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U.S. Army. 6th army group.

FINAL REPORT

G-3 SECTION

Headquarters, 6TH Army Group

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HEADQUARTERS 6TH ARMY GROUP
G-3 Section
APO 23, U. S. Army

Heidelberg, Germany.
1 July 1945.

SUBJECT: Final Report.

TO : The Chief of Staff.

1. The attached document is submitted as a Final Report, in narrative form, of some of the more important activities in which this office had a primary interest during operations of Headquarters 6th Army Group from its organization to 30 June 1945. No effort has been made to cover in detail or even mention many things of a minor nature, especially if they have no real historical value. Effort has been made to cover most items of major interest, which have historical value, in sufficient detail to indicate dates, actions taken, the reasons therefor, and the results produced, along with such correlative items as are pertinent and of interest. It will be noted that, except in one case, reference to the means and methods employed by 6th Army Group to deceive the German is omitted. It is believed that these matters should not be disclosed in this document.

2. In preparing this report effort has been made to deal with all activities by phases, and chronologically where possible. Every effort has been made to insure that facts such as dates, actions, reasons and results are correctly recorded and substantiated by records of this headquarters. However, conjectures, opinions and the like, which are readily identified in this report, do not necessarily represent the official records of this headquarters or the views of any officers or troops of this headquarters other than myself and the officers of the Planning Staff and Committee who collaborated in the compilation of this report. While it is not intended that this report should be considered as a history of 6th Army Group operations, it is intended that this report should amplify and supplement broadly the G-3 aspects of the History of Headquarters 6th Army Group which has been produced as a separate document; and it should be read in this light.

3. Time available has precluded presenting this report in as carefully chosen language and with the editorial nicety desired. Readers should bear this fact in mind when analyzing this report.

R. E. Jenkins
R. E. JENKINS

Brigadier General, G.S.C.,
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3.

Final
Report of G-3 Section
HEADQUARTERS 6TH ARMY GROUP
1 July 1945

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CHAPTER ONEBIRTH OF SIXTH ARMY GROUP

At the Quadrant Conference, Quebec, in August 1943 the Combined Chiefs of Staff decided that a landing should be made on the south coast of France, to assist a main assault against the French west coast by holding German formations in the south and attracting additional formations to the area from Northern and Central France. This operation was to be mounted in the Mediterranean Theater from resources available and, in addition to a limited number of American divisions, was to be composed of all French troops available under the French Rearmament Program.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower, U.S.A. then Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean Theater of Operations, was requested to present his views concerning this operation to the Combined Chiefs of Staff with the least possible delay. Accordingly, a strategic study was prepared at Allied Force Headquarters, Algiers, embodying General Eisenhower's views regarding the feasibility and desirability of this operation from the viewpoint of operations in the Mediterranean Theater, from the viewpoint of future operations in northwest Europe, and from the viewpoint of the combined Allied plans for the complete destruction of the German war machine.

This study was transmitted to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on 30 October 1943 by cable and on 31 October 1943 by officer courier. Both the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and the British Chiefs of Staff agreed in principle with the views expressed by General Eisenhower. These views formed the bases for later discussions by the Combined Chiefs of Staff at the Sextant Conference held in Cairo in late November 1943. At this conference the Combined Chiefs of Staff confirmed their former position that an assault against the south coast of France should be undertaken from the Mediterranean Theater and presented their views to President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, who agreed.

Following immediately upon the heels of the Sextant Conference was the Teheran Conference of "The Big Three", President Roosevelt, Prime Minister Churchill and Marshal Stalin. At this conference "The Big Three" agreed that a two-pronged assault by the Allies against Fortress Europe was the soundest method of opening a second front. The agreed strategic plan of "The Big Three" called for a main assault against Western France launched from bases in the British Isles and a secondary effort of maximum possible strength against Southern France launched from bases in the Mediterranean Theater. It was this southern force, composed initially of the Seventh Army, consisting of one U.S. corps of three infantry divisions and one provisional airborne division, and French Army "F" (later redesignated as First French Army) of two corps of seven divisions, that was destined to become the 6th Army Group, frequently referred to in dispatches as the Southern Group of Armies.

Hence the origin of the 6th Army Group is directly traceable to the three conferences which probably, more than any others, had the greatest influence upon the final destruction of the German war machine and upon the liberation of Europe -- the Quadrant Conference at Quebec, the SEXTANT Conference at Cairo, and the Torch Conference of "The Big Three".

Initial planning for the invasion of Southern France began at Allied Force Headquarters, Algiers, in December 1943. Headquarters Seventh Army, then at Palermo, Sicily, was nominated to command the invasion force. It was moved to Algiers early in 1944 to facilitate planning of the operation. Lieutenant General Alexander M. Patch (then Major General) was subsequently announced as commanding general and joined his new command soon after its arrival in Algiers.

General Jacob L. Devers, USA, (then Lieutenant General) joined AFHQ in January 1944 in the dual capacity of Deputy Supreme Allied Commander and Commanding General of North African Theater of Operations, U. S. Army. He materially influenced the planning and launching of the operation he was later to direct as Commanding General of 6th Army Group.

Many obstacles had to be overcome in planning and launching the Southern France invasion. These obstacles were largely occasioned by the keen competition for resources available in the Mediterranean Theater. The bulk of men and materiel required had to come from Mediterranean resources. Consequently, prospects of continuing vigorously the Italian Campaign were not aided by diverting a portion of the available means to the Southern France front.

The original target date for the invasion was mid-June 1944. Resources required had been earmarked from NATOUSA stocks. But these resources were transferred to the Italian Campaign in order to break the stalemate in Cassino and Anzio in the May 11 offensive. This occasioned an indefinite postponement of the Southern France operations, known at first as Anvil but later changed to Dragoon for security reasons. Despite this, planning for operation Dragoon continued. Late in June it was decided definitely to carry out the invasion and D-Day was set for 15 August 1944.

A small advance detachment of AFHQ, under command of General Devers, was established in Bastia, Corsica in July 1944 to coordinate the employment of medium bombers whose primary mission was to support Operation Dragoon. From this detachment, and in accordance with instructions received from General Marshall, Chief of Staff United States Army, and from General Sir Henry Maitland Wilson, Supreme Allied Commander Mediterranean Theater, General Devers organized the nucleus of Headquarters 6th Army Group whose training was initiated at once.

In accordance with the provisions of the Manual for Commanders of Large Units, it was envisaged that the functions of Headquarters 6th Army Group would be almost wholly tactical and that it would perform a minimum of administrative functions consistent with its mission. For this reason, except for Engineers and Signal, no special staff sections of the combat arms and supply services such as normally operate in an army headquarters were organized. Special representation of the remaining arms and services were, however, included in the G-3 and G-4 Sections of the general staff. A functional chart showing initial organization of G-3 Section is shown in Figure 1.

The fact that Headquarters 6th Army Group was being organized was kept secret for a considerable length of time for very obvious reasons, and it continued to be known as Advance Detachment AFHQ.

Although the Chief of Staff and heads of the general staff sections were appointed in late July and early August, they were not announced until 27 August, four days before the initial echelon of the headquarters moved to the mainland of France. They were:

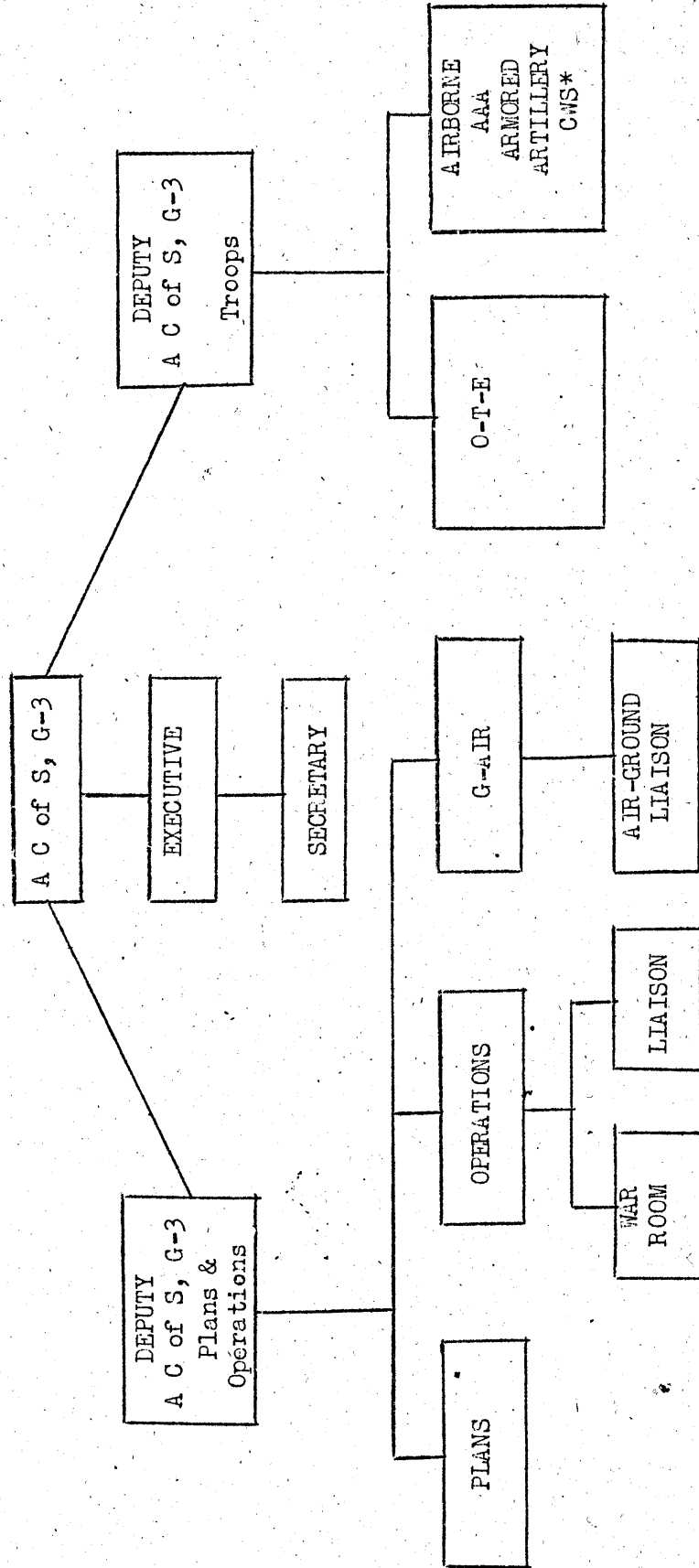
Chief of Staff: Major General David G. Barr, GSC
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-1: Major General Ben M. Sawbridge, GSC
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2: Brigadier General Frank A. Allen, Jr., GSC
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3: Brigadier General Reuben E. Jenkins, GSC
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4: Brigadier General Clarence L. Adcock, GSC

This staff remained unchanged except for Brigadier General Allen who on 27 September was ordered to SHAEF and replaced by Brigadier General (then Colonel) Eugene L. Harrison, GSC; Brigadier General Whitfield P. Shepard who later assumed the duty of Deputy Chief of Staff; and Colonel Henry J. Parkman, GSC, who was later appointed Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5.

As scheduled, the amphibious-airborne assault on the southern coast of France began on 15 August under command of Seventh U S Army. It achieved complete tactical surprise. Light opposition was encountered initially and as Headquarters 6th Army Group prepared to move to the mainland, American and French forces were rapidly pursuing the fleeing Germans up the Rhone Valley.

The first echelon of the Headquarters moved to St. Tropez, France, 30 miles southwest of Cannes on the French Riviera, on 31 August and established headquarters in Hotel Latitude 43. The remaining elements of the headquarters arrived from Naples and Corsica on 5 and 8 September.

G-3 ORGANIZATION
HEADQUARTERS 6TH ARMY GROUP



*Subsequently transferred to G-4

FIGURE 1

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At this time no definite date for assumption of command had been decided upon but it was generally agreed that Headquarters 6th Army Group would become operational sometime in mid-September. To effect a smooth change over, Headquarters 6th Army Group maintained close liaison with Seventh Army and French Army "B" during the northward advance. Liaison officers of the G-3 Section operated with the corresponding section of both Armies, keeping the tactical situation up to date at headquarters. Later, French officers were attached to the G-3 Section from French Army "B" to make liaison easier. Added to this was the permanent contact with the French Army maintained by the Allied Liaison Service working under direction of Seventh Army.

Movement of Headquarters from St. Tropez to Lyon began on 9 September and was completed on 15 September. The Palais de Foire on the eastern banks of the Rhone River was the site of the first operational headquarters of 6th Army Group.

On the afternoon of 14 September, while the Headquarters was in process of moving, orders were received from AFHQ placing Seventh U S Army and French Army "B" under command of Headquarters 6th Army Group as of 0001B hours, 15 September. At the same time tactical control was transferred from AFHQ to SHAEF. Responsibility for supply and administrative functions and for civil affairs within the area overrun were retained by AFHQ pending further developments.

By organizing from a nucleus of personnel thoroughly familiar with the planning phase of the operations and by maintaining closest liaison with all commands and agencies concerned, Headquarters 6th Army Group could become operational, assume command and pass to the operational control of SHAEF in a single stride on extremely short notice and experience no difficulty or confusion.

Thus, with initial instructions already on the way to Armies by radio, 6th Army Group came into being promptly at 0001B hours, 15 September 1944. It was destined for an eventful, historic and magnificent future.

CHAPTER TWO

SEVENTH ARMY CONTROLS DRAGOON FORCES

In Corsica and later in France, Headquarters 6th Army Group labored through its period of growing pains and kept abreast of the tactical and administrative situations of Dragoon Forces during July, August and early September.

Meanwhile, Seventh Army had added final touches to plans for operation Dragoon and conducted the amphibious-airborne assault on the Southern French coast as scheduled. From Italy was assembled the American contingent of the invading force which went ashore in the initial waves. To carry out the amphibious part of this gigantic task, Lieutenant General Patch employed the experienced VI Corps commanded by Lieutenant General (then Major General) Lucien Truscott which was composed of the veteran 3rd, 36th and 45th U. S. Infantry Divisions with one combat command of the French 1 DB attached. The 1st Airborne Division (Prov), the bulk of which had been in battle in Italy, was assigned to the airborne assault. Backing these assault forces was French Army "B" commanded by General D'Armee de Lattre de Tassigny, which was composed of two corps of seven divisions. Three of the French divisions had seen service in the Italian campaign and one in the assault of the Island of Elba. The two armored divisions and the other infantry division had not seen service in Italy as such but individuals of all had been hardened in fighting in Tunisia. Thus the entire assault force under Lt. Gen. Patch was composed of battle tried veterans, hardened by actual experience in fighting the German.

Under a blanket of aerial and naval bombardment, VI Corps assaulted the scenic French Riviera at 0800 hours, 15 August 1944, between Cannes and Toulon. This assault was preceded by an attack on the fortified islands of Levant and Port Cros, just off the coast between St. Tropez and Toulon, by the First Special Service Force. See Figure 2.

Meeting light initial resistance, the Americans advanced rapidly inland to establish a firm beachhead. The tactical plan called for twin drives westward towards the mouth of the Rhone River and north up the Rhone Valley. The only major resistance encountered on D-Day was in the 36th Division sector in front of St. Raphael. This was soon overcome, however, when the 36th Division, on the alert for just such a contingency, diverted forces to another beach, outflanked the resistance and captured St. Raphael. In the center, the 45th Division landed near St. Maxime and the 3rd Division, on the left, landed on the St. Tropez peninsula. The First Airborne Task Force (Prov), composed of one British Brigade and U. S. units equivalent to two regiments, under command of Major General (then Brigadier General) Robert T. Frederick, dropped in the Le Muy sector and St. Tropez Peninsula. Encountering only light opposition, the airborne units soon had

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Landings and Advance in
Southern France

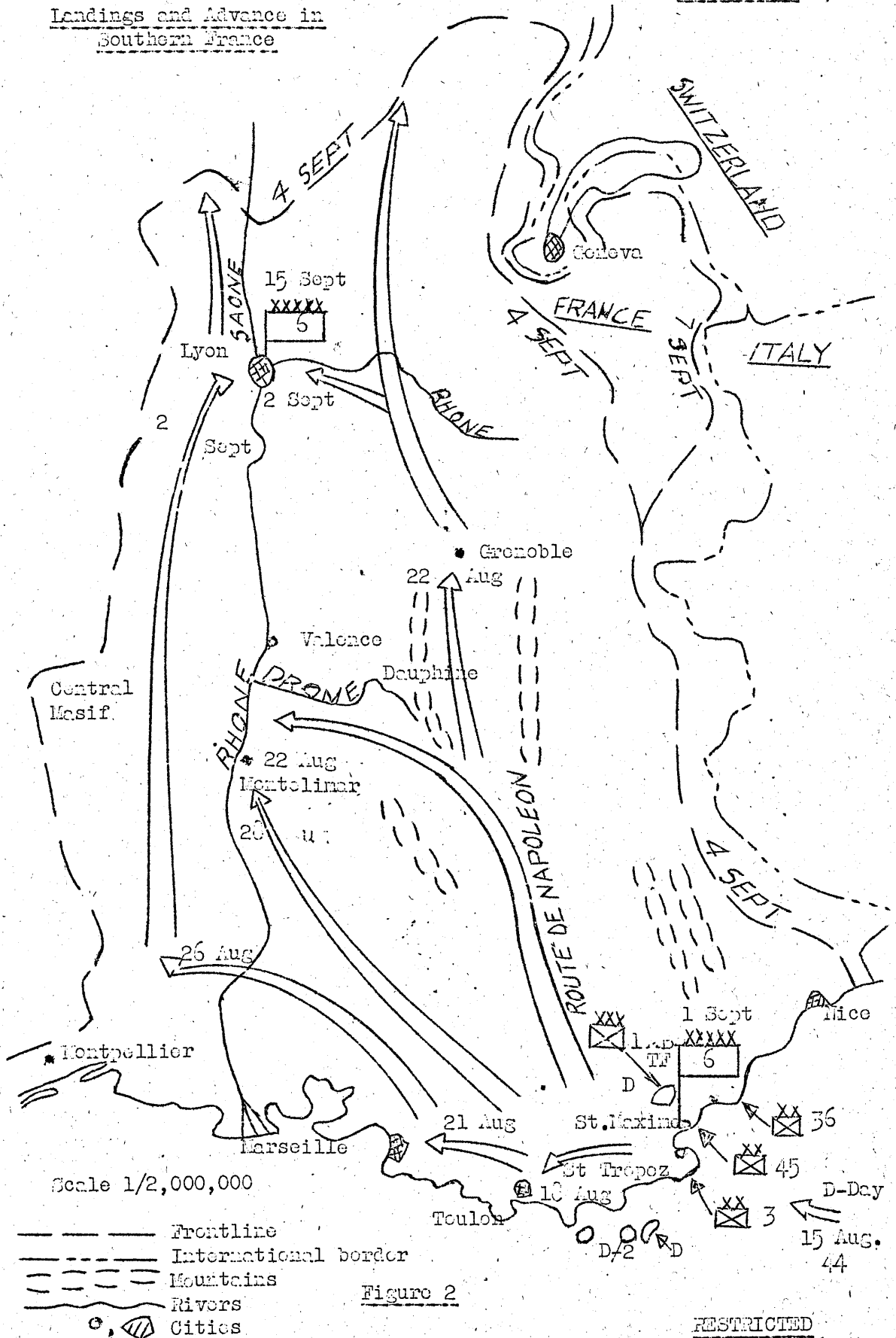


Figure 2

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consolidated their positions and joined forces with the amphibious forces to form a firm beachhead. All airborne elements were shifted to the right flank.

In the wake of the rapid advance of the VI Corps, French Army "B" began landing over the newly won beaches 16 August. The 1 DMI and 3 DIA came ashore first, followed in rapid order by CC2 of 1 DB, 9 DIC and two groups of Tabors. By 18 August, the French force began pushing westward along the coast on VI Corps' left. This maneuver was designed initially to capture Toulon, natural Mediterranean port, and surround Marseilles, larger artificial port to the west. Due to the light resistance encountered in the longer swing towards Marseilles and the speed of the VI Corps advance, both Marseilles and Toulon were reached simultaneously on 22 August. The eastern section of Toulon surrendered 24 August to 1 DMI but the German garrison fought bitterly in the western section of the city against 9 DIC until completely overrun on 28 August. Marseilles surrendered to 3 DIA and elements of 1 DB on 28 August.

Driving with relentless fury, American divisions pushed rapidly northward on the heels of the disorganized, retreating Germans. After forcing the Durance River Line on 19-20 August, VI Corps pushed Butler Task Force northeastward along the Route de Napoleon. Composed of one infantry battalion (motorized), reconnaissance squadron, armored field artillery battalion, tank destroyer company, two tank companies, and an engineer company, the Task Force advanced rapidly along the narrow, winding route meeting only token resistance. After occupying Sisteron and Gap and blocking the route from Grenoble on 20 August, the Task Force, on VI Corps orders, swung westward to seize the highground northwest of Montelimar. On 22 August, this light Task Force attempted to block the Rhone River escape route of the hard pressed Germans in the south and ran head-on into the hard hitting German 11th Panzer Division together with elements of three German infantry divisions. Sharp fighting ensued in which heavy casualties in equipment and men were inflicted on the fleeing Germans. Outnumbered, the Task Force withdrew eastward to positions where it could still cover a portion of the valley by fire. On 23 August, two RCT's of the 36th Division caught up with the Task Force. Another attempt was made to close the German escape route but this only partially succeeded due to the preponderance of forces on the German side. However, the German retreat northward relentlessly pounded from the air on the main jam-packed road, was slowed and heavy losses in valuable equipment and personnel killed, wounded and captured were inflicted upon the disorganized enemy.

As the fighting in the Rhone Valley progressed, elements of the 36th Division occupied Grenoble and the 45th Infantry Division moved rapidly northward through the French resort city. The 3rd Division continued to push northward up the Rhone Valley and through the neighboring foothills of the Dauphine Alps to join with the 36th Division in the capture of Montelimar on 28 August. Valence was captured on 31 August and the pursuit of the enemy continued northward.

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Meanwhile, French elements, after capturing Toulon and Marseilles, crossed the Rhone River at Avignon, Tarsaçon and Arles on 29 August. By 30 August, Nîmes and Montpellier had been occupied and reconnaissance elements had scoured the country as far as Sete, Beziers and Narbonne without contacting the enemy.

On 28 August, Seventh Army directed French Army "B" after occupying Montpellier and Narbonne, to advance rapidly northward along the west bank of the Rhone River and assist in the capture of Lyon. For this mission, the II Corps composed of 1 DMI and 1 DB was designated and sent racing northward.

To take advantage of the exploitation possibilities opened up by the rapid advance inland of its forces, Seventh Army initially had employed its troops as they became available in the most advantageous places. This had placed the French II Corps on the left and the VI U. S. Corps on the right. It was seen that the most suitable lineup of forces for future operations would be for the French to occupy the right and the American forces to operate on the left. Thus, as French elements completed clearing the ports of Marseilles and Toulon, Seventh Army directed French Army "B" to follow the VI Corps' advance through Grenoble and take up positions on the right. I Corps took command of 3 DIA and 9 DIC and by 1 September had started carrying out the assigned mission. At this time, II French Corps was moving rapidly north towards Lyon.

On 1 September, first elements of the 36th Division reached the highground to the south of and overlooking Lyon. The next day the remainder of the Division arrived. At the same time, 1 DB approached the city from the south. One day later, 1 DMI, following closely behind 1 DB, occupied the city.

After the occupation of Lyon on 3 September, the race northward continued with VI Corps capturing Bourg and occupying Lons Le Saunier on 4 September while II French Corps dashed through Macon. For front lines see Figure 3. Spectacular advances continued on both sides of the Rhone River and by 10 September, French forces had occupied Dijon while the VI Corps had already taken Besançon and American and French units were holding a wide front extending to the Swiss border just south of Blamont.

As Seventh Army advanced north and northeast against scattered opposition, Third Army, after breaking out of the Normandy beachhead at St. Lo, fought rapidly eastward. On 12 September, first contact between Third Army and Seventh Army was made at Chatillon sur Seine by two French reconnaissance officers. One of the officers was from 1 DMI of the southern forces and the other was from 2 DB, the French Armored Division which had landed in Normandy and was operating with the XV Corps of Third Army. Spotty contact existed during the next two days. On 14 September firm contact was established south of Chaumont, thereby sealing off Southwestern France where large numbers of German troops, unable to follow their comrades through the

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Lines of Advance Through Southern France

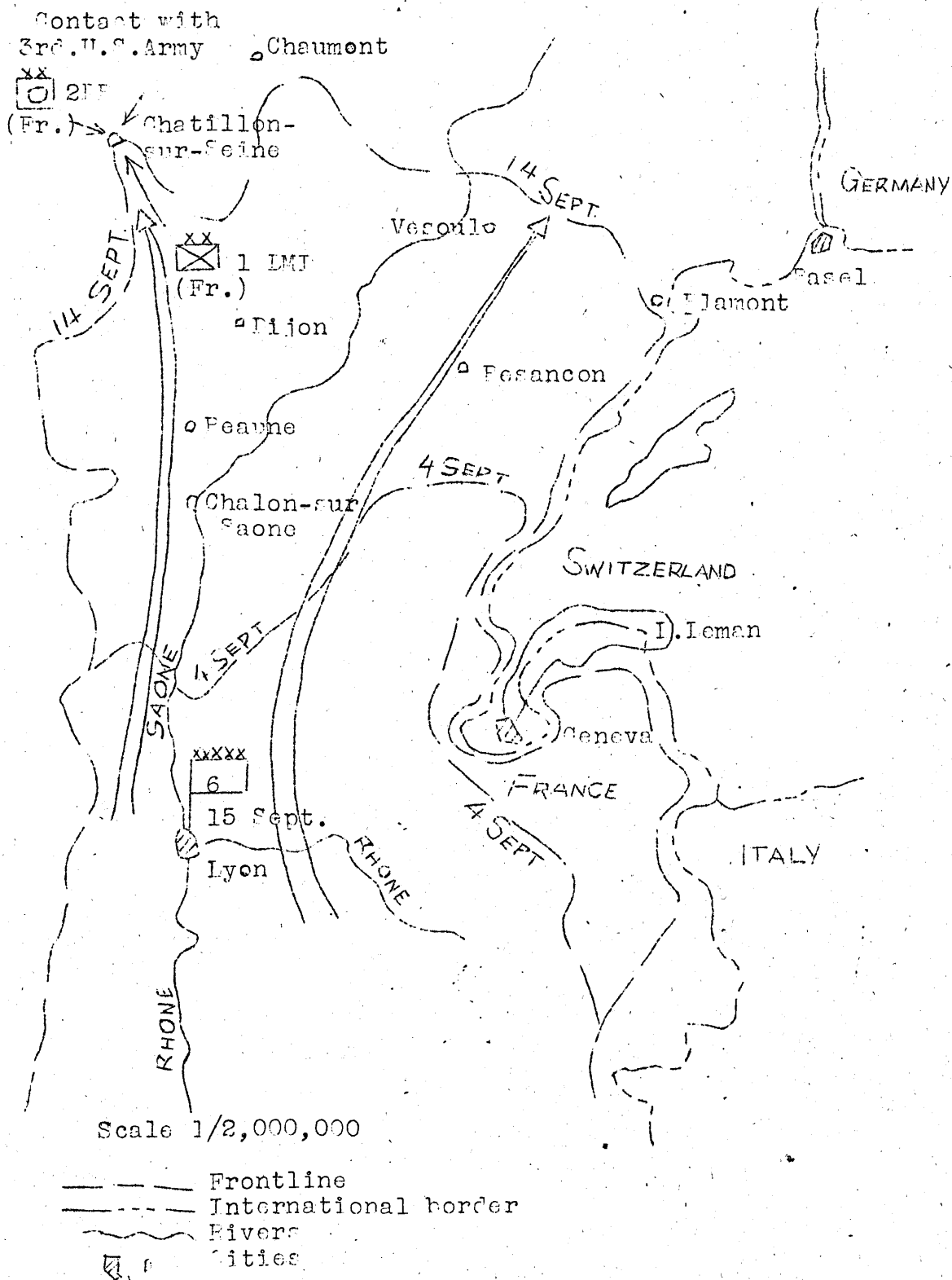


Figure 3

closed escape gate, were trapped. Constantly harassed by FFI units, many of these forces finally surrendered while the remainder dug in along the coast in the Bordeaux area to await destruction at the hands of French units at a later date.

Following plans already instituted, Seventh Army directed French Army "B" on 14 September to move II Corps to the right zone. This Corps had been pinched out of action after contact with Third Army had been established at Chaumont. I Corps already had gone into the line along the Swiss border. Movement of II Corps and Headquarters French Army "B" to the east flank would now place all French units in the same zone of action. This move was started immediately and although it required the crossing of main supply routes over which all supplies for front line units flowed from the beaches, little difficulty was encountered.

With the battle in the north progressing rapidly, Major General Frederick swung his Airborne Task Force (FABTF, previously known as 1st A/B Division (Prov)) eastward to block avenues of approach into France from Italy and protect the right flank of Seventh Army. After having reduced the two islands just off the French Riviera, the First Special Service Force was relieved by French troops. Assembling on the mainland it was assigned to the FABTF on 19 August to replace the British parachute Brigade which was being withdrawn. Relief of the British Brigade was accomplished on 21 August and it was assembled in Task Force reserve to await transportation back to Italy. For front lines on 14 September see Figure 4.

When both Marseilles and Toulon were captured on 28 August, the gigantic task of repairing port facilities badly needed to handle supplies for the advancing Dragoon forces, was begun. Ports of Marseilles and Toulon were opened for limited traffic on 16 September and the build up to peak capacity was rapid.

During the entire period up to 15 September, all supplies had been hauled overland by motor transport to the front line units. As the period was ending, the turn around trip was 900 miles and the transportation facilities had been stretched almost to the limit.

The prisoner bag during the first month of the operation was: French Army "B", 47,717; Seventh Army, 32,211. French Army "B" suffered 1,146 casualties in killed, captured and missing and 4,346 wounded. Seventh Army had 3,000 killed, captured and missing and 4,419 wounded.

During planning stages of the Southern France operation, it was agreed that initial tactical control of Dragoon forces should rest with AFHQ because of the planning, equipping and supply responsibilities. This was also necessitated by the difficulty of communication initially between the Dragoon forces and the Overlord Forces in the west. But at some time during the operation, it was realized that all forces operating in France must come under

Front Line
Franco-Italian Border
14 September 1944

Albertville

Bourg
St. Maurice

Petit St. Bernard Pass

ITALY



2 DI.
(-)

14 SEPT.

Mont Genis Pass

Modane

Chuse

Aorino

Brignac

Mont Genevre Pass

14 SEPT.

Orlu. zo

Barcelonnette

2 DIM
-XX
IABTF

Larche Pass

Cuneo

Situation
Sixth Army Group
Franco-Italian Border
14 Sept. 44
Figure

Scale 1/1,000,000

- Frontline
- - - International
- - - Boundaries
- xx- Unit boundaries
- {} Mountain pass
- o Cities



1.1
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Nice

Monaco

Figure 4

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one commander --- Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Forces. With the joining of Allied Forces at Chaumont and the opening of direct communication routes between the two forces, time was approaching for the change over. But since supplies for Dragoon forces must still come through Toulon and Marseilles, it was seen that administrative control must remain longer with AFHQ than tactical control. Thus on 14 September, when firm contact between Third and Seventh Armies, was established, the stage was set for the first step in turning over control of Dragoon Forces to SHAEF.

Reflecting months of careful study and planning, the Allied invasion of Southern France was accomplished with machine-like precision. Careful guarding of plans and secrecy of assembly of forces and supplies resulted in complete tactical surprise. With this in their favor, American and French Forces were able to break through the initial German defense line and start an exploitation that carried 480 miles to Besancon and Epinal, joined forces with Overlord to cut off thousands of Germans in Southwest France and inflicted heavy casualties in valuable materiel and personnel on the German Army. The exploitation phase traveled at such a rate of speed that all transportation facilities were strained to the utmost to keep up; and finally a slowdown had to be accepted to let supplies catch up with the front line elements. This overstrain of supply facilities was just beginning to be felt as Seventh Army prepared to relinquish control of Dragoon Forces to Headquarters 6th Army Group. Long and loud will be the praise of the innumerable brilliant maneuvers of both American and French units in the campaign up the Rhone Valley. Standing out for its timeliness and daring is the maneuver of the Butler Task Force. As an overall operation, the Southern France phase of the defeat of the German Army far outstripped expectations, outdoing by two months the time table set initially.

During the entire Southern France operation, invaluable assistance was rendered by the French Maquis, loyal underground French organization that sprung to life throughout the country on D-Day. Many instances of FFI capturing important communication centers and holding off German counter-attacks until the arrival of Allied troops were recorded. Not only in this way did the FFI assist. They knew where the German troops were. They knew the location of German defenses. Many times the Frenchmen led Allied troops through German defenses, making possible an attack from the rear instead of a head-on collision. By their daring and faithfulness, advances of Allied troops were made immeasurably easier. With the junction of Allied forces a large portion of Southwest France was isolated. In this area, dominated by the mountainous Massif Central, the FFI was exceptionally helpful and proved of invaluable aid in rounding up remnants of Nazi elements that were unable to escape to the northeast before the trap was closed at Chaumont.

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CHAPTER THREEHEADQUARTERS 6TH ARMY GROUP ASSUMES COMMAND

To gain a true picture of the overall situation when Headquarters 6th Army Group assumed command of Dragoon Forces, it is necessary to review planning and preparatory actions taken prior to 15 September. Even though inoperative, Headquarters 6th Army Group was far from idle during the Seventh Army's spectacular drive up the Rhone River Valley. Direct liaison had been maintained with Seventh Army and French Army "B" throughout the operation. The Headquarters was completely "in the picture" as far as the tactical and administrative situations were concerned. As a result, at least one problem to face the newly born Army Group Headquarters had already been scrutinized. That problem dealt with the Franco-Italian frontier.

Realizing that Seventh Army should be relieved of responsibility for a front so far to its rear, a conference was held with Major General Frederick on 12 September, looking to a more feasible command set up. Outcome of the conference was a recommendation to General Devers that:

Seventh Army be relieved of responsibility for this semi-static front.

A separate command under Major General Frederick be established to control the southern sector and to operate directly under Headquarters 6th Army Group.

The French retain responsibility for the northern sector of the front.

This recommendation was approved by the Commanding General. Details of the plan were forwarded to Seventh Army. It was not until after Headquarters 6th Army Group came officially into the picture, however, that orders were issued 25 September to implement the plan.

SHAEF's strategy in early September called for one knife-like, narrow thrust into Germany to capture the industrial Ruhr, followed by exploitation into the inner reaches of the Nazi homeland. Concurrently, the secondary effort was aimed at clearing the ports of Brest, Cherbourg and Antwerp. This view was outlined in a cable, 4 September, to those elements under SHAEF control at the time. When 6th Army Group came under tactical control of SHAEF, the Supreme Commander's appreciation of the situation and proposed plan of action was repeated to this Headquarters.

Following this plan meant that the bulk of Allied logistical support must be concentrated behind the 21st Army Group on the north for the all-out drive since the supply situation at that time did not permit continued pursuit operations by the entire Overlord force. With the 21st Army Group making the main effort, the remainder of

the front took on an offensive-defensive attitude. After the break through at St. Lo, the Third Army had raced eastward to join the Seventh Army at Chaumont on 14 September. This rapid advance soon thereafter, when logistical support was shifted to the north, slowed and gave the Germans opportunity to form some semblance of organized resistance which later took very definite shape. The same situation prevailed in front of Seventh Army where it became necessary to slow up the pursuit so supplies could catch up with front line elements, which were then 480 miles from their beach-head supply points.

Thus as Headquarters 6th Army Group assumed command of Dragoon Forces at 0001 B, 15 September, the enemy, which hitherto had been reeling drunkenly backwards, was beginning to stabilize his defenses. The Allies in the north were mainly committed to clearing ports along the west of France and Belgium and attacking in the direction of the German Ruhr. On the front of Dragoon Forces, the enemy was fighting back fiercely and making a foot-by-foot withdrawal to the Vosges-Belfort Gap defensive position.

At this time the G-2 Estimate of the Situation was that the Germans would attempt to hold a line running generally west of Belfort and tying into the easily defended Vosges mountains to the North. This was borne out by increasing resistance along the entire front, especially in front of Belfort Gap where the French had reached to within 20 miles of the key bastion of Belfort. Numerous reports were received of defensive positions being constructed along this general line. The Estimate read:

"Defensive works, terrain, a large number of second rate troops and the possible arrival of reinforcements seem to satisfy him as to his ability to hold this area. The Vosges Mountains offer natural positions for defense which the enemy has built up considerably to form the center of his line. The build-up of armored strength which is continuing along the German First and Nineteenth Army boundary (Luneville-Sarrebourg area) shows that the enemy is obviously aware of the danger to his forces should any penetration in the Luneville area open the road net to Strasbourg and the Rhine."

6th Army Group held two fronts. One front faced north and northeast in front of the Belfort Gap and generally west of the Moselle River. On Seventh Army's immediate left, the XV Corps of Third Army had closed to the Moselle at Epinal and northward, holding a bridgehead at Charmes while its right flank tied in with VI Corps at Chaumont. For front lines see Figure 3. French Army "B" was in the process of regrouping on the right of VI Corps. The other front along the Franco-Italian frontier faced east. General Frederick's First Airborne Task Force held the southern sector of this front as far north as Larche Pass while the French 2 DIM held the northern portion of the front. See Figure 4.

SHAEF's first directive of 14 September to the Southern Group of Armies, as 6th Army Group was designated, was received prior to the receipt later in the day of the directive from AFHQ transferring

tactical control of Dragoon Forces to the Allied Supreme Commander in France. This directive instructed 6th Army Group to "destroy the enemy in zone west of the Rhine, secure crossings over the Rhine and breach the Siegfried Line between Basle and Strasbourg." The first boundary between 6th Army Group and 12th Army Group was: Langres-Epinal-Strasbourg, all to 6th Army Group.

Upon assuming command, Headquarters 6th Army Group issued Operational Memorandum Number One, dated 15 September, resume' of which went over radio immediately upon receipt of AFHQ's cable. Major items in the instructions were the new command channels and details concerning reports required by this and higher headquarters. Since 6th Army Group officially came into the picture in the midst of operations already initiated under direction of Seventh Army and which had not been completed, there was little in the way of tactical directives to be issued at this time. To cover this contingency, the Operational Memorandum directed both Seventh Army and French Army "B" to continue operations in accordance with Seventh Army's last operational instructions. The last instructions directed French Army "B" on Belfort and Seventh Army on Epinal. This operation was underway and good progress was being made in the Seventh Army sector while the French were encountering stiffening resistance the nearer they approached the vital Belfort gate to the Rhine.

A minor change in the mission of the Southern Group of Armies was embodied in a SHAEF cable of 16 September which moved northward slightly the inter-army group boundary to: Langres-Epinal-Saarbourg-Landau-Speyer-Hockenheim, all to 6th Army Group. This was the first shift northward of the inter-army group boundary. Later numerous shifts were made, playing a vital part in the operations not only of this Army Group but also of the 12th Army Group on the left.

Regrouping of French forces was completed on 18 September when final elements of II French Corps closed in the new French zone on the right of VI US Corps. At this time official announcement was made of the redesignation of French Army "B" as First French Army. As the French went into the line they prepared for an all-out attack on Belfort, while VI Corps continued its progress towards Epinal and the Moselle River. Epinal and Remiremont were captured on 23 September and crossings over the Moselle secured by the 45th and 36th Divisions.

From the outset of operations in Southern France, it had been assumed that sometime after a junction of Allied forces in France had been effected a second US Corps would pass to the control of Headquarters 6th Army Group. This thought was crystallized in a conference at SHAEF on 22 September when General Devers requested attachment of XV Corps to his command. The proposal was approved but on September 23 SHAEF dispatched a cable to General Devers offering an alternate solution. This cable was two days enroute and arrived on 25 September after 6th Army Group had forwarded recommendations to SHAEF asking for attachment of XV Corps as of 29 September. In this same cable, 6th Army Group also recommended attachment of the 44th Infantry Division as soon as it arrived in Normandy to

bolster the two-division XV Corps -- 79th Division and French 2 DB. SHAEF's alternate proposal was studied, but 6th Army Group adhered to its former recommendations since contact had already been established with XV Corps.

SHAEF acquiesced to 6th Army Group's request and on 27 September a cable was received stating that XV Corps would be attached to 6th Army Group as of COOL B, 29 September, confirming verbal information received earlier. SHAEF also agreed to the attachment of one other infantry division, the movement of which "will be given lower priority to other moves presently contemplated by CG, 12th Army Group for reinforcing center and left of his sector."

The mission of 6th Army Group was not changed but the boundary was moved northward to include the existing XV Corps zone. The new boundary: Chaumont-Luneville-Saarbourg-Landau-Heidelberg, all to 6th Army Group.

Headquarters 6th Army Group issued Letter of Instructions Number One on 28 September, redefining missions of the two armies and passing the newly acquired XV Corps to control of Seventh Army. The boundary between armies was: Lure-Melisey-Le Thillot (to First French Army) - Erstein-Offenburg (to Seventh Army). This Letter of Instructions bears the date of 26 September because it was prepared on that date; however, it was not formally approved and issued until the 28th.

Seventh Army had already captured its previous objective of Epinal and had bridgeheads over the Moselle River. Hence, the scheme of maneuver was designed to carry both armies to the Rhine River. Seventh Army was directed on Luneville and then on Strasbourg. First French Army was directed to breach the Belfort Gap and capture Mulhouse and Colmar. The divergent main efforts of the two armies were designed to by-pass the easily defended Vosges mountains. It was realized that the key terrain features of the Saverne Gap, gateway to Strasbourg, and the Belfort Gap would be heavily defended. But it was believed that drives through these better avenues of approach would be easier and less costly than to attempt to force the Vosges mountain positions, especially since the approaching winter season heralded the advent of snow clogged roads and sub-zero weather in the high reaches of the mountains. The maneuver was designed to have these two forces close to the Rhine in the Mulhouse and Strasbourg areas and then join in the Rhine plain to isolate the Vosges position.

Both armies were directed to take advantage of any opportunity to seize a bridgehead across the Rhine. Seventh Army was instructed to make suitable arrangements with First French Army for the latter's participation in the capture of politically important Strasbourg.

When the instructions reached the armies to continue the current offensive, heavy fighting had developed along the entire front with the right flank of the French Army being completely stopped. Small gains were made on the remainder of the front as the enemy fought

desperately for every foot of ground in order to gain time to strengthen the Vosges-Belfort Gap position. Short in artillery and artillery ammunition, 6th Army Group forces slugged it out with the enemy over difficult terrain and in increasingly bad weather, with infantry carrying the entire load of the advances. On 29 September Seventh Army had captured Lure, Luxeuil and Rambervillers and reached the western fringes of the Forêt de Paroy.

In late September, the German troops in the Bordeaux area gave some indication of surrendering their forces, numbering approximately 20,000. It was decided that the only unit, other than the FFI who were containing the German force, available to receive the surrender was the 31st AAA Brigade commanded by Brigadier General Chapin which was located in Marseilles. General Chapin was issued instructions on 29 September to prepare a plan for a party of officers and 400 enlisted men to proceed to Bordeaux to receive the surrender and escort the prisoners to Marseilles by rail. Necessary arrangements were made for transporting and messing the escort, truck transportation being provided as the rail lines were not completely operative between the two areas. The German forces elected to form a "redoubt" in the tips of land surrounding the mouth of the Gironde River, however, and operations were postponed until adequate, well equipped forces could be spared from other fronts.

Throughout October, hampered by serious shortages in ammunition and supplies, Seventh Army and First French Army attempted to keep the offensive rolling at full speed. But fighting grew fiercer as the days passed and the enemy had more time to dig into his new positions. However, the supply situation was getting better with railroads open from Frejus via Aix, Sisteron and Grenoble to railheads in the Pologny-Mouchard area. Another rail line from Marseilles through Lyon and Dijon to the Vesoul-Besancon area was also open. With the opening of these two rail lines, truck transportation which had been employed in shuttling supplies from the beaches was being withdrawn. Previously the two armies lived on a day by day delivery of supplies but this improvement of the railroad situation forecast possibility of building up reserves in the army areas, beginning not later than mid-October.

Despite the small gains, heavy fighting was encountered on every side. In the Forêt de Paroy and the battle for Le Tholy, Allied troops slugged doggedly through German defenses in depth to finally take these important objectives.

In the Forêt de Paroy battle, the 79th Infantry Division, seeking to continue its sustained drive, ran up against its first major opposition. Entrenched in the heavily foliated forest, the enemy hurled back attack after attack of the US infantrymen. Gathering its forces, the 79th Division struck from the west and north to overcome the strongpoint centered around a road junction deep within the forest. The Americans had entered the forest on 30 September, but it was not until 15 October that they emerged victorious on the eastern fringes of the bloody battleground. In the final stages of this action, the 44th Infantry Division began arriving from Normandy and started relief of the exhausted 79th Division on 18 October.

In the south, the 3 DIA had been shifted from its south flank position northward to launch an attack on heavily defended Gerardmer area, key to the southern Vosges. This attack started 5 October. After 12 slow, grinding days of fierce fighting the French had made only small progress, capturing Rochesson and Cornimont and approaching Le Tholy, another strong German defense point. To assist in the attack, the 36th US Division, on the left of the 3 DIA, launched an attack southeastward toward the high ground in the vicinity of Gerardmer on 16 October. Hampered by rough, wooded terrain, the attack progressed slowly. Bruyeres was captured 19 October.

On about 15 October G-3 submitted to the Commanding General a broad plan of operations which envisaged a main attack by First French Army on its left on or about 25 October to capture Colmar while the weather would still permit a main thrust through the Vosges. Furthermore, the main German strength at this time was in the Belfort Gap. This attack was to be supported by almost the whole of the medium and heavy artillery with the Group. It was felt that this weight of artillery plus the possible surprise element would permit the French to gain the eastern slopes of the Vosges in three days and Colmar in five days. The plan further provided for the rapid movement of the bulk of the artillery back to the VI Corps of Seventh Army beginning the night of the third day and completing the night of the fifth day of the attack. Then Seventh Army would launch its main attack with VI Corps directed on Strasbourg on the morning of the sixth day.

It was the view of G-3 that, since we lacked the artillery and other resources necessary to keep strong attacks by two armies going successfully, we should mass our means behind first one Army and then the other in rapid succession in an effort to break the very obvious stalemate that was developing on our front. The Army Group Commander approved the plan in principle and directed that its feasibility be examined in detail. Detailed examination of its logistical implications disclosed that, although our supply situation was improving considerably, the ammunition and other supplies required for execution of the plan could not be accumulated before early November with our meager transportation facilities. Hence, logistics, and not terrain or the German, continued to be our most formidable opponent for the moment. Accordingly, the plan was held in abeyance while G-4 continued to bend his energies to improve our supply position. The plan was eventually abandoned in favor of the plan of 28 October since by early November weather in the high Vosges would prove to be a very decisive factor in the selection of a plan of maneuver.

