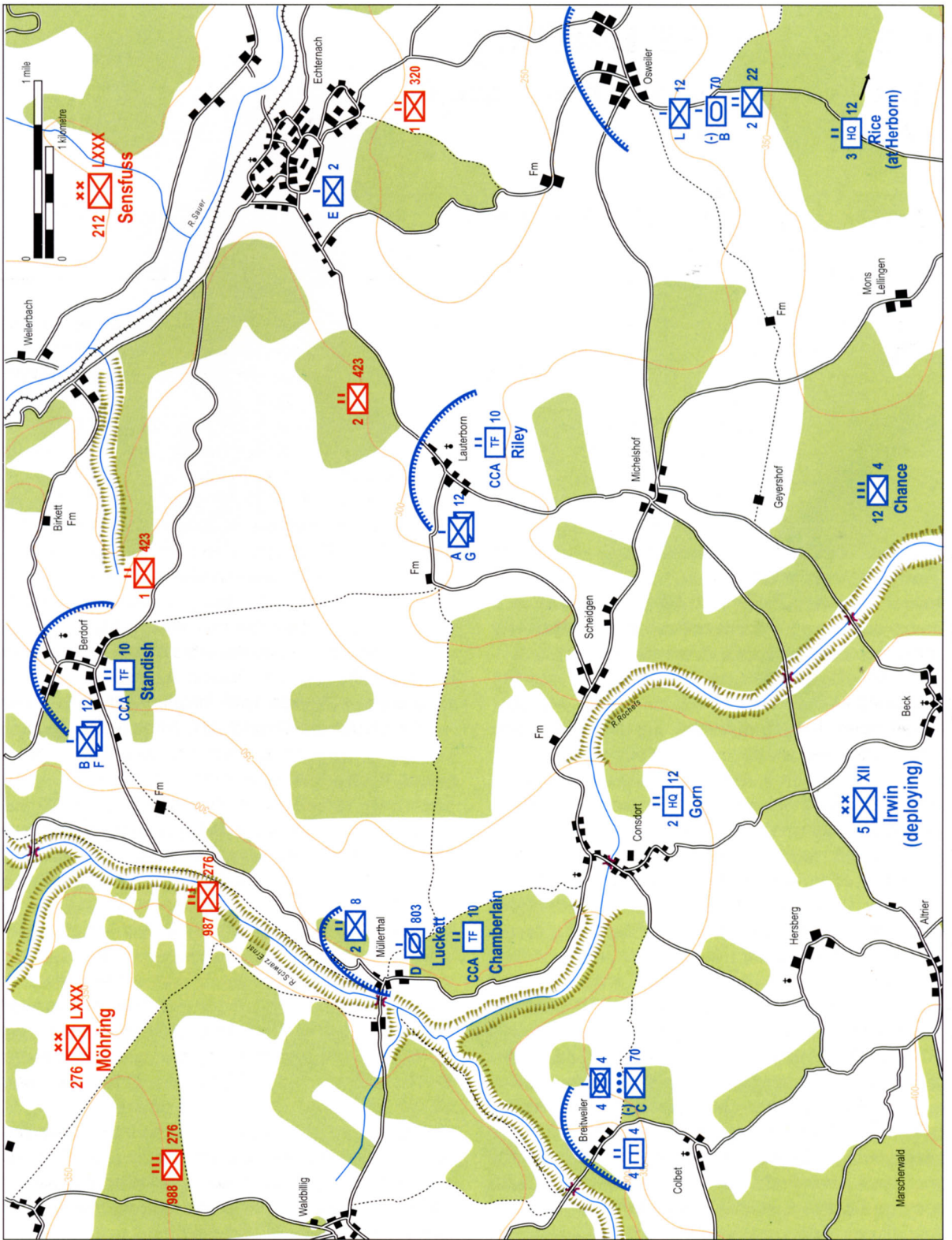
being given to the 8th's CO, Colonel James Lockett.

Strangely, but perhaps deterred by the fire from the heights above them, the German regiment made no immediate effort to assault the thin American line, appearing content just to occupy Müllerthal itself. This, however, posed a direct threat to the 12th Regiment's 2nd Battalion command post in Consdorf, and could not be ignored. Fortunately, in the afternoon the tanks and armored infantry of Brigadier-General Edwin Pilburn's CCA of 10th Armored Division began to arrive after their 75-mile (120km) drive from Thionville. It was then too late in the day to employ armour, so the divisional CO, Major-General William Morris, agreed with Barton that a counter-attack would be launched on December 18. To this end he split his command into the usual three task forces. That on the right under Lieutenant-Colonel J.R. Riley would head via Lauterborn toward Echternach; that in the centre under Lieutenant-Colonel Miles Standish would add its weight to the battle for Berdorf; and that on the left, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas Chamberlain, would try its luck in the Schwarz Ernst gorge itself.

The terrain here is so rugged, with perpendicular cliffs, thick clumps of pines and boulders left over from avalanches, that Chamberlain's tanks could only advance in single file while the accompanying infantry were under constant small-arms fire from concealed positions. Then a Panzerfaust disabled the leading M4, forcing the following tanks into a time-consuming detour around it, and in the end the column was forced

The problem the various American task forces – and 5th Infantry Division later in the day – had getting past Müllerthal are easily explained by the nature of the Schwarz Ernst gorge. What remains a mystery is why the Germans did not exploit it earlier.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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Men of Company A, I/11th RCT, 5th Armored Division, march away from the Schwarz Ernst after the division relieved Robert Chance's battered 12th RCT of 4th Infantry Division. (U.S. Army)

to halt just south of Müllerthal. Task Force 'Lockett' now took a hand and succeeded in driving some of the Volksgrenadiers from the heights around the village, but by this time it was getting dark again and there was no real progress.

