

General Maloney

HJM/al/72530
26 Jan 1949

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Lorraine Campaign
1 FEB 1949

Lt. General Walton H. Walker
Headquarters Eighth Army, USA
Office of the Commanding General
APO 343, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California

My dear General Walker:

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of 6 January. I will take up the points made in your letter in order.

1. The author of this volume was formerly the historian on duty at General Patton's Headquarters. He belonged to the Department of History of the University of Chicago and came to us from that institution. I think I can assure you that he possesses no personal antipathy nor antagonism towards you. He has stated to me that he has met you only once and that was here in Washington after the war. He personally requested that the manuscript be sent to you and that revision on the volume as a whole be held up after the other answers were in until yours had come in order that he might take cognizance of your statements. This could hardly have been the case if Dr. Cole were antagonistic towards you.

2. The Metz operation has been reviewed by other officers who took part in the operation who have stated that they regard this story as one of the best parts of the manuscript. As you probably know, we have much material from German sources and it appears to be a fact that the German documents regard the defense of Metz as among their best operations and that they did award special honors to the garrison. This was regarded here as in effect a tribute to the officers and men who finally captured the city. I cannot see that the Metz operation is belittled.

3. The Metz defenses are not treated with contempt. While it is a fact that this area had been formerly universally recognized as the strongest fortified area in the world they are here for the first time evaluated in their proper historical perspective. French testimony on the strength of the Metz fortifications dates at least from 1940 and in evaluating the strength of the Siegfried Line the same point is made; that the improvement in the effectiveness of the offense between 1940 and 1944 had reduced the relative defensive strength of 1940 fortifications. We are in possession of German documents dating from the summer of 1944 which show that the Germans did not regard the Metz fortifications as strong in the modern sense;

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instead they specifically recognized that it was outdated by advances in the techniques and tactics of the 1944 offensive. It was not until October that the Germans made much of the Metz defenses publicly and the evaluation here is that this praise was in the nature of propaganda, utilizing the successful defense in September. That the United States forces regarded the Metz fortifications as outdated is somewhat indicated by the XX Corps G-2's report of 5 September and prisoner interrogation reports referring to the fortifications as "World War I vintage." There are other references occurring in the records, like Intelligence Summaries issued prior to the 8th of September which refer to "old forts of the Metz system."

Dr. Cole has given the precise strength of the German garrison as found in German documents. I do not believe that there is any reflection cast on the XX Corps by the fact that the enemy was able to accomplish quite a lot with very little. As you can see from a perusal of the volume it is clearly shown that the same thing applied in front of the XV and XII Corps.

4. Ft. Briant was given first priority in Third Army tactical plans for October, according to Third Army records, after the Seventh Army took over the Forêt de Parroy fight. It is clearly shown in the record that neither General Patton nor General Irwin regarded the Ft. Briant operation as of "minor importance." The manuscript clearly states that Ft. Briant was one of the few works around Metz that had been put in a strong state of defense. The story as told in the manuscript is based throughout on 5th Division records (such as Task Force WARNOCK JOURNAL) which treat the operation as difficult and, while unsuccessful, certainly not discreditable. This is the view of the Third Army Diary, kept by General Patton's staff and consequently is the view taken by the author.

5. The episode of the staff officer from the XX Corps who was alleged to have given an order which resulted in delaying the 11th Infantry crossing is taken from (a) The Fifth Infantry Division in the ETO, a semi-official history published by the 5th Division; (b) interviews by historical officers made in the field and now on file with the Historical Division; (c) 11th Infantry, a semi-official unit history published by the 11th Infantry. While these sources are sufficiently firm to be trusted in ordinary cases, it is my considered judgment that the Inspector General's report mentioned by you, although we have no record of it, raises enough doubt to justify the deletion of this event.

6. The information pertaining to the relief of General Thompson was based upon oral and written statements made by two officers who were with the Seventh Armored Division. In view of your personal testimony and my own knowledge of the case, this passage will be deleted.

7. The exchange between yourself and General Irwin is taken from a stenographic verbatim report of a conversation between you and General Irwin on 28 September 1944. This report was attached to the 5th Division G-3 Journal of that date. The statement of General Patton's attitude came from a record of General Patton's visit to the 5th Division on the afternoon of 28 September. We will revise the statement of your views on that date to read substantially as follows:

"General Walker sharply insisted that more aggressive personal leadership should have been shown in the Division especially by the regimental and battalion commanders responsible for the initial attack at Fort Briant. General Irwin, however, noted that the difficulties encountered by the attacking force had been greater than anticipated, and reminded the Corps Commander that the air photos had shown neither the intricate wire entanglements nor the large number of pill boxes around the fort."

8. The statement in the last paragraph of chapter 9, p. 34, and to Note 9 regarding the Metz operation "this operation, skillfully planned and marked by thorough execution of the plan, may long remain an outstanding battle" is certainly not grudging in its credit. As to the opportunity which the Germans seized to tie their First Army's right wing together by establishing contact between the LXXIII Corps and the XIIISS Corps in time for withdrawal to the Saar River, this can be thoroughly documented from German records.

9. These appear to be the facts as shown by the record. Both General Gay and General Irwin have read and approved the manuscript containing the summation of the author as quoted in your paragraph e.

10. Professor W. T. Hutchinson (Chairman, Department of History, University of Chicago) made the following written comment, as a member of the Review Panel, on this manuscript:

"No one would know after reading the manuscript whether its author's favorite fighting arm was the infantry, the tanks, or the air forces, whether he had any preference among the corps or the divisions of the Third Army, or among its top-ranking officers, or, for that matter, (except for his obvious low opinion of Hitler's military skill) whether it was friend or foe he wished to win. This is all as it should be."

The directive under which this Division is writing requires it to prepare for publication a thoroughly documented comprehensive narrative of operations, regardless of whether or not they reflect credit or discredit upon any unit or any individual. We are fully cognizant of the great responsibility which this confers upon us and

we are attempting, from an assembly of materials to an extent which has never before been equalled, and by painstaking research, to make our narratives precise and factual and to correlate and evaluate results. This Division appreciates the effort you have made to assist us in the accurate portrayal of this campaign. It is our duty to preserve a completely objective attitude and in the case of this author, to the best of my knowledge and belief, he has written the campaign with no bias.

I would welcome any further suggestions or references to data which will assist us.

Sincerely yours,

HARRY J. MALONY
Major General, USA
Chief, Historical Division

MEMO FOR RECORD:

In letter, dated 6 Jan 49 from Lt. Gen. Walton H. Walker, Hqs. Eighth Army, APO 343, he commented, at the request of the Chief, Historical Division, on the manuscript The Lorraine Campaign, taking exception to the manner in which he himself was treated therein as CG of the XX Corps.

A reply has been prepared thereto by General Malony, citing each case referred to by General Walker and the modifications proposed, if any, in the manuscript. Prior to dispatch the letter was carried by General Malony to General Haislip, DCofS for Administration for clearance with the Chief of Staff in view of the nature of General Walker's comments in his reply. General Haislip returned the letter to General Malony on 1 Feb 1949 with the following comment written in pencil on the envelope: "The Chief of Staff approves your letter and is telling Walker so. WHH."