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# The Initial Assault on HERRLISHEIM by CCB, 12th Armd Div

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12th Armored Division. Armored School,  
student research report. Mar 50.

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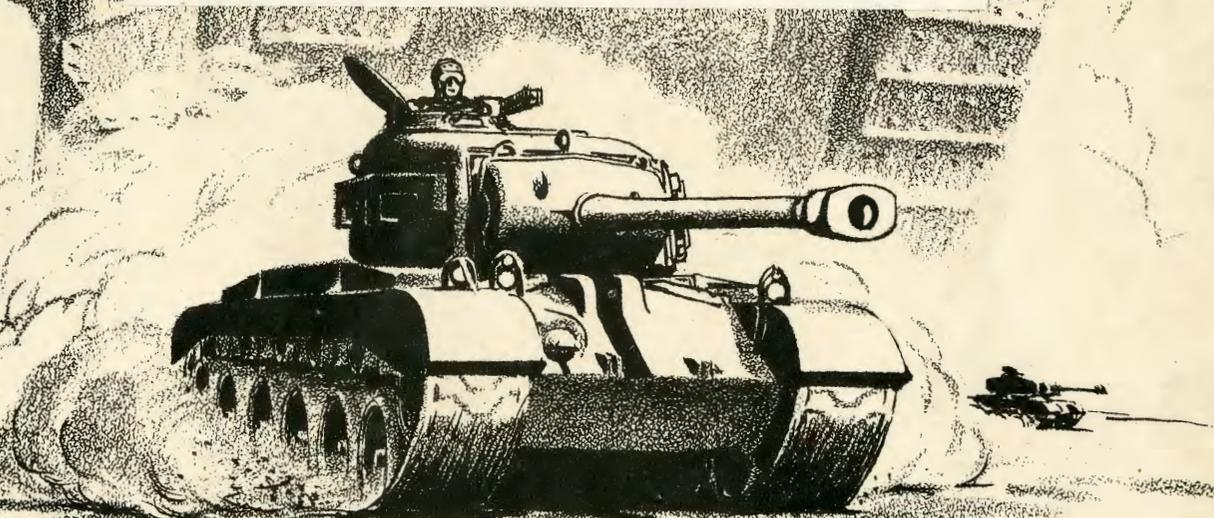
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### A RESEARCH REPORT

Prepared at  
**THE ARMORED SCHOOL**  
Fort Knox Kentucky  
1949 - 1950

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THE INITIAL ASSAULT ON HERRLISHEIM  
BY COMBAT COMMAND B, 12th ARMORED DIVISION

A RESEARCH REPORT PREPARED

BY

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1949-1950

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MARCH 1950

## FOREWORD

Armored warfare played a decisive role in the conduct of World War II. The history of the conflict will reveal the outstanding contribution this newcomer in the team of ground arms offered to all commanders. Some of the more spectacular actions of now famous armored units are familiar to all students of military history. Contrary to popular belief, however, not all armored actions consisted of deep slashing drives many miles into enemy territory. Some armored units were forced to engage in the more unspectacular slugging actions against superior enemy forces.

One such action, the attack of Combat Command B, 12th Armored Division, against HERRLISHEIM, FRANCE, is reviewed in this paper. As Commanding General of the 12th Armored Division during the action, I have particular interest in the report and the lessons learned from the action.

Combat Command B participated in this action as an attachment to the 79th Infantry Division and was released again to the 12th Armored Division only at the completion of the action reviewed in this paper. It was committed against a limited objective under adverse conditions of weather and terrain, a mission not too well suited for armored employment.

The lessons learned may well be remembered as the time might again present itself when armor is committed under conditions which the "book" would pronounce as unsuitable for armor.



RODERICK R. ALLEN  
Major General, US Army

## PREFACE

The confusion and uncertainties rampant on the battlefields of every war are compounded as each battle sinks into the obscurity of written history. The story of HERRLISHEIM amply illustrates this truism of most battle reporting. The lack of factual information concerning the operation limits basic research to a considerable degree. For example, there are no after-action reports concerning Headquarters, Combat Command B, and the 714th Tank Battalion -- two of the principal units in the action. The after-action report of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion is very brief and concerns itself only with a few preliminary orders and reports. Moreover, no written orders have been found concerning the operation from the 79th Infantry Division down through the smaller units, with the exception of the 12th Armored Division Artillery plan, which was quite complete. This lack of any substantial official documents has necessitated that this report rely heavily upon the 7th Army report of the action, which, it must be remembered, was written some time after the action and was based mostly on interviews with small unit commanders and their staffs, and with enlisted men of Combat Command B.

As a result of these limitations, some of the conclusions drawn are not substantiated by overwhelming documentary evidence. They are, however, in accord with all known facts, and fit the presumed facts which were inferred from the situation.

The committee is indebted to those former members of Combat Command B, 12th Armored Division, who offered information, advice, and assistance in preparation of the report. Much valuable information was provided by Major General Roderick R. Allen, former Commanding General,

12th Armored Division; Colonel Wallace H. Barnes, General Allen's Chief of Staff; and Colonel Charles G. Bromley, Commanding Officer, Combat Command B.

## NOTE

I. Clarification of the narrative, Chapters 4 through 9, can be improved by reference to:

1. Map (M), of the territory in question.
2. Sketch (D), of the LA BREYMUHL water control area.
3. Sketch (O), of the town of HERRLISHEIM.

II. Capital Letters and Parentheses in the Narrative:

1. In all instances where a capital letter, or letters, is followed by a dash line and then another letter in parentheses, either (M), (D), or (O), it refers to its location on either the map or sketches bearing these identifying letters. The whole set will be in parentheses. Example: (AA-M), showing that the specific object in question can be found at point AA on sketch M.
2. In cases where merely the letter in Parentheses M,D, or O, is found, it means that the action concerned is located on that particular map or sketch. Example: (M), (D), (O).
3. When a phase line number is inserted in parentheses it refers to one of the first four street corners in the northwest sector of HERRLISHEIM on the sketch. Example: (phase line No. 1).

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

#### Purpose

The month of January 1945 will remain vivid in the memory of those members of Combat Command B, 12th Armored Division, who participated in that unit's attack on HERRLISHEIM. For, during the period 8-11 January, this Combat Command was engaged in a bloody encounter against the Germans under the most trying of conditions.

This assault at HERRLISHEIM provides the basis for this report. The purpose of this paper is to analyze an historical operation in which a combat command of an armored division was attached to an infantry division, and given the mission of reducing a bridgehead. In addition, this study will attempt to point out adherence to, and violation of, past and present doctrine. It compares past and present organization, equipment, and employment.

Certain basic considerations must be ever present in the thinking of all military commanders when employing armor. These are, first, the selection of the right combination of armored infantry and tanks to complete successfully a given mission; and second, the effect of terrain and weather on armored employment.

In order to reduce to a minimum the chances for selecting the wrong type of team for a specific mission, or of employing armor over unfavorable terrain, planning must be deliberate and detailed. Sufficient time must be allowed for commanders in all echelons to make an appropriate reconnaissance and to formulate plans. Current doctrine presented in

training literature both emphasizes and reiterates, "deliberate planning and violent execution".

The story of Combat Command B, 12th Armored Division, at HERFLISHEIM emphasizes the importance of these basic considerations and the need for sound, deliberate planning in armored operations.

### The Big Picture

A brief synopsis of the action taking place in Europe and particularly in the ALSATIAN area is necessary in order that the HERRLISHEIM operation be placed in proper perspective. During December 1944 Hitler launched his vaunted ARDENNES offensive. This action carried over into the new year before it was ultimately contained.

"As the Battle of the Ardennes wore on the Germans began diversionary attacks in Alsace. They were not in great strength but because we had weakened ourselves in that area the situation had to be carefully watched. ... on no account ... must ... sizeable formations be cut off and surrounded."<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the German offensive the Seventh United States Army was ordered to prepare a line of defense to protect the southern flank of the Allied forces engaged in the ARDENNES. General Patch had the following troops to dispose in establishing his defensive line:

#### VI Corps

45th Infantry Division  
79th Infantry Division  
Task Force Herren  
Task Force Hudelson  
Task Force Linden

#### XV Corps

44th Infantry Division  
100th Infantry Division  
103rd Infantry Division  
253rd Infantry Regiment  
255th Infantry Regiment<sup>2</sup>  
106th Cavalry Group

In late December 1944 and early January 1945 the Germans started their offensive all along the Seventh Army front. They launched four simultaneous attacks in ALSACE: the first was in the FORTRESS OF BITCHE area, the second in the vicinity of REIPERTSWILLER in the HARDT Mountains, the

third in the HATTEN-RITTERSHOFFEN area on the ALSATIAN PLAIN, and the fourth offensive was in the HERRLISHEIM-GAMBSHEIM area in the RHINE bridgehead.<sup>3</sup>

In this latter sector the enemy forces crossed the RHINE on the morning of 5 January and attacked American positions from KILSTETT to DRUSENHEIM. The west bank of the RHINE in this area was thinly held by our forces. They were undergoing a succession of reliefs and reorganization which resulted in units under mixed commands attacking the Germans who had crossed the RHINE.<sup>4</sup>

On 5 January (Saturday) several attempts were made to eliminate the German foothold on the west bank of the RHINE. One American unit attacked southeast from BISCHWILLER toward ROHRWILLER; another attacked astride the road from WYERSHEIM toward GAMBSHEIM; still another attacked from KILSTETT toward GAMBSHEIM; but all of these attacks were unsuccessful and by 1900 hours on 5 January the Germans were established in a bridgehead five miles long and two miles deep.

On 6 January (Sunday) an American task force entered GAMBSHEIM, but the enemy counterattacked and the task force withdrew. Another task force attempted to enter GAMBSHEIM from another direction but it, too, was unsuccessful. On this same day a third American force attacked from BISCHWILLER and entered ROHRWILLER. Its attack was halted there.

On 7 January (Monday) an American force attacked to clear the enemy from the southern part of DRUSENHEIM but was forced back into the northern part of the village.<sup>5</sup>

Because the enemy situation in the HERRLISHEIM-GAMBSHEIM area was becoming so serious and no other Allied forces were readily available, Seventh Army was able to get the 12th Armored Division released from

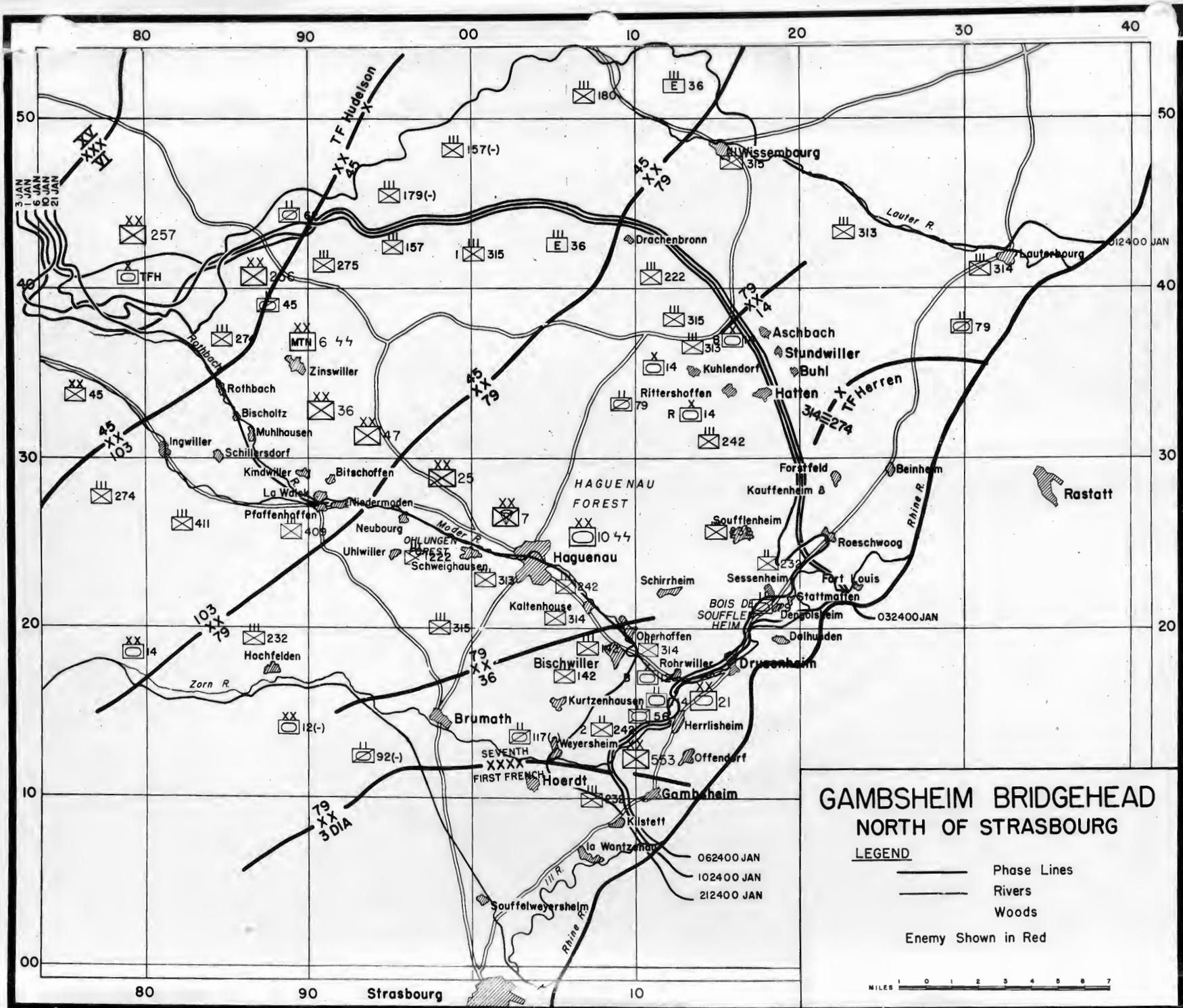
SHAEF reserve to be utilized in this bridgehead area.<sup>6</sup>

A brief resume of the 12th Armored Division's combat actions and other activities on the Continent prior to the HERRLISHEIM operation is essential to its proper evaluation in this action.

#### 12th Armored Division

By 22 November 1944 the entire 12th Armored Division had arrived in FRANCE. It was in bivouac in the AUFFAY area under Ninth Army.<sup>7</sup>

On 27 November the division was assigned to Seventh Army and was ordered to move to LUNEVILLE, arriving there on 2 December.<sup>8</sup> On 5 December the division was assigned to XV Corps and on the same day the division, minus the 493rd, 494th and 495th Armored Field Artillery Battalions, was ordered to move to KIRRBURG. The 493rd and 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalions were sent to the vicinity of DRULINGEN to support the 44th Infantry Division, and the 495th Armored Field Artillery Battalion moved to the vicinity of LE PETITE PIERRE to support the 100th Infantry Division. These armored field artillery battalions were the first units of the division to participate in combat.



By 8 December the division had relieved the 4th Armored Division in its sector and its mission was to support the advance of the 26th Infantry Division in breaching the MAGINOT LINE and continue the attack to the SIEGFRIED LINE.<sup>9</sup> At this time the 12th Armored Division command post was at DOMFESSEL. The three armored field artillery battalions were returned to the division to participate in this action.

During this drive towards the SIEGFRIED LINE the division's actions were divided into two phases - the first from 7-15 December and the second from 19-25 December.

In the first phase the division was opposed by elements of the 111th Panzer Division which was fighting a delaying action. The 12th Armored Division formation consisted of Combat R on the right, Combat Command A on the left, and Combat Command B in reserve. During this phase none of the units under Combat Command B became heavily engaged with the enemy.

The division's casualties during its first experience in combat from 7-15 December was 6 officers and 37 enlisted men killed, 16 officers and 141 enlisted men wounded.

The 80th Infantry Division moved into the 12th Armored Division sector and took over its area by 15 December, thus ending the first phase.<sup>10</sup>

In the second phase from 19-25 December the division was opposed by the 257th Volksgrenadier Division which was fighting a defensive action. During this phase the division was involved, at first, in scattered action at BETTVILLER, SINGLING, BINNING and UTWEILER and then, in accordance with Seventh Army's defense plans, and orders from corps, the division consolidated its forward positions and prepared for the defense of its area. At this time the division command post was at RAHLING.

On 25-26 December the 12th Armored Division was relieved of its defensive mission in the front lines and moved to ALBESTROFF to form the XV Corps reserve.<sup>11</sup>

On 29 December the division became a part of SHAEF reserve.<sup>12</sup> On 31 December the division moved to a bivouac area south of DIEUZE.

The 12th Armored Division remained in SHAEF reserve until it was released to Seventh Army which, on 6 January, ordered Combat Command B to HOCHFELDEN and on 7 January attached it to the 79th Infantry Division under VI Corps control.<sup>13</sup>

On 8 January the rest of the 12th Armored Division was ordered to HOCHFELDEN where it was placed under VI Corps. It was to be the corps reserve, and it was also ordered to maintain a reconnaissance screen along VI Corps' south boundary.

On 7 January the 79th Infantry Division was fighting in the BISCHWILLER-WEYERSHEIM-DRUSENHEIM area near the RHINE River. Combat

Command B was attached to assist in the reduction of the German bridgehead established across the RHINE in the HERRLISHEIM-GAMBSHEIM area.

While Combat Command B was to attack to the south and seize HERRLISHEIM the 79th Infantry Division was to attack DRUSENHEIM.

Before continuing with Combat Command B's operations in the HERRLISHEIM area it is appropriate at this time to look into the previous training that the 12th Armored Division had undergone while in the United States and England.

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#### NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

1. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe (Garden City, NY, Doubleday and Co. 1948) p 362.
2. Report of Operations, Seventh United States Army, Volume II (Published by Aloys Graf, Heidelberg, Germany, May 1946. Printed by the Heidelberg Gutenberg Printing Company, Stuttgart, Germany), p 496.
3. A History of the United States Twelfth Armored Division (Published by Army and Navy Publishing Company, Baton Rouge, Louisiana), p 35.
4. Op cit, Report of Operations, Seventh United States Army, Volume II, p 594.
5. Ibid, p 599.
6. Ibid, p 600.
7. Op cit, A History of the United States Twelfth Armored Division, p 24.
8. Ibid, p 24.
9. Ibid, p 27.
10. Ibid, p 29.
11. Ibid, p 34.

12. Op cit, Report of Operations, Seventh United States Army,  
Volume II, p 497.

13. Ibid, p 599.

## CHAPTER 2

### TRAINING

On 15 September 1942, the governors of the states of KENTUCKY and TENNESSEE met at the newly-constructed CAMP CAMPBELL for participation in the activation of the 12th Armored Division. Major General CARLOS BREWER assumed command on the activation of the unit.<sup>1</sup>

Filler replacements began arriving on 24 October 1942 and the usual Mobilization Training Program began on 10 November. Training for the new men was typical of all new units with the normal eccentricities of the weather of the area, the usual road marches, and first echelon maintenance. Included in the training was a well-publicized athletic program.<sup>2</sup>

On 1 April 1943, the 56th Armored Infantry Regiment with the necessary attachments was given the special mission of guarding a portion of the route of a train trip of President Roosevelt.<sup>3</sup>

The first overnight division exercise began on 27 April. Six weeks later the division, along with other units of the IV Armored Corps, was transferred to Second Army. IV Armored Corps staged a two-day problem on the CAMP CAMPBELL reservation on the 16th and 17th of July.

