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The Fuehrer-Begleit-Brigade (The Brigade under the  
command of Remer) in the Ardennes Offensive  
(16 Dec 44 to 26 Jan 45)

Translated by Charles E. Weber

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The Fuehrer-Begleit-Brigade (The Brigade

under the command of Remer) in the Ardennes Offensive

(16 Dec 44 - 26 Jan 45)

Previous history: During the first part of September, 1944,

I was detained by an order of Hitler from his headquarters in Bastenbourg  
lie on my way to the front to take over the Fusilierregiment with  
the "Greater Germany" Division. I was ordered by him to organize a  
combat force, later known as the Fuehrer Begleit-Brigade /Hitler's  
Escort Brigade/, the purpose of which was to take over the defense of  
headquarters, which was located about 100 km behind the front. At  
this time, it was supposed that an air landing of two to three airborne  
divisions on the part of the Allies was planned against the head-

quarters. The Fuehrer-Begleit-Brigade existing at the time was too  
weak for such a task. Besides, my force, which was to be organized,  
was to be used as a mobile operational reserve within the so-called  
fortress of Loetzen /East Prussia/ for engagements outside the limits  
of the fortress.  
To this end, I enlarged and formed my force as follows, taking  
into consideration the units already available there:

1. Brigade Staff

2. Fuehrer /according to Mueller, this refers to the Fuehrer  
Begleit-Brigade/ Signal Battalion (primarily intended for the internal

operations of the headquarters).

equipped with the most modern arms and ammunition and brought up to strength with experienced front-line soldiers.

When Hitler moved his headquarters to Berlin during the second half of November, 1944, my mission was completed. I then stayed several more days with my brigade in the area of Rastenburg. At the end of November, 1944, my brigade was transported by train for commitment on the western front on orders from Hitler.

For this purpose, the brigade had to be reorganized in great haste, with the extraction of units further needed in the headquarters and the addition of new units.

At the beginning of December, the following elements of the brigade listed above arrived in the area of Damm (Eifel):

1. Brigade staff
2. Fuehrer Antiaircraft Regiment with eight batteries
3. The entire Fuehrer Escort Regiment
4. The 828 Battalion on special assignment (The 829 remained for some time in Rastenburg, and later came to the Fuehrer-Begleit Brigade).

5. The medical company
6. A signal company, formed out of the Fuehrer Signal Battalion. Moreover, the following were added:
1. Staff of the Panzer Regiment
2. A panzer battalion from the "Greater Germany" Panzer Regiment.
3. One assault gun battalion (I believe the 120 Battalion,

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3. Fuehrer Air Signal Battalion (aircraft warning service).
4. Fuehrer Antiaircraft Regiment "Hermann Goering," with 14 batteries (for active air defense and ground artillery fighting).

5. Fuehrer Escort Regiment with three battalions.
- a. One armored personnel carrier battalion (five companies equipped with armored personnel carriers)
- b. One mobile battalion (four light and one heavy company loaded on amphibian Volkswagens and Steyr command cars)
- c. One heavy battalion with one tank company

- one assault gun company
- one antiaircraft company
- one combat engineer company
- one armored reconnaissance company
6. 828 Battalion, on special assignment) Both battalions consisted of rather old men ("Landasschuetzen" and had originally been intended for guarding head quarters premises which had not yet been used.
8. Medical company

This unusual array was the result of the special tasks on which this combined-arms unit was based. The various units were

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which had previously fought in France and had been reorganized).

4. One light artillery battalion from the 120 Regiment with two light batteries (five guns each) and one heavy battery.

5. One OT (Organization Todt) column and one army [supply]

column. Both of these only ready for commitment up to 1/5 [strength].

6. One horse-drawn bakery and butchery company.

7. One army post office and one workshop company.

All recently added elements were insufficiently equipped,

in respect to personnel and materiel, except for weapons and tanks. This

was especially true in respect to equipment with vehicles and signal

equipment. The staff of the panzer regiment did not arrive until two

days before the offensive and was so defectively assembled that it could

not be used for the time being. The 828 Battalion on special assignment

did not receive the bicycles designated for it until the day prior to

the offensive.

The brigade was organized as follows in great haste:

1. Brigade staff with general staff officer

2. One signal company (1/2 telephone, 1/2 radio)

One military police detachment

One armored reconnaissance company

One motorcycle messenger detachment

3. Three independent battalions with

one armored personnel carrier battalion of five companies

one mobile battalion of four companies

the 828 Bicycle Battalion on special assignment with four

companies

4. One panzer regiment with

one battalion of tanks (four companies of Mark IV tanks) and

one battalion of assault guns of four batteries

5. One artillery battalion

6. One antiaircraft regiment with two battalions

a. one light [battalion] with three batteries (self-

propelled)

(one company of 20 millimeter, one barrel guns, one

guns)

b. One heavy [battalion] with four batteries of six guns

[each] of 105 millimeter calibre.

7. Two transportation columns

One medical company

One bakery and butchery company

Army post office

One workshop company

8. One Feldersatz [replacement training] battalion with 1400

men, which had to be organized on orders from Army. It had about 20%

length with respect to personnel and materiel.

The shortcomings of this organization are to be attributed to

the fact that I received no regimental staff for the Panzer Gren Regt and

for that reason the brigade had to command three independent battalions

which had been armed and organized in very different ways. The means of

signal communication of the brigade were not sufficient for this increased

command load. The military police detachment of about 12 men was too

weak for an effective regulation of traffic, especially in difficult terrain. The relation of the heavy weapons to the infantry was exaggerated. An engineer unit was completely lacking. However, the capacity of the columns, which was enhanced by taking usable vehicles from

the rest of the force, was by no means sufficient for a well-functioning supply service. The fact that the small amount of artillery available

had no vehicles capable of cross-country travel was also a shortcoming.

The few days left before the offensive were intensively used

to organize and reorganize the brigade. In addition, the force was trained

every day on a company level and officers of all ranks were prepared

for their coming tasks by discussions about the terrain and map exercises.

Naturally, the time at our disposal for these purposes was quite limited,

especially inasmuch as a part of the added units did not arrive until

the day prior to the offensive. Instead, the Feldersatz battalion was

excellently equipped with respect to personnel and equipment in order to

guarantee a good, continuous training.

The brigade subordinated to the 66 Corps:

The Fuehrer-Begleit-Brigade was assembled in the area around

Damm during 17 Dec 44. Since the beginning of the offensive, I was at

the forward command post of the Fifth Army in Dachscheid, northeast of

Wachswalden.

18 Dec 44

About 1600 of 18 Dec 44, I received the order to take the

brigade to the front from the area of Damm by way of Gerolstein, Buedeshelm,

Pruem, Schneidelforsthaus, Roth and Aun in the direction of St Vith.

Mission: to thrust forward in a generally westerly direction

by way of St Vith within the framework of the 66 Corps, and subordinate

to this corps.

The brigade was set on the march by telephone, with the organiza-

tion ordered. Organization of the brigade:

1. Advance detachment: one armored reconnaissance platoon

one light company on Volkswagens

one assault gun company

balance of the II Battalion

Medium infantry gun company

antiaircraft company

2. Brigade staff with reconnaissance company armored regiment

II Battalion (armored personnel carriers)

artillery battalion

3. Antiaircraft regiment

4. III Battalion (828, on special assignment) on bicycles.

While the brigade set out under the command of the Ia, I travel

to the command post of the LXVI Corps, which I encountered in Weinsheim

(five km northeast of Pruem). I found out about the situation there and

I found out that I was to set out with the brigade by way of Roth,

Wur, Tischeid, Amlen, Schoenberg, and Hoenen in the direction of St Vith.

For the time being, I was not ordered to attack St Vith, but I was given

to understand that the intention existed, now as before, to thrust through

further to the west with the brigade toward the Mass after the fall of

St Vith. At any rate, the brigade was not to tie itself up with a battle

for St With. As for myself, I drove ahead on the designated road and did not reach the forward command post of the 18 WGD in Walleroder Kuehle until about morning. The road of advance ordered was completely jammed and in bad condition. Traveling off the road was impossible, even for track-laying vehicles. I therefore reckoned with a considerable delay of the march movement and reported this [fact] to the Korps.

19 Dec 44

At the command post of the 18 WGD, I learned that the enemy resistance east of St With had become considerably stronger. Besides, I saw that this division was still not very extensively spread out along the front. During the afternoon, I commenced road reconnaissance for the purpose of [finding out if there were] possible titles of circumventing St With. Because I got unfavorable results from this reconnaissance, I resolved to support the attack of the 18 WGD, set for about noon, with my advance detachment by a thrust on both sides of the road.

The advance detachment began to arrive in Walleroder Kuehle about 1200. The attack of the 18 WGD, which was commenced with only weak artillery, did not lead to any success. The armored joint of my advance detachment, which had, during this, advanced approximately to the bend in the road north of Prue erberG, received rather strong anti-tank fire. The company attacking through the woods south of the road was repelled with heavy losses by very well-placed enemy artillery fire. My impression was that the enemy had already wide himself so strong east of St With that this place could not be taken from the east by an attack emanating from the [march] movement without a sufficient

of heavy weapons. Moreover there was the fact that only the in north of the road appeared to be suited for a tank attack, but an unfavorable assembly area west of the woods "auf der Hoehne" the height", especially inasmuch as the road could be reached only enemy observation from the bottleneck of the road. Besides the it was so badly jammed that an advance of the armored group would been extremely difficult.

During the time following, I repeatedly received contradicting reports from Heeresgruppe, the Fifth Army, and the LXVI Korps, which partly of an attack [against] or a capture of St With, partly of a circum-

of the city and a further thrust to the west. I decided to circumvent St With to the north, although the road Walleroder Kuehle to Mayerode had been reported to me as being

only under certain conditions. It was still the most favorable. At the outset of darkness, the advance detachment set out to

by way of Mayerode. The assault gun company, along with a grenadier platoon, which were with the advance detachment, were sent out Walleroder Kuehle to Wallerode. The armored group had begun to

at this time, but was very badly wedged in with vehicles of divisions over to east of Aum. Inasmuch as this road was also used American units encircled in the Schmeffel that were breaking

traffic jam had come into being that could hardly be disentangled. The little force of military police belonging to the brigade

in the position to disentangle.

The attack of the elements of the brigade ordered to Wallerode (all together one assault gun company and two grenadier companies) launched at midnight by way of the fork in the road west of Wallerode and then by way of Kniehlsberg toward St Vith had no success. Therefore, I ordered a continued march by way of Medell and Born in the direction of Nieder-Dimmels.

20 Dec 44

The attack launched during the dawn of 20 Dec by the armored personnel carrier battalion together with an assault gun company, which had arrived in the mean time, led, after a hasty assembly in the woods north of Nieder-Dimmels, to the capture of Nieder-Dimmels and Ober-Dimmels and thereby to the effective blocking of the road from Liegniville to St Vith. A further thrust in a southern direction aimed at taking Sard-Les-St Vith bogged down in well-placed enemy artillery fire (two to three battalions) and antitank fire. I decided to wait for the deployment of the brigade. All attempts to accelerate this deployment were frustrated by the extremely difficult road conditions in the woods south of Neurode, where, in part, one vehicle after another had to be towed through one at a time. In addition, there was the fact that a lack of motor fuel resulted from the road difficulties and traffic jams in the case of the armored group. (An amount was already consumed that was threefold as great as that which was estimated for normal conditions). During the entire day, M. der-Dimmels was under heavy artillery fire.

21 Dec 44

I was ordered by LXVI Korps to attack along the road to St Vith from the Nieder-Dimmels area on 21 Dec 44. I had to decline to

make this attack as long as the high terrain south of Nieder-Dimmels was not in our possession. Otherwise I would have had to lead an attack with enemy flanking interference. I therefore decided in favor of an attack in a southerly direction for the purpose of taking Sard-Les-St Vith in order to block off this last important supply route and in order to have a solid street under our feet again for a further thrust because up to this time the road and terrain conditions had been my worst foe.

