

FIRST U.S. ARMY

CORPS LEVEL

V CORPS

VIII CORPS.

Corps level

CRITIQUE ON THE CORPS LEVEL OF THE FIRST U. S. ARMY

SUMMARY.

When the Counteroffensive was launched at approximately 0530 on 16 December, the First Army had three Corps on the line, north to south, the VIIth, the Vth, and VIIIth Corps, each occupying its position since early October. Of these, the northern VII and the central V Corps were pre-occupied with offensives of their own, the former to capture COLOGNE and the latter the ROER River dams. On the other hand, the southern VIII Corps occupied a quiet, defensive sector. Please note the positions and sectors' size of the three corps on the Twelfth Army Group's G-3 Situation Map of 161200 December in the frontispiece.

The German onslaught was heaviest against the southern sector occupied by the VIII Corps, and decreased northward. All four of the VIII Corps divisions were struck on 16 December, by an identified ten enemy divisions. While the V Corps was attacked mainly only on its southern flank, the 99th Division adjacent to the VIII Corps was assaulted by elements of 12 enemy divisions. South to north, the 2nd and 78th Divisions of the V Corps who were carrying the major burden of the V Corps offensive, were not assaulted on the 16th by infantry forces, the 2d receiving some heavy shelling. Farther north, adjacent to the central V Corps, the VII Corps was not stricken during the day, and continued its own offensive until 21 December, when it was relieved and withdrawn to Belgium for defense.

Enemy Offensive Capabilities.

The corps held the opinion that the enemy regarded his defense of the SIEGFRIED Line and of the AACHEN-OLN corridor to the RUHR as vital. His serious defense was expected, and a continuation of his defense was in general regarded as the primary enemy capability and intention. The Corps expected counterattacks against American penetrations.

When the VIII Corps assumed its sector on 4 October, it estimated that at least for political reasons the enemy was required to hold the SIEGFRIED Line at all costs, to hold the Allied forces on the Western front, and that the Line's serious defense was expected. The Corps continued this opinion, and on 9 December regarded the enemy primary ability and intention as the continuation of his current active defense. His practice of giving new divisions experience on the VIII Corps front, then moving them elsewhere suggested the enemy's desire that the sector remain quiet and inactive. Counterattacks to restore positions and reinforcements from reserves were unexpected unless the enemy felt the VIII Corps was mounting an offensive. German forces were considered to be very low in quality.

Adjacent to and north of the defensive VIII Corps, the V Corps was engaged in offensive action during most of the period 6 October-15 December, and its attitude towards the enemy's potentialities was measured against the Corps own operations, as reactions to the V Corps drives. According to the Corps description, the enemy strongly and determinedly resisted the V Corps advances, particularly in the HURTGEN Forest and the SCHEIDT regions. This determined defense was regarded as the current and expected enemy's capability by the V Corps G-2 Estimate of 6 December. However, prompt counterattacks with available reserves could be expected as a reaction to V Corps penetrations, inasmuch as the German system of defense was thought to be based upon immediate counter action to maintain the battle position.

Similar to the central V Corps, the northernmost Corps of the First Army, the VIIth, was occupied with an offensive on 16 December, and had been so engaged since D-Day, 6 June. The current drive was from approximately AACHEN to seize KOLN, and had been launched on 16 November. Within a week of operations, the VII Corps decided the enemy considered his defense of the AACHEN-COLOGNE corridor as vital to the RUHR, and the Corps G-2 Estimate of 9 December considered the enemy's most likely capability to be his continued active defense of his positions. Heavy enemy losses had been constantly replaced during the period, and the VII Corps wondered how long the defense could continue in the face of the loss rate and the new demand for troops arising in the south. This Estimate regarded as highly probable a counterattack with elements of the enemy's SIXTH Panzer Army after the Corps reached the east bank of the ROER River.

Lack of Counteroffensive Evidence.