In August 1943 the Division participated in two preparatory exercises for the coming TENNESSEE maneuvers. The first was a five-day river crossing staged on the nearby CUMBERLAND RIVER. The second was a four-day field exercise involving air-ground training staged at the home station of CAMP CAMPBELL.

On 3 September the units started the move to the south in order

to participate in the TENNESSEE maneuvers which lasted from 6 September to 1 November. These same units were involved in eight of the operations of the maneuvers.<sup>4</sup>

Following the maneuvers the division moved to CAMP BARKELEY, TEXAS, where it immediately started reorganization along the new lines which eliminated the regimental organizations and made the battalions self-supporting. Also at this time units received the numerical designations that were retained throughout the entire combat period.<sup>5</sup>

In early 1944, field problems became more frequent. Night driving, scouting and patrolling, and security practice were on the schedule during the month of February. Some of the units were selected to go to FORT BLISS for anti-aircraft firing. Many men were leaving to cadre new units or to join those already overseas. Replacements were being trained and absorbed into units of the division.

On 8 March 1944, the 44th Tank Battalion was relieved from assignment and the 714th Tank Battalion transferred in to take its place. Many of the personnel of the 714th were returning to the division after being separated from it during the reorganization.

In June the Division was scheduled for testing by the War Department to determine if a state of readiness for overseas existed. These tests were never completed. A few days later on 7 July, the 12th Armored Division was en route to CAMP BOWIE for retesting and the rest of July was spent in preparation for shipment overseas.

The Division moved to the NEW YORK PORT OF EMBARKATION where it engaged in a training program in preparation for the ocean voyage. Major General Roderick R. Allen assumed command of the division at this time.<sup>6</sup>

The next training for combat that the units received was in and around TIDWORTH BARRACKS, the spring board for American armored divisions en route to the Continent. Maintenance sections and tank crews were now servicing the new Ford tank engine. Other troops were cleaning and processing new but familiar equipment.<sup>7</sup>

Movement to the Continent and to an area in the Ninth Army zone was accomplished by 22 November 1944. Events soon ended this attachment for, on 27 November, the Division was alerted for an unexpected move to the Seventh Army. By the time of this alert an advance party of officers had observed the combat techniques and tactics of the 2d Armored Division in order to become better prepared for combat with the Ninth Army.<sup>8</sup>

In December the 12th Armored Division participated in combat as described in Chapter 1. The units then took inventory and pushed efforts to work out the answers to problems that had arisen on the battlefield and might be expected to arise again. Tactics were discussed by officers and key non-commissioned officers. Orientations concerning the Seventh Army zone were presented to every man. Communication difficulties had been encountered and efforts were made to find means to overcome them. The art of laying communication lines was revived and units began to depend more and more upon this type of communication.<sup>9</sup>

The year ended with the division undergoing a training program stressing the lessons learned in battle and orienting the new replacements. The 56th Armored Infantry Battalion and the 714th Tank Battalion, the two units to be most heavily engaged during the period of this study, were training near the town of LINDRA HAUTE.<sup>10</sup>

NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

1. Speed Is The Password, booklet issued by the Orientation Branch, Information and Education Division, Hq USFET, p 5.
2. Op cit, A History of The United States Twelfth Armored Division, p 16.
3. Ibid; p 16.
4. Ibid; p 18.
5. Ibid; p 19.
6. Ibid; p 22.
7. Ibid; p 23.
8. Ibid; p 24.
9. Ibid; p 31.
10. Jerome K. Sherrow, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim by the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion and the 714th Tank Battalion of the 12th Armored Division, manuscript material obtained from interviews supplemented by organizational journals. (Nordlingen, Germany; C. H. Beck) p 1.

## CHAPTER 3

### PREPARATION AND PLANS

At the end of 1944 the 12th Armored Division was in SHAEF reserve near the village of DIEUZE west of the VOSGES. On 6 January this status was changed by Seventh Army orders alerting the Division. Events concerning this change in status were described in Chapter 1. Information received by the Division was that VI Corps had a mission to be accomplished and that the Division would furnish one combat command. Headquarters of the Division asked for more information concerning the expected operation in order to send a more effective combination of combat elements. The only information received was that one combat command, accompanied by a tank destroyer battalion, would move east of the VOSGES. A balanced combat command, composed of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion and the 714th Tank Battalion with supporting elements, was ordered to the town of HOCHFELDEN.<sup>1</sup> The former Chief of Staff of the 12th Armored Division stated as follows:

Few if any higher commands under whom the Division served were aware of the fact that the organization of a combat command is flexible. Most were under the impression that an armored division was organized as is an infantry division; that is, with three combat teams or combat commands. For example, on more than one occasion, in fact on several occasions, as Chief of Staff I received from higher headquarters to furnish a combat command for specific detached missions. In answer to my question, "General, what composition do you desire in this combat command?" the answer was invariably "An ordinary combat command." When I replied "General, there is no such thing. Do you want this one heavy in armor or heavy in infantry?" the usual answer was, occasionally with a bit of added profanity, "You have three, send one." As matters developed, this became so ordinary or so usual I estimate today most people feel that a combat command is a definite type unit of fixed composition.<sup>2</sup>

Upon receipt of the order to move, Combat Command B, commanded by

Colonel Charles V. Bromley made the march to HOCHFELDEN arriving at the town on the morning of 7 January. The disposition of the tank destroyer battalion that accompanied Combat Command B has not been definitely determined; however, it did not participate as a part of the combat command.

On 7 January Combat Command B joined the 79th Infantry Division, which was then engaged in fighting in the BISCHWEILER, DRUSENHEIM, and WEYERSHEIM area near the RHINE River. Following this attachment, Combat Command B next moved to the town of BISCHWEILER where it was to establish a command post for the coming attack on HERRLISHEIM.<sup>3</sup>

Colonel Bromley had organized his command as follows:

Task Force Power (Lt. Col. PHELAN Commanding)  
714th Tank Battalion (- Company B)  
Company C 56th Armored Infantry Battalion

Task Force Rammer (Lt. Col. INGRAM Commanding)  
56th Armored Infantry Battalion (- Company C)  
Company B 714th Tank Battalion

Combat Command Troops  
Headquarters and Headquarters Company  
Company B, 119th Engineer Battalion  
494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion

On the morning of 8 January, Task Force Rammer was entering the village of KURTZENHAUSEN and Task Force Power was about two miles south moving into the town of WEYERSHEIM. Immediately after arriving in their respective areas, both units received word that they would attack the town of HERRLISHEIM from the north. Time of the attack was to be 1000 and the attack positions were to be just west of the town of RCHRWEILER. It was expected that elements of the French 2d Armored Division were to make a simultaneous attack on GAMBSHEIM, south of HERRLISHEIM. Elements of the 79th Infantry Division were to make a demonstration against

DRUSENHEIM to the northeast. Company B of the 119th was to be used to facilitate the advance of the two task forces.

The preceding plan for the attack by Combat Command B seems to have been based largely on an intelligence estimate that the number of Germans in the HERRLISHEIM-DRUSENHEIM area numbered between 800 and 1200 soldiers from many organizations. Also it was established that anti-aircraft protection was heavy and that friendly observer-type planes were practically excluded from the area. The exact location of enemy positions was unknown or at best, vague.

Task Force Rammer's original plan of attack was to use Company A of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion to lead, followed by Company B of the 714th Tank Battalion. The Mortar Platoon of Headquarters Company of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion was to support the attack from positions near ROHRWEILER.

Task Force Power was to deploy near ROHRWEILER, with the attached Company C of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion prepared to move east with the initial mission of protecting the east flank of Task Force Rammer. As soon as HERRLISHEIM was seized, Company C would then move south, pass along the eastern edge of the town and continue the attack. Company C was then to capture the town of OFFENDORF and eventually, to effect a junction with the French forces advancing from the GAMBSHEIM area, thus cutting the enemy routes of withdrawal.<sup>4</sup>

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#### NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

1. Op cit, A History of The United States Twelfth Armored Division, p. 35.

2. Letter, W. H. BARNES, Col GSC, 12 January 1950; p 3.
3. Op cit, HISTORY of the United States Twelfth Armored Division,  
p 37.
4. Op cit, passim, Initial Assault On Herrlisheim.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE COMBAT COMMAND ATTACKS (7-9 January 1945)

Task Force Rammer moved in column with Company B, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, as the leading element. The Heavy Machine Gun Platoon of Headquarters Company, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, was attached to Company B. The remainder of the column consisted of Company A, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, followed by Company B, 714th Tank Battalion, and Headquarters Company, less its Heavy Machine Gun Platoon, was the last element. This order was continued until the force reached BISCHWEILER (M). At BISCHWEILER Companies A and B, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, dismounted from their vehicles to continue the march on foot.<sup>1</sup> It was soon discovered that vehicles could be brought closer to a proposed assembly area in the vicinity of RCHRWILLER (M). The two units then remounted and continued the march. The Reconnaissance platoon, which should have led the column and reconnoitered the route, marched at the rear of the column.

During the course of the delay, Headquarters Company, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, passed from the rear of the column to the head and continued on the way. This unit, led by its Reconnaissance Platoon, arrived at an assembly area in the vicinity of RCHRWILLER (M) at approximately 0930. Headquarters Company organized a command post. The Assault Gun and Mortar Platoons took up firing positions in the vicinity of the town.<sup>2</sup>

In the meantime Task Force Power passed through Task Force Rammer during the delay at BISCHWEILER. Company C, 714th Tank Battalion, was leading followed by Company A, 714th Tank Battalion minus its 3d Platoon.

Company D, 714th Tank Battalion, was following Company A of the same organization. Company C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion had left its vehicles in WEYERSHEIM and was riding on the tanks of Companies A and C, 714th Tank Battalion. The Anti-Tank Platoon of Company C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, rode their own vehicles at the rear of the column. The 3d Platoon Company C, 714th Tank Battalion, had been attached to the 92d Cavalry Reconnaissance Battalion at WEYERSHEIM.<sup>3</sup>

After passing through Task Force Rammer, Task Force Power moved toward ROHRWILLER (M). However, as the unit approached ROHRWILLER it was discovered that a bridge east of the town had been destroyed. At this point the force swung east and south to the main road (M) and from there moved across a field (M) in order to utilize a good bridge at the northern edge of the town of ROHRWILLER (M). After this move the task force reached an assembly area in the vicinity of the town at approximately 0930 hours.

Company C, 714th Tank Battalion, was left on the eastern edge of the town of ROHRWILLER (M). The two platoons of Company A, 714th Tank Battalion, proceeded to the western edge of town where they were met by Lieutenant Colonel Phelan, the commanding officer of Task Force Power. Lieutenant Colonel Phelan displaced these two platoons in the northern part of ROHRWILLER (M) with orders to take advantage of the cover afforded by the buildings in that locality. The 1st Platoon was ordered to cover the area to the northeast and the 2d the area to the southwest. These platoons remained in the area of these positions until 1400 hours.<sup>4</sup> He ordered Company D, 714th Tank Battalion, into positions on the northeastern edge of BISCHWEILER (M) and told the company to remain there on call in case it was needed in any phase of the coming attack. In compliance with

this order, the company commander deployed the platoons on line with fifty yards interval between platoons. The plan of employment was that the 1st Platoon of this organization would service the 714th Tank Battalion, the 2d Platoon would service the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, and the 3d Platoon would constitute a reserve at OBERHOFEN. (M) 5

At this time the actual combat strength of Task Force Power consisted of one full strength medium tank company, one full strength armored infantry company, one medium tank company less a platoon, and one light tank company destined for use as a service unit.

In the meantime Lieutenant Colonel Ingram was organizing the units of Task Force Rammer. Companies A and B, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, were in an assembly area southwest of ROHRWILLER (M) and Company B, 714th Tank Battalion, was in an assembly area southeast of BISCHWEILER (M).<sup>6</sup> The original mission of Task Force Rammer was to attack almost frontally toward HERRLESHEIM (M). Task Force Power was to be in close support of Task Force Rammer and attack from the north.

The key to the success of this coordinated attack was the bridges in the area. Unless the bridge (F-M, D) was intact a coordinated attack could not be made. Apparently there had been no prior bridge reconnaissance of this area.

Task Force Power dispatched a patrol consisting of the 2d Platoon, Company C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, at approximately 1020 hours. This patrol was to determine the condition of bridges over the ZORN River. It should be noted that this was twenty minutes after the original attack was to have been launched.

The patrol successfully crossed a foot bridge across the MODER

River (D) and another footbridge (D-M) without delay or mishap. The patrol was moving toward LA BREYMUHL (O). As the platoon crossed this second bridge, the platoon leader, Lieutenant Russel, looked ahead and saw that the first bridge (E-M, D) at LA BREYMUHL was intact. Upon seeing this the platoon leader sent back the erroneous information that the key bridge (F-M,D) was intact.<sup>7</sup>

The patrol was held up by a fire fight and did not enter the area of LA BREYMUHL (O) until 1100 hours. At that time the platoon leader realized his mistake and radioed the commander of Task Force Power that the key bridge (F-M, D) was out and passage for tanks was impossible. To further complicate things this platoon found tanks of Company B, 47th Tank Battalion, 14th Armored Division, and Company L, 314th Infantry Regiment, 79th Infantry Division, fighting in the area.<sup>8</sup>

As soon as word was received that the bridges were impassable the plan of attack was changed. This change provided for the infantry to make the attack on HERRLISHEIM from the north supported by tank fire from west of the ZORN River (M).

Prior to the adoption of this change of the original plan attempts had been made to lower the water in the ZORN River by means of wells in the area. This effort had been unsuccessful.

By 1430 hours all units had been notified of the new plans, and Company B, 714th Tank Battalion, was moved from its positions in the vicinity of BISCHWEILER (M) to positions southwest of RCHRWEILER (M) in order to support the infantry attack when it got under way.<sup>9</sup>

Companies A and C, 714th Tank Battalion, were to support the attack of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion from selected positions

west of HERRLESHEIM (M). The Assault Gun Platoon, 714th Tank Battalion, was to give additional support from positions in the same area.<sup>10</sup> These fires were to be into the center of HERRLESHEIM.

The new mission for Company C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, was to relieve its 2d platoon in the water works. This was the platoon that had been sent out as the patrol to determine the condition of the bridges. However, for some reason the remainder of Company C withdrew to ROHRWILLER (M) and the relief of the platoon was not to be effected until after dark.

At approximately 1530 hours the newly planned attack moved out. Company B, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, was to move along the road southeast from ROHRWILLER (M) with its right flank guiding along the creek. Company A was to come abreast of Company B and secure their left flank. As soon as this junction was made the combined force of the two infantry companies was to approach HERRLESHEIM (M) in a skirmish formation with platoons abreast. This attack was to move across the field (D) between the ZORN River and the creek (M).

The 1st Platoon, Company B, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, crossed the bridges (C, D-M) without difficulty. However the 2d and 3d Platoons of the company suffered casualties from artillery and mortar fire.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, after crossing the bridges the company was held up for approximately one-half hour just out of LA BREYMUHL (O) while the 2d Platoon, of Company C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, was engaging in a brief skirmish from within the water works. Company B finally moved out again, but as it entered the alley way, after crossing the bridge (E-M, D) confusion resulted. This confusion was due to the fact that

when the 1st Platoon passed through the water works, the 2d and 3d Platoons, mistaking the 2d Platoon of Company C for their 1st Platoon, joined the 2d Platoon of Company C in the building (2-M) and took up firing positions at the windows.

In the meantime Company B, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, had engaged in a brief skirmish with some German Infantry who were trying to set up some machine gun positions in the fields south of the water works (D).

At approximately 0130 hours, 9 January, Company B and the 2d Platoon of Company A were ordered to move back to the buildings within the water works. This was accomplished without interference from the enemy.

In the meantime Company C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, had moved the remainder of its company to rejoin its 2d Platoon within the water works. This move was made under the cover of darkness and no casualties occurred.

The withdrawal of these units, plus the arrival of Company C, at the water works, made a total of four infantry companies within this crowded area. These included Company L, 314th Infantry Regiment, 79th Infantry Division; and Companies A, B, and C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion. Apparently unit integrity was lost as parts of all these units occupied the northernmost building of the water works (X, X-D). Other elements of these companies were occupying a private house across the road. The Machine Gun Platoon of Headquarters Company, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, with two platoons of Company B and scattered elements of the same organization moved into the building (M-2) over the ZORN

River (O). Machine guns were mounted in the four windows of room number 2 of building (3-D), and guards were placed in the courtyard.

In the meantime, tanks had given the infantry fire support from positions west of the ZORN River. The tanks had set up a perimeter defense across the river.

So far as can be determined no effort or plan was made to regain tactical unity of the companies which were in LA BREYMUHL.

After a quiet period of one hours duration, about 090330 January, enemy activity started in the vicinity of the water works (D). Shelling and movements were heard outside of the buildings in the darkness, also there was the sound of tanks approaching from the southwest. The previously posted guards were forced to take cover from mortar fire on the courtyard (D).

Following the mortar shelling a group of Germans came through the orchard (D) on the eastern side of the wall. They surrounded the courtyard and started throwing concussion type grenades over the wall; however little damage was caused. Elements in LA BREYMUHL returned to the courtyard and started throwing grenades at the Germans. They also shot a few of the Germans as they came around the wall. In the meantime, a group of Germans had moved into the barn (D) to the southwest and were firing across the road into the courtyard.

During this activity the Heavy Machine Gun Platoon, Headquarters Company, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, was divided into two sections. The 1st Section was further divided into two squads. One squad was placed near the road between the two buildings (D) in order to stop infiltration around the west side of the courtyard. This squad fired along

the road for about twenty minutes, until an enemy tank forced it to move further to the north. The other squad of the 1st Section was emplaced at the northwest corner of the water works building (D) to fire southeast across the creek. The 2d Section of the Heavy Machine Gun Platoon remained in place at the windows in building (2-D) in order to effect protecting fires to the east.

About 090430 January, two enemy tanks approached along each side of the road just west of LA BREYMUHL (D) and started shelling the water works building. As these tanks were forced to shoot over a seven foot stone wall (D) between themselves and the building, they could only bring effective fire on the upper portions of the building. One of the tanks moved up to the west side of the courtyard and blew a hole in the building wall. Riflemen and a light machine gun were placed at this hole in the wall to prevent enemy infiltration through the hole. This position afforded the light machine gun a field of fire to the southwest in the direction of the enemy occupied barn (D). At about the same time another enemy tank fired into the bridge site (D) where the 40th Engineer Combat Regiment had been attempting to put in a Bailey Bridge. A volunteer went to the doorway in the courtyard (D) and fired a bazooka disabling this enemy tank. Under cover of enemy artillery fire another enemy tank came up and pulled the disabled tank back to the southwest toward HERRLISHEIM.

At 090500 January, many German voices could be heard over the courtyard wall (D). More men were placed in position in the courtyard at once but were forced back into the water works building by enemy hand grenades. A heavy artillery concentration, placed by the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, along the southern edge of the water works,

assisted in repelling the enemy tank and infantry counterattack.

