

HEADQUARTERS EIGHTH ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY
Office of the Commanding General
A.P.O. 343

6 January 1949

Major General Harry J. Malony
Chief, Historical Division
Department of the Army
Pentagon Building
Washington 25, D. C.

My dear General Malony:

Copy of the manuscript entitled "The Lorraine Campaign" with a covering letter from you dated 9 November 1948, has been received and carefully examined. In your covering letter, you requested that I review the manuscript with a view of exposing any inaccuracies noted. My comments and impressions are included in the following sub-paragraphs:

- #1 a. GENERAL. It is my impression that throughout the entire manuscript, and especially in Chapters III and VI, I personally have been dealt with in a very unfriendly, unsympathetic and unfair manner. In my opinion no unbiased individual could read the chapters above referred to without feeling that the writer possessed a definite personal antipathy or antagonism toward me. The writer has drawn conclusions which are unfounded. My motives have been impugned, and statements made that "apparently" certain conditions existed when in fact such was not the case.
- #2 The Metz Operation, which General Patton habitually characterized as one of the most brilliant and praiseworthy actions of his Army is disparaged and belittled in every way. The Metz defenses are
- #3 treated with contempt although this area has been universally recognized by the Germans, the French, and the Americans as the strongest fortified area in the world.
- #4 The Fort Driant Operation is magnified into a major and dis-creditable operation when in fact it was of minor importance initiated for training purposes, and in furtherance of General Patton's desire that the XX Corps, during the lull forced on us by gasoline and ammunition shortage, conduct an active defense and improve its position wherever practicable. It was only one of numerous operations of similar importance which were being carried on at the same time. One of these was the attack by the 90th Division of Maizieres-les-Metz.

- #5 b. THE INITIAL CROSSING OF THE MOSELLE. The description of the

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initial crossing of the Moselle, contained in Chapter III, contains inaccuracies and unsupported assumptions which have no basis in fact. On Page 14, Section 4, of Chapter III, the statement is made that "although General Walker verbally had given General Irwin command of all troops in the Dornot area, some time elapsed before a real coordination between CCB and the 5th Division troops could be introduced." This statement is correct. Further on, the statement is made that "this latter problem was further complicated by the appearance of a staff officer from Corps Headquarters who directed that CCB should cross its armored infantry in advance of the 11th Infantry". To the best of my knowledge and belief, this statement is without foundation. The day after the initial crossing of the Moselle, I heard a rumor as to the matter quoted above. I investigated this rumor personally, and sent the Inspector General of the Corps to find out if there were any basis for it. No one could name the Corps staff officer who had issued any such instructions, nor could anyone name the officer of the 5th Division or the 7th Armored Division who had received such instructions from a Corps staff officer. As a matter of fact, the statement is belied by the fact that General Irwin had been placed in command of all troops in the Dornot area, and it is unreasonable to believe that any junior officer would presume to give him instructions as to the priority of the crossing of units of his command. Furthermore staff officers of the XX Corps did not give orders in my name in the field.

#6 c. RELIEF OF GENERAL JOHN B. THOMPSON. Note 15, appearing on Page 75, Chapter III but referring to Page 19, Section 4, Chapter III, is as follows: "On this same date Brigadier General John B. Thompson was relieved, and Lieutenant Colonel A. G. Adams took command of CCB. Thompson's relief apparently resulted from pressure exerted on the Commanding General of the 7th Armored Division by the Commanding General of XX Corps -- this despite the personal efforts of General Thompson to restore some order in the confused situation at the crossing site." This statement is incorrect, and it is submitted that in an official history which is to form the basis of future historical research, there is no place for such a phrase as "Thompson's relief apparently resulted from pressure, etc." A disparaging remark should be based on fact, not conjecture. It is true that from the time the 7th Division became operational until it arrived at the Meuse River, I had severely criticized the Division Commander and all commanders of combat commands of the 7th Armored Division for lack of aggressiveness, and I had suggested to General Sylvester that unless he and his combat command commanders displayed more aggressive leadership and drive, I would be forced to ask for their relief. I had last criticized General Thompson on the 24th or 25th of August in the vicinity of Provins, for lack of aggressiveness in his advance. This was personally directed to

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him by me and occurred at least two weeks before the time of his relief. I had no intimation that he was to be relieved and I was surprised when he reported to me at my Command Post and stated that he had been relieved by his Division Commander.