Of the three corps, the VIIth acquired the only ostensible evidence of an impending attack on a major scale. That is, Corps divisions obtained seven data, but, as noted in the Forwarding of Information discussion, the VIII Corps G-2 was notified of only four of these seven data prior to the 16 December attack. Single or collectively, these four data were numerically slight upon which to predicate an accurate prediction of a major enemy counterblow. In scope and reliability of informants, they were likewise weak. Two data concerned increasing enemy vehicular activity during the 12-15 December period, but no pattern of action could be derived from the several, separated instances. A civilian Luxembourg woman turned herself in to a divisional CIC on 14 December, and described some enemy build-up in the VIADEN-BITBURG area, but her capturing division declared that she had noted nothing of military significance on her main travel route. A PW was captured at 1930 on 15 December, who referred to an impending attack. He said he had arrived on the front on the previous afternoon, relieving an unknown unit, which was pulled out and briefed for an attack between 17 December and Christmas, but the PW did not know if the front were to be regimental, division, or the entire front. As the capturing division

#3.

observed, the PW was seriously wounded, and he was interrogated while under morphine. His coherence was questionable.

Note is taken that these four data were the only ones of seven which were forwarded to the VIII Corps headquarters by the Corps divisions prior to 16 December. The Corps judgment of the enemy intentions therefore took into account only those four. Actually, two divisions captured three other PW's on the 15th, one wounded, who stated from hearsay or rumor that an large-scale offensive was imminent. Neither these three nor the one reported to the Corps provided substantive, written information, e.g., official orders and plans. Thus, the four data forwarded to the Corps headquarters were the only attack symptoms possessed by the Corps G-2.

In contrast, Corps air reconnaissance, when flown on only five days of the 1-15 December period, observed only minor activity, such as movements of two trains and a few vehicles, from which no pattern could be deduced. Furthermore, the enemy's activity was defensive and inactive, limited to patrolling and sporadic artillery, all non-suggestive of aggressive intentions to the VIII Corps.

Unlike its southern VIII Corps neighbor, the V Corps did not possess evidence of the impending attack. Rather, if attack signs existed the V Corps did not recognize them. It possessed no special data resembling that of the VIII Corps which on its face value seemed to point to a large-scale enemy action. The enemy's strong resistance to the V Corps offensive operations prior to 16 December were interpreted as expected reaction. Air reconnaissance did not reveal attack signs. It was negligible due to bad weather, but when flights were flown they did not disclose informative data. A tually, air activity was largely support of the offensive ground operations, rather than reconnaissance for information.

Similar to the V Corps, the VII Corps was pre-occupied with its own offensive during the pre-Counteroffensive period, and the enemy's defensive action was the expected reaction, which was not an attack sign. No particular symptoms were noted by the Corps.

Forwarding of Information.

By the Corps. --- The major medium of the Corps transmission of their intelligence data was through their daily G-2 Periodics. Each of the V and the VIII Corps included the ENEMY CAPABILITIES section in their periodics, but entries were regularly NO CHANGE. In contrast, the VII Corps' G-2 Periodics did not incorporate even the title of that section, except on 7 December when it quoted from a SHAFF G-2 Weekly ISUP.

G-2 Estimates of the Enemy Situation were issued by all three Corps. The VII TH Corps issued #8, on 1 October, during the period in which the Corps assumed its Ardennes position, and

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followed with Estimates on 3, 8, 19 October, and 9 December. Those of the 3d and 8th October dealt with counterintelligence in Belgium and Luxembourg. An Estimate was issued by the V Corps on 6 December, and that of the VII Corps was on the 9th.

In respect to highly significant data, note is taken that only the VIII Corps received information that ostensibly indicated an impending major offensive by the enemy. These were four data received from its divisions during the last few days prior to 16 December. As observed on the Divia on Level, the Corps divisions acquired seven data, but only four were transmitted to the VIII Corps. The VIII's documents confirm that proportion. They were the two data concerning the increasing enemy traffic, the one pertaining to the build-up information provided by a civilian woman informer, and the claim of an impending attack made by a PW. All four data received by the VIII Corps were promptly reported in its G-2 Periodic for the day, but there was no evidence that it was forwarded by message to the Army as supplementary, expeditious method. One data, however, was reported in the Corps ISM.

From Other Commands. --- Each of the three Corps received G-2 issuances from higher and adjacent commands. G-2 Periodics was the usual document, particularly in the case of the VIII Corps. First Army Intelligence Summaries were also frequently received. The VII Corps tended to possess copies of recent SHAEF and Tenth Army Group G-2 Weekly Intelligence Summaries.

Initial Recognition of the Assault's Gravity.