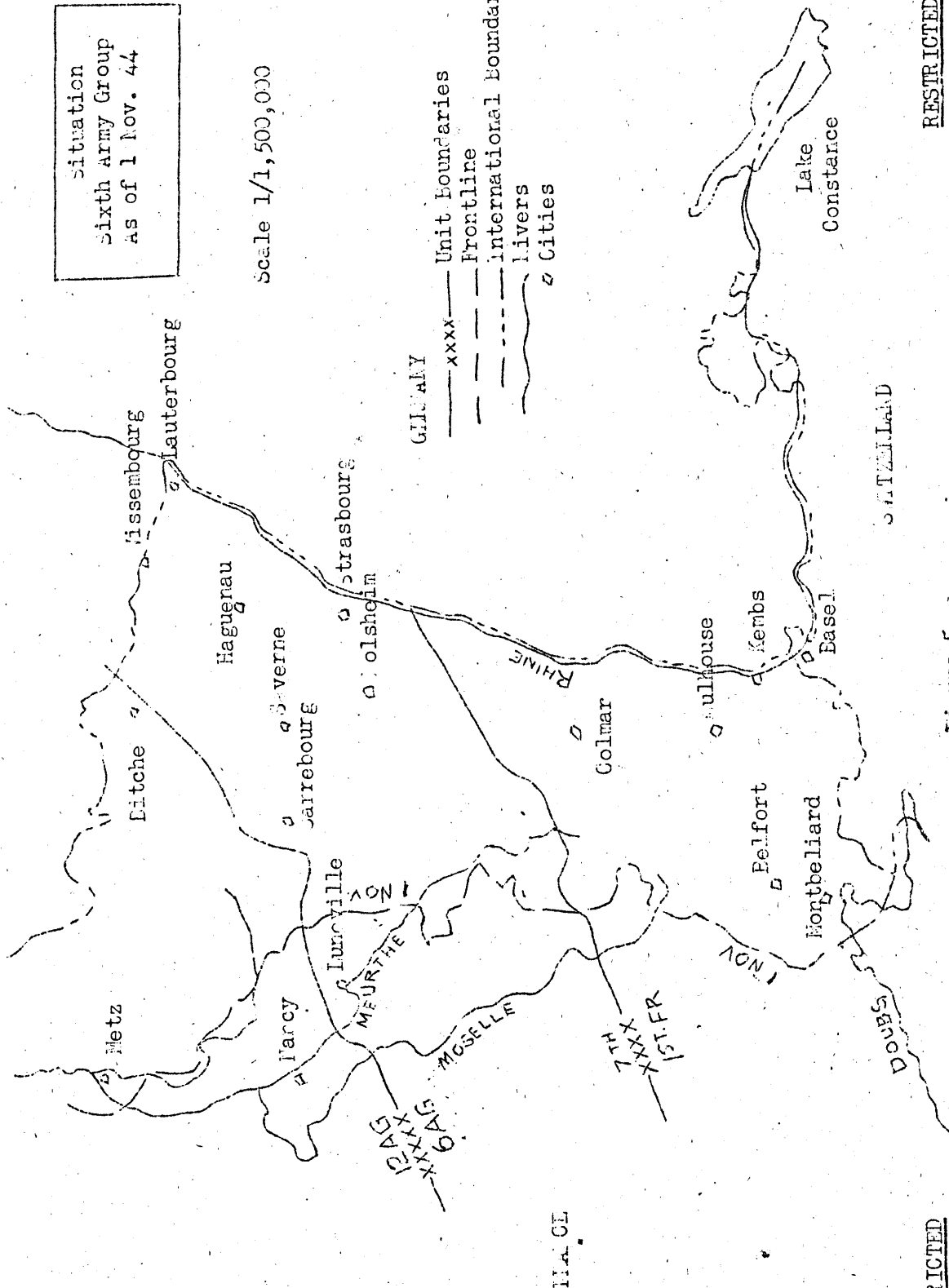
By month's end the 36th Division had battled its way through the woods north of Gerardmer and was in a position to outflank the strong Gerardmer position. Farther to the north, the 3rd US Division had fought through the Vosges foothills to the highground overlooking St. Die and on 26 October cleared the wooded terrain south of Raon L'Etape. The French 2 DB, operating with the XV Corps, captured Baccarat on 30 October and opened the way to Raon L'Etape from the northwest.