The next day, December 19, was a disaster. Lockett tried to hook around Müllerthal from the left (the direction of Waldbillig) while Chamberlain's tanks gave covering fire, but heavy artillery fire forced Mabry's infantry back. Next Lockett tried hooking round from the right (the direction of Consdorf), but the German gunners had got the range and Company E was virtually wiped out. Apart from the loss of Company E from II/12th in Echternach next day, it was the most severe beating for the 4th Infantry Division during the whole battle, and General Barton called the attack off. Task Force 'Chamberlain', unable to manoeuvre or offer any real help from the bottom of the gorge, was ordered to reverse its course back towards Consdorf, where it could provide a 'backstop' for Lockett, whose task was now just to keep the

Germans pinned down in Müllerthal.

General Morris, the 10th Armored CO, was briefly given all the troops in the 4th Infantry sector as a 'Provisional Corps', but this arrangement evaporated on December 20, when VIII Corps went to Third Army and 4th Infantry to XII Corps as part of the general reshuffling when Montgomery took over the northern sector of the battlefield. However, Morris took the opportunity to try to 'straighten out' the battlefield and the day saw much more heavy fighting, as already discussed. Müllerthal, however, remained a problem which was resolved only after the arrival of Major-General LeRoy Irwin's 5th Infantry Division next day.

It took time to reorganise for a co-ordinated counter-attack down the Schwarz Ernst, and it was not until Christmas Eve that Companies F and G of Colonel Worrell Roffe's II/2nd Infantry Regiment led the way. They had a hard time of it, because the Germans were well dug in and camouflaged and Company F suffered particularly badly from ricochets off the cliff faces. Next day, Companies A and B, I/11th, had a similar experience but by this time the two German divisions were falling back in a planned withdrawal, and with both Haller and Berdorf recaptured on either side of the gorge, they had no option but to evacuate Müllerthal.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

10th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division

Michelshof – December 22–26

Colonel Robert Bell's 10th Infantry Regiment was in 5th Infantry Division reserve behind the Saarlautern bridgehead and thus led the way when, on December 20, the division was ordered to move to Luxembourg, and transferred from XX to XII Corps. The 10th RCT arrived at its assembly area at Rammeldange just after midnight and on the 21st moved up to Erzen. At a meeting with his divisional commanders that evening, the XII Corps commander, General Eddy, assigned the regiment to the tactical control of Raymond Barton's 4th Infantry Division. Its mission was to reinforce and, ultimately, relieve Robert Chance's battered 12th Infantry Regiment in the Scheidgen-Michelshof-Osweiler sector. What no one knew at the time was that the German LXXX Korps was even then preparing to go over to the defensive, but first had to consolidate its positions.

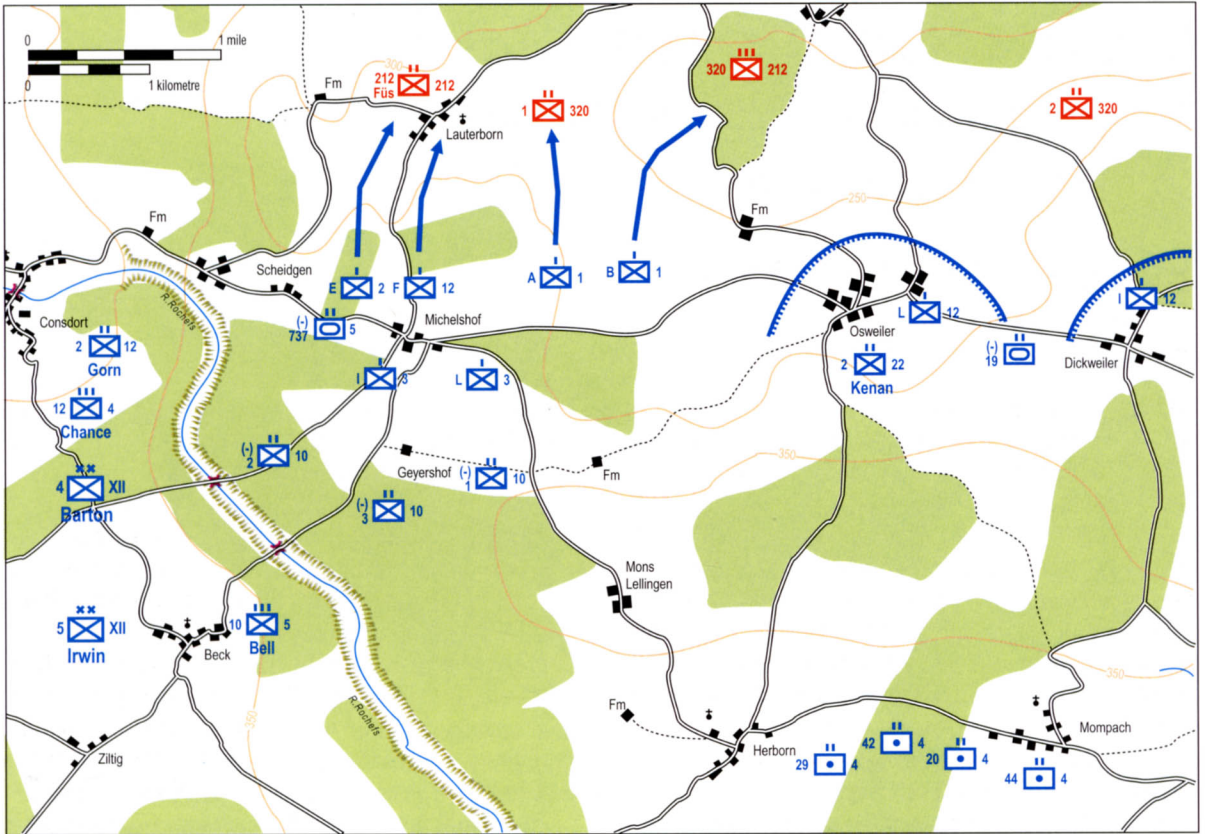
The result was that, as the regiment's leading battalions – I/10th on the right and II/10th on the left – moved up towards their start line behind the 12th Infantry Regiment's own thin line of defence, they were hit by a German artillery barrage which preceded an attack by 320 Volksgrenadier Regiment and 212 Füsilier Bataillon. Bell's 2nd Battalion promptly dug in before even reaching its start line and, in the confusion, the 1st Battalion drifted left across the road that formed the axis of the regiment's advance and dug in behind the 2nd Battalion. It was an inauspicious start even though the German attack had merely been launched to cover the withdrawal of other elements of 212 Volksgrenadier Division.