When the Counteroffensive was launched at approximately 0530 on 16 December, the V and VII Corps were engaged in offensives against the ROER dams and COLOGNE respectively, whereas the VIII Corps occupied a quiet, inactive, defensive front. As a corps the VIIIth received the brunt of the assault on the 16th when elements of ten divisions struck it. Nevertheless, the 99th Division, the southern flank of the V Corps, and adjacent to the VIIICorps on the VIII's north, was the divisional victim of elements of twelve divisions. Thus, of the actually assaulted divisions of the three corps, the four of the VIIIth were on the defense, but the 99th of the V Corps was still conducting its own offensive.

No belief was held by the VIII Corps that a major enemy counteroffensive would be made, and the command was surprised by the assault. Its realization of the attack's scope was not reached until approximately early morning of the 17th. Its G-2 Periodic of 162400 December inferred that the attack was only a counterattack to restore lost positions. This view was taken despite the fact that the Corps possessed by 2320 hours two copies of the Commander-in-Chief West's Order of the Day, 16 December, proclaiming the Counteroffensive to the German forces. One copy from the V Corps was received at 2120.

According to the V Corps G-2 Periodic for 160001A-162400A December: "The enemy apparently planned an all out attack against the VIII and V Corps with the main spearhead directed approximately

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at the boundary between the two corps.* The source of this data or the reasons for the opinion were not stated. Entirely possible, however, the V Corps G-2 derived this opinion from various sources, the main one being the captured text of the Von Rundstedt Order of the Day announcing the Counteroffensive. This document was captured by the 99th Division, and passed to the V Corps G-3 at 1350A, who doubtless showed it to the G-2. The Corps G-2 thereby had several hours to consider its meaning. During the day, however, the V Corps issuances provided no indication of its comprehension of the enemy's objectives and intentions. Intelligence Summaries of 0600, 1200, 1900, and 2400 described operations only, without commentary as to their overall significance. Their own offensive action was continued throughout the day by the 2d and 73th Divisions, which were not attacked, except for some shelling. On the other hand, the 99th, being actually assaulted, maintained positions against heavy pressure, contained two enemy penetrations, received intense artillery and mortar fire, conducted local counterattacks to restore original positions, and maintained contact with the 2d Division on its left(north).

In complete contrast to the VIII Corps and partially to that of the Vth, the VII Corps was not attacked by the enemy on the 16th, except for some shelling on two towns and an assault on one of the towns by a sixty man force which was repulsed. The VIIth continued its own offensive until relieved by the XIX Corps at midnight 21 December, whereupon the VIIth withdrew into Belgium for participation in the Counteroffensive.

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SUMMARY.

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The German onslaught was heaviest against the southern sector occupied by the VII Corps, and decreased northward. All four of the VIII Corps divisions were struck on 16 December, by an identified ten enemy divisions. While the V Corps was attacked mainly only on its southern flank, the 99th Division adjacent to the VIII Corps was assaulted by elements of 12 enemy divisions. South to north, the 2nd and 78th Divisions of the V Corps who were carrying the major burden of the V Corps offensive, were not assaulted on the 16th by Infantry Forces, the 2d receiving some heavy shelling. Farther north, adjacent to the central V Corps, the VII Corps was not struck during the day, and continued its own offensive until 21 December, when it was relieved and withdrawn to Belgium for defense.

General Observations Summary

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VIII
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VIII CORPS

SUMMARY

Following its BREAST campaign, the VIII Corps (Ninth Army) relieved the V Corps (First Army) on 4 October 1944 of its defensive position along the OUR River, paralleling the SIEGFRIED Line in the LUXEMBOURG-BELGIUM area, a 50 mile sector, and positioned the 2d Division on the North and the 8th in the South. The zone was extended to approximately 88 miles, to the southeast corner of LUXEMBOURG, on 11 October, when the 83d Division was transferred from the Third Army to the VIII Corps. On 22 October the Corps passed to the First Army from the Ninth. As of 15 December the 106th and 28th Infantry Divisions, the 9th Armored, and 4th Infantry were positioned North to South.