RESTRICTED

Situation
Sixth Army Group
As of 1 Nov. 44

Scale 1/1,500,000

LEGEND
—xxxx— Unit Boundaries
- - - - - Frontline
- - - - - International Boundaries
~~~~~ Rivers  
o Cities



RESTRICTED

Figure 5

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On 28 October a new SHAEF directive ordered the Southern Group of Armies to:

Continue the offensive to breach the Siegfried Line east of the Rhine, destroy the enemy in zone and deploy in strength across the Rhine with a view to a later advance in a northern direction; and

Launch a strong attack west of the Pfalzerwald in conjunction with the southern flank of the Central Group of Armies to breach the Siegfried Line.

This overall mission was too broad to be passed on to the Armies at this time. Hence, Headquarters 6th Army Group divided the mission into two phases. The initial phase to "capture Strasbourg and clear the area west of the Rhine" was incorporated in Letter of Instructions Number 2, issued 28 October. The second phase was left for a later date when developments could better point the best plan for accomplishing the assigned mission.

Twin drives towards the Rhine were envisaged by these latest instructions to the Armies. Seventh Army's main effort was directed on the axis Epinal-Strasbourg. First French Army was directed to launch a strong attack to breach the Belfort Gap. As a prelude to the general attack, Seventh Army was directed to seize a line of departure along the high ground north of Gerardmer by 5 November. First French Army was to launch a local attack, by-passing Gerardmer, not later than 1 November to assist the Seventh Army's attack.

No date for the co-ordinated attack was announced. Army plans for their offensives were directed prepared and submitted to Headquarters 6th Army Group for approval not later than 4 November.

Prospects of carrying the new directive to a successful conclusion appeared brighter with the arrival in Marseilles on 25 October of the 100th and 103rd Infantry Divisions. These divisions had been diverted from western France to 6th Army Group. The 14th Armored Division was expected to begin arriving in Marseilles during the first part of November.

Thus as the month approached its final stages, First French Army was facing the heavily fortified Belfort Gap; Gerardmer, guardian of the Schlucht Pass through the Southern Vosges, was in danger of being encircled; and Seventh Army was approaching St. Die, Raon L'Etape, Badonviller and Blamont. This placed 6th Army Group forces face to face with the prepared Vosges-Belfort Gap defense position, last stop short of the Rhine River. For front lines see Figure 5.

Fighting during the period 15 September - 1 November had been a continuation of the pursuit of a defeated enemy who was falling back on his bases, reserves and prepared positions, while our pursuing forces were outrunning their supply lines. During the later part of October, German defenses had begun to crystalize as a result of the necessary slackening of the Allied pace due to the supply situation. After reaching the Moselle River it had been necessary



for Allied forces to slacken their speed due to the distance they had advanced from their supply bases. It was not until mid-October that supply points moved into the army areas and the 900-mile turn around with truck transportation was partially eliminated. While from a purely tactical standpoint the rapid advances could have been maintained, the supply situation did not permit it due to destroyed railroads and limited truck transport. Thus it was emphatically brought out that any offensive force can advance only as rapidly as its supply situation permits and that a retreating enemy, given any breathing spell, can marshall his forces and quickly organize a defensive position that will require months of hard fighting to break.

Another 6th Army Group front - the Franco-Italian Border - demanded attention during this period.

Detailed study by G-3 planners on 24 September had pointed to the advisability of turning over the entire Franco-Italian Frontier to the French. This plan had not materialized. Orders were received from SHAEF to relieve elements of the American First Airborne Task Force (FABTF), occupying the southern sector, for another mission. This relief was originally ordered to be accomplished by 10 November but this date was later changed by SHAEF. On 11 October, First French Army was directed to relieve the FABTF in zone and assume responsibility for the entire front. The French countered that it was impossible for them to assume this added responsibility due to lack of troops and equipment. Plans were worked out in an effort to put the French in a position to take over this front, but no satisfactory solution was found. Later the 44th AAA Brigade was established as a separate command under Headquarters 6th Army Group and ordered to relieve the FABTF (Prov).

Battle casualties during this period numbered 6,994 for First French Army and 12,849 for Seventh Army. The First French Army took 11,785 prisoners while Seventh Army counted 12,327 through its cages.

Realizing the need for coordinated advanced planning, A C of S, G-3, recommended formation of a Joint Planning Staff, which was destined to play a big part in operations of the Army Group throughout the entire war. The recommendation was approved and organization of the Joint Planning Staff Group was announced on 10 October 1944.

Functioning under the supervision of the A. C. of S, G-3 and responsible to the Chief of Staff through A. C. of S, G-3, the Joint Planning Staff was composed of Deputy A. C. of S, G-3, Plans and Operations, Director; representatives appointed by A. C. of S, G-1 and A. C. of S, G-2, Chief of G-3 Plans, Chief of G-4 Plans, the Chief Air Advisor to the Army Group Commander, and recorder from G-3 Plans. In addition, the Director was authorized to coopt the services of representatives of other general and special staff

sections when their assistance was required. Representatives of A. C. of S, G-5, the Engineer and the Chief Signal Officer were appointed about 25 November 1944 on oral direction of the Chief of Staff.

The function of the Joint Planning Staff was to provide the information necessary to form an integrated plan and mold such information into feasible operational plans, with recommendations to the Chief of Staff. The directive which established the Joint Planning Staff specified that the facts furnished by the members were to be in accord with those known to the Chiefs of Staff Sections but that plans and studies prepared need not necessarily represent the personal views of the Section Chiefs. Completed plans represented majority opinion. Minority reports were submitted in the event of non-concurrence. A. C. of S, G-3 was charged with reconciling conflicts of opinion insofar as possible prior to submission of plans to the Chief of Staff. Copies of all JPS papers were circulated to staff sections concerned, as soon as possible, upon completion.

Thus the JPS did the "pick and shovel" work and provided the correlated information for consideration by the General Staff. Establishment of the JPS provided an authorized means of direct contact between individuals of the various staff sections on the planning level and obviated delay due to processing plans or requests for data or information through channels.

CHAPTER FOURMEURTHE TO THE RHINE

Unable to launch an all-out offensive to close to the Rhine due to the lack of supplies, 6th Army Group began building reserves of ammunition, gasoline and food in army rear areas during the latter part of October. At the same time, limited objective attacks were being carried out to gain a suitable line of departure for the offensive already ordered. Mid-November was set by G-4 as the earliest an all-out coordinated attack could be fully supported logistically.

Plans for the attack were prepared in detail by armies and submitted to Headquarters 6th Army Group for approval. Coordination of details of these plans was worked out with Third Army. Headquarters 6th Army Group Seventh Army and Third Army had studied the German habits. One of the enemy characteristics recalled was the habitual timing of his use of general reserves. Almost without fail, the German moved his general reserves on the evening of the second day or the morning of the third day of our attack. We decided to make this trait pay dividends. Therefore, it was agreed initially that Third Army would attack in the Metz area between 10-15 November, and 6th Army Group would attack not earlier than three days and not later than five days after Third Army's attack. By this it was hoped that the second attack would catch the German general reserves on the move, thus confronting the enemy commander with the difficult decision of what then to do with them.

Seventh Army's plan required XV Corps to make the Army Group main effort on the axis Sarrebourg-Strasbourg. The 44th and 79th Infantry Divisions were to make the initial assault with the French 2 DB in reserve, alerted to exploit a breakthrough. One RCT of each infantry division was motorized to exploit any favorable situation. The Armored Division was not to be employed until infantry had penetrated deeply into enemy defenses and gained suitable terrain for armored action. The 45th Infantry Division, in Army reserve, was earmarked for use by the XV Corps and placed on a 12-hour alert when the attack commenced.

First French Army's plan called for a drive on the axis Montbelliard-Pulhouse, by-passing strongly defended Belfort to the south. I Corps on the south was to make the Army main effort.

The enemy situation was studied continuously. G-2 reported that the German Fifth Panzer and Nineteenth Armies were facing 6th Army Group along the Vosges-Belfort Gap line. Total strength of these two armies west of the Rhine was estimated at 77,500 combat effectives, 410 artillery pieces and 120 tanks. Replacement of certain mobile elements of the Fifth Panzer Army on the north flank by new fortress and other static units indicated that the enemy felt his north flank was reasonably secure.

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Forces of 6th Army Group had been bolstered by the arrival of the 100th Infantry Division in Seventh Army area on 2 November. On 9 November, elements of the 103rd Infantry Division began arriving in the Army area. With the two newly arrived divisions, Seventh Army boasted a total of eight divisions, one of which was armored.

Meanwhile, the 14th Armored Division closed in Marseilles on 2 November and was being equipped rapidly preparatory to movement northward.

First French Army now had six divisions, having been augmented during October by arrival of the 5 DB from Marseilles and 2 DIM from the Franco-Italian border where the latter was relieved by the 4 DIM.

This added strength gave the Southern Group of Armies 14 divisions, three of which were armored. One more armored division, the 14th, was in sight.

As plans for the attack to close to the Rhine were being given a final polishing, Headquarters 6th Army Group was directed to liquidate German elements astride the Gironde Estuary in Southwest France. In addition to FFI units currently in the area, use of one French Corps of not to exceed two divisions was authorized. French General de Larminat was selected to command the forces for the operation. SHAFF directed that the operation be completed by 1 January 1945. Purpose of the operation was to clear the Gironde Estuary which controlled the important and badly needed port of Bordeaux.

At this time, 4 November, it was estimated that there were approximately 25,000 enemy in the pockets north of Bordeaux with 270 guns, 35 tanks and three submarines. Containing the pockets were 22,000 poorly armed and trained FFI troops. These FFI troops were to be used in the attack along with the two divisions to be withdrawn from First French Army.

Plans were immediately drawn to use the French 1 DB and 1 DIM to conduct the operation. At this time, dates for their withdrawal from the present front ranged from 7-30 December. No action, other than planning, was taken at this time.

To take advantage of favorable weather, making utilization of air power possible, Third Army jumped off in its attack on 8 November, two days earlier than contemplated. If 6th Army Group was to take maximum advantage of consequent possible diversion of German troops towards the Metz area, according to the agreed plan, Seventh Army and First French Army must attack no later than 13 November. After a hurried conference and review of G-4 implications, it was agreed that the attack was feasible. Secret letters were dispatched immediately by officer couriers to the Army commanders announcing D-Day as 13 November.

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As time for the attack approached, the weather on 6th Army Group front grew progressively worse. Blinding rain or snowstorms raged through the whole area. In the Vosges areas roads were already clogged by snow drifts and temperatures dropped below freezing. Streams and rivers through the lower areas had overspilled their banks.

Because of this bad weather, First French Army requested permission to postpone D-Day. However, on 12 November word was received that the French attack would be launched as scheduled. But on 13 November the French did not attack, postponing opening of their offensive one day. Seventh Army set 0700 hours, 13 November as H-Hour.

General Devers considered the possibility of postponing the attack in an effort to get better weather when air support would be possible. But at about 2300 hours, 12 November, he informed G-3 that the attack would not be postponed, remarking in effect:

"The Germans will not expect us to attack in such weather. We will get surprise."

As scheduled, Seventh Army launched its attack at 0700 hours, 13 November, in a snowstorm. Artillery fire throughout the previous night had pounded enemy batteries, culminating in a short, violent barrage on enemy front line positions just before H-hour. The main effort of Seventh Army, being carried out by XV Corps, was supported by approximately 350 artillery pieces, exclusive of the guns of tanks and tank destroyers. In addition, a majority of VI Corps artillery was sighted to fire in support of the main effort. See Figure 6.

Little resistance from troops was reported on Seventh Army front during the first day, indicating complete surprise. The German trenches in front of the right division of the main effort (XV Corps) were not occupied, and they were quickly overrun. Large numbers of anti-tank mines, anti-personnel mines, booby traps, and boggy ground were encountered, however, causing relatively slow progress initially.

Beginning at 1200 hours, 14 November, First French Army launched its attack, with I Corps on the south making the main effort. Initial progress was satisfactory. As in front of Seventh Army, numerous mines and booby traps were encountered.

Despite snow, boggy terrain and enemy obstacles, the attack progressed rapidly. On 16 November, First French Army broke through the Belfort Gap defenses in a triple penetration on a 27-mile wide front, extending north and west from the Swiss border. Gains up to 10 miles were reported. Meanwhile, the VI Corps captured the high ground southwest of St. Die and cleared Raon L'Etape. By-passing Blamont, XV Corps had advanced three miles to the east of the town.

Scale 1/1,000,000

- Front Line
- International Boundaries
- XXXX Unit Boundaries
- Rivers
- o Cities

Metz

Petit Biedersheim, Piche

Wiessembourg, Karlsruhe

Lauterbourg, Soultz

Seltz

Haguenau

Nancy

Sarrebourg

Saverne

12 AG  
XXXX  
6 AG

Strasbourg

Kolsheim

Paon U tape

St. Etienne

Selestat

Rebeaumeville

Colmar

7th  
XXXX  
1st FR

RHINE

GERMANY

Mulhouse

Kembs

Belfort

Huningue

Montbéliard, Delle

Basel

Plamont

SWITZERLAND

Figure 6

Pushing with unabated determination, elements of I French Corps broke through to the Rhine River on 20 November, capturing Huningen and Kombs and reducing all enemy resistance between the two towns. Farther west, Belfort was captured. Meanwhile, VI Corps forced crossings of the Mourthe River in the St. Die-Raon L'Etape sector. Having broken through enemy defenses, XV Corps infantry captured Sarrebourg and the French 2 DB was rushed through the hole to exploit to the east and northeast.

After following the doughboys to Sarrebourg, the French armor took the lead, swinging north and south of the main route through the Vosges mountains -- the Saverne Gap -- to the Rhine Plain. Little resistance was met and the armor rushed headlong for Saverne, outflanking the key communication center from the south and north. On 22 November, French armor captured Saverne and cut the main east-west route from Nancy to Strasbourg east of the Vosges. In this maneuver the armor had already opened two routes into the Alsace Plain over which infantry elements were rushing to take full advantage of the armored drive. On VI Corps front, St. Die was entered. The French took Mulhouse and advanced eight miles northward.

After capturing Saverne, 2 DB momentarily halted its eastward advance to clear the main highway through the Vosges via the Saverne Pass. Then doing an about face, the armor sped towards Strasbourg, entering the city on 23 November after meeting little resistance. Much excitement was occasioned by reports from the front that XV Corps had captured a bridge over the Rhine River intact in this action and that elements of 2 DB were already deployed east of the Rhine in Germany. Later reports, however, proved this wishful thinking.

On our extreme right as the two French armored divisions 1 DB and 5 DB turned north in pursuit of the completely disorganized enemy, fate took a hand in the proceedings. Trying to utilize the same route which was already in use by other traffic, combat commands of 5 DB became hopelessly ensnared in traffic jams, during which a serious German counter attack was launched towards Delle but repulsed. G-3 and two other officers of Headquarters 6th Army Group witnessed this traffic tie-up during the night of 20-21 November. It was probably the worst ever witnessed, for which the Chief of Staff of 5 DB was reported to have been relieved by General de Lattre. Unfortunately this relief was accomplished only after the damage was done and not before 5 DB initiated its movement. It required 48 hours to straighten out the traffic jams, and by that time the enemy had reorganized sufficiently to establish a defensive position along the Doller River and north of Mulhouse, hinged on the Hardt Forest and Rhine River. French elements were unable to break through this line. And with that, advances northward down the Rhine Plain ended for several weeks to come.

By 25 November, enemy positions in the northern Vosges, on VI Corps front, had completely collapsed and elements of 2 DB were driving south up the Rhine Plain south of Strasbourg and Mulshoim.

At this time, 6th Army Group had three possible lines of action. One was to hold on the north and divert forces to the south to assist the French in completely closing to the Rhine. Another was to follow exactly SHAEF's directive and launch an attack to the north in conjunction with Third Army to breach the Siegfried Line, while leaving the French to complete the job in the south.

Seventh Army and planners of Headquarters 6th Army Group posed a third course of action. During the time the 13 November attack was being planned and executed, Seventh Army had made detailed plans for crossing the Rhine in stride. Crossing sites had been selected between Strasbourg and Karlsruhe. Now Seventh Army wanted to cross the Rhine and breach the Siegfried Line in a single operation, tying its bridgehead initially to the northern tip of the Black Forest.

JPS agreed with Seventh Army and recommended that line of action on 19 November.

This was the situation and "behind the scene thinking" as 6th Army Group came to the cross roads of its battle.

In a conference in Vittel on 24 November, attended by General Eisenhower and General (then lieutenant general) Bradley, Commanding General of 12th Army Group, the situation was discussed. Following the conference, Seventh Army was directed to swing the bulk of its forces northward in an attack to breach the Siegfried Line. Seventh Army's secondary mission was to assist the First French Army in closing to the Rhine. First French Army was instructed to destroy the enemy west of the Rhine and close to the River in zone. By these tactics, 6th Army Group continued to protect the southern flank of the 12th Army Group and assist its northern neighbor in closing to the Rhine in zone.

Accordingly, on 28 November, XV Corps launched an attack northward in the direction of Hagenu, In three days, gains up to 10 miles had been made and the Moder River reached at several points. However, heavy fighting developed around Hagenu and Bitch, slowing the northward march of the American units. See Figure 7.

Meanwhile, activity on the Franco-Italian front had been limited to patrol action and relief of units by both American and French elements.

As ordered by Headquarters 6th Army Group in Operational Memorandum Number Three on 8 November, the newly constituted 44th AAA Brigade Command began relieving elements of the FABTF on 15 November. Brigadier General Ralph Tobin, Commanding General, 44th AAA Brigade assumed command of the southern sector on 21 November, following relief of elements of FABTF.

At this time the 19th and 68th Armored Infantry Battalions of the 14th Armored Division, which had arrived on 10 November, were holding



Metz

Nancy

Front Line

International Boundaries

Unit Boundaries

Rivers

Cities

19 DEC

7 DEC

26 NOV

12 AG

6 AG

7th

1st IFR

7 DEC

19 DEC

26 NOV

7-19 DEC

RHINE

FRANCE

GERMANY

SWITZERLAND

Metz

Nancy

Rezon L'Etape

St. Die

Solestat

Vieboisville

Colmar

Belfort

Plamonto

Belle

Strasbourg

Wolshelm

Haguenau

Saverne

Sarrebourg

Bitche

Petit Rederching

Wissensbourg

Tauterbourg

Sultz

Basel

Huningue

Kumbs

Bulhouse

Figure 7

sectors in the line. These units were needed on the main front to operate with their parent unit. The 442d Infantry, less the 100th Infantry Battalion which had arrived on the Alps sector on 13 November, was withdrawn from the Seventh Army front and assigned to 44th AAA Brigade to relieve these Armored Infantry Battalions. On 23 November the 442d Infantry (-100th Bn) arrived and the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion was relieved. On 25 November the 899th AAA Battalion arrived and the First Special Service Force and the 68th Armored Infantry Battalion were relieved on 28 November and 1 December, respectively. On 6 December the 65th Infantry Regiment (-2 Battalions) arrived on the Alps front. By 15 December the composition of the front line troops of the 44th AAA Brigade was as follows:

442d Infantry  
65th Infantry (-2 Bns) and  
899th AAA Battalion (acting as infantry).

As Seventh Army's attack progressed northward during the first of December, First French Army's attempt to close the Colmar Pocket from the south and west was meeting increasing difficulties. Only minor gains were being made.

To bolster First French Army and relieve Seventh Army of responsibility for waging a dual-front battle, Headquarters 6th Army Group issued Letter of Instructions Number Four, 2 December.

Seventh Army was directed to capture Selestat in a maneuver designed to pinch out two of VI Corps' divisions fighting in the French Zone and make them available for use in the north. Two Seventh Army divisions--French 2 DB and 36th US Infantry Division--were ordered passed to control of First French Army as soon as Selestat was captured.

One day later, 3 December, VI Corps captured Selestat and Ribeauville after breaking through the Vosges Mountains. The French at the same time had penetrated farther into the Vosges Mountains and captured the Bussang Pass.

After accomplishing its mission in the French zone, Seventh Army began withdrawing the VI Corps minus the 36th Infantry Division. The VI Corps swung northward down the Rhine Plain to assist XV Corps in breaching the Siegfried Line. On 5 December, 12th Armored Division was assigned to 6th Army Group and subsequently came under control of XV Corps. By this time, the entire Seventh Army was pushing northward towards the Siegfried Line; XV Corps on the left and VI Corps on the right.

Seventh Army looked forward to receiving reinforcements in the form of three new divisions coming over from the States. Initially, the three divisions were to be assigned to 6th Army Group but SHAEF, acquiescing to requests from 12th Army Group, agreed for one of the divisions to go to Third Army and the other two to Seventh Army. The 63rd and 70th Infantry Divisions were to come to Seventh Army and the 42nd was to go to Third Army.

The Divisions came piecemeal. First units to arrive were the infantry elements. These units were equipped as rapidly as possible and shipped to the army area. The 63rd and 70th Divisions were assigned to Seventh Army on 8 December but did not begin arriving in the army area until sometime later. It was not felt that the divisions as such would be ready for employment until mid-February.

While awaiting the arrival of the supporting arms and services, Seventh Army decided to give the new infantry components front line experience on a quiet sector, along the Rhine River front. The new infantry regiments were to replace regiments of divisions already in the line, permitting those units that had been fighting almost continuously since landing in Southern France to take a breathing spell.

On 11 December, VI Corps cleared Haguenau while XV Corps captured Petit-Riderching on the Maginot Line, old French border defenses. Only minor advances were reported by First French Army.

Breaking northward after capturing Haguenau, Seventh Army cleared the Haguenau Forest on 13 December and was fighting in Seltz and Soultz-Sous-Forêts. On 15 December Seventh Army captured Lauterbourg, near the German border, but other advances, especially in the Bitch area, were limited.

Elements of VI Corps crossed the German border in the Rhine Plain 16 December to gain bridgeheads over the Lauter River and capture Wissembourg.

Because the need for all elements of the First French Army in the current battle was pressing, SHAEF agreed on 14 December to a postponement of Operation Independence. However, 1 DMI had already moved the bulk of its elements to Western France.

As Seventh Army was entering the Siegfried defenses on 16 December, the German counter offensive struck in the Ardennes. No immediate change was made in Seventh Army's mission.

For a short time longer, Seventh Army continued its northward drive against stiffening resistance as the famed Siegfried Line was reached and penetrated at several points. On 19 December, US Infantry and armor were fighting in the Siegfried defenses in the Wissembourg area and to the east and in the converted Maginot defenses in the Bitch area. Minor advances were reported on First French Army front at this time with the capture of Kaisersberg by the 36th US Division and the occupation of Mittelwihr.

But Seventh Army's drive northward was to be short lived. The German offensive of 16 December was on. Headquarters 6th Army Group received orders from SHAEF to relieve elements of Third Army covering the front of two corps on the immediate left of Seventh Army and to go immediately on the defensive. For front lines of greatest advances see Figure 6.

There may be some question as to whether it would have been better to permit Seventh Army to continue its offensive through the Siegfried Line, which was progressing rapidly, rather than to assume the defensive. Breaching of the Siegfried Line in the Wissembourg area would have opened the northern Rhine plain to Allied troops and outflanked the strong defenses in front of Third Army. What influence this would have had on the German's Ardennes offensive is mainly conjecture, but it is within the realm of possibility that some German elements earmarked for Hundstedt's drive would have been diverted southward to counter the Seventh Army with a resultant weakening of the main German effort in the north.

As an overall operation, the offensive beginning on the Meurthe and in front of Belfort Gap on 13 November proved highly successful. From the planning standpoint, it was well conceived and coordinated in every minor detail. This planning and coordination netted results beyond expectation. By G-2ing that the German would commit his general reserves in front of the Metz offensive proved correct. Thus, when Seventh Army opened its big guns and drove for the Rhine and Strasbourg, the enemy had little except local reserves, to throw in the way of the fast moving armor and motorized infantry.

The main effort of Seventh Army, carried out by XV Corps, was an exemplary instance of the utilization of armor in its main role, exploitation after the outer enemy defenses have been penetrated. The 2 DB was held in reserve, after being passed through in the initial attack until the main enemy defenses had been penetrated and suitable terrain for the employment of armor reached. It was a brilliant maneuver that sent the French armored division around the Saverne Pass to come in from both north and south to outflank the strong, easily defended position, resulting in opening of multi-routes into the Alsace Plain. Motorized infantry followed closely the French armor, and barely had the armor stopped running before infantry was on the ground to hold what had already been gained, or to assist in reduction of final enemy strongpoints.

The initial French drive through the Belfort Gap employed the same principles---making holes in the enemy line with infantry, followed by exploiting armor. This breached the Belfort Gap and permitted the armor to dash to the Rhine and capture Mulhouse..

The principal bone of contention in the operations during November and the first part of December hinges around the Colmar Pocket. To say that it was tactically unsound to swing the bulk of Seventh Army northward to assist Third Army in breaching the Siegfried Line when the enemy was on the run and while the Colmar Pocket was still in existence is without basis. The French had driven brilliantly to the Rhine and through strongly defended Belfort. Available to the French to reduce the pocket were four French Infantry Divisions, three French Armored Divisions, one US Infantry Division, and the equivalent of another infantry division in smaller French units.

There was no indication that the French would not be able to accomplish their mission and close to the Rhine all the way from Basle to Strasbourg with little difficulty. Many considerations must be taken into account in the failure of the French to carry this out. Initially, the traffic jam of armored units, when the enemy was on the run and French armor was in hot pursuit, definitely influenced the action. This gave the German time to regroup and prepare new defenses. This is what stopped the French in the South. When the traffic jam was finally straightened out and an attempt to crack the hastily thrown up enemy defense line failed, little progress was made on this front until many weeks later. Too, French casualties, especially in officers in colonial outfits, had been heavy. No replacements were available for these men familiar with handling colonial troops. This resulted in a lowering of morale and efficiency in divisions that had carried the brunt of fighting for the French forces since landing in Southern France. This was the principal contributing factor to failure, and could not have been anticipated by Headquarters 6th Army Group.

As far as the Seventh Army's drive northward was concerned, the proof of the pudding is in the eating. Since the Siegfried Line had been penetrated in several places and American units were fighting in Germany generally all along the VI Corps front, results shine as a monument to the success of this operation. Seventh Army felt it could either cross the Rhine and establish a bridgehead hinged on the northern tip of the Black Forest or continue through the Siegfried Line with not too much difficulty. "If" stands out as the salient word in this situation, and since there was no chance to prove the contention made, no battle tried solution is possible. One conclusion appears obvious. The German Ardennes offensive and the consequent shifting of American divisions from the Saar front to the north robbed the Seventh and Third Armies of a brilliant and crushing victory in the Saar Basin in December/January. For on 20 December, only broken German units stood between them and the Rhine.

During the period covered by this report, shortage of infantry replacements began to be felt seriously. Casualties had not been too heavy in comparison with results obtained but the shortage resulted from a lack of men in reinforcements pools.

At the beginning of November, Seventh Army was short 2,602 infantry replacements. By 15 December this shortage had reached 6,782. But still the situation had not become critical.

Casualties suffered by Seventh Army from 1 November to 15 December were: killed, 2,441; wounded, 13,658; missing, 2,079.

French casualties over the same period totaled 14,881 killed, wounded and missing.

Seventh Army counted 25,066 prisoners through its cages during this period while First French Army captured a total of 9,726 prisoners.

CHAPTER FIVETHE GERMAN COUNTER OFFENSIVE

As Seventh Army's offensive rolled northward through the strong Siegfried defenses, word reached TAC Headquarters 6th Army Group at Pfalsbourg, France, of the German counter offensive in the Ardennes. First reports on 17 December were fragmentary and far from satisfactory. Several days elapsed before the course of the Nazi breakthrough could be followed with accuracy. During this period daily liaison was maintained with 12th Army Group at Luxembourg.

But the German offensive did not stop Seventh Army at the time. The doughboys and tankers of VI Corps plowed through the German Westwall in at least three places, north and east of Wissembourg. The French Maginot Line, which had been reversed in many places to serve as a long range outpost for the German frontier fortifications, was receiving the same treatment farther to the west. While slowed by the prepared defenses, Seventh Army's offensive was by no means stopped and the feeling was prevalent throughout the Army that VI Corps would soon be in the clear, north of the defenses in the Wissembourg area.

The German drive continued westward in the Ardennes. It was obvious that this enemy effort was not on a penny-ante scale but the magnitude of the German thrust was not known for several days. However, the offensive did recall to mind immediately the famous last desperate German gamble in World War I to seize victory while on the very brink of defeat. By 19 December, three days after the Panzer armies struck, some idea of the ambitious German plan had been gained. Captured documents and propaganda boasts over the radio revealed the enemy intended to split Allied forces by driving through the Ardennes to capture the important deep water port of Antwerp.

With this background of German plans and knowledge of the current situation, General Eisenhower assembled selected members of his staff and his commanders at Verdun, main headquarters of 12th Army Group, to work out a plan to turn the desperate German gamble into decisive defeat for the enemy and victory for the Allies. The conference convened in a solemn atmosphere. General Eisenhower, flanked by his staff, presided. Sitting around the conference table were Air Chief Marshal Tedder (deputy SCAEF), General Devers, General Bradley, General (then Lieutenant General) George S. Patton, Jr., Commanding General of Third Army, and members of their staffs. Representatives of 21st Army Group present are not recalled. The current situation, tactical and logistical, and lines of action open to the Allies were discussed in detail. Piece by piece the Allied plan was fitted together. It was announced orally by General Eisenhower to the assembled officers.

As far as overall strategy was concerned, the Allied objective remained unchanged --- capture of the industrially important Rhur

district. But to meet the present emergency, the approved immediate plan called for:

6th Army Group to halt Seventh Army's offensive and pass it to the defensive at once, and at the same time take over a forty-mile sector of Third Army's front with our present forces augmented by the addition of only one infantry division -- the 87th. In addition, 6th Army Group was told to be prepared to lose one infantry division and possibly more to assist in stemming the German drive.

12th Army Group and 21st Army Group were assigned the job of reducing the German penetration. All troops north of the penetration had been placed under operational control of the British 21st Army Group. Those south of the bulge remained under command of General Bradley. Twin attacks from the north and south with all available troops against the shoulders of the bulge were ordered.

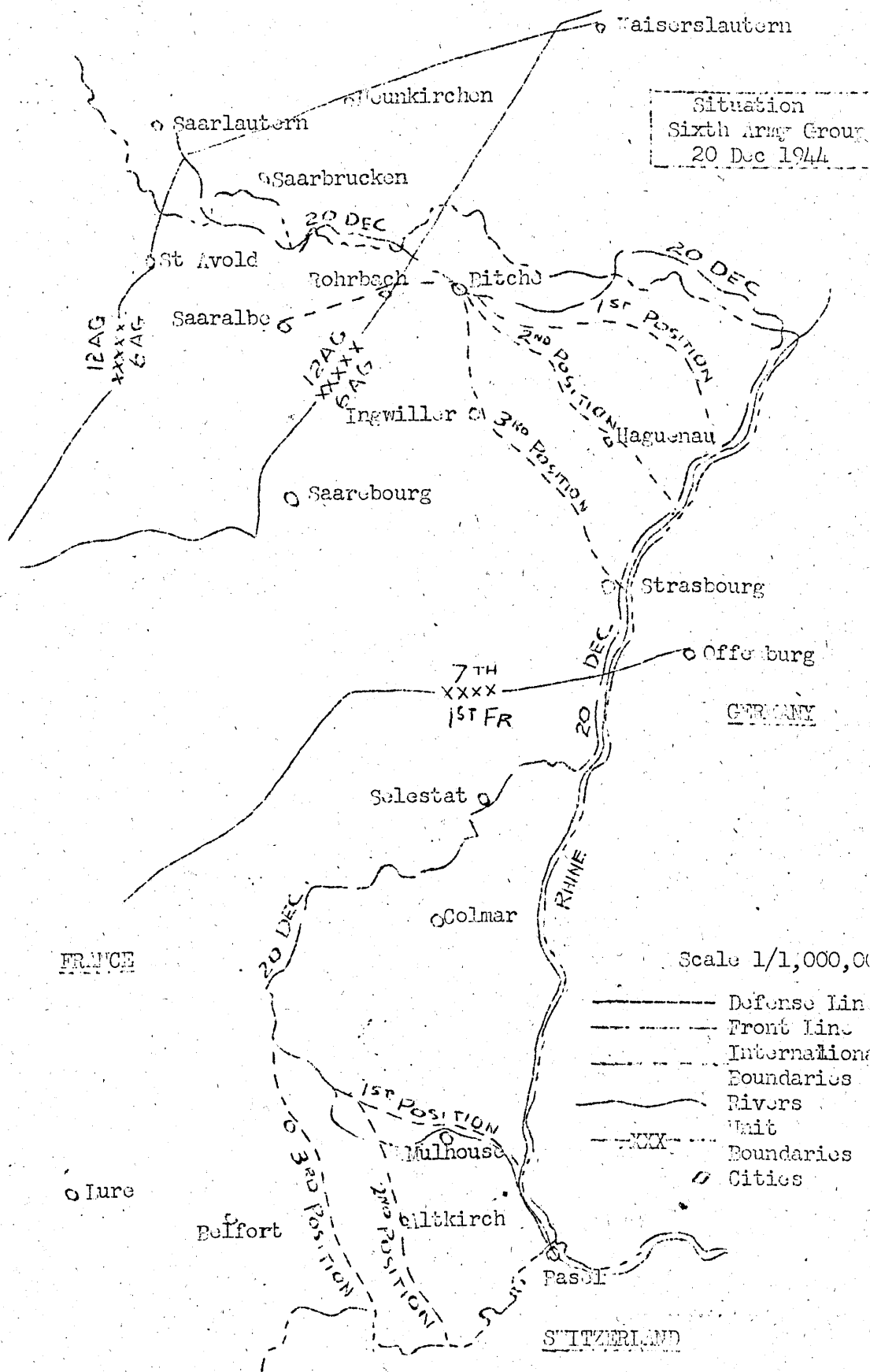
To include the new sector formerly held by the XX and XII Corps of Third Army, the boundary between 6th and 12th Army Groups was changed to: Dombasle-Chateau Salins-Baronville-Falquemont-St. Avold-Carling-Bous (to 12th Army Group) - Neunkirchen-Landstuhl-Kaiserslautern (to 6th Army Group). See Figure 8.

With these instructions, 6th Army Group passed from a successful offensive to the defensive with one of its armies in what was destined to become our most hectic period of the war. Smarting from the blow to its ambitions and dreams of continuing non-stop into Germany proper, 6th Army Group, nevertheless, tackled its new assignment with vigor and determination. For front lines see Figure 8. But the offensive was not forgotten. It was temporarily sidetracked to be picked up at the earliest opportunity.

Promptly upon his return from the conference, oral instructions were issued by General Devers to General Patch to carry out SCAEF's directive. The speed with which these instructions were put into effect is attested to by the fact that Seventh Army began relieving Third Army elements in its newly acquired sector on 20 December. At the same time, relief of the 36th Division by the 3d Division was directed, placing 3d Division under operational control of First French Army and returning 36th Division to Seventh Army.

On 21 December, G-2 warned of an imminent German attack in the Homburg area. It was pointed out that the enemy continued to bolster his strength in this area. At this time, the enemy was definitely conducting an aggressive defense with the possibility of turning to the offensive within the next 10 days.

Confirming oral instruction previously issued and revealing the still present offensive-mindedness of all concerned, Headquarters 6th Army Group issued Letters of Instructions Numbers Five and Six on 21 and 22 December, respectively.





Letter of Instruction Number Five was addressed to Seventh Army. It ordered immediate abandonment of the offensive and relief of certain Third Army units as far west as Saarlautern. To assist in taking over this new area, Seventh Army was to take command of 87th Division and infantry elements of 42nd Division which had been assigned to Third Army at the same time 63rd and 70th Division infantry units were assigned to 6th Army Group. Seventh Army was instructed to submit a complete defensive organization of the Army area to Headquarters 6th Army Group and to institute immediately reconnaissance for rearward positions to meet a possible hostile penetration from the front or either flank.

One infantry division was earmarked for movement to 12th Army Group's assistance on short notice, anytime after 23 December. The Seventh Army nominated the newly acquired 87th Division, which was subsequently lost to the Central Group of Armies on 22 December.

In order to deceive the Germans as to our intentions and to hold troops in the area east of the Rhine, Seventh Army was instructed to dispose its troops and bridging material along the western banks of the Rhine north of Strasbourg in such a way as to facilitate an attack across the Rhine at any time.

Letter of Instructions Number Six was addressed to the First French Army, ordering an attack not later than 5 January to destroy the German forces west of the Rhine. The attack was to be a two-pronged offensive from north and south. The French were instructed to be prepared to take over the Strasbourg area and defend the line of the Rhine to the Swiss border after closing to the Rhine. All sectors not engaged in the offensive were to be immediately wired in and strong defensive works constructed.

These instructions were issued because 1 DMI had begun its movement back to First French Army from Southwest France and with its help it was felt that the First French Army should be able to eliminate the sore-spot Colmar pocket.

Previously, while Seventh Army's offensive was rolling northward, General Devers had foreseen the need of an additional Corps Headquarters for Seventh Army. On 15 December, he requested, in a letter to SHAEF, assignment of an additional corps headquarters with necessary supporting troops to this command. The request was approved and Headquarters XXI Corps, then arriving in Normandy from England, was ordered to 6th Army Group.

Meanwhile, infantry elements of the three new divisions --- one of which had been diverted from Third Army to Seventh Army --- began arriving in the Army area. Because of the pressing need for additional troops, Seventh Army immediately organized the new and untried infantry regiments into task forces under command of the assistant division commanders. These task forces were placed in line along the Rhine River to gain their promised battle indoctrination.

On 23 December, Task Force Harris (63rd Division) took over a sector north of Strasbourg. The next day, Task Force Linden (42nd Division) which had been turned over to Seventh Army by Third Army, relieved 36th Division in Strasbourg. The 36th Division was assembled in Army reserve in the Sarrebourg area. On 25 December, 12th Armored Division was relieved from the line and assembled in the Sarrebourg area in Army reserve. On 27 December, Task Force Herren (70th Division) went into the line along the Rhine River. All three task forces were assigned to VI Corps.

The German offensive continued to move westward in the Ardennes. From SHAEF on 26 December came instructions for 6th Army Group to fall back to the line of the Vosges Mountains, giving up Alsace and Strasbourg. This action was apparently directed in order to shorten 6th Army Group's line and make additional units available to SHAEF to combat the northern German threat. Upon receiving these instructions, General Devers called a conference of his staff with Lieutenant General Patch and his Corps Commanders at Pfalsbourg to discuss in detail the new turn of events. At this conference, G-2 reiterated his convictions of an imminent German attack in the Homburg area and estimated the attack could be launched by 1 - 3 January.

On 27 December TAC Headquarters 6th Army Group moved back to Vittel. To cover this move, the newly arrived Headquarters XXI Corps moved into the old headquarters set up at Pfalsbourg and maintained necessary signal traffic.

As 6th Army Group assumed the defensive, JPS was busy studying this new turn of events with a view to developing the most cohesive plan to meet an attempted enemy penetration.

First to come under the JPS microscope was the possibility of 6th Army Group having to assume responsibility for defense of the entire sector from the Moselle south and east to Switzerland. Planners considered an attack on the Trier-Merzig front aimed at the key communication centers of Metz and Nancy a strong enemy capability. The terrain was favorable and the prize well worth the risk involved.

A majority of this corridor was outside 6th Army Group's zone of responsibility and therefore coordination and conduct of the defense, in the event of attack, was made more difficult. Yet 6th Army Group would be most concerned should an attack be launched on this front by the Germans.

Since 6th Army Group might be called upon to assume responsibility for this entire front JPS on 23 December examined its implication. The planners at this time limited their recommendations to an immediate request to SHAEF for a corps composed of two infantry divisions and one armored division should this added responsibility be placed on 6th Army Group.

Two days later after the JPS had delved deeply into this problem, they recommended that SHAEF be requested to turn over the entire defensive sector south of the Moselle to 6th Army Group. This request, with a recommended inter-army group boundary, was submitted to SHAEF.

Going further into the possibilities of enemy penetrations, JPS recommended a complete defensive set-up for the entire current sector. At the same time it was recommended that a decision to launch an offensive to close the Colmar Pocket be postponed until the Ardennes situation cleared. These recommendations were later embodied in instructions to the Armies.

Following closely on the heels of the order to withdraw, SHAEF directed 6th Army Group on 28 December to assemble a corps of one infantry division and one armored division in SHAEF reserve. To accomplish this, and button up final plans for the defense all along the front, Headquarters 6th Army Group issued Letter of Instructions Number Seven, 28 December.

These instructions placed both Seventh Army and First French Army on the defensive. The main battle position was outlined. In addition intermediate battle positions were outlined for both armies. See Figure 8. Seventh Army was again warned against possible German penetrations along the axes of: Homburg-Nancy; Homburg-Sarrebourg; Colmar-Remirecourt; and Colmar-St. Die. First French Army was warned against penetrations on the axes: Colmar-Remirecourt; Colmar-St. Die; and against a penetration of the Belfort Gap. Detailed plans for coordination of the defenses of both armies and with Third Army on the left were laid down, including road blocks, preparation of bridges, dumps, equipment and roads for destruction.

Seventh Army was ordered to assemble the XXI Corps, composed of one infantry division and one armored division, in the Sarrebourg area as SHAEF reserve. The two divisions nominated by Seventh Army were 36th Infantry Division and 12th Armored Division, both of which were in Army reserve.

First French Army was instructed to pass 2 DB to control of Seventh Army in the Strasbourg area not later than 3 January. 1 DMI was assigned to First French Army upon its arrival from Southwest France. This unit closed in the First French Army area on 31 December.

With these actions, Headquarters 6th Army Group had carried out SHAEF's directive, in which there was no idea of falling back to the Vosges until forced to by enemy action.

On 30 December, G-2 Estimate of the Enemy Situation again warned of possible German attack on the axis Homburg-Sarrebourg by an estimated three to five divisions as the main German capability. G-2 pointed to the aggressive attitude of the enemy on our front, to

his build up of strength, and to the overall strategic advantage of forcing Seventh Army to commit its forces on this front. Should the enemy be able to reach Sarrebourg, a withdrawal from Alsace would be necessary. This would be a great moral as well as political victory for the German.

G-2 also pointed out that a diversionary attack might be launched in either the Mulhouse, Colmar or Strasbourg area at the same time.

Upon receipt of information that 6th Army Group was to organize a defensive position running along the eastern edge of the Vosges Mountains, the French Government thought that an immediate evacuation of Alsace had been ordered. As a result, General de Gaulle is reported to have dispatched a letter to General Eisenhower urging him to make every effort to hold Strasbourg because of its political significance to the French. On 2 January, General Devers received a similar letter from General de Lattre.

The French government offered services of three FFI divisions to 6th Army Group to insure retention of Strasbourg. Inspection teams were sent immediately to determine the state of readiness of these divisions. After the inspection it was decided to use only one -- the 10th (Billotte) Division, which was rated the best of the three.