The assembly of the II Battalion, which had been brought forward into the hollow just west of Nieder-Dimmels during darkness, was harassed for such a long time shortly before daylight by suddenly launched, well placed enemy artillery fire that this battalion was not in the position to move up and thereby take advantage of the dawn. Because my heavy weapons, the bulk of the tanks and the artillery battalion had still not been brought up because of the catastrophic road conditions and because the brigade, moreover, had no support whatsoever, by Korps, I called off the attack in view of the superiority of the enemy artillery.

I reckoned that the brigade could be deployed by about evening. In order not to let the day slip away unused, I put the II Battalion to blocking the road from St Vith to Vielsalm by taking advantage of the forests west of Sard-Les-St Vith. Moreover, this battalion was to send strong reconnaissance forward to the southwest in the general direction of Salmbateau and to report the information found out about the forest roads leading in this direction.

As for myself, I prepared the attack of the brigade against Sard-Les-St Vith from the north and northwest for the night of 21/22 Dec 44. My plan was the following:

The armored group (the II Battalion, two armored companies and ~~two assault gun companies~~) was assembled at 2400 in the area of Leder--Zimmeler--Heide. The III Battalion completed assembly in the vicinity of Tomberg at about 0100. The armored group myself. I set out powerful reconnaissance along the edge of the patch of woods south of Ober-Dimmels was rather occupied and that enemy armored cars had been sighted. It was reported that the terrain off of the road was not passable at and that several tanks had already stuck fast.

I therefore led the armored group through the bare places in the direction of Tomberg. Up until daylight, I moved it to the southern edge of the forest north of Sard-Letz-St with much effort. This was a very difficult undertaking because tanks blocking fast at every moment in the softened terrain and because roads were very thick in parts. At times, one tank after another had guided in by scouts on foot.

As a result of the continuous noise of the motors, the element prize was lost. During the night, the artillery battalion shielded any artillery positions spotted west of Sard-Letz-St with airfare observed by forward observers of the III Battalion. By advantage of the darkness and the snow storm, the III Battalion its way even closer to the locality. The moving forward of the group during the dawn was delayed by the fact that the forward man onto mine along the edge of the woods which first had to be

22 Dec 44

The armored group was to attack by way of Ober-Dimmels on both sides of the road [to] Sard-Letz-St with, whilst the III Battalion was to penetrate into this locality [Sard-Letz-St with] from the area including Tom and Berg from the northwest, [and] if possible, to take the artillery positions presumed [to be] northwest of the locality by surprise. The attack was to be conducted by surprise [and] without any artillery preparation, however the artillery [was to be] ready to fire on demand. Distribution of a sufficient number of forward observers to both combat teams. [sic]. The II Battalion, which had been assigned to block the road, was provided as a possible reserve.

Shortly before darkness, we were able to bring the artillery battalion into position, after the guns had been towed with vehicles having cross-country mobility. The III Battalion likewise arrived with its bicycles (pulling them along; they were completely covered with mud). The bicycles remained in Born and, moreover, were not used thereafter during the entire offensive.

The II Battalion had reported the blocking of the road from St with to Wieselau during the afternoon in a very boldly conducted undertaking, moreover a further advance in a southerly and southwesterly direction, [and an] engagement with enemy artillery positions and isolated tanks in the area north of Commaier and Hinterhausen.

The result of the road reconnaissance did not sound favorable. Furthermore, captured unit commanders of the 7 Armored Division (US) were reported who had apparently come from a discussion.

enemy tanks were spotted, apparently rear guards. Hinterhausen was taken with the loss of two of our tanks. Four enemy tanks were shot out of

action. The further advance on a broad front on both sides of Kapellen-busch toward Kapelle led to the capture of more tanks which had got stuck in the marshy area east of Kapelle. During the advance still more tanks which had got stuck fell into our hands.

In order to take advantage of this success and in order to prevent the enemy from effecting a lodgement, the mobile II Battalion

was brought up and it took over the advance guard point after having been given an assault gun company. It immediately went on to Rogery by way of Pm Kretz - Commander, whilst the armored group assembled and organized itself behind the artillery battalion, which was following the II Bat-

tallon. Beho was free of enemy forces. Road conditions from Commander Rogery were understandable bad. Despite that fact, the direct road was ordered because the bridge one km northeast of Beho was destroyed.

East of Rogery, enemy entrenchments were reported. For this reason, the artillery battalion was ordered into position west of Commander for the purpose of guarding the advance. After a short struggle before darkness, Rogery was taken, one hour later, Clertaux. Weak enemy artillery harassing fire was directed against both localities.

I ordered the prompt continuation of the march in a westerly direction off of the main road. Next march objective: the road crossing 3.5 km west of Regne. During the entire day, I did not receive any report at all concerning the enemy situation and location of the adjacent units.

cleared. In the meantime, the III Battalion broke into the locality and fought ahead from house to house. The locality was stubbornly defended

by enemy tanks. Individual combat teams were then stopped by enemy tanks and were temporarily taken into captivity, even the battalion commander. It was not until the attack lunging from the edge of the woods on a broad front was made that the locality was taken and the situation

restored. The III Battalion had considerable losses, especially inasmuch as enemy tanks concentrated fire at close range on the many wounded men who were in several cellars. At about noon, Bard-Lez-St Vith was fully

cleared and in our firm possession. In toto, about 20 American tanks were put out of action or captured, a number was abandoned and was still completely intact and about 50 prisoners were taken. During the day,

and during the following night, the locality itself was under constant enemy artillery fire. In the direction of St Vith, contact was made with the 18 and 62 VPD.

During the afternoon, the units were put in order and the many tanks that had stuck fast were pulled out. During the night, the II Battalion, which was able to block the road leading to Velsaln only temporarily, was brought up and the change of position of the artillery

was carried out. The abandoned vehicles of the brigade had to be drawn along by way of St Vith during the night because the roads leading from Born to Bard-Lez-St Vith were not passable.

23 Dec 44

At about 0800 of 23 Dec 44, the brigade set out with the armored group by way of Rirkeler toward Hinterhausen. In this locality several



The advance guard point reported enemy column traffic in a northerly direction on the road from Beovigny to Salmechateau. I ordered the blocking of the road to the south, south the mill [ab] Clartreux and details to follow just behind the enemy columns in order to gain as much ground as possible without fighting in this manner. However, this following was soon noticed and resulted in the fact that the tank at the end opened fire. I myself witnessed how the two advance assault guns, one after another, put five enemy tanks and two coupled guns out of action one after another by driving 50 meters ahead each time and shooting off a ground signal in such a manner that the enemy tank was completely lighted up each time [and] could be destroyed with the first shot, in the majority of cases. Because the enemy column was apparently stopped by the demolition of a bridge, about 12 tanks and 20 vehicles could be captured in addition. The crews scattered into terrain during the darkness.

24 Dec 44

The advance was continued by way of Provodroux, Otre and Vlainin. At the break of day the brigade was located about in the area mentioned above. The reaching of this high terrain was difficult for the tanks and vehicles as a result of the icy roads because the winter equipment requested had not arrived. I was very much astonished to meet up already with 55 units in this area.

A further movement during the day was not possible because of enemy air activities, which were increasing because of weather conditions.

Temporary subordination to the Sixth SS Panzer Army

The brigade was temporarily subordinated to the Sixth SS. A thrust in a northerly direction by way of Lierneux was intended. It led to lead this attack astride the road from Regne to Lierneux passing the latter locality to the right) and to reach the road in direction of Hablemont by way of Lamsival. To this end, I secured for myself with a weak armored group. Reconnaissance in force it ahead toward Prature.

25 Dec 44

Subordinated to the LVIII Korps

Shortly before the beginning of this thrust, I received the information from Heeresgruppe to reach Aconines by way of Semee and Docharps. An onset of darkness [in order to put the brigade] at the disposal of the LVIII Panzer Korps. This order was changed at the time of the capture and an advance of the brigade in the direction of Hampeaux. The 1a of the brigade, travel-ly of Semee and Larchois was ordered. The 1a of the brigade, travel-head toward Wazy to the LVIII Korps, was guided in there. The 2a of the brigade was supposed to take Hotton and the bridge during 6 Dec 44 and to attack further in the direction of Koiseux. To end, the various units of the brigade received individual orders to march into the assembly area (see sketch) and specifically ap-proximately in the order of the attack planned for the following day. It is important in this connection to clear the road as soon as possible so that the units could travel into their respective assembly areas, if at all possible, in order to save time. Above all, it

The first elements of the brigade arrived in the assembly area about midnight. About 0930 ending of the assembly and beginning of the attack. Despite the extremely difficult terrain, the attack was successful. Whilst the battalion on the right took the Bois de Hamptean [sic] the battalion to the left thrust through the Bois de Hamptean. I had already given the order to move ahead to the armored group when the Corps gave me the order to suspend the attack at once and to disengage the brigade for the purpose of another assignment. My protest to the effect that this would be possible during the day only at the price of heavy losses at this stage of the battle was rejected twice. The cessation of the attack and the disengagement from the enemy was ordered. This disengagement cost quite a few losses because the enemy went over to the attack at once. Tank elements of the 116 Pz Gren Div took over the protection of the line of departure.

At the onset of darkness, the first elements of the brigade were on the march by way of Halleux, Rouchampay, the intersection of roads [sic], "road spider" west of Champion and Ortheville. Motor fuel was so scarce that almost half of the vehicles had to be towed.

27 Dec 44

Considering the enemy air activities, the brigade was supposed to take shelter for the day in the Bois de Herraumont. The medical company, traveling during the day, was shot up in flames to the extent of 40% by a fighter-bomber attack lasting 35 minutes, although all vehicles were painted white and bore the red cross. A number of wounded men were thereby killed. During the course of the night, the brigade was to take

was important to get the III Battalion, which had been divided up onto all kinds of vehicles and which had already left its bicycles behind in Born, up forward during the night.

The plan of attack was the following:

The II Battalion was to attack to the right along the road from Bendeux--Bas to Hamptean with the support of an assault gun company and to take the locality. The III Battalion was to thrust to the left through the Bois de Hamptean and to take possession of the heights west of Hamptean. The armored group, at the disposal of the brigade in Bendeux--Bas, was, after the success of the initial phase of the attack, to thrust through, by way of Hamptean, either along the road or further on to Hotton between Hamptean and Henll, according to the situation and terrain, in order to take possession of this locality [Hotton] and the crossing site. The artillery battalion was to go into position in such a manner that it could support the various phases of the battle by means of observed fire in very close coordination with the individual combat teams. The bulk of the antiaircraft regiment was employed for air defense because there were no possibilities of artillery effect for the heavy antiaircraft battalion on account of its flat trajectory. During the progress of the attack, elements of the antiaircraft regiment were to eliminate enemy flanking pressure from the northern bank of the Orthe, especially in the area of Merpin, and to keep themselves in readiness after the capture of Hotton in order to be used to block the road of approach.

26 Dec 44

let. During the morning the artillery battalion took up firing positions in the area of Planderge. Brigade command post in Trome.

28 Dec 44

During the night, the brigade was assembled, according to orders, in the area of Chenogne for the attack against Sibret and, together with I Battalion, took over the guarding of the sector from the southern part of the forest north of Lagerotte to Lagery to Lavasselle to the sector and southeast of Bruil. Formation shown on the sketch. According to reports, the attack launched during the morning did not get very far and the patch of woods one km south of Chenogne because the brigade was only attacking unit area, against which [unit] the entire enemy force and anti-aircraft fire of the enemy forces located in and south of the area was concentrated. The flanking fire from Villeroix had an ally unpleasant effect. A little later, the enemy forces located in the area of Sibret went over to the attack. Hard fighting went on the entire day, during which the patch of woods south of Chenogne hands a number of times. During this [fighting] a 105mm anti-aircraft gun distinguished itself especially. During the entire day, [unit] and its crew put enemy tanks out of action, which were under fire, at very close range along the southern edge of this patch of woods. The crew of the gun demanded the gun in close infantry combat. [unit] not until 30 Dec 44 that this gun was rammed by an enemy tank fighting.