Immediately upon assumption of its Ardennes front the Corps estimated that the enemy was required to hold the SIEGFRIED Line at all costs, at least for political reasons, to hold the Allied forces on the Western Front, and that the Line's continued serious defense was expected. This was the salient theme of the G-2 Estimates of 1, 19 October and 9 December. According to the latter, the enemy's primary ability and intention was his current active defense. His practice of moving new divisions into the zone for front line experience then commitment elsewhere indicated his desire that the zone remain quiet and inactive. Counterattacks to restore positions and reinforcements from reserves were not expected by the 9 December Estimate unless the enemy felt the VIII Corps was mounting an offensive. German forces were appraised as being very low in quality, to be hastily organized Kampfgruppen, composed of miscellaneous replacement, security, and service troops. This low quality did not suggest offensive intentions to the VIII Corps. Nor did the fact that the enemy's operations were defensive and inactive.

VIII Corps activity was likewise defensive, with some active patrolling and harassing artillery. Its defense was difficult because its front was stretched some 88 miles, leaving spots open for patrol penetration. Of the four divisions on the line as of 16 December, the 4th and 28th, while battlewise, were undergoing rest and rehabilitation, and the 106th Infantry and 9th Armored were inexperienced, this being their initial commitment.

Information concerning the enemy was both slight in quantity and of inconclusive authority. Bad weather completely prevented air reconnaissance on 10 of the days during the 1-15 December period. Only short flights were flown on the other days, which observed only minor activity such as movements of two infantry trains and a few vehicles. At least no pattern could be deduced from the data. As noted on the divisional

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level, (1) during the 12-15 December period, the 28th and 106th Divisions observed increasing enemy vehicular traffic; (2) a Luxembourg civilian woman voluntarily surrendered to the 28th Division on 14 December, and who described German buildup in the VIADEN-BITBURG area; and, (3) two PW's from each the 4th and 106th Divisions captured on 15 December stated from hearsay or rumor that a major German offensive would be launched between 17-25 December. These seven data were reasonably too slight for a prediction of a major enemy counterblow. They were likewise weak in scope. No pattern of action could be derived from the several, separated instances of accelerated enemy traffic observed by the 28th and 106th Divisions. Even the 28th Division asserted that the woman informer it had acquired had described nothing of military significance of what she had seen on her main route. The statements about an impending attack made by the two 106th PW's were founded upon hearsay, and upon rumor the two of the 4th Division. No substantive written information, e.g., official orders, and plans, were provided. Both 106th's PW's were wounded, reducing, doubtless, their coherence.

Of these seven data, only four had been forwarded to the Corps, the two about the increasing traffic, that about the woman informer, and that from one of the PW's. Of the four impending attack claims by PW's, the Corps was notified of only one, and his testimony was given while he was under the influence of morphine. Even if his claim were substantial, there was negligible time for the taking of divisional and Corps protective measures, because the Division did not learn of it until 1930 on the 15th, and the Corps 36 minutes later.

The Corps pre-Counteroffensive identification of the enemy was very inaccurate. Similar to the totals of the individual divisions, the VIII Corps identified only four enemy divisions prior to 16 December, yet ten divisions assaulted the Corps front on that day. Its initial conception of the enemy strength and reserves was expressed in its G-2 Estimate of 1 October when the Ardennes position was assumed. An available strength of 30,000 was then estimated, plus a reserve infantry division of 5,000 and a panzer grenadier brigade of 1,500. In contrast, the 19 October G-2 estimate set the strength at 35,000 men, but the 9 December Estimate gave the figure as 24,000, with the reserves as two panzer, two infantry, five parachute divisions, and the Sixth Panzer Army of five divisions. As of 15 December, the identified enemy divisions were the 18th, 26th, 212th, 352 VG Divisions.

No belief was held by the VIII Corps that a major, large-scale enemy counteroffensive would be made, and the command was surprised by the assault. Except for the questionable four intelligence data mentioned above, the VIII Corps possessed no attack symptoms. The Corps realization of the scope of the attack was not reached until approximately early morning of the 17th. Its G-2 Periodic for 162400 December intimated that the attack was only a counterattack to retore lost positions. This view

#3. VIII Corps. Summary.

was taken despite the Corps acquisition by 2310 of two copies of the Commander-in-Chief West's Order of the Day, 16 December, proclaiming the Counteroffensive to the German forces. Apparently, this revealing document, obtained from the V Corps and the 106th Division, was disregarded in the G-2's analysis of the situation.