(In spite of the refusal of 6th Army Group to employ the other divisions, the French government ordered six additional infantry regiments into the First French Army area without coordinating the movement with this headquarters. The arrival of these new units would overtax the available supply facilities and overcrowded transportation which was being used to maximum extent in supplying troops currently in the area. SHAEF was asked by Headquarters 6th Army Group 8 January to make representations to the French Government against the movement of any troops into 6th Army Group area without prior approval of this headquarters.)

The sixth paragraph, page 33, should read as follows:

About an hour before midnight, December 31/1 January, the Germans launched a series of strong probing attacks with two divisions in the Hardt Mountains east of Bitche on the front of VI Corps. The brunt struck Task Force Huddleston, composed of elements of 14th Armored Division and 117th Cavalry Squadron, in the

As the Hardt Mountain attack was reaching the height of its intensity on 5 January, the Germans established a small bridgehead in the Gambesheim area, north of Strasbourg, after crossing the river undetected. This was apparently thought by VI Corps to be only a small force and a nuisance raid. Only a small force was dispatched to eliminate the bridgehead. Initial attacks against the bridgehead failed and the Germans became firmly entrenched in the marshy, flat ground around Gambesheim and Herrlisheim.

Elements of 14th Armored Division were hurled at the bridgehead on 8 January but were unable to reduce this stronghold west of the Rhine.

At about this time the German Ardennes offensive had shot its bolt. Seeing 6th Army Group being attacked from two directions -- the Bitche area and at Gambesheim -- SHAEF agreed to release XXI Corps composed of 36th Infantry Division and 12th Armored Division to 6th Army Group on 7 January. The Headquarters XXI Corps was given a sector on the left by Seventh Army. The divisions were placed in reserve initially.

As the fighting blazed on Seventh Army's front and the 10th (Billotte) French Infantry Division arrived in First French Army area, Headquarters 6th Army Group sought to tighten its defenses. Letter of Instructions Number Eight was issued 7 January. Seventh Army was instructed to organize additional defensive positions (see Figure 8) but to withdraw only in the face of strong enemy pressure. The 36th Infantry Division and 12th Armored Division were released to Seventh Army but were to be used only on authority of 6th Army Group. For new boundary see Figure 9.

To shorten Seventh Army's front, the First French Army's zone was extended to include Strasbourg. The 10th (Billotte) Division was assigned to First French Army upon its closing in the Army area.

The entire defensive was built along aggressive lines. Frequent raids on the front of both armies were directed, to keep the enemy confused as to our intentions. Especially was this to be true in the Colmar Pocket area, where already the eyes of the commanding general had been turned, while searching for means with which to eliminate this bulge in his lines.

While VI Corps was fully engrossed with the Gambesheim bridgehead, the Germans hurled an attack down from the north on Hatten. Employing two divisions --- 25th PGR and 21st Panzer --- the Germans captured Hatten and penetrated as far as Rittershoffen on 11 January. Counterattacks on 12 January stopped the German advances, retook Rittershoffen and brought American elements back to the outskirts of Hatten. One combat command of 14th Armored Division was employed on 13 January in an attempt to regain Hatten; at the same time the Germans renewed their attacks. Bitter fighting ensued around Hatten for the next six days but no appreciable gains were made by either side.

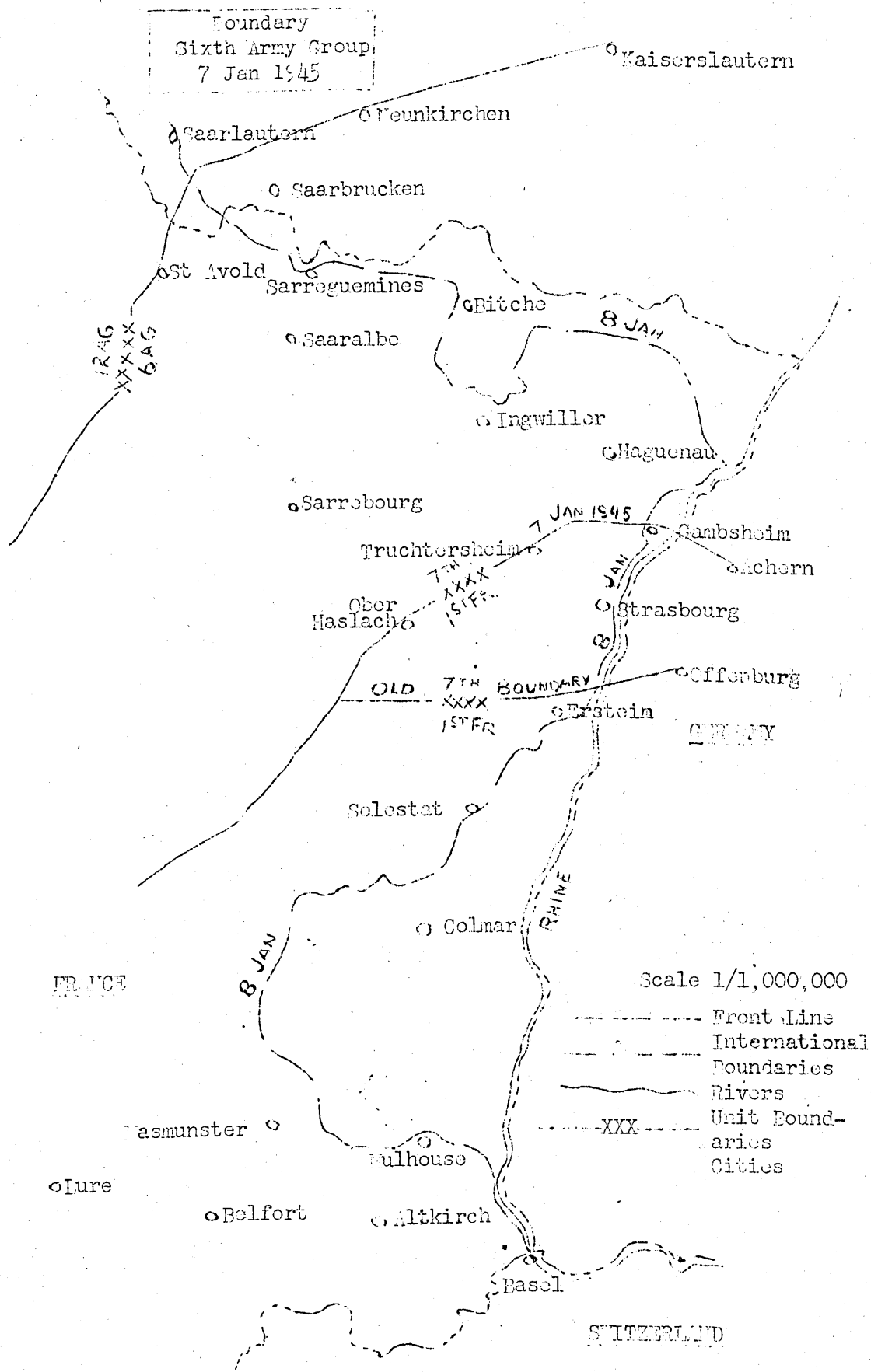


Figure 9

Meanwhile, the Gamsheim bridgehead continued to grow. Piece-meal attacks by American armored and infantry elements were making no headway against it. On 17th January, 12th Armored Division was thrown into the battle. The next day it succeeded in gaining a foothold in the town of Herrlisheim. This foothold was short lived, however, as German attacks from the north and a continuation of attacks from the east cut off almost the whole of a CC and forced the withdrawal of the remainder. In this action almost an entire infantry battalion and tank battalion were lost. Germans advancing from the north joined at Herrlisheim with the Gamsheim bridgehead and the enemy now held a long corridor between the Rhine and Moder Rivers. Realizing that its available units could not now reduce the bridgehead, the VI Corps put the 36th Infantry Division into line to contain the bridgehead. See Figure 10.

This strong German position west of the Rhine was now a serious threat to the VI Corps position in the Hatten - Hardt Mountain area. Should the German penetrations continue westward, its present positions would become untenable.

In line with SHAEF's directive not to risk the integrity of his forces General Devers ordered VI Corps to be withdrawn to a previously prepared position along the Moder River. This withdrawal was effected during the night of 20-21 January without incident. For line, see Figure 11.

With the withdrawal of VI Corps to the Moder River and the stabilizing of the XV Corps lines south of Bitcho, a serious German threat to 6th Army Group came to an end. For front lines see Figure 11. The Allied position was improving in the north. The Ardennes bulge was being gradually reduced. First French Army, assisted by the XXI Corps composed of three American infantry divisions and one armored division initiated action to eliminate the Colmar Pocket. Seventh Army, meanwhile, spent the time on the defensive, rotating units in line, carrying out limited objective attacks to gain a suitable line of departure for the renewal of the offensive, and planning the second penetration of the German West-wall.

By 5 February, remaining elements of the three divisions whose infantry had been acting as task forces had arrived in the Seventh Army area. The 101st Airborne Division was assigned to 6th Army Group just after its release from the Bastogne trap to bolster our position north of Strasbourg.

American elements of 6th Army Group never fought harder for their existence than from the time Seventh Army's offensive was stopped on 20 December until the line was finally stabilized along the Moder River and thence westward south of Bitcho. The disappointment of everyone, especially of the doughboys, at having to halt a successful offensive against the Germans on 20 December was evident on every hand.

Line of Maximum Penetration  
Sixth Army Group  
Ritchie-Mattson, 1942

GERMANY

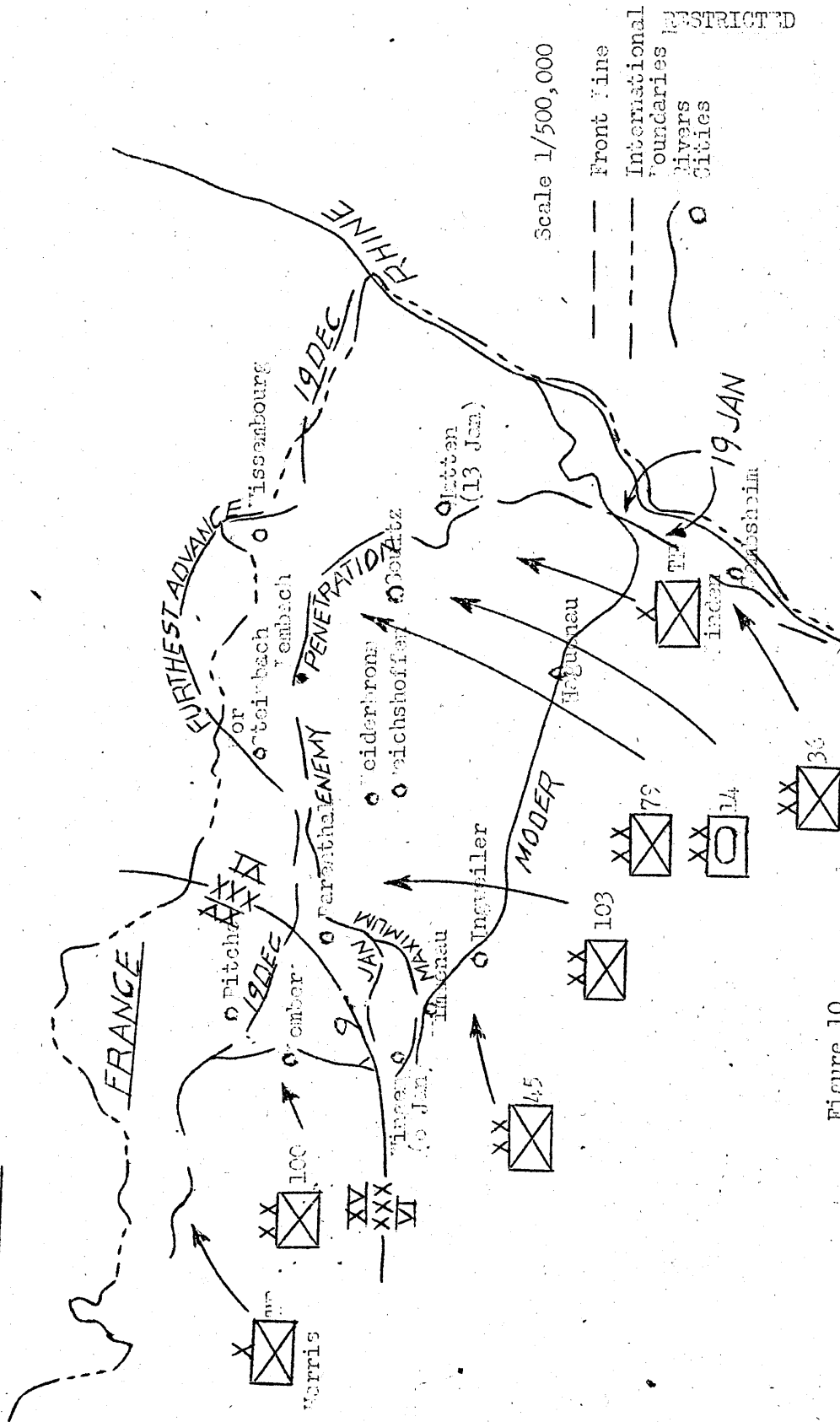


Figure 10

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Moder River Defense Line  
Sixth Army Group  
22 Jan 1945

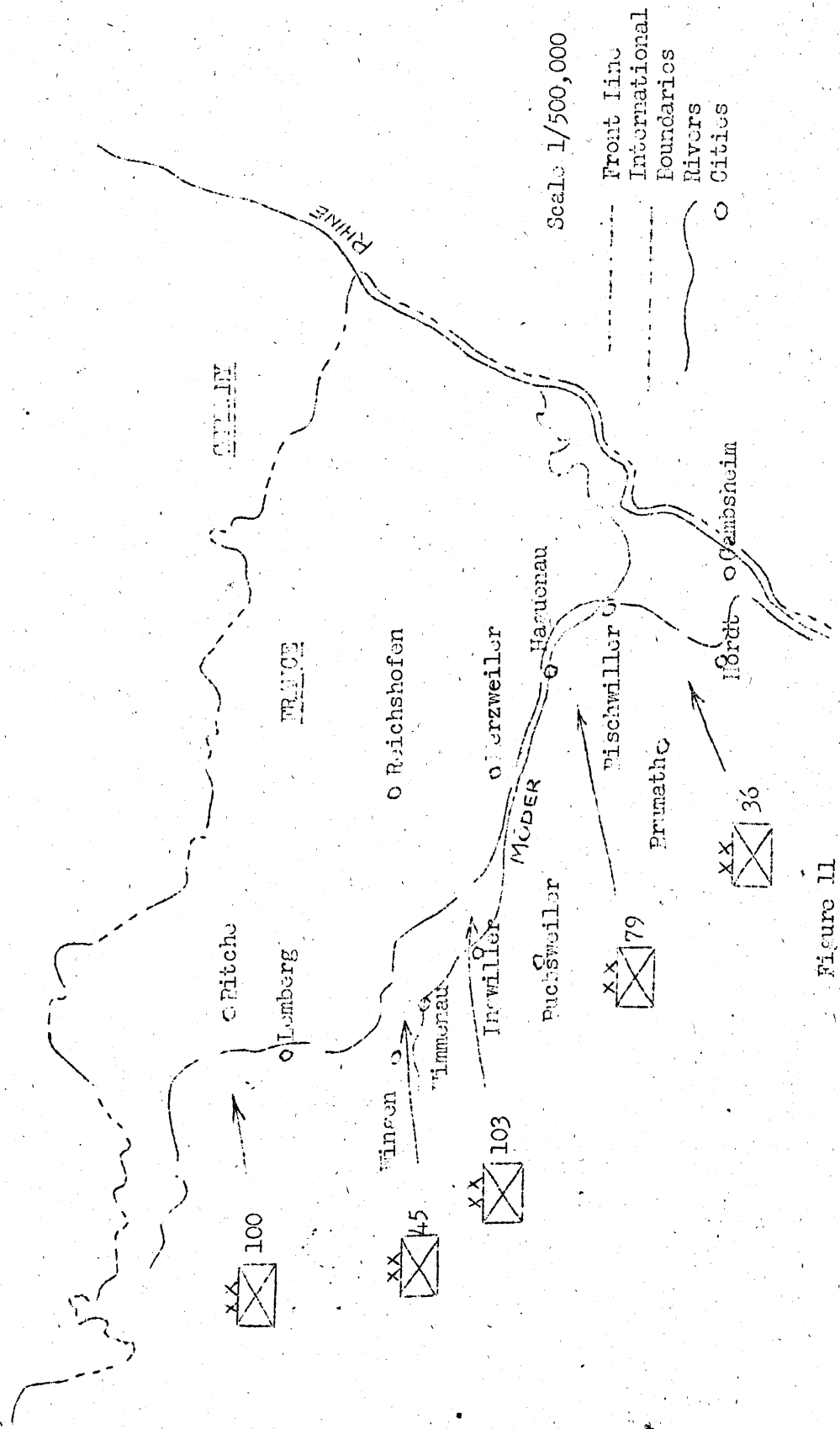


Figure 11

RESTRICTED

The First French Army remained unable to close the Colmar Pocket with its own means. Practically the same state of morale existed amongst the Colonial troops as prevailed during the latter stages of the preceeding period; and the only important gains made on that front were by the 3rd U. S. Infantry Division, advancing slowly, doggedly southward through snow covered rough terrain.

Although Headquarters 6th Army Group did not fail to evaluate correctly the German's potentialities, we failed to appreciate our own weakness. At first we had hoped to go on the defensive in the north while at the same time renew the offensive with the French on the south to close the Colmar Pocket. This plan failed. Hence, we were forced on the defensive throughout the entire sector.

Comprehensive and continuous study of the terrain and enemy capabilities had led this headquarters to believe that the entire area south of the Moselle should be the responsibility of one commander. Study of the terrain corridors in the area shows that the Moselle avenue of approach leads directly into 6th Army Group's back door. But this avenue was not a 6th Army Group responsibility until the back door was reached. With divided responsibility, coordination of defenses of the sector was difficult. Under these conditions, conduct of a defense against an attack in the Trier-Merzig sector would have been immeasurably retarded. Although no such attack materialized, Headquarters 6th Army Group experienced many uneasy hours during this defensive phase.

The fourth paragraph, page 36, should read as follows:

Ample warning had been given both XV and VI Corps of the imminence of German attacks in the actual areas in which they came. After staggering backwards initially XV Corps recovered quickly and threw back the German attack with heavy losses, except in the Rimling area, where hard fighting continued for three days. However, on its right in the Bitche area hard won ground had to be surrendered as a security measure in holding the

weak forces of the wrong composition.

RESTRICTED

CHAPTER SIXREDUCTION OF THE COLMAR POCKET

While on the defensive, never once did the Commanding General, 6th Army Group entertain any idea other than one of resuming the offensive at the earliest opportunity. During the hectic days when Seventh Army was repulsing attempted German penetrations on three sides, the offensive was the chief topic of conversation. General Devers directed that liquidation of the Colmar Pocket must be accomplished at the earliest possible date, and that before an all out offensive to breach the Siegfried line commenced.

After buttoning up defensive plans from all angles, JPS turned its attention to the south. As a result, Operation "Cheerful" was presented for approval. It was felt that since the French to date had been unable to eliminate the Colmar Pocket, additional troops would be necessary. For this purpose, our planners recommended employment of an American Corps of two infantry divisions and one armored division. One of the infantry divisions - 3rd - already was under operational control of the First French Army. The planners recommended drives from north and south. The attack in the south would precede the northern push, which was to be the main effort by the American corps, by at least two days. A maximum of seven days was estimated for the operation and it was recommended that it be started prior to 20 February, before the spring thaws made the Rhine Plain a sea of mud.

Early in January, General de Lattre visited General Devers and proposed a plan for liquidation of the Pocket with forces available to him at that time. General Devers, however, did not think the French had strength enough to accomplish the mission, and held off giving his approval.

On 14 January, Lieutenant General Walter B. Smith, Chief of Staff, Allied Expeditionary Force, visited Headquarters 6th Army Group. The entire situation was aired. General Smith was asked for two divisions, one infantry division to be employed in the Colmar Pocket operation and one armored division to replace 2. DB behind XV Corps when the former was shifted east of the Vosges to take part in the French attack. On 15 January, a SHAEF cable attached 10th Armored Division and 28th Infantry Division to 6th Army Group. It was understood that 28th Division was not to be used in a full-scale offensive because of its depleted condition. It had been badly battered in the Ardennes breakthrough and was relieved from the line to refit and assimilate large numbers of reinforcements.

General Devers announced that the Colmar Pocket offensive would be launched 20 January in order to make maximum use of the best predicted period of weather prior to the spring thaws. With these two newly assigned divisions already on the way, Headquarters 6th

Army Group issued Letter of Instructions Number Nine, 18 January, calling for a coordinated offensive to eliminate the Colmar Pocket. The southern attack by I French Corps, beginning 20 January, was to be on the axis Cernay-Guebwiller, thereafter exploiting in the direction of the Brisach Bridge.. The main effort by II French Corps was to be launched 22 January between Colmar and Selestat directed southeast. For scheme of maneuver, see Figure 12. The 28th Division was placed under operational control of First French Army for the operation.

Seventh Army was directed to pass 2 DB to operational control of First French Army in time for the northern operation. A second armored division -- Seventh Army nominated the 12th -- was to be assembled south of Saverne by 22 January for possible use by the French. 10th Armored Division was attached to the Seventh Army upon its arrival in the Sarrebourg area.

Beginning on 18 January, 28th Division moved into the line on the right of 3rd U. S. Division in II French Corps sector. 10th Armored Division began arriving in Seventh Army area on the same date.

Plans for the operation were worked out in minutest detail. For the operation, which was expected to last seven days, sufficient artillery ammunition for 10 days of battle was provided from 6th Army Group's small reserve. Warnings were issued that more artillery ammunition might not be available and that great care must be exercised in the expenditure of amounts allocated for the operation.

The enemy situation was closely scrutinized. By the middle of January 269 German Infantry and 30 SS Divisions had moved out of the Pocket. It was estimated that 15,000 combat effectives remained in the pocket, many of them second rate troops. But for weeks replacements had been arriving in the Pocket and the Germans were continuously strengthening their defenses.

The importance attached by the Germans to holding their bridgehead west of the Rhine can be inferred from the fact that Himmler was placed in direct command of the sector. G-2 reported that the Germans could launch an attack through the Pocket towards either St. Die or Remiremont in conjunction with a strong attack in the north. This double attack, if successful, would make Seventh Army's positions in the Rhine Plain to the north of Strasbourg untenable and force a withdrawal to the line of the Vosges Mountains. Recapture of Strasbourg and Alsace would have been a valuable victory for the Germans and would have strengthened their propaganda campaign. Also, it might have taken some of the pressure off Rundstedt in the Ardennes area. So great was the Germans' apparent confidence in accomplishing this that Himmler is reported to have promised Strasbourg to Hitler by 30 January, anniversary of National Socialism.

Scale 1/500,000

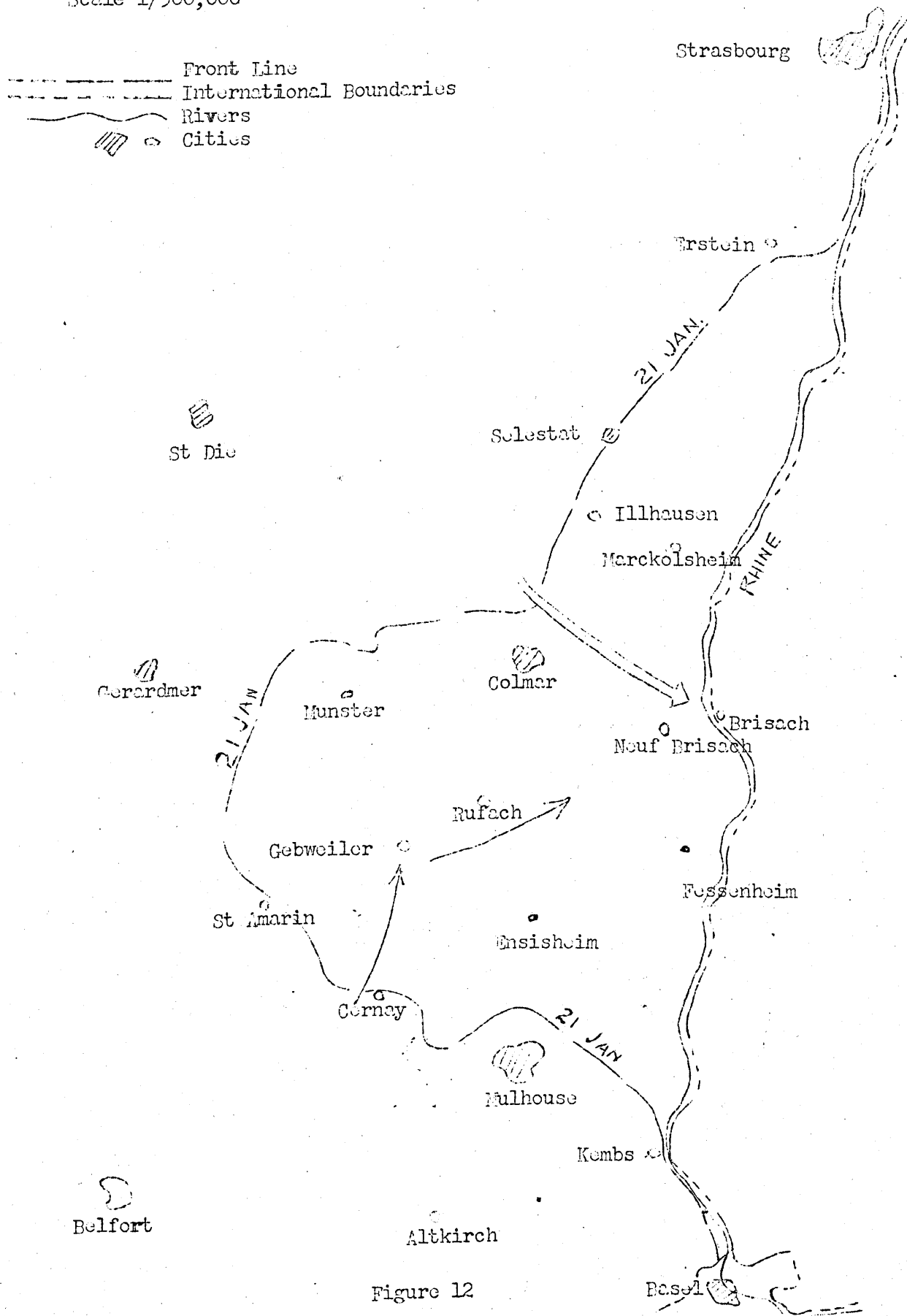


Figure 12

As scheduled, I Corps' attack on the south jumped off on 20 January during a snow storm with the 2 DIM, 9 DIC, 4 DMM and elements of 1 DB making the attack. Tactical surprise was gained, and initially the French elements made rapid progress. By nightfall of the first day the Bois de Nonnebruch and the Cernay-Mulhouse railroad had been reached. However, I Corps failed to continue the exploitation that night. It halted its advance. As was to be expected, Germans reacted rapidly the next morning and vigorous counterattacks were launched against I Corps. Hence, small progress was made the second day as the French hurled back repeated counterattacks all along the front. See Figure 13.

Carrying out the second phase of the operations, II French Corps attacked on 22 January using the 1 DMI, 2 DB and 3rd U. S. Division backed by elements of 5 DB in the main assault. After infiltrating through the Forêt Communal de Colmar during the night, 3rd U. S. Division reached the eastern edge just at daylight and jumped off in its attack while the 3 DIA spent the night repulsing a counterattack at Kilstett. Slow progress was made across the entire front initially due to thick mine fields.

By 24 January I Corps attack had begun to slacken while the 3rd U. S. Division in II Corps continued to make progress. The Ill River was cleared from Selestat to Illhausern and the Forêt Communal de Colmar was freed of enemy.

While only local gains were being made on I Corps front, 3rd U. S. Division of II Corps reached the Colmar Canal at three points on 26 January. Farther to the north a bridgehead was established by I DMI across the Ill River at Huttenheim.

Not satisfied with the progress of the attack, General Devers requested an additional infantry division from SHAEF. The request was approved, resulting in 75th Infantry Division moving into the First French Army sector on 27 January. On 29 January, Headquarters XXI Corps assumed command of American units --- 3rd, 28th and 75th Infantry Divisions --- in addition to elements of 5 DB. Mission of XXI Corps was to continue the attack and capture Brisach. The attack was renewed, both from the north and south.

By 29 January, I Corps was fighting in the outskirts of Cernay and the Forêt de Nonnenbruck. In the north, XXI Corps established a bridgehead south of the Colmar Canal and was advancing on Colmar from the north.

Slow progress was made on the south. By 3 February 3rd U. S. Division had reached Neuf-Brisach and 28th Division had taken Colmar. Elements of 2 DB relieved 5 DB units fighting with the 3rd Division and continued to drive up the Rhine.

Scale 1/500,000

Front Line

International Boundaries

Rivers

Cities

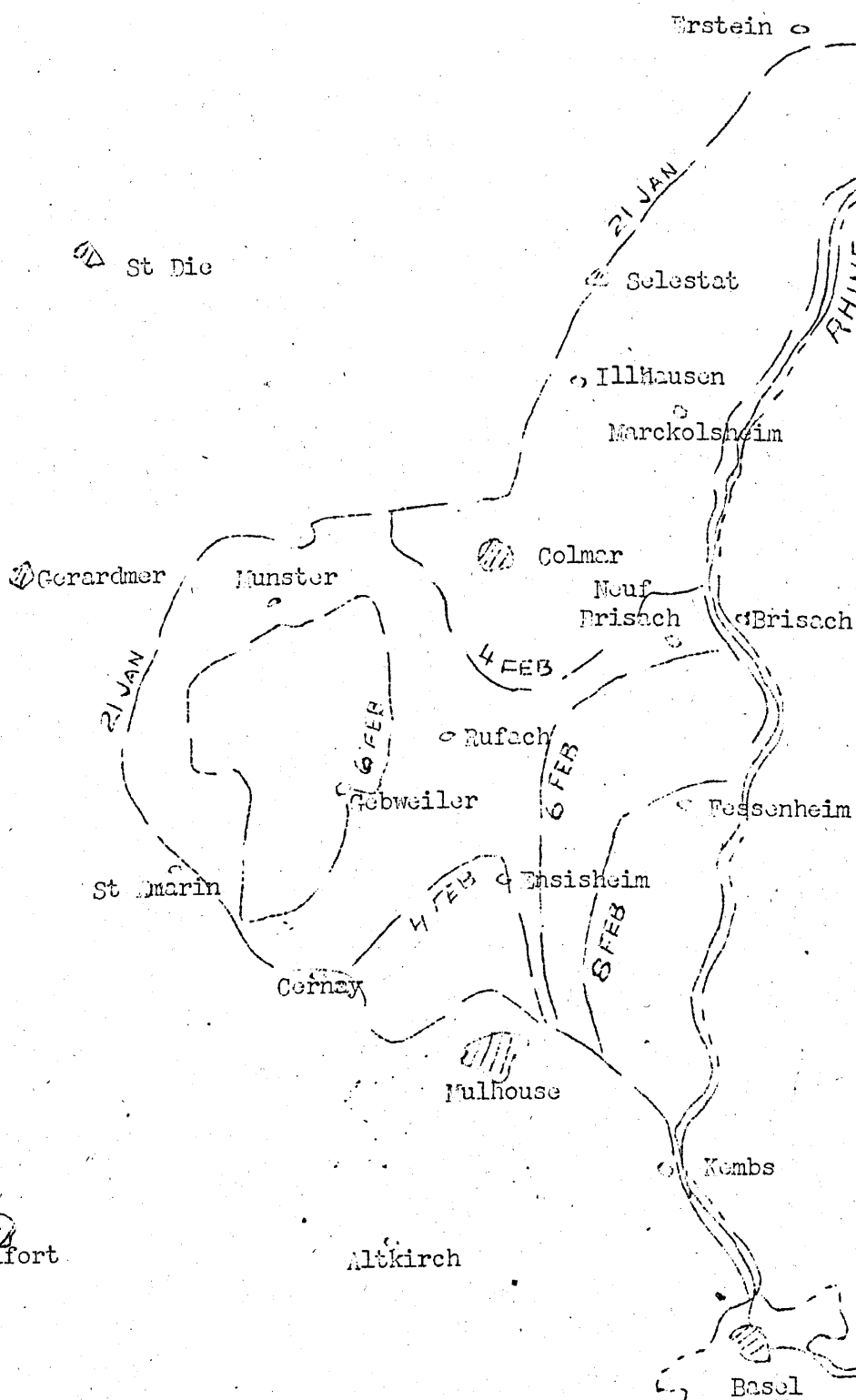


Figure 13

On 5 February, 12th Armored Division, which had been recently assigned to XXI Corps, passed through 28th Division in the Colmar area and drove southward on the axis Colmar-Rufach. Resistance encountered was quickly overrun and in 24 hours the Americans had contacted elements of 1 DB driving from the south. This isolated the entire Vosges sector in front of 10th (Billotte) Division.

At the same time, 3rd Division stormed Neuf Brisach and 2 DB drove southward to join elements of 1 DB at Fessenheim on 7 February. The Colmar Pocket was completely sealed off and only mopping up operations remained. For advances by phase, see Figure 13.

During the entire battle, weather had been the worst recorded in that part of the Rhine Plain in 10 years. Battle casualties of both French and American units were heavy as also were the non-battle casualties resulting mainly from the abnormal weather. Battle casualties for XXI Corps during the entire operations numbered 2,961 while non-battle casualties took the heavier toll 3,228. The French casualties were even heavier. A total of 5,067 battle casualties were suffered as against 11,963 non-battle casualties.

From 28 January to 10 February, XXI Corps captured a total of 6,420 Germans, while during the entire operation, from 20 January, other elements of First French Army counted a total of 10,018 prisoners.

With the reduction of the Pocket, French units took up defensive positions along the Rhine from north of Strasbourg to Basle, relieving American elements which had played a major part in the operation. First French Army had assumed responsibility for defense of Strasbourg on 7 January.

Everyone felt elated when word spread that the German no longer held territory west of the Rhine south of Strasbourg. But there was no time for leisurely adjustments. American units had to be redeployed. Two of the divisions used -- 28th and 75th -- had been borrowed from SHAEF for the job. They had to be returned. Too, the defense of the Rhine within the French sector had to be coordinated now that the front lines had been moved up.

To accomplish this, Headquarters 6th Army Group issued Letter of Instructions Number Ten, 12 February, telling Seventh Army and First French Army to defend along their present line, pointing out the Vosges Mountain Line as the main battle position to be used only in case of necessity. Intermediate and switch positions were delineated for First French Army in the Rhine Plain. See Figure 13. Both Armies were instructed to rotate units in line and institute immediately intensive training programs designed to prepare all units for resumption of the offensive.

The weather was still bad. The spring thaw had set in and in many places roads had completely deteriorated. In other places, in the mountains, roads were almost impassable due to snows and deteriora-



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tion during the winter months when repairs were impossible. This situation faced the American units as they started to head northward out of the pocket area. On 11 February, 75th Division started movement out of the pocket. Two days later 28th Division started northward. Both divisions passed through the remainder of 6th Army Group area with only a slight pause, heading for the 12th Army Group. 12th Armored and 3rd Infantry Divisions moved into Seventh Army area, beginning 18 February, in Army reserve, to get a well deserved period of rest.

Proof of the soundness of the plan is found in results obtained, and had the entire Corps, as recommended by JPS, been available on 20 January, there is little doubt but that the operation would have been over in the seven days allowed.

The Commanding General, 6th Army Group, was in thorough accord with the JIS from the outset in the matter of additional troops probably needed to assist the French in wiping out the Colmar Pocket. But it looked as if only one more infantry division, -- 28th -- could be made available for the job, and it had to be done. The good weather period, beginning 20 January, was drawing near, and thus the attack was ordered before the full Corps recommended by the JIS could be assembled. But the other division was made available by SHAEF as soon as possible and thrown into the action, as was 12th Armored Division which operated with XXI Corps during the latter stages of the action. Primarily, it was an American show in the main attack on the north flank, with 3rd Division carrying the brunt of the fighting initially and then XXI Corps with its three American infantry divisions, one French armored division and one U. S. armored division finally settling the issue.

The entire supply of artillery ammunition set up for the French for the operation in the south was shot up during the first five days of battle. However, ample warning of the scarcity of all types of artillery ammunition had been issued, and the blame for this unwarranted extravagance rests squarely on the shoulders of those controlling the expenditure in First French Army. Additional ammunition to complete the operation was provided from our almost exhausted reserve.

Closing of the Colmar Pocket put a new light on the whole 6th Army Group picture. The French could now take over more of the Rhine; and additional troops could be made available to Seventh Army for resumption of the offensive. In the meantime, these troops could be used to relieve others for rest and refit in rear areas, pending the green light on the big push which we knew was soon to come.

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CHAPTER SEVENBREACHING THE SIEGFRIED LINE AND OVERRUNNING THE SAAR

Long before the German counter offensive started in the Ardennes, planners of Headquarters 6th Army Group had turned their attention to plans for crossing the Rhine River. As Seventh Army and First French Army relentlessly battered German forces enroute to capture Strasbourg and Mulhouse, JPS's first recommendation was made. On 19 November, the Chief of Staff was presented a paper proposing an assault crossing north of Strasbourg, aimed at a bridgehead tied to the northern tip of the Black Forest. At that time, 6th Army Group's long range mission was to occupy the Nuremberg - Regensburg - Munich Area. As has been previously recorded, Seventh Army was turned northward after reaching the Rhine and nothing came of this plan.

Planners were so busily engaged in defensive planning during the latter part of December and early January that offensive thoughts went into hibernation. In mid-January SHAEF's predicted operations of 17 December for 1945, in three phases, were studied in detail.

First JPS thought was a recommendation on 17 January that upon resumption of the offensive, the main effort be along the Bleis River Valley. It recommended that plans for the operation be drawn with a view to employing the available armored means in mass.

On 26 January JPS prepared a report on SHAEF Planner's paper on "Future Operations in 1945", 17 December. Our planners did not agree with the idea of closing to the Rhine throughout its length prior to making an assault crossing with the main effort in the North. Our planners contended that the Germans would be expecting a main effort against the Ruhr and therefore would have their forces disposed behind already prepared positions to meet the attack. A crossing of the River in the south as soon as possible with a subsequent drive on the Frankfurt-Kassel axis was the JPS plan to soften up the Ruhr by pulling German troops to the south. With American forces moving on the Kassel area, three important sectors of Germany -- the Ruhr, Hanover and Leipzig-Berlin -- would be threatened.

After the Colmar Pocket operations were underway and the German Ardennes bulge was being reduced, on 25 January, JPS completed a study on "Operations In The Immediate Future" in which they recommended that following completion of the Colmar operations, all American Divisions be given a two weeks period for rest, refitting and rehabilitation before a new offensive was launched. During this time, 6th Army Group could be building up its artillery ammunition supply to the level required for operations against the Siegfried Line.

Early in February the Colmar Pocket was eliminated and Seventh Army was still on the defensive. In the north, SHAEF directed 21st Army Group

with Ninth U. S. Army attached to institute operations to close to the Rhine in the Emmerich-Wesel area not later than 10 February. 12th Army Group was instructed to continue its present attacks east of the Ardennes.

Regrouping of 6th Army Group commenced 15 February when 75th and 79th Infantry Divisions were released. XXI Corps reverted to control of Seventh Army and was given a sector on the left. 3rd Infantry Division was withdrawn from the French sector and placed in SHAEF reserve in the Pont - a - Mousson area 18 February. The same day 28th Division began departing 6th Army Group area. On 28 February, 12th Armored Division went into SHAEF reserve in the St. Avold area and 2 DB began movement from the area to Western France to come under control of the French Ministry of War.

Continuing perusal of all possible lines of action, JPS completed a study 19 February on "Operations to Close to the Rhine as far north as its confluence with the Moselle". It was deemed possible that all or part of Third Army might be withdrawn from operations north of the Moselle to assist. Target date for the operation was assumed to be any time after 13 March.

The JPS plan called for the main effort up the valley of the Bleis River on the axis Saarguemines - Kaiserlautern - Worms with a secondary effort through the Hardt Mountains on the axis Neiderbronn-Hinterweidenthal. The secondary effort was to be launched 48 hours prior to the main attack.

Looking to the relief of all American elements on the Franco-Italian frontier, the Alpine Front Command was established effective 1 March. General de Corps d'Armee Doyen was placed in command of the front. At that time, the 27th French Alpine Division and 44th American AAA Brigade were holding the front. 1 DM was relieved from First French Army and completed the relief of 44th AAA Brigade in the southern sector about 18 March.

On 4 March, SHAEF advised all subordinate commands that operations of 21st Army Group to close to the Rhine in zone were making excellent progress. The same message instructed 12th Army Group to be prepared to launch an offensive to close to the Rhine north of the Moselle as soon as success of the British effort was assured. 6th Army Group, the message said, was maintaining an aggressive defense and preparing plans for operations in the Saar.

12th Army Group met brilliant success in its attack to close to the Rhine. As the operations were continuing, SHAEF called for 6th Army Group's plan for operations in the Saar. Since this was purely an army job, Seventh Army was asked for its plan. On 5 March, Seventh Army submitted a plan generally in line with recommendations previously made by JPS--breach the Siegfried Line in the Bleis River Valley and advance on the axis Saarguemines-Kaiserlautern-Worms. Plans called for seizing a bridgehead east of the Rhine as soon as possible after reaching the river. The main effort was to be the job of XV Corps.

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Air support, beginning D-10, was planned in detail. Prior to the attack, road, rail and supply installations in the Saar were to be pounded continuously. During the attack phase, bombers were scheduled to blast Siegfried defenses in front of XV Corps while fighter bombers were attacking all known enemy CP's. Close support was planned throughout the operations with first priority to XV Corps.

To carry out these operations, three additional infantry divisions, one additional armored division and a few additional smaller combat and service units were requested. The plan was approved by General Devers with only minor changes.

On 6 March, the approved plan was submitted to SHAEF. The next day, SHAEF informed G-3 that the plan had been approved and that General Eisenhower was enroute to 12th Army Group then to discuss rapid transfer of troops needed for the operation.

On 8 March a cable from SHAEF directed that 6th Army Group launch operations in the Saar as soon as 12th Army Group was assured of closing to the Rhine north of the Moselle. It was pointed out that the object of the operation was to hold as many German forces away from the main effort in the north as possible and establish bridgeheads over the Rhine River in the Mainz-Mannheim area. To assist in the attack, 12 Army Group was to strike northeast from the Merzig area in rear of the enemy. The new inter-army group boundary was set as: Conflans-Saarlautern (to 6th Army Group)-Birdenfeld-Oberstein-Kirn-Sobernheim-Bad Kreuznach-Bingen (to 12th Army Group). Detailed adjustment of the boundary was left to Army Group commanders.

No definite date for the attack was set at this time but it was generally agreed that the target date must be around mid-March. Thus 6th Army Group was saddled with the gigantic task of moving in newly acquired combat and service units, polishing its attack plans and arranging supply installations behind the main effort in a matter of seven days.

The target date for Seventh Army's offensive was set as 15 March in a SHAEF cable on 10 March, just two days after 9th Armored Division seized the Remagen bridge and established the first bridgehead east of the Rhine. With this official date set, the race to meet it was in full swing. Two of the additional divisions allotted were to be used in the initial attack. They -- 71st Infantry Division and 6th Armored Division--closed in Seventh Army area on the night of 14 March. The other two divisions--4th Infantry and 13th Armored--were in Army reserve and closed after the offensive got underway. All minor units, except one treadway bridge company coming from England, closed in Seventh Army area prior to the attack, to 12th Army Group's everlasting credit.

Immediately upon receipt of the official target date for the operation, Headquarters 6th Army Group issued Letter of Instruction Number Eleven on 10 March.

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Seventh Army was instructed to assume operational control of north flank First French Army Division (3 DIA) and use it in the operations until the line of the Lauter River was reached. This was done in line with the idea of extending First French Army's boundary northward to include better crossing sites over the Rhine River. See Figure 14

The main effort of Seventh Army was directed along the valley of the Bleis River on the axis Saarguemines-Kaiserslautern-Worms. French elements along the Rhine were kept on the defensive with the added mission of conducting strong raids nightly across the river to test enemy strength and verify identification of hostile units. This effort was to be concentrated in the Briisach area..

Just prior to D-day for Seventh Army, Third Army turned south, crossed the Moselle River in the Coblenz area, and started pushing south-eastward.

Seventh Army jumped off on 15 March. The attack started on the front of XV Corps at 0100 hours. By 0715 hours all elements of Seventh Army were attacking, having opened their assaults on a carefully worked out time table. First TACAF flew 1670 sorties, an unprecedented number with the means available, in support of the initial attack, in perfect weather.

Initial resistance was light and spotty. XV Corps reached the outskirts of Bitche and by-passed the strong point which had held out against frontal assaults in December prior to the defensive period. XXI Corps advanced up to five kilometers and VI Corps crossed the Zintzel River and captured Baerenthal in the Hardt Mountains. More than 2,000 prisoners were taken by Seventh Army during the first day.

On 17 March, XXI Corps had broken into the Siegfried Line east of Saarbrücken and XV Corps reached the first belt of fortifications. VI Corps continued to advance. On the north, Third Army's offensive had gained momentum across the Moselle and the Siegfried Line south of Trier was being rolled back as 12th Armored Division was rushed from Seventh Army to Third Army to take advantage of the breakthrough and come in behind the Siegfried Line defenses.

On 18 March, 3rd Division penetrated the main Siegfried defenses south of Zweibrücken, and 6th Armored Division in XV Corps reserve, was alerted to pass through the infantry and exploit towards Kaiserslautern. VI Corps had outflanked the Hagenau Forest and XXI Corps was embroiled in heavy fighting in the Siegfried Line.

To strengthen the VI Corps attack, G-3 consulted with G-3 Seventh Army on advantages of releasing the remainder of 5 DB from Army Group reserve and attaching it to 3 DIA, which was fighting with VI Corps. Seventh Army wanted this done, and it was approved by General Devers. Groupement Montsabert was formed of 3 DIA and 5 DB and placed under VI

Situation  
Sixth Army Group  
15 March 45

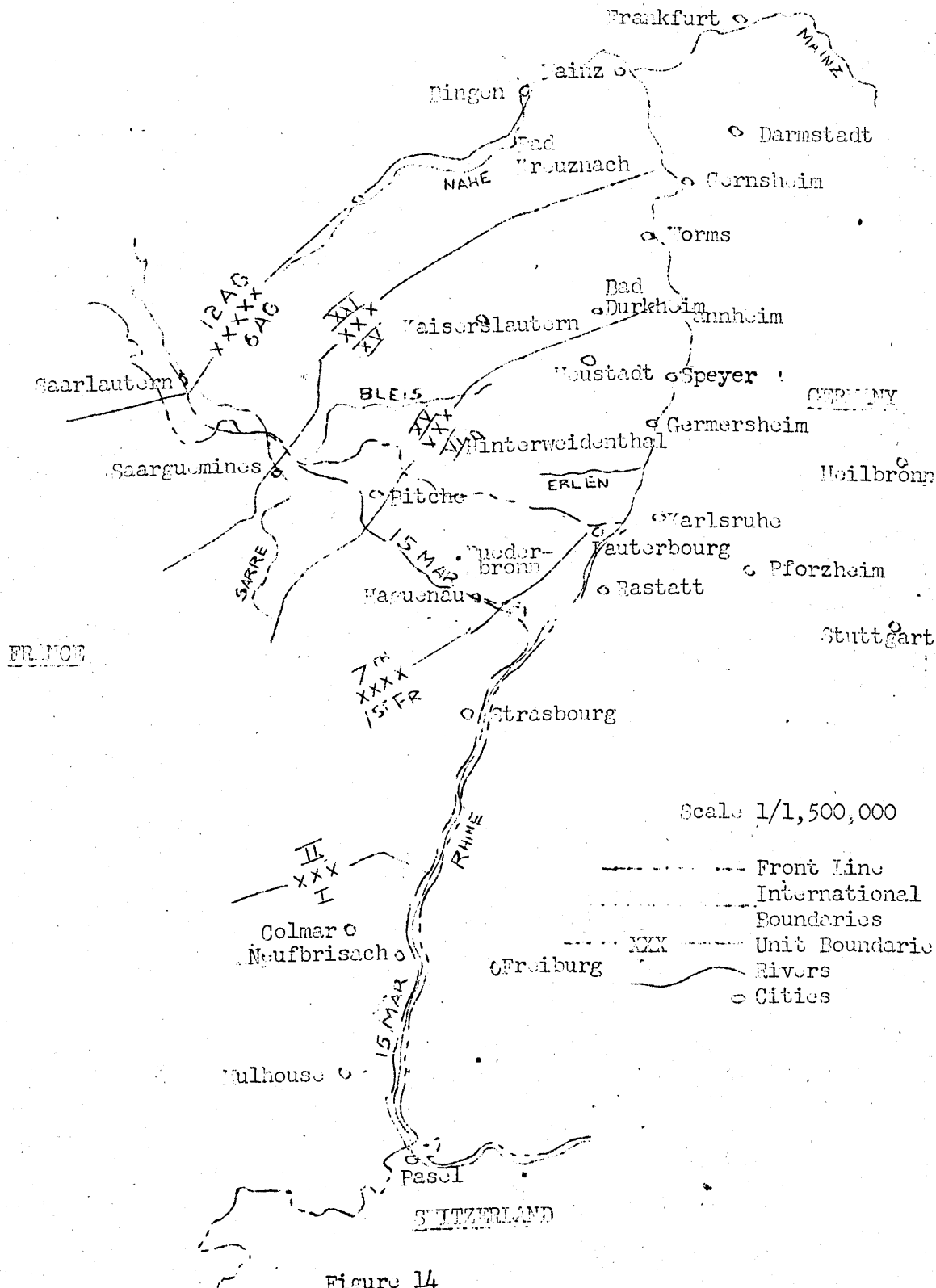


Figure 14

Corps control. The Groupement was to remain under Seventh Army until it reached the line of the Erlon River, when its offensive mission for the nonce would be completed and it would revert to control of First French Army.

By 20 March, VI Corps' attack had reached into the Siegfried Line and had been measurably slowed. But XV and XXI Corps broke completely through the Westwall and started exploitation towards the Rhine. Third Army elements were working in the Kaiserlautern area and were headed for Worms after reaching Mainz. On 21 March, XXI Corps was pinched out and took responsibility for mopping up the area in the Saarluturn area.

Boundary changes between Third and Seventh Army occurred almost daily during the exploitation phase in the Saar. As Third Army, advancing east and southeast in the face of light opposition, reached points along the agreed operational boundary, another change would take place. With the arrival of Seventh Army units in the area, the boundary would be changed back.

Sweeping across the rolling country through the gap in Siegfried defenses made by Third Army, 12th Armored Division swung in behind the Siegfried defenses and assisted in opening the route through the pill box area all along the front.

On 23 March, VI Corps broke through the thick defenses in the Rhine Plain while XV Corps rushed divisions to the Rhine to relieve Third Army elements already along the River. XXI Corps which was now in Seventh Army's center continued to mop up enemy pockets of resistance along the Rhine River.

With Seventh and Third Armies making rapid progress towards clearing the Saar, SHAEF on 22 March outlined plans for operations east of the Rhine. Mission of units fighting south of the Moselle was set as establishing a bridgehead in the Frankfurt area generally delineated by a line along the Neckar River to Freibach-Amorbach-Main River-to Hanau-Giessen-Siegen-Siegen River to its junction with the Rhine. Main advance from this bridgehead was to be towards Kassel.

SHAEF directed that eventually 6th Army Group would control the area south of the Main River and 12th Army Group the area north of the Main River. As soon as agreed between the two Army Group commanders, the inter army group boundary would be changed to: Saarbrücken-Neunkirchen-Nohfelden-Nahe River to Bad Kreuznach-Mainz-Main River-to Hanau-Freidberg-Geissen (to 12th Army Group).

As these instructions were received, Seventh Army was regrouping and bringing up bridging and assault equipment in accordance with plans to cross the Rhine at the earliest possible opportunity. XV Corps was to make this main effort, too. Thus on 24 March, one day after Third Army crossed the Rhine, XV Corps relieved elements of Third Army in the Worms area. The next day Seventh Army, employing the veteran 3rd and 45th

Infantry Divisions which had made the main assault against the Siegfried Line, crossed the Rhine. There were still a few pockets of enemy resistance west of the Rhine but these were being taken care of by troops as they regrouped. For situation, see Figure 15.

Seventh Army captured 30,000 prisoners in this action, including many high ranking German officers, in addition to inflicting heavy losses on the enemy in materiel. The Air arm was particularly effective, demolishing large convoys and making daylight movement for the enemy almost impossible. Roads throughout the area were checkered with craters and dotted with hundreds of destroyed vehicles and guns.

Headquarters 6th Army Group and Seventh Army had long planned this offensive, and when the order came, were ready. But the short notice was felt in the movement of new troops into the area. In less than seven days time, it was necessary to move approximately 130,000 troops into Seventh Army area in addition to some 14,000 tons of artillery ammunition. Working with a precision that exuded mutual concern, 12th Army Group and Conad pushed their facilities to the limit to help the overstrained facilities of 6th Army Group. And as a result, everything of major import was in place when H-hour struck.

Some doubtless may wonder at the decision of 6th Army Group to make its main effort up the valley of the Bleis River instead of up the Rhine Plain. Looking at it purely from a tactical standpoint, it would appear that a drive down the Rhine Plain to contact Third Army elements advancing from the north would have encircled the entire Saar and set the stage to bag all German elements in the area. But the corridor was narrow; it was within range of big guns east of the Rhine and the road net out of range of these guns for supplying a main effort was not adequate; at least 15 streams cut across the plain between the Siegfried Line and Worms; chances for exploiting rapidly with armor were limited because of the narrow corridor and obstacles these streams provided. Too, the Siegfried Line was thickest - 20 kilometers - here and it was believed that sufficient time would be consumed in breaking through these defenses to give the German opportunity to withdraw his forces east of the Rhine.

On the other hand, the Bleis River corridor was wide enough to take maximum advantage of armored exploitation; enemy defenses were not as strong in this area; and the road net would support a major effort. We reasoned that a rapid penetration of the Siegfried Line in the Saarguemes area would open the way for speedy exploitation and overrunning of German forces before they could withdraw behind the Rhine. In this way it was felt a more damaging blow could be dealt to the German Army. This we believe proved to be the case. The Siegfried Line was penetrated quickly in the Saarguemes area, and between Seventh and Third Armies the entire Saar-Palatinate was overrun before the heavy Siegfried defenses in the Rhine Plain had been completely reduced.



Situation  
Sixth Army Group  
24 March 45

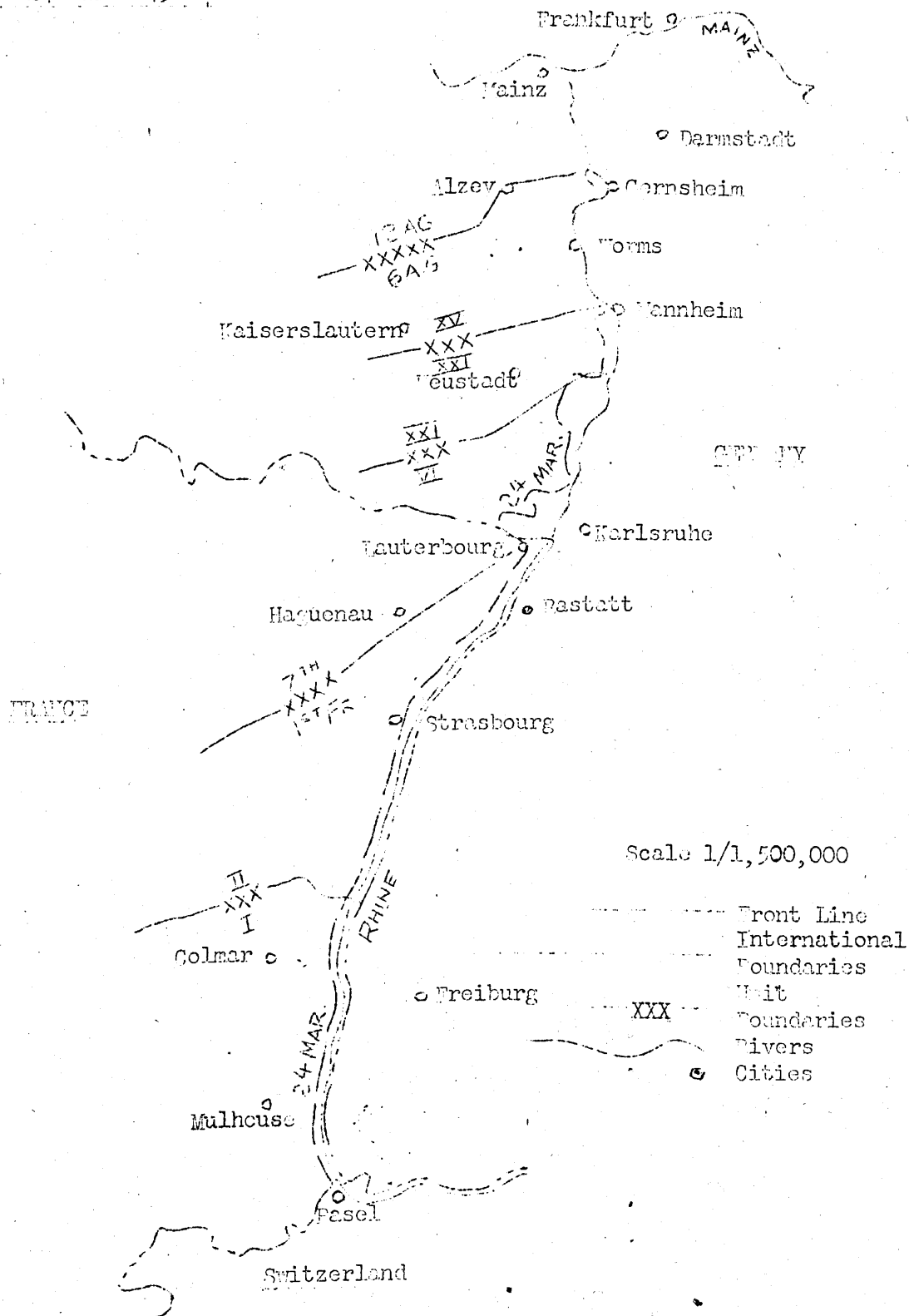


Figure 15

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Outstanding in the operation was the close cooperation and coordination between Seventh and Third Armies in an extremely fluid situation. Operational boundaries were changed almost daily to permit unrestricted exploitation by either unit in a position to do so, regardless of whether the area was originally assigned as an objective or not. This period represented the ultimate in cooperation between two armies bent on destroying the enemy regardless of who received credit for the job.

After the Gernsheim action, 12th Armored Division had polished its technique in the Colmar Pocket fighting and it came into its own in the Saar battle. Moving rapidly from Seventh Army to Third Army, the division plunged through the prepared gap in enemy defenses and swept rapidly eastward to open the back door of the Siegfried defenses, halting only when it reached the Rhine.

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CHAPTER EIGHTCROSSING THE RHINE AND ADVANCING EASTWARD

Operations to breach the Siegfried Line and cross the Rhine River had always been considered as one continuous operation by planners of 6th Army Group. When plans were polished for defeating the enemy in the Saar-Palatinate the contemplated river crossing operations were scrutinized and needed materiel assembled. As Seventh Army moved along the Bleis River Valley this materiel was pushed forward, close to the front lines, and necessary instructions issued to XV Corps to sustain operations through seizure of a bridgehead between the Main and Neckar Rivers. Thus as Seventh Army closed to the Rhine on 24 March, the stage was set for the next move -- stepping across the final major barrier protecting the Nazi homeland.

Facing 6th Army Group were the German First and Nineteenth Armies, both depleted from staggering defeats suffered in the Saar-Palatinate and Colmar Pocket operations. On the south, the Nineteenth Army had been unable to reinforce materially its decimated units. In the north, the First Army was still punch-drunk from its recent drubbing in the Saar-Palatinate.

On 25 March, 6th Army Group was along the Rhine from the Swiss border to north of Worms. Third Army on the left had crossed the Rhine on 24 March at Oppenheim and had advanced rapidly eastward with an armored spearhead threatening Darmstadt. First Army was driving to expand its Remagen bridgehead and link up with Third Army in the Frankfurt Area. The British 21st Army Group was in the process of crossing the Rhine north of Wesel. The actual crossing was effected 25 March.

6th Army Group was ready to cross the Rhine with Seventh Army at Worms and was readying First French Army for an assault crossing in the Speyer area. Due to strict conservation measures preceding the Saar battle and the speed with which the Seventh Army closed to the Rhine, the artillery ammunition picture was bright. Railheads had already been advanced to Strasbourg and work was underway on rail lines through the Saar. It was estimated that railheads could move to the Rhine at Frankenthal by 3 April.

On 25 March, SHAEF directed 21st and 12th Army Groups to effect a junction in the Kassel-Paderborn area and then mop-up and occupy the encircled area. 6th Army Group was directed to protect the right flank of 12th Army Group as far north as the Hohe Rhon hill mass. We were directed to be prepared to release one or two divisions to the 12th Army Group. The inter-army group boundary was established as: Saarbrücken-Neunkirchen-Nohfelden-Nahe River to Bad Kreuznach-Mainz-Main River to Frankfurt (to 12th Army Group)-Hanau-Fulda-Meiningen (to 6th Army Group).

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Seventh Army was ready to cross the Rhine. The plan called for XV Corps to make the assault crossing. XV Corps put 3rd and 45th Infantry Divisions in the assault. After a bridgehead had been established other divisions would be crossed and used to drive east and south to establish the desired bridgehead. See Figure 16.

As VI and XXI Corps continued regrouping and mopping up west of the Rhine, XV Corps made its assault crossing at 0230 hours 26 March. Reasonably heavy resistance was encountered, especially from multi-gun anti-aircraft weapons, mortars and self-propelled guns. Initial resistance was soon overcome, and by mid-morning 3rd Division held a bridgehead four miles long and two miles deep, while north of Worms, 45th Division's bridgehead was four miles deep and six miles long.

Within 24 hours of the jump-off the two bridgeheads had joined and XV Corps held a front along the line Sandhofen-Sandtorf and thence along the autobahn from west of Hittenfeld to east of Gernsheim. See Figure 17.

By 27 March, 45 Division had broken out of the bridgehead and contacted Third Army elements in the vicinity of Aschaffenburg, 30 miles east of the Rhine. 3rd Division and 44th Division, which were moved east of the Rhine 26 March, were making rapid advances against heavy opposition in the Odenwald and in the Rhine Plain.

On 29 March, XXI Corps assumed responsibility for the southern sector of the bridgehead and Seventh Army was in process of moving the remainder of its forces across the river. At 1200 hours Mannheim surrendered. Seventh Army held a line generally along the Neckar River to Everbach to Amorbach and along the Main to Aschaffenburg with reconnaissance elements beyond.

To carry out SHAEF's directive of 25 March, Headquarters 6th Army Group issued Letter of Instruction Number Twelve, 27 March. Seventh Army was directed to advance rapidly northeast, seize the Hohe Rhon hill mass and protect the right flank of Third Army. Afterwards, Seventh Army was to extend reconnaissance to Graben-Bruschal-Heilbronn-Crailsheim-Rothenburg-Neustadt-Bamberg-Coburg-Ilmenau. The Army was instructed to utilize highly mobile reconnaissance elements and retain strong reserves as mobile striking forces, prepared to exploit to the northeast, east or southeast.

First French Army was instructed to regroup rapidly and provide a corps composed of two infantry divisions and one armored division for a crossing of the Rhine in the Germersheim area and seize Karlsruhe, Pforzheim and Stuttgart. The inter-army boundary was moved northward to give the Speyer crossing sites to First French Army.

General Devers dispatched a cable to General de Lattre on 30 March instructing speed in preparations for crossing the Rhine. The same evening the Chief of Staff, First French Army visited Headquarters 6th Army

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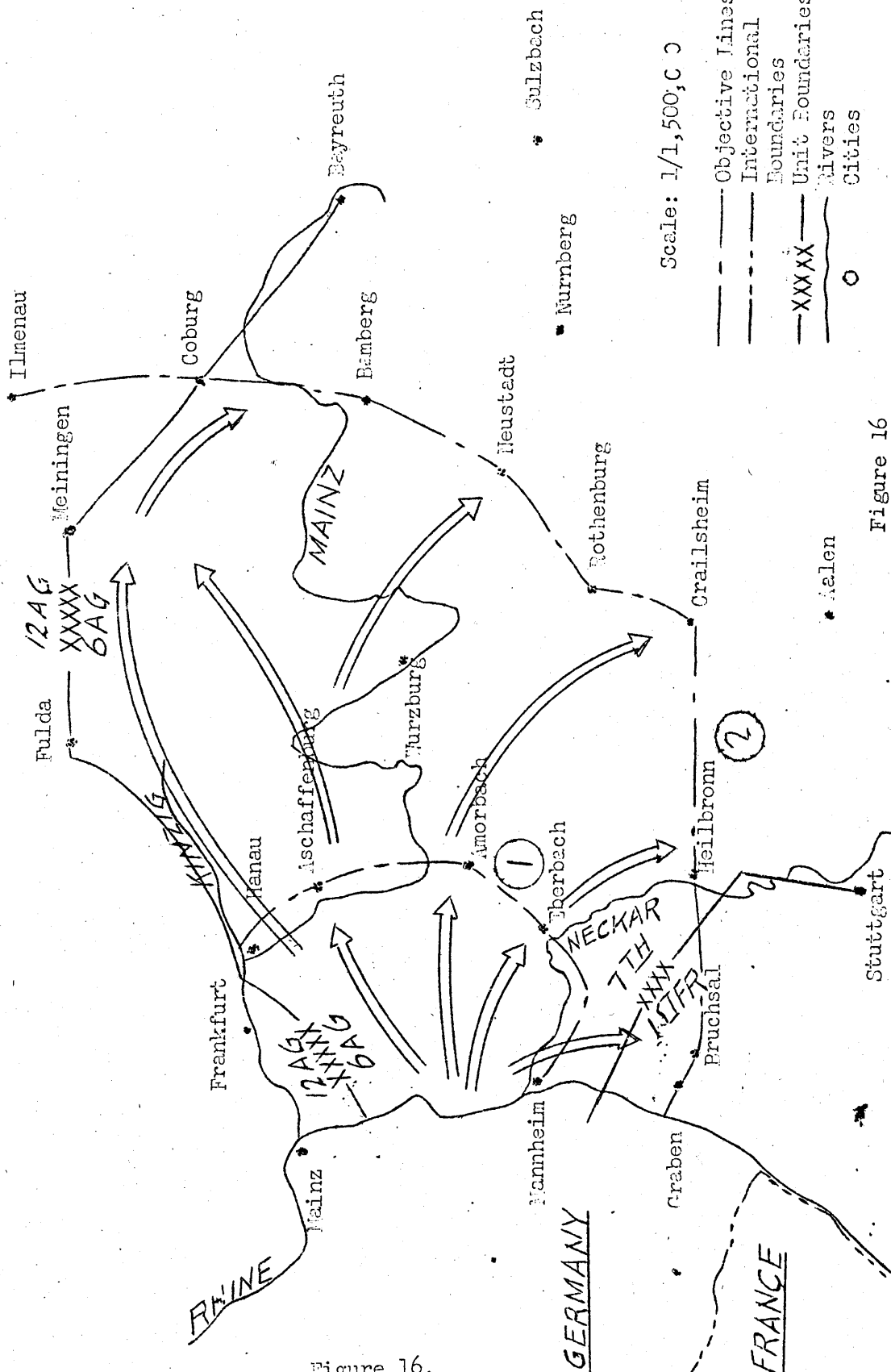


Figure 16.

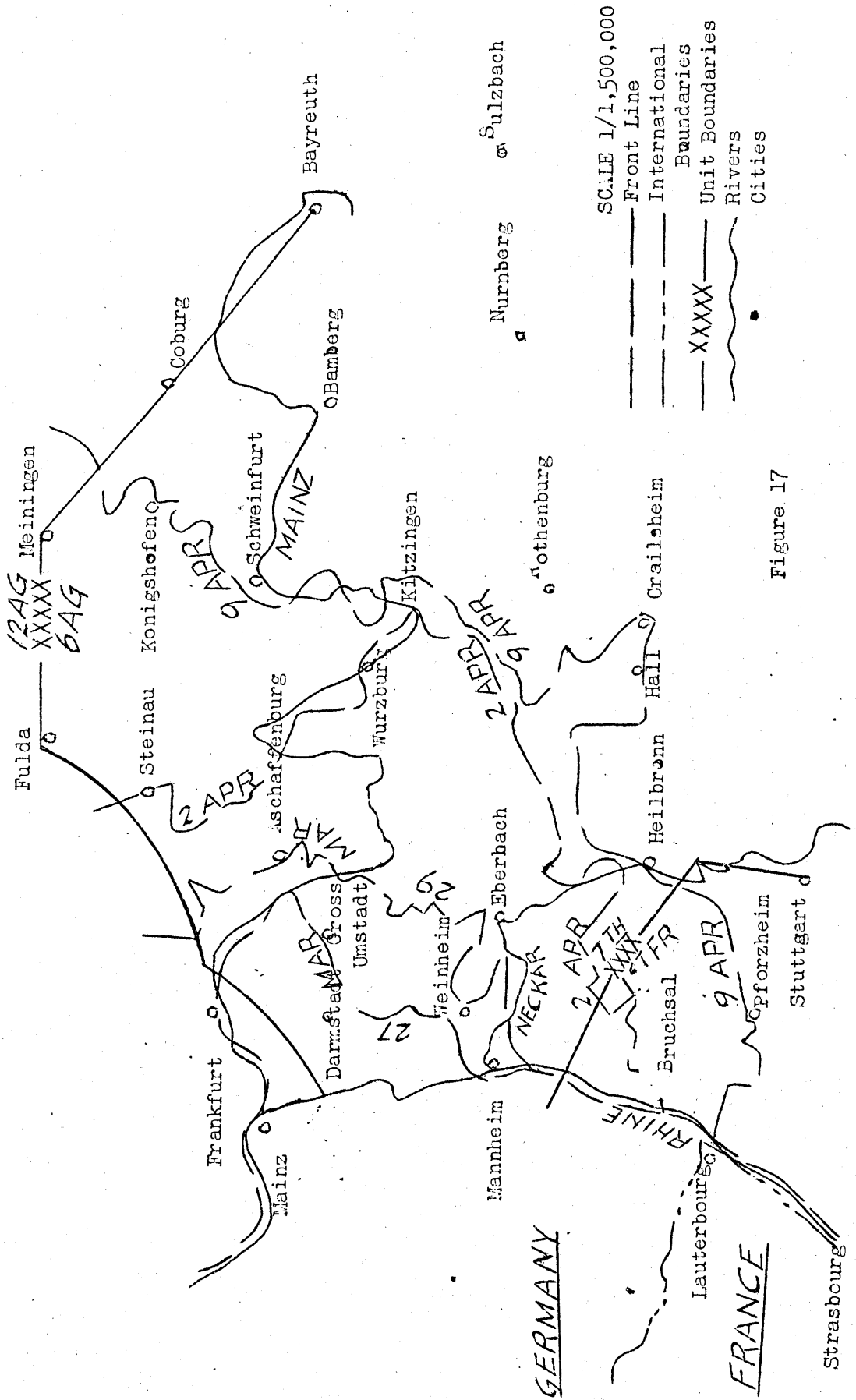


Figure 17

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Group. He informed General Devers that First French Army would make an assault crossing of the Rhine at 0500 hours 31 March. General Devers was agreeably surprised at the speed with which the French had regrouped and made preparations for crossing the Rhine. After sharp fighting the bridgehead was established as scheduled. By 1 April build-up of forces was progressing rapidly and contact had been established with VI Corps.

On 31 March, Seventh Army was lined up with XV Corps on the North, XXI Corps in the center and VI Corps on the right. Mission of XV Corps was to capture the Hohe Rhon hill mass; XXI Corps to capture Wurzburg; and VI Corps to advance south and east to the designated reconnaissance line.

On 2 April, Seventh Army had by-passed Aschaffenberg and advanced 12 miles to the east. Elements of 100th Division in the south were advancing on Heilbronn. 12th Army Group had completed its encirclement of the Ruhr. Throughout Germany enemy forces were falling back before gathering Allied pressure with little hope of being able to establish a defensive position.

SHAEF's instructions of 2 April directed the dividing of enemy forces by a powerful thrust eastward on the axis Kassel-Leipzig and destruction of the German army. The main thrust was 12th Army Group's mission. 6th Army Group was directed to protect the southern flank of 12th Army Group as far as the Bayreuth area. In addition, 6th Army Group was ordered to be prepared to launch a strong offensive on the axis Nurnberg-Regensburg-Linz but not at the expense of its primary mission. The inter-Army Group boundary was extended from Meinengen to Bayreuth.