At evening the brigade reported that it was too weak to be able to carry out the attack ordered against Sibret alone [and that]

over the sector of the 26 Volks Gren Div, which was located approximately in the line from Morhet to Sibret. It was the intention of [unit] headquarters [to use] the brigade for the purpose of closing the broken ring of encirclement around Bastogne by means of an attack in a southerly direction [in order] to close this gap again.

I personally found out that the 26 Volks Gren Div was very weak and was without armor-piercing weapons. It would therefore have to be taken into account that it would be pressed back even further to the north during the day. Terrain reconnaissance showed, however, that the sector from Pinsamont to Howmont and the high terrain south of Chenogne would have to be held under all circumstances if the conditions for an attack to the south were to remain favorable. I therefore decided to commit a 105mm anti-aircraft battery and a light anti-aircraft battery at once in the area of Chenogne in such a manner that they could command the high terrain west and south of this locality in order to prevent an enemy tank penetration. I likewise ordered the armored personnel carrier battalion with several assault guns, which was traveling in great distance between units, because of the danger from the air [to proceed] into the Bois de Vaillet. The bulk of the anti-aircraft regiment was committed for an air defense around Trome and west of Planderge. This measure proved good because during the course of the afternoon ten cargo carrying gliders, committed for the purpose of bringing supplies to Bastogne, could be shot down. Sibret was lost during the course of the day, as was expected. Chenogne was likewise temporarily lost but it was taken right back again in a counterthrust by the elements of the brigade located in the Bois

a concentrated artillery support on our part would be, at least, necessary to eliminate the enemy artillery. I was also especially bothered by the Bois des Haies de Margery, which had only been blocked hastily by an engineer company (26 WGD) under my command with road blocks and a few mines.

I knew that only weak forces of the adjacent unit on my right, the 3 Pz Gren Div, had arrived.

29 Dec 44

The 29 Dec 44 was characterized by repeated enemy attacks on

Chenogne from a southerly and southwesterly direction which were carried forward with a strong artillery support. Penetrations which often got as far as the locality were nopped up by counterthrusts. At evening,

the situation was about the same as that of the previous day. During the night, very bravely and skillfully carried out reconnaissance as far as into the patches of forest south and southwest of Sibret reported the assembly of tanks and vehicles. The brigade calculated that 30 Dec 44 would bring rather strong enemy attacks supported by tanks.

Nevertheless, a renewed attack by the 3 Pz Gren Div and the

brigade in a southerly direction was ordered for 30 Dec 44. Specifically, the 3 Pz Gren Div was supposed to take Willeroux and to thrust on to

Assols in order to effect a closing of the ring of encirclement around

Castagne there with the I SS Pz Div. The Fuehrer-Begleit-Brigade,

subordinated to the 3 Pz Gren Div, was to take Sibret.

(subordinated to the 3 Pz Gren Division)

and then to block off the road south of Sibret leading on to Bastogne

For the brigade, this attack had the disadvantage that, first, it meant a repetition of the attack attempted on 28 Dec 44 and would

therefore have to meet up against a strengthened defense and, secondly, that no notable artillery support of any kind could be promised to me besides that of my own battalion. In addition, the III Battalion, which was still located in the old line of security, was not at my disposal

for this attack. Only an elimination of the flanking pressure from Vill

was to be counted on.

The plan of attack (see sketch) was as follows:

After the assembly had been completed during the night in the area of Chenogne, the II Battalion, together with an assault gun company was to attack and take Sibret from the northwest, west of the woods south of Chenogne (circumventing this [woods] because of enemy artillery

fire) with the right wing pressed along against the Brun sector and group thrusting afterwards. The armored group (armored battalion and mounted armored personnel carrier battalion) was to divide itself near

Plohamont and if necessary to support the attack of the II Battalion on

both sides of the Brun Brook and then, however, to thrust through Sibret in order to block the road leading from Bastogne to the southwest in the region of Belle-Sau to the west and likewise the road leading to

Clochimont. The gap arising between Marche St Marie and Sibret during the course of the attack was to be stopped up by an assault gun battery and a light antiaircraft battery. The artillery battalion, which had previously been committed in the area of Flambierge, changed its position

to the west.

fire and well placed artillery fire from Sibret. The brave commander (Oak Leaf cluster bearer, Maj Wikelley) was so badly wounded that he died a short time later when he tried to pull his battalion forward again. (The commander of the I Battalion was likewise put out of action by a traffic during the previous night). As the fog lifted, the armored group, which was advancing on to Flohamont, recognized two armored groups of about 30 tanks each advancing to the north. As far as I recall, the one was located in the area of Forchet, while the other was traveling in the direction of Jodenville. The armored group of the brigade opened fire at once and put a number of tanks out of action at once. Because it [the armored group] was itself located on a slope and was very soon under heavy tank fire and concentrated, well placed artillery fire, it disengaged itself from the enemy, taking the II Battalion with it, and continued to carry on the tank battle from the high terrain between Grand Larie and the patch of woods to the east, including the latter. The II Battalion, disengaging itself, alas, among the tanks (rather than to the side), had considerable losses. Four of our tanks were thereby put out of action. This tank battle, led inexorably on both sides, lasted about two to three hours.

I learned from an estimation of the situation that our attack had been started at the same time as a very strong enemy attack, which apparently was supposed to lead to a retirement of our divisions fighting toward the west. The reinforced, concentrated enemy artillery fire, as well as the continuous bombing attacks and fighter bomber attacks also indicated this.

into the hollow southeast of Recharval and was to support the attack with [the] forward observers accompanying both combat teams by observed fire on Sibret. No artillery preparation, but rather [fire] after the beginning of the attack on request. The battalion had already adjusted its fire on Sibret. The heavy anti-aircraft battalion was likewise to support the attack on Sibret with "air bursts" and to combat targets which presented themselves on the right flank. (In addition, the heavy anti-aircraft battalion actually had the assignment of putting tanks out of action which had broken through in a sort of anti-tank position.)

The III Battalion was to go on defending itself in the same sector as previously. A light anti-tank battery was subordinated. An assault gun battery was kept back from the brigade in order to be committed with the III Battalion in case of an enemy tank attack. The heavy anti-aircraft gun battery likewise had observation posts with the III Battalion.

30 Dec 44

The attack was set for 0730 in order to steal the march on the enemy attack to be expected. According to experience, the enemy never tracked before 0900. The II Battalion, located in an advanced position, shortly before, captured the enemy security detachment just ahead of it (half way between Chenogne and Flohamont). Forward brigade command at south of Chenogne. Brigade command post [at] Renanmont.

At the break of daylight, the II Battalion started out, whilst an armored group expanded toward the south, gaining ground south of Chenogne. For the time being, the II Battalion made good progress, never it got stuck on the Bruil ditch just before Sibret in infantry

house when a strong enemy tank attack b way of Handed-St Harde against Chenogne, with flanking pressure against the northern hollow, was car out. Because I encountered only a few of our damaged tanks and a few grenadiers in the locality itself, which had effected a lodgement in t cellars and ruins of the locality, I considered the situation extremel critical. I was paralyzed myself for quite some time, as far as comming was concerned, because an enemy tank stopped a few meters from my house. It was nevertheless possible to send off two radio messages fr the command armored personnel carrier, which was located in the dead space of the house. These messages were sent to the armored group: locality to be held to the last man and the request for support to be sent to the 3 Pz Gren Div.

I wondered why the enemy tanks and armored personnel carrier which were rained by crews, did not take the locality, although they hardly fired upon at all from the locality. As I later found out, our armored group had taken up the tank battle, standing around Chenogne in a semicircle and skillfully taking advantage of the terrain, because of the previous continuous bombing attacks on the locality, while at the same time the tanks located on the northern edge of the woods south of Chenogne, as well as the heavy antiaircraft battery located on the southern edge of the Bois de Valet, were very effective. This battle was one of the toughest that the brigade experienced during the Ardennes Offensive. The attack was repelled during the afternoon and Chenogne remained in our possession. In my opinion, the locality could have been taken by a dismounted infantry company because the locality itself was

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I myself had thus far been with the armored group. When I noticed that an enemy task force was advancing to the north by way of Laveselle in the direction of Rechival, i.e., in the direction of our poorly manned line of security, I immediately drove with my command armored personnel carrier through the Bois de Valet to Remamont, whither my brigade staff had moved during the morning. During a short discussion about commitment with my Ia, the first enemy tank already drove past my house, while the second covered at the church [in] Hubermont. The first was wiped out by an antitank grenade, while the second was forced to turn away to the south by fire. The assault gun company, which was still available, together with a few mounted grenadiers, was sent out from Hubermont toward the southwest in order to block the road south of Rechival and likewise the sector between this road and the Bois de Valet. The artillery battalion located southeast of Rechival defended itself stubbornly with direct fire against attacking tanks. Three enemy tanks were thereby put out of action. The successful assault gun company and the antiaircraft gun located on the edge of the Bois de Valet enabled the formation of a strongpoint-like front by the III Battalion by way of the southern edge of Garmont, and, the hill southeast of Rechival and the southern edge of the northwestern extension of the Bois de Valet.

When I believed the danger point in this sector to have been cleared up, I drove back again to Chenogne. In the meantime, that locality had been turned into a pile of stones by continuous bombing attacks and concentrated artillery fire. I had just arrived in the southernmost

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ardly occupied.

Our losses of men during the day were heavy, because the brigade had to organize itself for the defense from an attack position under strong enemy pressure. Nevertheless, this day led to a complete defensive success through the will to fight and the bravery of the German soldier.

This success resulted in the enemy's losing about 30 tanks.

In my opinion, the enemy attack was set too rigidly against Chenogne. It would no doubt have had more success if the point of main effort of the attack had been with the combat team advancing on Rechival, because this combat team had practically thrust through the defense of the brigade near Rechival with its advance guard point while the bulk of the brigade was tied up in the battle around Chenogne.

In addition, there was the fact that, as so often, the brigade is given time during the night to form a new defensive front without any disturbance. The oft-said sentence: "Lord let the evening come, then is battle won," proved true, even in this critical situation. The German force could have saved a lot of blood if it had continued to exploit the successes of the day during the night. This and the proverbial lead of fighting in the woods were two certain factors which could be taken into account in formulating tactical measures. Both were things which astonished us Eastern-Front warriors very greatly.

The evening report of the brigade to 3 Panzer Gren Div expressed the fact that a repetition of an attack on Sibret could not be made with means at our disposal, and that, on the other hand, all the forces of the brigade would have to be concentrated in order to be able to

hold the front in case of further enemy attacks.

31 Dec 44

Subordinated to the XLVII Panzer Korps

During the night, the brigade was re-grouped (see sketch).

The 3 Pan Gren Div took over Chenogne. The boundary line ran about as follows: from the road crossing south of the Bois de Herbaumont to the eastern edge of Remumont to the western edge of the Bois de Valet to Plohaumont. Left boundary with the Pz Lehr Div: western edge of Lavacherde to the road fork east of Plopre to Remagne, not including the last.