By daylight the counterattack has been repelled, the enemy tanks had withdrawn, and many Germans had surrendered. The troops at the water works continued to fire on the enemy who had withdrawn to previously prepared foxholes to the east.<sup>12</sup>

Had the Germans known or realized the weakness of the defensive dispositions of the American Troops, in that the positions which had been prepared were inadequate to defend the water works, their counterattack might have been successful.

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#### NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

1. Op cit, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim, p 3.
2. Ibid, p 3.
3. Ibid, p 5.
4. Ibid, p 5.
5. Ibid, p 6.
6. Ibid, p 2.
7. Ibid, p 7.
8. Ibid, p 7.
9. Ibid, p 16.
10. Ibid, p 17.
11. Ibid, p 18.
12. Ibid, p 26.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE SECOND ATTEMPT

During the early hours of the morning of 9 January, Combat Command B drew up plans for the attack on HERRLISHEIM. Major F. P. Fields, executive officer of Task Force Power, notified Company C of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion that it was no longer attached to the 714th Tank Battalion and had reverted to 56th Armored Infantry Battalion control.<sup>1</sup>

Major E. S. Livaudais, S-3 of Task Force Rammer, informed his units that the plan called for Companies A and B of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion to again lead the attack with Company B moving out from LA BREYMUHL at 0605 hours, having ten minutes to clear the water works. Company A would follow and then come abreast of Company B on its west (right) flank. Both companies were to be at the northern edge of HERRLISHEIM by dawn and would immediately push to take it, clearing their respective sectors to the south. Upon entering HERRLISHEIM, Company B was to cross to the east, over the stream running through HERRLISHEIM while Company A remained on the west side of this stream. Company C of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, after moving to the town as closely behind Companies A and B as possible, was to mop up in their rear.<sup>2</sup>

While Companies A and C of the 714th Tank Battalion would be in the fields west of HERRLISHEIM firing into the town giving support to the infantry closing on the town, Company B of the 714th Tank Battalion, at daylight, would cross over the Bailey bridge which would be ready at the water works (F-M, D). They would then follow the infantry along

the axis of the road from LA BREYMUHL to HERRLISHEIM giving them close fire support. In case the bridge was not in, Company B would join Companies A and C and assist them in their mission. It was this alternate plan that had to be followed when at approximately 090400 January, Captain Leehman, commanding officer of Company B, found that no attempt was being made to install the bridge because of surrounding enemy activity. This bridge was not completed until 1600 hours, 9 January.<sup>3</sup>

On the morning of the attack, the 3d Platoon, Company A, 714th Tank Battalion, having been relieved from attachment to the 92nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, rejoined its company on the left of the second platoon. It was ordered by Lieutenant Colonel Phelan, commander of Task Force Power, to move as close to the ZORN River as possible to cover the area to the east and northeast.<sup>4</sup> Here the platoon observed German machine guns and tanks (X-M) firing at the infantry as they left LA BREYMUHL for HERRLISHEIM; however, they could not fire at the enemy because Company B, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, at this time (sometime after 1030 hours) masked the platoon's fire by passing directly in front of them.

Prior to this, the remainder of Company A, 714th Tank Battalion, moved to the curve of the ZORN River just west of the town to provide direct fire into its southern half. From this position the company could see some movement in the STAINWALD WOODS. They knew that French forces were supposed to be moving up in that direction; however, to insure security the 1st Platoon of Company A was arched around to face the STAINWALD WOODS. The 2d platoon took up a position on the 1st platoon's left (east) flank to provide security toward the east and north (M).<sup>5</sup>

Before Company A moved to fire into HERRLISHEIM, Company C, 714th

Tank Battalion, having moved into positions of the late afternoon before, captured approximately 50 Germans retreating westward from the outskirts of HERRLISHEIM. Company C fired slowly into the town. They gradually shifted their fire to the south as Company B, 714th Tank Battalion, moved across their front and the infantry neared the northern edge of HERRLISHEIM. Thereafter they ceased firing when Company B took up firing positions directly in front of them.

Company B, 714th Tank Battalion, moved out from LA BREYMUHL at about 1030 hours to the area just west of HERRLISHEIM to support the infantry's attack. Inasmuch as the bridge had not been built and the tanks could not cross the ZORN River, they kept pace with the infantry by moving down on the west side of the ZORN. The platoons leapfrogged southward keeping as close to the western edge of the river as possible. Due west of town they fired at enemy foxholes that were all about them on the west bank of the ZORN, and at a pill box (EE-M). Twenty-five prisoners surrendered but the pill box proved to be empty. At this time the 2d Platoon of Company B was on line facing the south and the 3d Platoon, its tanks abreast, swung around directly at HERRLISHEIM firing into the southern edge of town. With these two platoons in position, the 1st platoon went into position above the third.

As Company B took up its firing position and the infantry entered the town, they lost contact with each other. Lieutenant Colonel Ingram, commander of Task Force Rammer, had Captain Leehman reconnoiter the bridge just at the southwest edge of the town, but it was found to be badly damaged. At about 1600 hours Captain Leehman found that the Bailey bridge at LA BREYMUHL was passable, whereupon Lieutenant Colonel Ingram

ordered Company B, 714th Tank Battalion, into HERRLISHEIM at once.<sup>6</sup> The first platoon was to cover the second and third as they moved up the road (FF-M) and then through the water works.

It was now dusk and all the 714th Tank Battalion had been resupplied with ammunition, food and water from OBERHOFEN, by the light tanks of the 1st Platoon, Company D, 714th Tank Battalion.

At this time enemy tanks and antitank guns in excellent defilade behind the main road running southwest out of the town opened fire at all three of the tank companies. They succeeded in knocking out one of the Company C tanks. Company C immediately started moving to the rear with only the front of the tanks facing the enemy fire in order to present the smallest target possible. They also returned fire, but it was impossible to hit any of the well hidden German guns or tanks below the road embankment (GG-M) where only their muzzles partly protruded.

Company B encountered heavy fire as they moved north to LA BREY-MUHL to cross the Bailey bridge. Four tanks were lost as the company moved broadside. Seeing the disorderly condition of his company, Captain Leehman asked for and received permission to take his company west of RCHRWEILER to reorganize. Here they received mortar fire that killed one man and wounded others.

As Companies A and C employed smoke and fire in an attempt to cover the withdrawal of Company B, four tanks of Company A were hit but not permanently disabled. Under the cover of darkness, Companies A and C withdrew to reorganize in an assembly area (KK-M) where a perimeter defense was established for the night. Here Lieutenant Colonel Phelan consolidated them.

Company C received word that sometime during the night a bridge would be erected over the ZORN River (L-M) over which their tanks were to cross; however, the bridge was never built.

During the night 9-10 January plans were formulated by Lieutenant Colonel Phelan for Companies B and C, 714th Tank Battalion to attack HERRLISHEIM the following day.

While Task Force Power was experiencing its difficulties, Task Force Rammer had gone into action.

Company B, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, with its platoons well dispersed in platoon column, got its attack underway at 1030 hours instead of 0605 hours as originally planned, and then only after Lieutenant Colonel Ingram arrived to get the company on its way.<sup>7</sup> This delay was caused by the enemy situation at LA BREYMUHL. As the company's left (east) flank guided on the creek into HERRLISHEIM, the company received small-arms automatic weapons fire from the southeast (R-M) and severe 120-mm mortar fire as it moved into the open field (D), where it sustained heavy casualties. Upon reaching two stone buildings (Y-M), the company again received enemy small-arms and machine-gun fire from the edge of town and moved in a southwesterly direction to escape this fire. It ceased when the company reached a gully (DD-M), whereupon Company B received white phosphorous rounds from their own mortars. Upon reaching the area where the road and stream almost meet (LL-M), the company held up for a short period of time near the buildings at the outskirts of town. Here it received intermittent enemy machine-gun fire. As a result of this action since leaving LA BREYMUHL, over half of Company B was either killed or wounded.

During this time, the light tanks from the 1st Platoon of Company D, 714th Tank Battalion, were evacuating the wounded. One of these tanks was knocked out by 120-mm mortar fire as it waited to cross the bridge at LA BREYMUHL.

The Heavy Machine Gun Platoon of Headquarters Company, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, moved out after Company B. At this time the 714th Tank Battalion tanks were firing from across the ZORN eastward at the dug-in enemy. Guiding on the road to HERRLISHEIM and under the cover of an artillery smoke screen, the Heavy Machine Gun Platoon moved on to a ditch (O-O) where it was ready to outpost the town.

Thirty-five men of Company B entered HERRLISHEIM at approximately 1300 hours. They proceeded on their mission of moving over the concrete vehicular bridge and clearing the eastern area of the town.

At about 1500 hours, very disorganized and having only its light machine-gun squad and a few riflemen, the company was ordered to pull back and be replaced by Company C. Company B moved into a house along the westernmost road (C-O). Its communications with battalion were lost, and Captain Drass, last named in charge of all infantry in HERRLISHEIM, directed that the company spend the night in defense of what it had.<sup>8</sup> The company took up positions in houses along the road (E-O).

The Antitank Platoon of Company B that had been guarding the bridge near ROHRWEILER (D-M) was directed by battalion to move to HERRLISHEIM to reinforce the remainder of its company. It moved via a route west of the ZORN River to a foot bridge (PP-M) where it crossed the river and turned north to join the company at its command post.

Company A, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, moved out a few minutes

after Company B and the Heavy Machine Gun Platoon, but met relatively light enemy fire. They moved alongside Company B's right (west) flank, extending in a skirmish line almost to the ZORN River. The first and second platoons were abreast and the third platoon in support. They captured eight prisoners up to this time and finally halted (MM-M) half way to HERRLISHEIM to wait for Company B, who had fallen behind. Battalion ordered Company A to pivot around to the southeast and enter the town just west of the creek, while the 714th Tank Battalion tanks fired into HERRLISHEIM from across the river.<sup>9</sup> Company A advanced intending to secure the northwest part of town and then continue southward. It was to clean out its respective sector and meet Company B at the point where the creek ran out (BB-M), there to await further orders.

The first four corners at the western edge of HERRLISHEIM had previously been designated as four separate phase lines (O). Upon reaching each one, Company A was ordered to radio this information back to the battalion command post at BISCHWEILER, which would thereby know the progress being made; however, the platoons never were able to get in contact with the battalion command post.

At approximately 1230 hours the company entered the town, but found that its SCR-300 and 509 radios were inoperative. A similar situation was to develop for Companies B and C. Since no tanks were able to get into town that day or night, the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion and Combat Command B were to be completely out of communication with its infantry units in HERRLISHEIM until the morning of 10 January. A contact party was sent to find Company B but was unsuccessful as Company B had not as yet entered HERRLISHEIM.

Company A, with its 2d Platoon leading, entered the northern tip of the town (B-O) and worked from the westernmost north-south road (O) to the next north-south street (O). The 1st Platoon entered just below the second (A-O), moved down the same road but cleared in the opposite direction to the west, both platoons working abreast. Few prisoners were captured as the platoons were to move through HERRLISHEIM as quickly as possible. Many enemy machine-gun and antitank positions with excellent fields of fire were set up in the sector but were abandoned by their crews.

The 3d Platoon entered the town when the 2d Platoon had reached the first east-west road (C-O) and it worked sideways to take in areas of both platoons. An enemy machine-gun in a house (L-O) was knocked out by 60-mm mortar fire, the only light mortar fire employed during the entire operation because observation across the creek was impossible.

The company's progress was impeded when its personnel carriers were confronted with a Mark IV tank facing them down the first street (O). After a half hour the tank withdrew, and the company moved on, encountering enemy infantry and more Mark IV tanks. Platoons were losing contact with each other, and snipers were taking their toll.

At approximately 091600 January Company A's platoons asked the company commander for more ammunition and requested him to call for artillery fire by map coordinates on enemy strong points east of the creek. Since Company A was not expected to cross the creek in HERRLISHEIM until Company B was in place to give it support, Company A withdrew to the vicinity of phase line number 4 (O) to reorganize and set up in houses for defense of the northwestern part of HERRLISHEIM that night. Captain Drass, the company commander, intended to consolidate the battalion in the morning

and continue the attack if no further orders were forthcoming.<sup>10</sup>

Company C of Task Force Rammer in reserve was to follow Company A at such distance as to allow contact with its rear and yet not come under any fire that Company A might draw. However, when Lieutenant Colonel Ingram got the attack under way, he ordered Company C to remain at LA BREYMUHL until ordered to move.<sup>11</sup>

At approximately 1200 hours, Company C moved out and by leapfrogging and rushing a squad at a time, it was in HERRLISHEIM at about 1430 hours, having suffered only two casualties. It moved into the town along the ditch (O-O) and crossed over to the eastern side of the road where it met Captain Drass. He assigned the company the mission previously designated for Company B and had it take the left (east) flank and move along the creek until it was abreast of Company A. After completing this mission, the company set up its defensive position along with Companies A and B for the night.

Earlier in the afternoon and during this operation, the 2d Platoon of Company D, 714th Tank Battalion, evacuated wounded from HERRLISHEIM by moving down along the west bank of the ZORN River and using the foot bridge (PP-M) to get into town. The wounded were carried to this foot bridge, loaded on the tanks and evacuated to RCHWEILER.

At approximately 1930 hours, these same light tanks brought food and other items to the foot bridge (PP-M). Attempts were made to communicate with the infantry in HERRLISHEIM by radio but to no avail, nor could personal contact be established because of friendly small-arms fire during hours of darkness. The food and other items were unloaded and placed on the ground nearby and the light tanks withdrew in the face of what appeared

to be a German attack from the northeast.

At 092030 January, Battalion Headquarters of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion tried to send a radio equipped reconnaissance platoon into HERRLISHEIM to contact the infantry and establish radio communications with the battalion command post.<sup>12</sup> This patrol crossed the foot bridge (PP-M) and immediately became engaged in a fire fight with ten Germans. The patrol captured two and killed the rest. At this time the patrol learned from several infantrymen who had escaped from the northern edge of HERRLISHEIM that everyone in town was cut off and surrounded and that it was impossible to get in from the foot bridge because troops had orders to shoot at any moving object. This information coupled with the illumination of the ground in the immediate area, caused by the burning buildings, induced all of them to abandon the thought of entering HERRLISHEIM.

The party returned safely to BISCHWEILER, but their unsuccessful trip coupled with the information brought back, threw the forward command post of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion at the western edge of ROHRWEILER (U-M) into a state of great confusion. Lieutenant Colonel Ingram ordered the formation of a rescue party, requested permission from Combat Command B to send this party to HERRLISHEIM to bring in radios and evacuate the wounded, but Combat Command B denied this request.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the night the infantry companies in HERRLISHEIM, cut off and with no communications with battalion, were subjected to constant German combat patrol raids. The infantrymen, outnumbered and surrounded, could not make their own positions known. They were at a distinct disadvantage because they had no supporting armor, whereas enemy tanks roamed

the streets and shot up houses at will. With the coming of dawn, the enemy infiltrations ceased.

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NOTES FOR CHAPTER 5

1. Op cit, Initial Assault On Herrlisheim, p 28.
2. Ibid, p 28.
3. Ibid, p 29.
4. Ibid, p 29.
5. Ibid, p 29.
6. Ibid, p 30.
7. Ibid, p 33.
8. Ibid, p 42.
9. Ibid, p 35.
10. Ibid, p 40.
11. Ibid, p 36.
12. Ibid, p 47.
13. Ibid, p 49.

## CHAPTER 6

### FINAL ATTACK AND WITHDRAWAL

After the chaotic night of 9 January the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion tried to reestablish contact with the units out of communication with each other and with the battalion command group in ROHWILLER. No one was certain whether the units in HERRLISHEIM were intact, wiped out, or had suffered heavy casualties and were ineffective. B Company, 714th Tank Battalion, was reorganized near ROHWILLER, having lost four tanks the previous afternoon. At 100200 January, Lieutenant Colonel Ingram, who commanded Task Force Rammer, called Captain Leehman, Commanding Officer of Company B, 714th Tank Battalion, to BISCHWEILER and ordered him to move his company immediately to HERRLISHEIM to contact whatever units were still there and have them withdraw from the town under the protection of his tanks.<sup>1</sup> It is not known whether Lieutenant Colonel Ingram received these orders from Combat Command B or whether he made the decision on his own initiative. The former is presumed to be more likely. The situation in the town was still vague and confused as communication among the units was still lost and higher headquarters knew neither where these units were located nor how many had become casualties.

In compliance with this order Captain Leehman moved his company out at approximately 0400. In order that his tanks would not lose contact during the move he had them move forward in a close, bunched-up formation. The third platoon was in the lead with its tanks abreast; then the second followed with four tanks; and the first with its three tanks brought up

the rear. After crossing the Bailey Bridge at the water works (O), his company cut sharply to the southwest, and hugged the east side of the ZORN River to keep away from the road, any part of which the enemy could cover with heavy fire from antitank guns emplaced along the DRUSENHEIM--HERRLISHEIM highway (M).

Just at daybreak, about 0600,<sup>2</sup> the tanks entered the west edge of HERRLISHEIM, moving to the fourth street corner (Phase line No 4-0) where they stayed within the cover of the surrounding houses. Captain Leehman was not certain which part of the town his tank company was occupying, nor where the infantry forces in the town were. He therefore decided that, accompanied by another tank to cover his movement, he would reconnoiter up and down the main street (O). While on this reconnaissance he spotted an enemy tank at (AA-0) and knocked it out at almost point blank range. He shouted as he moved along, hoping to contact the infantry forces; but because of their harrowing experiences of the night before the infantry concealed in the houses did not answer. He did spot figures running in the opposite direction and called them, but they were probably Germans who had seen his tanks and were escaping. Finally, he did contact one American soldier at the second corner (Z-0) who led him to Company A, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion. There he met Captain Drass, Commanding Officer of Company A, who told him that the infantry was occupying only the northwest part of the town. Captain Leehman immediately moved his tanks to that vicinity in order to protect them from enemy infiltration. The tanks were located off the road and scattered along side the houses between Phase Lines Nos. 1 and 3. Here they were to provide fire support when the haze lifted. Captain Leehman

then radioed Combat Command B and stated that he had found the units in HERRLISHEIM and requested that they all be allowed to withdraw believing that there were insufficient forces to hold the town. Combat Command B ordered all units to remain there.

While Captain Leehman and Company B of the 74th were trying to locate the units in HERRLISHEIM, Lieutenant Cook, in OBERHOFEN, was ordered by Lieutenant Colonel Ingram to pick up Captain Maddock, Lieutenant Jacobs, and 19 infantrymen and transport them to HERRLISHEIM as reinforcements. These reinforcements were requested by Captain Leehman by radio as he was riding up and down the street searching for the lost units in the town. He felt that this infantry could help him locate the lost units, and also give his tanks protection in case the rest of the force in the town had been wiped out. This request was relayed by Lieutenant Colonel Ingram to Headquarters, Combat Command B, who granted the request. Lieutenant Cook was told to transport the reinforcements only as far as the foot bridge (PP-M) and then protect them from the rear side as they continued into the town.