Headquarters 6th Army Group extended the objective and reconnaissance lines of both Armies. Seventh Army was instructed to seize the line: Ludwigsburg-Crailsheim-Nurnberg-Bayreuth and extend reconnaissance to: Stuttgart-Aalen-Weissenberg-Sulzbach-Rosenberg-Matredweitz. First French Army's objective line was: Lichtenau-Pforzheim-Ludwigsburg with reconnaissance to Kehl and Stuttgart.

Seventh Army was to be prepared to advance southeast on Linz and First French Army was instructed to be prepared to seize the Black Forest and clear the eastern bank of the Rhine River.

On 4 April, Karlsruhe fell to the French and Seventh Army ran into strong opposition in Heilbronn. On 9 April, XV Corps captured the Hohe Rhon hill mass after VI Corps had thrust a long armored spearhead to Crailsheim and the French had taken Pforzheim.

Advances continued toward Bayreuth in the north while the center of Seventh Army pushed towards Nurnberg. On 12 April, VI Corps' armored spearhead at Crailsheim was forced to withdraw after repeated counter-attacks while Heilbronn was finally cleared of the enemy only after three

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days of house to house fighting. The French in the south had reached a point opposite Strasbourg on the Rhine and were penetrating the northern edges of the Black Forest. See Figure 1C.

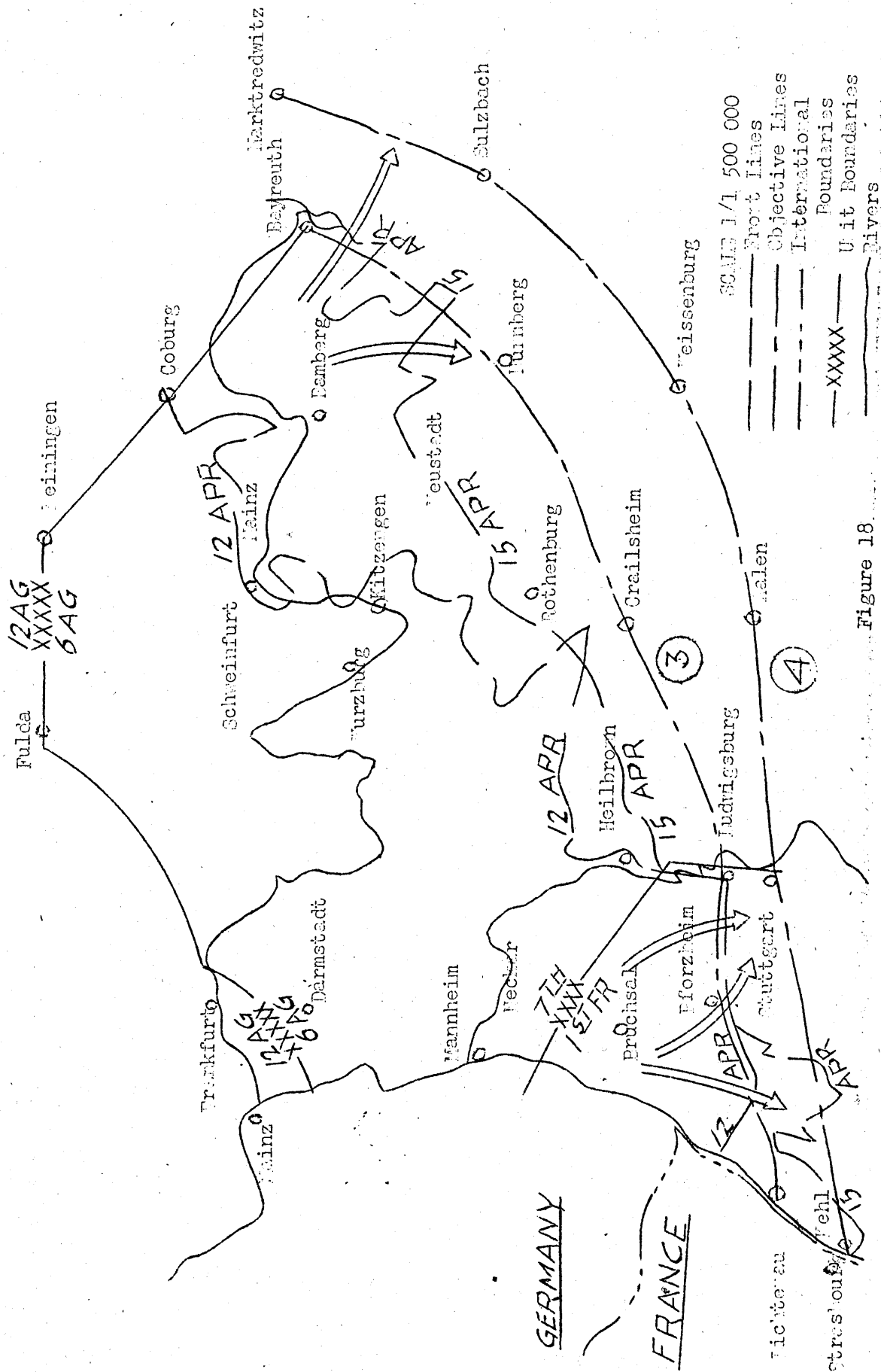
Prisoners poured into 6th Army Group enclosures by the thousands. Approximately 113,937 prisoners were taken during the period. Except in fighting in Aschaffenburg and Heilbronn where Seventh Army ran into tough house-to-house fighting, casualties were not heavy.

During this period 6th Army Group had crossed the Rhine on the heels of the retreating, disorganized enemy. Little opposition was encountered after the initial crust and a period of exploitation started which was to carry to the Brenner Pass.

Seventh Army did a magnificent job of regrouping on the run and bringing forward necessary bridging and assault equipment. The Army's advance hardly stopped the length of a deep breath before doughboys were paddling across the Rhine to do battle again with the enemy. The advantage gained in the Saar-Palatinate was never relinquished. Each day the pressure became stronger until finally German Army Group G began to fall apart.

Only two instances of heavy fighting were encountered, and both could have been partially, if not wholly, avoided. Seventh Army was dashing madly after the disorganized enemy. It did not expect to encounter strong resistance, especially in Aschaffenburg, where it was actually following the tracks of Third Army elements. Consequently, when Seventh Army troops rushed on the town and found it strongly defended they had gone too far to redeploy and by-pass the strong point immediately. A pitched battle ensued against fanatical Nazi resistance resulting in lost time and heavy casualties. The same thing happened in Heilbronn. In both cases, Seventh Army formations were not in a position to maneuver initially and consequently became embroiled in a frontal attack against a strongly defended city.





CHAPTER NINEEXPLOITATION TO THE SOUTH

The opening of this chapter finds the enemy lines in a highly fluid condition along the entire Western Front. The most pronounced semblance of order is on the front of the U.S. 6th Army Group. With a relatively large rear area still under his command in this Zone, the enemy has been able to maintain fairly good organizational control of his dwindling troops. Facing 6th Army Group are the remnants of Army Group "G" which is composed of the German First and Nineteenth Armies. All enemy line divisions are receiving reinforcements, but the rate of attrition keeps their actual strength at a fairly constant figure with diminishing quality. Our enemy can retreat gradually and concentrically behind natural terrain barriers along their entire front, with both flanks and rear protected. As long as the rate of withdrawal is controlled by the enemy, he will be able to maintain a cohesive front line the strength of which can, for a period, actually be increased. Although there is as yet no positive evidence of a prepared National Redoubt, the turn of military events is forcing our enemy to concentrate all his resources in Southeastern Germany. It is not believed that German Army Group G as a whole will surrender. Its only capability is still that of retreat and consolidation of forces along a gradually constricting perimeter; a capability which it can continue to exercise for a considerable length of time, unless it is cut up and defeated too rapidly to permit its orderly retreat.

The 21st Army Group is continuing its operations to destroy the Germans in the North. The 12th Army Group is acting defensively on its left and center, but is poised ready to launch a powerful thrust with the Third Army to join hands with the Russians. 6th Army Group is anxious to go all out in pursuit of the enemy who has been badly beaten west of the Rhine River and who is retreating all along the front east of the Rhine; but we have a mission which prevents it for the moment. We must keep close control of our armies.

On 14 April, G-3, 6th Army Group went to 12th Army Group to talk over the situation and plans with General Bradley, his Chief of Staff, General Allen, and his G-3, General Kibler. During that visit G-3 learned that General Bradley had been warned that the Third Army would change its direction about the time it hit the important Bayreuth communications center and would move to the Southeast toward the Danube Valley and Salzburg; that Third Army would be composed initially of about 11 divisions and would be raised eventually to 15. Those divisions plus the expected strength of Seventh Army and the strength of the First French Army would bring the total number of divisions to be used in South Germany to about 34.

On the morning of 15 April, after a general staff conference on results of this visit with 12th Army Group, General Devers announced that he and G-3 would visit SHAEF the next day for a conference.

SHAFF G-3 called during the 15th saying that a directive which would set out the course of our next operation was then in the course of preparation for approval by General Eisenhower. It would include initially the operation to destroy the Nineteenth German Army, clear the Black Forest area and the area south of Stuttgart and get the entire First French Army East of the Rhine. Later in the afternoon of the 15th, G-3 SHAFF advised by phone that the directive had been approved and was on its way. The directive did not arrive prior to the time General Devers left for SHAFF on the 16th. Upon arrival at SHAFF a copy of the directive was secured from the Deputy G-3. The directive, 281, assigned the 6th Army Group the mission of protecting the South (right) of 12th Army Group and of occupying Western Austria and that part of Germany within its zone of action. Its advance on the left was to conform to that of the main offensive of the 12th Army Group. It set forth, among other things, the new boundary between Army Groups, which meant that the overextended Seventh Army would have about 50% as much front as it was then holding. In addition, General Eisenhower gave Seventh Army two more divisions. All this, of course, gave the Seventh Army probably more offensive power and greater depth to its deployment than it had ever enjoyed. During the conference, General Eisenhower agreed with General Devers that 6th Army Group should undertake the operation against the German Nineteenth Army rear as soon as possible. Ways and means of getting it under way at top speed were discussed. General Eisenhower was very anxious to accomplish the relief of Seventh Army elements in the Third Army's new zone of action as early as possible in order that the operations to the Southeast from the Nurnberg area could be launched quickly. Bringing Seventh Army within its new boundaries involved moving all troops of the XV Corps and approximately one-third of XXI Corps. General Devers told General Eisenhower that he would depart immediately for General Bradley's headquarters and arrange the details with General Bradley.

General Devers and G-3 left SHAFF by plane for General Bradley's headquarters where they were fortunate in finding General Bradley, General Patton, and General Hodges discussing this relief. Within about 30 minutes the two Army Group Commanders had completed their arrangements, and General Patton had received necessary oral instructions from the 12th Army Group commander regarding his part of the relief. General Devers, in the meantime, had directed his aide to arrange to have General Patch meet him at Headquarters 6th Army Group when he returned to Heidelberg at about 1730 hours. After completing the arrangements with 12th Army Group and hearing the directive given to General Patton orally about the relief, General Devers and his G-3 left for Heidelberg, arriving by 1700 hours. Shortly thereafter, General Patch with his G-3 and G-4 arrived.

General Devers held a conference in the war room with General Patch giving oral directives concerning the operation and particularly the launching of the effort on the right of Seventh Army to cut off the German Nineteenth Army as quickly as possible. General Devers' instructions to his staff and to General Patch on the afternoon of the 16th are reflected in Letter of Instructions Number 14 which was

published that night. Copies of Letter of Instructions Number 14 were delivered to Seventh Army on the morning of the 17th and to First French Army on the afternoon of the 17th.

On 16 April 1945 the 6th Army Group was disposed along the west bank of the Rhine from Basel to Strasbourg thence to the vicinity of Bayreuth, with the cities of Baden-Baden, Pforzheim, Heilbronn and Bamberg in our hands (see Figure 19) and salients in the line in the First French Army zone extending as far south as Appenweir southeast of Strasbourg and Forbach southeast of Baden-Baden. Operations now permitted a shifting of our forces to the south. Rapid regrouping of 6th Army Group units, and changing of direction coupled with a dash to the mountain area at the Swiss and Austrian borders offered an excellent chance to destroy the enemy, now occupied in a series of delaying actions all along the front. The German Nineteenth Army was the first target.

To effect the destruction of German Nineteenth Army the Seventh Army was, in Letter of Instructions Number 14, directed to complete regrouping rapidly and launch its initial main effort on its right, southwest up the Neckar River with a Corps, strong in armor and of high mobility, seize the communications center formed by the triangle Tübingen-Balingen-Sigmaringen; thereafter exploiting to the west and south as far as the Swiss Border, and assist the First French Army in destroying that portion of the German Nineteenth Army in the Black Forest area. (See Figure 20). The First French Army was directed to continue strong action between the Rhine and the Black Forest and clear the east bank of the Rhine, conform action in the Stuttgart area to the advance of the right of the Seventh Army, enveloping Stuttgart from the west, coordinating this action with the Seventh Army, and protecting the right flank of the Seventh Army. The First French Army was further directed to destroy elements of the German Nineteenth Army in the Black Forest area, seal the Swiss Border in its zone, complete regrouping and be prepared for further advance to the southeast in a new zone of action. The original concept of this operation (Figure 20) was that the initial effort by the First French Army would be on its right, southward down the east bank of the Rhine. The thrust southward, directed down the east bank of the Rhine, would be in the nature of a holding effort indicating weakness and was intended to encourage the German Nineteenth Army to stay in position until VI Corps (which was employed for the main effort on the right of the Seventh Army) was in position to go all out up the valley of the Neckar and to the south sealing up the German Nineteenth Army between the VI U.S. Corps and the First French Army. However, a premature main effort southeast through the center of the First French Army nullified this plan. The Germans, already jumpy from their recent defeat west of the Rhine, started running to the rear, to a great extent clearing the trap set for them before the blow of the VI U.S. Corps had sealed them off. This premature and misdirected thrust on the part of the First French Army was most embarrassing -- especially in the light of the fact that Par. x of Letter of Instructions Number 14 clearly indicated that a premature advance by First

Situation  
Sixth Army Group  
16 April 45

Scale 1/2,000,000

International  
Boundaries  
Front Line  
16 April  
Unit Founda-  
ries  
Rivers  
Cities  
Mountains

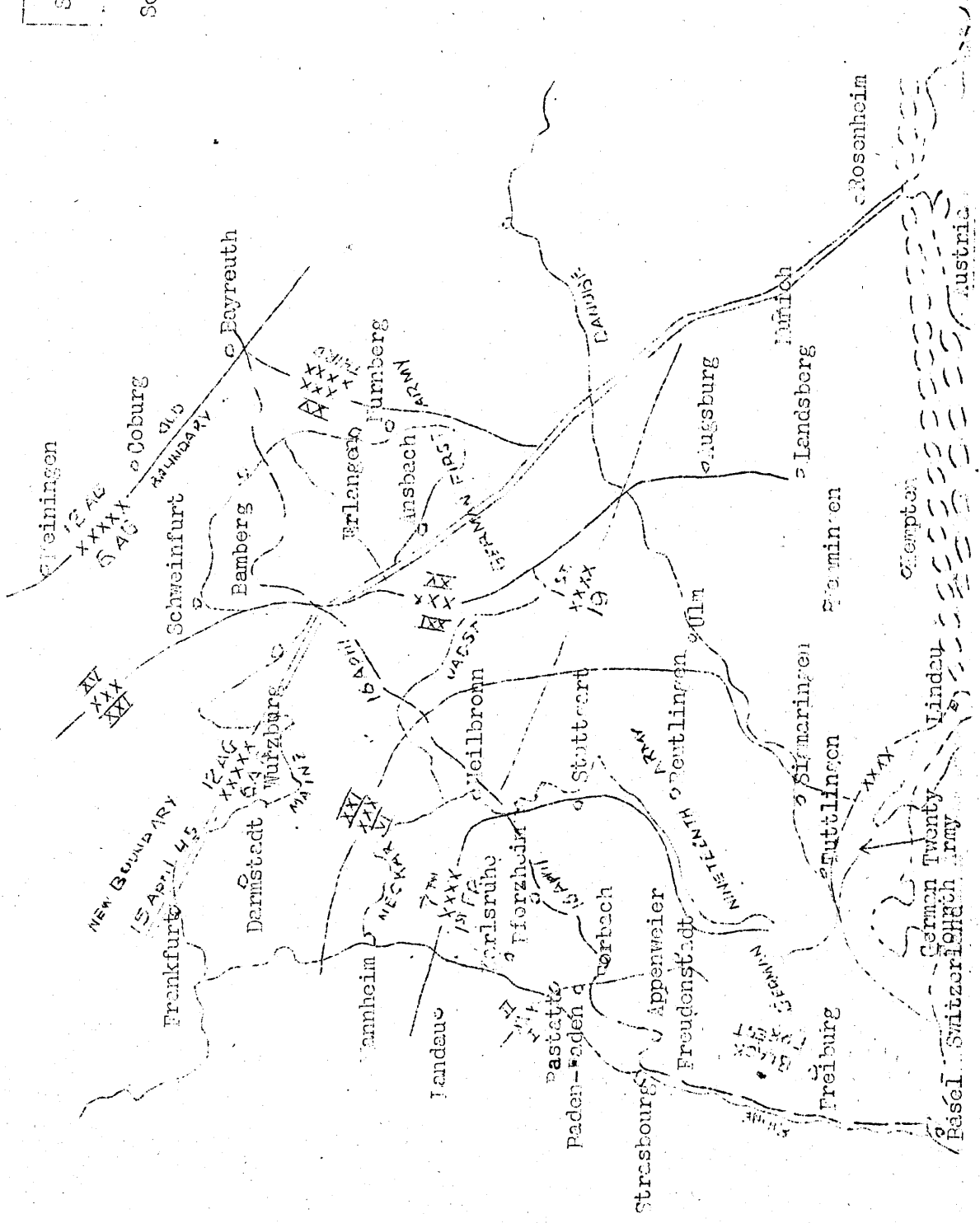


Figure 19

Scheme of Maneuver  
Sixth Army Group  
16 April 45

Scale 1/2,000,000

International  
Boundaries  
Front Line 16 Apr  
Unit Boundaries  
Rivers  
Cities  
Mountains

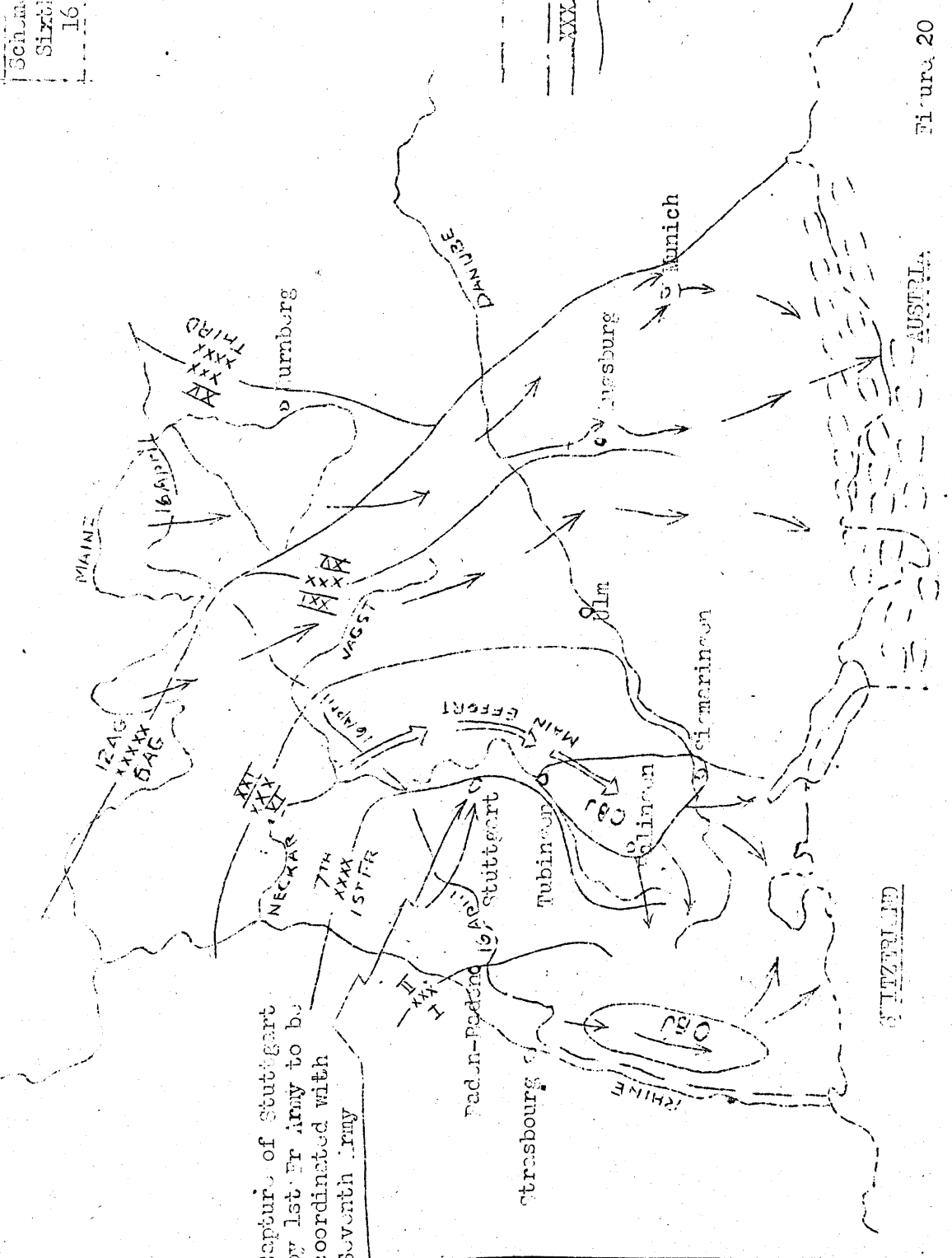


Figure 20

French Army in the Stuttgart area would be prevented by the Commanding General, First French Army, who would maintain close liaison with Seventh Army in order to accomplish proper timing. The plan for employment of the First French Army was explained in considerable detail by G-3 to General de Lattre personally at a conference in his office on the afternoon of 17 April. However, General de Lattre apparently did not accept the 6th Army Group concept of the maneuver. This action south, west of Stuttgart, carried his troops across the Neckar where they turned east into the zone of action of the VI U.S. Corps, which was the main attack corps of 6th Army Group. Several cables were sent attempting to hold General de Lattre's center back and get the proper timing in the maneuver, but they were without result. Consequently, a goodly portion of the German Nineteenth Army escaped to the southeast. As the First French Army advanced farther to the east it became apparent that the VI U.S. Corps would soon be headed into the left flank of the First French Army. It also became apparent, that, with the headlong retreat of the German Nineteenth Army, another action to cut off this army before it reached the Austrian border was in order. Accordingly, on 22 April the main effort of the Seventh Army was directed to the Southeast on Ulm and a new boundary (see Figure 21) to conform to the abortive thrust to the east by First French Army, was set between that army and the Seventh U.S. Army.

Meanwhile, in the northwestern part of the 6th Army Group sector the attack in conjunction with the Third Army (which was directed southeast toward the Danube) was progressing rapidly. The change in direction of advance of XV Corps and the shift of this Corps as well as approximately one third of XXI Corps to conform to the new inter-Army Group boundary established in the 15 April directive of SCAF, were effected smoothly. In this case it was desirable to continue the advance, with pressure on the enemy and avoid blocking by cross traffic the roads in our rear which were needed for supply and for units of the Third Army moving into their new zone. The inter-Army Group boundary (Figure 20) extended in a southeasterly direction. With the exception of 14th Armored Division, units of XV Corps continued their advance to the south and southwest, and shortly found themselves in their new zone of action. 14th Armored Division was heavily engaged at the moment on the extreme left. By mutual agreement this division was assigned to the Third Army and replaced in the 6th Army Group by a new arrival, 20th Armored Division. The advance in the zones of action of XXI and XV Corps progressed rapidly from 15 April, with daily advances along the line ranging from 2 to 17 miles. Nurnburg in the zone of advance of the XV Corps offered stubborn resistance, requiring the combined efforts of elements of three divisions for its capture; the city finally falling on 21 April.

By 22 April 6th Army Group had advanced to an irregular line (Figure 21) from Basel through Freiburg, Reutlingen, Goppingen, Ellwangen, Cunzen, Hilpolstein to Neumarkt with three salients extending into the enemy held area, one to Lake Constance, another to within 20 miles of Ulm, and the third to the Danube, 25 miles short of Augsburg.

Situation  
Sixth Army Group  
22 April 45

Scale 1/1,500,000

International  
Boundaries  
Front Line  
22 April  
Unit  
Boundaries  
Rivers  
Cities  
Mountains

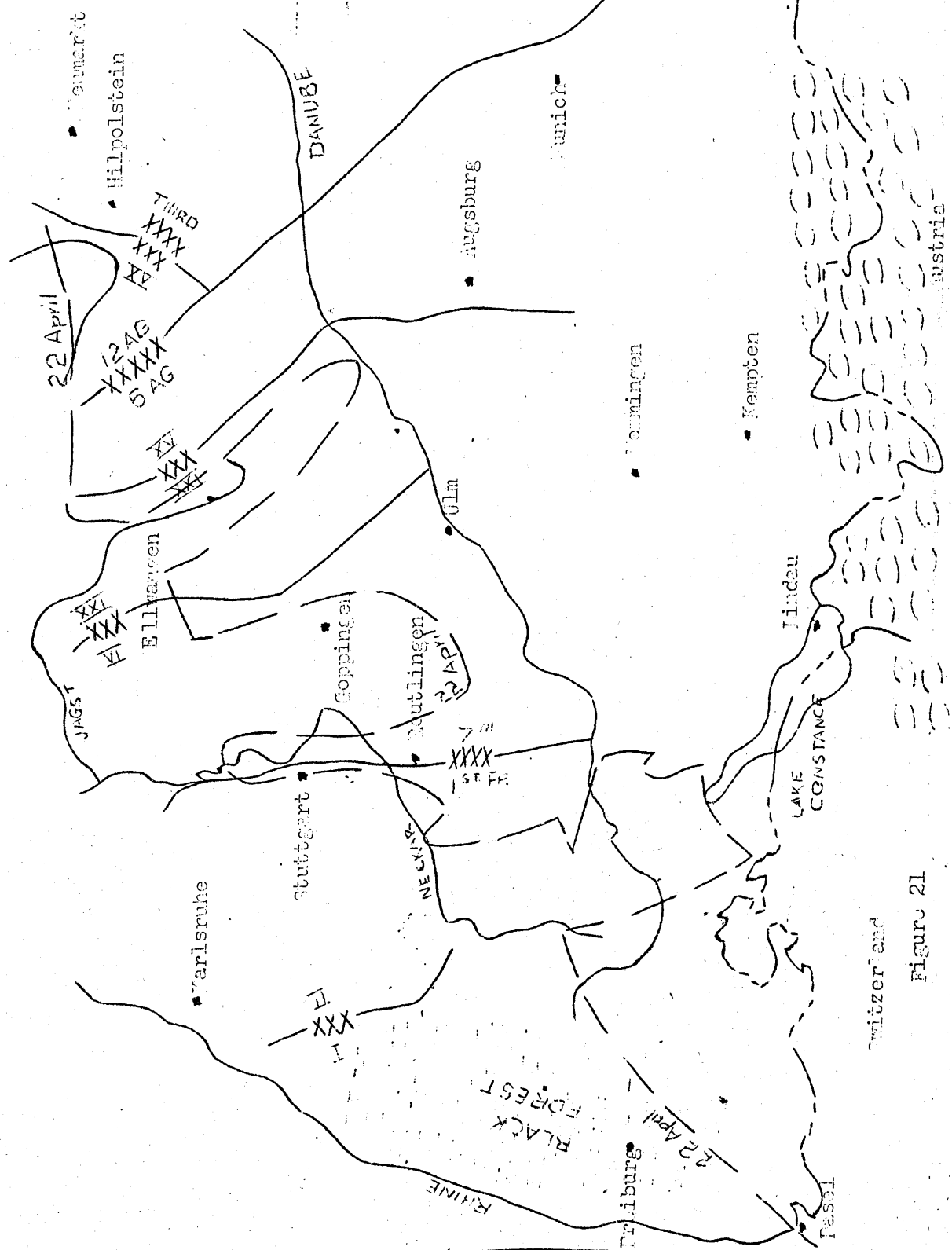


Figure 21



All along the 6th Army Group front, German Army Group G continued to show signs of complete disintegration on its left. Enemy reinforcements, already conspicuous by their absence, were considered few and next to unobtainable. The enemy could only hope to delay at the Danube before yielding Upper Bavaria. A helter-skelter headlong dash for the high ground in western Austria appeared to be his only hope of saving those remnants still possessing some semblance of organization.

It was obvious, then, that the most expeditious way to prevent the elements of the German Army Group G from entering the high country and to bring the war in the south to as early a close as possible was to beat the enemy to the entrances to western Austria. Salzburg and Berchtesgaden were in the zone of advance of the Third Army in the 12th Army Group Sector. Like Bregenz, Landeck and Innsbruck, the cities of Rosenheim and Salzburg controlled the remaining vital routes into the southern mountain area. The race for these all important escape routes was on!

In the midst of this dash to seal the entrances to the mountain country, an incident occurred which delayed the execution of the mission, and, at one stage, threatened to throw a major portion of the entire Army Group into confusion akin to that of our frantic enemy.

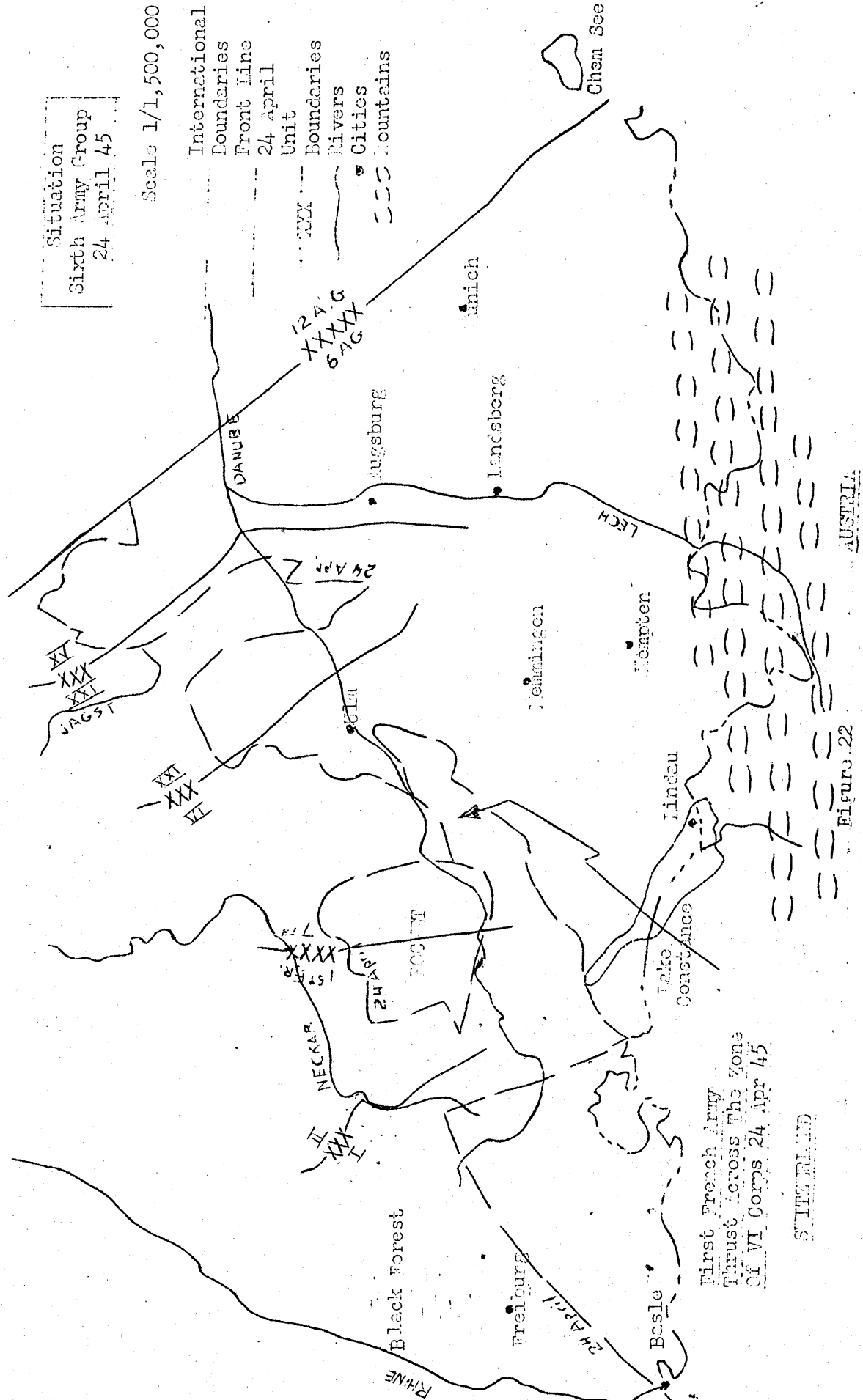
During the period 23-25 April a serious situation developed in the zone of action of VI Corps, which had powerful armored and infantry forces moving in a rapid drive to the south and southeast. On the afternoon of the 23rd, Seventh Army reported that elements of First French Army were moving east on Ulm across VI Corps Zone (Figure 22). Orders were issued at once by the Commanding General 6th Army Group directing prompt withdrawal of the French units into their own zone so that the roads required at full capacity by VI Corps would not be blocked. Nevertheless on the following afternoon, 24 April, VI Corps reported elements of the 1st DB were then in Ulm and in the Ulm area astride the axis of advance of VI Corps. Ulm was situated about 40 miles outside (east of) the First French Army zone; so that no clear routes to the south remained to VI Corps.

During the 24th, General de Lattre's Chief of Staff arrived for a conference with General Devers and reported that General de Lattre had told him that he, General de Lattre, had received instructions from General de Gaulle to conduct the advance on Ulm and to retain control of all territory captured by the First French Army until the final zone of occupation for French troops had been determined by the governments concerned. This surprising report was promptly relayed to SHAEF with appropriate objections. French compliance began on the 25th but this interference in violation of an order received through the one and only official command channel (Headquarters 6th Army Group) cost General Brooks (VI Corps) at least 24 hours delay in pushing his key drives to the south.

Situation  
Sixth Army Group  
24 April 45

Scale 1/1,500,000

International  
Boundaries  
Front Line  
24 April  
Unit  
Boundaries  
Rivers  
Cities  
Mountains



First French Army  
Thrust Across The Zone  
Of VI Corps 24 Apr 45

STILLERAD

Figure 22  
AUSTRIA

This was a very serious matter because Seventh Army was engaged in a race to seal the passes into Austria before the retiring German Forces could occupy and defend the mountain area. As it turned out, the sealing of the passes was accomplished in spite of the delay. However, the time lost may well have prolonged the fighting for a corresponding period before the hopelessness of Army Group G's position forced its surrender. It is observed that, contrary to usual custom, no copy of General de Lattre's orders to his I and II Corps based on Headquarters 6th Army Group Letter of Instructions Number 14 was furnished our headquarters.

For the drive southward the supply of artillery ammunition was plentiful. There was, however, the task of transporting the ammunition to the guns over extended distances.

The rapid advance of the Armies created a transportation problem of the first magnitude. Railheads were secured at the Rhine but east of the Rhine extensive enemy demolitions of key bridges delayed the opening of railway services toward Wurzburg, Munich and Lake Constance so that dependence upon truck haul supplemented by airlift was necessary.

The great distance between the rear boundary of the Seventh Army and its front lines necessitated the establishment of an Army Intermediate boundary behind which COMAD could assume responsibility for logistical support of the forward troops. It was agreed on 28 April that the Danube River was an approximate intermediate rear boundary for the Seventh Army.

When the Inter-Army Group boundary was shifted to the south a major revision of the main supply routes serving Seventh Army was necessitated and required the establishment of new priorities for rehabilitation of railways. Certain running rights on highways in First French Army area were allocated to Seventh Army. The First French Army rear boundary was moved forward to conform to the rapid advance of 6th Army Group forces.

The part of the Seventh Army Zone west of the Rhine River was transferred to the Fifteenth Army, releasing 36th Infantry Division for operation east of the Rhine.

Stuttgart was something of a problem for a few days after its occupation on 23 April. In the first place, this city had been officially designated by Supreme Headquarters, AEF, as the headquarters for the Western U.S. Military District upon its capture. Stuttgart was on the boundary between the First French Army and the Seventh U.S. Army inclusive first to the French and later to the Seventh Army but with joint use of routes through the city both before and after the change in boundary. For a time both the 100th U.S. Division of the VI Corps and the 3rd DIA of the First French Army were represented in the city. The matter

was settled amicably. However, First French Army refused to vacate Stuttgart and remained in the city pending delineation of occupational zones.

The DA ALP was responsible for an important sector which extended from Switzerland along the Franco-Italian border to the Mediterranean Sea. (Figure 23)

In view of major operations to commence in Italy about 15 April 1945, AFHQ requested SHAEF to conduct diversionary operations along the Franco-Italian border for the purpose of containing the enemy forces in that sector and making a show of force on this front.

Such activity fell to the Alpine Front Command under Headquarters 6th Army Group control. Plans were prepared by DA ALP and approved by Headquarters 6th Army Group. The outline plan included clearing of Mont-Genis Pass, clearance of Larche Pass including the capture of fortifications of St Ours Bos and St Ours Haut. It was also planned to clear the Petit St Bernard with attacks toward Susa and along the axis Mont Genevre Pass - Oulx.

These operations were executed as planned with action starting 4 April. Considering the rugged terrain, weather, and problems of transportation, the operations were conducted most successfully under not too favorable conditions. Gains were made chiefly at the passes, all along the line (Figure 23) until 28 April when Headquarters 6th Army Group cabled DA ALP to halt their troops and withdraw into France "as the military situation permits". The Germans in Italy were completely disorganized at this time and further diversionary action by DA ALP was deemed not necessary. This withdrawal was accomplished with some delay incident to reluctance on the part of the French to give up territory gained in Italy; but with its execution, fighting on the Franco-Italian border virtually ceased.

In the meantime, the Army Detachment of the Atlantic was making important preparations for Operation Venerable (previously designated as Operation Independence) to reduce the Royan Pocket and open the Port of Bordeaux. This stubborn enemy garrison (estimated at 13,000) which had controlled the entrance to the Gironde River since the liberation of southern France, had long been a literal thorn in our side during the whole of our campaigns. Plans to reduce the pocket had been set back from 1 Jan 1945, in view of the urgent need for troops on the main front. Now sufficient forces, all French (some 55,000 Non-Rearmament Program) and elements of the 2 DB, recently released from their training area, under the command of General de Larminat, were assembled and prepared to reduce the stronghold.

On 10 April 1945 General de Larminat moved his command post of the Army Detachment of the Atlantic from Cognac to Villeneuve. Arrangements for air support by the 1st Tactical Air Force (Provisional) as well as French Naval support for the action were worked out very satisfactorily. The action was planned and executed in two stages (Figure 24).

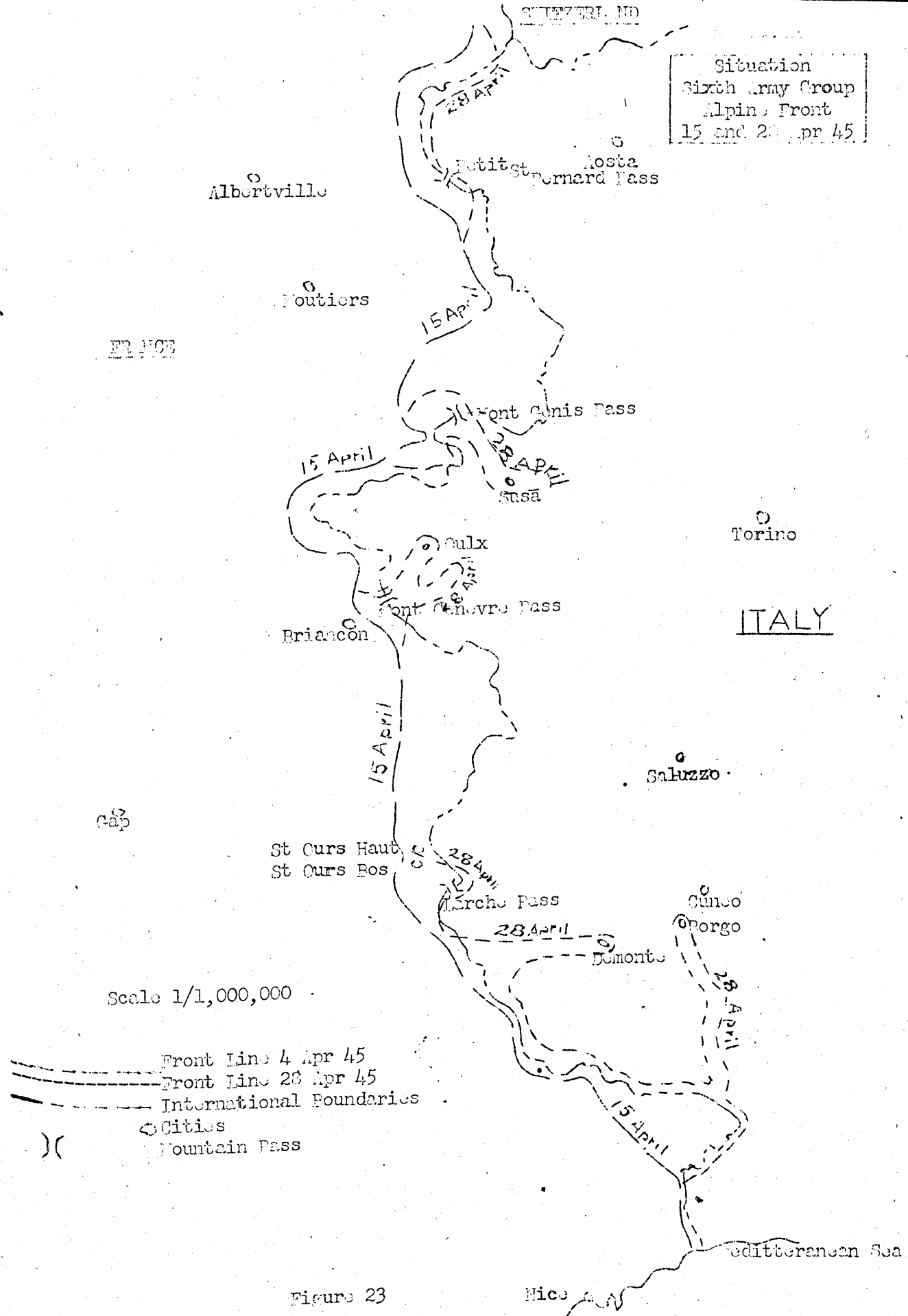


Figure 23

Nice

Scheme of Maneuver  
Sixth Army Group  
Royan Pocket  
14 April 1945

Scale 1/1,000,000

Front Line  
Enemy  
Fortifications  
Rivers  
Cities

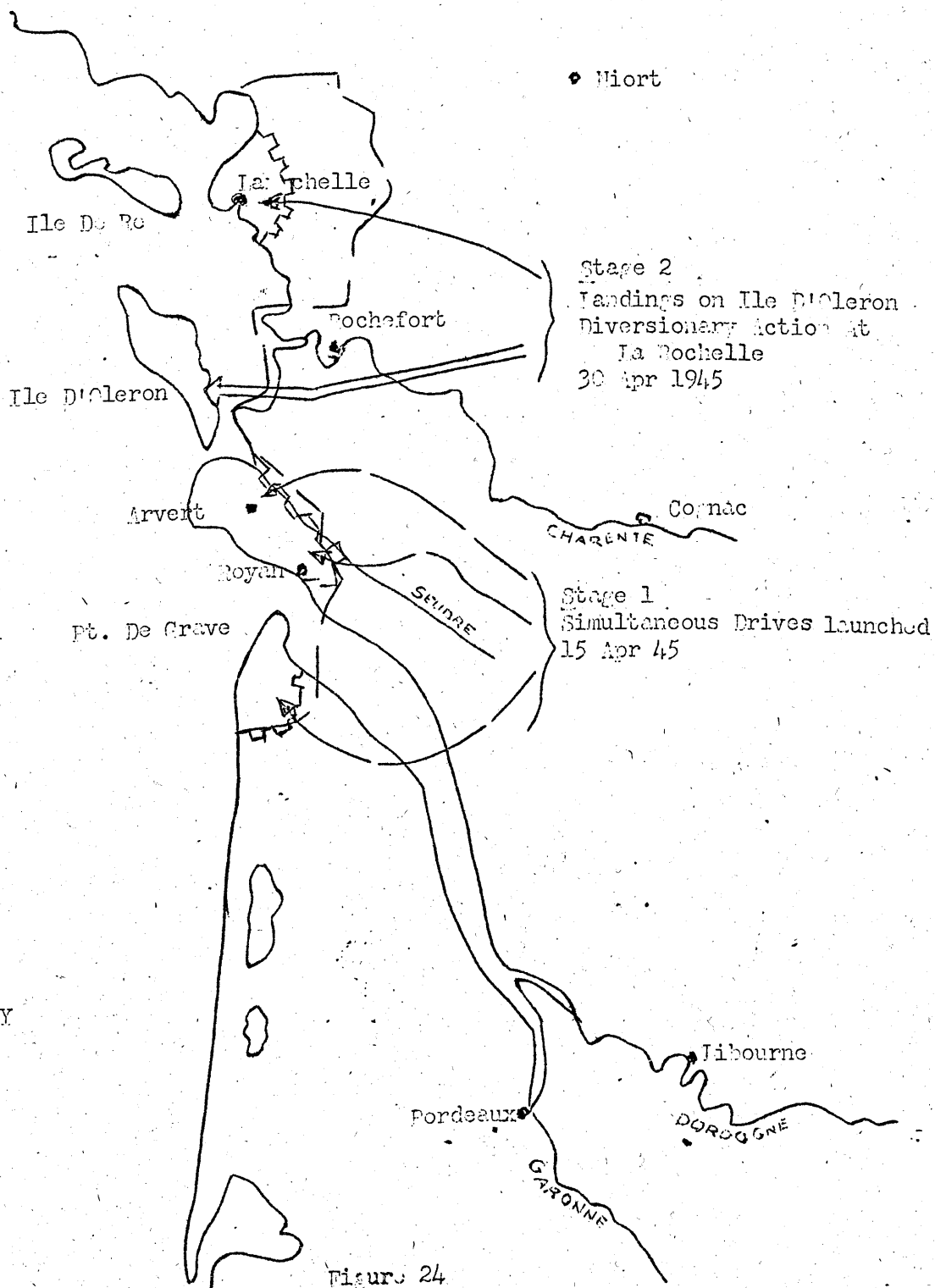


Figure 24

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The first stage, the reduction of Royan redoubt and the Point de Grave stronghold was commenced 14 April 1945 with attacks to seize lines of departure for main assaults to be launched 15 April. By the evening of 15 April Royan was completely occupied while the enemy outpost positions in the Point de Grave area were penetrated. By 18 April the entire Arvert peninsula was cleared and the German Commander was taken prisoner. On 20 April the remaining enemy in the Point de Grave area surrendered.

It was time for stage two, reduction of Oleron Island. The operation was started on 30 April with multiple landings in force on Oleron and diversionary action in the vicinity of La Rochelle. U.S. landing craft were used to supplement means of the French Navy. Providence lent a hand during the night preceeding the attack in the form of a most helpful fog. The landing, like the entire operation, was carried off successfully. Forty-eight hours later all enemy forces on the island as well as the few remaining on the mainland, had surrendered. The Port of Bordeaux, after many troublesome months of blockade, was finally opened on 2 May.

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CHAPTER TENREDUCTION OF THE GERMAN NATIONAL REDOUBT

The idea of a German National Redoubt based on the mountainous terrain of west Austria took shape gradually. Small bits of information gathered from all sources added credence to the story that German forces in the south would fall back to this rugged terrain, there to make a last ditch stand. Stories emanating from German sources indicated that large underground depots were well stocked and that elaborate plans had been prepared to defend the area based on the lateral communication afforded by the valleys of the Rhine, Ill, Inn and Salzach Rivers. None of this information appeared authoritative but the volume of it indicated that something was up, calling for plans to counteract such a move should the Germans attempt it.

As early as 02 April SHAEF directed 6th Army Group to be prepared to launch a thrust on the axis Nurnburg - Regensburg - Linz to prevent consolidation of German resistance in the south.

Until after the crossing of the Rhine, the occupation of Austria had been considered an AFHQ undertaking. With the continued advance of 6th Army Group forces towards the south and southeast, it became apparent that German forces in Italy were not to be withdrawn to bolster the crumbling western front. This clearly indicated that the initial force entering Central and Western Austria might well be composed of ETO rather than MTO troops.

About 22 April Lieutenant Colonel Stromberg from SHAEF, G-3 Plans section arrived at Headquarters 6th Army Group with SHAEF's latest thinking in the form of a staff study which had not yet been formally approved by SCAEF. A hasty meeting of the J.P.S. was called at which he presented orally the contents of the paper answering questions as they arose. The object of his visit was to assist planning in the 6th Army Group designed to prevent, if possible, a protracted defense in the National Redoubt. We did not believe in the theory of a completed National Redoubt. What we did consider as a possibility was that the German forces being driven south by the French and U. S. Armies, and west by the Russians would be forced into Austria where, if given time, they could put up formidable resistance. Our principal aim was to destroy completely German Army Group G before it could reach the National Redoubt area in our zone of action. How successful we would be in this was soon to be disclosed.

The enemy's disorganization as of 28 April is well described in the Weekly Intelligence Summary No. 32 bearing that date, the essence of which follows:

That portion of CinC West's command (Nineteenth German Army and First German Army) opposite 6th Army Group failed to receive



sufficient reinforcements during the week to aid in either the reestablishment of a front line or even to replace the approximately 78,650-odd troops lost as prisoners of war during the period 21-26 April, exclusive of permanent casualties. The inability of the enemy to halt the eastward drive toward Ulm and Kempten rolled up the Suabian Fourtain positions and turned the Danube River line. This drive coupled with advances to the south through the places mentioned above effectively disorganized and practically destroyed Nineteenth Army. Farther to the east, friendly armor has broken contact between Seventh and First German Armies. This was the situation most to be avoided by Army Group G. The result is that First Army is practically isolated and must fight an independent action with exposed flanks for the defence of Munich.

First German Army was unable to find suitable connected terrain features upon which it could reestablish a front line against unrelenting Allied pressure. Its rearward progress has continued for the second successive week. The appearance of Vlassov Russians and Hungarian troops in front line positions could not effect the very great need for artillery pieces, ammunition, motor transport and tanks. The position forced upon First German Army, isolated by the deep wedge driven into its right flank and disintegration of the Nineteenth Army on its left flank, will compel its early withdrawal to the Austrian Border. The Army will be forced back to cover the city of Munich, but due to the unavailability of any cross corridors of strong natural defensive positions in the vicinity, the city will fall rapidly. However, Himmler, who is reported in Munich, may urge a final German "Sacrifice" for this town.

Nineteenth German Army suffered a tremendous and overwhelming defeat at the hands of the fast moving First French Army. The ranks of the enemy were cut into numerous pockets and then individually mopped up. The rate of attrition was so high that the enemy's capability of restoring its ranks was not possible of fulfillment. Nineteenth Army will probably have the doubtful honor of being the first enemy army to arrive in the so called "Redoubt" area. It will probably have the mission of manning the few defensive positions already constructed in the Bregenz-Innsbruck area, as well as that of constructing new defenses. The remnants of Nineteenth Army, after having lost approximately 50,000 prisoners of war during the past week, can only hope to delay their day of capitulation.

#### Capabilities

The enemy may be allowed only two actual capabilities:

- (1) He can surrender unconditionally.
- (2) He can continue his senseless immolation, fighting hopelessly from isolated strongpoints as his lines disintegrate.

The overwhelming military defeat of the German armies north of the Danube and in the Black Forest, the dwindling resources both of men and material remaining to the enemy, and the increasingly obvious war-weariness of the civilian population all combine to make a political capitulation imminent. The hold of the Nazi overlords upon the Wehrmacht and the people is definitely weakening, particularly in Bavaria. The civilian finds himself in a position of fighting for the protection of his home and possessions not against the Allies, but against the fanatics who will not or may not accept defeat. As for the German soldier, prisoner of war status has become certainly more inviting than the prospect of further resistance under conditions of extreme privation.

Should the Nazis choose to resist, whether through a blind but monumental faith in ultimate victory or through simple acceptance of their own fate, their resistance will be short lived. The north-south valleys of Bavaria offer no tenable defensive positions and will serve as avenues into Austria. His inferiority in guns, supplies, mobility and total lack of air support are so complete that even field losses cannot be replaced. Feverish activity now in the development of defensive positions in Austria denotes a realization that he waited too long to make the "National Redoubt" a fact. The enemy is militarily completely defeated; he will be allowed neither respite nor truce, choose whichever he will.

x       x       x

As a result of Lt. Col. Stromberg's visit, G-3 directed the JPS to prepare a plan to forestall, if possible, organized resistance in Austria by destroying Army Group G and blocking the passes into that country in our zone of action. Prior to receipt of this information from SHAEF our mission had been to seize and occupy that part of Austria and Germany in our zone. This new information and the confirming directive which followed later, gave us specific critical areas in the Redoubt Area as physical objectives against which we should concentrate our effort. We found that it was necessary for us to have Rosenheim in our zone of action in order to give us free use of the roads leading into the valley of the Inn from the east. This was incorporated in the SHAEF directive which did not arrive until 27 April. The JPS plan, which was approved by General Devers 24 April, resulted in the dispatch of a cable to Seventh and First French Armies at once. A paraphrase of the cable follows:

First French Army will advance with strong mobile forces to rapidly seize Bregenz - Feldkirch area, sealing the Austrian-Swiss Border and thereafter be prepared to continue the advance to capture Landeck.

Seventh Army will advance rapidly with main effort on the right, with strong mobile forces to block the passes into Austria along the German border in zone preventing the escape of the withdrawing enemy from the north, and thereafter dispatch strong mobile forces to seize Innsbruck-Brenner Pass area and thereafter be prepared to assist in the capture of Landeck by First French Army.

Armies will prepare plans for resupply by air.

On 25 April General Devers held a Command and Staff conference at Headquarters 6th Army Group at 11 o'clock attended by General Patch, his G-2, G-3 and G-4 and by the Chief of Staff, Assistant G-3 and G-4 of First French Army. The object of the conference was to discuss the operation outlined in the cable dispatched to the Armies the day before. The Army Group Commander's idea was to have the First French Army drive to the south while the Seventh Army pivoted on its left and swung east in order to close the exits of the passes leading into Austria. At this time, no official directive had been received from SHAEF other than the informal information that had been given by Lt. Col. Stromberg. General Patch agreed with the concept of the maneuver and told General Devers that the Seventh Army part of it was already under way based on our cable received the day before. The Chief of Staff, First French Army, was in agreement but was in doubt about their ability to get through the defense of the Bregenz area rapidly.

By 28 April it had become apparent that Army Group G had been badly cut up. Prisoners were being taken in tremendous numbers, and VI Corps and the right of the XXI Corps met practically no opposition other than some isolated groups as they rapidly started their swing. VI Corps headed south with its right and began to turn its center and its left toward the east which, of course, had the effect of swinging XXI Corps' right which was also free. The First French Army, in the meantime, was having its difficulties with logistical and infantry support of its armor. It had failed to get the proper infantry support behind its armor and was not making the progress hoped for. By the time it got its infantry up VI Corps was well to the south.

By the evening of 29 April, it was definitely clear that Seventh Army could get to Landeck with VI Corps' right much before First French Army could reach the area. Therefore, on 30 April the boundary between Armies was extended south from Hofen so as to give Landeck and the communication routes thereto to Seventh Army. At this time, VI Corps' right was well into the Alps. It was now apparent that we had beaten the Germans to the area, that they would not be able to get into the area by using routes west of Salzburg. XXI Corps was moving its armor rapidly, backing it up by motorized infantry, swinging its right along the edge of the Alps south of Munich. It seemed assured of reaching the entrance to the pass at Rosenheim leading up to the valley of the Inn and cutting the retreating Germans off. So it was simply a question of time before the Innsbruck-Brenner Pass area would fall. This left the enemy only one route into the mountain area through the pass in the Salzburg area.

XXI Corps' maneuver was pinching out XV Corps which had been the pivot of the Army maneuver. XV Corps, instead of facing south, was now facing the gap at Salzburg from the northeast on XXI Corps' left. The boundary between Army Groups at this time was just to the west of Chiem Lake. Salzburg was in the zone of action of the Third Army,

which was still north and northeast of XV Corps' left. Third Army with its long, exposed and lightly held left flank was unwilling to advance on the Salzach River corridor until sufficient infantry had been brought up to assist its armor and adequately protect its left flank. It became quite apparent that the boundary between Army Groups should be changed and that XV Corps should head for Salzburg along with the left of XXI Corps. Both were much closer to it than Third Army. The Salzburg Pass had to be sealed off quickly.

Seventh Army was anxious to get the Army Group boundary changed in order to get XV Corps into Salzburg. General Devers directed G-3 to take the necessary action to effect the change in Army Group boundary which would make possible the contemplated maneuver. The whole transaction was handled by telephone between 6th Army Group, 12th Army Group and SHAEF and cleared up in one day. It is interesting to note that within 24 hours all arrangements necessary to change the principal maneuver of two Army Groups had been completed and all the action to implement them had been taken, even down to the divisions in most cases. This was fast work. It was possible because interested persons were able to talk over the secret telephone in "double talk" in a way that anyone not thoroughly familiar with the conversation could not understand. Many details were handled by cyp plane.

6th Army Group's mission was changed in answer to the above oral agreement by a SHAEF cable dated 3 May 1945, giving to the Southern Group of Armies the mission of seizing the Landeck and Innsbruck areas, sealing the Brenner Pass, capturing Salzburg, seizing the Bruck-Padstadt area and occupying that portion of Austria in zone of action. The boundary was revised eastward as follows:

As before to Freising (to 12th Army Group) Muhlendorf - thence along Inns River to its junction with Salzach River (to 6th Army Group) - Strazwalchen (to 12th Army Group) - Bad Isch - Schladming - Mauterndorfvillach (to 6th Army Group).

From the point of view of 6th Army Group, the decision which gave the Salzburg area to Seventh Army was probably the decision which brought about the immediate collapse of the Germans in southern Germany. XXI and XV Corps were able to move into the former zone of action of Third Army by an open flank and block Salzburg Pass with great rapidity. Without this decision, the Germans in front of Third Army's right flank would have poured into the Alps area through the Salzburg Pass and we might have had a tough time getting them out.

While the above maneuver was underway, VI Corps advanced rapidly southward and cut the main east-west route through the Redoubt by capturing Innsbruck and Landeck, and moved on south through the Brenner and Resia Passes.

RESTRICTED

With all passes into the mountain country sealed and German Army Group G completely slashed into a state of disorganization (Figure 25) the Commander was ready to confer with General Devers regarding surrender.

On the afternoon of 3 May, General Devers was informed by SHAEF that General Kesselring had asked General Wolf who was in command of the surrendered SS Troops in Northern Italy, to find out with whom he should deal regarding a surrender of the German forces in the Austrian area. General Barr was directed to send a cable to AFHQ asking them to have Kesselring informed that he should deal with General Devers, Commanding General, 6th Army Group. In the cable Kesselring was told how his representatives should approach and where they should come through the Allied lines. It was later discovered that Schulz, CG Army Group G, and not Kesselring, was surrendering. General Devers, in the meantime, had directed General Barr and G-3, to draw up the instrument of surrender. This was done on the night of the 3rd, being presented to the General Staff for consideration the next morning. In the meantime, General Devers, took a copy of the terms and went forward to the Command Post of the XV Corps situated at Haar, Bavaria. At about 1500 4 April, G-3 was directed to proceed to the Headquarters VI Corps with a copy of the terms as agreed upon by the Staff. These terms were to be used by General Brooks as a guide for the terms of surrender that he should use in current negotiations with representatives of the German Nineteenth Army. The 6th Army Group's terms were delivered to General Brooks' Headquarters at 0150, 5 May by G-3 who later proceeded to Haar to join General Devers.

General Devers, General Patch, General Haislip, General O'Daniels, General Ott, General Menoher, General Jenkins and Lieutenant Colonel Cabot Lodge were assembled at Headquarters XV Corps, Haar, Bavaria, at about 11:30 A.M. 5 May. About 12:45 P.M. General Devers was informed that a German delegation headed by the Commanding General, 1st German Army, Lieutenant General Foertsch, representing General Schulz, Commander of Army Group G, had arrived at the meeting place at the edge of town. General Devers directed his party to proceed at once by automobile to the meeting place to receive the German delegation. The meeting place was in a German sculptor's studio in a very beautiful setting at the edge of town. The studio had several large beautiful rooms, one of which had been prepared for the occasion by the Chief of Staff, XV Corps.

Upon arrival of the party at the meeting place, the German delegation could be seen standing in a group off to the right in the yard in front of the building. As the U. S. party dismounted the German delegation came to attention. No salutes were exchanged. General Devers' party entered the building, and went directly to the room which had been arranged. Shortly after entering, General Devers handed a copy of the terms of surrender to Chief of Staff XV Corps and asked him to deliver it to the Chief of the German delegation.

RESTRICTED

[illegible]

SITUATION  
SIXTH ARMY GROUP  
4 MAY 45

Figure 25.

RESTRICTED

General Menoher delivered the copy to General Foertsch who requested 30 minutes in which to study the document. This request was granted. Shortly after 1:30 P.M. General Devers took the seat at the head of the table and the officers of his party were arranged on his right in order, General Patch, General Haislip, General O'Daniel, General Jenkins, General Ott and General Menoher. The Lieutenant interpreter entered with General Foertsch who was introduced by General Menoher. General Foertsch stood at attention and bowed from the hips. There was no exchange of salutes or other greetings. General Foertsch took seat at the end of the table opposite General Devers. The interpreter sat between General Menoher and General Foertsch.

General Menoher then requested that General Foertsch's staff which consisted of approximately eight officers be brought in and seated. Six of them took seats on the right of General Foertsch at the table. Two junior officers took seats along the wall of the room on the German side of the table. General Menoher then introduced the U.S. party in the order of their seating, beginning with General Devers. The American representatives remained seated as they were introduced. General Foertsch was then invited to introduce his own staff. He rose and introduced his staff, apparently in order of rank. Each German officer rose and bowed as he was introduced.

Formalities completed, General Devers opened the discussion by asking General Foertsch if he had read and understood the terms of surrender. It was brought out that some misunderstanding of the word "term" was prevalent in the German party. The German equivalent of "term" implies conditions. Since this was an unconditional surrender, General Devers directed that the word "specifications" be substituted for "term" in the instrument of surrender to avoid any misunderstanding.

The conference was recorded and the bulk is included here with a view to giving an idea of the state of collapse of German Army Group G and the attitude of General Foertsch, representing its commander.

Gen. Devers: It is understood that this is unconditional surrender.

Gen. Foertsch: I understand.

Gen. Devers: This is a specification as to how we will carry out that condition.

Gen. Foertsch: I understand.

Gen. Devers: The first part of this instrument to be filled in is what territory is covered by this instrument. Will you give us that?

Gen. Foertsch: May I say this: I have the order and authorization to talk for the whole Army Group "G". This group comprises all forces of the First Army and of the Nineteenth Army, and the whole territory which has been marked on these maps by a line on the East, South and West. I assume that the Northern demarkation line will be the one which is in force at the moment the truce becomes effective.

Gen. Devers: What is the Northern line which is in force now?

Gen. Foertsch: The present front line is correct. This would mean that from the time of the truce initially there will be no movements by Allied forces into the territory which is at present held by the German forces. Will it be necessary to mark this Northern boundary on the map or will it be sufficient if a certain small zone will separate the two front lines?

Gen. Devers: You mean on the North?

Gen. Jenkins: The North boundary of the Germans is the present Allied front line, Sir.

Gen. Devers: I don't see how it affects us in the Northern boundary.

Gen. Haislip: It gives them four boundaries.

Gen. Jenkins: It would include troops in certain areas. On the South by the Italian-Swiss frontier, on the West by the Rhine River, and on the North by our front line.

Gen. Devers: Why do we need a space?

Gen. Foertsch: There would not be any space needed. I would consider it satisfactory for all troops to stay where they are at the time of the truce. As a matter of principle I want to point out the following. I have received orders from Field Marshal Kesselring to talk for Army Group "G". The Army Group "G" is under the orders of Field Marshal Kesselring. However, Field Marshal Kesselring, besides the forces of Army Group "G", is the Commander-in-Chief of other forces outside of the territory of Army Group "G". I would therefore propose, as a matter of principle, that in this instrument, wherever the name of Field Marshal Kesselring appears, there will be substituted the name of the Commander of Army Group "G", General Schulz. This instrument would then conform to the authorization I have brought along. It is intended that General Schulz's staff will be the staff for the surrender and execution of all terms set forth in this instrument.