VIII CORPS

CRITIQUE

I. Assumption of Ardennes Position, 4 October 1944.

Following its BREAST campaign under the Ninth U.S. Army, the VIII Corps moved that command's forward zone to the enemy's SIEGFRIED Line defenses in the LUXEMBOURG-BELGIUM area. (I, A&B) The VIII Corps relieved the V Corps (First Army) composed of the 4th and 28th Infantry and 5th Armored Divisions, which moved northward, adjacent to its former position, to participate in a First Army drive on the SIEGFRIED Line. A move was made by the VIII Corps during the last week of September and early October to the vicinity of BASTOGNE, Belgium, and responsibility for its new sector was assumed on 041200 October.

"The mission of the Corps was to relieve the V Corps and take up a defensive position along the line held by the latter unit." This Ninth Army zone, occupied by the VIII Corps only, was between the First Army on its north and the Third Army, and was a 50 mile line along the OUR River, paralleling the enemy's SIEGFRIED Line, from approximately LOSHEIM, Belgium (LO397) southward almost to ECHTERNACH, Luxembourg on the German frontier. The 2d Infantry Division was positioned on the north, in the vicinity of ST. VITH, Belgium, and the 8th Division south near ELX WILTZ, Luxembourg.

II. Evaluation of the Enemy Capabilities.

When the VIII Corps assumed its Ardennes zone in early October, it immediately appraised the enemy's situation in a G-2 Estimate on 1 October. While subsequent daily G-2 Periodics contributed intelligence data, the G-2 Estimate was the medium for the Corps expression of its judgment about the German possibilities. Two later Estimates were issued, on 19 October and 9 December.

A continued serious defense of the SIEGFRIED Line was the primary expectation of the 1 October Estimate, with three capabilities as possible: to counterattack locally to restore positions, to continue an active defense of current positions, and to reinforce for local counterattacks or concentration for a larger scale counterattack anywhere on the Corps front. The Estimate of three weeks later repeated those capabilities. But, the 9 December Estimate narrowed potentialities, in that the enemy's current active defense was considered as his primary ability and intention, unless the VIII Corps went onto an offensive. The G-2 explained: "The enemy's practice of bringing new divisions to receive

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front line experience and then relieving them out for commitment elsewhere indicated his desire to have this sector of the front remain quiet and inactive." Counterattacks to restore positions, and reinforcement from reserves were not expected unless the enemy felt the VIII Corps was mounting an offensive. Thus, as of about a week preceding the Counteroffensive, the VIII Corps restricted the enemy's capability to his current active defense, without counterattack probabilities.

Preliminary to its G-2 Estimates, the Corps made two studies of titled, THE SIEGFRIED LINE.

SIEGFRIED Line Studies.

Both the Corps G-2 and the Artillery issued studies, dated 30 September and 1 October respectively. (III, A; V, A) Both documents, of four and three pages, lacked consideration of the enemy's offensive potentialities. Rather, both studies were descriptive, dealing with the physical details of the line, such as the nature of the fortifications, the design and strength of concrete positions, and the defenses facing the VIII Corps.

Initial Appraisal of the Enemy.

Evaluation of the enemy's potentialities was stated on the Corps level in the Corps G-2 Estimate #8, 1 October, and a Corps Artillery Intelligence Report was issued on the same day.

Corps G-2 ESTIMATE #8, 1 OCTOBER. -- Continued serious defense of the SIEGFRIED Line was the salient point of this document. (II, A) The lead sentence stated: "The Siegfried Line on the front and flanks of the area to be occupied by the VIII Corps is being strongly defended by the enemy." The line was characterized as "not a complete system of static fortification, but rather a light system of interlocking defenses which increase the defensive power of mobile troops. The doctrine for its defense states that in case of a breach of the forward lines mobile troops located in suitable rear areas will immediately counterattack to restore the position. Within the limits imposed by the lack of mobile reserves of good quality, the enemy has consistently followed this doctrine in his current operations against the V Corps. His counterattacks have been prompt and vigorous, ..." According to this Estimate of 1 October, documents captured by the predecessor command, the V Corps, indicated "That the enemy had been ordered to hold the Siegfried Line at all costs." Day-by-day action against the V Corps and the numerous PR statements as to missions of their units indicated "conclusively that, for political reasons if for no other, the enemy will continue to hold the Siegfried Line as long as there is a chance of holding the Allied forces on the Western Front."