On their second day of battle, December 23, the regiment made a little more headway, but a number of men in the 1st Battalion lost their way in the woods and, harassed by constant sniping from Volksgrenadiers well entrenched in camouflaged foxholes, the battalion this time drifted right, opening up a gap

between itself and the 2nd Battalion. The 2nd itself fared worse. Company F, in the woods northeast of Michelshof, was hit by artillery fire. The shells bursting amongst the trees caused great damage and at the end of the day the company numbered only 46 men, although some stragglers did rejoin later. Company E on the battalion's left, meanwhile, had begun deploying to assault a ridge in front of it when it was hit in flank by a sizeable contingent of Volksgrenadiers. Fortunately, the company radio worked for once and artillery support was immediately forthcoming. This broke up the German attack, but the company was forced to pull back to its start line to regroup.

Christmas Eve saw the beginning of the main 5th Infantry Division attack with all three regiments in line (the 2nd and 11th also now having been withdrawn from the Saarlautern bridgehead). Bell's 10th Regiment was on the right of the division's line, still centred on the road leading through Michelshof towards Echternach. On the regiment's own right, the 1st Battalion encountered the same problem as on the previous day with well-concealed snipers and machine-gun nests and, two hours into the assault, was hit by a counter-attack supported by a couple of Sturmgeschütze. However, much of XII Corps' artillery was now available to bolster the 4th and 5th Infantry Division's own guns, and the German attack withered. On the left, the 2nd Battalion had the support of eight M4s from the 737th Tank Battalion, and made much better progress since the tanks made short work of enemy machine-gunners. By nightfall the battalion had recaptured the hill to the south of Lauterborn which had posed so many earlier problems. Moreover, the 5th Infantry Division had also achieved its initial objective of relieving Chance's 12th Infantry Regiment, and the enemy was now definitely pulling back. The commander of 212 Volksgrenadier Division, General

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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The advance of 10th Infantry Regiment's 1st and 2nd Battalions either side of Michelshof, towards Lauterborn, was seriously delayed by resistance in the woods which look insignificant on the map but were full of determined Volksgrenadiers.

Sensfuss, had shortened his line, with his right resting on Berdorf and his left on the Sauer east of Echternach, and had even begun withdrawing some of his men back across the river.

However, Christmas Day was no walkover for Bell's 10th Regiment. On the right, the 1st Battalion struggled to get through the woods northeast of Lauterborn, and made little headway. In the centre, the 3rd Battalion, brought out of regimental reserve, took over the hill south of Lauterborn occupied by the 2nd the previous day but could make little further progress because of enemy machine-gun positions on the far side of a ravine directly in its path. The battalion commander asked permission to try to outflank this from the west but his request was denied because this would have encroached on the

2nd Battalion and caused undeniable confusion.

The slow advance continued on Boxing Day, with I/10th finally extricating itself from the woods – which were strewn with Teller mines linked to trip wires – and getting to within half a mile (0.8km) of Echternach by nightfall. In the centre meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion had started its attack across the ravine before dawn, using the darkness to creep up on the German positions and attacking at daybreak with Company I on the left and L on the right. This time the attack succeeded, and by dusk the 3rd Battalion could also look down on Echternach, where the Germans could be seen energetically ferrying men back across the Sauer in rubber boats and across a wooden trestle bridge. Artillery fire soon put a stop to this until darkness fell. Some of the enemy dived into the shelter of the town's solidly built stone houses while others fled north towards Berdorf and the bridge at Bollendorf. That night, 10th Infantry patrols infiltrated the town, hoping that some of Company E of II/12th might still be hanging on, but there was no sign of them. Next day the regiment re-occupied Echternach in strength.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
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U.S. XII CORPS' BATTLES

8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division and
11th Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division

Berdorf/Haller – December 22–27

Colonel Paul Black's 11th Infantry Regiment, having pulled back the two companies engaged in the Saarlautern bridgehead, followed Bell's 10th on December 21 but, after arriving in Luxembourg City, found itself unable temporarily to go any further because the road north of the city was being used for the deployment of Major-General Horace McBride's 80th Infantry Division, on temporary attachment to III Corps. The third of the 5th Infantry Division's regiments, Colonel Worrell Roffe's 2nd, followed next day and assembled at Junglinster, where Colonel Chance had his own 12th Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, headquarters.

Major-General Stafford Irwin's plan of attack for his centre and left-hand regiments on December 24 called for a parallel advance either side of the Schwarz Ernst gorge towards Haller and Berdorf, and the advance began at about 1100 hrs. Roffe's leading 2nd and 3rd Battalions were deployed from the Schwarz Ernst to just north of Scheidgen, abutting Colonel Bell's 11/10th west of Michelshof. The 1st Battalion was held in reserve in Colbet. Despite the lack of success, Task Forces 'Chamberlain' and 'Luckett' had experienced over the previous few days in the Schwarz Ernst gorge, Roffe decided to send his 2nd Battalion down into its precipitous wooded slopes while his 3rd advanced on its right, flanking the Berdorf ridge.