Because all three battalions were equally exhausted from fighting and a relief of the badly hit III Battalion could no longer be achieved on time, I decided to leave the front from Gerumont to Remumont to Rechival

to the west in tip of the Bois de Valet, which was occupied only as a series of strong points, in its present grouping, despite the attack expected on the next day. The III Battalion was reinforced with about 100 men. To this end, I created for myself two strong tactical reserves with the mission of clearing up possible enemy penetrations by immediate counter-thrusts. For this purpose, the I Battalion and the tank battalion were considered for the eastern Rechival sector, the sector including the point of main effort, and the II Battalion and the assault gun battalion for the western sector. A heavy anti-aircraft battery was committed in the patches of woods north of Remumont for a defense against enemy tanks which might break through to the north onto the main road. The heavy anti-aircraft battery committed in the area north of Sprumont was likewise ordered into such a position that it could fire on enemy tanks that had made penetrations, in addition to its air defense.

The II Battalion was to send forth continuous reconnaissance in force in the direction of Remagne and into the Bois des Hales de

Magery. Brigade command post in Lavacherie, the forward command post

near the armored group in Fosset.

The relief in Chenogne was not ended until daylight. Enemy

forces effecting a temporary penetration were turned back by tanks that

were already advancing. During the course of the day, a number of attacks,

which did not have the force of attacks on Rechival and Pinsamont on

the previous day, were repelled by the brave III Battalion and by concen-

trated artillery fire.

1 Jan 45

During the night, the II Battalion took over the sector from

Germont to Pinsamont, together with a tactical reserve in Tillet,

to which a battery of the assault gun battalion was brought up from Amber-

loup. Reconnaissance in force to the southwest was ordered [sent out]

from Tillet.

The III Battalion was reinforced by the company located in

Pinsamont. The extremely critical motor fuel situation (during the fol-

lowing day, the tanks had only enough motor fuel for a distance of 15 to

20 km at times) compelled the armored vehicles to keep close together.

After counterthrusts had taken place, the tanks often had to be left up

front in order not to use up motor fuel unnecessarily. All vehicles which

were not combat vehicles were parked north of the Gurthe.

After 0900, the enemy attacked continuously with tank support.

Several enemy tanks which had broken into Hubermont and Rechival were

put out of action in close combat by the brave men of the III Battalion.

More tanks (about 8) were put out of action by the antitank battery

located in the patches of woods northeast of Remanont. In Hubermont,

the brave commander of the III Battalion was killed in close combat.

The toughly and inexorably led battle of this battalion, which had been

facing the enemy without interruption since 19 Dec 44, created favorable

conditions for the participation of the armored group, which threw the

enemy back into the jump-off position.

Pinsamont was lost. The company that was thrown out of that

locality belonging to the II Battalion took up the fight anew on the ric

between Acul and Rechival with [Its] front to the southeast. A counter

thrust did not take place because Pinsamont was located far out from the

[General] course of the front. A weak attack on Germont was repelled.

In the sector of the adjacent unit to the left, Chenogne was

lost at one o'clock. As a result, the left wing of the III Battalion

was withdrawn in the evening hours to the hills south of Millomont.

2 Jan 45

The withdrawal of the badly battered III Battalion and [Its]

relief by the I Battalion was ordered for the night. The III Battalion

was supposed to rest up in Amberloup in order to occupy the right sector

the brigade, the southern part of the Bois la Chenete, on the following

morning. By doing this, I wanted to have the left sector of the brigade

defended by the II Battalion, which was the most powerful. I knowingly

forwent a rather strong tactical reserve commanded by the brigade in

doing so, but I ordered all battalions to set aside at least 1/3 of their

fighting strength as local reserves for immediate counterthrusts. A



part of the armored group was also committed within the framework of the Battalion in such a manner that enemy tanks could be put out of action even before [reaching] the main line of resistance. In order to save food, the heavy weapons thus became the mainstays of the defensive battle. At this time, the battalion had a fighting strength of about 150 men. Generally speaking, the rifle companies were 25 to 30 men strong. During the course of the day all attacks on the left were successfully repelled without the occurrence of any penetrations. Several enemy tanks were kept out of action north of the Bois de Vallet.

In the case of the II Battalion, Gerhont was lost after a second attack. A further advance to the north was averted by the participation of an assault gun company.

3 Jan 45

On 3 Jan 45, no attacks worthy of mention took place. After 00, the III Battalion was in the position ordered. During the night, exposed elements of the II Battalion in Aoul were withdrawn to Chagnon. A number of motors reported south of Recharval in the night was interested as the preparation of an attack for the following day. (Reheld the II Armored Division (US) by the 7 Artborne Div).

At evening, the brigade had about 25 tanks and assault guns ready for action, 15 in repair, [and] about 15 to 20 tanks which were slated on our road of advance, for the most part, with mechanical damages. A bulk of them could not be towed off as yet because no motor fuel was available for that purpose.

4 Jan 45

On 4 Jan 45, there was only enemy patrol activity in the night

sector of the brigade. To the left, [there was] the successful defense against several attacks against Hubermont by means of antitank fire from the heavy antiaircraft battery located in the patches of woods northeast of Remumont. Taking into consideration the temporary enemy penetration in Planterge in the case of the adjacent unit to the left, our own left flank was covered. Furthermore, an assault gun battery was temporarily given to the 3 Pz Gren Division. The antiaircraft battery mentioned above, which was known to have been under continuous enemy artillery fire, changed position during the evening to the region of the southern edge of the Bois de Herbaumont. The brigade command post was moved, according to orders, to Roumont. The forward command post remained in Posselt.

5 Jan 45

On 5 Jan 45, an attack was made in the night sector on the III Battalion. After all attacks had been repelled during the day, the two companies located in the southern part of the Bois de Chenail were captured, with about 60 men, during the evening hours. Only a few [m.g.] bursts were heard and the position was later found empty. Apparently, these companies had been attacked from the rear. It remains indigmatic why the enemy did not march further to the north through the forests. [It] would have hardly met up against [any] resistance the e.

In this connection, it must be said that the enemy forces (in this case, the 87 Inf Div (US)) fought very skillfully, as far as infantry was concerned. It was the only force for which we had respect, even during the night. In the area of Tillet, patrols were encountered behind our lines which shouted to our posts, relief detachments, etc. In

German and thereby caused so many a surprise.

6 Jan 45

During the day, a number of attacks were made on Tillet in the sector of the II Battalion. The locality was held in hard fighting.

First of Tillet, the enemy was able to gain several hundred meters. The brigade forward counterthrusts south of the road from Tillet to Lavalle, taking into consideration the enemy artillery superiority and fighter bomber attacks, which shattered every movement during the day in the open terrain. On the other hand, enemy forces which had temporarily advanced in Tillet and across the road from Tillet to Lavalle were thrown back by counterthrusts.

In order to save blood, the brigade ordered the II Battalion,

which was located in the open terrain, to take up reverse-slope positions if possible, in order to break up enemy attacks in front of our main line resistance by the fire of heavy weapons from the low ground. This also had the advantage that the enemy artillery could not hit our forward lines with observed fire. The experience of the last several days had shown that the enemy did not begin his attacks, as a rule, until after a rather long artillery preparation. Then, at the attack following it ran up against resistance, it was broken off at once. Then an artillery preparation began again, followed by an infantry attack. That was repeated a number of times during the day. It was not until almost no resistance took place from the IIR that the enemy infantry went forward. A paralysis of our heavy weapons, especially of the artillery, was hardly brought about, however, except temporarily by lighter howitzers. In view of the

stubbornly and bravely at 0300. The entire armored group was in combat

Although surrounded and repeatedly attacked, it was still fighting

company of about 20 men was pushed together and was on two farms.

Renumont, into which the enemy thrust immediately thereafter, a weak

in penetrating into Renumont from a southeasterly direction. In

at locality were readily repelled. Toward evening, the enemy succeeded

and fighter-bomber attacks. All attacks on Tillet and to the east of

alternately attacked. The attacks were again introduced by strong arti-

Tillet and the sector from Rochval to Hubertmont to Renumont were

The 7 Jan 45 was again a very difficult day for the brigade.

7 Jan 45

were apparently not under one command.

It was learned that the brigade had two enemy divisions before it which

this fact was to be found in statements from prisoners of war, from which

the sector of only one battalion was attacked. The explanation for

disorganized manner in respect to time and place. For the most part,

during the last several days, that the enemy attacks were led in a quite

Moreover, the command of the brigade was struck by the fact

terrain.

observation into the terrain ahead from commanding points in the rear

the heavy weapons, especially the artillery, have good possibilities for

moment. The prerequisite for such a conduct of battle is, naturally, the

tion with infantry and machine gun fire commencing suddenly at the last

to be repelled with heavy losses by a battle from a reverse-slope position

shortage of ammunition of our artillery, the enemy infantry was supposed

and did have any more reserves at all. A company of about 25 men, which was quickly thrown together by the brigade, was set out during the night for the purpose of counterattacking. A detachment of this small unit, thrusting through the middle of the village, which was occupied by the enemy, succeeded in blocking off the village to the rear in an energetic night attack, while the rest of the company took one house after another, thereby relieving the company which was bravely holding out. Moreover, about 140 prisoners were brought in. Despite the fact that the shaken young company commander lost his right hand in close combat at the beginning, he led this undertaking to a full success and did not take leave from the brigade until the following morning.

Apparently, this nocturnal attack must have caused a very great panic, because we were also able to occupy Hubermont and Willmont again almost without a fight. Taking the contact with the adjacent unit to the left into consideration, Korps permitted the IIR to be moved to a patch of woods west of Rechmont. Oak outposts were left in the line from Lavalle to Hubermont to Willmont. This position meant a shortening of front and had better possibilities of effect into the terrain ahead.

On 8 Jan 45, unsuccessful attacks were made on Tillet and positions east of it. In the area from Willmont to Hubermont, only a heavy anti-aircraft battery went in to such a position north of the Ourthe for the support of the artillery

8 Jan 45

artillery could fire into the area of the II Battalion.

9 Jan 45

On 9 Jan 45, no attacks in the sector of the I and II Battalions.

In the case of the III Battalion, the situation demanded a withdrawal of the front to the road from Pimpre to Tillet. (Reasons no longer remembered.) During the night, the fighting strenuous of the rifle companies were brought up to 30 men, those of the heavy weapons companies to 80 men. The brigade found out that a withdrawal of the front was planned. The following lines were reconnoitered and, according to orders, were improved by supply personnel that was moved up:

1. Tomy to the southern edge of Amberloup to Fossat and

2. The hill northeast of the Rau sector to the road fork

at the southern tip of the Bois de Herbelmont.

10 Jan 45

Renewed attack on Tillet. During the evening, the locality was lost after a tough battle. In view of the withdrawal planned, no counterattack was ordered. No attacks at all in the other sectors.

11 Jan 45

No special happenings. During the night, the brigade disengaged itself from the enemy without interference and reached the area around

Friday to Cens to Bergeme. The I Battalion occupied the line from east of Lavacherie to Avscount to the road fork south of the Bois de Herbelmont with a few tanks.

During the night of 11/12 Jan 45, the brigade was released from the XLVII Pz Korps and became an army reserve.