- Gen. Devers: I assume that none of the other forces of Field Marshal Kesselring are within the boundary of the territory just given me.
- Gen. Foertsch: This is correct for Field Marshal Kesselring besides commands a territory in the Southeast. However, in this territory there are no forces which actually belong in the territory of the Southeast. In other words, all forces which are now in this territory would come under the provisions of this instrument. What we want is to change the name of Field Marshal Kesselring to the name of the Commander-in-Chief of Army Group "G", General Schulz.
- Gen. Devers: It is agreed to the change: to use Army Group "G" and the name of General Schulz.
- Gen. Foertsch: No, instead of the name of Field Marshal Kesselring the name of the Commander of Army Group "G", General Schulz.
- Gen. Devers: In any case Field Marshal Kesselring and his staff and other forces in this area must also surrender unconditionally.
- Gen. Foertsch: It is something which I would have to find out because I cannot decide regarding the person of Field Marshal Kesselring or his personal staff but only all forces in Army Group "G".
- Gen. Devers: We will close this instrument out on the basis of Army Group "G".
- Gen. Foertsch: Yes, Commander, General Schulz. Questions regarding the staff of Field Marshal Kesselring will still have to be clarified. To clear this up might take a certain time, depending on the means of communication. I ask that independent of this question the time of the armistice will be settled. I guarantee that Field Marshal Kesselring will in no case give other directions regarding Army Group "G".
- Gen. Devers: There will be no armistice. We will set the time, and that is when this instrument will be effective. If we should during that time run across anybody that is in this area, they will simply become prisoners of war.
- Gen. Foertsch: Up to the time of the truce.
- Gen. Devers: How long will it take to notify the troops?

Gen. Foertsch: I will welcome it, if the truce according to paragraph 2 could be put into effect as soon as possible. I propose tomorrow, 12 noon, May 6.

Gen. Devers: Satisfactory.

Gen. Foertsch: I would appreciate it if for the announcement of this time limit I could have the support of General Devers to be able to get the effective time to my troops as quickly as possible.

Gen. Devers: We will assist in every way possible.

Gen. Foertsch: I ask regarding paragraph 3, until further notice, officers and such personnel which are necessary to maintain order will be permitted to keep their small arms for reason of discipline. I am talking about officers, MP's and roving MP's which are to keep order in the territory, and I think that it will be to our mutual interest because in only this way can we guarantee discipline and order.

Gen. Devers: Small arms?

Gen. Foertsch: This includes pistols, rifles and machine pistols - no machine guns.

Gen. Devers: How many troops are involved?

Gen. Foertsch: I cannot give an exact number. Normally within a division there is one company of MPs. That would be about 100 men in a division. Those 100 men do not include the officers. It would be very difficult for me to give any definite number, but I believe honestly that from this measure will never result any threat to the strong Allied forces.

Gen. Devers: Granted.

Gen. Foertsch: The reason for my asking this is the following: We have difficulties regarding food. In this territory there are very many evacuees which have gone there on account of air attacks. For this reason there would be a possibility that riots or looting by some soldiers might occur. I think that it is also in the interest of the Allied forces that such dangers should be suppressed right from the start, and this is the actual reason for this request. I am particularly grateful to you for acceding to my request.

Gen. Devers: How can the bearers of arms be distinguished?

Gen. Foertsch: All the MPs wear some metal shield - some form of plaquette. Roving patrols wear some kind of fourragere. They can be very easily distinguished from other troops for reasons of discipline in the German Army.

Gen. O'Daniel: They should all wear a 3-inch white brassard on their left arm.

Gen. Devers: If they were to wear some white brassard there would be no trouble - officers and men.

Gen. Foertsch: I think that every officer could be very easily distinguished even without it by his shoulder straps.

Gen. Devers: Our soldiers won't see them in the distance.

Gen. Foertsch: The officers would carry only pistols - nothing else. If however an officer for reasons of order carries more than a pistol, he too has to wear a white brassard.

Gen. Devers: It is up to the officer if he wants to take the chance on it.

Gen. Foertsch: I don't think anybody would shoot at an officer who carries a pistol just like that. I would propose to talk this over in detail. We will not cause any difficulties. I would propose re paragraph 4, concentration of equipment and personnel, a period of 48 hours after the truce.

Gen. Devers: That is granted - beginning noon tomorrow.

Gen. Foertsch: In other words, it would be the 8th of May - noon - 12 o'clock.

Gen. Devers: That is alright. (Watches were checked for coordination)

Gen. Foertsch: May I bring up the following question in reference to paragraph 4. In the Annex it says that all arms, weapons and ammunition should be put in dumps by troops, companies and batteries. Do we understand that each troop, company or battery puts all its arms in their own dump or do you want one big dump for a division?

Gen. Devers: We prefer one dump.

Gen. Foertsch: In this case I would need a little more time to collect them all in one dump.

Gen. Devers: We mean to collect them in as big a dump as possible in the time given.

- Gen. Foertsch: The size of the dumps will depend largely on the means of transport we have available. To collect them in any larger dumps would be very difficult for the following reasons: We have very little fuel, if any, and the road conditions in the territory are very difficult.
- Gen. Devers: That is the reason we set it in this form. You can put it in large or smaller dumps, as you want - not below a company.
- Gen. Foertsch: It is O.K. Regarding the sentence that all these dumps should be guarded by unarmed sentries, I doubt very much that it would be practicable. There are very many foreign laborers in the region.
- Gen. Devers: The guards can have arms for that purpose, and when we take over, the guards can turn in their arms.
- Gen. Foertsch: It is quite alright. In reference to the sentence that all military equipment such as radio, telephone, telegraph and motor vehicles will have to be assembled and guarded, I assume it will be permitted to keep such transport as is needed to regulate traffic and bring up supplies; also to keep such means of communication needed by the staff to give orders to their troops. Otherwise no staff would have the necessary means of transporting the arms from one place to the other. This would include a few radio stations and, to allay any suspicion, all orders would be given in the clear.
- Gen. Devers: That is approved so long as you are carrying out the administrative features of this instrument. After that they will be turned in.
- Gen. Foertsch: That is clear. To get food, fuel, etc. to the troops, especially food, we will need a certain number of motor vehicles as well as horse-drawn vehicles for a certain length of time.
- Gen. Jenkins: That is taken care of in paragraph 3.
- Gen. Foertsch: Referring to the Annex, paragraph 3, where you desire that all our troops collect away from and keep clear of highways, railroads, etc., I don't think this is practicably possible. This, because they are in a mountainous territory with very few roads. If the troops are to keep alive and to get any provisions whatsoever, they will have to use the roads.

- Gen. Devers: You will have to give us a troop list and pin-point where your units are, and we will put liaison officers with the units. Where they need to use the roads, we will provide for it.
- Gen. Foertsch: What kind of movement of Allied troops do you contemplate when you say that routes of advance may be required by Allied forces?
- Gen. Devers: Just freedom of roads in the area for movement of troops - for concentration or war.
- Gen. Foertsch: According to that we would have to figure on the possibility that in this territory which you are talking about an American division might appear some day.
- Gen. Devers: They will appear.
- Gen. Foertsch: Yes, you will send liaison staffs and controlling commissions, Will this territory also be occupied by American troops immediately?
- Gen. Devers: Yes, because we are going to establish military government therein.
- Gen. Foertsch: Could you give an idea when your troops would move in - starting from the time of the truce?
- Gen. Devers: Probably two days.
- Gen. Foertsch: I consider it my duty to point out that it would be very difficult to billet any troops on account of the present over-crowding.
- Gen. Devers: We have that problem already. We propose to handle it quickly and firmly, and I don't anticipate any more trouble than we have had already.
- Gen. Foertsch: The terrain is of Alpine character, has very few towns and villages, and few means of communication, and is very badly off as far as any food is concerned. Even now there are places where you cannot find a piece of bread.
- Gen. Devers: We realize the difficulties.
- Gen. Foertsch: In paragraph 4 of the Annex you give us 72 hours to render you an order of battle of all major units. I do not know exactly how detailed you will want this list, but in any case the time is very brief. In 72 hours we could easily give you a list which, for

instance, would give the "82nd Regiment with three companies", or something like it but if you wish a more detailed list, additional time will be required.

Gen. Patch: If you have radio communication and use it in the clear, why should you need more than 72 hours?

Gen. Foertsch: Due to the present fighting, all these units have been so mixed up that it is impossible for us to have an exact strength report. I want to stress this as I consider it my duty to be honest so that no one can say later on that we did not act in good faith.

Gen. Devers: We accept. Do the best you can in that time and then continue to make the list more complete.

Gen. Foertsch: This is all I have to say regarding this document. However, I have a few things of importance I desire to bring out. I mentioned before the great difficulties in the food problem. Our troops have food for about 6 to 8 days. There has never been sufficient food within this territory to feed the troops which are in there now. I therefore deem it necessary to come to an agreement, the details to be worked out later, according to which we would be able to continue buying food also farther to the North, outside of this territory.

Gen. Devers: I think you must understand that your army will be moved just as soon as we can get it moved, and that they are not going to subsist where they are forever. I don't anticipate there is going to be any difficulty in making arrangements whereby your troops will have enough food, but we cannot authorize you to leave this territory to go North into somebody else's territory to buy food because we control all the food in all the territory which we occupy.

Gen. Foertsch: I would like to know when you say that our troops would be moved from the area as soon as possible, whether you mean that they will be used again in civilian occupation or whether they will be sent away as prisoners of war.

Gen. Devers: They will all be prisoners of war. If you mean are we going to send them out of the country, that is something beyond my pale. We will abide by the rules of war.

Gen. Foertsch: In other words, this would mean we would have to consider ourselves Prisoners of War within a very short time?

Gen. Devers: Yes, there is no armistice. This is a complete surrender.

Gen. Foertsch: In this connection I would like to ask another question. If I understand you right on this, the prisoners of war will be used in a capacity beneficial to the German people as soon as possible. However, will the other Allies avoid that these German prisoners fall into the hands of the Russians.

Gen. Devers: That is something on the level I have nothing to do with. Will you state that question more clearly?

Gen. Foertsch: Does the American High Command intend to hand over any prisoners made by the American troops to Soviet Russia?

Gen. Devers: I can't answer that question for the higher command.

Gen. Foertsch: I am very grateful to General Devers; especially I want to thank him in the name of my comrades who are now prisoners of war and who, as I hope, are and will remain in the hands of gentlemen.

Gen. Devers: We will abide by the rules of war. We will have the papers retyped to conform to the suggested changes. I will sign and you can sign later.

Gen. Foertsch: I think it might be a good idea to immediately advise my command of the time of the truce so that no time will be lost. I want to advise my higher command by all means which will be put at my disposal.

Gen. Devers: Perfectly alright. How do you propose doing that?

Gen. Foertsch: In any way which suits you will be suitable to us. I would prefer a marked plane of a cub type to fly over and advise the High Command.

Gen. Devers: What you want to do is to notify your command?

Gen. Foertsch: It would be good if one of my officers went by cub plane, and I would like to send word by radio to my CP which is at Saalfelden, near Zell Am See. There is no regular airfield nearby. On my part, I would like to do everything possible to prevent any further bloodshed.

(It was suggested that General Foertsch make use of the 3rd Division facilities for this purpose).

Gen. Devers: Make arrangements for this. Understand, this is unconditional surrender.

Gen. Foertsch: I have no power to do anything against this. I have one request in this connection. You are also the Commander of the troops of de Gaulle. The German people would be greatly indebted to you, Sir, if you would be able to give some attention to the behavior of the French troops. One of my officers yesterday had an experience which I do not want to mention here in detail.

Gen. Devers: The French troops under my command will obey the rules of war.

The instrument of surrender follows:

Specifications of Surrender, presented by General Jacob L. Devers, U. S. Army, Commanding 6th Army Group, on behalf of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, U. S. Army, Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Forces, and accepted by General Schulz, Commander-in-Chief, Army Group "G", Army of the German Reich.

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1. It is agreed that the territory covered by this instrument includes the areas bounded on the East generally by the line: Kirchberg (inclusive) - Ried (inclusive) - Frankenmarkt (inclusive) - Freudenthal (inclusive) - South Corner Zeller See - Radstadt (inclusive) - Oberdrauburg (exclusive) - Plocken Pass (exclusive), on the South by the Italian and Swiss frontiers, on the East by the River Rhine, and on the North by the present Allied front line, which are under the jurisdiction of General Schulz. All German military and para-military forces in this area are under command of General Schulz. All those forces, including General Schulz, are bound by this instrument and shall be subject to such other specifications as may be applied hereafter by the authorities of the United Nations.

2. All forces, including all para-military forces, under command of General Schulz, shall cease unconditionally all acts of hostilities towards forces of the United Nations not later than 1200B hours, 6 May 1945.

3. All such forces under command of General Schulz, except as indicated in Annex A, shall disarm themselves immediately and remain in their present areas retaining all mess and transportation equipment, food and forage necessary for self maintenance and subsistence until directed otherwise by authorities of the Armed Forces of the United Nations.

4. Concentration of all equipment and personnel as prescribed in Annex A will be effected not later than 1200B hours, 8 May 1945, after which time offensive ground and air action will be taken by the Allied Forces against all unauthorized movement of forces affected by this instrument. Other instructions indicated in Annex A will be carried out promptly.



5. This instrument is independent of, without prejudice to, and will be superceded by any general instrument of surrender imposed by, or on behalf of the United Nations and applicable to Germany and the German Armed Forces as a whole.

6. The official language of this instrument shall be the English text.

Signed and agreed at Haar, Bavaria, this 5 day of May 1945.

For General Schulz

Commanding General, First  
German Army.

General Jacob L. Dovers  
United States Army

ANNEX "A"

1. Pending further orders all officers and not to exceed one hundred other ranks per division may retain their rifle, machine pistol, pistol, or other sidearm for internal security purposes. All such armed personnel will wear a 3-inch white arm band above the left elbow for easy identification. All other arms, weapons and ammunition of whatever nature will be placed in dumps of appropriate size in convenient locations in areas occupied by companies, troops, batteries, and other detachments of a comparable or smaller size. Appropriate guards will be posted on all such dumps to insure their security pending further disposition as directed by authorities of the Armed Forces of the United Nations. All military equipment such as telephone, telegraph and radio equipment, motor vehicles, horse-drawn vehicles and other means of transport (both ground and air), and other movable military impedimenta not needed for execution of these specifications will be similarly assembled and guarded in convenient locations pending their further disposition. All such dumps will be kept clear of lines of communication and axes of advance required by the Allied Forces.

2. All weapons and equipment will be deposited in dumps with breech blocks, bolts, sights and/or other operating mechanisms intact.

3. Having disposed of all weapons, ammunition and combat equipment of whatever nature, all forces under command of General Schulz will stand fast in their respective areas until given further direction by authorities of the Armed Forces of the United Nations, and will keep clear of all highways, railroads, trails and other routes of advance which may be required by Allied Forces.

4. By hour and date indicated in paragraph 2 this instrument, General Schulz shall furnish the Commanding General, Sixth Army Group, an order of battle of all major units, including Allied Prisoner of War Camps, concentration camps and similar installations under his

command, and as soon as possible shall furnish the Commanding General, Sixth Army Group, with a complete troop list showing by unit designation, type, strength and location, all elements of his command affected by this instrument.

5. All minefields within areas controlled by General Schulz shall be plainly marked immediately by signs and shall be outlined with white tape or other suitable means which are readily identifiable. All mines, booby traps and other types of demolition charges shall be removed from all highways and railroad bridges, tunnels, overpasses and underpasses on all lines of communication and from all buildings and means of transport, highway, rail and air, within the areas controlled by General Schulz, and all such mines, booby traps and other means of demolitions so removed shall be rendered harmless; those mines, booby traps and other means of demolitions which cannot be removed and rendered harmless immediately shall be plainly marked and placed under guards.

The conference broke up promptly. The terms were rewritten to include the minor changes agreed upon in the discussion, while the American and German officers had lunch separately. Shortly after 1500, 5 May, General Devers signed the original and one copy of the revised instrument, and directed that General Patch and General Haislip do likewise. Thereafter, in the presence of General Monohar and General Jenkins, as well as the members of General Foertsch's staff, General Foertsch re-read the document and signed the original. A copy was then handed to General Foertsch. The German staff, which had been standing, immediately came to rigid attention; and the General and his staff literally bowed out of the picture.

Thus the single purpose of 6th Army Group, destruction of the German Armies opposing it, was completed in dramatic fashion. This news was flashed to the world at once. But we were replaced in the spotlight two days later by the all important announcement that the entire German war machine on the fronts to our east and to our north, following the example of Army Group "G", had also surrendered unconditionally to our Supreme Commander and to our Russian allies.

CHAPTER ELEVENPOST HOSTILITIES ACTIVITIES

The terms of surrender were fulfilled and hostilities ceased on the Seventh Army front as soon as orders could be disseminated throughout German lower echelons. Some confusion and resistance by isolated German units occurred in front of First French Army. This opposition was soon overcome after several pitched battles. German units involved were from Twenty-Fourth Army.

Headquarters 6th Army Group's Military Missions to higher German Headquarters were established. Brigadier General Henry C. Wolfe of Headquarters 6th Army Group arrived at Central Hotel in Ell on 11 May to take charge of the Military Mission to Headquarters German Army Group "G" which had previously been set up by a Seventh Army liaison detachment. Colonel K. S. Andersson of Headquarters 6th Army Group headed the mission to German Nineteenth Army and arrived at Pfunds on 11 May. The Military Missions supervised the carrying out of the surrender; transmitted additional instructions to implement the occupational policies and formed liaison headquarters for transmittal to the higher Allied Headquarters for decision such requests and problems of the surrendered German forces as could not be dealt with on the spot. The missions also facilitated the movement of occupational forces into the areas of the surrendered German forces.

Advance to the south was resumed by Seventh Army and First French Army at noon on 3 May to complete the occupation of their respective zones in Austria. The Italian and Swiss Frontiers and the Enns River line on the east were set as the limits of advance.

The principal problems which required coordination by higher Allied headquarters were those of feeding and maintaining the large number of German forces concentrated in the Alpine districts. Initial German food supplies were estimated to be sufficient for about six to eight days or until about 13 May. It was reported on 11 May that 200,000 German troops were moving from the southeast toward the 6th Army Group area in Austria. Later this group appeared to be I German Cavalry Corps which claimed to have been discharged by British forces. AFHQ was requested to intercept and prevent movement of the reported troops from its area of responsibility. Before the situation was settled control of Seventh Army and the responsibility for the areas involved were passed to Headquarters 12th Army Group.

In order to facilitate redistribution of forces and formulate a coordinated plan of occupation by the Headquarters which would have responsibility for the U. S. Zone, General Dovers and General Bradley agreed at a meeting held in Heidelberg on 14 May 1945 that Seventh Army should pass to control of Headquarters 12th Army Group without delay. SHAEF approved this agreement and ordered the 12th Army Group

to assume command of Seventh Army on 16 May 1945. General Bradley, however, did not want responsibility for First French Army during the interim period of settlement of the French Zone of Occupation and assumption of responsibility therefor by the French Government. General Bradley's reasons for this were the unfamiliarity of Headquarters 12th Army Group with problems of French organization and supply, the lack of previous personal contact and lack of familiarity with the established communications and liaison which Headquarters 6th Army Group had with First French Army. It was therefore agreed between the Army Group Commanders that First French Army would remain under command of Headquarters 6th Army Group until SHAEF should release First French Army to control of the French Government.

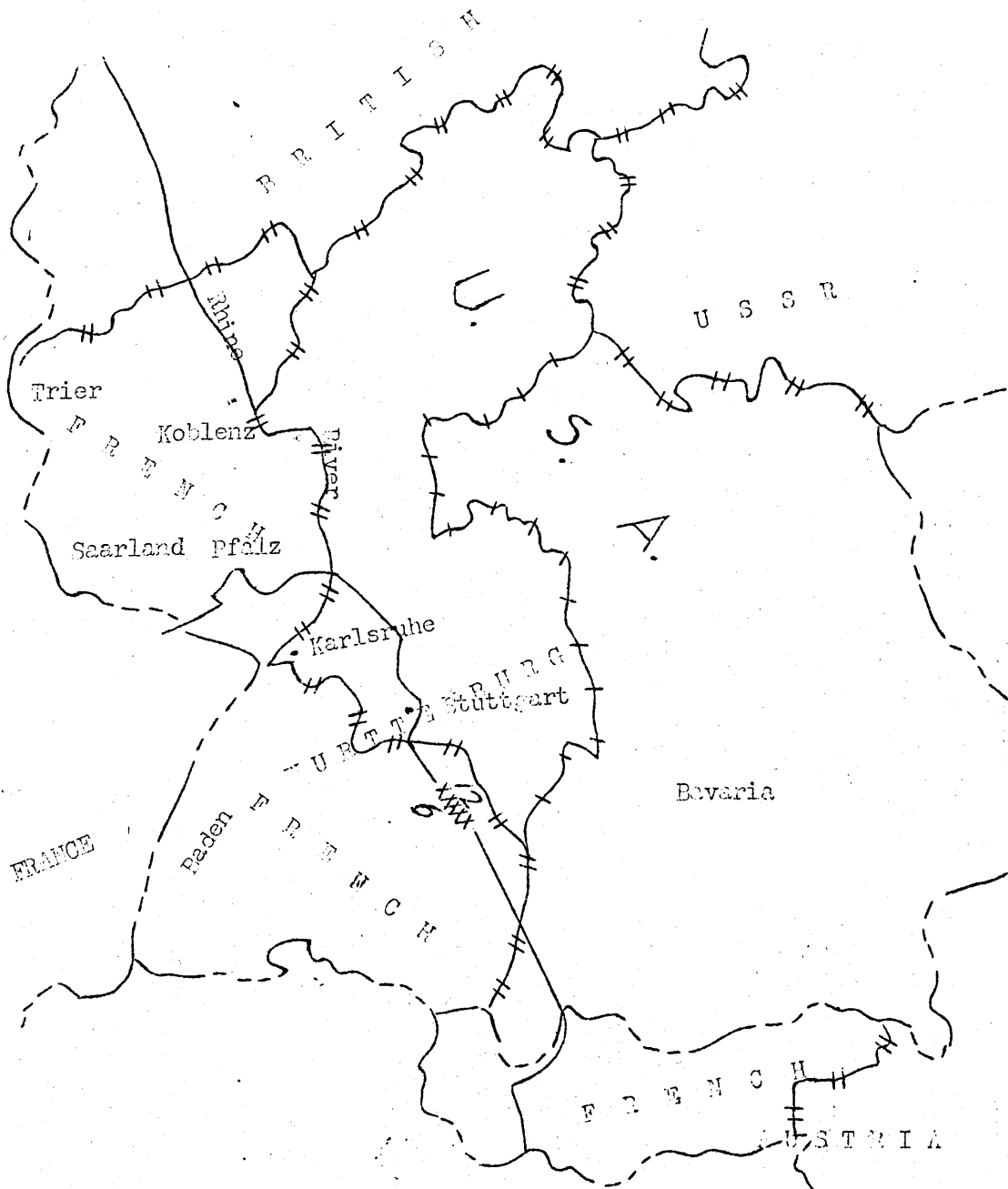
On 21 June SHAEF indicated by cable that agreement had been concluded on final delimitation of the French National Zone of Occupation in Germany and transfer of areas of responsibility was imminent. (See Figure 26). SHAEF directed that plans for transfer of areas be prepared to become effective on or about 1 July 1945, but that First French Army could not be contacted on the matter for the time being. A preliminary plan was prepared and approved by the Chief of Staff 23rd June and discussed on that day with Headquarters 12th Army Group and SHAEF.

A conference was held at Headquarters 6th Army Group 25 June attended by representatives of SHAEF, COMZONE, Headquarters 12th Army Group, Third, Seventh, Fifteenth Armies, Comad, Adsec, Oise Intermediate Section and Ninth Air Force. The tentative plan was discussed at the meeting and approved after slight modifications. The plan was submitted to SHAEF with 12th Army Group concurrence the following day.

On 27th June, SHAEF authorized discussion with First French Army. Representatives of First French Army conferred with staff officers at Headquarters 6th Army Group. On 30th June, SHAEF indicated over the telephone that the plan would be approved except for the phasing which must be speeded up to complete the operation within 10 days instead of 21 days and that a directive to effect immediate transfer would follow shortly. It was obvious that additional coordination would be necessary to fulfill the SHAEF directive within the specified limit of time.

SHAEF indicated to AFHQ in response to the latter's inquiry of 12 May 1945 that operational control of Army Detachment of the Alps would not be released until French troops withdrew from Italy. General Doyen had refused to withdraw from any occupied territory until authorized to do so by the French Government. AFHQ was particularly concerned because the likelihood of political difficulties arising in northwestern Italy had long been foreseen. Headquarters 6th Army Group was notified by SHAEF that an agreement had been reached to effect withdrawal of French forces from areas

FRONTIERS OF OCCUPATION IN  
GERMANY BY AUSTRIA AS INDICATED ON 21 JUNE 1945



- International Boundaries
- == National Zone Boundaries
- + Military District, US Zone
- XXXXX Limits of occupation by First French Army during initial operational phase

Figure 26

east of Franco-Italian boundary of 1939 by 10 July. It is presumed that Headquarters 6th Army Group will be relieved of responsibility for the Army Detachment of the Alps at that time and control of such forces will pass to the French Government. This date coincides with the date for turnover of the French zone in Germany. Thus, when relieved of all operational responsibility, the mission of Headquarters 6th Army Group will have been concluded.

Redeployment Training received attention as early as mid-March. At that time, information was received by the Chief of Staff that a training command would be established in this theater for the purpose of training units that were to be redeployed directly to the Pacific or indirectly through the United States. It was expected that Headquarters 6th Army Group would be assigned the mission. On 25 March, at Phalsbourg, Colonel Miles W. Brewster, G-3 Plans Section of ETOUSA, briefed General Devers and his staff on Theater Redeployment Planning and stated that the Theater Tentative Basic Plan assigned the mission of Redeployment Training of all units, except those assigned or attached to USSTAF, as a responsibility of Headquarters 6th Army Group.

It was decided that a small group of officers from Headquarters 6th Army Group would be sent to Headquarters ETOUSA in Paris to read into the picture and to prepare plans and necessary directives for the new problem which would confront the 6th Army Group on VE Day. Accordingly, the Deputy Chief of Staff, Brigadier General Whitfield P. Shepard, and five other officers were selected and ordered to ETOUSA.

Upon arrival in Paris 1 April, study of the redeployment training problems and implications commenced. An analysis of the Redeployment Flow Chart, dated 5 April 1945, indicated that Headquarters 6th Army Group would be responsible for the training of 3360 units varying in size and type from divisions to small signal detachments of only a few men.

Representatives of Army Ground Forces and Army Service Forces came to ETOUSA and were consulted on the problems they had met in training in the Zone of the Interior. The various Special Staff Sections of Headquarters Communications Zone were also consulted. As plans began to shape up additional specialized officer personnel was required and studies of requirements for training areas were made. Headquarters 6th Army Group's Basic Plan for Redeployment Training was submitted to Headquarters ETO on 10 May and was approved. Plans were progressing most favorably and the final draft of Headquarters 6th Army Group Training Memorandum No 1 was completed. This memorandum was based on AGF, ASF, and War Department training programs and directives.

On 13 May a new Redeployment Flow Chart dated 14 May 1945 was received. An analysis of the chart indicated that the total number

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of units that would come under control of Headquarters 6th Army Group for training was only 723, most of which were Service units, as compared to 3360 previously determined. This reduction in units was due to a tremendous speed up of the shipment of units from the theater as well as a decision that units scheduled for strategic reserve would remain under control of the Army of Occupation and Communications Zone until shipping for return to the States was available.

As a result of the reduction of the number of units available for training, General Eisenhower decided that the establishment of a special headquarters responsible for redeployment training was unnecessary. Instead it was decided that each major command would be responsible for training those units assigned or attached which were to be redeployed. Accordingly, on 2 June a conference was held at ETOUSA at which all major commands were represented and at which the G-3, ETOUSA announced the new policy on Redeployment Training. After turning over the material they had prepared to other appropriate Headquarters, Headquarters 6th Army Group Redeployment Planning Staff was dissolved and returned to Heidelberg.

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CHAPTER TWELVEOCCUPATION OF GERMANY

Headquarters 6th Army Group commenced planning for the occupation of Germany in late September 1944 and carried it on until the termination of its mission in July 1945. The guiding principles and the missions assigned to 6th Army Group were set forth in the appreciations and outline plans issued by SHAEF for Operation 'Talisman', the Second 'Talisman' plan, dated 31 October 1944, and Operation 'Eclipse', dated 10 November 1944. The SHAEF plans outlined broadly the strategic areas to be seized to establish Allied military control in Germany, the occupational objectives and priorities for their accomplishment, and the general policies governing the occupation. Also designated by SHAEF was the general plan for organization of the final occupation. Because the situation as it might exist at the time of defeat and capitulation of Germany could not be forecast with certainty, SHAEF plans were general and designed to meet either a complete surrender by a central German authority or piecemeal capitulation upon collapse of centralized control. Detailed instructions covering limited aspects of occupation such as counter-intelligence, prisoners of war, displaced persons, public relations, signal communications and disarmament were set forth in memoranda related to the outline plans.

The SHAEF plan specified that Headquarters 6th Army Group would be withdrawn from Germany and control of Allied forces in the U. S. Zone would be consolidated under Headquarters 12th Army Group. Responsibility for coordination of planning rested with Headquarters 12th Army Group.

The first draft plan of the Joint Planning Staff of 25 November 1944, conformed to the principles and missions laid down by SHAEF plans and the operational situation as assumed by 12th Army Group. Operation 'Eclipse' was considered to be a continuation of the current military operations. It was assumed that, when the operation should commence upon German surrender or collapse, Allied Forces would be disposed in prolongation of the current zones of action with the bulk of forces in bridgehead areas east of the Rhine, and that Russian forces would not have occupied any considerable portion of Germany.

In designating the missions of Seventh Army and First French Army the tactical operations, strength, equipment of forces and supply lines were considered. Seventh Army was assigned the mission of making a deep thrust into the Nurnberg and Munich areas while First French Army protected its south flank and Line of Communications by blocking action along the east bank of the Rhine, in the Black Forest, and east in the Stuttgart area. The plan indicated a single axis of advance leading first to Nurnberg and then turning south to Munich in order to provide security for a single Line of



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Communications and still leave Seventh Army sufficient strength upon reaching the Munich area to cope with the possibility of encountering sizeable German forces withdrawing from Italy. The mission of sealing the German-Swiss border had already been assigned to First French Army, in response to SHAEF directive cable of 16 September 1944.

Several questions of major importance concerning administrative organization in Germany which were not clearly defined in the SHAEF plan became apparent. The position of Communications Zone in Germany was clarified to the extent that it would be responsible for logistical support, but would have no area responsibility.

The Joint Planning Staff draft plan was revised and enlarged to include the clarification of the responsibility of Communications Zone in Germany and the SHAEF and 12th Army Group provisions for additional supervisory personnel to perform post-hostilities military government and disarmament functions. Also included was 12th Army Group's provision for a corps of 3 infantry divisions and 1 armored division of Third Army to assist Seventh Army in the Nurnberg-Regensburg area. The approved 'Eclipse' Outline Plan was issued under date of 5 February 1945 but distribution was delayed until 25 February 1945 when interpretation of SHAEF security restrictions had been clarified.

To conform to a change in 12th Army Group's plan which was necessitated by the altered tactical situation and to provide more guidance for Seventh Army in its planning, Alternate Outline plans were issued on 19 March 1945. The alternate plans provided for initial occupation of the Saar and establishment of Military Government in the State of Westmark by Seventh Army. One Corps of First French Army under this plan would relieve Seventh Army in the above areas during the redistribution of forces in the secondary phase of occupation. The strength of Seventh Army was designated as three Corps Headquarters and a total of 16 Divisions.

At the same time under date of 19 March 1945 a directive on the Tentative Basis for 'Eclipse' Planning was prepared by Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, and approved by the Army Group Commander. The directive cited the shortage of bridging equipment to cross both Seventh and First French Armies over the Rhine simultaneously and gave Seventh Army priority. It instructed Seventh Army to be prepared to direct one corps on Nurnberg, one corps on Regensburg and one corps on Munich. The latter corps was to dispatch a strong highly mobile force into Pforzheim-Donaueschingen-Immenstadt-Ulm area initially and to be followed by French forces which would relieve the mobile force of Seventh Army. The tentative planning directive designated that a mobile task force of one armored and one infantry division, and naval personnel to patrol Lake Constance, would cross the Rhine in the vicinity of Neuf Brisach and seal the Swiss border as far as Austria. Also one infantry division would cross the Rhine on available equipment and occupy the east bank of the Rhine and

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the Black Forest as far north as Karlsruhe. Other provisions were that one armored division and one infantry division of First French Army should cross the Rhine on Army Group order behind the right Corps of Seventh Army to occupy the Karlsruhe-Stuttgart area and relieve Seventh Army in Wurttemberg, permitting Seventh Army elements to move into Bavaria. The possible necessity of utilizing two French divisions to occupy the Saar to relieve Seventh Army was also included.

Specific instructions to cover more detailed aspects of the 'Eclipse' Operation were issued as annexes to the original outline plan, dated 5 February 1945. The annexes were prepared by the staff sections having primary interest and coordinated by G-3 Section.

A Revised Outline Plan for Operation 'Eclipse' was issued by Headquarters 6th Army Group dated 22 April 1945. This revision maintained the annexes in effect, unless superseded at that time, and rescinded the Alternate Plans previously issued. Suggestions received from SHAEF and Communications Zone ETOUSA designed to clarify certain of the missions of Communications Zone and the use and provision of specialist personnel for post-hostilities functions were incorporated in the revised plan. The outstanding points of revision were necessitated by changes in 12th Army Group's plan. 12th Army Group adopted the policy of transferring between Army Headquarters responsibility for areas and command of troop units located therein in order to effect the transition from the operational to the occupational phase while leaving troops in place. It was hoped that movement of troops and installations already engaged in occupational duties would thereby be held to a minimum.

The major change in organization for occupation of the U. S. Zone was that Headquarters Seventh Army would be responsible for the Western Military District which included all the U. S. Zone except Bavaria, instead of the Eastern Military District which would be organized by Third Army Headquarters. Other new conceptions from 12th Army Group plans which were incorporated in the revised plan were the adjustment of Wehrkreis boundaries to conform to political subdivisions and reconstitution of Wehrkreis organization if necessary to control, maintain and disband the German Armed Forces. To centralize control of military government along the lines of former German administration, corps headquarters were to be eliminated from the chain of command for military government and administrative purposes as early as possible.

Tactically, the execution of the 'Eclipse' plan was very much as anticipated and planned. Accomplishment of all objectives in the disarmament of Germany and control of occupied areas was not as complete and smooth in all cases as anticipated and expected. It is believed that such failure where it occurred is not the fault of the troop units involved, but is due to lack of timely dissemination of the extensive detailed instructions to permit their being studied

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and understood by units preoccupied with combat operations and to the lack of administrative headquarters to control the occupational forces in rear areas while the higher tactical headquarters focused their attention on completing the defeat of the German Armed Forces.

The need for an administrative headquarters to control areas in rear of the combat armies in the event that combat operations were carried on deep inside of Germany had been foreseen. In response to an inquiry SHAEF informed Headquarters 6th Army Group on 21 January 1945 that SHAEF could not furnish a headquarters for occupational control of rear areas of 6th Army Group such as 12th Army Group had in Fifteenth Army. Therefore, in compliance with SHAEF "Interim Directive for the Occupation of Germany" of 13 January 1945, an augmented corps headquarters was requested to execute the detailed planning and to provide coordination in occupation of rear areas in Germany. SHAEF message 370600 dated 11 February 1945 indicated that this request could not be favorably considered.

The provisions concerning specialist personnel for post-hostilities functions which were included in the "Eclipse" plans seemed to provide for adequate control of the occupation in those respects. In practice however, the static liaison staffs were a distinct failure. This was due first to the failure of higher headquarters to authorize an approved T/O & E for these staffs in sufficient time for them to be self-sufficient and perform their contemplated function; and secondly, the training which they received was based on the early conception of disarmament control using a dual staff organization with one staff to control German activities and the normal staff for the regular administration of lower troop echelons. Thus much of the visualized assistance for combat units in controlling the occupation of Germany was not available when required.

The discrepancies which occurred appear to have resulted from the conflict between operational necessity and administrative planning. The complexity of many problems of occupation and the necessity for an organization of personnel capable of handling them in order to effect a smooth transition from combat operations to occupational control of areas was appreciated by the administrative planners at the higher levels. However, in the operational view, all organizations and personnel available were engaged in the mission of defeating the enemy armed forces and could not be spared for occupational training or detailed planning until the primary mission had been completed. Therefore, although elaborate and detailed plans and policies were adopted at the higher levels, time for their complete study and comprehension was not available to lower echelons until hostilities were ended. Thus the original operational plans were followed and consolidation of the occupation developed after hostilities ceased.

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The operational necessity of maintaining the greatest possible pressure on the fleeing enemy force to prevent organization of a coordinated defense required all available strength that front line units could muster to cover the very extended fronts assigned them. The unit frontages and speed of advance did not permit detachment of suitable forces for disarmament and similar purposes of control of civilian population when regiments were occupying towns at a rate of more than 30 per day, as occurred in many instances.

At lower echelons, liaison and continuity of policy were frequently lacking. The static liaison staff had been contemplated for use only at higher levels in larger centers to supervise control which would be disseminated through German administrative machinery. Under the circumstances of the defeat and complete occupation for Germany prior to collapse and surrender little German administrative machinery remained. Although details of plans and policies may in some instances not have been carried out at lower levels, the planning done during the winter and early spring was available immediately upon cessation of hostilities. Thus solution of few problems had to be developed during the transitional period of consolidation of occupational control.

12th Army Group used Headquarters Fifteenth Army to control and coordinate the occupation of areas of Germany in rear of the armies which were conducting the combat operations. As a solution of the problem of controlling rear areas in the zone of 6th Army Group SHAEF specified in cable FID 17249 dated 22 February 1945 that Headquarters Fifteenth Army would relieve 6th Army Group of occupational responsibilities west of the Rhine. This change in area responsibilities would be effected by successive adjustments in inter-Army Group boundary as necessary. Headquarters Fifteenth Army was not prepared to take over immediately all of Germany west of the Rhine and when given the mission by Headquarters 12th Army Group, Fifteenth Army was established in the center of the Rhine Province to take over first from First Army then extend its area of control behind Ninth and Third Armies and finally to take over from Seventh and First French Armies on the south flank in the Saar and Pfalz. By the time Fifteenth Army was ready to relieve 6th Army Group in areas west of the Rhine on 25 and 27 April 1945 Seventh Army had advanced well beyond its bridgehead area and had responsibility for a line of communications and all the area as far east as the front lines which extended from Neuburg on the Danube southwest to the vicinity of the Austrian border.

The French Zone of Occupation was entirely a political matter of negotiations carried out at the highest governmental level. The uncertainty of the whole question however, seriously affected military operations and control of occupation. Acting on instructions of the French Provisional Government, French military commanders declined to yield any territory initially occupied by

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French forces. Stuttgart, the capital of the State of Württemberg, had been captured by the French and had been previously designated in all 'Eclipse' plans as the location for the headquarters which would control the Western Military District of the U. S. Zone. (See Figures 26 and 27). Military Government and area control and administration were based on control superimposed upon and following the German administrative and control channels. The whole scheme for redistribution of occupational forces and organization and consolidation of control of the occupation of Germany were dependent on definition of the national zones once the decision of the Yalta Conference that the French would have a national zone of occupation had been announced.

After mid-April 1945 it became apparent that our forces might reach the Austro-German frontier ahead of forces under AFHQ. Responsibility for developing the policies and organization of the occupation of Austria had been assigned to AFHQ. It was agreed that SHAEF forces would continue pursuit of fleeing German remnants into Austria and occupy that area in accordance with SHAEF 'Eclipse' policies somewhat modified to meet the local situation in respect to Military Government. Headquarters 6th Army Group was designated to coordinate the implementation with 15th Army Group. G-5 teams were requested from AFHQ. Disarmament specialist personnel and a controlling headquarters could not be made available by AFHQ in the early phases of the occupation of Austria. In effect, the 'Eclipse' operation was carried across the frontier into the areas of Austria occupied by the SHAEF forces, and as such the occupation of Austria presented no unique conditions except that the bulk of the forces surrendered by German Army Group G were located in Austria.

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National Zones of Occupation in Germany and  
Organization of U.S. Zone Under "Eclipse" Plan.

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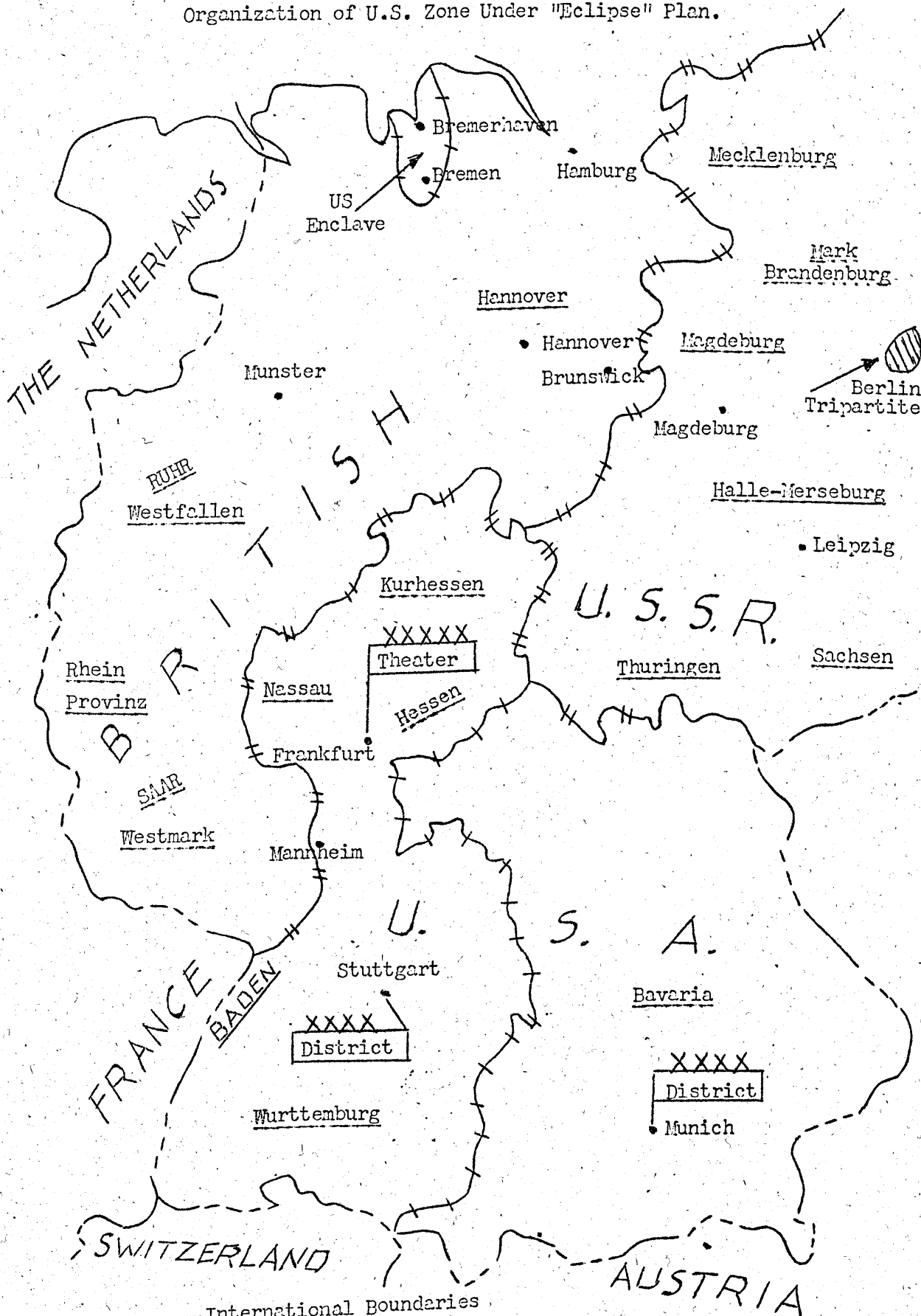


Figure 27

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CHAPTER THIRTEENEFFECT OF ARTILLERY AMMUNITION SUPPLY1. General.