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As to the strength of the enemy, this 1 October Estimate believed that a maximum of 30,000 troops were available for immediate commitment against the VIII Corps, including the mobile reserve which could be transported easily. Approximately 22,000 were currently operating in the zone, principally under the following units:

2 SS Panzer Div. 'DAS REICH'	--- 3,900 men
19 Inf. Div.	--- 4,000
36 " "	--- 7,500
5 Para. Div.	--- 500
Attached and Misc. Units.	--- 6,100

Artillery strength was estimated at 14 battalions of artillery, composed of 75mm, 105mm gun how., and 150mm how., several batteries of Smoke Projectors (Nevelwerfer), and several railroad guns of 210mm caliber located on the rail line north of TRIER. Tanks had been seriously depleted in the past month and currently did not constitute a serious threat. An estimate of 40 tanks was made, but the enemy "has shown very little inclination to use them offensively." Reserves consisted of the 48th Infantry Division, 5,000 men, which was thought of as probably a mobile reserve, but whose location was unknown, and the 106th Panzer Grenadier Brigade of 1,500 men and 10 tanks, located north of TRIER.

The quality of both the committed and reserve forces was considered to be low. Committed forces were mostly hastily organized Kampfgruppen, composed of ~~the~~ miscellaneous replacement, security, and service troops, operating under the headquarters of divisions which had been depleted in previous operations. Artillerymen, airmen, convalescents, recent inductees whether very young or very old, and the aged from local home-guards were these troops. Lower quality forces manned the fixed fortifications, which the better quality made the counterattacks. Other than the reserves mentioned above no other known enemy forces were regarded for employment as strategic reserves. The enemy was considered capable of collecting and using more of the low quality forces in prepared fortifications. In fact, according to an unspecified higher headquarters, eight divisions of the 500 series, 527-562, were being formed, as well as four from convalescent and furlough personnel. The Corps thought one of these divisions might appear on its front, if they were evenly distributed along the SIEGFRIED Line. In General, "the reserves available to the enemy in the West and even from other theaters are extremely meager. The forces now opposing the Allied Armies for continued defense of a line 450 miles in length. The only chance that the enemy has of successfully defending the Fatherland is to use all the reserves that can be assembled in the West and to commit them as rapidly as they become available. The frantic mobilization of all available manpower within Germany and the hasty organization of new divisions indicate that further reinforcements of the type recently committed on the Western front are definite possibilities. It will take a little time, however, to get these forces organized into action."

Enemy capabilities were simply stated as follows, with non the three designated as the most or least likely:

"(1) The enemy can make local counterattacks to restore his lost staggered line positions at any time with forces now on his front.

"(2) The enemy can continue an active defense of his present positions with forces now on his front.

"(3) The enemy can reinforce his front line strength with one Inf Div (5,000 men) and one Panzer GR Brigade (1,500 men and 10 tanks) at any time and utilize such reinforcements in making local counterattacks or concentrate his strength for a counterattack on a larger scale anywhere on the Corps front."

CORPS ARTILLERY INTELLIGENCE REPORT #100, 1 OCT.(V,A) --- Enemy artillery capabilities were initially considered under that heading as the following:

"a. Continue to harass front line elements.

"b. Intensify harassing and interdiction fires to interfere with relief of V Corps units.

"c. Fire in support of infantry counterattack to interfere with relief of V Corps.

"d. Fire at extreme ranges."

Under the discussion of these capabilities, "a above is being exercised and will mostly likely continue since the fires of German artillery in the defense are habitually direct on front line troops." The b and c or a combination were considered likely, and regarding d, "it is not likely that deep in fires will be received in any volume since the enemy in this area has not employed long-range interdiction or harassing fires. Such fires are a definite capability, however, during the relief of V Corps and for short time thereafter."

Other October Appraisals.

Inasmuch as the Corps G-2 Estimate #8, 1 October, was the VIII Corps basic intelligence statement about the enemy as of the Corps assumption of its Ardennes sector, subsequent October, November, 1-15 December G-2 appraisals either continued the conclusions expressed in that Estimate or revised them. They were basically continued. Daily G-2 Periodics and irregularly issued Estimates were the media for these future statements of Corps G-2 opinions.