/s/ Remer



MS # B-592

19 Dec 44 - 22 Dec 44

Scale: 1:50,000



Born

Kedel

Nieder-Einels

Ober-Einels

Tomme-Pere

Sart-lez-St Vith

St Vith

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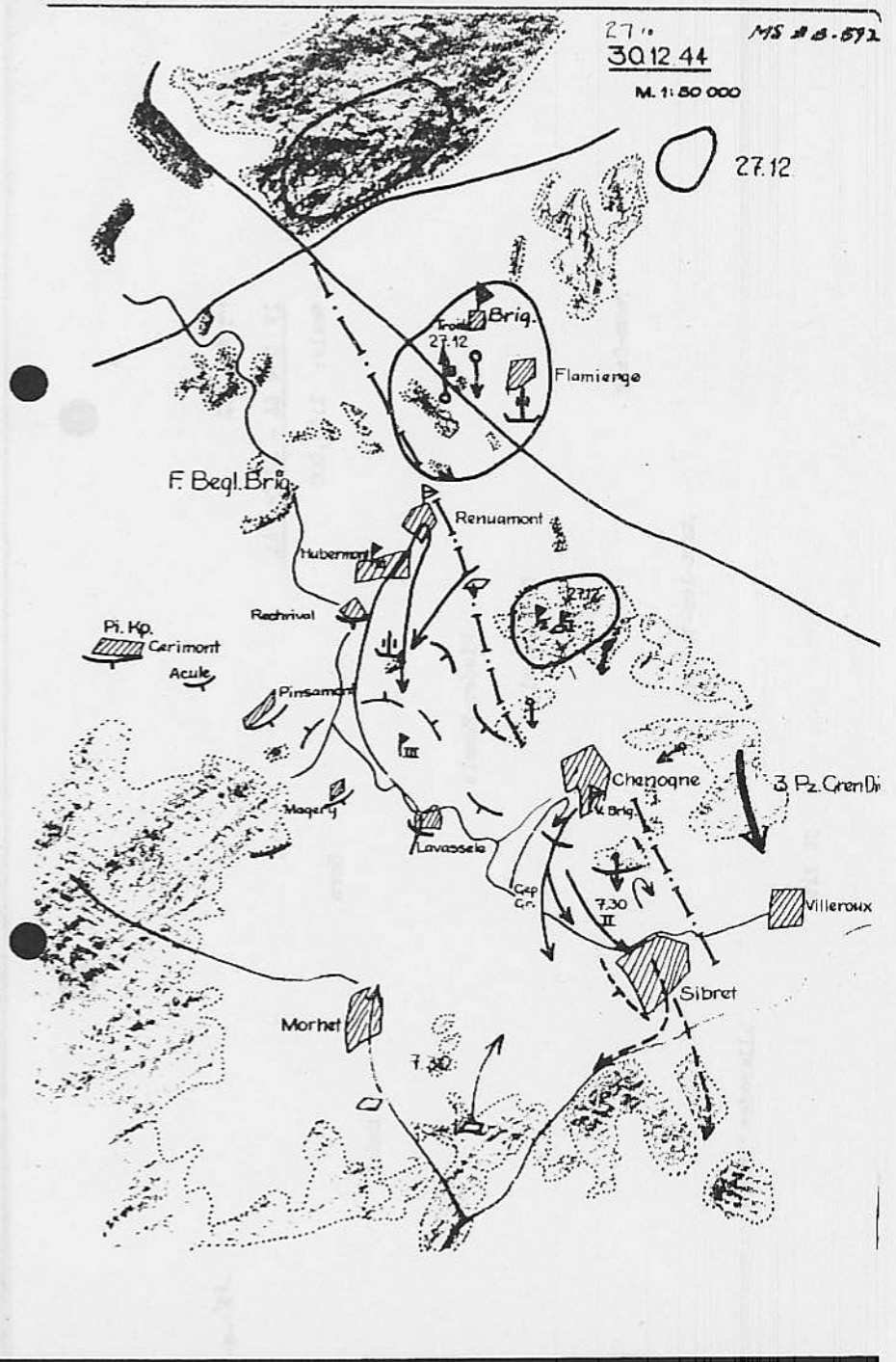
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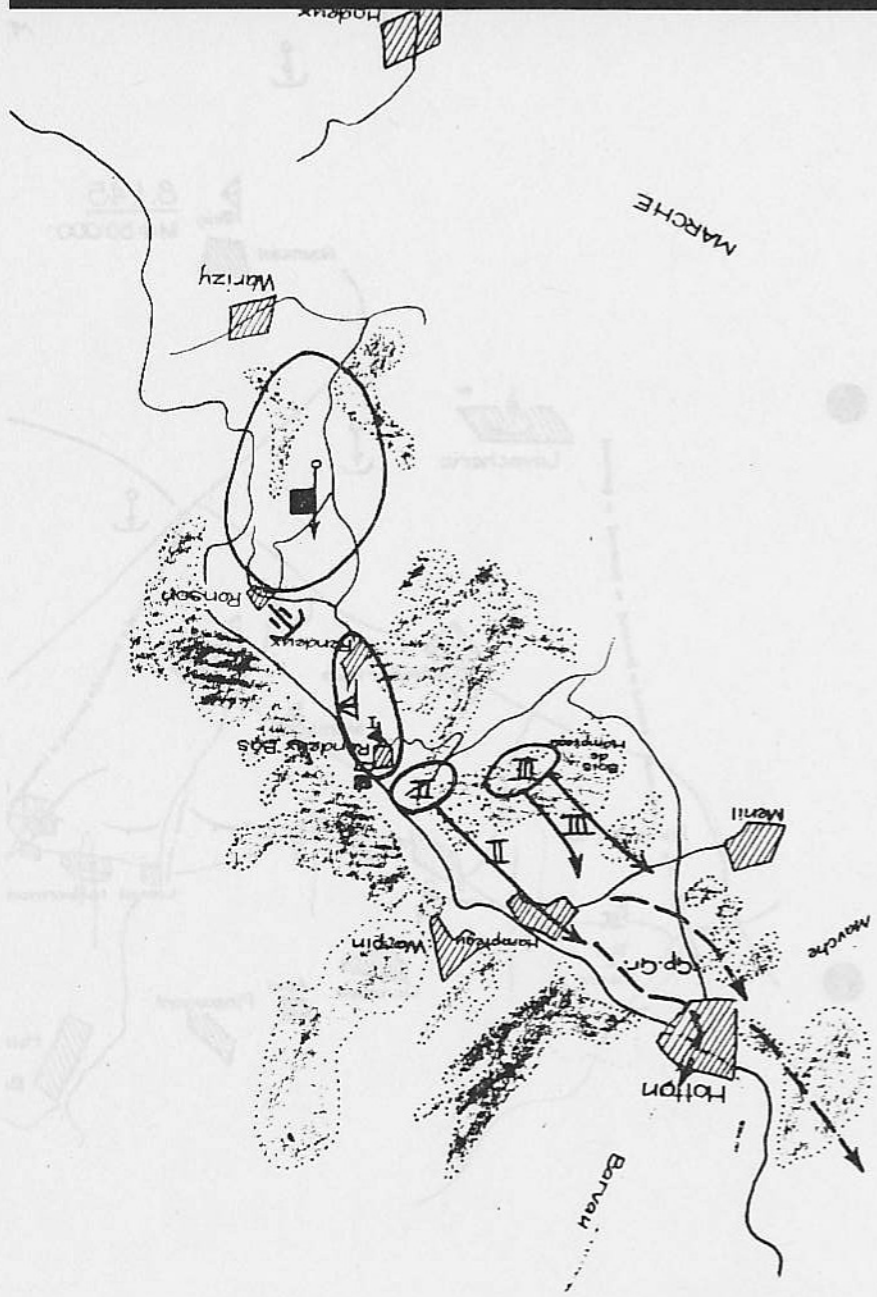


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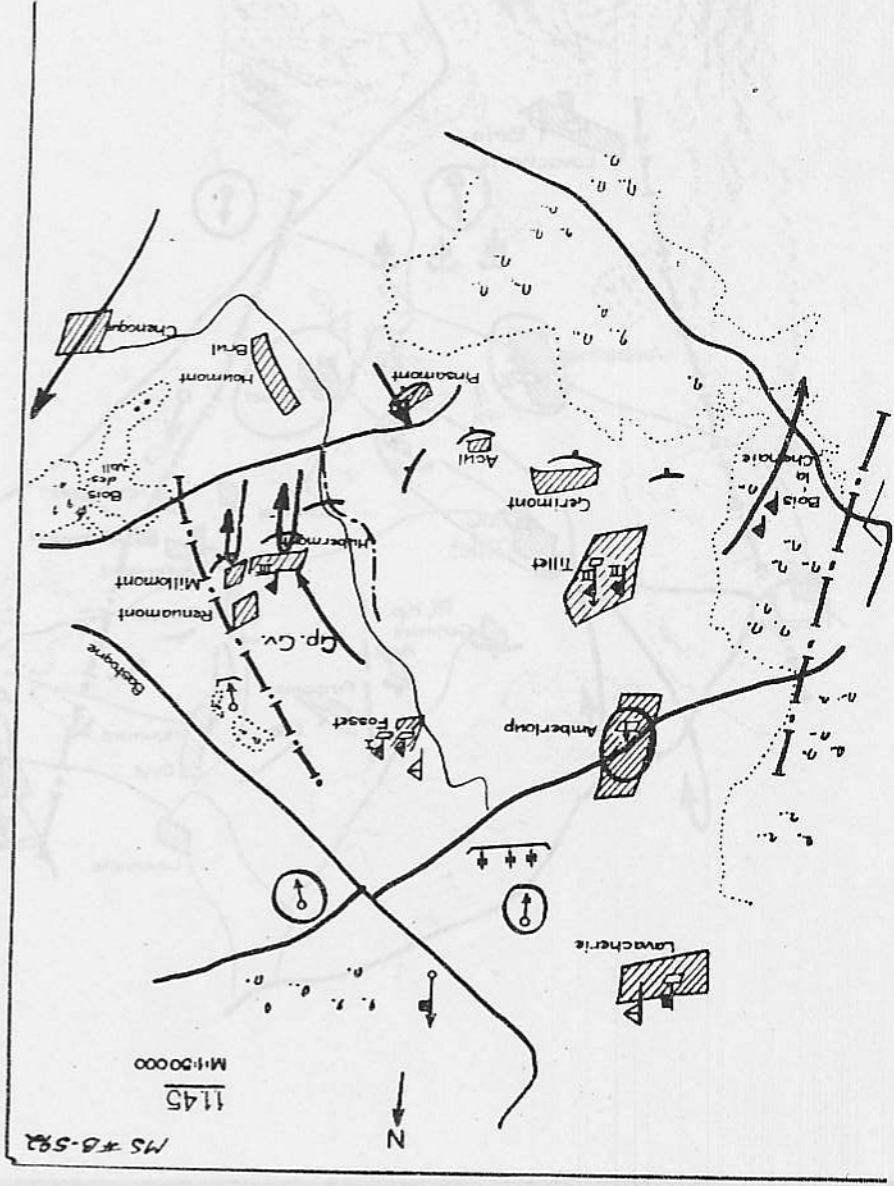
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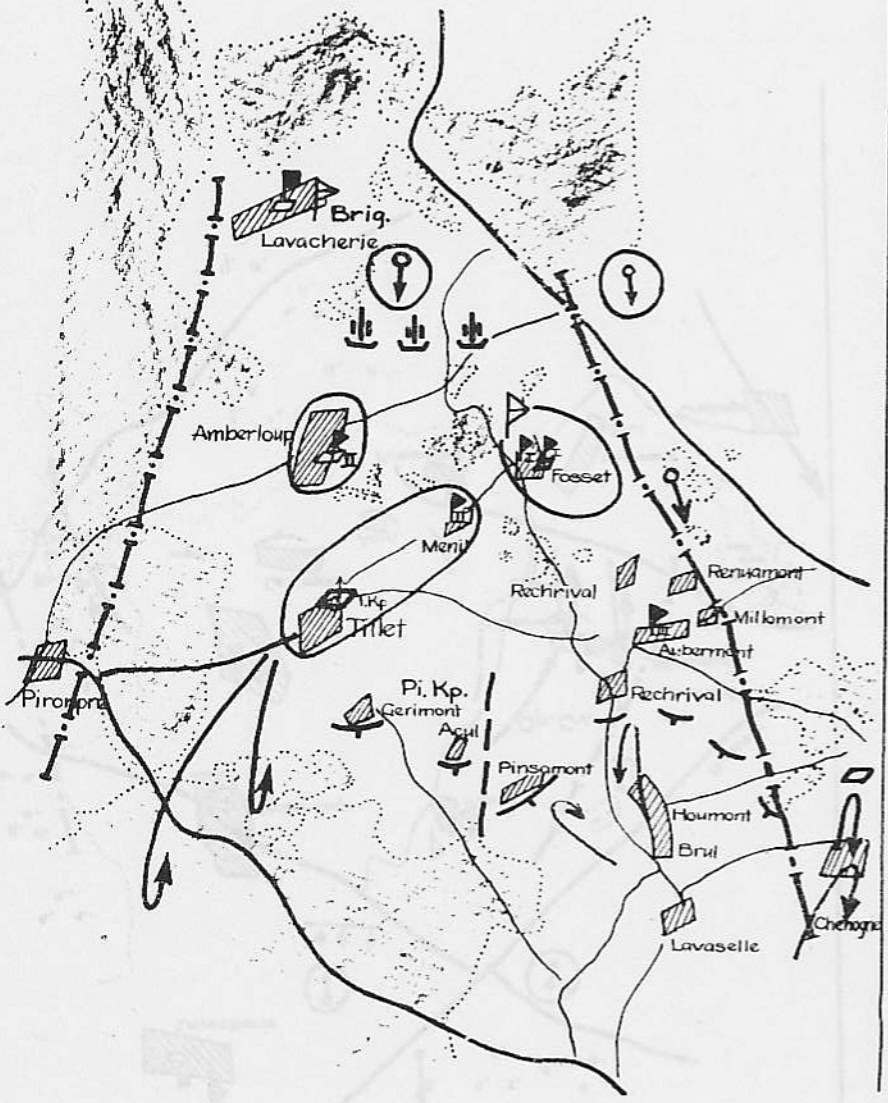
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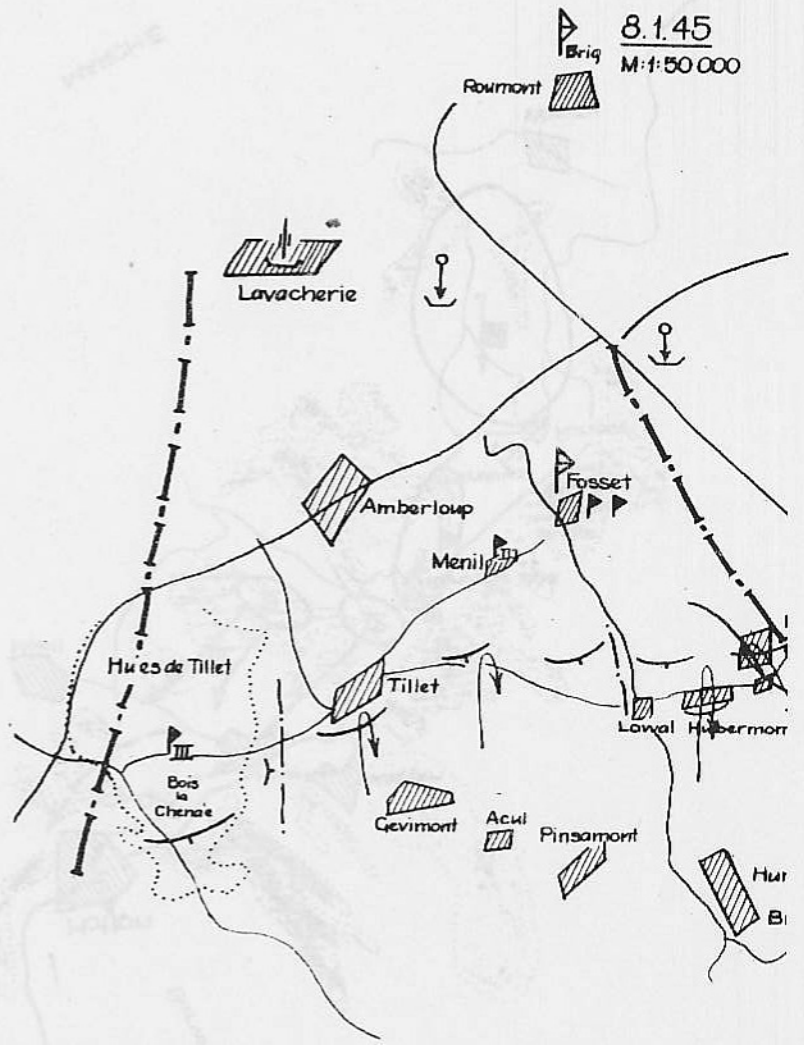
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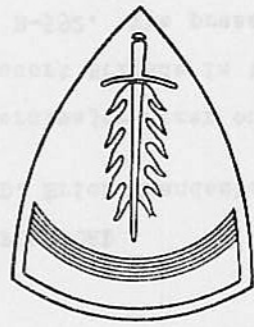
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(Part I)