As the tanks approached the foot bridge they dismounted and discovered that the Germans had destroyed the bridge during the night except for one twisted stringer and a hand rail. These remnants of the bridge were deemed to be of sufficient strength to permit the passage of infantry if they crossed one at a time, and very carefully. Evidence of the fact that the enemy had been there during the night was the removal of ten dead Germans who had been noted the previous day on the east bank of the stream.

Captain Maddox divided his group into two sections and moved them

by leapfrog tactics into the town. Because of the reduced visibility the tanks were not required to fire in support and returned to RCHRWILLER by 0730. Meanwhile Captain Maddox's infantry reinforcements had reached Phase line No. 4 (O) by 0845. There Captain Maddox contacted Captain Leehman who had, in the meantime, contacted Captain Drass and his Company A, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion.

While Lieutenant Colonel Ingram and higher headquarters were making efforts to regain contact with the units in the town, those units were remaining under cover of the houses. Only essential wire-laying teams and messengers ventured into the streets and they were usually received by sniper or automatic weapon fire. Some mortar and artillery was falling in the town also. At 0600 a white phosphorous shell burned down the barn which housed one of the heavy machine guns of the first section of the Machine Gun Platoon of Headquarters Company and the gun was moved to another house which contained the other gun of the section. Later the whole section was moved to the Company C command post where the second section was already installed (X-0).

With the coming of dawn, the men did not venture outside, for, although the Germans had ceased their infiltration tactics, they continued to cover the numerous alleys which criss-crossed the northern part of HERRLISHEIM. Company C personnel firing to the east from positions in houses at (T and E-0) killed many Germans on the east side of the creek who carelessly exposed themselves, perhaps believing that the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion had already been wiped out.

At about 0700 the engineer company attached to Combat Command B received word that its personnel would move down into HERRLISHEIM to be

used as infantrymen in order to alleviate the understrength situation of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion. All necessary ammunition, small arms, machine guns, mines, and bazookas were quickly assembled and issued. With its platoons at full strength of 45 men each, Company B, 119th Armored Engineer Battalion, started out for HERRLISHEIM from OBERHOFEN.<sup>3</sup> Mounted in their five 2-1/2-ton trucks and five half-tracks they moved out in column down the south side of the MODER River until they reached a small patch of woods (XX-M), where the Company Commander, Captain Wilson, established a Command Post. There the three platoons dismounted and went down the dry AUGRABEN Creek bed, while artillery and mortar fire fell off to their east flank. As they approached the foot-bridge (PP-M), they stopped and lined up in single file. A reconnaissance party was sent out, which returned in a few minutes and reported that the bridge had been blown, except for the twisted iron trestle. The engineers used the same method in crossing the damaged bridge that had been used by Captain Maddox an hour before. The three platoons went over, the 1st, 2d, and 3d, in that order. Each platoon was equipped with a SCR-509 radio set. Haze and mist still hung in the air allowing the first platoon to reach HERRLISHEIM in the vicinity of Phase line No. 4 (O) without incident. However, just as the 2d platoon was about to cross, the haze lifted and the men were stopped by machine-gun fire from the southwest corner of the town. After about 10 minutes the men pushed on and reached the town where the 1st platoon was located. The 3d platoon, being the last to cross, suffered seven casualties before crossing the bridge, but finally joined the remainder of the company in HERRLISHEIM.

Captain Wilson, Company Commander of Company B, 119th Armored

Engineer Battalion, contacted the infantry units in HERRLISHEIM and reported to his own unit that the infantry was scattered to the north and the east of his position as far as the trail (O). Since his engineers were at the southmost point of friendly occupation within the town, exposed on all sides except the north, he quickly set up an all-round defense, the first platoon guarding to the west, the second to the north, and the third to the east. Lieutenant McConnell, one of the engineer platoon leaders, stated that the company established excellent defensive positions. Fox holes were dug by each individual at ten-foot intervals, mine fields were disposed to the south, and six medium tanks along the main street (O) were sited to cover the company from all directions.

Such were the dispositions of Combat Command B on the morning of the tenth. No one was aware of the German plan for that day, although everyone suspected that they would attempt another counterattack to drive out the elements in the town. All around the town the Germans had well-sited guns which took under fire any personnel or vehicles that attempted to enter or leave HERRLISHEIM.

Meanwhile in ROHRWILLER, plans were continuing to build up the force in the town and mount another attack. All except one company of the 714th Tank Battalion, Company B, was still on the west side of the ZORN River, and it was hoped that some means could be devised to bring these remaining companies in close supporting distance of the infantry in the town.

At 0800, Lieutenant Cook's light tanks, which had returned to ROHRWILLER after transporting the supporting infantry to HERRLISHEIM earlier in the morning, again was given the mission of returning to

HERRLISHEIM, this time transporting Lieutenant Colonel Ingram and five of his headquarters personnel plus Captain Harridge, Commanding Officer of Company D, 714th Tank Battalion.<sup>4</sup> The later wanted to familiarize himself with the route to the town in expectation of replacing Lieutenant Cook's light tanks with the third platoon. At this point, however a messenger came to the forward Command Post of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion from Company C, giving the location, dispositions, total strength, and, at that time, the casualties, and artillery fire plan for the night of 9-10 January. This messenger stated that another messenger was originally sent at 2315 but never got through. He himself was sent at 2345, and finally got through with the message. He was awarded the Silver Star for his efforts.<sup>5</sup> The message also included the supply needs of the units in HERRLISHEIM. In order to save time it was decided to send back Lieutenant Cook's platoon with the needed supplies. Captain Harridge decided to accompany this platoon in a tank from the third platoon.

In order for the infantry to get the supplies as quickly as possible, the five tanks took the direct route through the water works over the Bailey Bridge and on toward HERRLISHEIM. A short distance from LA BREYMUHL (O-M) the column was slowed by 75-mm HE fire. Lieutenant Cook's tank was hit and had to be driven off the road. The remaining four tanks continued on the HERRLISHEIM.

When Lieutenant Colonel Ingram came in to HERRLISHEIM at about 0930, he looked over the situation for about an hour and formulated a plan to continue the attack. (It is not clear whether he decided to attack on his own initiative or whether he was told to by Headquarters,

Combat Command B.) In any event, the plan called for Company C to cross the creek, recapture the houses they had taken the day before (U-0), and come up on line with Company A. Both companies would then make a coordinated attack south. Company B, because of its weakened condition, was to remain in reserve. Neutralization fire was planned to be fired by the artillery to eliminate the automatic fire which was sited at the bridge over the creek. This artillery fire plan was never put into effect, however, because of the proximity of the friendly infantry to the bridge. Captain Maddox was ordered to displace his 81-mm mortars and assault guns forward, closer to the town to better support the attack. In order to do this he decided to place them in a field west of the ZORN River (UU-M). Observers were to cross the foot bridges and observe for both the assault guns and mortars from an observation post in HERRLISHEIM.

The assault gun platoon half-track and three ammunition half-tracks got across the creek at about 1000, but the two M8 assault guns got mired when they broke through the ice. At the same time they received some fire at the crossing site, but neither was hit as the Germans apparently thought that they had been knocked out of action. Most of the fire was directed at Company A, 714th tanks across the ZORN River. However, the fire was of sufficient volume that further evacuation of the M8s was impossible. Captain Maddox arranged to have a wrecker move up and evacuate the M8s; however, this was not accomplished until late at night and then the assault guns were returned to ROHRWILLER.

While this activity was going on in Task Force Rammer, plans were being made by Lieutenant Colonel Phelan, Commanding Officer of Task

Force Power, to render more immediate assistance to those forces in HERRLISHEIM and thereby attempt to continue more successfully the attack of the combat command objective. Therefore, early on the morning of the tenth, Lieutenant Colonel Phelan directed Captain Harrington to take his Company A of medium tanks closer to the ZORN River. This company was at the time occupying a joint position with Company C, which they had held during the night. (KK-M). From this new position it was believed that the company could protect the flow of supplies, tanks, and personnel, into the town and thereby relieve some of the pressure and resume the attack. Company A was to cover the north and northeast areas of the town, the high banks of the roads leading from LA BREYMUHL and DRUSENHEIM, the railroad embankment, and the strong point in the field (X-M). Captain Harrington, in compliance with this order, moved his tanks to a position south and west of the waterworks (UU-M), the 1st and 2d platoons on line and the 3d slightly to the rear for support.

In the course of the morning, Captain Harrington actually moved only a few hundred yards due west from the position he had occupied the previous day. At about 1500, the tanks drew antitank fire and HE from well-concealed positions behind the embankment of the road leading northwest out of HERRLISHEIM. However, no damage was done to the tanks. At that moment, Captain Harrington was speaking to Major Fredrick P. Field, Executive Officer of the 714th Tank Battalion. He ordered Company A to move farther westward, out of range. Smoke grenades were used to screen the withdrawal and proved very successful as the company was not hit. The company backed up (through AA-M), between the KESSELGRABEN and AUGRABEN Creeks and set up in depth because of the narrow frontage. Later, at

dark, the 2d and 3d platoons returned to a position north of ROHRWILLER to refuel and replenish ammunition. The 1st platoon remained in place to act as guides for the troops which were to evacuate HERRLISHEIM later that night.

At 1010, Lieutenant Colonel Phelan left Combat Command B Headquarters, and visited Company C, with orders to Captain Clayton, the company commander, to move his tanks to HERRLISHEIM over the Bailey Bridge and along the road leading in from the northwest.<sup>6</sup> His company was to join the other units in the town in an attack. The move of Company C was covered to the east by Company A, and to the northeast, by Company B, who were already in the town. Only one platoon moved at the time to LA BREYMUHL; the 1st, 2d, and 3d with the assault gun platoon, in that order.

It was about 1100 when the company had cleared the Bailey Bridge. It continued in column as it moved down the west side of the road where the embankment offered some defilade. As it pulled in front of the town, three battalions of Division Artillery laid down a heavy smoke screen east of the tanks. In spite of this effective screen, however, the last platoon received antitank fire from the northeast corner (GG-M) just as it was entering the town. Luckily only one assault gun was lost as the remainder of the company closed up quickly as soon as the fire was heard, and moved off the streets (O) and along side houses and barns.

Within the town, just prior to this action were the remnants of three infantry companies and Company B of the 714th Tank Battalion. Lieutenant Colonel Ingram had just launched his attack with Company C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, as he had planned. At this point Captain

Leehman of Company B, 714th Tank Battalion, received a radio message from Major Livaudais, S-3 of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, telling him that everyone was to "sit tight", as Combat Command B was sending Lieutenant Colonel Phelan to take charge of the attack. Lieutenant Colonel Phelan entered HERRLISHEIM at about 1300 on one of Company C's, 714th Tank Battalion, leading tanks. On being informed of what was taking place and what had been planned by Lieutenant Colonel Ingram, he gave his approval, decided that the main attack would take place at 1400, and that his tanks and the engineers would participate. In conjunction with this attack plan the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion planned to put a five-minute artillery preparation 20 minutes prior to the attack on the north edge of STAINWALD WOODS, for the purpose of knocking out any enemy gun emplacements or any tanks or personnel that might be sent to reinforce the Germans in an around HERRLISHEIM. After that, at 1345, just prior to the attack, the artillery was going to lay down a 15-minute preparation on the southern end of the town to soften it up for the attack.

The plan also called for Company A of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion to move down the westernmost street in HERRLISHEIM (O) with Company B following the small trail. On reaching the end of this trail, Company B was to cross over and continue along the main road, joining Company C near the bridge. Each infantry company was to be supported by two medium tanks from Company B, 714th Tank Battalion. Captain Leehman planned to take the remainder of his tanks in the company, less one platoon, across the creek and form a defensive arc at the east edge of town protecting Company C, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, from the northeast, east, and southeast. As the attack progressed these tanks would keep pace

with it, except the one platoon which was to act as a rear guard. Captain Clayton's Company C was to be employed in the following manner: the first platoon would accompany Company A, 56th Armored Infantry Battalion, along the west edge of the town; the 2d platoon would be in the northwest corner of the town to cover the field (M) where German automatic weapons were suspected; and the 3d platoon would remain in its present position to act as a reserve.

Just before the attack jumped off (about 1340) German bazooka men infiltrated Company C, 714th Tank Battalion, and knocked out a few tanks. Also at about the same time, enemy artillery and mortar fire became so severe that the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion was reduced in a short time to approximately 150 men. Five enemy tanks were spotted behind the road embankment at the northeastern corner of the town (GG-M), but were not fired on. The enemy fire continued at an intense rate, and Lieutenant Colonel Phelan's Command Post had to be moved several times. Just a few minutes before the attack he and several other officers, including the artillery forward observer, were wounded. Because of the resulting turmoil, everything was held up; moreover, no one dared venture into the streets because of the heavy fire. Company C of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion did try to get across the creek, but were stopped cold by anti-tank and tank fire. Thus, due to the intense enemy fire and the wounding of the key command personnel in the town the attack bogged down before it really ever got started. Records do not indicate the whereabouts or the activities of Lieutenant Colonel Ingram during this confused period. Several witnesses of the action thought that he was also wounded during the action. As the lack of leadership in the town at this time was

critical, it is regretted that more definite information as to Lieutenant Colonel Ingram's whereabouts is lacking, since it must be assumed that he would have been the logical choice to succeed Lieutenant Colonel Phelan after his becoming a casualty.

Major Field, Executive Officer of the 714th Tank Battalion, was contacted by radio and informed of the situation; he, in turn, transmitted the information in person to Headquarters, Combat Command B. Captain Boone, S-3 of the 714th Tank Battalion, who had entered the town with Lieutenant Colonel Phelan was ordered to take over the situation in HERRLISHEIM. Captain Boone at the request of Combat Command B repeated the situation by radio at 1500. In addition, he recommended that infantry reinforcements be sent immediately, feeling that he could not hold what he had in the town with the few infantrymen at hand and feeling further than an attack by the Germans would jeopardize the tanks in the town as they were inadequately protected. This fact had been brought to light earlier before the attack got under way when the German bazooka men attacked the tanks of Company C. During his radio discussions with Combat Command B, he was asked if he could withdraw his forces immediately under cover of a smoke screen, but he felt that it was impossible during daylight.

Medical supplies, particularly sulfa and morphine, were critically needed because of the large number of casualties who had not been evacuated, and these supplies were requested at about 1700. As no means were available to send them on the ground, pilots from Division Artillery offered to drop them from a liaison plane. This, however, proved impossible as visibility was too poor for the pilot to observe the drop area.

At about 1530 the enemy artillery and mortar fire let up considerably, allowing Captain Boone and other officers to contact their men and attempt to organize sectors of defense. After the experiences of the force the night before, it was felt that adequate defensive organization was imperative. The tanks were dispersed down the sides of the streets alongside the houses, but in positions from which they were able to cover down the streets in the event that enemy tanks came up during the night. At 1630, just as darkness set in, all German fire in the town ceased. It was an anxious moment as it was not known whether this was the signal for another German attack. Fortunately, none took place. Captain Boone, an energetic S-3, made tentative plans during the establishment of the defense of the night for a withdrawal of the units. He planned to evacuate all the wounded, including a German officer, first; the bulk of the infantry next; and the tanks last. The engineers were to be given special missions.

His prior planning proved to be wise, for at 2000 Major Fields called stating that Combat Command B had ordered all units pulled out of HERRLISHEIM as soon as possible.<sup>7</sup> The time and method was partially given to Captain Boone by Major Fields and he was to work out the details.

In accordance with his prior plans, Captain Boone, using tanks as ambulances, evacuated the wounded first. The major part of the infantry was evacuated next, leaving behind only those troops essential to the protection of the tanks against infiltration tactics by the Germans. The engineers were given the following missions: One platoon was to cross the ZORN River and locate a pontoon boat which was supposedly in the vicinity to use in case the foot bridge was destroyed. The second platoon was

to outpost the foot bridge and assist the troops in crossing it, and the third was to act as a rear guard at the road junction at Phase line No. 4. The artillery was to fire preplanned concentration to cover the withdrawal. One of these groups of concentrations was a three sided box designed to protect the infantry when they were to leave the town.<sup>8</sup>

That the withdrawal was a success was due largely to the work of Captain Boone and the unit commanders in the town. In spite of obstacles such as darkness so complete that the men had to hold on to each other to guide themselves, the cold, the slippery footing, to say nothing of the exhaustion of the troops, especially the infantry, all units returned from the town and established a defense roughly in front of RCHRWILLER. The artillery also was a contributing factor to the success of the withdrawal as its heavy fire undoubtedly confused the Germans as to the intent of the forces in the town.

Thus ended, after prohibitive losses in personnel and equipment, numerous piecemeal attacks, confusion, and the final withdrawal of Combat Command B's shattered forces, the first abortive attempt by VI Corps to reduce the HERRLISHEIM bridgehead with armor over unsuitable terrain.

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#### NOTES ON CHAPTER 6

1. Op cit, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim, p 54.
2. Ibid, p 55.
3. Ibid, p 58.
4. Ibid, p 56.

5. Ibid, p 56.
6. Ibid, p 63.
7. Op cit, A History of the United States Twelfth Armored Division, p 47.
8. Op cit, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim, pp 72-73.

## CHAPTER 7

### SUPPORTING TROOPS

It is axiomatic that success in battle can be achieved only when there is complete cooperation and coordination of all arms toward the accomplishment of the mission. The characteristics of each arm and service adapt it to the performance of its special functions. The combined arms team commander coordinates and directs the action of all, exploiting their powers to attain the ends sought.

In order to properly evaluate Combat Command B's action, one must consider and analyze the part played by those troops supporting the action, field artillery and engineers. As field artillery is the principle arm of fire support, it is fitting that its role at HERRLISHEIM be considered initially.

#### Field Artillery

The bulk of the close supporting artillery fires were furnished by the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion. This section, therefore, will concern itself primarily with their participation. Reference, however, will be made to the remainder of the division artillery whenever significant additional support was rendered, or when necessary to clarify details of supervision and planning as executed by VI Corps Artillery, 33d Field Artillery Brigade, and the Division Artillery Commander, Colonel Charles R. Gildart, or members of his staff.

The possible employment of the division and the specific mission for Combat Command B in the bridgehead area north of STRASBOURG were made known to Colonel Gildart on the 8th of January 1945, while in conference

with the Division Commander (General Allen). During the course of the conference Colonel Gildart recommended that all battalions of the division artillery be employed in support of Combat Command B's attack. In order to resolve some of the questions concerning utilization of the division artillery in its new operational mission, Colonel Gildart visited the VI Corps Artillery Commander. During this visit the ammunition situation, usually a critical one for artillery units in the past war, was discussed.

At 1125 hours, 8 January 1945, upon verbal orders of the VI Corps Artillery Commander, the 12th Armored Division Artillery was placed under the operational control of the 33d Field Artillery Brigade, which was supporting the 79th Infantry Division attack. The assignment was confirmed by Operation Instruction No. 1, Hq VI Corps Artillery, dated 10 January 1945.

This order is reproduced in its entirety in order that the reader can get a more accurate picture of the artillery support available to the Corps Commander, and, particularly, the organization and mission of the 33d Field Artillery Brigade which supported the action in and around HERRLISHEIM. (See appendix 3, page 101.)