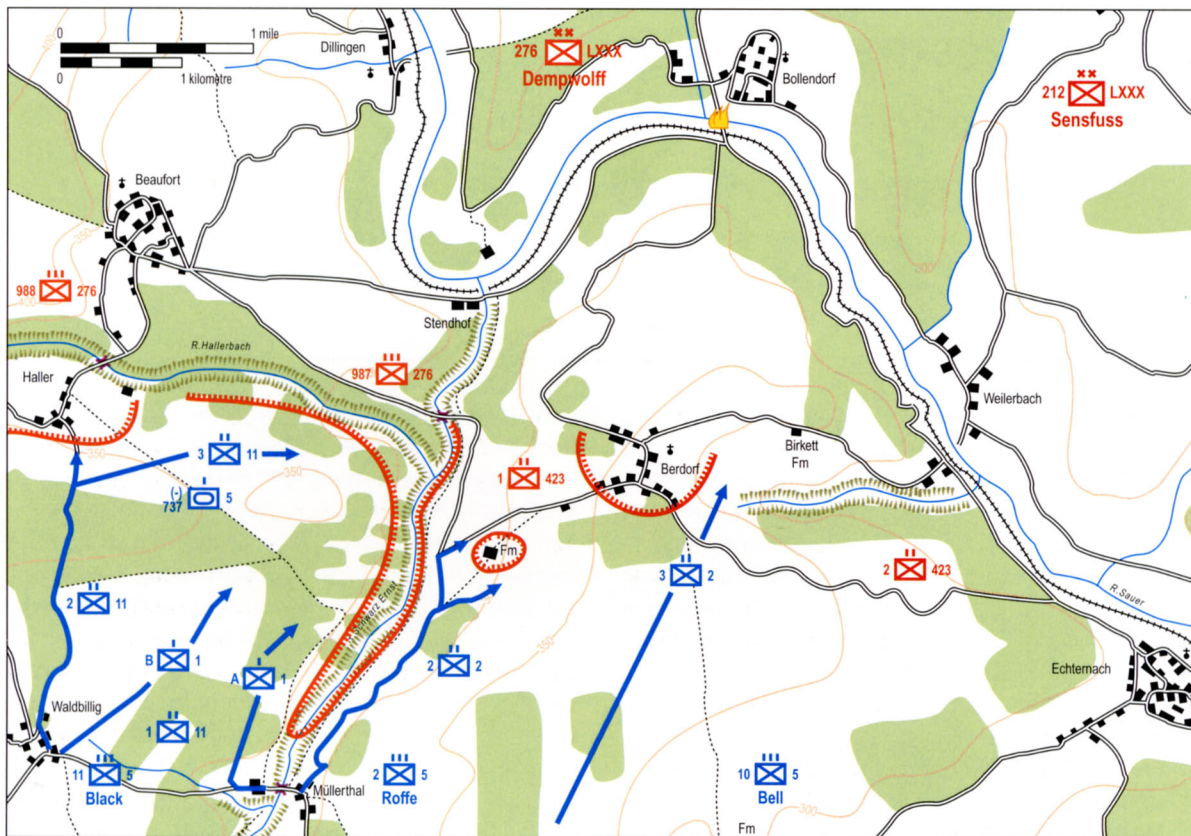
As already seen, Companies F and G had a hard time of it in the gorge so Roffe ordered them to fight their way out on Christmas morning and attack the farm overlooking the west road to Berdorf instead. The 3rd Battalion had a similarly tough experience advancing across the rugged landscape and lost 30 men of Company L, including their commander, to heavy machine-gun fire from a ridge in their path. What Roffe did not realise was that he was facing strong elements of two German regiments, 987 from

276 Volks-grenadier Division in the gorge and 423 from 212 Volksgrenadier Division in front of Berdorf. However, he persevered, calling down artillery fire on the ridge while Company K manoeuvred to outflank it. This time the position was taken with only three casualties, but the battalion commander, Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Connor, later said the action had been like trying to 'catch rats in a maze'.

Meanwhile, on the west side of the Schwarz Ernst, Colonel Paul Black's 11th Regiment, having sorted out the traffic congestion problem, had started its advance towards Haller and Beaufort from Christnach, with the 1st Battalion on the right and 3rd on the left. Company A of 1/11th descended into the Schwarz Ernst gorge on the other side of the river from Roffe's men, but came under flanking fire from Müllerthal, while Company B encountered strong opposition from a contingent of 276 Volksgrenadier Division's 988 Regiment at Waldbilling. The German garrison did evacuate the village later during the night, though, and Company B moved in at daybreak. On the regiment's left, meanwhile, the 3rd Battalion had made much better progress, and by nightfall was in the woods overlooking Haller, less than 1,000 yards (915m) away.

For Christmas Day, Black decided to bring his reserve 2nd Battalion into play at Haller while the 3rd swung round in front of the 1st Battalion along the line of the Hallerbach creek. This coincided with the real beginning of the German withdrawal to and behind the Sauer. Reinforced by ten M4A3E2 'Jumbo' assault tanks from the 737th Tank Battalion, the 3rd quickly captured the heights to the immediate east of Haller, then swung round to drive the enemy out of the woods in front of the 1st Battalion sector northeast of Waldbilling. The 2nd Battalion recaptured Haller at the same time, rounding up nearly 200 prisoners from 988 Volksgrenadier Regiment.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84					36-38,45-46,76-77,85-86	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54	47-48	49-51			



The situation on December 25 showing the positions of the 11th Infantry Regiment's three battalions west of the Schwarz Ernst gorge, and those of the 2nd Regiment to the east. The German forces opposing them appear much stronger than they, in fact, were by this stage.

On the other side of the gorge, Roffe's III/2nd advanced through the woods overlooking Berdorf, which had been hammered all night by the American artillery. Supporting tanks again quickly suppressed German machine-gun posts, and the battalion successfully drove a wedge into 212 Volksgrenadier Division's lines between Berdorf and Echternach. The 2nd Battalion, having painfully extricated itself from the gorge, came under heavy fire from the farm overlooking the road junction. Companies F and G rejoined Company E for the attack, but had only three M4s for support, and one of these was promptly knocked out by German anti-tank guns in the woods north of the village. This shot revealed the enemy positions, though, enabling artillery fire to be brought down on them. After this, the farm was captured with

comparative ease and Berdorf was in sight.

