

Combat Command "A" History, November 1944-  
March 1945



# SURPLUS

NON RECORD MATERIAL  
WW II RECORDS DIV, NARS

HEADQUARTERS COMBAT COMMAND "A"  
14TH ARMORED DIVISION, APO #446  
U. S. ARMY

On the first of Nov 1944, GCA was bivouacked in the vicinity of Septemes, France. The period 1 Nov to 6 Nov was spent preparing for movement to the north into the combat area. Supply shortages were corrected as much as possible along with maintenance of equipment and training of units. On the 5th of Nov the advance party left for the north to prepare for the arrival of the troops. On Tuesday, 7 Nov the first troops and track vehicles left Septemes by rail (boxcars and flatcars) with destination Chatel, France. The first wheeled vehicle column departed Septemes by road on 8 Nov 44, and arrived 10 Nov as did the first trains of troops and tanks

GCA closed vicinity La Verrerie De Portieux on 14 Nov 1944. The period 10 Nov to 19 Nov was spent bivouacked in the vicinity La Verrerie De Portieux preparing men and equipment for combat. Tactical studies were made of the fighting ability of tanks in the area that the command was destined for fighting. Column formations were formed for the purpose of meeting the problem of tanks being confined to the roads.

At 201400 Nov 44 GCA marched in two columns towards assembly area vic ST REMY and NONPATELIZE from which it was to cross the MEURTHE RIVER and attack to the east. After having been restrained by VI Corps west of the line ST REMY-LASALLE for approximately 10 hours, units occupied their assigned areas.

At 211400 Operations Memorandum No 12 HqVI Corps was received changing the mission of GCA to a march northwest from RAMBERVILLERS thru BAGCARAT-BLAMONT and CIREY to attack southeast to seize SCHIRMECK and block enemy forces withdrawing to the northeast. At 1900 the column having completely reversed and reformed, began the march ordered. The column halted on side roads vic BLAMONT between 2300 and 0630 at which time it resumed the march.

At 220830 the first enemy contact was made by the point of the 62 AIB leading the GCA column. After removing one road block the 62 was halted by another defended road block located at V500995. Enemy resistance was stubborn; small arms, machine gun and mortar fire held up our advance. About 1400 the 48 Tk Bn on GCA order sent a strong reconnaissance element down the ABRESCHWILLER-LE DONON road. By dark no report had been received of this unit and the command outposted for the night.

At approximately 1900 message was received indicating transfer of GCA from VI Corps to XV Corps as of 1400.

On the morning of 26 Nov, 62 continued the attack up the BLANG-RUPT VALLEY and the 48 attacked up the ST QUIRIN valley. Both meeting defended road blocks. At the end of the day, our most advanced elements were at V586946. On 24 Nov both columns succeeded in breaking thru resistance and reaching a road junction V580914 near LE DONON. The 48 having reached the road jet first continued the attack down the road toward SCHIRMECK and was halted in the late afternoon by a large road crater at V582889.

By the next morning the road crater had been filled and the 48 continued its attack. XV Corps order of the previous evening had changed the GCA objective to a point 800 yards northwest of SCHIRMECK so as to prevent interference with VI Corps troops rapidly approaching SCHIRMECK from the southwest.

614-13.2

Nov  
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This objective was reached by the 48 at 1430 after several heavy fire fights near GRANDFONTAINE. Contact was then made with units of VI Corps and by 7th Army order GCA at that time was attached for operations to VI Corps.

The command remained on the SCHIRMECK - ST QUIRIN road until the morning 27 November at which time it marched by two columns to the Valley of the RHINE and turned south thru OBERNAI with the mission of seizing and holding the line ERSTEIN - BENFELD - SELESTAT. First contact was made at a defended road block at the CR northeast of GOXWILLER V8181. The west column, 25 tk Bn pushed thru this road block and moved south thru moderate resistance to GERTWILLER V8079 where it was stopped by a blown bridge. The 48 Tk Bn passed just east of GOXWILLER and turned to the southeast towards VALFF after a stiff fight on the west edge of VALFF, the 48 pushed thru, but was stopped by a blown bridge on the eastern edge of VALFF. The 62 which had been in reserve had meanwhile been sent thru BISCHOFFSHEIM - KRAUTERGETSCHEIM and HINDISHEIM to attack south down the ERSTEIN - BENFELD - SELESTAT road. Shortly after dark, head of this column reached a point just northeast of BENFELD and met extremely heavy resistance. The enemy attacked with small arms, automatic weapons, mortars, antitank guns and artillery. The 62 was forced to withdraw. The 25 had meanwhile found a bypass around the blown bridge at GERTWILLER and attempted to cross. Heavy antitank and machine gun fire prevented the successful crossing and the 25 withdrew just to the north edge of town and outposted for the night. 48 meanwhile had reformed its column and moved so that its head was at MEISTRATZHEIM. VI Corps order restricted our zone for the next days attack to the OBERNAI - SELESTAT Highway and routes west thereof.