The availability of artillery ammunition plays a decisive role in determining what operations can be undertaken. During the operations of 6th Army Group, the lack of an adequate ammunition supply had an important effect on the operations that were undertaken. The amount of ammunition that can be expended in any given operation is directly dependent on future resupply possibilities. A field commander cannot expend the ammunition on hand to the best advantage unless he is assured of an adequate and timely resupply. This chapter will discuss in detail the effect of the ammunition supply situation on the operations undertaken by 6th Army Group.

2. D-Day to 30 September 1944.

The artillery ammunition for this phase of the operations was set up in the "Dragoon" plan and was phased into Southern France through the beachheads and the ports in accordance with the anticipated requirements and the increase in the gun list.

a. To provide this supply the resources, including reserves, of MTO were divided on a gun list basis between the Fifth Army and the Dragoon troop list.

b. Ammunition requisitions for the Dragoon operation were also placed in the United States for loading in ships to be discharged in Southern France.

c. The amounts of ammunition planned for the early phases of the operation were adequate.

d. The rapid advance of the troops inland made a difficult transportation problem and the troops did not receive all of the ammunition that they might have used.

e. During the latter half of September, resistance stiffened causing an increased demand for artillery ammunition, so that the tonnage of ammunition reaching the front-line units was barely sufficient to support the pressure it was desired to maintain against the enemy. No ammunition tonnage was available to create stocks in the forward areas.

f. Prior to 15 September 1944, Seventh Army was in command of the entire operation including French units. The artillery officer of the Seventh Army controlled the allocation of ammunition between U. S. and French troops. When Headquarters 6th Army Group assumed

command, it immediately became necessary to allocate artillery ammunition between the Seventh Army and First French Army in order to insure an equitable distribution of combat resources and to facilitate orderly transportation arrangements. At this time the Line of Communications extended from the Southern French port of Marseillo and the beaches east of Toulon to the foothills of the Vosges Mountains, a distance of 425 to 500 miles.

g. To allocate ammunition it is necessary to know:

- (1) What quantities are immediately available.
- (2) What the resupply rate will be for several months in the future.
- (3) The operations, current and future, that are planned.

Complete information (1) and (2) was not available in late September 1944, due to incomplete firing records of French units, incomplete ship unloading records and incomplete haulage and issue records.

h. The allocation of artillery ammunition for the period 26 September to 15 October was based on the best information at hand on available artillery ammunition. These data were furnished by the Artillery Officer Seventh Army. It included all artillery ammunition in the ASP's and back to the southern ports and some of it in ships in the ports. Positive assurances could not be obtained from the supply agencies as to whether it could all be unloaded from the ships in time. The following operational factors were taken into account:

- (1) Mission of 6th Army Group: To maintain constant pressure on the enemy.
- (2) Missions assigned to Seventh Army and First French Army were equal in importance and the relative difficulties and resistance facing the two were considered to be equal.
- (3) Future plans for crossing the Rhine and breaching the Siegfried Line.

The result was as follows:

- (1) Use of same rate per gun per day in computing quantities for each Army. Additional guns arriving during the period were considered.
- (2) Although a gun day rate was used in computing the quantities, the totals only were furnished to the Armies.



(3) Army commanders were instructed that they must create their own reserves and build up ammunition stocks for future operations from the allocations.

i. Because the expenditure during the first month of the operation had been less than anticipated, the gun day rates used in calculating the allocation for period 26 September to 15 October were the highest ever possible for the 105 mm How and 155 mm How. They were:

| <u>Type</u> | <u>Rds/g/day</u> |
|-------------|------------------|
| 105 mm How  | 64               |
| 155 mm How  | 43               |
| 155 mm Gun  | 23               |
| 8" How      | 11               |

j. When this allocation was published, the supply agencies stated that more ammunition had been allocated than was available. However, the supply agencies were unable to furnish any definite figures on available ammunition so the allocation stood.

3. Period 1 October 1944 to 11 November 1944.

a. Immediately after announcing the allocation for the period 26 September 1944 to 15 October 1944, the supply agencies were asked for more complete and detailed data on ammunition availability. About 10 October it became apparent that no data would be forthcoming in time to compute the allocation for the next period. The Artillery Section, G-3, undertook a hurried and feverish research of all available firing records, ASP reports and shiploading data and by 14 October had arrived at an approximation of the amount of ammunition still due 6th Army Group under the allocations made to Dragon Forces by MATOUSA. This information was used in making an allocation for the period 16 October to 31 October. In making this allocation the missions and difficulties of the two Armies were considered to be equal, therefore, equal gun day rates were used in computing the allocations for both Armies and for the First Airborne Task Force on the Franco-Italian border.

b. During early October studies of the artillery ammunition requirements for crossing the Rhine and breaching the Siegfried Line were completed. Information was furnished to SOS MATOUSA that it was anticipated, that, at some period during November 6th Army Group would expend thirty days of supply of ammunition, at the MTO day of supply (See MTO D of S Column 2 Table 4) during a period of ten days. This information was furnished in order to permit the supply agencies to take the necessary action to insure that the ammunition would be available, and that the expenditures during the ten day period would not create a critical ammunition shortage immediately thereafter.

c. During the latter part of the month Headquarters MTOUSA Advance finally provided data on the standing of the 6th Army Group with respect to ammunition allocated to Dragoon Forces by SOS, MATOUSA, also on the expected arrivals of ammunition from the U. S. These data made it possible to make adjustments during the allocation period 1 to 10 November. Again the missions and difficulties of the Armies were considered equal and equal gun day rates were used in computing the allocations. The gun day rates decreased because the expected ammunition arrivals for November were insufficient in some calibers, and also it was necessary to spread some of the quantities arriving in October over into November.

d. On the 28th October, a meeting was held by the Artillery Section, G-3, with representatives of the Army Artillery Officers and Ordnance officers and the Ammunition Officer MTOUSA Advance. At this meeting details were settled concerning the system for allocating and controlling the ammunition available to the 6th Army Group. The system in brief consisted of the following:

- (1) The supply agencies to furnish timely information to Headquarters 6th Army Group on the available ammunition, to include confirmed quantities of ammunition arriving during the month and estimated figures for ammunition arrivals during the succeeding two months.
- (2) The Army Group to establish its allocations as credits for the various Armies and forces with Headquarters MTOUSA Advance, COMAD, and DMLH. These credits to remain good, until drawn by the Army or force or cancelled by Headquarters 6th Army Group.
- (3) The Armies or forces to call forward their ammunition to the Army areas as required.
- (4) Headquarters 6th Army Group to establish any other restrictions, limitations or special provisions regarding the employment of ammunition by instruction to the Armies.

e. During October it became apparent that it would be necessary to allocate ammunition by type within the respective calibers in order to permit proper distribution of projectile types, propelling charges, fuses, etc. Haphazard shipments out of the ports had produced a serious maldistribution. Adjustments for over-shipment of particular types were made in the allocations for the period 1 to 10 November.

f. During October the transportation capacity increased and constant pressure was placed on ammunition movement in order to provide the required build-up of ammunition for the offensive to be launched in mid-November. The rate at which the necessary

ammunition could be accumulated in the forward areas determined the date when this major coordinated attack could be launched. Although constant pressure against the German Forces was being maintained, expenditures were held to the minimum during this period in order to expedite the ammunition build-up.

g. During this period Headquarters 6th Army Group held no true reserve of ammunition. Some small quantities of ammunition were not allocated, but these were regarded as hedges against inaccuracies in availability figures. The creation of an Army Group Reserve at this time was impracticable because:

(1) All available tonnage out of southern ports was allocated to the Armies to build up supplies for current and immediate future needs.

(2) Armies were being supplied out of the Southern Ports and no Communication Zone Section stocks had yet been built up in the forward areas. No tonnage could yet be spared for building such forward dumps.

(3) Any reserve held by the Army Group could only have been held in the Southern Ports and with a rail travel time of 7 - 10 days to the Armies it would have been unwieldy to segregate an Army Group Reserve.

(4) A backlog of unloaded ammunition ships at this time in effect provided a reserve.

#### 4. 12 November to 15 December 1944.

a. At the beginning of this period ammunition had been built up in forward areas permitting the launching of the coordinated offensive planned for mid-November. To start this battle ammunition as follows, per piece, was available to the Armies.

| <u>Type</u> | <u>Rounds Per Piece</u><br><u>Seventh Army</u> | <u>Rounds Per Piece</u><br><u>First French Army</u> |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 105mm How   | 1526                                           | 1178                                                |
| 155mm How   | 535                                            | 348                                                 |
| 155mm Gun   | 320                                            | 510                                                 |
| 8" How      | 428                                            | 715                                                 |

All of this ammunition had not yet reached the forward area but it was now possible to move the balance forward by the time it would be required.

b. It is well to note at this point that up until the receipt of the paraphrase of ACHLR Message WX 58633, all ammunition expenditure planning had been on the assumption that the War

Department was capable of supporting the operation with a War Department approved MTO day of Supply per weapon. See Column (2) in Table 4. The authorized level of ammunition for MTO was 75 days of supply. Supply agencies requisitioned on this basis although generally the stockage actually on the ground in the theater did not reach this amount. This was due to delays caused by the method of submitting and editing requisitions. The result was, that part of the 75 days of supply was generally afloated. About this time this situation was relieved somewhat by permitting the supply services to requisition on anticipated consumption, and thus fill the water part of the pipe line.

c. On 11 November a paraphrase of AGMAR Message MX 53633 was received. This message indicated that beginning in January the ammunition support available from the War Department would be considerably less than the ETO or the MTO day of supply, particularly in the 105mm How and the 155mm How, which constitute the bulk of the artillery support. This message was received first with incredulity and then with amazement. The Armies of 6th Army Group had just been reinforced and were now fully deployed prepared to strike powerful blows at the enemy. The available resupply predicted for the first four months of 1945 as compared to the ETO and MTO days of supply is tabulated as follows:

| Type      | ETO Day<br>of Supply | MTO Day<br>of Supply | Resupply potential<br>average 1 Jan to<br>30 April. |
|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 105mm How | 40                   | 50                   | 18                                                  |
| 155mm How | 25                   | 35                   | 15                                                  |
| 155mm Gun | 25                   | 30                   | 15                                                  |
| 8" How    | 20                   | 25                   | 13                                                  |
| 240mm How | 7                    | 15                   | 5.5                                                 |
|           |                      |                      | 11.0*                                               |
| 8" Gun    | 15                   | 15                   | 14                                                  |

\*5.5 for January, February, 11.0 March, April.

It can be seen from the above that the possible artillery support would be greatly reduced under these resupply rates. Reductions amounted to 64% for the 105mm How, 57% for the 155mm How and 50% for the 155mm Gun. The effect of these drastic reductions in expected ammunition supply had a tremendous effect on the planning of operations.

d. On 23 November Major General Bull, G-3 SHAEF and Major General Clay, visited Headquarters 6th Army Group to confer on the implications of the drastically reduced ammunition resupply. Generals Bull and Clay were furnished with a study, Headquarters

6th Army Group, "Ammunition Consumption and Requirements Analysis", dated 23 November 1944. This study is filed in the document files. The conference held with Generals Bull and Clay was attended by the Army Group Commander, Chief of Staff and the Assistant Chiefs of Staff G-3 and G-4, as well as interested special staff representatives. The following is quoted from paragraph 2 of the "Ammunition Consumption and Requirements Analysis":

"2. Discussion. Artillery ammunition, like other combat resources, directly affects the magnitude, scope and timing of operations that can be conducted. When ammunition supplies are short it has the effect of making it not possible to employ all the troops simultaneously in an offensive role. It restricts the timing of operations because ammunition must be accumulated to launch a major action. It reduces the possibility of taking advantage of weaknesses in the enemy's dispositions. It has an undesirable psychological effect on troops and commanders".

e. It now appeared that the ammunition supply for the next six months consisted of the quantities which had already been committed to shipment to the southern ports in November and December, and thereafter the extremely meager resupply as predicted by the War Department for the first four months of 1945. In this connection reference is made to the line plotted at the appropriate level on the attached expenditure charts showing the comparison of the resupply rates predicted by the War Department with actual expenditures. This line is marked on the chart by (1), (2) and (3). The ammunition had been requisitioned in anticipation of the Rhine crossing and because the increased weapons list of 6th Army Group was scheduled to arrive in late November and December. This amounted to considerable quantities of ammunition. It was now plain that this ammunition constituted the only offensive ammunition resources that would be available to 6th Army Group for many months to come. Information on the reduced future rates of supply was furnished to the Artillery Officer, Seventh Army, on or about 12 November. This information was furnished only in general terms to the First French Army at this time.

f. 6th Army Group launched its major offensive on 13 November 1944 when Seventh Army began the attack. Expenditures reached a high level throughout Seventh Army for three to five days. After the line was broken and the exploitation initiated, expenditures dropped considerably. The Artillery Officer of Seventh Army exercised rigid control over artillery ammunition within the Army because it was anticipated that the fight and pursuit would continue, and, that, upon reaching the Siegfried Line and the Rhine, artillery ammunition in large quantities would be required to permit immediate attack to overcome these obstacles.

g. In the First French Army, which started its attack on 14 November 1944, expenditures immediately reached a high scale and continued at a very high rate long after the progress of the troops had stopped. Lavish expenditure on the part of First French Army continued unabated until 21 November 1944 and then it slackened only slightly. At this point it became necessary to inform the First French Army that all available ammunition that could be supplied to it for current operations had been made available, and that it was not possible to support continuously such expenditures. By 28 November 1944, it became necessary to furnish some additional ammunition to the First French Army from the major reserves held by Headquarters 6th Army Group. It also was necessary to make considerable quantities of ammunition available to First French Army that constituted part of the December supply. Henceforth until 31 December 1944, ammunition was allocated to the First French Army for specific operations only in order to prevent excessive consumption from destroying the offensive power of 6th Army Group as a whole.

h. During early December the progress of Seventh Army toward the north was highly satisfactory and it was planned to force the Siegfried Line and then cross the Rhine. Although Seventh Army still had considerable quantities of ammunition available to it, it was allocated a major share of the ammunition. However, these large quantities were held under control of Headquarters 6th Army Group until released for specific operations. This was done to insure that Seventh Army had credited to it all the ammunition that it could possibly move into the forward areas. The Communications Zone had not yet established any ammunition stockages in the forward areas; therefore, it was incumbent that the Armies have ample credits in order to insure timely movement of the ammunition forward. Analysis of the ammunition position of 6th Army Group as of 10 December revealed that, provided First French Army was placed in a defensive role along the Rhine, sufficient light and medium artillery ammunition would be available to support a continuance of the Seventh Army's penetration of the Siegfried Line and the crossing of the Rhine and a move toward Kassel. For the heavy artillery, the desired quantities of ammunition would not be available and under the predicted resupply rates would never be available. Consequently any operations undertaken must accept the handicap of restricted heavy artillery support. During the whole period the actual expenditures were greater than during the previous two periods because of the offensive launched in mid-November and because of high expenditures by the First French Army.

## 5. 16 December 1944 to 16 January 1945.

a. Seventh Army had reached and penetrated the Franco-German border by 16 December 1944 and was making excellent progress through the Siegfried Line. The artillery ammunition available to

Seventh Army was sufficient to continue the penetration, close to the Rhine, cross and defend a bridgehead. The German Ardennes counteroffensive upset operations. Seventh Army sideslipped to the left, taking over two corps sectors from Third Army, thereby weakening its front and shelving temporarily its offensive. The First French Army had reached the Rhine, except for the Colmar Pocket.

b. Representatives of Headquarters 6th Army Group were called to SHAEF for a meeting on 20 December 1944, at which time it was announced that SHAEF was assuming control of all ammunition resources in France as of 1 December 1944. Note that this was retroactive. Until the warning in early December and the final action taken by SHAEF, Headquarters 6th Army Group could consider that all artillery ammunition coming into southern ports was available to 6th Army Group. SHAEF in assuming control proposed to exercise this control by establishing a maintenance day of supply for each weapon and certain reserves per weapon. This maintenance day of supply was in reality the available day of supply for each weapon. This maintenance day of supply was calculated by considering as available all stocks then in COMZONE and SOLOC and the expected future supplies from the United States to 1 May 1945. After determining the deployment weapons list, the available ammunition was prorated for the period 1 December 1944 to 1 May 1945 into two categories:

- (1) A ten day reserve for each weapon to be controlled by SHAEF.
- (2) A daily supply for each weapon.

These rates were somewhat better than the resupply predictions shown in the AGWAR cable WX 58633 discussed in para 4 c above. This was due to spreading out of the existing stocks in the theater particularly the stocks in SOLOC which had belonged to 6th Army Group, and some additional quantities made available by the War Department as a result of General Bull's visit, on the subject, to Washington in late November 1944. Representatives of Headquarters 6th Army Group received this information on 20 December in Paris and were told that the information was preliminary, and that no written confirmation would be made for the time being. The recommendations of the Army Groups were desired as to:

- (1) Is the Theater reserve too large or too small?
- (2) Has the Theater reserve been built up too fast?
- (3) Such other recommendations as the Army Groups desire to make.

Making the assumption of control retroactive to 1 December 1944 placed the 6th Army Group in the position of already having overdrawn its share of ammunition for December. Headquarters 6th Army Group had allocated ammunition to the Armies for December and this ammunition had been largely consumed. The unexpended balances were required to execute the assigned missions. In response to the informal request for recommendations Headquarters 6th Army Group concurred in the general scheme with exceptions in substance as follows:

- (1) The bulk of Theater reserve should be held at Army Group level.
- (2) Creation of Theater reserve was too abrupt, causing unnecessary dislocation in tactical and ammunition plans.
- (3) Keeping computation of rates in whole numbers of rounds resulted in the reserves being considerably in excess of ten days.
- (4) Headquarters 6th Army Group had allocated and largely expended December ammunition. It would be placed in the position of being overdrawn on its share initially. The difference was requested from the proposed SHAEF reserve as an immediate allocation to prevent 6th Army Group from being overdrawn on 1 January 1945.

c. The request for a special allocation from the proposed SHAEF Ammunition Reserve was not granted. SHAEF selected another solution. The calculations were revised and the system put into effect as of 1 January 1945 rather than as of 1 December 1944. The revised rates were announced in SHAEF Message S-73227, 31 December 1944 which placed the system in effect. The plan was in substance as follows:

- (1) A maintenance day of supply for each weapon in the Theater. This maintenance day of supply is generally referred to as the SHAEF maintenance rate. This rate is plotted on the expenditure charts at the end of this chapter and marked SHAEF rate. (See Table 1).
- (2) A SHAEF ammunition reserve of seven days of maintenance supply for each weapon in the Theater was established.
- (3) A reserve of 27 maintenance days of supply for each weapon in the Army Groups. This 27 days of supply was to be controlled by the Army Groups and to provide the necessary Army reserves.

The maintenance day of supply had been computed by taking into account all the ammunition in Army ASP's as of 31 December,



all ammunition in Communication Zone and SOLOC installations, and the expected resupply from the War Department. The SHAEF maintenance day of supply, for the most critically short types, as announced 1 January 1945 was as follows:

Res/Apn

|                         |      |
|-------------------------|------|
| 57mm Gun, HE            | 0.7  |
| 81mm Mortar Lt. HE      | 6.0  |
| 105mm How M2 and M7, HE | 26.0 |
| 105mm How (Tank), HE    | 3.6  |
| 155mm How HE            | 19.5 |
| 155mm Gun HE            | 13.0 |
| 8" How HE               | 5.5  |
| 3" Gun HE               | 11.9 |
| 240mm How HE            | 4.5  |

d. The establishment of this system in effect recaptured all ammunition in Army ASP's and made an equal redistribution on a weapon basis. The establishment of the SHAEF maintenance day of supply had the effect of providing a guaranteed rate of ammunition resupply to the Army Groups. While the rates were not as high as were desired, they were better than the resupply rates predicted by the War Department in November. This system provided a definite assurance of what the ammunition supply would be from 1 January to 1 May, and provided a sound basis for ammunition expenditure planning.

e. Prior to the receipt of the message establishing the SHAEF rate it had been necessary during the last few days of December to make the ammunition allocation for the period of 1 to 10 January. This had been done based on the maintenance day of supply furnished to Headquarters 6th Army Group at the conference on 20 December in Paris. Equal gun day rates were used in making the allocation to both Armies. Adjustments were made for the small differences in rates in the allocations for period 21 - 31 January 1945.

f. In order to make an adjustment in the credits which had been established with SOLOC it was necessary to determine the amount of ammunition in the Army ASP's and in transit to the Army ASP's as of the close of business 31 December. These data were eventually collected and agreed to by the representatives of the Armies and SOLOC and adjustments were made in the ammunition credit standing of the Armies effective as of the close of business at SOLOC's dumps 31 December. While this was largely a paper transaction, it was necessary in order to establish definitely and beyond argument the ammunition standing of the Armies and of 6th Army Group.

g. With respect to the distribution of the 27 days of maintenance supply constituting the Army Group Reserve the following was decided. Twelve maintenance days of supply for the weapon of each Army or Force were stocked in the Army ASPs. In the case of Seventh Army and the 44th Brigade (Franco-Italian Border), this ammunition was released to the commanders as their contingency reserve. In the case of First French Army, the 12 maintenance days were stocked in First French Army ASPs but control of the ammunition remained with Commanding General, 6th Army Group.

h. On 20 December, 6th Army Group was definitely placed on the defensive and troop distributions were adjusted in depth accordingly. This called for reductions in the stocks of ammunition in the forward areas. The relocation of ammunition stocks was carried out by the Armies under instructions issued by Headquarters 6th Army Group.

i. On 1 January the Germans launched a counteroffensive in the vicinity of the Hardt Mountains. Expenditures by Seventh Army immediately reached high levels and during the first 15 days of January, Seventh Army expended ammunition in excess of the daily maintenance rate for its weapons and was forced to dip heavily into the reserves. In connection with the counteroffensive by the Germans in the vicinity of the Hardt Mountains, it is well to note that ammunition expenditure can be controlled when we are on the offensive or when on the defensive if the enemy does not attack, but when the enemy attacks, artillery fire is necessary and must be delivered. The enemy forces the firing and expenditures cannot be restricted.

j. During late December and early January plans were made for the reduction of the Colmar Pocket. Additional amounts of ammunition had to be made available from 6th Army Group reserve to the First French Army in order to mount the Colmar Pocket reduction. A number of Seventh Army troops participated in this operation under operational control of the First French Army. The weapons of these troops were supplied from the resources of Seventh Army. Ammunition was made available to the First French Army and to Seventh Army for the reduction of the Colmar Pocket as follows:

|               |                       |
|---------------|-----------------------|
| 105mm How M-2 | 700 rounds per weapon |
| 155mm How     | 400 rounds " "        |
| 155mm Gun     | 250 rounds " "        |
| 8" Gun        | 100 rounds " "        |

k. Ammunition expenditures during this period were less than during the previous period. See attached Table 1, expenditure chart. It must be noted that offensive action stopped shortly

after 16 December 1944. Expenditures were held down until the German attack of 1 January 1945 and the expenditures of the period were largely accounted for by firing to stop this counteroffensive. Seventh Army expended approximately 50% of its share of the 27 days reserve in addition to the maintenance rate.

6. 17 January 1945 to 14 March 1945.

a. As this period began preparations were underway to reduce the Colmar Pocket. Additional troops and artillery were attached to 6th Army Group bringing much needed ammunition. Ammunition had been set up for the Allies to reduce the Colmar Pocket as stated in Para 5 j above. Seventh Army was now being attacked only in restricted areas and could begin to save and reconstitute its reserve.

b. The offensive against the Colmar Pocket began on 20 January. Some initial advances were made but the attack quickly bogged down on the south. The ammunition set up for the French was quickly expended and on the 23rd, First French Army requested additional ammunition for the I French Corps on the southern side of the Pocket. Some additional 105mm How and 155mm How ammunition was made available on 25 January 1945, for movement from the ASP's to the gun positions from the 6th Army Group Reserve stocked in the First French Army ASP's. This was done to insure availability of ammunition near the guns in case of German counterattacks. Authority to expend was held by CG, 6th Army Group.

c. The attack on the north flank of the Pocket was reinforced by 28 January by the U. S. XXI Corps and more U. S. artillery in order to push the attack to a conclusion. In preparing for this, it was necessary to set up additional ammunition for the additional U. S. and French troops operating under XXI Corps. This required further commitment of the Army Group Reserve. For this second attack on the pocket it was not possible to set up ammunition for the First French Army on the same scale as initially and they were given  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the ammunition released for movement on 25 January (see subparagraph b above) plus the regular allocation at the SHAEF maintenance rate for the period 1 - 10 February.

d. The XXI Corps skillfully accomplished its mission with the ammunition resources set up for the job and the Pocket was eliminated by 2 February.

e. Due to the heavy drain on stocks of ammunition in Seventh Army ASP's by the Colmar Pocket operation and by previous heavy expenditures Seventh Army became concerned about the quick

physical availability of ammunition. To relieve this condition, six additional days of supply, at SHAEF rate for Seventh Army gun list, from the Army Group Reserve were stocked in Seventh Army ASP's. Expenditure was prohibited except on authority of Headquarters 6th Army Group. Some of this ammunition was hauled by truck by Seventh Army from Langre to Army ASP's at Bayane.

f. By early January only very small ammunition depots had been built up in COMAD. In order to locate ammunition properly for the defensive deployment and in such a way that it could be moved forward upon taking the offensive, Headquarters 6th Army Group requested that COMAD stock 30 SHAEF days of supply at Langre or other forward locations. This request was not met and in fact the stockage at Langre decreased.

g. The following conclusion is quoted from a future ammunition supply study furnished Headquarters 6th Army Group Joint Planning Staff by the G-3 Artillery Officer on 1 February:

"Conclusion. There will be insufficient ammunition available to properly support a major offensive by Seventh Army until at least 30 days after the elimination of the Colmar Pocket. The ammunition available in the heavy calibers will be insufficient unless augmented from outside 6th Army Group. Operations during the saving period must not require ammunition in excess of 1/2 SHAEF's rate".

Accordingly ammunition was allocated on the following basis for the period 1 February to 10 March:

1/2 SHAEF Rate to First French Army

1/2 SHAEF Rate to 44th AAA Brigade (Alps Front)

SHAEF Rate to Seventh Army

Unallocated ammunition was held under Headquarters 6th Army Group control to rebuild the Army Group Reserve and create stocks for future offensive action.

h. After the conclusion of the Colmar Pocket Operation, 8 February 1945, the expenditures of First French Army along the Rhine dropped to very low levels. The First French Army was able to save and build up a considerable stock of ammunition from its reduced allocations during the period 11 February to 30 March. However, it was necessary to forbid general artillery duelling across the Rhine and the small expenditures were limited to harassing fire and in support of patrol actions.

RESTRICTED

i. The ammunition available to Seventh Army for its attack on 15 March was as follows:

| <u>Type</u>  | <u>Number of Weapons</u> | <u>Rounds Per Gun</u> |                  |
|--------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
|              |                          | <u>Min. Desired</u>   | <u>Available</u> |
| 105mm How    | 817                      | 1200                  | 1133             |
| 155mm How    | 336                      | 800                   | 892              |
| 4.5 inch Gun | 36                       | 800                   | 500              |
| 155mm Gun    | 126                      | 660                   | 578              |
| 240mm How    | 18                       | 500                   | 255              |
| 8" How       | 72                       | 500                   | 346              |
| 8" Gun       | 4                        | 500                   | 664              |

In order to make this much ammunition available all of the Army Group's savings and all unallocated amounts due the Army Group to include 31 March were allocated to Seventh Army. It was estimated that a 20-day battle would have to be fought. It was considered that the above amounts of ammunition would be sufficient for this battle, and would provide sufficient ammunition for an immediate crossing of the Rhine as soon as it was reached and for defense of a bridgehead. In the event that the German resistance crumbled west of the Rhine and the advance became rapid after passing the Siegfried Line the ammunition would be sufficient to provide for considerable fighting beyond the Rhine. The amounts of light and medium artillery ammunition were sufficient. The amounts of heavy artillery ammunition were not as great as was desired but they accumulated so slowly that it was unprofitable to delay the operation longer in order to accumulate the heavy artillery ammunition.

j. The First French Army had saved enough ammunition from its meager allocations to support the Task Force de Monsabert that was assisting the Seventh Army in the northward push next to the Rhine, and still have a favorable reserve.

k. In January when the SHAEF rate was put into effect the Artillery Section G-3, Headquarters 6th Army Group, established a master gun list of the Army Group. Changes and dates were posted to this list and from it the number of SHAEF maintenance days of supply due 6th Army Group for any given period could be determined. Changes in the gun list with dates were furnished to ETOUSA and COMAD. At the end of each month a recapitulation, showing total gun days, allocations made during the month and amounts of ammunition due 6th Army Group that had not been allocated by it to its subordinate commands, was furnished to COMAD. In March, SHAEF, at the instigation of COMZONE, changed the system effective 20 March. The changes were:

(1) SHAEF rate was to be still determined but was to be regarded by COMZONE as a prediction of available supply and as a target for availability in the forward areas.

(2) COMZONE was to furnish the Army Groups by 7th, 17th and 27th of each month actual lump sum quantities of Class V items available to them in forward depots for the periods 1 to 10, 11 to 20, and 21 to last day of month. In addition COMZONE was to furnish predictions of forward area availability for three succeeding 10 days period and two more months.

(3) The Army Groups were then to compute their all citations and notify COMZONE of the all citations to their various Armies. COMZONE was then to establish credits at its various forward area depots for the Armies and forces of the Army Groups and advise the Armies of their location. Armies could then request shipment. At the insistence of Headquarters 6th Army Group, COMZONE agreed that all credits for 6th Army Group Armies would be established with CONAD, and that CONAD would arrange direct shipments to the Armies from depots in other advance sections. Thus 6th Army Group's Armies had only one COMZONE agency to deal with on ammunition.

This system was not satisfactory for the conditions of 6th Army Group for the following reasons:

(1) COMZONE had no forward depots in the areas in rear of 6th Army Group and ammunition stocks that were within 36 hours rail time of the Armies were very small.

(2) Experience had shown that under existing conditions and organization the only way to insure forward movement of ammunition was to allocate it to the Armies so that they would call it forward in their tonnage.

1. In determining forward availability to make the allocation for the period 21-31 March COMZONE disregarded the credit system in force in 6th Army Group and regarded ammunition as obligated only if covered by an Army transportation request. When the data on the allocation to 6th Army Group for the period 21-31 March was received it was not clear whether the quantities included 6th Army Group's reserve and other unallocated amounts accrued under the SHAEF Rate or not. If the quantities given did include 6th Army Group Reserve (which had now been completely reconstituted) then the allocation was short of the SHAEF Rate for March. Conflicting interpretations were received by telephone and it became necessary for two officers from the Artillery Section, G-3, and an Ordnance Officer to go to COMZONE where they spent several days recomputing for the benefit of

COMZONE the quantities of ammunition due 6th Army Group under the SHAEF Rate from 1 January 1945 to 31 March 1945. As a result COMZONE agreed to modify its allocation to 6th Army Group and provide it with the ammunition due under the SHAEF Rate. Having obtained a correction from COMZONE, and then having determined what ammunition credited to our Armies had not been covered by transportation requests, it was possible to readjust again the credits of the Armies to give them their proper standing.

This revised system did not function well due to the fact that all cations from COMZONE were habitually late in arriving and the channels for getting the credits established and the ammunition moved were cievous. In order to insure the movement of ammunition under existing conditions Headquarters 6th Army Group found it necessary to prepare and announce its allocations from 5 to 10 days in advance using its unallocated reserve to cover the credits established.

7. 15 March 1945 to 7 May 1945.

a. In early March 1945, SHAEF directed the execution, about 15 April, of Operation "Independence" to open the southwestern part of Bordeaux. The ammunition requirements for this operation had been previously studied. A conference was held with representatives of Western French Forces at Phalzburg on 24 March. At this meeting the quantities of artillery ammunition to be furnished were settled. The Artillery Officer and the Chief of Staff of the Western French Forces requested large quantities of 155mm Gun ammunition. To provide the agreed amount it was necessary to commit a portion of the 6th Army Group Reserve in this caliber and some other calibers to mount this operation.

b. During March some additional quantities, over 1/2 SHAEF Rate, of artillery and mortar ammunition were furnished to Army Detachment of the Alps (French Forces on France-Italian Frontier) to conduct some minor offensive operations. These were in support of cover plans designed to assist 15th Army Group's offensive by retaining German divisions in western Italy during the period 10-20 April.

c. By 27 March the Seventh Army had crossed the Rhine and was making excellent progress on the east bank. Due to the collapse of German resistance west of the Rhine, the expenditure of the large quantities of ammunition that had been expected west of the Rhine and in crossing the Rhine had not occurred, therefore, the ammunition position of Seventh Army was excellent at the end of March. In the ammunition allocations from the period 1-10 April very little ammunition was allocated to Seventh

Army and the First French Army was given the full SHAEF rate for its gun list as it was scheduled to cross the Rhine and advance to the south and east from Speyer-Germersheim Area. The unallocated ammunition was held under Army Group control inasmuch as it was not certain whether these resources would have to be thrown behind Seventh Army or First French Army. The immediate needs were amply taken care of by the amounts on hand and the allocations for 1-10 April.

d. During April the advance of both Armies was rapid and the requirements for available ammunition could easily be met. The principal ammunition problem was one of truck transportation to move the requirements forward from railroads. The disintegration of the German Army reduced the requirements for artillery ammunition and this condition continued until the cessation of hostilities. The expenditures for the period 1 April to 7 May decreased (see Table 1).

## 8. Statistics.

### a. Ammunition Expenditures

(1) The average daily expenditures of 105mm How M-2, 4.5 inch gun, 155mm How, 155mm Gun, 3" How, 6" Gun and 240mm How ammunition for all weapons in 6th Army Group from 15 August 1944 to 7 May 1945 are shown by the allocation period on the charts attached as Table #1. The expenditures are highlighted with notes to show the relation to actual operations. Also shown are the average weapons per period in the Army Group. Each chart contains a summary giving the following expressed in rounds per weapon per day averaged for the entire campaign:

(a) Expended (total expenditure prorated on gun per day basis).

(b) 6th Army Group Reserve (average part of each available gun day of supply required to build up the Army Group Reserve).

(c) ASP (Average part of each available gun day of supply required to build up ASP stockage and provide distribution).

(d) In transit (Average part of each available gun day of supply required to fill the pipeline to the Armies from Southern French ports).

(e) Available (Total ammunition available to 6th Army Group during the campaign, 15 August 1944 to 7 May 1945).



From this quantity, ammunition was allocated to the Armies, 6th Army Group Reserve was maintained, ASP's filled and pipeline from COMZONE Dumps and Southern Ports to ASP's filled).

(2) The average daily expenditures plotted on the charts are listed on the Tabulation of Expenditures attached hereto as Table #2. The figures shown in the summary on each chart are listed in the tabulation attached hereto as Table #3.

b. Day of Supply.

A comparison of the various days of supply that 6th Army Group encountered with the actual quantities supplied are shown in a Table #4. Table #5, is a tabulation of the SHAEF maintenance rates. It will be noted that none of the days of supply were actually met.

9. Comments.

a. Effect of Ammunition Shortage.

Artillery ammunition like other combat resources directly affect the magnitude, scope, and timing of operations that can be conducted. When ammunition supplies are short it has the effect of making it not possible to employ all the troops simultaneously in an offensive role; it restricts the timing of operations because ammunition must be accumulated to launch a major action; it reduces the possibility of taking immediate advantage of weaknesses in the enemy's dispositions; it has an undesirable psychological effect on troops and commanders; and it precludes the use of artillery in deceptive maneuvers and restricts its use to support of the actual attack only. The most critical factor in regard to expenditures is future supply. If the resupply rate is low then operations must be spaced far apart whereby the enemy gains time to dig in. A large amount of ammunition is always required to make a breakthrough. 6th Army Group experienced all these effects during the period of the operations. A precise quantitative evaluation of the effect of the inadequate ammunition supply cannot be made but it is the opinion of this headquarters that a supply in general approximately 1/3 greater than that furnished would have saved many lives and shortened the war.

b. Day of Supply.

It will be noted that the ammunition available to 6th Army Group for the period of the operation, 265 days, did not equal any of the days of supply that were either approved or recommended

by either ETO, MTO, or the War Department. The fact that the campaign was successful must not be taken as proof that the supply of artillery ammunition was enough. There may be possibility for discussion as to what a proper day of supply should be but the history of the campaign is incontrovertible proof that the amount furnished was not enough. A larger artillery ammunition supply in the hands of our skilled Field Artillery would have reduced our casualty list, killed more Germans, and brought the fighting to a quicker end. To take the view that the supply furnished was enough is to place a price in dollars and sweat on men's lives.

10. List of Charts, Tabulations and other Data attached herewith:

- a. Expenditure Charts 1 for each of the seven calibers.
- b. Table 2, Ammunition Expenditures.
- c. Table 3, Ammunition Summary.
- d. Table 4, Comparison of Days of Supply.
- e. Table 5, SIMEF Maintenance Rates.

11. Following Ammunition Studies are filed in the Document File:

- a. Ammunition Consumption and Requirements Analysis, Headquarters 6th Army Group, 23 November 1944.
- b. Memorandum to C/S, Subject "Ammunition Supply", dated 24 December 1944, from G-3.
- c. Memorandum to Joint Planning Staff, Subject "Possibility of Ammunition Supply". From G-3 Artillery Officer.
- d. Explanation of Headquarters 6th Army Group Artillery Ammunition Records.

EXPENDITURE CHARTS

105mm Howitzer M2 & M7

4.5 inch Gun

155mm Howitzer

155mm Gun

8 inch Howitzer

8 inch Gun

240mm Howitzer

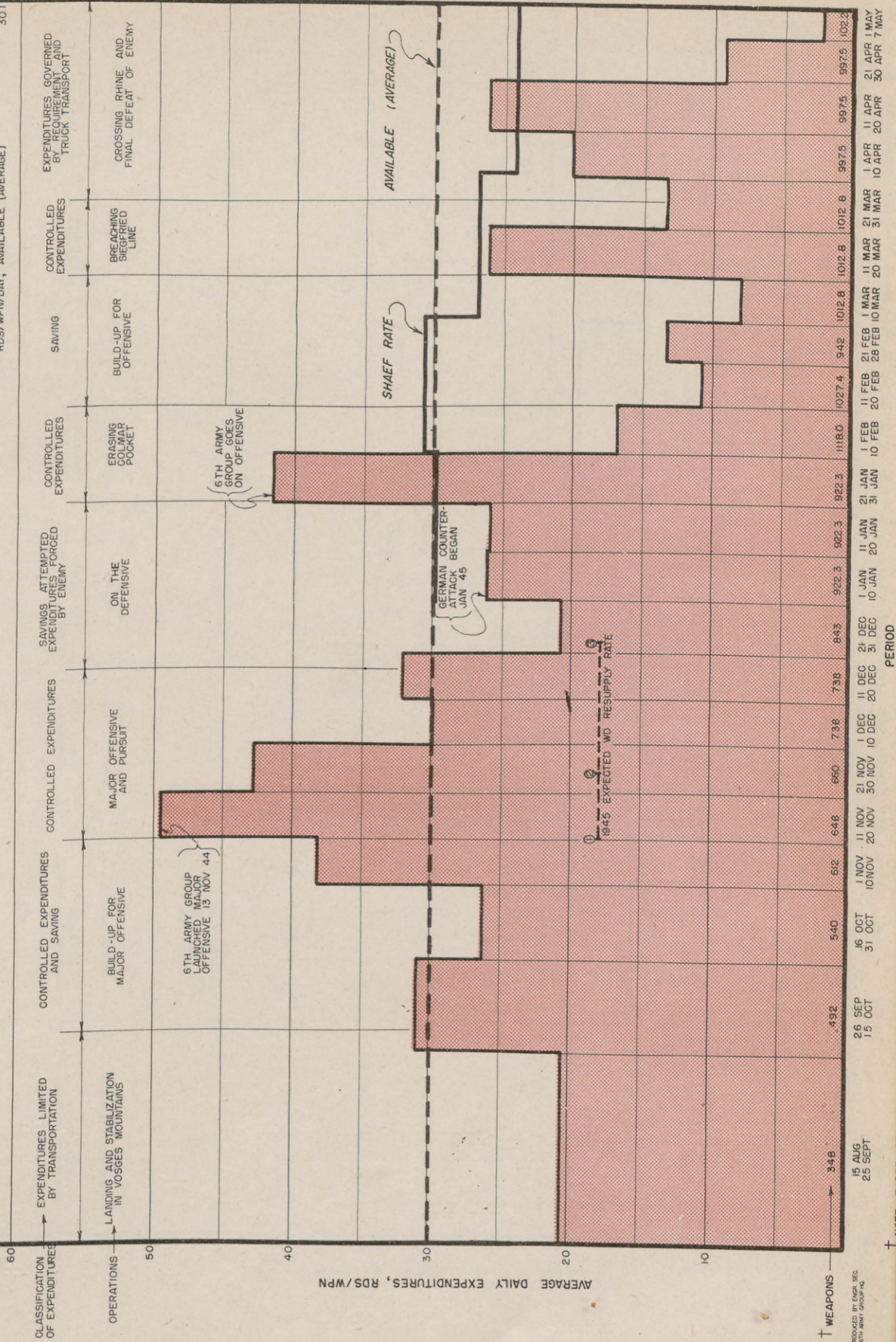
TABLE 1



# 105 MM HOW M2 AMMUNITION 6TH ARMY GROUP EXPENDITURES

SUMMARY 15 AUG '44 TO 7 MAY '45

RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED . . . . . 23.2  
RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP  
6TH ARMY GROUP RESERVE . . . . . 2.1  
RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP  
STOCKAGE IN ASPS . . . . . 2.0  
RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO FILL IN-  