Brigade ordered Colonel Gildart to place one battalion in direct support of the 314th Infantry Regiment, 79th Infantry Division; one battalion in direct support of Combat Command B; and the other battalion in general support. In complying with these orders, Colonel Gildart then organized his divisional artillery as follows:

493d Armored Field Artillery Battalion - General Support

494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion - Direct Support, Combat Command B

495th Armored Field Artillery Battalion - Direct Support

314th Infantry Regiment, 79th Division<sup>2</sup>

In spite of treacherous driving conditions due to ice and snow, the battalions moved through the SAVERNE GAP without mishap and closed in the BISCHWILLER (R 0918) area on the 8th of January at the times indicated:

Division Artillery - - - - - 1530, 8 Jan 1945

493d Armored Field Artillery Battalion - - - - 1800, 8 Jan 1945

494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion - - - 1930, 8 Jan 1945

495th Armored Field Artillery Battalion - - - 2230, 8 Jan 1945

Due to icing conditions it was impossible to fly all the organic liaison airplanes to the new positions east of the SAVERNE GAP on the 8th. Two aircraft, those of the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, managed to complete the flight into the bridgehead area on the 8th before the weather closed in completely. The remainder of the division artillery planes were flown in on the 10th.

Upon learning that other artillery units operating in this pancake terrain had picked up valuable information regarding positions of enemy batteries and other enemy activity through the use of flash bases, Colonel Gildart ordered all his battalions to establish similar bases as soon as possible after arrival in the area.<sup>3</sup>

The command posts of division artillery and the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion were established in BISCHWILLER, which was also the command post location of Combat Command B. The juxtaposition of these command posts greatly facilitated liaison between Combat Command B and its supporting artillery.

The following account describes an interesting effort on the part of the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion to make its initial close support plan more effective:

. . . . Prior to CCB's scheduled attack on the 8th of January, Major William G. Raoul, Executive Officer, 494th AFA Bn, had 100 overlays made of HERRLISHEIM (R 1214) from a 1:25,000 scale map, which he distributed to the participating units. On it were coordinate squares and principle terrain features of the DRUSENHEIM, HERRLISHEIM and OFFENDORF areas, with numbered concentrations in a series of geographical groups having self-explanatory names. They were successfully used throughout in calling for missions by the infantrymen, tankers, and artillery forward observers.<sup>4</sup>

The battalion's support of the 8th of January consisted of fire on German tanks (F-M) and infantry units west of the ZORN River (CC-M) and harassing fire placed on the western edge of HERRLISHEIM. These fires were observed, and their effect on enemy personnel and materiel is attested to by the forward observer reports. As a result of intensive artillery fire by the 12th Armored Division Artillery, HERRLISHEIM blazed fiercely throughout the night. Communications difficulties and poor visibility combined to make it impossible to register the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion the night of the 8-9th January.

. . . . About 0430 the morning of the 9th a barrage was directed along the northern edge of the town, the creek flowing into it, and the gully (DD-M) to soften these sectors for the infantry's advance later that morning . . . and to knock out what was believed to be enemy anti-tank guns hidden there in waiting for the 714th Bn tanks to show themselves.<sup>5</sup>

The southern edge of the water works at LA BREYMUHL was subjected to a heavy concentration of fire in an effort to rout the German tanks and infantry that had counterattacked our forces in that area earlier. A comprehensive picture of these fires may be attained by referring to overlay M, Appendix 5, and the report of missions fired submitted to

division artillery by the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion for the 24-hour period ending 0600 hours 9th January 1945.<sup>6</sup>

Fire coordination for Combat Command B's attack on the 9th of January was made by the battalion, and its fire-plan integrated the fires of the remainder of the division artillery and the 33d Field Artillery Brigade. The battalion assumed responsibility for advancing the "No Fire Line" based on information received from its forward observers.<sup>7</sup>

Message #13, 33d Field Artillery Brigade, received by division artillery headquarters at 0750 9 January, prohibited the use of Pozit (proximity) fuzed shells except on order of 33d Field Artillery Brigade or 79th Infantry Division.

Combat Command B's dawn attack of the 9th never did get started until much later in the morning, as we have noted previously. However, the counterattack the Germans mounted to upset the early attack plan was broken up by intense artillery fire. The 130 rounds expended to break up this enemy attack was actually the first phase of the scheduled preparation for Combat Command B's attack, and was fired as part of a counter-preparation. These concentrations were dumped south of LA BREYMUHL (R-rr-M) between 0715 and 1015. At 1030 a concentration was fired on German infantrymen in the open fields west of HERRLISHEIM (CC-M).

Three hundred rounds were pumped into HERRLISHEIM at 1050 to soften up the town in preparation for the assault by the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion. An hour later a barrage was placed upon enemy tanks and anti-tank guns along the heavily fortified railroad embankment north-east of the town (WW-M).

A smoke screen, maintained for forty minutes (from 1325 to 1405),

was laid north of the town and along the east end of the ditch (DD-M) to enable the infantry forces to cross the open area between LA BREYMUHL and HERRLISHEIM. The remainder of the afternoon artillery support consisted chiefly of intermittent harassing fire on snipers operating in the field below LA BREYMUHL (OO-M) and on the tanks and anti-tank guns in defilade behind the railroad embankment just north of HERRLISHEIM (LL-M).

At 1750 hours on 9 January, division artillery received a message from S-4, VI Corps Artillery, which limited ammunition expenditures of the battalions of the 12th Armored Division Artillery to the 4,000 rounds on hand in each battalion.

During the night, artillery was placed on prearranged targets on the eastern edge of town and set it ablaze. In addition, a 600-yard strip of the main road and railroad, along the enemy strong point (X-M), was constantly harassed.

A recapitulation for the period 090600 January 1945 to 100600 January 1945 finds the artillery support of the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion stepped up considerably. The total expenditures for the 24 missions fired during the period included:<sup>8</sup>

1,328 rounds - - - - - HE M 48

68 rounds - - - - - HE M 54

101 rounds - - - - - HC

18 rounds - - - - - WP

Figure 2, Appendix 4, gives a complete tabulation of the missions fired by the division artillery for the 24-hour period ending 1800 hours, 9 January.

The major artillery effort in the engagement took place on the

10th and during the early hours of the 11th. Every effort was made to assist the troops that Combat Command B had in HERRLISHEIM and eventually to protect the withdrawal of these beleaguered forces from the town.

A two-hour rolling barrage starting at 0845 was placed along the railroad tracks east of HERRLISHEIM (M). This barrage, the first of many on the same enemy position that had caused so much trouble for the Combat Command was directed primarily at infantry personnel who maintained a murderous flanking fire on any and all attempts to negotiate the flats between LA BREYMUHL and HERRLISHEIM.

Further up the tracks (X-M), the air observer adjusted on more Germans dug in near the main road; a few minutes later it spotted two 88-mm guns on the road (m), scoring a direct hit on one; and at noon it claimed to neutralize two enemy tanks along the tracks.<sup>10</sup>

The tenth proved to be the only day that liaison aircraft could be used effectively for observed-fire missions. Snow, fog, sleet, haze, smoke, and heavy enemy anti-aircraft flak protection combined to the utmost during the operation to limit the effectiveness of this versatile air observation post.

Four tanks on the main road south of the town (M) and personnel along the LANDGRABEN River (M), who were attempting to reinforce the Germans in HERRLISHEIM were fired on just prior to noon. In order to assist C Company of the 714th Tank Battalion's move into HERRLISHEIM and the subsequent evacuation of wounded from the town by the light tanks, the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, reinforced by fires from the 493d Armored Field Artillery Battalion and units of the 33d Brigade, laid down a heavy smoke screen along the railroad leading to DRUSENHEIM.

As noted in Chapter 7, the artillery support rendered during the

withdrawal of all units from HERRLISHEIM was most significant. A large measure of credit for the success of the withdrawal is due Captain James H. Moulder, forward observer of the 494th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, who coordinated the defensive fires. Before being wounded, Captain Moulder had devised a three-sided box barrage pattern for the protection of Combat Command B units against enemy infiltration. The elements of the pattern were designated:

1. Concentration "Red" (LL to WW-M) - from the north edge of HERRLISHEIM, northeast to the railroad tracks.
2. Concentration "Blue" (M) - along a line running parallel to "Red" from the west-central corner of town to the railroad tracks.
3. Concentration "White" (M) - along the railroad tracks connecting the two parallel barrages east of HERRLISHEIM.

When the order to withdraw was given, a fourth area, designated for a "Green" concentration (M), was selected along the creek, between the two roads leading northward out of HERRLISHEIM, running just short of the southern tip of the BOIS DE DRUSENHEIM in which there were friendly troops.<sup>11</sup>

Every available artillery piece (including the other two division artillery battalions, the 493d and 495th, plus units in the 33d Field Artillery Brigade) was concentrated on the areas noted above in an all-out effort to get the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion and the 714th Tank Battalion out of HERRLISHEIM safely.

The series of defensive barrages and smoke screens began at 2330 hours the 10th of January and continued until 0150 hours of 11 January when all but the covering units had withdrawn. When these had left HERRLISHEIM, at 0200, a TOT (time on target) was fired into the town by all artillery units of the 33d Brigade.<sup>12</sup>

In retrospect, the following statement from Colonel Charles G.

Bromley, Commander of Combat Command B, summarizes the general opinion of the artillery support for the operation as given by those individuals who participated in the attack. "Artillery support was entirely adequate and was furnished in any amount requested. Artillery support was invariably timely and effective."<sup>13</sup>

### Engineers

As a normal attachment to Combat Command B, Company B, 119th Armored Engineer Battalion accompanied the combat command into the bridge-head operation. It was "attached to the attacking force in order to clear any mine fields that might be encountered, and build or repair necessary bridges, thereby keeping the tanks and infantry rolling."

The morning of the 8th, the first day of the attack, Lieutenant McConnell, the company executive, with the first platoon reconnoitered the footbridges (C-M) over which the attacking forces would have to pass. During this reconnaissance they found that a unit of the 40th Engineer Combat Regiment was completing work on one of the bridges. The party then returned to BISCHWILLER where the company remained on call ready to perform any engineer work required.

The initial task consisted of placing a 36-foot wooden treadway over a hole in the Bailey Bridge (C-M). The last tank of the 714th over the bridge accidentally put a hole through the side necessitating a repair job.

About 1700 on the 9th, Combat Command B ordered that a float be placed in the treadway bridge across the ZORN River, northwest of HERRLISHEIM (SS-M).

The D-7 bulldozer, to be used in this work, was brought in from<sup>14</sup>

OBERHOFFEN and moved along the south side of the MODER River. Half-way down (EE-M) it was stopped by 88-mm fire coming from the enemy strongpoint, behind the railroad tracks to the east. At the same time the 714th Bn tanks, which were to protect the engineer work by laying down a curtain of fire, were ... hit and ... set ablaze in the fields, thereby clearly lighting up the proposed bridge site.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of these circumstances, the dozer moved on to ROHRWEILER instead of trying to move into the work area. The remainder of the engineer company, upon seeing the fires raging near the bridge site, stopped on the BISCHWILLER-ROHRWEILER road (II-M) and turned back to OBERHOFFEN.<sup>16</sup>

Around midnight, the company was ordered to throw a few 30-foot pontoons over the water at (HH-M) so that the infantry could get out of HERRLISHEIM safely. This order, however, was rescinded shortly afterwards. The morning of the 10th, the engineer company was ordered into HERRLISHEIM for use as infantry.

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#### NOTES FOR CHAPTER 8

1. Unit History, 12th Armored Division Artillery, dated 13 February 1945, microfilm number 111.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Op cit, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim, pp 27-28.
5. Ibid, p 28.
6. Unit Journal, 12th Armored Division Artillery S-3 Reports, 9 Jan 1945. Microfilm number 112.
7. Op cit, Unit History, 12th Armd Div Arty.
8. Op cit, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim, p 53.

9. Op cit, Unit Journal, 12th Armd Div Arty.
10. Op cit, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim, p 68, and Op cit, Unit Journal, 12th Armd Div Arty.
11. Ibid, p 72.
12. Ibid, p 73.
13. Col Charles G. Bromley, letter dated 6 Dec 49.
14. Op cit, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim, p 1.
15. Ibid, pp 49-50.
16. Ibid, p 50.

## CHAPTER 8

### COMMUNICATIONS AND CONTROL

Military leaders have recognized the importance of communications and control since the first battles known to man and all have made efforts to improve means of communication and the control of units that were expected to perform a mission.

In the study of the communication methods of former commanders it is necessary that we consider them in the light of the equipment that was available at that time and not in the light of present equipment. In January of 1945 the American tank was equipped with one of three radios, the SCR-508, the SCR-528 and the SCR-538. The SCR-508 consisted of one transmitter and two receivers; this allowed the operator to listen to two channels and to transmit on one selected channel. The SCR-528 was similar, however it had only one receiver. The SCR-538 consisted of one receiver. All three types included an intercommunication system with which contact between members of the tank crew was maintained. The SCR-508 was authorized for the headquarters tanks of tank battalions and tank companies. SCR-528s were authorized for the platoon leaders and the platoon sergeants. All other tanks were equipped with the SCR-538 which meant that three of the five tanks in each platoon were equipped with radios that made transmission to other tanks or vehicles impossible.

Radios used by the armored infantry at that time were the SCR-300 and the SCR-509-510, designation of the latter depending upon whether it was mounted in the vehicle or portable. At that time there was no direct radio or phone communication between the infantry and the crew of the tanks. This was the equipment authorized to the Twelfth Armored

Division when it entered combat in December 1944.

As a result of communication problems that arose in the action of the 12th Armored Division in December, communication personnel were seeking new and better means of communication. The infantry leaders found that means of talking with tank commanders were non-existent. The SCR-509-510 of the infantry was very effective when it was mounted but was not dependable when used as a portable unit. Troops developed the art of laying wire in order to find more dependable communication, and on 22 December, in a defensive position, wire lines had been laid from battalion headquarters to every company, platoon and observation post of the front line infantry units.<sup>1</sup>

In the initial assault on HERRLISHEIM in January 1945 the communication was maintained at all times between the 12th Armored Division and Combat Command B. Likewise, communication between Combat Command B and the headquarters of the two battalion elements were maintained throughout and liaison was established between headquarters of the 56th Armored Infantry and headquarters of the 714th Tank Battalions.

The plans for the attack on HERRLISHEIM designated the following control measures; attack positions near the town of ROHRWEILER, a definite attack formation, axes of advance for the task forces and the use of phase lines in the town. These control measures were effective with the exception of the phase lines as no reports were received from the platoons upon their arrival or crossing the lines.

During the morning of the attack, communication by radio in both task forces was adequate and continued throughout the day. At that time the transmission distance was under four miles and the sets had not been

in operation over a prolonged period. Units had not become separated and subordinate unit locations were known to all headquarters.<sup>2</sup>

Communication continued to be normal and successful during the morning of 9 January. Company A of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion left LA BREYMUHL and entered HERRLISHEIM at about 1230. Attempts to make contact with headquarters of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion were unsuccessful with either the SCR-300 or the SCR-509. A party from Company A attempted to contact Company B of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion but was unsuccessful due to the violence of the action in which Company B was engaged. Subsequent attempts by Company A to contact the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion by radio were unsuccessful. Reports to higher headquarters on reaching phase lines were attempted as planned but to no avail. Company B and Company C made similar attempts but all were unsuccessful.<sup>3</sup>

The first attempt by the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion to contact units in HERRLISHEIM was made by a radio equipped patrol which returned without contacting the main elements there.

At 0200 10 January tanks of Company B of the 714th Tank Battalion were ordered to contact the units in HERRLISHEIM. Tanks entered the town at daybreak, finally contacted the troops there and reported by radio at about 0730 10 January. This ended the long silence concerning HERRLISHEIM which had lasted for about eighteen hours. Messengers were used during the morning of 10 January. Wire lines were in operation during the afternoon and communications were wholly restored.<sup>4</sup>

NOTES ON CHAPTER 8

1. Op cit, A History of The United States Twelfth Armored Division, p 32.
2. Ibid; passim.
3. Op cit, Initial Assault on Herrlisheim, p 37.
4. Ibid; passim.

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSIONS

In establishing conclusions concerning an operation such as the one in which Combat Command B, 12th Armored Division, participated at HERRLISHEIM, France, certain limitations must be constantly borne in mind. For without bearing these limitations in mind, one is very likely to seize on what now appear to be obvious shortcomings and condemn both commander and troops, much like the old alumni quarterbacking on Monday morning the losing game his team played the Saturday before. The researcher, like the alumni, can only know part of the story behind the defeat, that part concerning which there is irrefutable evidence. As has been emphasized before, such evidence in this report is notably lacking.

Two factors, however, stand out as a result of the operation of Combat Command B at HERRLISHEIM. The first and perhaps most important is that no attack with armor can ever gain its maximum effect without "deliberate planning" and "violent execution." In fact, in most armored operations, the lack of either of these two ingredients in the attack will doom the operation to failure.

The second factor is that terrain and weather play a decisive role in any armored operation. Even the most carefully planned attack can bog down when adverse weather conditions are encountered or when the terrain is unsuitable for armored maneuver. Armor will of course have to be employed in adverse terrain and during unfavorable weather, but plans must be made to minimize the effects of these two potential obstacles.

In this operation, because of the shortage of troops in the Seventh

Army area, and in particular in the VI Corps zone, the corps commander was forced to commit a combat command of an armored division in an attempt to eliminate a serious threat in his overextended front line. It is unfortunate that this sector was such that the terrain was so unsuited for armor. It is equally unfortunate that weather conditions were particularly adverse, and a constant haze and fog masked observation of the area.

However, granting that the corps commander was forced to commit the only troops available in his reserve, the actual combat command requested from the 12th Armored Division by his headquarters was notably unsuited for its mission. The chief of staff of the 12th Armored Division stated that VI Corps asked only for a "type" combat command. This meant a combat command composed of one tank battalion and one armored infantry battalion along with the necessary supporting troops. Such a request from higher headquarters indicated either a lack of appreciation of the possibilities of combination of forces within a combat command to fit its particular mission, or that it was felt that the mission was of such a nature that a balanced though undersized combat command could perform it. Apparently this latter was more likely the case as most persons interviewed stated that they thought initially that the mission would be an easy one against an inferior enemy.

The limitations of this organization became painfully apparent as the action wore on and requests were made by Colonel Bromley, the combat command commander, to the 79th Division, to reinforce his command with more infantry, either from the 12th Armored Division or from the 79th Infantry Division. General Allen also made similar requests to the 79th Division and to VI Corps. All such requests were refused. Many

members of the division stated that in their opinion the addition of such infantry would have perhaps assured the success of the operation.

Once the organization of the combat command was determined by higher headquarters, the combat command commander organized his forces into two teams, one heavy in infantry and one heavy in tanks. Because the enemy situation was vague, this was certainly a sound organization. His contemplated use of the attached engineers was also sound in the existing situation. Perhaps the outstanding planning prior to the operation was that of the artillery supporting fires, for although little time was allowed by higher headquarters for artillery planning and registration, the artillery performed admirably throughout the operation. It did so in spite of the most adverse observing conditions and the limitations placed on it by shortages of ammunition.