ARDENNES OFFENSIVE

THE FUHRER ESCORT BRIGADE IN THE

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MS # B-838

*Call Gates*

MS # B-592

34-J-

8 Jan 45

Scale: 1:50 000

Lavacherle

Fosset

Tennant

Hubert

Tennant

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MS # B-878

FORWORD

by General a.D. Erich Brandenberger

This study by Generalmajor Remer on the Ardennes operations of the Fuehrer Escort Brigade is the continuation

and conclusion of MS # B-592. The present work describes

the last commitment of the Fuehrer Escort Brigade in the

western theater, on the left wing of the Fifth Panzer Army,

before its transfer to the East near the end of January.

This commitment occurred during the retreat of the Fifth

Panzer Army from the Bastogne area toward the West Wall,

and was intended to facilitate the withdrawal of our hard-

struggling units. Events at a higher level are described

in MS # B-522 (LVIII Panzer Corps).

The second section of the study furnishes the answers

to a number of questions asked of Generalmajor Remer in

Allendorf.

/s/ Brandenberger

MS # B-878

THE FUHRER ESCORT BRIGADE IN THE

ARDENNES OFFENSIVE

(Part II)

by

Otto Ernst Remer, Generalmajor

Historical Division  
HEADQUARTERS  
UNITED STATES ARMY, EUROPE  
1954

Otto Ernst Fritz Adolf REMER  
 Generalmajor  
 Date of Birth: 18 August 1912  
 Place of Birth: Neubrandenburg/Mecklenburg

REMER joined the Army as an officer candidate in 1933 and was assigned to the 4th Regiment at Koburg as a 2d Lieutenant of Infantry in 1935! In 1938 he was promoted 1st Lieutenant and placed in command of a company of the same Regiment.

In the 1929 campaign in Poland REMER commanded the Infantry howitzer company of the 478th Regiment in the 1940 campaign in France and in the Balkan campaign of 1941 he was in command of the motorized Infantry howitzer company of the 701st Regiment. In 1941 he was promoted captain and in February 1942 was assigned as acting commander of a battalion in Russia. Later in 1942 he was given command of an armored Infantry battalion of Panzer Grenadier Regiment Grossdeutschland, an elite unit from which Panzer Division Grossdeutschland was formed in May of the same year.

Promoted major in January 1943, REMER was transferred as a battalion commander to Guard Regiment Grossdeutschland in Berlin in May 1944. It was while serving in this assignment that he played a major role in putting down the uprising which followed the attempted assassination of Hitler on 20th July 1944. In recognition of his action on this occasion, REMER was promoted colonel, with rank dated 1 July 1944, and assigned as Combat Commander Westenburg on 1 September 1944. Three months later he was placed in command of the Hitler Bascort Brigade, with which he took part in the Ardennes Offensive. In February 1945 he was promoted Generalmajor and transferred to the eastern front together with his brigade, which at the same time was upgraded to the status of a Panzer division.

On 22 May 1945 the General was taken into custody by US forces at Bamberg, Bavaria.

I. THE COURSE OF BATTLE

1. 13 January 1945. During the night of 12 January

1945 the Fuehrer Escort Brigade marched through the Ortho-Nistrand-Rilly-Nadrine-Wibrin-Houtfalize-Tavigny-La Vilette-Triene area into the Winenroge-Boewange-Donnange-Detteit area. The bulk of the brigade arrived about noon of the next day. The brigade was subordinate to the XXXIX Corps as army reserve. Its command post was at Dettelt. The 13k Regiment was immediately employed in the assembly area for air defense. During the late afternoon a combat team consisting of the 1st Battalion, assault gun battalion and artillery battalion was advanced to Molinet to take part in a counterattack southeastward from Michamps. The team was to assist the heavily decimated 167th Volksgrenadier Division under Colonel Theodor Toladorff. The command post of the 167th Division was also at Molinet.

Beginning at dawn, the attack was to lead from Michamps through Oubourcy, clear the forest patches 1 1/2 km southwest of Oubourcy and restore the old main line of the division (see sketch). At the same time the 9th Panzer Division was to attack on the right of the combat team, north of the railroad line, from the Bourcy area. During the night the

Editor's Note: Order of Battle of the German Army indicates Generalleutnant Hans-Kurt Hoocker commanded the 167th Division at that time, and Colonel Toladorff the 340th Volksgrenadier Division.

artillery battalion moved into position east of Kolnet, his battalion, along with the artillery of the 167th Division, was to support the attack. It was planned to carry the attack, on horseback if possible, at least as far as the patches of forest southwest of Oubourcy during the dawn hours. After reaching the old main line the 67th Division was to take over its sector again. After conference with the division commander, it was learned that the contemplated infantry support by the 167th Division could hardly be expected, for the division at that time had a trench strength of only a few dozen men. Preparations were made for a surprise, lightning-like attack without preliminary artillery fire. If possible, the old line was to be reached before the furious enemy artillery fire could set in. Necessary reconnaissance had to be carried out during the night. Repeated requests for the 9th Panzer Division to begin its advance simultaneously with the combat team were granted by the corps. The assembly was completed without casualties under harassing enemy fire. Our own harassing fire was intended to conceal the noise of our armored vehicles being driven to the assembly positions.

2. 14 January 1945. The attack began at dawn according to plan. In one dash the combat team reached the

patches of forest, dismounted and pushed stealthily southward through the woods. During the morning it was learned that, for reasons still unknown today, the 9th Panzer Division had not begun to attack. As a result the combat team met infantry fire and increasingly well-aimed artillery fire from the deep right flank and had to defend itself against flanking counterthrusts. Thus the attack had become futile and had to be determined. The combat team retreated from the forests after suffering considerable losses from shells detonated in the tree tops. Throughout the day it established defense positions southwest of Oubourcy against enemy counterattacks.

During these operations the brigade came under the command of the LVIII Panzer Corps. This corps ordered another combat team consisting of the 2d Battalion and two Panzer companies to Derenbach as reserves for the 1st SS Panzer Division. The Panzer battalion of the brigade was drawn up to Hamville as corps reserves. Since this separation threatened to dissolve the brigade, I visited Field Marshal Model to point out my personal written order from the Fuehrer which stated that my brigade was to be employed only as a whole unit. I was assured this would be done.

3. 15 January 1945. In the afternoon the brigade received orders from the LVIII Panzer Corps to prepare for-

performances were demanded particularly of the infantry-  
man who, in his foxhole day and night without relief, was  
wet to the skin from the almost continuous snowdrifts.  
Second and third degree frostbites increased alarmingly.  
With reconnaissance reports indicating U.S. forces opposite  
us, the customary relief for the night was impossible  
because of lack of reserves. The trench strength of the  
companies fluctuated at that time between 10 and 15 men  
each.

An assembly of enemy tanks just north of Longvilly  
was observed at dawn on 16 January. It was crushed by  
two assault guns, which during the fueling had been moved  
up to firing range without being noticed. Eleven of the  
enemy tanks were put out of action. This blow, which  
caused panic in the enemy camp, could not be exploited  
because the battalion in the area was still occupied  
with establishing a defense position and no other forces  
were available at that time. An enemy attack which tempo-  
rarily reached the crossroads south of Moines collapsed under  
combined heavy tank and artillery fire.