d. THE FORT DRIANT OPERATION. During the last week in September the Third Army was directed to go over to the defensive. General Patton requested and obtained permission to continue to make local attacks with small units for training purposes, to improve positions and to keep the enemy off balance. In furtherance of General Patton's desire that his units conduct an active defense, General Irwin telephoned me on or about the 24th of September and stated that the Commanding Officer of the 11th Infantry had recommended an attack with one battalion of his regiment on Fort Driant. The Commanding Officer of the 11th Infantry had informed General Irwin that in his opinion Fort Driant could be captured with one battalion of infantry without too much effort. General Irwin stated that he concurred in the recommendation of the Commanding Officer of the 11th Infantry. After consultation with General Patton, I authorized General Irwin to attack Fort Driant. It is true that after the attack was started both General Patton and I were extremely anxious that it be successfully concluded and we pressed General Irwin to take the Fort with the least possible delay. A statement made in Chapter VI, Section 1, Page 13, reads as follows:

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"The Army Commander himself did not press General Irwin to conduct the Driant Operation, but instead instructed the 5th Division commander to take advantage of the forthcoming lull in the Army's operations to rotate and rest his tired Division. General Walker was not so charitable. He accused the 11th Infantry of "quitting" at Fort Driant, to which General Irwin retorted that the Infantry had not "quit", and reminded the Corps Commander that the air photos had not shown either the intricate wire entanglements or the large number of pill boxes around the Fort". This statement is not correct. General Patton was more emphatic than I in insisting that inasmuch as we had become involved at Fort Driant, that we succeed in our attempt to capture it. I distinctly remember him making the remark, "We have put our hands to the plow, we must finish the job". I did not accuse the 11th Infantry of quitting. I did insist on more aggressive action on the part of the force attacking Fort Driant and particularly on more aggressive personal leadership on the part of the regimental and battalion commanders which up to this time had been lacking. There was certainly no heated discussion, accusations or refutations as is indicated in the statement quoted above. After approximately ten days of attacking Fort Driant, during which time the Fort was entered and very important information obtained as to the interior layouts of the Metz fortifications, it became apparent that to continue the attack would not be worth the cost. I considered the situation very carefully and from every angle, consulting with General Irwin, General Warnock,

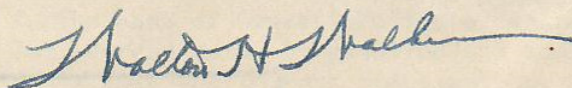
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the task force commander, and General Gaffey, the Army Chief of Staff all of whom were in favor of stopping the attack. On the 11th of October I laid the situation before Generals Bradley and Patton and told them that if it were desired we would continue the attack on Driant and would strengthen the forces to such an extent the attack would be successful. I warned them however, that to do this it would be necessary for me to take troops from other positions and that the attack would be costly. General Patton and General Bradley agreed that Driant was not worth the cost and directed me to discontinue the attack. This was not considered by General Bradley, General Patton or me as a major reverse as is indicated on Page 20, Chapter VI, Section 1.

#8 e. THE METZ OPERATION. Finally the entire attitude of the writer of the manuscript is exemplified by the last paragraph of Chapter IX, which is on Page 34 of this Chapter, and to Note 9 appended to this paragraph. Although grudging credit is given as follows: "This operation skillfully planned and marked by thorough execution of the plan, may long remain an outstanding example of a prepared battle for the reduction of a fortified post", it is destroyed by the following sentence which continues, "However determined enemy resistance, bad weather and attendant floods, plus a general tendency to over-estimate the strength of the Metz fortifications, all combined to slow down the American offensive and give opportunity for the right wing of the German First Army to repair the tie between the LXXXII Corps and the XIIIISS Corps in time for an organized withdrawal to the Saar River", and the statement in Note 9 as follows: "However it is true that the events of September and early October had made the Americans wary of high losses and dramatic failures, such as the first attempt to take Fort Driant, and prompted a widespread use of cautious and slow-moving tactics in which crushing superiority in men, guns and tanks was concentrated wherever the enemy showed signs of standing his ground".

#9 I request that this manuscript be revised and that derogatory statements which are not supported by factual evidence, be deleted. I ask this in justice to the officers and men who fought at Metz and in consideration of the military and personal reputation of the commanders involved.

Faithfully yours,



WALTON H. WALKER
Lieutenant General, United States Army
Commanding

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