In spite of these instances of sound planning, there is evidence that not all phases of the attack were as well thought out, particularly the details of movement from the assembly area to the attack position, the missions of organic supporting weapons, and prior reconnaissance of the area. Also, there is evidence of lack of coordination with troops already in the area of the operation. This lack of detail planning started at corps level and extended down throughout the echelons of command. For example the artillery was not released by corps to the troops it was going to support until 0930 of the morning of the attack. This was scarcely one-half hour prior to the time of the attack. Insufficient time was also allowed for the combat command commander to make a reconnaissance of the area in which he would have to deploy his troops, even though the terrain was very poor for armor.

At battalion level, the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion had difficulty in its march from the assembly area to the attack position, and as a consequence mounted and dismounted unnecessarily. This action caused the 714th Tank Battalion on short notice to pass through the 56th. The mortar platoon leader of the 714th Tank Battalion stated that he was given the mission of general support of the attacking troops but was not given any specific targets or even areas in which to concentrate his fires. He further stated that he had no knowledge of the ammunition supply point, that throughout the operation he fired solely from a map, and that he never displaced his platoon forward from its original position in the attack position. In contrast, during the same period the Mortar Platoon of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion fired observed fire and moved forward to better support the troops.

Officers of both task forces stated that once the attack started, they were unaware of the presence of Company L, 314th Infantry Regiment; the 40th Combat Engineers; or Company B, 47th Tank Battalion, 14th Armored Division, which were all located in the vicinity of LA BREYMUHL prior to and during the attack. Even though these friendly troops were in Combat Command B's zone at the water works on the ZORN River, the troops of Combat Command B had to inquire of a local civilian information concerning the depth of the river, fording points, etc.

These incidents and events point to the lack of prior planning in preparation for the attack. Perhaps the idea which prevailed concerning the inferiority of the enemy may have influenced all commanders and their staffs in neglecting the details of planning in this operation, but the fact remains that more thorough planning, particularly as it concerned

ground reconnaissance and coordination, was definitely needed if the operation was to succeed. This fact should have been particularly evident to the higher commanders since previous attempts by other units to reduce the bridgehead had failed.

The importance of moving armor quickly to the objective once the attack has been launched was never adequately recognized during this operation. Alternate plans for the effective and decisive use of tanks were non-existent. For example, once it was discovered that the tanks of Task Force Power could not cross the Zorn River in the initial attack, they were committed to a role of firing ineffectively from the west side of the river, unconcealed and stationery. The error inherent in this manner of tank employment did become apparent as more and more tanks were destroyed or damaged by well-aimed German antitank fire from concealed positions. In spite of the casualties incurred in this fashion, however, Company A, 714th Tank Battalion was utilized in this role for three consecutive days. Such employment denied the tanks of two of their principal characteristics, maneuverability and shock action. At no time was the bulk of the tanks concentrated against any key terrain feature. One company, Company B, was committed piecemeal in support of the infantry; Company D was used exclusively as a means of transportation for supplies and evacuation of wounded, and Company C was used until the last afternoon in a stationery fire support role.

The armored infantry fared no better. Companies were committed without effective tank support even though German artillery and automatic weapon fire was very heavy and infantry casualties were numerous. Units were committed piecemeal, often to reinforce a failing attack, too late to

be of benefit, and frequently from the same direction. There were many delays in getting the attacks started, which indicated improper or lack of leadership and supervision. Once the battle is joined, it must be pushed vigorously in a coordinated effort, and if it bogs down commanders must employ all means available to regain the momentum of the attack. This might have been accomplished if some reserve had been available at combat command level. No such reserve was maintained, even though there was no indication that troops from any other source could have been committed in support of the attack. Engineers were finally committed as a last resort, emphasizing the desperate circumstances of the command.

Communications during the action were dependent almost entirely on radio, which was fairly effective for the majority of the action. However, radio communication did break down at a most critical time during the night of the 9th so that contact was lost with the units in the town of HERRLISHEIM. Effective alternate means should have been employed, particularly wire. Messengers were sent from the units in the town but failed to get through until morning. More aggressive leadership in this situation might have even sent out combat patrols to regain contact. Liaison was maintained between Combat Command B and the two task forces by having the command posts of each of the three headquarters adjacent to each other, allowing the executive officers of the battalions to receive orders promptly from combat command. However, evidently there was misunderstanding because on the last day, Lieutenant Colonel Ingram, commander of Task Force Rammer was in HERRLISHEIM getting an attack under way when Lieutenant Colonel Phelan, Commander of Task Force Power, was ordered in to take charge of the attack. Liaison must have broken down

somewhere along the line. What liaison was maintained by Combat Command B with adjacent and higher units is not known, although the means used could not have been too effective if the presence of the units of the 314th Infantry Regiment in the LA BREYMUHL area was not known. Combat Command B, it must be remembered, was attached to the 79th Infantry Division, the parent unit of the 314th Infantry Regiment.

The failure of the operation, however cannot be attributed solely to the troops involved. The weather was very definitely a great assistance to the defender and an equally great hindrance to the attacker. Lack of visibility seriously hampered observed fire from all weapons and tended to offset the attacker's preponderance of artillery and tanks. Artillery liaison planes were for the most part either grounded or unable to observe because of haze and fog, or because of active antiaircraft defense. Tanks were greatly hampered in their firing because of the reduced visibility of their direct sighting equipment.

The absolute flatness of the terrain was also a serious handicap to the attacking forces. The absence of any cover whatsoever except in the immediate vicinity of the built up areas made it necessary for the troops to attack across exposed ground from the line of departure all the way to the objective, constantly subject to observation and effective fire by the Germans. Although the ground was frozen and trafficable for tank movement, the unfordable MODER and ZORN Rivers presented a serious obstacle. Tanks had to cross at the existing bridge sites, which hampered their maneuver and canalized their attack formations. Moreover, the Germans were well registered on the bridge sites. Thus it was that with the combination of weather and terrain that existed, it

was necessary for both infantry and tanks to attack across open exposed ground over unfordable streams to reach their objectives.

The area behind the objective HERRLISHEIM, was criss-crossed with streams and woods. This configuration of the terrain limited the depth of the attack and afforded no high ground to the rear from which the attackers could dominate the town.

The strongest point in the German defensive system was the intersection of the DRUSENHEIM--HERRLISHEIM highway and the railroad. Both were built up on high embankments affording the Germans concealed movement behind them. If this key piece of terrain had been seized initially, it would have cut lateral communication and prevented the Germans movement behind the embankment north of HERRLISHEIM. The seizure of this objective incidentally was the original mission of Task Force Power, but it was abandoned when the bridge over the ZORN River was discovered to have been destroyed.

#### Lessons Learned

One of the outstanding lessons learned from this operation is that no commander must underestimate the enemy. Such an underestimation can result in hastily drawn and ill-conceived plans. If this underestimation permeates the command, and the enemy is discovered to be aggressive and determined, the morale of the attack in troops is adversely affected, sometimes seriously, and confusion and indecision result.

Another lesson learned is that the more adverse the terrain and weather, the more carefully drawn must be the plans of all commanders for the commitment of armored units. Cold weather in particular has an adverse effect on the morale and efficiency of the fighting man, and

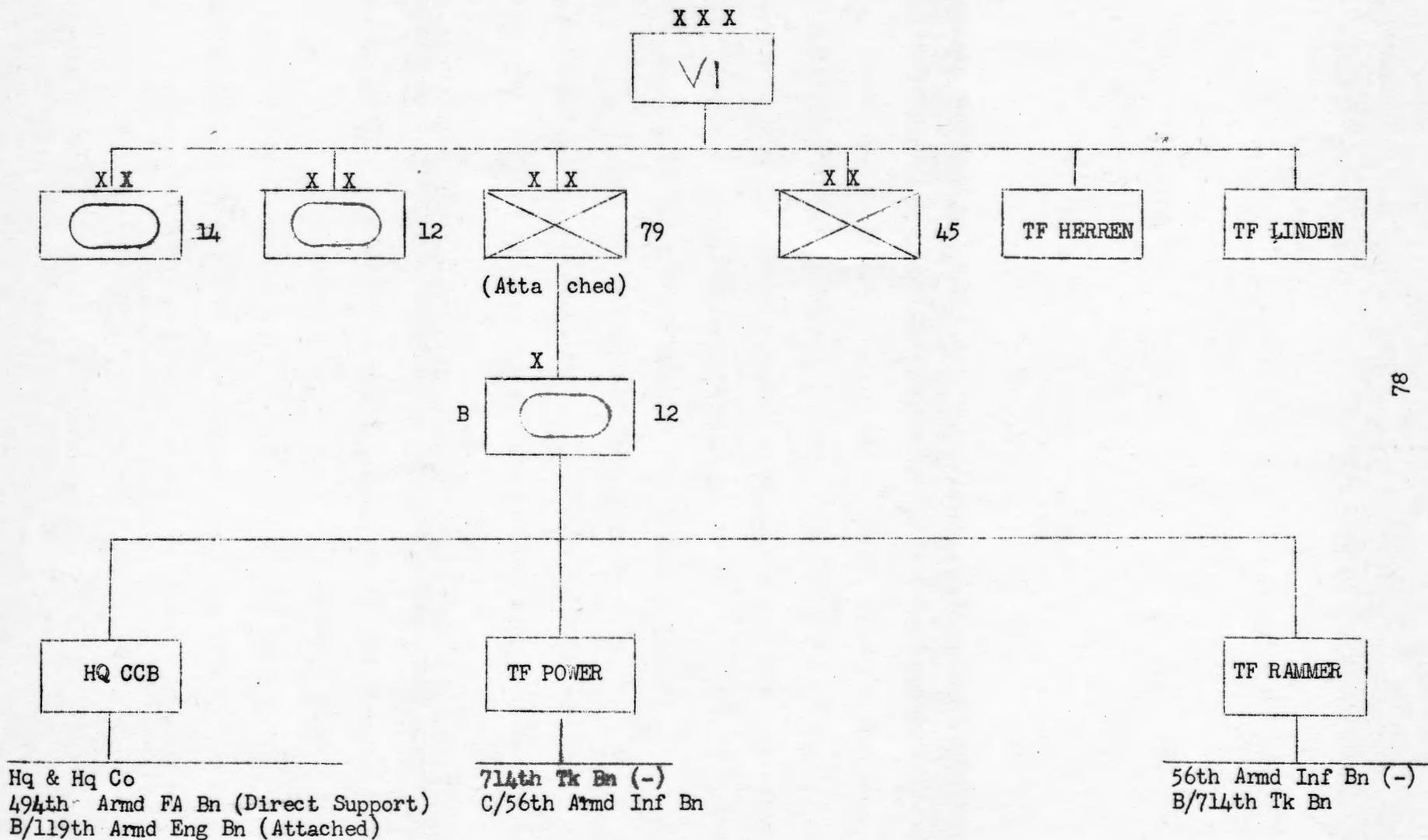
leadership must be unusually aggressive to counteract its effects.

It must also be pointed out that from this action it can be learned that plans for and the resulting attack are often at considerable variance. If the attack does not go according to the original plan, bold and aggressive steps must be taken and plans quickly made to further the accomplishment of the mission.

The troops of Combat Command B, 12th Armored Division, were neither better nor worse than the troops of any other division in the Army. Their training, as described in Chapter 2, was substantially the same as any other armored division. The errors committed in the action were by no means limited to Combat Command B. The errors Combat Command B did commit were the errors of most troops who had not become "battle wise." Coordination is learned by experience, as is the effects of adverse terrain and weather conditions. The report does emphasize the truth of the doctrine now repeated in almost every armored publication--  
In the employment of armor, there must be deliberate planning followed by violent execution.

APPENDIX 1a

COMPOSITION OF VI CORPS, 8 JANUARY 1945



## APPENDIX 1b

### ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE

In order to derive the maximum benefit from the study of the enemy order of battle that faced the 12th Armored Division in the battle of HERRLISHEIM, it is necessary to have a general knowledge of the overall German plan for the RHINE front with particular emphasis on the city of STRASBOURG as a keypoint. The strong opposition encountered by Combat Command B during this operation is more readily explained when the strategic and political importance of this city is thoroughly understood.

Let us review briefly the general situation from the enemy point of view during the latter part of 1944 and the early months of 1945.

Following the failure of the von Rundstedt December offensive in the EIFFEL area, the German high command concentrated its attention on attacks in the ALSACE area. There were four major offensive efforts: the first, near the fortress of BITCHE; the second, in the HARDT MOUNTAINS near REIPPERSWILLER; the third, on the ALSACE plain near HATTEN and RITTERSHOFFEN; and the fourth, in the RHINE riverhead near HERRLISHEIM and GAMBSHEIM. Combat Command B of the 12th Armored Division moved against this riverhead in January 1945.<sup>1</sup>

During the period between 24 and 31 December 1944, there was apparently a continued effort on the part of the Germans to refit and reorganize their scattered divisions in preparation for an offensive. There was considerable activity on the SV Corps front. The 36th Volksgrenadier Division had been withdrawn from the line and was believed to be refitting. In the sector occupied by the 17th Panzer Grenadier

Division elements of the 19th Volksgrenadier Division were identified in confirmation of the idea that only a shell of the former was in action. The bulk of the 25th Panzer Grenadier Division was being refitted in the ZWEIBRUKEN area having left a few scattered elements in the SIEGFRIED positions. The 21st Panzer Division, then the most important mobile unit in the German First Army had gone north, but was still in the VI Corps sector, with only a small force still in the line.<sup>2</sup>

At this time the Intelligence Officer of the Seventh Army stated the enemy capabilities in an intelligence estimate substantially as follows: the offensive capabilities of the enemy were strongly pointed out in the estimate on the 29th of December, while admitting that the attitude of the enemy had been mainly defensive up to that time, the document reported definite enemy buildups in two areas that might affect the Seventh Army. These were the EAST RHINE RIVER VALLEY and COLMER BRIDGEHEAD and also the SAARBRUCKEN area. It stated that there were nine divisions or elements of them of the German First Army in contact with the Seventh Army west of the RHINE. It stressed the fact that mobile units such as the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier the 25th Panzer Grenadier and the 31st Panzer Divisions were in very light contact. In addition to the obvious refitting activities of the enemy, both terrain and weather favored him in attack. One of the major terrain factors was that the RHINE RIVER formed a continuous right flank for the Seventh Army half as long as the front itself.<sup>3</sup>

Apparently very little was known of the size, composition and mission of the German crossings near GAMBSHEIM during the early part of January. According to statements in the History of the 12th Armored

Division, higher headquarters was convinced that the force was very small and composed of inferior quality troops with the mission of occupying the ground that the Allies were expected to give up in their expected withdrawal to the VOSGES MOUNTAINS.<sup>4</sup>

A list of enemy units and personalities identified from prisoner of war interrogation reports together with explanation and comment where appropriate is attached to this Appendix as Annex I. A careful examination and evaluation of the information contained in this document leads one to the conclusion that the opinion that an inferior force was in the bridgehead had some substantiation prior to 6 January. Members of the 12th Armored Division Combat Command B, when questioned by this committee, frequently voiced the opinion that the estimate upon which their attack of January sixth was based was far from accurate.<sup>5</sup> The consensus of opinion among these officers being that the strength and quality of the force opposed to them was grossly underrated. There is evidence to support this view, however, it seems that the difference of opinion is well founded in each case due to the evidence that nearly all the units attached to Headquarters 553 Volksgrenadier Division made the crossing of the RHINE into the HERRLISHEIM-GAMBSHEIM area during the nights of 5 and 6 January using a ferry in the vicinity of FREITSTETT. Captain Renz, commanding officer of the Fifth Company, Second Battalion, Regiment Oberhein, the interrogator states that every prisoner interrogated was once wounded or physically defective or both. Such malformations as fingers grown together were of common occurrence. This evidence points to the occupation of the bridgehead prior to 6 January by a force of second-class troops. From the sixth to the end of the engagement there was a continual stream of

reinforcements by units under the command of the 553 Volksgrenadier Division crossing the RHINE into the towns of OFFENDORF, HERRLISHEIM and GAMBESHEIM.<sup>6</sup>

The history of the 12th Armored Division states that when Combat Command B moved on HERRLISHEIM on the seventh of January it discovered that the enemy was defending the riverhead with a tenacious attitude and that his troops, instead of being a conglomerate collection of weak battle groups, were in reality a major effort organized on a division scale. This estimate of the enemy strength, composition and organization is not entirely in accord with some of the evidence. The Order of Battle of the German Army of February 1944 published by the War Department notes under the history of the 553 Volksgrenadier Division, that during December of 1944 the division staff was withdrawn to the KARLSRUHE area and subsequently transferred to the STRASBOURG area to control miscellaneous units. Prior to this move the division had suffered heavy losses in the VOSGES area and its remaining troops were absorbed by the 361st Infantry Division.

The Captain Renz mentioned previously remarked that in his opinion and that of several other German officers their situation in the bridgehead was extremely precarious. He complained that the artillery support he had been told would come from the other side of the RHINE never materialized.

None of the units listed as organic to the 553 Volksgrenadier Division were identified during the period although the vast majority of the miscellaneous units captured knew that they were under the headquarters of that division.

There seems to be no evidence that elements of the 10th SS Panzer

Grenadier Division arrived in the bridgehead before the nineteenth of January. There is, however, a statement by the interrogator of sixteen prisoners from the Second Company, V Battalion Oberhein that they saw about 200 men in OFFENDORF on the night of 6 or 7 January wearing the black uniform of the SS and equipped with armbands reading Reichsfuhrer Himmler or Adolf Hitler. These organizations are both Panzer Grenadier divisions.

Confirming the statement that the bridgehead was very lightly held prior to the time of the attack by CCB, 12th Armored Division, the following paraphrased account is offered from the History of the 14th Armored Division:

On 6 January, Company B of the 47th Tank Battalion, 14th Armored Division was ordered to support the 2nd Battalion of the 315th Infantry Regiment of the 79th Division. They moved into the BITSCHWEILLER--ROHRWILLER area that morning without resistance and reached DRUSENHEIM shortly after noon against very light opposition. The following morning at 0500 the Germans opened up with a heavy artillery barrage and followed it up with an attack by an estimated battalion of infantry supported by several tanks and drove the Americans from the town.<sup>8</sup>

From this statement it would appear that reinforcements in at least battalion strength occurred during the night of the sixth. This is amply confirmed by the prisoner of war interrogation reports cited in Table 3 to this Appendix.

In conclusion the probable strength of the enemy in the HERRLI-SHEIM-GAMBSHEIM bridgehead consisted of over 2000 men of quality varying from the most decrepit of Volksturm to crack SS Panzer outfits. The latter undoubtedly were added as stiffening to the non-regular troops

already in the towns and possibly a forerunner of the 10th SS Panzer Division that moved in strength on 19 January and the days following that date.