By this time, the German LXXX Korps' two divisions barely had a line to defend at all, and were rapidly ferrying their men back across the Sauer. On Boxing Day morning, Companies F and G, II/2nd, closed in on Berdorf. Here, they surprised the Germans out in the open before they could deploy for the village's defence. It was still a struggle to win through, though, and when the 1st Battalion tried to pass in order to capture the farm on the high ground overlooking the bridge at Bollendorf, its men came under heavy fire, and had to abandon the attempt until next day – by which time the 2nd Battalion had finally secured Berdorf and most of 212 Volksgrenadier Division was back across the river. It was a very similar story in the 11th Regiment sector, where the 2nd Battalion recaptured Beaufort after a short fight, while the 3rd crossed the Hallerbach and was soon bringing down artillery fire and fighter-bombers against 276 Volksgrenadier Division's crossing point at Dillingen. In the southern sector of the front, it was effectively the end of the 'Battle of the Bulge'.

16/12/1944	17/12	18/12	19/12	20-21/12	22/12	23/12	24/12	25/12	26/12	27-28/12	29/12	30/12	31/12	5/1
pages 68-75	82-84				36-38,45-46,76-77,85-86	39-42,78-81	43-44	52-54		47-48	49-51			



NEW YEAR CRISIS IN ALSACE

One hour before the clocks struck midnight on December 31, 1944, instead of celebrating New Year the thinly spread men of Lieutenant-General Alexander Patch's Seventh Army deployed facing the West Wall south and east of Saarbrücken suddenly found themselves under attack. Psychologically, the Germans could hardly have picked a better moment to begin a new offensive in the west, but this time their security had not been as good as it was before the beginning of 'Herbstnebel' and Allied intelligence was forewarned of XIII SS-Korps' assault. In fact, Eisenhower had already planned that, when the Germans did attack, Patch's Seventh Army would shorten its line by falling back on defensive positions in the Maginot Line and Vosges mountains, abandoning much of northern Alsace as a temporary expedient while the situation 100 miles (160km) away in the Ardennes was resolved.

Shermans of the 12th Armored Division's 714th Tank Battalion deployed near Haguenau during Seventh Army's riposte against the Gombsheim bridgehead. (U.S. Signal Corps)

What did come as a surprise to the Allies, even though they had been alerted through Ultra to the movements of various squadrons in II Jagdkorps of Luftflotte 3, was the waves of hundreds of German bombers and fighter-bombers which struck at 18 Allied airfields in Holland, Belgium and northern France on New Year's Day itself. Over 150 Allied aircraft were destroyed, mostly on the ground, and a similar number damaged during what was later dubbed the 'hangover raid', but the Luftwaffe itself lost roughly as many machines and, more importantly, over 200 irreplaceable pilots.

The new German ground offensive in the Seventh Army sector, codenamed 'Nordwind', fell principally on Major-General Robert Spragins' 44th Infantry Division on the right flank of Major-General Wade Haislip's XV Corps at Sarreguemines; and on Major-General Robert Frederick's 45th Infantry Division, which had only that day, December 31, been transferred (without shifting position) from Haislip's XV to the left flank of Major-General Edward Brooks' VI Corps. (Brooks himself had assumed command of the corps on October 25, when Lucian Truscott, who had led it

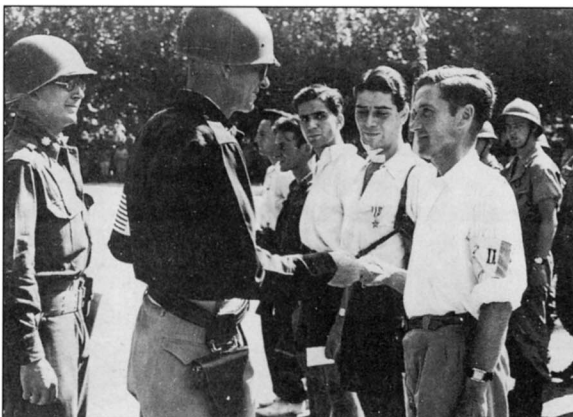


ashore during Operation 'Dragoon' in August, returned to Italy to take command of Fifth Army.)

On the 45th's right flank, and barely affected during the first phase of the German offensive, was Major-General Harry Collins' fresh 42nd Infantry Division. This had begun landing in France only at the beginning of the month, and was still incomplete, but relieved Major-General John Dahlquist's veteran 36th 'Texas' Infantry Division in the line on December 24. The 36th then fell back to the vicinity of Weyersheim, just to the north of Strasbourg, being attached briefly to Major-General Frank Milburn's fledgling XXI Corps before going to XV Corps. Milburn's XXI Corps itself would not become operational until January 13, although its staff had arrived in Europe in September. Its components would be the 28th and 75th Infantry Divisions, which had already fought hard in the Ardennes, and the 3rd Infantry Division, which had temporarily been seconded to the French II Corps on December 15.