Following the issuance of this Estimate on 1 October, the first daily G-2 Periodic, #108 on 011200A-021200A October, referred to this Estimate for the information about the enemy, including his capabilities. (III,B) Daily periodics for 3-18 October noted no change as to enemy capabilities, and did not add new data, rather, some periodics cited portions of the 1 October Estimate. During this 1-18 October period, two G-2 Estimates were issued, but they did not pertain

to the enemy offensive potentialities. (II, B&C) Estimate #9, COUNTER-OFFENSIVE IN BELGIUM, was issued on 3 October, and #10; COUNTER-OFFENSIVE IN THE GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG, on the 8th.

Estimate #11 was issued on 19 October, but the Corps opinion of the enemy capabilities was unchanged in this Estimate. (II, D) In fact, the phraseology of the 1 October issuance was repeated. This 19 October Estimate, however, considered detailed counterattack possibilities. In contrast to the 30,000 figure of the 1 October Estimate, this of the 19th approximated 35,000 enemy troops along the OUR-MOSELLE River front as "available for counterattacks and for defense of his Siegfried line." Nevertheless, "information of the enemy's activities presently available to G-2 does not indicate that any large scale counterattack is contemplated or even probable on his part, however local counterattacks are a distinct capability and must be expected. ..." The Corps G-2 expressed the view that the current "grouping of enemy forces and his activity on the front (indicated) that there (were) four areas along the OUR-MOSELLE River front where he would most likely make counterattacks. Certainly he would counterattack almost immediately if an attempt were made to dislodge him from his positions in these areas, yet the possibility of local counterattacks or at least a reconnaissance in force must not be overlooked." The four areas were: HANNSCHEID-SCHNEE PIPEL AREA; VIADEN AREA; FORTHEQUACH AREA; GREVENGLACHER AREA. This 19 October Estimate repeated the opinion of the 1 October issuance that the quality of troops were low and had not been improved.

No further G-2 Estimate concerning German potentialities were issued from during 20-31 October, and the ENEMY CAPABILITIES section of the daily G-2 Periodics were noted as no change. (II, B) In fact, the Corps opinion of the enemy capabilities was stated in its 1 October G-2 Estimate, and it was not basically altered throughout the month.

Appraisals During November.

No change was made during the first seven days of November concerning the capabilities as expressed in the daily G-2 Periodics. (II, C) The Periodic of 6 November pointed out that the enemy order of battle had shifted, and the units in contact were the 18th VG Division, the 35th, 91st, 353d and 416th Infantry Divisions, and elements of the 2d Panzer Division. This was an almost complete substitution of forces over those facing the Corps on 1 October.

The enemy's point of view was reviewed in the 8 November G-2 Periodic, which observed in its section on Enemy Capabilities that the enemy had reacted to the V Corps SCHMIDT offensive "with vicious counterattacks and the fighting around SCHMIDT has now become very fierce and stubborn." (Ibid.) Possibly resulting from the V Corps drive, there was increased enemy activity in the 2d Division's sector. In general, the enemy was considered to be implementing Capability #3 of the 1 and 19 October G-2 Estimates that he was reinforcing his front line. Uncertainty existed, however, whether the reinforcements were "new units or merely troops and material to be incorporated into the existing divisional organization..."

No further revised opinions were stated during the remainder of November, 9-30th, and the ~~Summary~~ Periodic's ENEMY CAPABILITY section was marked as no change.

Appraisal 1-15 December.

As of 1 December, according to the G-2 Periodic of that day, the enemy units in contact were the 18th, 26th, 352d, 212th VG Divisions. (IV,A) But, in general, no changes in enemy capabilities were expressed through 8 December.

A G-2 Estimate #12 was issued on 9 December, which analyzed the German operations and potentialities. (II,B) His activity during the previous six weeks had not been offensive. Rather, resistance had been stubborn, with very few patrols penetrating his defenses, and his activity had been limited to patrolling and sporadic artillery and mortar fire. A complete turn-over of his divisions had occurred, with the older divisions being "pulled out for commitment in an active area to plug a gap, and a new Volksgrenadier division replacing it to gain front-line experience. In respect to capabilities, the VIII Corps G-2 believed that the enemy's active defense then in current effect would continue until the VIII Corps went on the offensive. The G-2 observed: "The enemy's present practice of bringing new divisions to receive front line experience and then relieving them out for commitment elsewhere indicated his desire to have this sector of the front remain quiet and inactive." Capability #2 to counterattack to restore positions and #3 to reinforce from reserves "will doubtless never be implemented unless the enemy feels that VIII Corps is preparing to mount an offensive."