TABLE I

A SUMMARY OF THE ESTIMATED ENEMY STRENGTH BY UNIT AND TOTAL

Headquarters 553 Volksgrenadier Division	Unknown
1. Regiment Oberhein	
V Battalion Oberhein	100
Regimental Companies Regiment Oberhein	100
VI Battalion Oberhein	250
2. 2 SS Police Regiment	
II Battalion	485
3. 20 Mortar Battalion	70
4. Jagzug	30
5. 405 Antitank	150
6. Miscellaneous SS men	<u>200</u>
Total of known strengths	1385

The following units did not have a strength given by prisoners as did the above. The units listed in the Order of Battle with an estimated strength for each based on the reported strengths of similar units follows:

1. 6th Company 2 SS Police Regiment	130
2. 13 Company 2 SS Police Regiment	130
3. Battalion Hoffe Regiment Oberhein	<u>250</u>
Total of estimated strength	510

ESTIMATED STRENGTH OF ENTIRE BRIDGEHEAD 2000

TABLE 2

A SUMMARY OF MAJOR EQUIPMENT AS INDICATED BY PRISONERS<sup>2</sup>

1. Tanks including 3 US M4s remainder being Mk IV and V	20
2. Artillery 150 mm	4
3. Antitank guns all calibers	16
4. Mortars 81 mm	14
5. Light machine guns	14
6. Panzer Fausts	17

a. The material contained in Tables 1 and 2 is based on information found in the G-2 Periodic Report of the 12th Armored Division from 170001A January 1945 and from Interrogation Summary LPW Team 134 12th Armored Division, page 17, January 1945.

an estimate of the armament of those units whose prisoners did not mention it during interrogation is not practical since none of these units seem to be T/O & E organized and equipped. However it is safe to assume that there were more machine guns, panzer fausts, and possibly antitank guns.

TABLE 3

ENEMY TROOP LIST

I. 553 Volksgrenadier Division (Infantry)

A. History:<sup>a</sup>

Commander: Generalmajor Huter  
Home Station: Wkr. V  
Grenadier Regiments: 1119, 1120, 1121  
Artillery Regiment: 1553  
Fusilier Battalion: "  
Engineer Battalion: "  
Signal Battalion: "  
Anti Tank Battalion: "  
Auxilliary Battalion: "

July 1944: Formed (29th wave) at Munsingen maneuver area, Werkreis V, from replacement units as a Grenadier Division. Subsequently it was redesignated 553 Vgr Div. (32nd wave)

September 1944: On the western front in the Nancy area.

November 1944: Suffered heavy losses in the Vosges area and was at that time partially absorbed by the 361st Infantry Division.

December 1944: Division Staff withdrawn to the Karlsruhe area and subsequently transferred to the Strasbourg area to control miscellaneous units.

Early 1945: Out of action, possibly disbanded.

a. History is taken from Order of Battle of the German Army March 1945, published by the Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington 25, D. C.

B. Composition during the period from six to twelve January 1945.<sup>6</sup>

1. Headquarters 553 Volksgrenadier Division: Identified as the unit in command of the majority of troops in HERRLISHEIM, but its actual presence in the village is not confirmed by any of the

evidence available to this committee. One prisoner thought that the Headquarters was east of the RHINE.

The division commander is not mentioned by name by any of the members of the units captured at HERRLISHEIM.

a. Regiment Oberhein (CO Lt. Col. Marbach): This unit was also referred to by prisoners as Battle Group Marbach and as the E - V Regiment. It controlled the following units that were identified in the sector:

(1) V Battalion Oberhein (CO Lt. Zieres); This unit was also known as Battle Group Zieres and was responsible for much of the confusion involving identifications during this action. It appears that the designation at one time represented I Bn, E - V Regt under control of the 405th Administrative Division. When placed under the command of the 553 Vgr. Div it became known as V Battalion Oberhein although the paybooks of the prisoners had not been changed accordingly. Its strength was believed to be between 75 and 100 men.

(a) Battalion Headquarters: Prisoners refer to the commander as both Captain and Lt. Zieres. Many such conflicting statements found in the interrogations indicate the degree of confusion that must have existed among all ranks of the enemy and leads to the belief that the units were recently formed. The adjutant was Lt. Schmidt and the headquarters consisted of a communications section and a messenger

section. It was located in two bunkers located south of KEHL, about 3/4 of a mile east of the river.

(b) 1st Company: (CO Lt. Frey - captured) The company command post was located south of HERRLISHEIM near a dam. The unit had a strength of approximately 90 men when it crossed the RHINE in rubber boats on January sixth near FREITSTETT. The first and second platoons were taken prisoner shortly after crossing the river.

(c) 2nd Company: (CO unknown). Sixteen prisoners were interrogated from this unit. The mission the company was to take up a position in the fork of the creek north of HERRLISHEIM as flank security for the town. Several noncoms and five enlisted men were left behind in OFFENDORF to dig out the first platoon that was buried under a bombed house. Our bombing missions also neutralized one 88mm gun and one 20mm AA gun in the village. The second platoon was the only one with the majority of its members still alive and uncaptured when they felt the situation was hopeless and surrendered. The company helped originally to establish the bridgehead and had its first battle on the railroad south of GAMBSHEIM. They had observed some GHQ artillery 150mm or larger in the woods in the vicinity of FREITSTETT. The platoon crossed the river near that town on a ferry that was

guided by a wire and propelled by a small motorboat. They passed through HERRLISHEIM at night on their way to GAMBSHEIM and claimed to have seen no installations in the former town. However they saw between fifteen and twenty tanks in OFFENDORF and about 200 men all in SS black uniforms with an arm marked Reichsfuhrer Himmler or Adolph Hitler. These tanks were said to mount 75mm or 88mm guns.

(2) Regimental Companies, Regiment Oberhein;

(a) 13th Company: (Inf How) was also known as Battle Group Schmidt, and had an estimated strength of 90 to 100 men.

(b) 14th Company: (AT Co.) known as Battle Group Walther with an estimated strength of 100 men. It was equipped with three 75mm AT guns and 28 Offenrohr.

(3) VI Battalion Oberhein: (CO Captain Murg) The battalion crossed the RHINE on the sixth of January near FREISTETT in assault boats. Before that they had been in the Black Forest for training. Their estimated strength was 250 men. The Battalion command post was located behind HERRLISHEIM in a pillbox. A captured platoon leader who was at first very security conscious, said later that the whole bridgehead was a makeshift affair and actually had nothing behind it. The unit was equipped with gas masks. Every prisoner interrogated was once wounded, physically defective or both. Such malformations as fingers grown

together were common.

(a) 2nd Company: (CO Lt. Wartman) This officer was seriously wounded at HERRLISHEIM.

b. 2nd SS Police Regiment: This unit was under the control of the 405 Administrative Division until 25 December 1944 when it was transferred to the 553 Volksgrenadier Division and the II Bn was placed under the command of Regiment Oberhein.

(1) II Battalion: (CO Major Zarnow) (Adjutant Lt. Back)  
(Ordnance officer Lt. Rickert)

(a) 1st Company: (CO Lt. Steffen) Consisted of 110 to 140 men divided into three platoons. Each platoon was armed with three light machine guns and three panzerfaust. They crossed the RHINE 9 January on a ferry.

(b). 5th Company: (CO Captain Renz) (Exec Lt. Zabler)  
The company commander was a prisoner and the executive had been killed. This company had an original strength of about 100 men of which only 50 were in the line, the other platoon being in reserve. The unit command post was in OFFENDORF. The unit went into position on 7 January when it crossed the river and entered the bridgehead. The armament consisted of five light machine guns and six panzerfausts. The NCOs were armed with machine pistols. The mission of the company was to hold a line somewhere in HERRLISHEIM and the commander had ordered the construction of a second

line of defense, The company was prevented from completing this second line due to the intensity of American artillery fire. When interrogated the company commander stated that the command post of the II Bn was west of the RHINE, although he did not know the exact location. He thought that it was in a house south of OFFENDORF. In addition he said that the regimental command post was also west of the river in an unknown location. He confirmed other reports of two or three assault guns in the STAINWALD. He complained that he had been promised artillery support from across the river, but up until the time of his capture none had been received. In the opinion of this prisoner and that of the other German officers that he knew, their situation in the bridgehead was extremely precarious. His company supply train was in OFFENDORF along with his third platoon which was in battalion reserve. He knew that his battalion was under the command of the 553 Vgr. Division, and thought that the division command post was east of the river. The fifth company relieved an unknown unit in the bridgehead on the seventh of January and the other unit remained somewhere on the vicinity.

(c) 6th Company: (CO Captain Meinzquinkel) The majority of this company was captured prior to 17

January.

(d) 7th Company: (CO Captain Thoenessen) Strength 120 men.

(e) 8th Company: (CO Captain Bulter) (Exec Lt. Warnebold). This company consisted of two submachine-gun platoons of four guns each, and one mortar platoon consisting of four 81mm mortars. Strength was between 100 and 125 men. One squad of the first submachine gun platoon supported the 5th company and one, the 6th. The remaining platoon was in reserve. The company crossed the river on the sixth of January and set up a headquarters in a house behind a mill on the HERRLISHEIM-GAMBSHEIM road. The supply trains were in OFFENDORF.

(f) 13th Company: (CO Lt. Kues)

(g) Jagdzug: This unit consisted of about 30 men drawn from various companies and equipped with three light machine guns. It was formed for the protection of the battalion headquarters and crossed the river on 6 January on the ferry near FREISTETT.

(h) 20 Mortar Battalion: the fourth company of this battalion had a strength of 70 men and was equipped with ten 81mm mortars. The entire unit was under the control of Regiment Oberhein and G-2, 12th Armored division assumed that the other three companies were in the area.

(i) 405 AT Battalion: (CO Captain Manherz) It was not determined whether this unit was operating under the control of Regiment Oberhein or even under the 553 Vgr Div, but its location in the bridgehead would logically lead to the assumption that it was commanded by one of those headquarters. It was reported to consist of two AT companies and one AA company with an estimated battalion strength of 100 to 150 men. It was armed with nine 75mm AT guns and one 37mm AT gun.

(j) The VI Corps History mentions the capture of prisoners from a Battle Group Hoffe which was under the command of the 553 Vgr, Div. No details were given and no other reference to this battalion could be found.

b. The paragraphs on the composition of units in the HERRLISHEIM area of the bridgehead are based on information found in the G-2 Periodic Report of the 12th Armored Division from 170014 to 172400A January 1945 and from Interrogation Summary IPW Team 134, 12th Armored Division cage, 17 January 1945.

II. SS Panzer-Grenadier-Division, Leibstandarte - SS "Adolf Hitler"<sup>c</sup>

A. History:

Home Station: Berlin-Lichterfelde (Wkr. III)

Commander: SS Oberfuhrer Wisch

Composition:

SS Panzer Grenadier Regiments 1, 2, 3 (?)

Panzer artillery regiment

Panzer reconnaissance battalion

Panzer engineer battalion

Panzer signal battalion

AT battalion

Formed in the winter of 1940 - 41 as a motorized division by expansion of the Leibstandarte (Hitler's bodyguard regiment) which had taken part in the Polish and Western campaigns as a motorized regiment.

Fought with distinction in the Balkan campaign and was heavily engaged in Russia until the summer of 1942. Transferred to France to be reorganized as a panzer grenadier division and returned to southern Russia for the German counteroffensive toward Kharkov in March of 1943 and back to Russia in the autumn. Last reported heavily engaged west of Kiev.

B. Comment:

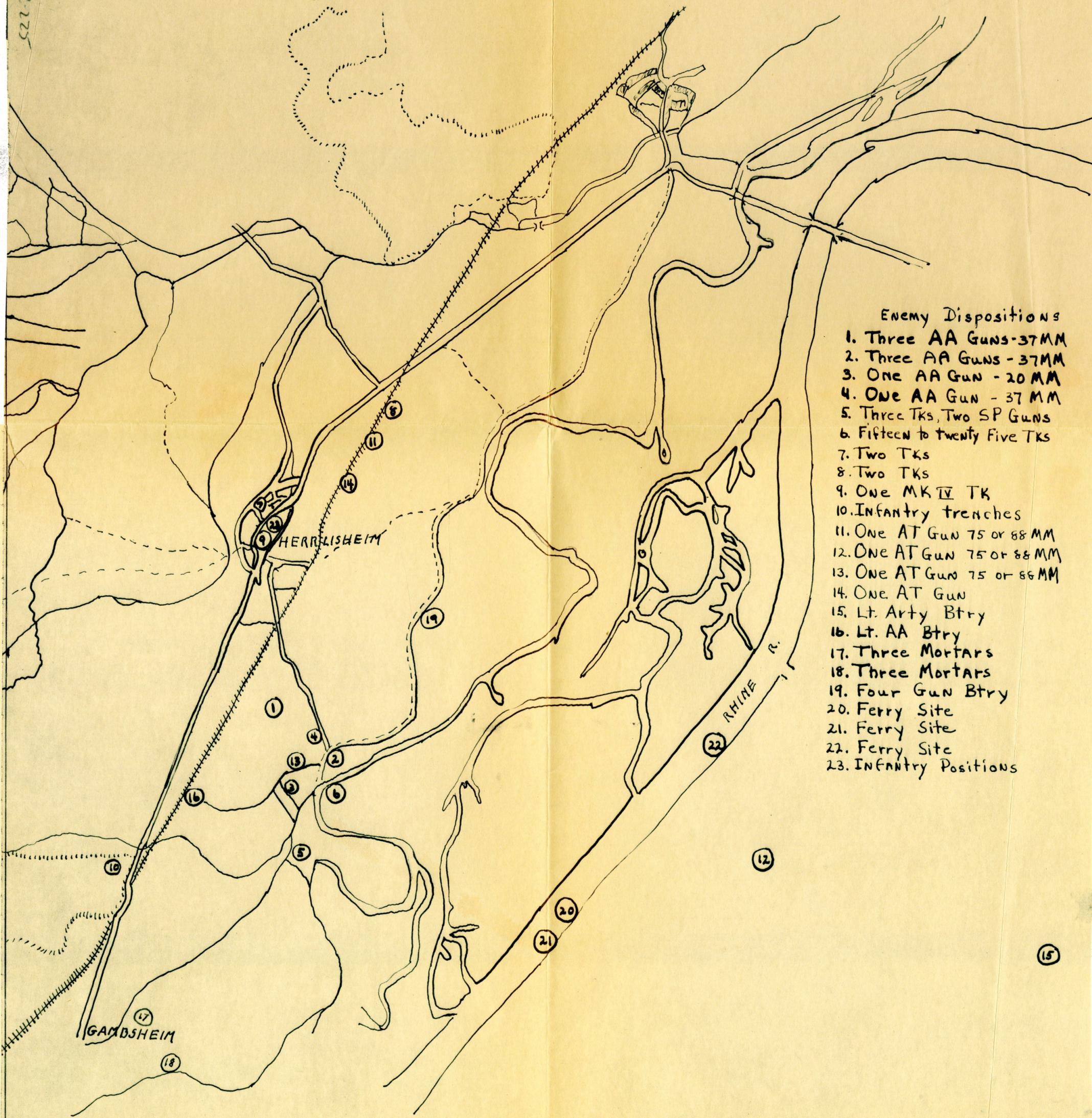
The 200 men wearing the uniform of this division that were seen in OFFENDORF may have been a battalion that had escaped from Russia and was being used as stiffening for the Volksgrenadiers. This point of view is based only on circumstantial evidence and is not supported by any definite findings of this committee.

c. History is taken from Order of Battle of the German Army March 1945, published by the Military Intelligence Division, War Department, Washington 25, D. C.

NOTES FOR ANNEX 1b

1. Division Operations in France, 1 to 31 January 1945, 12th Armored Division. (Distributed by G-3 Information and Education Section, 12th Armored Division.) p 127-153.
2. History of the Seventh United States Army from 15 December 1944 to 25 January 1945. (Aloys Graf, Heidelberg, Germany, May 1946.) p 561-582.
3. Ibid.
4. Op cit; Division Operations in France.
5. Interview with Lt. Col. Clayton W. Wells, former commander of the 56th Armored Infantry Battalion. Interview with Lt. Col. Frederick P. Field, executive and later commander of the 714th Tank Battalion.
6. G-2 Periodic Report from 170001A to 172400A January 1945, Headquarters 12th Armored Division, APO 262.
7. Interrogation Summary, 17 January 1945, IRW Team 134, p 1.
8. History of the 14th Armored Division. (Albert Love Enterprises, Atlanta, Georgia.) Chapt. 9, Jan 3 to 20, 1945.

R-225



Enemy Dispositions

1. Three AA Guns-37MM
2. Three AA Guns - 37MM
3. One AA Gun - 20MM
4. One AA Gun - 37MM
5. Three Tks, Two SP Guns
6. Fifteen to twenty Five Tks
7. Two Tks
8. Two Tks
9. One MK IV TK
10. Infantry trenches
11. One AT Gun 75 or 88 MM
12. One AT Gun 75 or 88 MM
13. One AT Gun 75 or 88 MM
14. One AT Gun
15. Lt. Arty Btry
16. Lt. AA Btry
17. Three Mortars
18. Three Mortars
19. Four Gun Btry
20. Ferry Site
21. Ferry Site
22. Ferry Site
23. Infantry Positions

15

APPENDIX II  
TERRAIN STUDY

The results of a detailed map study of the BRUMATH and DRUSENHEIM sheets FRANCE 1/25000, together with results of interviews with members of Combat Command B, the 12th Armored Division and of the 14th Armored Division give what may be assumed to be a fairly accurate estimate of the terrain situation in the HERRLISHEIM-GAMBSHEIM bridgehead during the original attack by CCB.

During the month of January this portion of the RHINE valley is subject to freezing temperatures, light snowfalls, overcast skies, fogs and varying winds. From 7 to 11 January the temperature held at about the freezing point. It was cold enough to harden the wet, loam soil so that it would bear a tank in most places, however. In some instances, probably in sheltered or deeply swampy places, vehicles broke through the crust. There was a light fall of snow about two inches deep - just enough to make men and vehicles outlined in sharp relief to the enemy. Although the streams and the ZORN canal had a coating of ice it was not sufficient to bear the weight of a man. The sky was overcast most of the time and heavy fogs limited visibility prior to 0900 hours. Winds were light and variable.

An examination of the relief and drainage system as shown in the sketch map attached hereto as Annex 1, shows that the area across which the attack was launched is a level plain crossed laterally by several streams and the ZORN canal. The maximum height of any point above the surrounding country is approximately one meter until the HERRLISHEIM-

GAMBSHEIM road (route No. 1) and the railroad behind it are reached. These features rest on embankments about 20 meters in height, and easily concealed the low silhouette of the German tanks and self-propelled guns. They provide the only cover and concealment other than the town of HERRLISHEIM on the battlefield. A sketch map of the town is attached as Annex 2 showing the location of streets, buildings, streams and some known enemy installations.

The area is drained to the northeast by the ZORN canal, and the EICHGRABEN and KESSELGRABEN rivers, which lead eventually to the MODER and the RHINE. Numerous intermittent streams and drainage ditches lace the plain from north to south. These ditches offered the only cover for troops advancing on the town while there is no concealed or covered approach for vehicles at all.