In Brooks' VI Corps' sector facing the German onslaught on January 1, 1945, while the 42nd was therefore completely 'green', the 45th and the 36th, which would soon revert to his command were by this time two of the most battle-hardened infantry divisions in the U.S. Army, and well accustomed to fighting in rugged terrain and snow since they had taken part in the landings at both Salerno and Anzio as well as fighting on the Cassino front during the winter of 1943/44. At the beginning of the new German offensive, however, the corps had no armoured

Before the defence of Strasbourg became a political rather than a military issue, the commanders of the U.S. Seventh Army and French First Army, Lieutenant-General Alexander Patch (*below*), and Général Jean de Lattre de Tassigny (*below right*), worked closely together, both with the troops under their command, and with the Resistance forces. (U.S. Signal Corps)



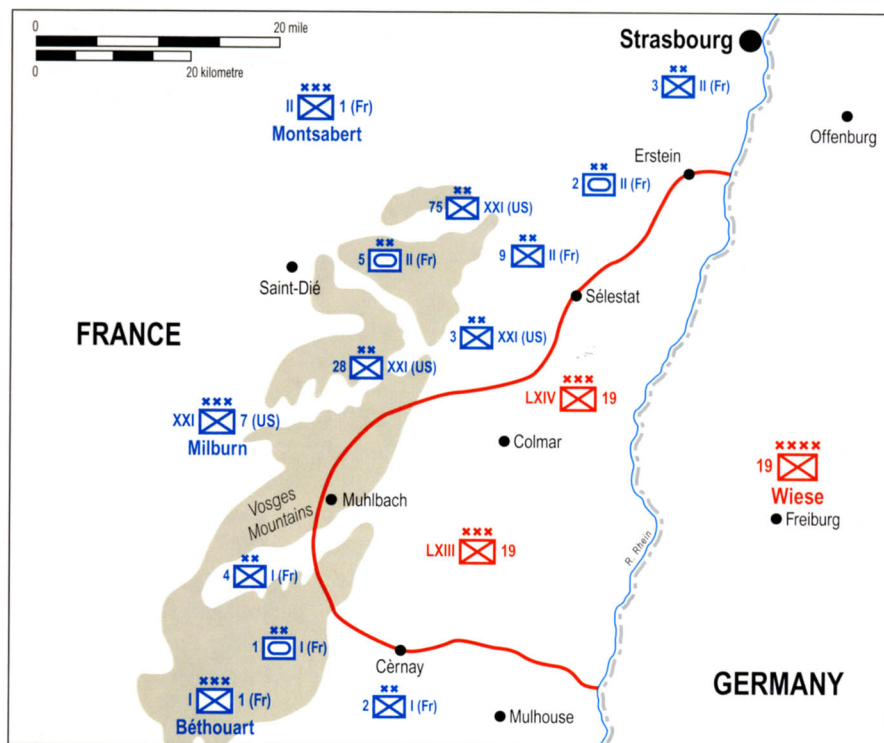
support apart from the understrength 101st and 191st Tank and 645th Tank Destroyer Battalions. When the scale of the enemy offensive became apparent, though, on January 3, Patch transferred Major-General Rod Allen's 12th Armored Division from XV to VI and then later to XXI Corps. Like the 42nd Infantry, the 12th Armored was relatively combat inexperienced, only having arrived in France in November. The other division involved in the battle, Spragins' 44th, was also a comparative newcomer to the war, having joined XV Corps only in the middle of October, but had fought well at Sarrebourg and in the Saverne Gap during November.

Politics rather than military considerations now came into play again, just as they had before Operation 'Dragoon'. The withdrawal of Dahlquist's 36th Infantry Division from the Haguenau sector had left Strasbourg exposed to attack. This was anathema to both Charles de Gaulle and to the fiery commander of the Première Armée Française, Jean de Lattre. (Often referred to as the 'Marshal Ney' of World War 2, de Lattre was promoted to Maréchal de France posthumously in 1952.)

Eisenhower saw no useful purpose in hanging on to Strasbourg but he had tried arguing with de Gaulle before, and so surrendered gracefully – but if the French wanted to defend the city, they would have to do it themselves. Most of de Lattre's forces (Béthouart's I and de Montsabert's II Corps) were already engaged in the investment of the German LXIII and LXIV Korps in the Colmar pocket – a broad salient just to the south of Strasbourg – but he peeled off Général Guillaume's tough 3e Division d'Infanterie Algérien and Général Brosset's Free French 1e Division d'Infanterie Motorisée, which took over the city's defence on January 5 – just, as it happened, in the nick of time. (The latter division included two battalions of Foreign Légionnaires and both divisions had a regiment of the crack Chasseurs d'Afrique.)



While Guillaume's 3e Division Algérien concentrated on the defence of Strasbourg, the remainder of de Lattre's Première Armée Française got on with the reduction of the German Nineteenth Armee's two Korps in the Colmar pocket. Devers assigned the 5th and 12th Armored Divisions to assist the three infantry divisions in Frank Milburn's XXI Corps from Seventh Army, which were co-operating with the French during the operation.



The two Roberts, Spragins and Frederick, meanwhile, were having a fairly rough time. The 44th was forced to fall back from Sarreguemines towards the Saare Canal, but by January 3 had the situation under control. Reinforced by the 253rd Regiment from Major-General Louis Hibbs' freshly arrived 63rd Infantry Division, the 44th forced the German XIII SS-Korps back to its start line by the middle of the month, capturing the CO of 17 SS-Panzer Grenadier Division in the process. The 45th, as planned, fell back from Bitche to a line behind the river Moder centred on Wingen. This marked the high tide level of the German offensive – a gain of around 20 miles (32km) – and from January 4 Frederick's men counter-attacked to eliminate the German LXXXX and LXXXIX Korps' forces in the Bitche salient.

Over the next few days, the Germans launched two further assaults. The first, on January 4, by 'Gruppe Rässler', consisting of the reserve 606 Volksgrenadier Division, reinforced by elements of XXXIX Panzer Korps moved south from Bastogne, took place on VI Corps' right flank at Wissembourg, but were stopped on the river Moder line. More threatening was an assault just north of Strasbourg over the Rhein at Gamsheim by 553 Volksgrenadier Division from XIV SS-Korps of Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler's Heeresgruppe Oberrhein. The five battalions of Collins' 42nd Infantry Division – all that had so far arrived in the VI Corps' sector – initially counter-attacked, with no success.