A particular source of concern to the brigade was the  
contact with its left neighbor, the weak 5th Airborne Divi-

defense in the sector bounded by the crossroads 1 km  
southwest of Moines, the height east of Longvilly, and  
the western edge of Oberwampach. The brigade was to  
establish an effective block on the road from Bastogne  
to Clerveaux. During the night the 1st Battalion deployed  
north of the road, the 2d Battalion south of the road.  
(The 3d Battalion had been disbanded after heavy losses  
in personnel). The artillery battalion moved into posi-  
tion in the Crendal area; the Tank regiment was committed  
for both air and ground defense on both sides of the road  
east of Allernorn. The bulk of the panzer regiment was  
in Hamville, with elements in Allernorn. An assault  
gun company had been attached to each of the battalions  
committed at the front. The advanced command post of the  
brigade was at Barvaques de Troine, 1 km northeast of Aller-  
born. On the right was the 167th Division, on the left the  
5th Airborne Division. Reconnaissance during the night  
reported contact with the enemy at Longvilly.

4. 16-18 January 1945. These days were marked by  
numerous enemy attacks on both sides of the road. On the  
whole, these were successfully countered. The main bur-  
den was borne by the infantry and panzer troops, who often  
had to counterattack several times a day. Almost superhuman

exhausted elements of the 1st and 2d Battalions were transferred to the Detlelt-Donnange-Willange area for 24 hours to sleep and dry their clothes. The artillery battalion moved into position in the Donnange area, the panzer Grenadier Group transferred to Winrange. The units from the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade and the 9th Panzer Division were detached again. Enemy attacks on 19 and 20 January were readily repulsed; often observed assemblies in Allerborn were fired upon by the artillery.

6. 21 January 1945. A new line of resistance was now occupied, running from the western edge of the woods east of Grenade via the western edge of Winrange and the western edge of Boevange to the hill belt south of Boevange. All enemy attacks here were also repulsed without the assistance of the armored group in the Donnange area. The brigade command post was at Eeblorn.

7. 22 January 1945. The Fuehrer Escort Brigade moved into a bridgehead position around Eeblorn and Watoherdange to cover the withdrawal of the divisions of the XVIII Panzer Corps east of the Oert section. The artillery battalion was ordered into the Heister area east of Clewaux for guard duty. The heavy battalion of the 1st regiment was committed in the Marbach area; the light battalion was stationed at

which had relieved the 1st SS Panzer Division on 15 January. However the enemy penetrated at Oberwampach, part of the panzer regiment attacked either via Allerborn or Derenbach. Here, too, the situation could frequently be improved. The part of the 1st regiment employed in air defense reported no to three downed enemy planes daily. Consequently the frequency of low-ranged air attacks over the brigade area began to drop substantially. This occurred repeatedly during the Ardennes offensive.

5. 19-20 January 1945. The front was retracted approximately 2 1/2 km as a result of enemy penetrations against the front on the left. The new position ran roughly along the tank intercepting position: International frontier west Troine-western edge of Barques de Troine-western edge the woods east of Allerborn-alignment of the road to Derenbach. In addition, elements of the Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade and about 10 Tiger tanks of the 9th Panzer Division were given to the brigade. The brigade's mission was to look the road effectively under all circumstances to ensure smooth withdrawal by the units of the army committed farther north.

In the new line all dispensable soldiers of the brigade apply trains and all dispensable gunners of the 1st regiment were given infantry assignments. The completely

knew the purpose and exact destination. Upon my final report to Hitler and Field Marshal Keitel, Wehrmacht chief of staff, in Berlin I was merely told that in the assembly area in the Eifel region my brigade would still have a few days for reorganization and training. I was explicitly ordered to take care that neither my unit nor elements of it were prematurely thrown into local operations as had been previously done with other units. In addition I received a basis written order that my brigade was to be employed only as a whole unit. I was to send direct report daily through an assigned radio station on the condition and potential commitment of the brigade. This way Hitler wished to have an unembellished report, he put it, on the condition of the unit in order to obtain a clear picture of the extent and speed of decrease in combat effectiveness of an intact unit in large-scale combat. From these remarks, the fact that other units had already been employed, and from other indications of large scale combat, I inferred that supreme headquarters was apparently planning a major offensive. I obtained no precise information of the type of employment contemplated for my brigade.

Upon my arrival at the brigade assembly area at Daun (Eifel) in the beginning of December, I saw from the order

by rail to the west to be employed in the field. No one guarding Hitler's headquarters in Hattenburg, was transferred November 1944 the Fuehrer Escort Brigade, which had been

1. Preparation for the Offensive. At the end of

## II. DETAILS OF THE OFFENSIVE

attached units were to be conducted into the unloading area. shipped by train for commitment in the East. The newly as a division. Within a short time the brigade was to be to manage the rehabilitation and reassembly of the brigade to Berlin, first to report to the Fuehrer, and secondly units had already been assembled. I received orders to go be expanded rapidly into a panzer division. The additional visit by the Fuehrer's adjutant that the brigade was to Narbourg-Dabourg-Daladen. On 24 January I learned in a Gade moved into the area south of Arzfeld via Clervaux- transferred the brigade as army group reserve. The brigade transferred the brigade as army group

8. 23 January 1945. Orders from the army group prepared for demolition.

assigned. The roads leading to the Clerf sector were pre- in Eselborn and Wetscherdange an assault gun battery was the Clerf sector. To each of the battalions committed The bulk of the panzer regiment was transferred east of the crossing points of the Clerf river for air defense.

It is noted that apparently a major assembly was under way. By day only single vehicles were allowed to pass along the roads. By night the traffic routes were occupied more heavily. Everywhere there were one-way roads, on which the traffic from various units proceeded according to pre-arranged time schedules. If columns did not reach their destinations they had to clear the road immediately upon the coming of daylight and camouflage themselves against visibility from the air. If villages were occupied, camouflage had to be particularly careful to prevent enemy air reconnaissance of enemy aircraft and seek cover. In addition, postal communication had been totally suspended. This measure was carried to the extent of a continuous checking of civilian post offices. No command posts were permitted to be marked with signs. Complete radio silence had been imposed, which hindered training, especially in a newly-assembled unit, very difficult. Tactical terrain discussions and training objects were designed to exercise the following: crossing a river, fight for ditches and road blocks, night attacks, a company, scale in the fashion of assault patrol advances, for penetration of forests and villages, etc.

The conspicuous concentrations were explained to the troops by the deceptive information that we were in the Eifel region in order to counter the enemy attacks, particularly in the Aachen area, with effective flanking moves. A few kilometers behind the front a line was designated and was to be crossed only on foot, for it was feared that the enemy's attention would be aroused by excessive motor noise. Reliable soldiers, such as Alsatians, Lorainians, and members of Volkstote III<sup>2</sup>, who might desert to the enemy, were pulled out of the front. Additional care was taken to keep soldiers in the field from learning of the preparations in the rear area. Necessary reconnaissance, for example, was performed under the code word "relier."

A carefully elaborated time schedule with the army group regulated the initiation of the various command organs in such a manner that the absolutely necessary commander of staff assistant was initiated at the latest possible date. I was informed of my task relatively early, about ten days before the beginning of the offensive, because my brigade, as army group reserve, was to be committed originally as an element of corps of the Seventh Army my brigade was originally of the Seventh, and later of the Fifth Army. In a map exercise Editor's Note: Members of this group were persons of German descent, but foreign nationality, and were considered politically unreliable.

scheduled to oversee the attack of the Fifth Army on the left flank. I also took part in all map exercises of the Fifth Army. Here it was expected that my brigade would at first be detained by supreme headquarters and I would begin advancing only after penetration had been successful and a main thrust was discernible. Field Marshal Model told me that perhaps my unit could even be committed as an element of the Sixth SS Army. I oriented only my operations officer on the planned offensive and, relatively later, my supply officer to the extent that I considered it necessary for the performance of his supply functions. Other officers weren't informed until the day preceding the beginning of the offensive, the troops only on the day it began.

2. Organization and Equipment of the Brigade. As indicated above, my brigade was reorganized upon its arrival at the assembly area. In weapons, tanks, and guns the unit was brought up to its full authorized strength, though part of the equipment didn't arrive until the beginning of the offensive. That part of the brigade that I had brought from the Headquarters could be regarded as excellent as far as the composition, education, training, and armament of the personnel was concerned. Of the newly-added units only the Panzer Battalion "Großdeutschland" had battle experience and was well

The staff of the panzer regiment could not be committed at the time because of its equipment and composition. The assault gun battalion was also a newly assembled unit. Its guns were new, though some were left damaged on the road between the railroad station and the assembly area because drivers were inadequately trained. Workshop facilities and wrecker services, however, were completely inadequate. For camouflage reasons and because of fuel difficulties, most of the tank and assault guns had to be used in combat without having been broken-in; guns were first adjusted by trial fire only two days preceding the offensive.

The Flak Regiment Hermann Goering was probably one of the best-equipped and best-trained regiments of its kind. By within the framework of the relatively small brigade, containing only one Grenadier regiment, the regiment was hard to use in attacks because it was too immobile. The 12-ton tractors, and 10,5-ton guns were too heavy. Ammunition had to be procured from Germany, for none was available for the special type at the army group. The heavy guns could be moved only on relatively firm soils in the difficult terrain. For very combat, the guns were limited because of their flat



trajectory--a 21 km range. The flank regiment was excellent as a blocking unit, particularly, for countering tank assaults because tanks could be put out of action at a distance of 3 km.

The light flank battalion with self-propelled mounts

rendered excellent services both in ground and air defense.

The brigade was protected, particularly from low-range air

attacks in assemblies, offense and defense. Moreover, the

other units of the brigade were equipped with a good air

defense. Repeatedly over the brigade area, attacks by

low-flying planes and fighter planes stopped after initial

attempts.

As to artillery, the brigade was provided with only one

light battalion, whose tractors could get across country

only to a limited extent. In the place of the heavy flank

battalion I would rather have had a second artillery battalion

with self-propelled mounts. During difficult offensive opera-

tions the deficient artillery equipment proved costly.

A further disadvantage in the organization and equipment

of the brigade was the absence of sufficient means of commu-

cation. I had only one signal company, 50 percent wired

and 50 percent with radio. With that I had to conduct the

operations of three independent battalions. The requisitioned

elemental staff was not received. Moreover, the brigade

had no engineer unit and hence always depended on corps or army engineers. Since throughout the offensive no

engineer units were assigned to us, we had to get along

with our own means. The transportation space allocated

was also insufficient, especially since only one-fifth of

the allocated vehicles could be used. As a result the units

had to carry the larger part of their supplies with them.

Empty vehicles of the units were always assembled for supply

runs for the brigade and employed at the main thrusts.

3. Replacements and Reserves. Before the offensive

about 20 percent of the personnel and material was placed

into the field replacement battalion. By detaching to it

the ablest officers and noncommissioned officers a good

training was ensured. I attached particular value to the

training of subordinate commanders. They were lacking especial-

ly in the units that had newly joined the brigade.

On the basis of experience gained in the East it had been

ordered that the combat strength of rifle companies must not

exceed 40 men, of heavy companies 60 men. Stronger companies

could hardly be led in combat, particularly by the young

company commanders available, and only caused unnecessary

concentrations and resulting losses. The combat strength

of large companies, especially inexperienced, youthful units,

dropped to about a third of the original strength after the

first battles and then usually remained on this level for some time. It was especially advisable to man the first armored personnel carriers only to the extent necessary for handling the weapons, for direct hits usually caused the loss of the entire crew. Equally as important as reserves was the retention of unneeded weapons such as machine guns and mortars, for the weapons, after the crews had been killed or injured, usually remained on the battlefield and were lost.