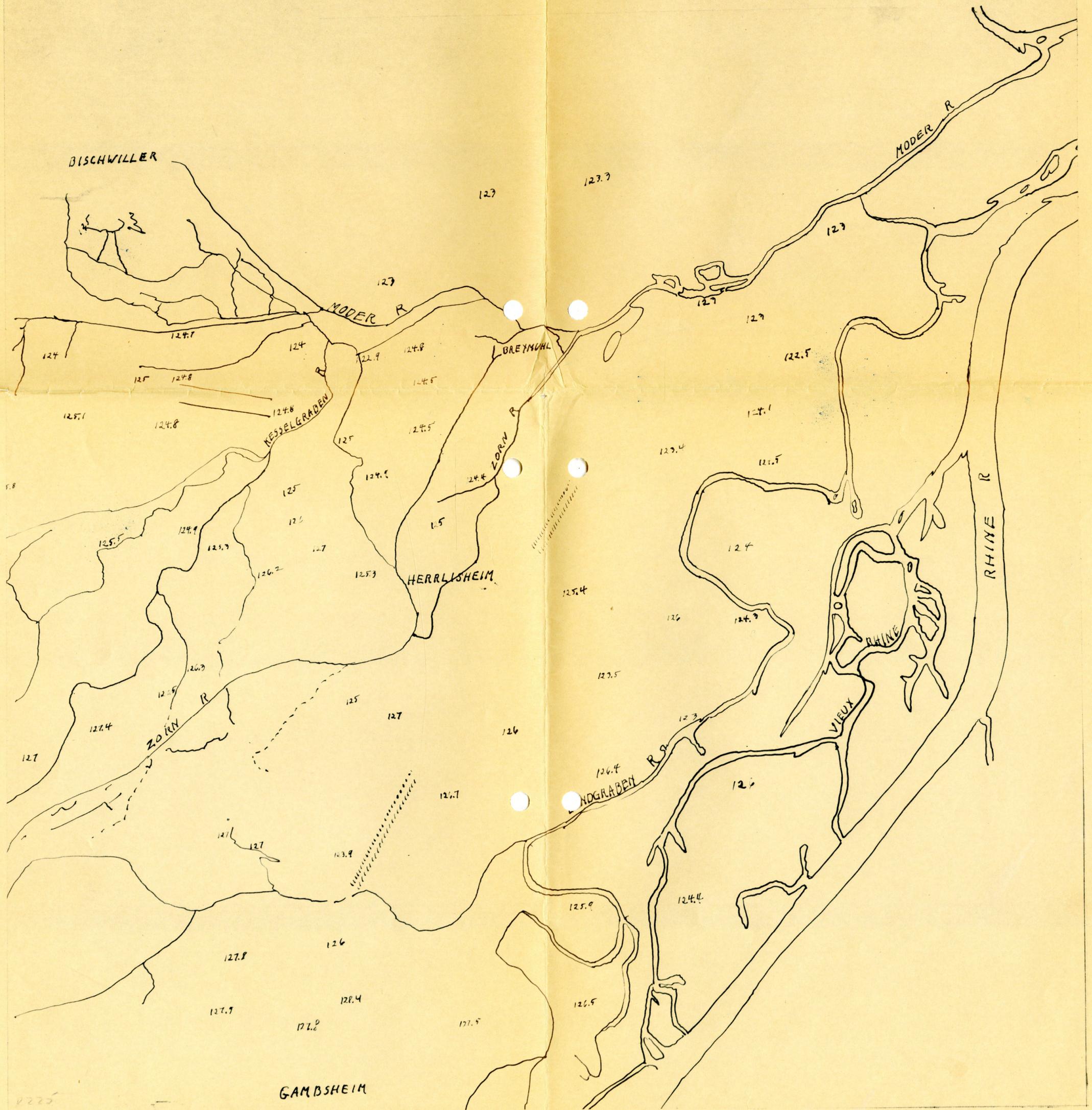
The distribution of vegetation is shown on the sketch map Annex 2. Two fairly large forests, the STAINWALD on the south and the BOIS de DRUSSENHEIM on the north constitute the principle growth in the area. The enemy had excellent observation on the entire battlefield from the STAINWALD wood and he used tanks and self-propelled guns with telling effect from this flank.

The roadnet leading from HERRLISHEIM to OFFENDORF and thence to the crossings of the RHINE offered an excellent main supply and evacuation route for the Germans of which they took full advantage in reinforcing their position in the town.

In summary we can say that the entire terrain and weather with the possible exception of early morning fogs favored the enemy in his defense. The avenues of approach all lead across open country which offered little or no cover or concealment. Obstacles to advance by our forces were

furnished by the ZORN canal and the various streams and ditches. The open fields of fire afforded by the plain were of little use to the United States troops since every possible gun and tank position was easily visible to a covered and concealed enemy. The casualties in 12th Armored Division tanks bear tragic witness to this observation. On the other hand the enemy had in the town, the raised road and the STAINWALD an ideal defensive position together with fields of fire from one to two kilometers in length. He exploited this advantage to the fullest extent.

RELIEF AND DRAINAGE SYSTEM



APPENDIX III

HEADQUARTERS VI CORPS ARTILLERY

APO 46, U. S. Army

[REDACTED] AUTH: CG VI C ART

INIT: CFS

Date: 10 Jan 45

OPERATION INSTRUCTION

Number 1:

1. FO #11, this Hq is suspended until further notice.
2. The following attachments and missions will apply:
  - a. 33 FA Brigade:
    - (1) attached: 6 FA Group  
59 AFA Bn  
36 FA Bn  
634 FA Bn  
292 FA Bn  
975 FA Bn
    - (2) Mission: Provide direct support in the right (East) sector of 79 Inf Div as agreed with CG 79 Inf Div Arty. Reinforce fires of 79 Inf Div Arty with 1 Med Bn. General support in 79 Inf Div Sector.
  - b. 405 FA Group
    - (1) attached: 69 AFA Bn  
938 FA Bn  
976 FA Bn
    - (2) Mission: Provide direct support for 36 Engr Regt (C) with 1 Lt Bn. Reinforce fires of 45 Inf Div Arty with 1 Med Bn. General support in right (East) sector of 45 Inf Div.
  - c. 17 FA Group
    - (1) attached: 977 FA Bn  
698 FA Bn (-C Btry)  
575 FA Bn (-A & C Btry)  
C Btry, 995 FA Bn
    - (2) General support in Corps zone.
  - d. 35 FA Group
    - (1) attached: 17 FA Bn  
995 FA Bn (-C Btry)  
C Btry, 698 FA Bn
    - (2) Mission: Provide direct support 275 Inf Regt with 1 Med Bn. General support in left (west) sector of 45 Inf Div.

( . Per VCG VI Corps, 12 Armd Div Arty placed under operational control  
33 FA Brigade for direct support in right (East) sector of 79 Inf Div.

BAHR  
Brig Gen

Official  
Stubbs, Asst S-3

APPENDIX IV  
Figure 1

494th ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

REPORT OF MISSIONS FIRED  
24 Hour Period Ending 090600 January

CONCENTRATION	TIME	COORDINATES	TARGET	AMT & TYPE AMMUNITION	BY	RESULTS
BP Reg	1017-1112	(14.73 - 15.11)	CR	5 WP 23 M48	Plane	Not registered Unable to observe
EP Reg	1337-1347	(14.73 - 15.00)	CR	2 WP 6 M48	Plane	Registered
AG 89	1431-1448	(14.0 - 16.9)	Infantry & MG's	3 WP 32 M48	FO #38	Activity ceased
BP ck Rds	1507-1530	(14.73 - 15.11)	CR	1 WP 7 M48	Plane	Registered
	1512-1540	(13.5 - 16.7)	MG	12 M48	FO #38	Communications lost not completed
CF 57	1609-1614	(12.4 - 14.7)	Town	136 M48	FO #47	Right in there
MF 51	1617-1622	(12.5 - 15.1)	Infantry edge of town	36 M48	FO #37	Good
MF 39	1633-1635	(12.3 - 14.9)	Infantry in town	34 M48	FO #37	Excellent
ME 55	1635-1637	(12.5 - 14.5)	Infantry in town	34 M48	FO #37	Maximum effect
Barrage EW	0420-0430	(12.4 - 15.5)		52 M48	Ln 0 51	Good
		(13.0 - 15.6)				
NG 10 Series	0430	(13.0 - 15.7)		32 M48	Ln 0 51	Effective
		(13.6 - 16.4)				
NG 10 Series Barrage EW	0455 0500	(13.6 - 16.4)		32 M48	Ln 0 51	Unobserved
		(12.4 - 15.5)				
NG 10 Series and Barrage EW	0530-0600	(13.0 - 15.6)		22 M48	Ln 0 51	Unobserved
		(13.0 - 15.7)		63 M48	Ln 0 51	Unobserved
		(13.6 - 16.4)				
		(12.4 - 15.5)				
		(13.0 - 15.6)				

APPENDIX IV  
Figure 2

12th Armored Division Artillery

REPORT OF MISSIONS FIRED

091800 Jan 45

<u>Missions</u>	<u>493</u>	<u>494</u>	<u>495</u>	<u>Total</u>
Air OP	1	0	0	1
Harassing:				
Observed	0	32	3	35
Unobserved	0	2	2	4
Personnel:				
Observed	0	27	4	31
Unobserved	0	0	0	0
Vehicles:				
Observed	0	1	0	1
Unobserved	0	0	0	0
Tanks:				
Observed	1	2	2	5
Unobserved	0	0	0	0
Mortars & Machine Guns:				
Observed	0	2	1	3
Unobserved	0	0	1	1
Registration:				
Observed	1	0	3	4
Unobserved	0	0	0	0
Counterbattery:				
Observed	0	1	0	1
Unobserved	0	0	6	6
Miscellaneous:				
Observed	3	1	0	4
Unobserved	0	0	0	0

APPENDIX IV  
Figure 3

494th AFA Bn Ammunition Expenditure 8-11 Jan 1945		
TYPE	REMARKS	ROUNDS
HE M48	High explosive shell which bursts on impact with either quick or delayed fuze setting	3244
HE M54	Time fuze shell	225
WP	For smoke and anti-personnel missions	40
HC	Smoke missions only	<u>191</u>
	Total expenditure	3700

APPENDIX IV  
Figure 4

Extract from 12th Armored Division G-1 Periodic Report.

Report of Operations During Period 8-21 Jan 1945.

UNIT	T/O STRENGTH		EFFECTIVE STRENGTH 8 JAN		EFFECTIVE STRENGTH 21 JAN		KILLED 8-21 JAN		MISSING 8-21 JAN		WOUNDED 8-21 JAN		NON-BATTLE CASUALTIES 8-21 JAN				RETURNED TO DUTY 8-21 JAN		REPLACEMENTS 8-21 JAN	
													INF		OTHER					
	OFF	EM	OFF	EM	OFF	EM	OFF	EM	OFF	EM	OFF	EM	O	EM	O	EM	OFF	EM	OFF	EM
CC "B"	16	78	16	76	16	70						4			1	4	1	2	1	
714th Tk Bn	42	678	43	650	36	601		5		2	10	26				22	1	6	2	3
56th AIB	42	986	34	849	26	529	1	22	1	52	11	235	3	97		1	4	62	3	24
1494th AFA Bn	34	487	33	480	31	478		1			3	1				2	1	1		

APPENDIX IV  
Figure 5

DISTRIBUTION OF AWARDS AND DECORATIONS, JANUARY 1945				
	DSC	SS	SM	BS
12 Armd Div	-	19	1	48

6th Army Group Record of Progress, Volume 1, Copy No. 26, dated 31 March 1945.

N  
↑

D

ROHRWILLER

MODER RIVER

BRIDGE IN

BUILDING

XX

PRIVATE HOUSE

SPARSE ORCHARD

FOX HOLES

3

WINDOWS

DOOR

COURT

YARD

7' HIGH STONE WALL

PILL BOX

BARN

BRIDGE OUT

ZORN RIVER

CREAK

TO HERRLISHEIM

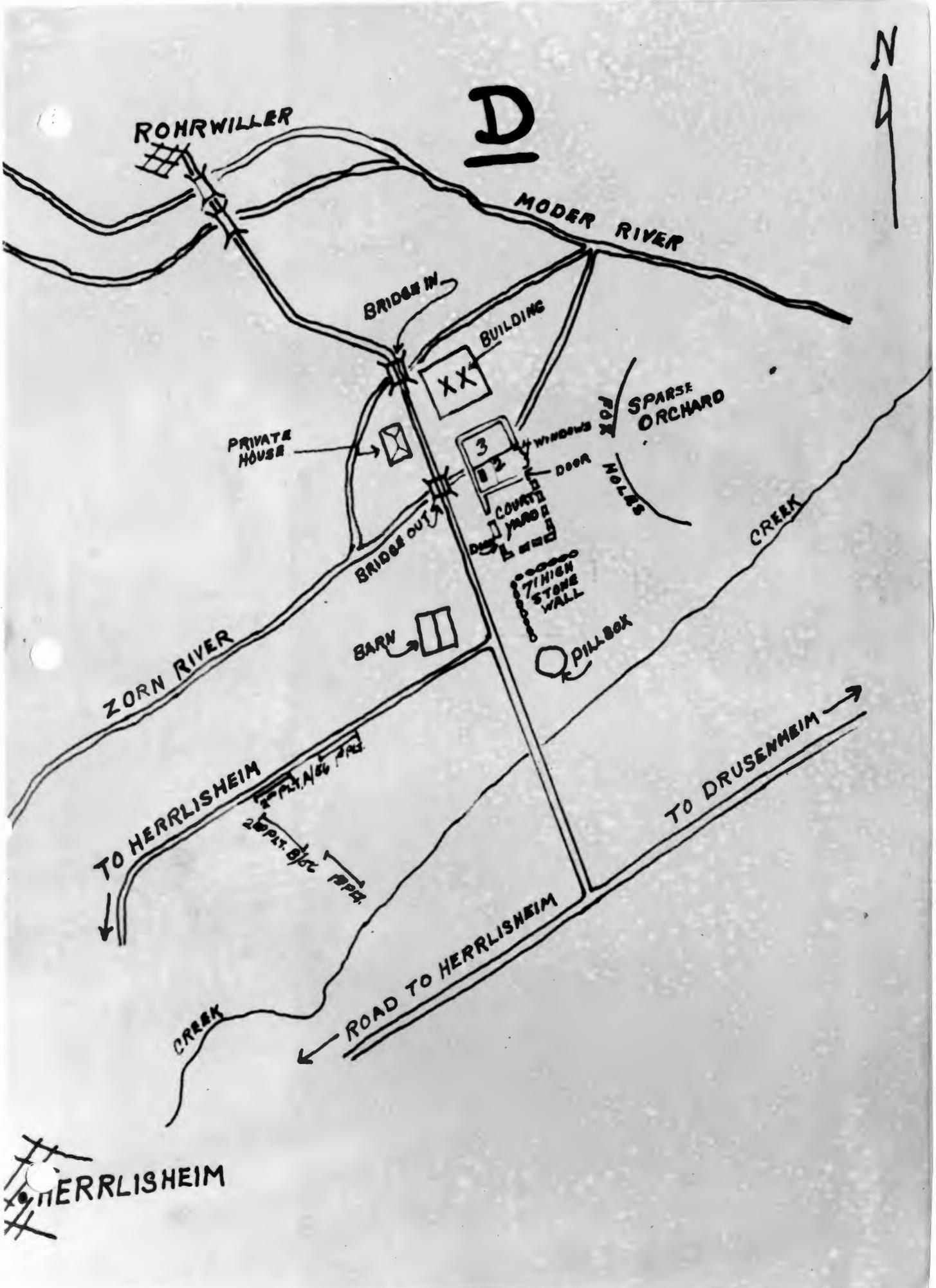
20 FT. BLK. 17 FT. 17 FT.

TO DRUSENHEIM

ROAD TO HERRLISHEIM

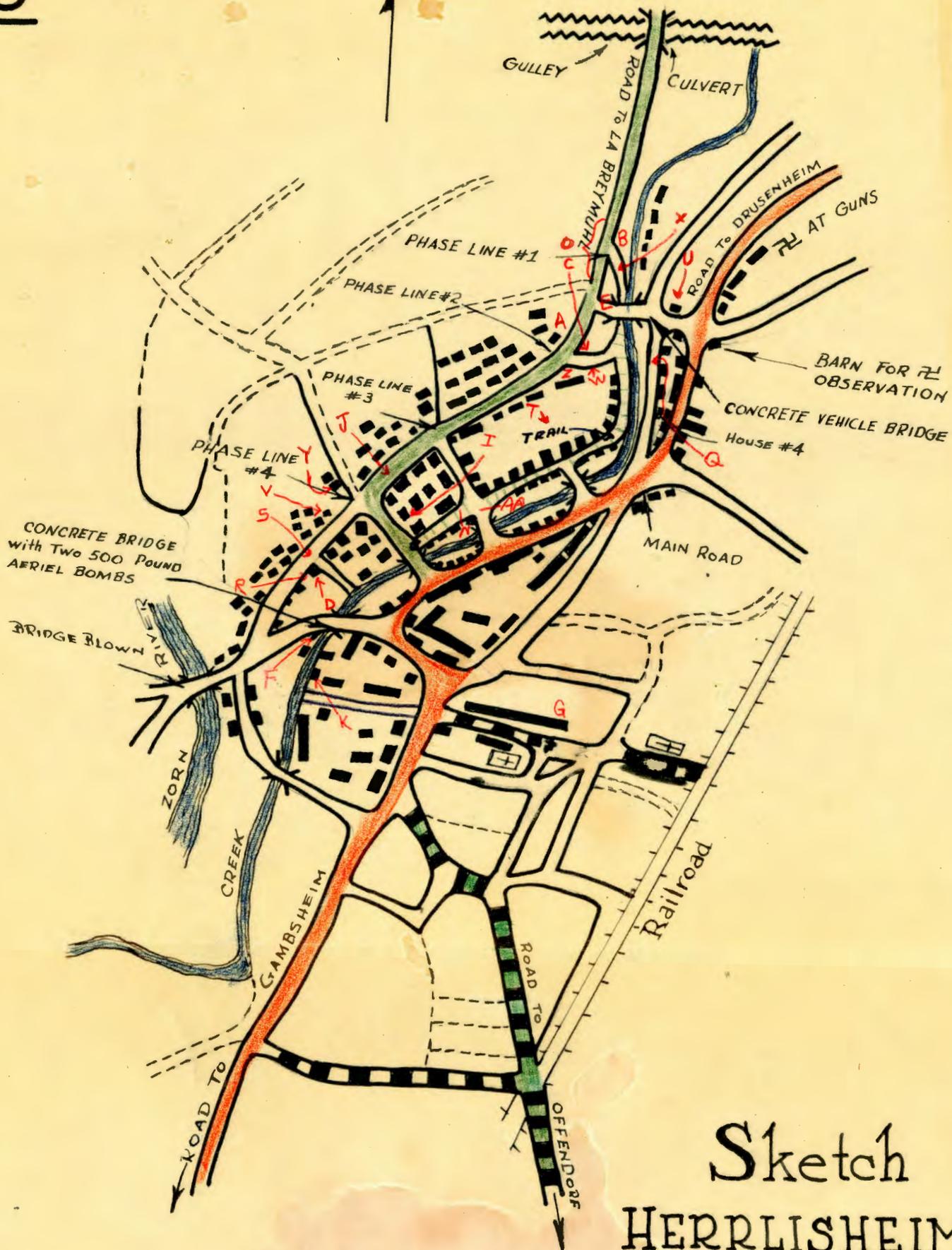
CREAK

HERRLISHEIM





10



Sketch  
HERRLISHEIM

#050277

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