On 28 Nov the 25 continued its attack on GERTWILLER meeting very heavy resistance and being unable to push thru. The 48 attacked thru HERLIGENSTEIN and into BARR where it met extremely heavy antitank fire which inflicted many casualties and forced the withdrawal of the Bn.

On 29 Nov, 62, which had reverted to reserve on the previous day moved around to the east of the 25 thru BOURGHEIM and ZELLWILLER to a position just north of ST PIERRE where it was halted by a blown bridge heavily defended. 48 moved thru BARR to EICHHOFFEN where it was halted by a blown bridge. On 30 Nov bridges were constructed at ST PIERRE and ANDLAU, the latter in the face of heavy fire, and both columns continued the attack to the south. At the end of the day the 62 had cleared the west edge of EBERSHEIM and the 48 had turned east thru SCHERWILLER and halted on GCA order approximately one mile east of that town.

TROOP LIST

25th Tk Bn. 14th AD  
 48th Tk Bn. 14th AD  
 62nd Armd Inf Bn. 14th AD  
 500th Armd F. Arty Bn. 14th AD  
 B Trp, 94th Ren. Sqd. Mech. 14th AD  
 Co. C, 125th Armd. Engr. Bn. 14th AD  
 Co. C, 136th Ord. Maint. Bn. 14th AD  
 Det. MP Platoon, 14th AD  
 Det. 154th Signal Co. 14th AD  
 A & B Btry, 398th AAA  
 69th Armd F. Arty Bn. Atchd 270100 Nov 1944

CASUALTIES

Killed 7 Off. 37 EM  
 Wounded 4 Off. 119 EM  
 Missing 5 Off. 53 EM  
 NBC 1 Off. 36 EM  
 Repl Recd 0 Off 26 EM  
 Axis Pris 116

ROSTER OF KEY PERSONNEL

G.H. KARLSTAD, Col., Inf. 08109 Comdg. Off.  
 JOHN G. MONTGOMERY, Maj. Inf. 0381617 Exec. Off  
 HUMBERT F. BIASELLA, Maj. Inf. 0336886 S-4  
 GABRIEL, LOUIS T, Jr. Maj. MC 0388162 Med O  
 DANIEL R. GENTRY Capt. F.A. 0116561 S-3  
 DE WITT C. ARMSTRONG, III, Capt., Inf. 025441 S-2  
 CHARLES M. PAULUS, 1st Lt., Inf. 01014668 Comm. O.  
 ROBERT B. FULTON, III, 1st Lt., Inf. 0514661 Ln. O.  
 DONALD R. Mc VEIGH, 1st Lt., Inf 01016105, Asst. S-4, claims & Real Estate O.  
 WILLIAM J. HODGES, 2nd Lt., Inf. 0528403, Actg. S-1  
 MADISON V. SCOTT, 2nd Lt., F.A. 0511528, Asst Comm O  
 ROY L. CREWS, 1st Lt. 0556488, Chaplain  
 JOHN P. STANTON, 1st Lt. 055708, Chaplain  
 JOHN A. STAIR, 1st Lt., Inf, 01013869, Hq. Co. Comdr.

UNIT COMMANDERS

ERNEST C. WATSON, Maj. 0249093, 25th Tk Bn.  
 JAMES H. MEYERS, Lt. Col., Inf. 62nd AIB  
 E.H. FERRIS, Lt. Col. 48th Tk Bn.  
 D.V. SWANSON, Lt. Col. 500th AFA  
 FREDERICK J. SCHWIND, 1st Lt. A-84  
 JOHN E. MARTIN, 1st Lt. B-94  
 FRANKLIN R. WALLACE, Jr. Capt. C-125  
 JAMES K. TYRELL, 1st Lt. C-136