A panzer Grenadier company, with 18 light machine guns, 4 heavy machine guns, 4 mortars and 4 20-mm antiaircraft guns, carried with it 30 to 40 percent of its arms, depending on locations and mission. In general, a unit needs more weapons on defense than it does on offense. One reason is that in offensive the transportation of the heavy infantry ammunition is always a problem. With the same amount of ammunition, for example, it is often possible to achieve the same results with one mortar as with four. Defense differs in that it is possible to have available enough ammunition, the remaining 50 or 70 percent of the arms were retained in decreasing numbers by the supply trains of the companies, battalions, regiments, and the brigade. It was important that the companies were in a position to replace immediately

damaged or destroyed weapons. For this reason weapon repair services belong with the fighting troops at the front. Similar economies and stocking of reserves is necessary with precious radio sets. There should also be only as many non-armored combat vehicles on the scene of operations as are required for the transport of troops. Main-  
tance of the prescribed maximum strength of material reserves stocks was continuously controlled and supervised by the brigade. Inexperienced company and battalion commanders are often inclined to live from hand to mouth.

During the Ardennes offensive replacements reached the front three times from the field replacement battalion, which in turn drew the personnel from the Replacement Army. These replacements were always distributed by the staff assistants of the brigade according to the latest strength reports. In this manner the brigade, which had considerable losses during the continuous, hard days of combat was always ready for new commitments, and was able to expand into a panzer division only two weeks after the offensive. An additional personnel reserve existed in the number of men on regular leave. As usual, personnel were sent home on leave continuously, regardless of events in the field.

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4. The Brigade's Losses. The losses of personnel amounted to almost 2,000 men, about 450 of which were killed. A large number of the wounded recuperated and returned to their units during and immediately after the offensive. About 60 to 70 percent of the casualties were the result of grenade splinters. The concentrated, flexible artillery fire of the enemy was most feared by the troops. About 15 to 20 percent of the losses were caused by bombs and low altitude air attacks. These losses were inflicted on supply trains and reserves rather than with the fighting troops. The brigade could successfully protect itself from air attacks by its own strong antiaircraft forces. The slight losses among the fighting troops 5 percent were missing in action, approximately 10 percent were caused by tank fire, and the rest by infantry fire. Of nine commanding officers three were killed and four injured. Of the approximately 100 tanks and assault guns originally available, the brigade had 25 to 30 in usable condition after the offensive. Ten to twelve underwent short-term repairs and about fifteen long-term repairs, making a total of 55 to 60 percent. Ten to twelve tanks were put out of action by enemy antitank guns or tanks, five to ten into mines, and the rest had to be destroyed during the

fighting either because they lacked fuel or there were not sufficient wreckers. There was no notable help from the army or army group. The artillery lost two of its ten light guns; one was run over by a tank, the other was hit directly by artillery fire. Of the four heavy guns one dropped out result of direct bomb hit during the march. The heavy tank battalion lost three of its twenty-four heavy guns, two through tank action, one through bombing. Of the 135 armored personnel carriers about 45 were lost, mostly as a result of artillery action. A large number had to be demolished for lack of wreckers. In the rear area the brigade lost a relatively high number of supply trucks as a result of fighter-bomber attacks. A total of 140 to 150 enemy tanks were put out of action or captured. Before we had to destroy our own tanks when we abandoned the territory we had gained, the ratio of our losses to the enemy's was one eighth. A striking feature was the relatively large number of vehicles we captured in unimpaired condition. In all the brigade captured 60 to 70 jeeps and about the same number of trucks. But the joy was short-lived because these vehicles consumed too much fuel. They were either destroyed

by us or turned over to other units. Of sixteen downed planes thirteen were credited to the Flak battalion, three to Infantry units.

About 400 to 500 prisoners were taken. Twenty to thirty guns were captured or destroyed. No notable enemy fuel stocks fell into our hands though fuel finding details always accompanied the fighting troops. On the other hand, considerable amounts of food, clothing and all kinds of equipment were secured. The brigade lived almost exclusively on captured items.

#### 6. Fuel Situation. As far as I remember, 4.2 daily

issues of fuel were planned. When the brigade began its advance out of the Daun area on the third day of the offensive, it had only two daily issues. At that time the entire transportation section had been dispatched four days previously to receive the allocated fuel. I believe that at the time the fuel had to be picked up far in the rear in the vicinity of the Rhine River. All the allocated fuel was probably never received. Throughout the offensive individual vehicles arrived sporadically at the front, but never whole convoys.

Editor's Note: One issue was the amount of fuel required per vehicle per 100 km of travel.

The brigade had continuous fuel difficulties after 20 December and most of the tactical decisions were dependent on the fuel situation. Furthermore, because of road congestions and bad road and terrain conditions the troops needed far more fuel than was usually allocated under normal circumstances. During transfers, for example from Laroupe to Bastogne, occasionally 50 percent of the vehicles had to be towed.

Since the distance from the fuel issuing points to the field units was always very great, continual delays and loss of vehicles had to be anticipated as a result of lighter-bomber attacks and road congestion. On some days as many as half of all fuel vehicles were set aside even though they could not be recognized as such vehicles. Another drawback was the seizure, carried out inconsiderately by some agencies, of approaching fuel for allegedly decisive purposes. Enemy fuel depots were captured, but they provide only a temporary supply. It was established procedure to pick up fuel from the tanks of captured vehicles.

#### 7. Reasons for the Failure of the Offensive. The beginning of the Ardennes offensive was chosen for a period when an overcast sky was expected. This was done to eliminate as far as possible enemy action from the air in view

along this road from Roth via Auv and Schoenberg to St. Vith. At least one of the higher headquarters should have ordered the roads to be cleared temporarily by military police forces. Or the delay necessary to allow the 18th Volksgrenadier Division to move up should have been accepted and the Fuehrer Escort Brigade ordered to delay its advance until afterward. In either case considerable time would have been saved.

Regarding the St. Vith episode, I believe that enemy resistance at the time when the brigade started advancing was considerably underestimated. The brigade began to move as ordered and in the formation ordered, that is with light units in front as the advance detachment. This formation was intended for the expansion of an operational breakthrough, for such a breakthrough was the main objective of the mission as issued by army and corps. I was told to avoid a battle for St. Vith, and again shown on the map the various advance routes leading to the Meuse river. If after the arrival of the first units of my brigade at noon of the 19th, I had had my armored group instead of the advance detachment, I would have made a tank assault on St. Vith in spite of the adverse terrain west of the Wallerode mill, 4 km east of St. Vith. This was impossible because the armored group was

of our own aerial inferiority. This factor was even more important because the supreme command had selected the Stiel region, which, as an assembly and combat area, presented the difficulty of channeling heavy traffic through relatively few roads. Contrary to all weather forecasts, the sky cleared after the first week, at a time when the fighting divisions and those following closely behind were dependent upon the poor road network. Road conditions, particularly in the already snow-covered areas, worsened as a result of new snowfall. A majority of the divisions, as well as the Fuehrer Escort Brigade, had no winter equipment for their vehicles, particularly for the tanks.

As an example, at St. Vith the chaotic traffic conditions in the snow-covered terrain made it impossible to commit a mobile panzer unit such as the Fuehrer Escort Brigade in time, even allowing for the deficient technical riding experience of a young unit. Aside from bad road conditions, it was impossible from the command viewpoint to launch a panzer unit on a road which at places could be used only in single file. Moreover, the entire road was interrupted by the horse-drawn 18th Volksgrenadier Division, which as just moving up toward the front. Columns of the Sixth Army were also using it. Yet I was ordered to advance

the roads. Assemblies and major operations were also attacked with increasing severity. Units had been directed to do their marching, transferring, and a part of their fighting by night. Experience also showed that little enemy action could be expected for one to two hours after daybreak and one hour before sunset.

There were three other essential factors which caused the failure of the Ardennes offensive:

a. A smaller number of combat units were available than had been planned. Some of the units originally provided were probably needed at other endangered sectors of the front; other probably were not dispatched at all after the command realized that the Meuse river would not be reached and crossed in the period of four to five days planned.

b. The personnel and material status of many units did not reach the anticipated standards. The panzer divisions were all short of tanks. Some of the Volksgrenadier divisions and the Volks artillery corps were short of horses, frequently there was no substantial support by corps or army artillery at the local points of fighting, for example at St. Vith and Bastogne. The brigade never received additional artillery support and always depended on its own single battle

completely wedged-in on the road. Hence I decided to bypass St. Vith on the north despite the unfavorable road conditions. It was soon made clear that the enemy knew how to exploit the events around St. Vith during this delay.

In addition to adverse weather conditions and terrain difficulties the brigade was beset as early as the third day with a lack of fuel. This was even more detrimental because the only way to get fuel vehicles to the front was to have them towed by tracked vehicles. The fuel ran short so soon owing to the road conditions, twice as much as expected had been used. As I noted above, the brigade had to start its advance with half the allocated fuel. Another reason for the late arrival of fuel supplies lay in the distance which the supply columns had to cover. Still another factor was the activity of enemy aircraft, which prevented more and more movement by day. Not enough distance could be covered by night. The fuel depots were not moved forward as the field units advanced. It was reported that for reasons of security the agencies in charge of supply had been notified too late to procure the supplies west of the Rhine river, but I cannot comment on this report.

After Christmas, except for a few days, the enemy air activity prevented almost every movement of whole units on

command's goal, to induce the West through a clear offensive victory to step out of the war or agree to negotiations which would allow a free hand in the East, had failed.

Another reason for a speedy success, and also a reason for the early beginning on 16 December even though preparations had not yet been completed, was that the date of the beginning of the Russian offensive out of the Bannov bridgehead was known. By this date the Eastern Front, which according to Hitler had been weakened to the limit in favor of the Ardennes offensive, was to be finished the bulk of the panzer divisions no longer needed in the West. Instead, the departure of the divisions earmarked for the East was delayed by weeks after the failure of the offensive for lack of fuel.

It was further hoped that this offensive would diminish attacks on Germany and her paralyzed key industries. The industries could again attain their full capacity output of armaments in the construction of new types of airplanes, production of synthetic gasoline, etc. But these hopes were also frustrated.

The optimism wakened by the first success of the Ardennes offensive both at home and with the men at the Eastern Front

he extremely flexible enemy artillery, on the other and, with its large expenditure of ammunition, was always superior to ours. This cost us much blood in difficult attacks. Furthermore it must be considered that a number of divisions and partial units had been newly activated and had no combat experience and experience with seam-work.

c. There was no notable support by our Luftwaffe. The complete lack of air support on the one hand and the continuous enemy air activity on the other had considerable effect on the morale of our troops.

I. CONCLUSION

Every officer and every soldier who took part in this operation knew of its significance, through a light-ning-like advance across the Meuse river in four to five days, to Antwerp in about fourteen days, it was to lead to the destruction of about half of the invasion armies and the elimination of the important supply port of Antwerp. Hitler's warning, that we would either take Antwerp in 1945 be faced with a war of material, which we would be equal to, clearly defined the stakes. The supreme

turned into defection. Among the units participating in the offensive the initially excellent psychological attitude of the soldiers was profoundly shocked. When I reported to Hitler on 30 January 1945 I frankly stated that the frustration of hope had had paralyzing effect on the troops, that with the decimated units I had seen everywhere after the offensive, the race could no longer be won. With the great hopes of the offensive abandoned, we all now hoped that the Government would find a political solution for ending the war.

If the German officer, like any soldier, continued to do his duty true to his oath and resigned himself to fight on in compliance with orders, he did so in the belief that any hour a political solution would come. On the Eastern Front, however, he fought with the knowledge that every yard of German soil trodden and delved by Bolshevism signified the annihilation and destruction of German and Occidental culture.

/s/ Remer