TRANSIT PIPELINE . . . . . 2.8  
RDS/WPN/DAY, AVAILABLE (AVERAGE) . . . . . 30.1

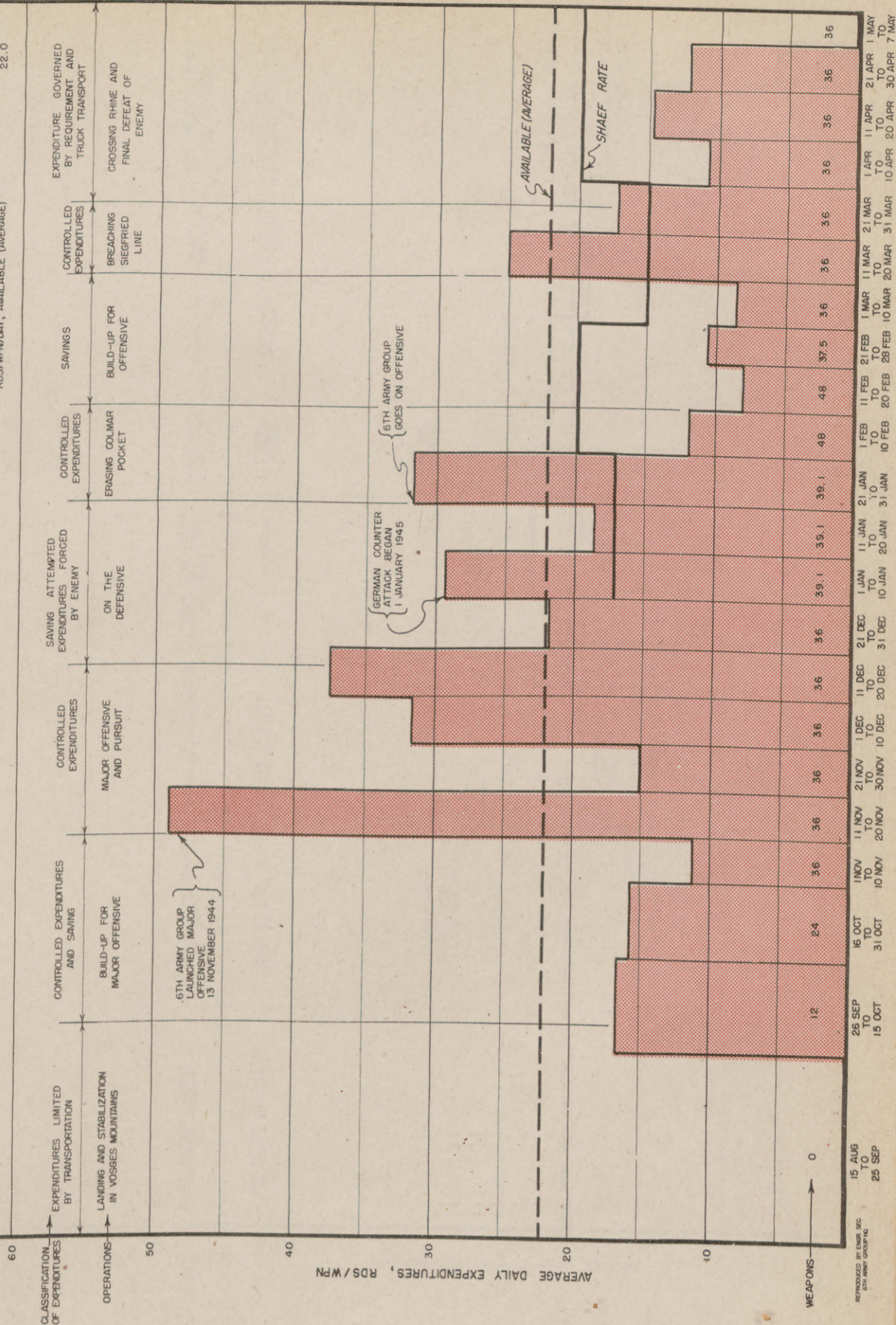




# 4.5" GUN AMMUNITION 6TH ARMY GROUP EXPENDITURES

SUMMARY 15 AUG '44 TO 7 MAY '45

|                                                                                     |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP 6TH ARMY GROUP RESERVE | 19.2 |
| RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP STOCKAGE IN ASPS       | 0.3  |
| RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO FILL IN-TRANSIT PIPELINE        | 2.4  |
| RDS/WPN/DAY, AVAILABLE (AVERAGE)                                                    | 0.1  |
|                                                                                     | 22.0 |

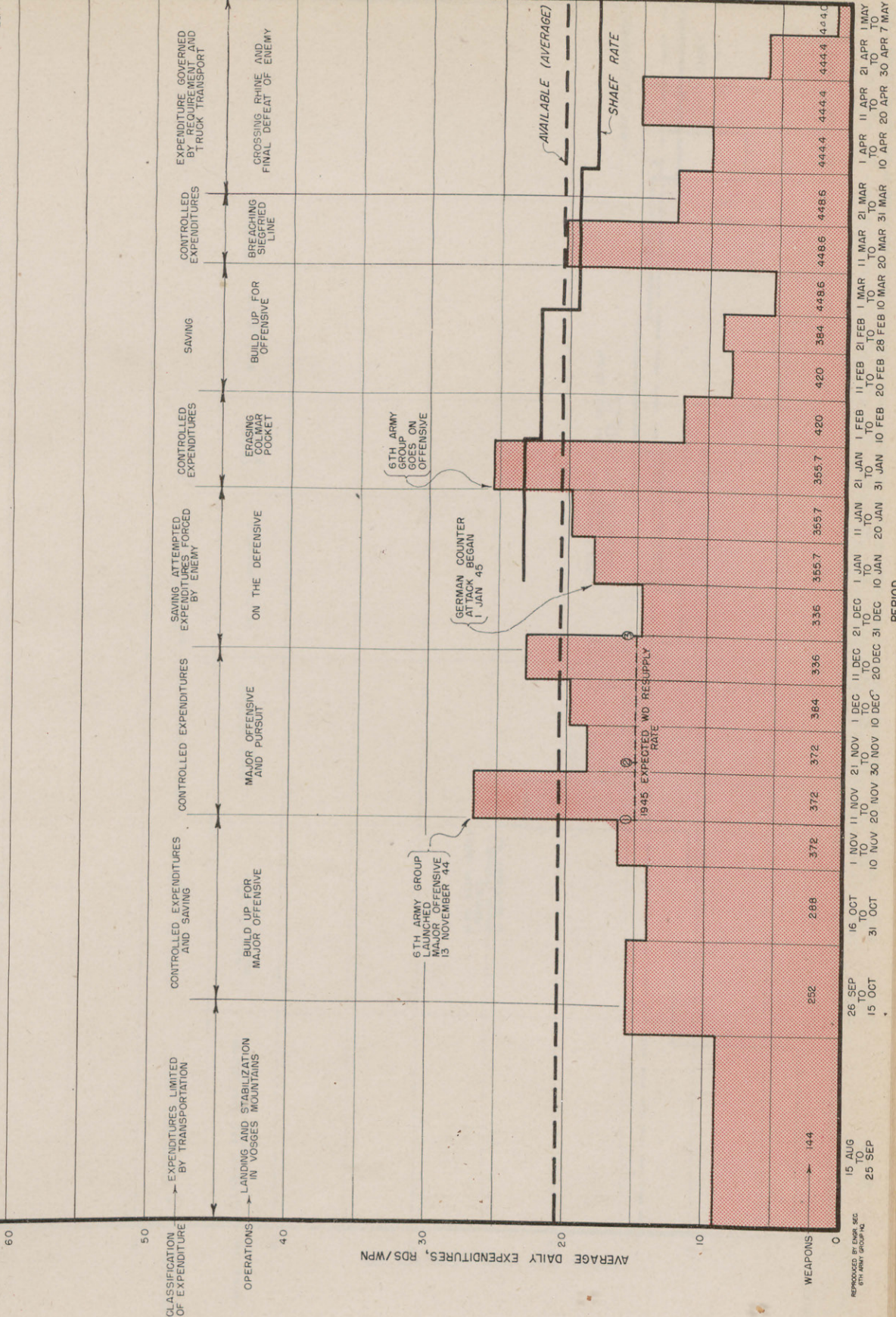




# 155 MM HOW AMMUNITION 6TH ARMY GROUP EXPENDITURES

SUMMARY 15 AUG '44 TO 7 MAY '45

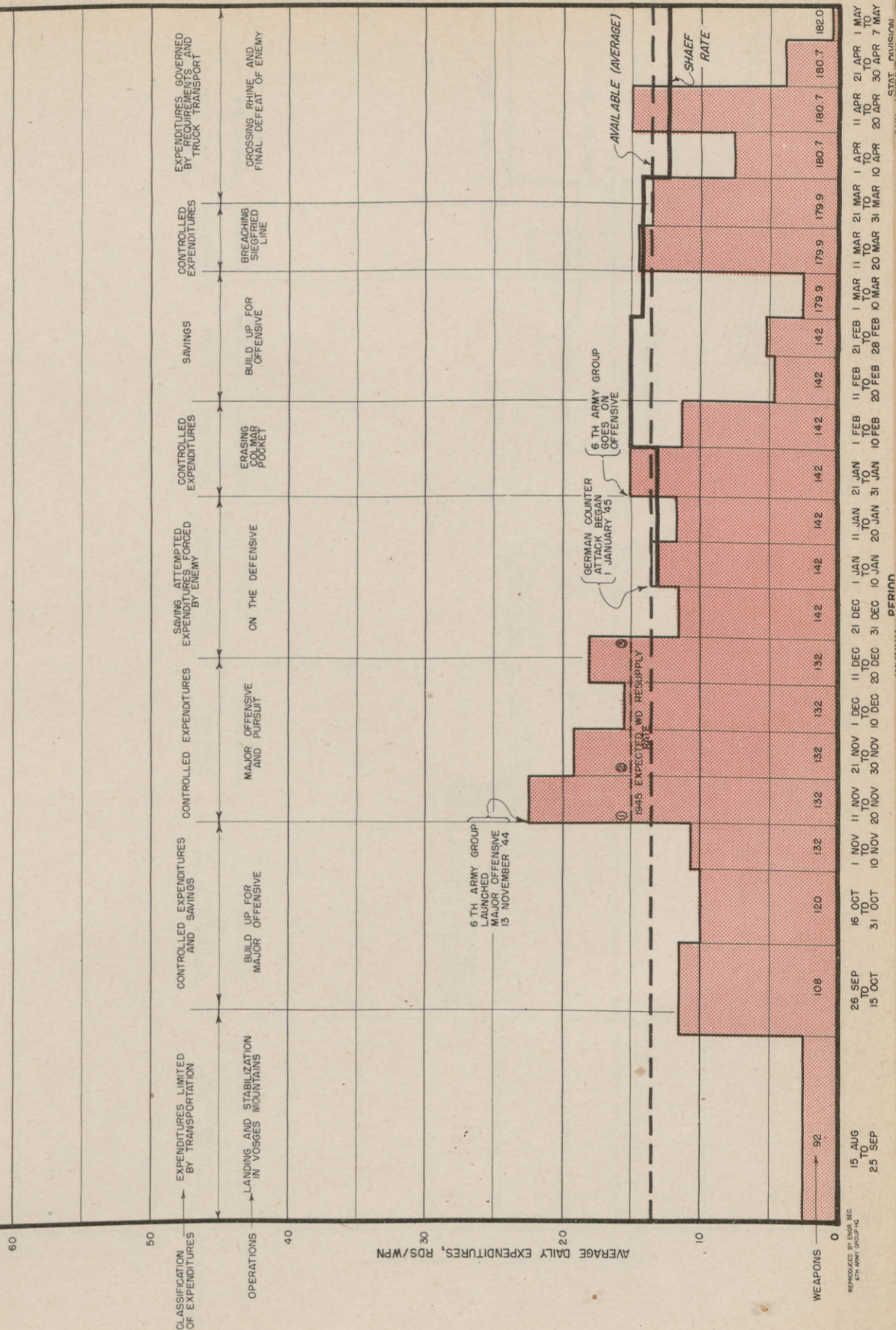
RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED 14.4  
RDS/WPN/DAY, FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP 1.6  
6TH ARMY GROUP  
RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP 2.3  
STOCKAGE IN ASPS  
RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO FILL IN -  
TRANSIT PIPELINE  
RDS/WPN/DAY, AVAILABLE (AVERAGE) 21  
204





SUMMARY 15 AUG '44 TO 7 MAY '45

|      | RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED | RDS FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP STOCK-IN AG GROUP | RDS/WPN/DAY, AVAILABLE (AVERAGE) |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 10.9 |                       |                                                              |                                  |
| 1.3  |                       |                                                              |                                  |
| 1.0  |                       |                                                              |                                  |
| 1.0  |                       |                                                              |                                  |
| 13.7 |                       |                                                              |                                  |

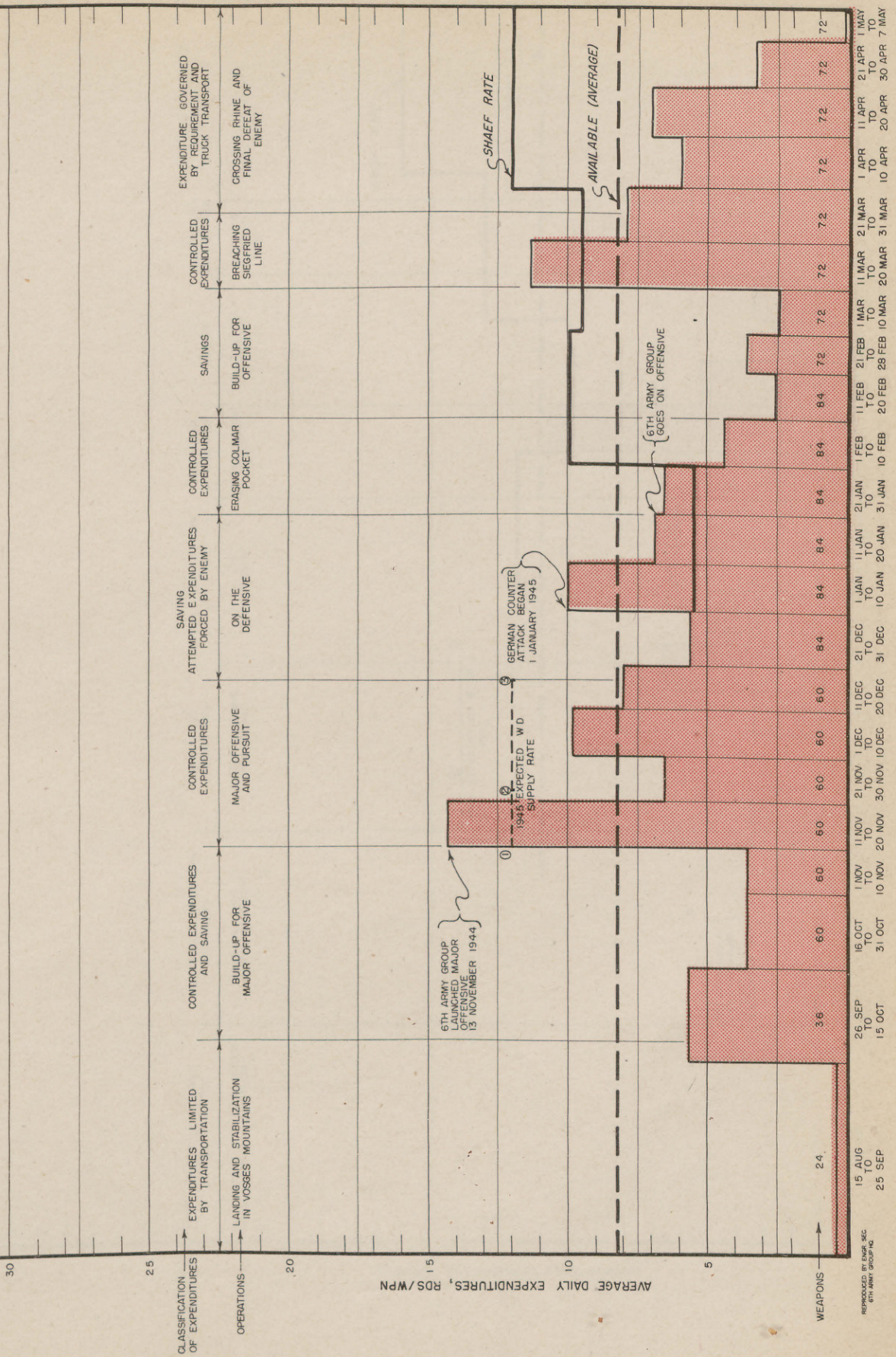




# 8" HOW AMMUNITION 6TH ARMY GROUP EXPENDITURES

SUMMARY 15 AUG '44 TO 7 MAY '45

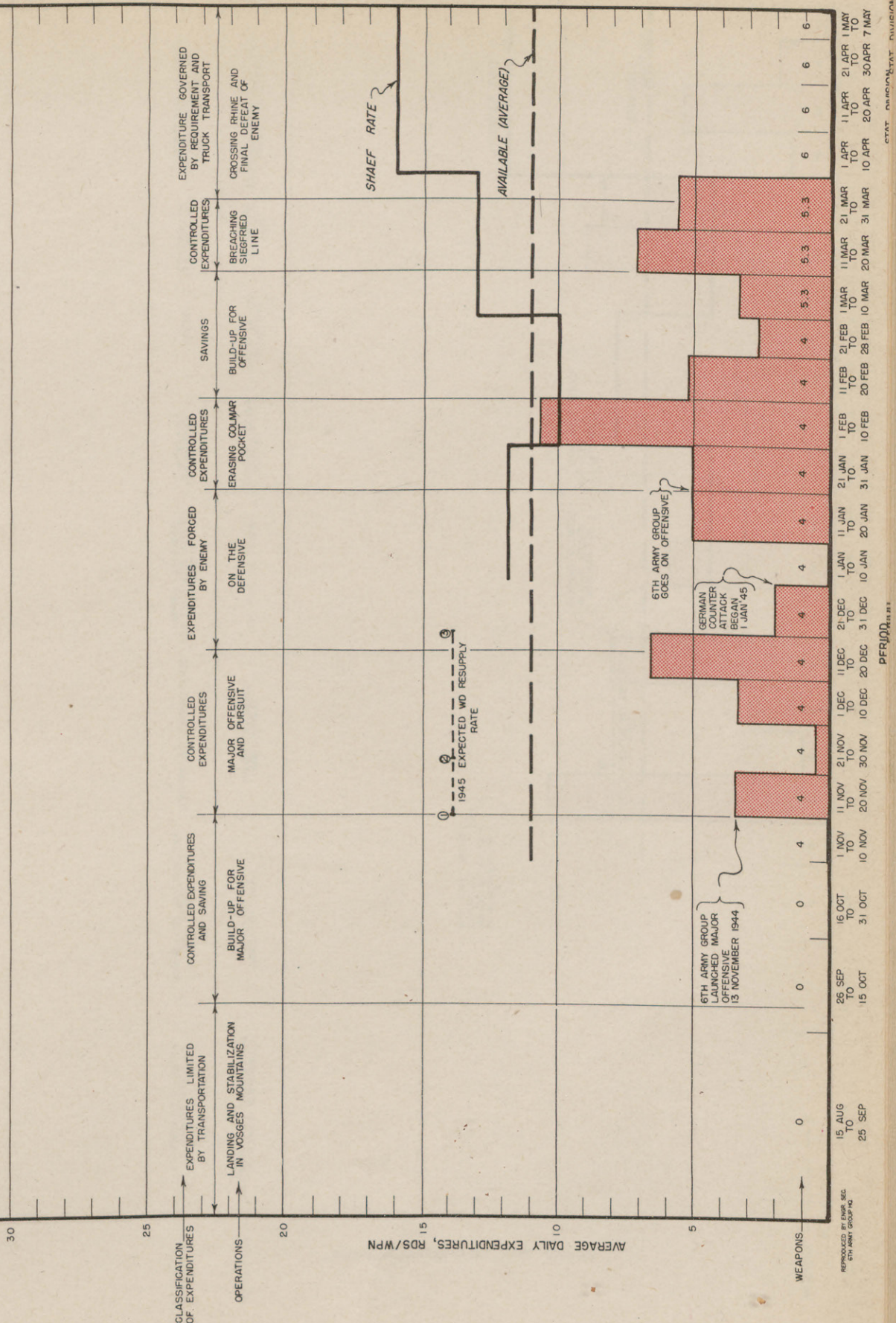
RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED . . . . . 5.8  
 RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP  
 6TH ARMY GROUP RESERVE. . . . . 0.6  
 RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP  
 6TH ARMY GROUP ASSETS. . . . . 1.1  
 RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO FILL IN-  
 TRANSIT PIPELINE. . . . . 0.7  
 RDS/WPN/DAY, AVAILABLE (AVERAGE) . . . . . 8.2





## SUMMARY 15 AUG '44 TO 7 MAY '45

|                                                                            |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED.                                                     | 3.1  |
| RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP 6TH ARMY GROUP RESERVE. | 1.4  |
| RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP STOCKPILE IN ASPs.      | 0.8  |
| RDS/WPN/DAY FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO FILL IN-TRANSIT PIPELINE.        | 5.7  |
| RDS/WPN/DAY, AVAILABLE (AVERAGE)                                           | 11.0 |





# 240 MM HOW AMMUNITION 6TH ARMY GROUP EXPENDITURES

SUMMARY 15 AUG '44 TO 7 MAY '45

|                                                                      |     |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| RDS/WPN/DAY, EXPENDED                                                | 4.1 |
| RDS/WPN/DAY, FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP                  | 0.3 |
| 6TH ARMY GROUP RESERVE                                               | 0.9 |
| RDS/WPN/DAY, FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO BUILD UP STOCKAGE IN ASFS | 1.6 |
| RDS/WPN/DAY, FOR ENTIRE PERIOD REQUIRED TO FILL IN-TRANSIT PIPELINE  | 6.9 |
| RDS/WPN/DAY, AVAILABLE (AVERAGE)                                     |     |

30

25

20

15

10

5

0

CLASSIFICATION  
OF EXPENDITURES

EXPENDITURES LIMITED  
BY TRANSPORTATION

LANDING AND STABILIZATION  
IN VOSGES MOUNTAINS

EXPENDITURES LIMITED  
BY TRANSPORTATION

EXPENDITURES LIMITED  
BY TRANSPORTATION

EXPENDITURES LIMITED  
BY TRANSPORTATION

EXPENDITURES LIMITED  
BY TRANSPORTATION

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BY TRANSPORTATION

EXPENDITURES LIMITED  
BY TRANSPORTATION

EXPENDITURES LIMITED  
BY TRANSPORTATION

EXPENDITURES LIMITED  
BY TRANSPORTATION

AVERAGE DAILY EXPENDITURES RDS/WPN

WEAPONS

REPRODUCED BY ENGR SEC  
6TH ARMY GROUP HQ

15 AUG  
TO  
25 SEP

26 SEP  
TO  
15 OCT

16 OCT  
TO  
31 OCT

1 NOV  
TO  
10 NOV

11 NOV  
TO  
20 NOV

21 NOV  
TO  
30 NOV

1 DEC  
TO  
10 DEC

11 DEC  
TO  
20 DEC

21 DEC  
TO  
31 DEC

1 JAN  
TO  
10 JAN

11 JAN  
TO  
20 JAN

21 JAN  
TO  
31 JAN

1 FEB  
TO  
10 FEB

11 FEB  
TO  
20 FEB

21 FEB  
TO  
31 FEB

1 MAR  
TO  
10 MAR

11 MAR  
TO  
20 MAR

21 MAR  
TO  
31 MAR

1 APR  
TO  
10 APR

11 APR  
TO  
20 APR

21 APR  
TO  
30 APR

1 MAY  
TO  
7 MAY

PERIOD

STAT. DIVISION

RESTRICTED

## 6TH ARMY GROUP TABULATION OF AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES 15 AUGUST 1944 TO 7 MAY 1945

| PERIOD        | No.<br>of<br>Days | 105 HOW M-2 |                 |                               | 4.5" GUN |                 |                               | 155 HOW (ALL) |                 |                               |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------------|-------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
|               |                   | Wpns        | Total<br>Rounds | Rounds<br>per/wpns<br>per/day | Wpns     | Total<br>Rounds | Rounds<br>per/wpns<br>per/day | Wpns          | Total<br>Rounds | Rounds<br>per/wpns<br>per/day |
| 15 Aug-25 Sep | 41                | 348         | 293,095         | 20.5                          | 0        | -               | -                             | 144           | 54,145          | 9.2                           |
| 26 Sep-15 Oct | 20                | 492         | 305,137         | 31.0                          | 12       | 4,037           | 16.8                          | 252           | 78,609          | 15.6                          |
| 16 Oct-31 Oct | 16                | 540         | 227,129         | 26.3                          | 24       | 6,111           | 15.9                          | 288           | 64,995          | 14.1                          |
| 1 Nov-10 Nov  | 10                | 612         | 234,408         | 38.3                          | 36       | 4,055           | 11.3                          | 372           | 59,835          | 16.1                          |
| 11 Nov-20 Nov | 10                | 648         | 322,650         | 49.8                          | 36       | 17,627          | 49.0                          | 372           | 99,603          | 26.8                          |
| 21 Nov-30 Nov | 10                | 660         | 283,638         | 43.0                          | 36       | 5,523           | 15.3                          | 372           | 69,032          | 18.6                          |
| 1 Dec-10 Dec  | 10                | 738         | 222,300         | 30.1                          | 36       | 11,421          | 31.7                          | 384           | 76,574          | 19.9                          |
| 11 Dec-20 Dec | 10                | 738         | 237,321         | 32.2                          | 36       | 13,532          | 37.6                          | 336           | 77,524          | 23.1                          |
| 21 Dec-31 Dec | 11                | 843         | 194,241         | 20.9                          | 36       | 8,635           | 21.8                          | 336           | 53,989          | 14.6                          |
| 1 Jan-10 Jan  | 10                | 922.3       | 240,528         | 26.1                          | 39.1     | 11,501          | 29.4                          | 355.7         | 64,063          | 18.0                          |
| 11 Jan-20 Jan | 10                | 922.3       | 239,559         | 26.0                          | 39.1     | 7,326           | 18.7                          | 355.7         | 69,788          | 19.6                          |
| 21 Jan-31 Jan | 11                | 922.3       | 421,698         | 41.6                          | 39.1     | 13,670          | 31.8                          | 355.7         | 99,935          | 25.5                          |
| 1 Feb-10 Feb  | 10                | 1118        | 189,454         | 16.9                          | 48       | 5,763           | 12.0                          | 420           | 49,510          | 11.8                          |
| 11 Feb-20 Feb | 10                | 1027.4      | 110,995         | 10.8                          | 48       | 3,871           | 8.1                           | 420           | 35,356          | 8.4                           |
| 21 Feb-28 Feb | 8                 | 942         | 99,907          | 13.3                          | 37.5     | 3,202           | 10.7                          | 384           | 27,924          | 9.1                           |
| 1 Mar-10 Mar  | 10                | 1012.8      | 82,305          | 8.2                           | 36       | 3,173           | 8.8                           | 448.6         | 24,762          | 5.5                           |
| 11 Mar-20 Mar | 10                | 1012.8      | 265,364         | 26.2                          | 36       | 9,006           | 25.0                          | 448.6         | 91,188          | 20.3                          |
| 21 Mar-31 Mar | 11                | 1012.8      | 150,699         | 13.5                          | 36       | 6,859           | 17.3                          | 448.6         | 62,056          | 12.6                          |
| 1 Apr-10 Apr  | 10                | 997.5       | 201,970         | 20.2                          | 36       | 3,877           | 10.8                          | 444.4         | 45,043          | 10.1                          |
| 11 Apr-20 Apr | 10                | 997.5       | 260,958         | 26.2                          | 36       | 5,350           | 14.9                          | 444.4         | 67,000          | 15.1                          |
| 21 Apr-30 Apr | 10                | 997.5       | 94,366          | 9.5                           | 36       | 4,408           | 12.2                          | 444.4         | 27,191          | 6.1                           |
| 1 May- 7 May  | 7                 | 1022        | 14,774          | 2.1                           | 36       | -0-             | -0-                           | 444           | 3,453           | 1.1                           |
| TOTAL         | 265               | XX          | 4,692,496       | XX                            | XX       | 148,947         | XX                            | XX            | 1,301,575       | XX                            |
| GUN DAYS      | X                 | 202,038     | X               | X                             | 7,740    | X               | X                             | 90,453        | X               | X                             |
| EXP/GUN/DAY   | X                 | X           | X               | 23.2                          | X        | X               | 19.2                          | X             | X               | 14.4                          |

Table 2 (sheet 1)

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

## 6TH ARMY GROUP TABULATION OF AMMUNITION EXPENDITURES 15 AUGUST 1944 TO 7 MAY 1945

| PERIOD        | No. of Days | 105 HOW M-2 |              |                        | 4.5" GUN |              |                        | 155 HOW (ALL) |              |                        |
|---------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|----------|--------------|------------------------|---------------|--------------|------------------------|
|               |             | Wpns        | Total Rounds | Rounds per/wpn per/day | Wpns     | Total Rounds | Rounds per/wpn per/day | Wpns          | Total Rounds | Rounds per/wpn per/day |
| 15 Aug-25 Sep | 41          | 348         | 293,095      | 20.5                   | 0        | -            | -                      | 144           | 54,145       | 9.2                    |
| 26 Sep-15 Oct | 20          | 492         | 305,137      | 31.0                   | 12       | 4,037        | 16.8                   | 252           | 78,609       | 15.6                   |
| 16 Oct-31 Oct | 16          | 540         | 227,129      | 26.3                   | 24       | 6,111        | 15.9                   | 288           | 64,995       | 14.1                   |
| 1 Nov-10 Nov  | 10          | 612         | 234,408      | 38.3                   | 36       | 4,055        | 11.3                   | 372           | 59,835       | 16.1                   |
| 11 Nov-20 Nov | 10          | 648         | 322,650      | 49.8                   | 36       | 17,627       | 49.0                   | 372           | 99,603       | 26.8                   |
| 21 Nov-30 Nov | 10          | 660         | 283,638      | 43.0                   | 36       | 5,523        | 15.3                   | 372           | 69,032       | 18.6                   |
| 1 Dec-10 Dec  | 10          | 738         | 222,300      | 30.1                   | 36       | 11,421       | 31.7                   | 384           | 76,574       | 19.9                   |
| 11 Dec-20 Dec | 10          | 738         | 237,321      | 32.2                   | 36       | 13,532       | 37.6                   | 336           | 77,524       | 23.1                   |
| 21 Dec-31 Dec | 11          | 843         | 194,241      | 20.9                   | 36       | 8,635        | 21.8                   | 336           | 53,989       | 14.6                   |
| 1 Jan-10 Jan  | 10          | 922.3       | 240,528      | 26.1                   | 39.1     | 11,501       | 29.4                   | 355.7         | 64,063       | 18.0                   |
| 11 Jan-20 Jan | 10          | 922.3       | 239,559      | 26.0                   | 39.1     | 7,326        | 18.7                   | 355.7         | 69,788       | 19.6                   |
| 21 Jan-31 Jan | 11          | 922.3       | 421,698      | 41.6                   | 39.1     | 13,670       | 31.8                   | 355.7         | 99,935       | 25.5                   |
| 1 Feb-10 Feb  | 10          | 1118        | 189,454      | 16.9                   | 48       | 5,763        | 12.0                   | 420           | 49,510       | 11.8                   |
| 11 Feb-20 Feb | 10          | 1027.4      | 110,995      | 10.8                   | 48       | 3,871        | 8.1                    | 420           | 35,356       | 8.4                    |
| 21 Feb-28 Feb | 8           | 942         | 99,907       | 13.3                   | 37.5     | 3,202        | 10.7                   | 384           | 27,924       | 9.1                    |
| 1 Mar-10 Mar  | 10          | 1012.8      | 82,305       | 8.2                    | 36       | 3,173        | 8.8                    | 448.6         | 24,762       | 5.5                    |
| 11 Mar-20 Mar | 10          | 1012.8      | 265,364      | 26.2                   | 36       | 9,006        | 25.0                   | 448.6         | 91,188       | 20.3                   |
| 21 Mar-31 Mar | 11          | 1012.8      | 150,699      | 13.5                   | 36       | 6,859        | 17.3                   | 448.6         | 62,056       | 12.6                   |
| 1 Apr-10 Apr  | 10          | 997.5       | 201,970      | 20.2                   | 36       | 3,877        | 10.8                   | 444.4         | 45,043       | 10.1                   |
| 11 Apr-20 Apr | 10          | 997.5       | 260,558      | 26.2                   | 36       | 5,350        | 14.9                   | 444.4         | 67,000       | 15.1                   |
| 21 Apr-30 Apr | 10          | 997.5       | 94,366       | 9.5                    | 36       | 4,408        | 12.2                   | 444.4         | 27,191       | 6.1                    |
| 1 May- 7 May  | 7           | 1022        | 14,774       | 2.1                    | 36       | -0-          | -0-                    | 444           | 3,453        | 1.1                    |
| TOTAL         | 265         | XX          | 4,692,496    | XX                     | XX       | 148,947      | XX                     | XX            | 1,301,575    | XX                     |
| GUN DAYS      | X           | 202,038     | X            | X                      | 7,740    | X            | X                      | 90,453        | X            | X                      |
| EXP/GUN/DAY   | X           | X           | X            | 23.2                   | X        | X            | 19.2                   | X             | X            | 14.4                   |

Table 2 (sheet 1)

RESTRICTED

RESTRICTED

## 6TH ARMY GROUP TABULATION OF MUNITION EXPENDITURES 15 AUGUST 1944 TO 7 MAY 1945 (continued)

| PERIOD        | No. of Days | 155 GUN      |                        |        | 8" HOW       |                        |      | 8" GUN       |                        |       | 240 HOW      |                        |      |
|---------------|-------------|--------------|------------------------|--------|--------------|------------------------|------|--------------|------------------------|-------|--------------|------------------------|------|
|               |             | Total Rounds | Rounds Per Wpn Per Day | Wpns   | Total Rounds | Rounds Per Wpn Per Day | Wpns | Total Rounds | Rounds Per Wpn Per Day | Wpns  | Total Rounds | Rounds Per Wpn Per Day | Wpns |
| 15 Aug-25 Sep | 41          | 9,422        | 2.5                    | 92     | 260          | 0.3                    | 0    | -            | -                      | 0     | -            | -                      | -    |
| 26 Sep-15 Oct | 20          | 25,311       | 11.7                   | 108    | 4,016        | 5.6                    | 0    | -            | -                      | 0     | -            | -                      | -    |
| 16 Oct-31 Oct | 16          | 19,132       | 10.0                   | 120    | 3,434        | 3.6                    | 0    | -            | -                      | 0     | -            | -                      | -    |
| 1 Nov-10 Nov  | 10          | 14,284       | 10.8                   | 132    | 2,134        | 3.6                    | 4    | 0            | -                      | 6     | 0            | -                      | -    |
| 11 Nov-20 Nov | 10          | 29,645       | 22.5                   | 132    | 3,640        | 14.4                   | 4    | 140          | 3.5                    | 6     | 621          | 10.4                   | -    |
| 21 Nov-30 Nov | 10          | 25,340       | 19.2                   | 132    | 3,872        | 6.5                    | 4    | 21           | 0.5                    | 6     | 64           | 1.1                    | -    |
| 1 Dec-10 Dec  | 10          | 20,501       | 15.5                   | 132    | 5,932        | 9.9                    | 4    | 137          | 3.4                    | 12    | 370          | 3.1                    | -    |
| 11 Dec-20 Dec | 10          | 23,892       | 18.1                   | 132    | 4,826        | 8.0                    | 4    | 261          | 6.5                    | 12    | 973          | 8.1                    | -    |
| 21 Dec-31 Dec | 11          | 18,295       | 11.7                   | 142    | 5,161        | 5.6                    | 4    | 87           | 2.0                    | 18    | 369          | 1.9                    | -    |
| 1 Jan-10 Jan  | 10          | 19,293       | 13.6                   | 142    | 8,440        | 10.0                   | 4    | 0            | -                      | 18    | 1,084        | 6.0                    | -    |
| 11 Jan-20 Jan | 10          | 16,772       | 11.8                   | 142    | 5,834        | 6.9                    | 4    | 205          | 5.1                    | 18    | 602          | 3.3                    | -    |
| 21 Jan-31 Jan | 11          | 23,731       | 15.2                   | 142    | 6,055        | 6.6                    | 4    | 225          | 5.1                    | 18    | 583          | 2.9                    | -    |
| 1 Feb-10 Feb  | 10          | 16,213       | 11.4                   | 142    | 3,757        | 4.5                    | 4    | 428          | 10.7                   | 18    | 599          | 3.3                    | -    |
| 11 Feb-20 Feb | 10          | 6,584        | 4.6                    | 142    | 2,286        | 2.7                    | 4    | 207          | 5.2                    | 18    | 667          | 3.7                    | -    |
| 21 Feb-28 Feb | 8           | 5,841        | 5.1                    | 142    | 2,045        | 3.6                    | 4    | 85           | 2.7                    | 18    | 417          | 2.9                    | -    |
| 1 Mar-10 Mar  | 10          | 4,513        | 2.5                    | 179.9  | 1,833        | 2.5                    | 5.3  | 178          | 3.4                    | 18    | 382          | 2.1                    | -    |
| 11 Mar-20 Mar | 10          | 26,501       | 14.7                   | 179.9  | 8,201        | 11.4                   | 5.3  | 378          | 7.1                    | 18    | 1,650        | 9.2                    | -    |
| 21 Mar-31 Mar | 11          | 27,338       | 13.8                   | 179.9  | 6,188        | 7.8                    | 5.3  | 328          | 5.6                    | 18    | 1,680        | 8.5                    | -    |
| 1 Apr-10 Apr  | 10          | 13,854       | 7.7                    | 180.7  | 4,332        | 6.0                    | 6    | 0            | -                      | 18    | 294          | 1.6                    | -    |
| 11 Apr-20 Apr | 10          | 27,497       | 15.2                   | 180.7  | 5,141        | 7.1                    | 6    | 0            | -                      | 18    | 1,026        | 5.7                    | -    |
| 21 Apr-30 Apr | 10          | 7,024        | 3.9                    | 180.7  | 2,474        | 3.4                    | 6    | 0            | -                      | 18    | 372          | 2.1                    | -    |
| 1 May- 7 May  | 7           | 747          | 0.6                    | 182.0  | 55           | 0.1                    | 6    | 0            | -                      | 18    | 60           | 0.5                    | -    |
| TOTAL         | 265         | 381,730      | XX                     | XX     | 94,916       | XX                     | XX   | 2,680        | XX                     | XX    | 11,813       | XX                     | XX   |
| GUN DAYS      | X           | X            | X                      | 16,344 | X            | X                      | 866  | X            | X                      | 2,904 | X            | X                      | X    |
| EXP/GUN/DAY   | X           | X            | 10.4                   | X      | X            | 5.8                    | X    | X            | 3.1                    | X     | X            | 4.1                    | X    |

Table 2 (sheet 2)

RESTRICTED



RESTRICTED

SUMMARY - 15 August 44 to 7 May 45

| (1)<br>TYPE       | (2)<br>Gun Days<br>15 Aug 44<br>to<br>7 May 45 | (3)<br>EXPENDED |                              | (5)<br>6th AG RESERVE |                              | (7)<br>ASP   |                              | (9)<br>IN TRNSIT |                              | (11)<br>AVAILABLE |                               | (12)<br>Rds/Wpn/<br>Day<br>(11) - (2) |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                   |                                                | Total<br>Rds    | Rds/Wpn/<br>Day<br>(3) - (2) | Total<br>Rds          | Rds/Wpn/<br>Day<br>(5) - (2) | Total<br>Rds | Rds/Wpn/<br>Day<br>(7) - (2) | Total<br>Rds     | Rds/Wpn/<br>Day<br>(9) - (2) | Total<br>Rds      | Rds/Wpn/<br>Day<br>(11) - (2) |                                       |
| 105mm How,<br>M-2 | 202,038.0                                      | 4,692,496       | 23.2                         | 434,189               | 2.1                          | 396,896      | 2.0                          | 558,995          | 2.8                          | 6,082,576         | 30.1                          |                                       |
| 4.5" Gun,         | 7,740.1                                        | 148,947         | 19.2                         | 2,325                 | 0.3                          | 18,220       | 2.4                          | 592              | 0.1                          | 170,084           | 22.0                          |                                       |
| 155mm How         | 90,453.3                                       | 1,301,575       | 14.4                         | 146,209               | 1.6                          | 206,813      | 2.3                          | 191,546          | 2.1                          | 1,846,143         | 20.4                          |                                       |
| 155mm Gun         | 36,663.9                                       | 381,730         | 10.4                         | 45,593                | 1.3                          | 36,602       | 1.0                          | 36,790           | 1.0                          | 500,715           | 13.7                          |                                       |
| 8" How            | 16,344.0                                       | 94,916          | 5.8                          | 9,458                 | 0.6                          | 19,192       | 1.1                          | 11,032           | 0.7                          | 134,648           | 8.2                           |                                       |
| 8" Gun            | 866.3                                          | 2,680           | 3.1                          | 1,217                 | 1.4                          | 685          | 0.8                          | 4,958            | 5.7                          | 9,540             | 11.0                          |                                       |
| 240mm How,        | 2,904.0                                        | 11,813          | 4.1                          | 1,026                 | 0.3                          | 2,747        | 0.9                          | 4,532            | 1.6                          | 20,118            | 6.9                           |                                       |

T A B L E 3

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COMPARISON OF THE VARIOUS DAYS OF SUPPLY  
WITH THE ACTUAL AVAILABLE AMMUNITION

|                      | WD<br>D/S<br>Rds/<br>Gun<br>Nov<br>44 | MTO<br>D/S<br>Rds/<br>Gun<br>Nov<br>44 | 12 AGp<br>Desired<br>Rate<br>D/S<br>Rds/Gun<br>Nov 44 | 6 AGp<br>Desired<br>Rate<br>D/S<br>Rds/Gun<br>Nov 44 | ETO<br>D/S<br>Rds/<br>Gun<br>Nov<br>44 | ETO<br>D/S<br>Rds/<br>Gun<br>Jan<br>45 | ETO<br>Apprvd<br>D/S<br>Rds/<br>29 Apr | Average<br>Rate<br>Supplied<br>to 6 Army<br>Gp<br>15 Aug 44<br>7 May 45 |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 105mm How,<br>152.47 | 40.                                   | 50.                                    | 60.0                                                  | 50.                                                  | 40.0                                   | 45.0                                   | 41.0                                   | 30.1                                                                    |
| 105mm How,<br>154    | 20.                                   | 20.                                    | 10.0                                                  | 20.                                                  | 20.0                                   | 15.0                                   | 4.0                                    | 10.0                                                                    |
| 4.5 Inch<br>Gun      | 28.                                   | 36.                                    | 30.0                                                  | 40.                                                  | 28.0                                   | 28.0                                   | 26.0                                   | 22.0                                                                    |
| 155mm How            | 25.                                   | 35.                                    | 40.0                                                  | 40.                                                  | 25.0                                   | 33.0                                   | 25.0                                   | 20.4                                                                    |
| 155mm Gun            | 25.                                   | 30.                                    | 25.0                                                  | 35.                                                  | 25.0                                   | 25.0                                   | 22.2                                   | 13.7                                                                    |
| 8 Inch How           | 20.                                   | 25.                                    | 25.0                                                  | 30.                                                  | 20.0                                   | 25.0                                   | 25.0                                   | 8.2                                                                     |
| 8 Inch Gun           | 15.                                   | 15.                                    | 12.0                                                  | 20.                                                  | 15.0                                   | 10.0                                   | 15.0                                   | 11.0                                                                    |
| 240mm How            | 7.                                    | 15.                                    | 15.0                                                  | 25.                                                  | 7.0                                    | 15.0                                   | 13.0                                   | 6.9                                                                     |

Table 4

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AMMUNITION MAINTENANCE RATES ETO  
(SHAEF RATE)

| <u>ITEM</u>      | <u>JAN 1</u> | <u>FEB 1</u> | <u>MARCH 1</u> | <u>APRIL</u> |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 57mm Gun, AT     | (4.3)        | (13.2)       | (4.6)          | (1.0)        |
| HE               | .7           | 9.6          | 1.0            | 1.0          |
| SABOT            | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| APC              | 3.6          | 3.6          | 3.6            | -            |
| 60mm Mortar      | (4.76)       | (4.96)       | (4.96)         | -            |
| HE               | 4.6          | 4.6          | 4.6            | -            |
| Ill              | .1           | .3           | .3             | -            |
| WP               | .06          | .06          | .06            | -            |
| 81mm Mortar      | (11.2)       | (10.9)       | (10.0)         | (8.0)        |
| HE (Lt)          | 6.0          | 5.7          | 5.0            | 5.0          |
| HE (Hv)          | 2.9          | 2.9          | 2.8            | 2.0          |
| WP               | 2.3          | 2.3          | 2.2            | 1.0          |
| 75mm How         | (27.7)       | (27.7)       | (27.7)         | -            |
| HE w/M48A2       | 25.0         | 25.0         | 25.0           | -            |
| HE w/M54         | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| HE-AT            | .7           | .7           | .7             | -            |
| WP               | 2.0          | 2.0          | 2.0            | -            |
| 75mm Gun         | (6.9)        | (6.9)        | (6.9)          | -            |
| HE w/M48A2       | 4.3          | 4.3          | 4.3            | -            |
| APC              | 2.1          | 2.1          | 2.1            | -            |
| WP               | .5           | .5           | .5             | -            |
| 76mm Gun, T & AT | (13.4)       | (13.4)       | (13.4)         | -            |
| HE w/M48A2       | 8.3          | 8.3          | 8.3            | -            |
| HE w/M48A2       | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| APC              | 5.1          | 5.1          | 5.1            | -            |
| WP               | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| 3" Gun, AT       | (19.0)       | (19.0)       | (19.0)         | -            |
| HE w/M48A2       | 8.9          | 8.9          | 8.9            | -            |
| HE               | 3.3          | 3.3          | 3.3            | -            |
| APC              | 6.8          | 6.8          | 6.8            | -            |
| WP               | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| 90mm Gun AA      | (6.5)        | (6.5)        | (6.5)          | -            |
| HE w/T74         | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| HE               | 1.2          | 1.2          | 1.2            | -            |
| HE               | 4.8          | 4.8          | 4.8            | -            |
| APC              | .5           | .5           | .5             | -            |

Table 5 (Sheet 1)



| <u>ITEM</u>              | <u>JAN 1</u> | <u>FEB 1</u> | <u>MARCH 1</u> | <u>APRIL</u> |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|
| 90mm Gun T & AT & Ground | (21.8)       | (21.8)       | (21.8)         | -            |
| HE w/M48A2 NC            | 15.0         | 15.0         | 15.0           | -            |
| HE w/M48A2               | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| APC                      | 6.8          | 6.8          | 6.8            | -            |
| WP                       | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| 4.5" Gun                 | (17.2)       | (20.0)       | (15.0)         | (20.0)       |
| HE                       | 17.2         | 20.0         | 15.0           | 20.0         |
| WP                       | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| 105mm How M2             | (30.0)       | (30.6)       | (26.7)         | (24.0)       |
| HE w/M48A2               | 26.0         | 26.6         | 23.5           | 23.5         |
| HE w/M54                 | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| WP                       | 1.1          | 1.1          | .3             | .5           |
| HC                       | 1.7          | 1.7          | 1.7            | -            |
| Clrd Smoke               | .4           | .4           | .4             | -            |
| HE-AT                    | .8           | .8           | .8             | -            |
| 105mm How M3             | (19.7)       | (16.5)       | (9.4)          | (7.8)        |
| HE w/M48A2               | 17.7         | 14.5         | 7.5            | 7.5          |
| HE w/M54                 | -            | -            | -              | -            |
| HE-AT                    | .7           | .7           | .7             | -            |
| WP                       | .8           | .8           | .7             | .3           |
| HC                       | .5           | .5           | .5             | -            |
| 155mm How                | (23.2)       | (22.0)       | (19.7)         | (18.2)       |
| HE                       | 19.5         | 18.3         | 17.5           | 17.5         |
| WP                       | 2.7          | 2.7          | 1.2            | .7           |
| HC                       | 1.0          | 1.0          | 1.0            | -            |
| 155 Gun                  | (13.3)       | (15.3)       | (14.3)         | (12.7)       |
| HE                       | 13.0         | 15.0         | 14.1           | 12.0         |
| WP                       | .2           | .2           | .1             | .7           |
| HC                       | .1           | .1           | .1             | -            |
| 8" How                   | (5.5)        | (9.9)        | (9.5)          | (12.0)       |
| HE                       | 5.5          | 9.9          | 9.5            | 12.0         |
| 8" Gun                   | (11.9)       | (10.0)       | (13.0)         | (16.0)       |
| HE                       | 11.9         | 10.0         | 13.0           | 16.0         |
| 240mm How                | (4.5)        | (8.0)        | (4.5)          | (12.0)       |
| HE                       | 4.5          | 8.0          | 4.5            | 12.0         |

Table 5 (Sheet 2)

CHAPTER FOURTEENAIR COOPERATION

No effort will be made in this short summation to cover in detail the extent of air cooperation with ground forces under control of Headquarters 6th Army Group in the successful campaigns in France, Germany and Austria. Details of the part the Air Arm played in the battering and final defeat of German Armed Forces facing 6th Army Group will be found in Histories of Seventh Army, First French Army, First Tactical Air Force (Provisional) and Twelfth Air Force. Here it is desired only to cover briefly the overall air picture as it affected operations of 6th Army Group and to illuminate some of the broader results obtained.

Planning for air cooperation in ground assaults on the Army Group level was carried out at the Commanding General's daily conference. Contemplated ground plans were discussed with Commanding General, First TACAF (Prov.) or his representative and the overall air plan worked out. Close cooperation between air and ground units was effected at the Army level. Therefore, records of this office are limited on actual accomplishments of the Air Force.

Air and Ground Forces literally lived and learned together. With each mission flown, the tie between the two Arms became closer and closer until well before the latter stages of the campaign, front line commanders considered the close cooperation planes almost as much a part of their combat team as the supporting artillery. It was this feeling of mutual understanding and confidence that lent immeasurably to the actual results obtained. Throughout the entire operations, confidence in the Air Force grew daily and a feeling of pride in its accomplishments prevailed ground units as they advanced over ground littered with destroyed vehicles, guns, trains and bridges.

In use within this Army Group was an air-ground coordination system brought over from Italy, which initially was not the approved SOP of either Air or Ground Forces. Because it worked so smoothly and brought closer cooperation, however, details of the plan have since been incorporated in the approved regulations on the subject. The system was faster, safer and more effective, assuring Armies of desired air cooperation with a minimum of delay. So far as this office is able to determine, there was not one soldier in 6th Army Group killed as the result of bombing by our Air Force. In a few of the extremely fluid situations where fighting was close and furious, some instances of cooperating Air Forces strafing our columns have been reported.

Air Support Parties with Corps and Division Headquarters handled close cooperation missions with the general support missions being screened by Army Headquarters in conjunction with their Air

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Support Control. Prior to taking off on a pre-briefed mission, planes rendezvoused above assigned Corps to meet the Corps ASP. If the Corps ASP had no close cooperation mission within a given period of time, the planes continued on their pre-briefed mission. However, if the Corps ASP had need for air cooperation, the planes postponed or even discontinued their pre-briefed mission to assist the Ground Forces.

Initially, communications between Air and Ground Forces were not all that was desired but, as in other instances, both Arms worked together to perfect their technique and overcome this difficulty. In Seventh Army, "horsefly" planes -- liaison planes -- in addition to smoke and radio were used as a regular means of guiding high performance planes onto targets. This system provided excellent results and became a fixed part of Seventh Army's SOP for air-ground cooperation.

To cover cooperation of Air Forces in ground missions of 6th Army Group forces, it will be necessary to start with the pre-invasion planning period.

While Seventh Army was commanding Dragoon Forces, Twelfth Air Force, commanded by Major General James H. Doolittle with headquarters at Corsica, was furnishing the air power. Assistance was also rendered by heavy bombers of the Mediterranean Allied Air Force. Planning for air cooperation in the invasion of Southern France progressed as Ground Forces laid out plans of the maneuver. To carry out missions in Southern France in close support of Seventh Army, the following aircraft were available:

Six Groups of P-47's; Three Wings of RAF Spitfires; One Squadron of A-20's; One Squadron of Beaufighters; Two Squadrons of T-6's; One Squadron of P-51's; and One Squadron of Photographic Reconnaissance. These planes composed the XII Tactical Air Command under Brigadier General Gordon P. Saville.

Prior to D-Day, the Air Force undertook a campaign of softening up enemy defenses along the entire Southern Coast of France. These attacks were carried out initially so as not to spotlight this sector as a possible invasion area. They were planned to appear as being in support of the Italian Campaign. As D-Day drew nearer, the attacks were intensified, shifting from place to place along the Southern Coast, and still not concentrating on any particular sector. In the last five days before D-Day, some 3,400 effective sorties were flown against gun positions, defensive positions, radar installations, bridges and communications centers. A total of 6,440 tons of bombs were dropped during this period, the majority by medium bombers. In the period from 0500 hours to 0800 hours D-Day, 610 effective sorties were flown against the actual invasion beaches, dropping 774 tons of bombs. During D-Day 3,036 additional

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sorties were flown against enemy defenses, supply installations, communication centers and enemy convoys. This was the mightiest air effort ever staged by MAAF. Results obtained can be seen in the light resistance encountered from prepared defenses during the establishment of the beachhead.

During the drive northward up the Rhone Valley, Seventh Army, because of the speed of its advance, did not have continuous communications with the Air Force and thus lost some advantage of the air striking power. However, flying pre-briefed missions, the Air Forces spread devastation along the retreating German columns. Tying in with artillery, the Air Arm assisted in bottling up and destroying several thousand enemy vehicles and guns in the Montelimar area. Throughout the entire length of the Rhone Valley escape route, destroyed German equipment was evidenced on every hand.

Initially, Twelfth Air Force furnished support for Seventh Army in its drive to establish a beachhead and then push northward up the Rhone Valley. This Force operated out of Italy, Corsica and Sardinia. However, when Headquarters 6th Army Group assumed control of Dragoon Forces, the Air Command furnishing close cooperation to Seventh Army --- XII Tactical Air Command --- passed to control of Ninth Air Force. On 20 September, the Ninth Air Force Liaison Office was established to coordinate air cooperation for forces under Headquarters 6th Army Group. On 20 October, First Tactical Air Force (Provisional) commanded by Major General Ralph Royce, was established to replace the Ninth Air Force Liaison Office. First TACAF (Prov.) assumed control of XII Tactical Air Command, operating with Seventh Army, and French Tactical Air Command, operating with First French Army. Brigadier General Saville succeeded Major General Royce as commanding general of First TACAF on 29 January and when he left for a new assignment, Major General Robert P. Webster assumed command of the Air Force.

At the outset, XII TAC was composed of: 324th Fighter Group; 27th Fighter Group; 50th Fighter Group; 111th Tac/R Squadron; 162d Tac/R Squadron; 415th Night Fighter Squadron and 23rd PRU Squadron. A majority of these planes had been transferred from the Mediterranean Theater.

French TAC was composed initially of: 4th Fighter Group; 339th Wing; and 2/33rd Tac/R Squadron.

Later, some additions were made to both Tactical Air Commands. In addition to these planes, First TACAF called on Ninth Air Force for additional support required on the Army Group front.

After Headquarters 6th Army Group became operational, a period of bad weather set in that caused a slackening of the pace of the air offensive, especially in the Vosges Mountain sector during the

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winter months. However, during the defensive period from 21 December to 6 February, the Air Force in support of Seventh Army was particularly effective with the limited means available. Despite bad weather, First TACAF flew some 9,000 sorties and dropped more than 6,200 tons of bombs on enemy forming for attacks, supply installations and routes of communication. In these operations 148 locomotives, 1,833 railroad cars, 500 military vehicles, including 61 tanks, and 15 bridges were destroyed. In addition, 301 rail cuts were effected.

In the Colmar Pocket operation also, weather was a limiting factor. Despite this, the Air Force got in some effective and damaging blows. From 20 January to 9 February, First TACAF flew 1,980 sorties in support of First French Army's attack. The offensive was designed to isolate the battle field, prevent enemy movements and soften up defended positions, especially towns. An impressive list of claims was made as a result: 254 railroad cars, 9 locomotives, 114 vehicles, 18 tanks and 403 buildings destroyed were the major items.

As Seventh Army turned to the offensive on 15 March, the Air Arm unleashed its mightiest offensive against enemy movements, communications, supply installations and DPs. In front of the main effort by XV Corps to breach the Siegfried Line, heavy and medium bombers attacked the prepared fortifications en masse. The fortifications were not destroyed, however, and the main advantage gained was running the enemy indoors and lowering his will to resist. On 15 March, First TACAF flew 1,670 sorties in support of Seventh Army. Two days later a total of 1,899 sorties were flown, a phenomenal number in the light of available airplanes. To accomplish this feat meant that almost every plane must fly an average of three sorties during the day.

After the breakthrough, the Air Force reamed the Saar-Palatinate, attacking enemy columns and making daylight movement almost impossible. Heavy losses were inflicted on the enemy in the Homburg, Kaiserslautern and Bad Dürkheim areas. While these operations were being carried out, other planes were isolating the battlefield and preventing the bringing up of reinforcements and badly needed material.

As 6th Army Group stepped across the Rhine, broke through its bridgehead and started exploitation eastward and then southward, First TACAF planes patrolled the skies continuously. Impressive claims in destroyed and damaged enemy convoys, supply installations, trains and communication centers were recorded daily as a result of these operations. A majority of the missions flown were close co-operation and on targets of opportunity.

First TACAF outdid itself from 15 March to V-E Day, cooperating with ground forces of 6th Army Group in the battle to destroy German Army Group "C". Although having only limited means, the Air

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Force operated continuously in favorable weather and many times during inclement weather. The record of this command in its assigned role is particularly impressive and was one of the most valuable contributing factors to 6th Army Group's ultimate destruction of German Army Group G.

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