Next, on January 7, LXIV Korps of the German Nineteenth Armee launched a pincer-attack out of the Colmar pocket, aiming to drive north up the west bank of the Rhein to link up with the Gamsheim forces and retake Strasbourg. Spearheaded by 198 Infanterie Division supported by Jagdpanthers of 654 schwere Panzerjäger Abteilung, this reached Erstein, only a stone's throw south of the city, but were then checked by the 3e Division Algérien and the tank destroyers of the Chasseurs d'Afrique. Although the fighting continued for several days, Devers reckoned that 6th Army Group now had the situation under control, and, on January 15, issued orders for de Lattre to begin preparing to eliminate the Colmar pocket entirely. Next day, the 12th Armored Division counter-attacked at Gamsheim, but by this time the bridgehead had been substantially reinforced by 10 SS-Panzer and 7 Fallschirm Divisions. These forces pushed west almost as far as Haguenau, but were halted at the American 'stop' line on the river Moder.

The new German initiative delayed de Lattre's assault against the Colmar pocket until January 20. Then, however, Béthouart's I and de Montsabert's II Corps, reinforced by Milburn's U.S. XXI Corps and Général de Vernejoul's 5e Division Blindé, attacked concentrically. The operation was further hampered by bad weather but Vernejoul's men took Colmar on February 2 and by the 10th the last German units in the pocket had pulled back east of the Rhein.

EPILOGUE

THE BOIL IS LANCED

On January 3, 1945, to the great relief of Eisenhower, Patton and Bradley and despite the misgivings and sour demeanour of Montgomery, the main Allied counter-offensive to erase 'the Bulge' finally began in earnest. The plan, basically was 'Lightning Joe' Collins' 'kleine lösung' rather than Patton's more ambitious 'große lösung', and aimed only at reuniting First and Third Armies east of Houffalize, rather than cutting off the base of 'the Bulge'.

The main instruments were Collins' VII and Troy Middleton's VIII Corps on either flank, with part of Brian Horrocks' British XXX Corps in the centre. (6th Airborne and 53rd [Welsh] Infantry Divisions plus 29th and 33rd Armoured Brigades.) At the same time, however, Millikin's III and Eddy's XII Corps in the south were to keep pushing the German forces back behind the Clerf and ultimately the Our, while Matthew Ridgway's XVIII (Airborne) Corps headed towards St Vith and the Schnee Eifel, establishing new 'hard shoulders'.

Once this new phase of operations began, however, the Allied forces quickly rediscovered what the Germans had already learned – that the places in the Ardennes where armour can be deployed effectively are limited and that strong infantry support is vital. Precious ground was only retaken slowly and at high cost in lives – and meanwhile the Germans threw a reconstituted I SS-Panzer Korps into yet another attempt to seize Bastogne, which by this time had become a symbolic rather than a strategic prize.

On the second day of the new offensive, practically everything came to a standstill in a blinding snowstorm, and for the next fortnight weather conditions were so bad that on only three days could supporting fighter-bomber sorties be flown. German resistance everywhere was proving determined, and local counter-attacks were often devastating. Even the usually optimistic Patton made a diary note on January 4 that, 'We can still lose this war.'

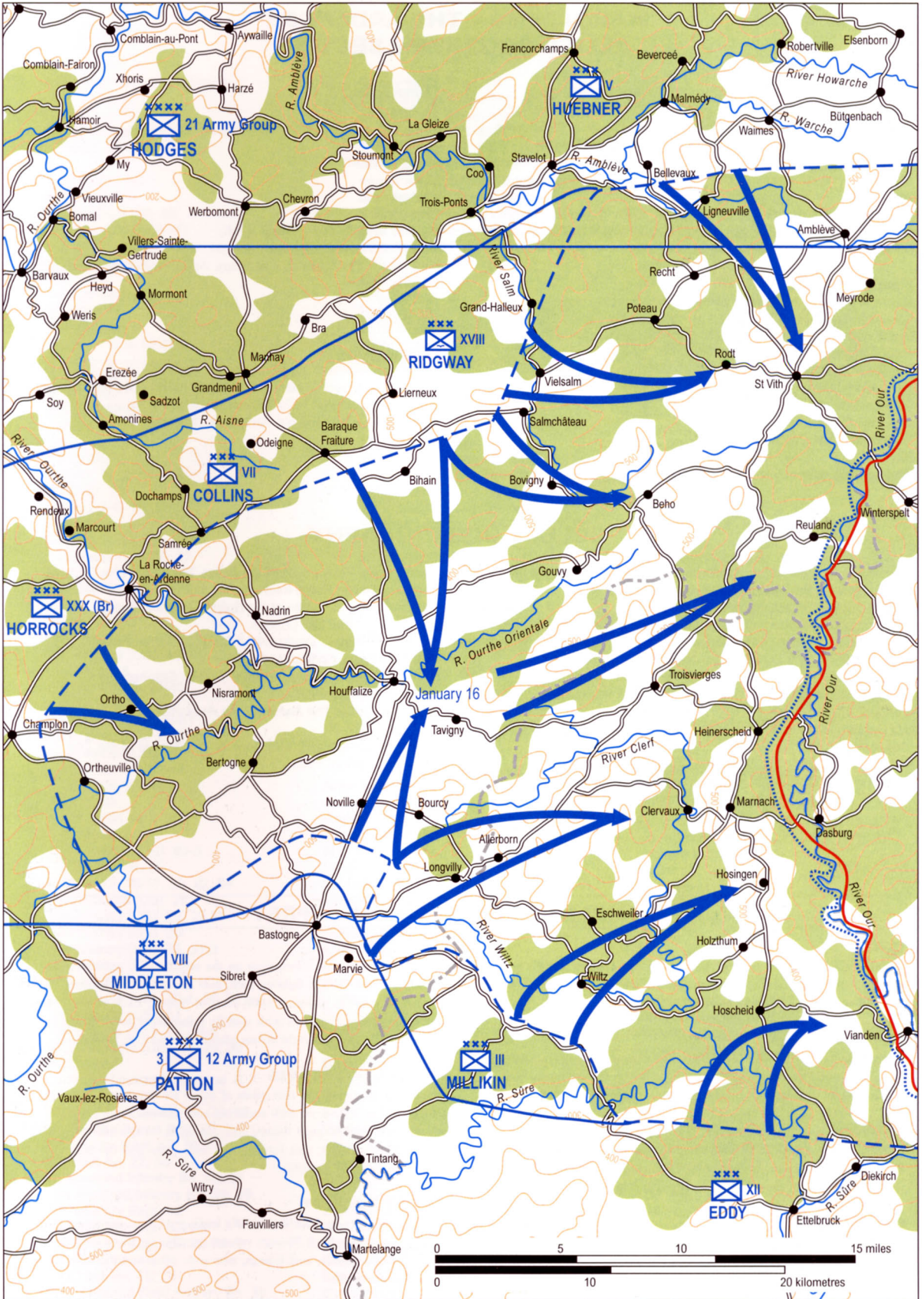
Nevertheless, progress was made, although on

January 5 the greatest advance was a mere mile (1.6km). Next day though, 3rd Armored Division retook Baraque Fraiture – 'Parker's Crossroads'. The 7th was a virtual stalemate, but on January 8 Hitler authorised Fifth Panzer Armee to begin retiring – which it was already doing. He also started pulling out forces, including two Volks-Artillerie Korps, from what even he could finally see was a lost battle. The GIs did not immediately notice their disappearance because the resistance in the front line remained stubborn. In the meanwhile the Alsace situation was forcing Eisenhower and even Patton to look over their shoulders.

Even now, the battle still raged around Bastogne, but on January 11 Patton's newly arrived 90th Infantry Division 'bagged' a large part of 5 Fallschirm Division, and, in the north, Ridgway's troops were advancing east of the Salm down the Amblève valley from Trois Pons and Stavelot. On January 12, news of the latest Russian onslaught caused Hitler to begin pulling the remaining SS-Panzer divisions out of the line. Both Patton's and Hodges' forces began making faster headway. When V Corps (now commanded by Clarence Huebner, because Leonard Gerow had been promoted to lead Fifteenth Army) joined in the counter-attack on January 15, it was almost all over bar the shouting. Patrols from Patton's 11th Armored and Hodges' 84th Infantry Divisions linked hands outside Houffalize on the 16th, by which time the disgruntled Montgomery had already begun pulling XXX Corps back to Holland.

The 'boil' was finally lanced when, appropriately, 7th Armored Division retook St Vith on the 23rd. There was still hard fighting to come, but to all intents and purposes the 'Battle of the Bulge' was now a subject for historians.

The unbroken line on the map shows the front line 24 hours into the Allied offensive. The slow progress initially is clearly indicated by the heavy broken line which shows the situation on January 12. The final dotted line marks the situation at the end of the month.



WARGAMING – THE ARDENNES ALLIED SOUTHERN SECTOR

The Ardennes Offensive of December '44 represents the last desperate gasp in the West by a defeated and crippled Germany. Recent anniversaries and commemorations, events in the cinema (as well as the reminiscences of participants) have brought the war into sharper focus in the public mind with a consequent increase in interest. All these factors make World War 2 a 'must' for many wargamers.

Wargaming with model figures offers the budding general possibly the most visually satisfying medium for refigiting World War 2 battles – particularly the Ardennes Campaign.

Figures and models

Below is a list, by no means comprehensive, of the main figure manufacturers. Many can be obtained from good model shops or the addresses of the individual manufacturers can be found in most wargame magazines.

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Heroics and Ross

1/285th Scale:

GHQ via Chiltern miniatures

10-mm/1/200th Scale:

Skytrex

Wargames South

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20-mm Scale:

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Skytrex

Platoon 20

Figures Armour and Artillery (FAA)

Wargames Foundry (limited ranges)

Plus many plastic kits by Matchbox, Airfix, Hasagawa, Esci etc ...

25-mm Scale:

1st Corps

Battle Honours

Computer Games

Empire Interactive's 'Battleground Ardennes'

Microsoft's 'Close Combat – Normandy to the Ardennes'

Strategic Simulation Inc's 'Panzer General'

Strategic Studies Group's 'Ardennes Offensive'

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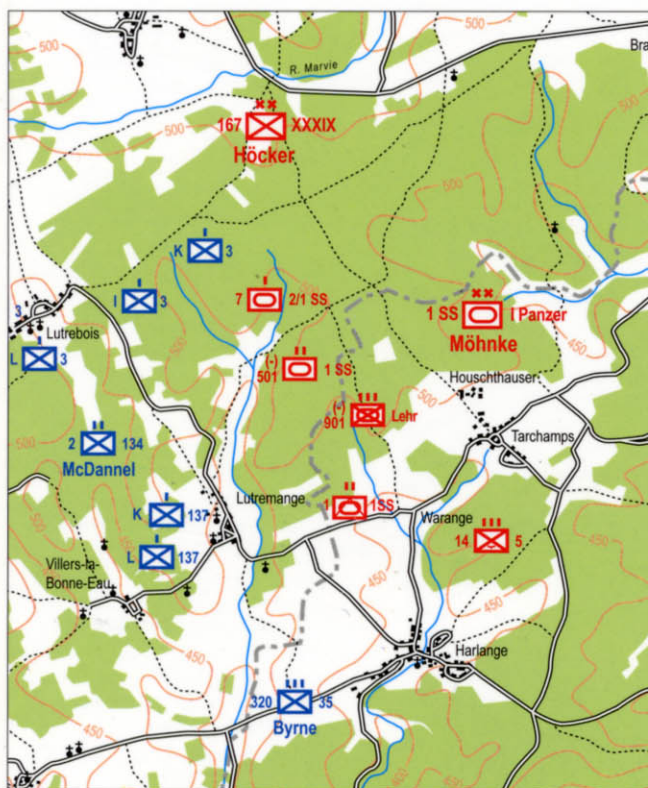
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