Enemy forces facing the VIII Corps were estimated by this 9 December analysis as amounting to 24,000 troops, consisting of the 26th and 212th VG Divisions of 6,000 men each, the 352d Infantry Division of 6,500, and the 18th VG Division of 5,500. They were described as having been refitted and reformed from combat seasoned cadre, young recruits, older men up to 45 years, naval and GAF personnel. "These divisions have received an average of two months intensive training as a unit, and represent a last ditch effort to form divisional units for the defense of the 'Fatherland.'"

Reserves were listed as follows:

2	2 Pz Div.	4,000 men, 50 tanks	MUCHEN-GLADBACH area
116	" "	5,000 " 40 "	KOBLENZ area (E of Rhine)
243	Inf. Div.		WESTPHALIA (could arrive on our front
326	" "		within 72 hours)

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Sixth Pz Army.

1 SS 'LAH	Each---	(6,000 men	REINZLAND vic COLOGNE, backing
2 * 'DAS REICH'		(60 tanks	up inf.
9 * 'HOHENSTAFFEN'		(MKV Assault	
12 * 'HYTLER JUGEND'		(gun bn(?)	
9 Pz Div.			
2 Para Div.			Reforming in HOLLAND
6 * *			"
7 * *			"
5 * *			COLOGNE area

Respecting armor and artillery, the VIII Corps had stated that no enemy division had organic armor nor were there any GHQ tank battalions, but there were eleven artillery battalions.

Terrain was regarded by the Corps as favoring the defense, the OUR and SAUER Rivers constituted the most formidable initial obstacles, the communications net behind the enemy facilitated his shifting of forces to meet an advance, the road net was adequate but maintenance would be heavy. An advancing force would be confined to roads, due to soil, climate and season. There was little opportunity for use of armor.

Enemy capabilities during the remainder of the period, 10-15 December, and beyond those estimated by the G-2 Estimate of 9 December, were unchanged in the Corps evaluation. At least the daily periodics did not reflect any changing opinion. (IV,4) Their Enemy Capability section noted no change, and the divisional units identified continued to be the 18th, 26th, 352d, and 212th WG Divisions. Of interest was the inclusion in the G-2 Periodic for 15 December of a discussion of reserves capable of intervention. A Third U.S. Army G-2 Periodic for the 14th was quoted, to the effect that German reserves of armor and infantry in the Northern sectors of the Western front "continue to be the biggest question mark in enemy dispositions. Indications continue that the enemy is planning an operation that would employ the four divisions of Sixth SS Panzer Army. ..."

Combat Interviews/Arrival.

Enemy capabilities were not discussed by the Corps officers during post-campaign interviews held with them by combat historians. (VII)

III. Security Problems and Measures.

When the VIII Corps relieved the V Corps on 4 October, it assumed a 50 mile line paralleling the OUR River, from approximately LOSHEIM, Belgium (LO397) southward almost to ECHTERNACH Luxembourg on the German frontier. (I, AAB) This sector became a Ninth Army command between the First Army on the north and the Third Army. Within the VIII Corps, the 2d and 8th Infantry Divisions were positioned north to south. "The

mission of the Corps was to relieve the V Corps and take up a defensive position along the line held by the latter unit."

According to the Corps After/Action Report for October, "the extended front ... stretched out the divisions and made the problem of preserving depth and continuity in the defense an extremely difficult one. Only the more commanding ground could be organized with any force, leaving many vacant spots between the organized positions. These were fairly extensive and while they were protected against any major enemy thrust by the divisions' mobile reserves, the front was decidedly open and penetrations by enemy patrols were frequent occurrences throughout the month. ..."(I,B) This document also pointed out that "since the most active area in the sector was in the north and as this area appeared to be most likely section of the Corps front for future offensive operations, the bulk of the Corps Artillery was committed to the north. ..."

Numerically, the Corps forces of two divisions were augmented during October by the addition of two divisions and a cavalry group, but the Corps front was also extended from approximately 50 to 88 miles, with only one of the two acquired divisions assuming a front line position, the other becoming reserve.(I,B) On the 11 the 83d Division, on the Corps south flank, was transferred from the Third Army to the VIII Corps, the sector bringing the remainder of LUXEMBOURG into the Corps sector. The 83d occupied a defensive position behind the SAUER and upper MOSELLE Rivers, and its inclusion in the VIII Corps zone lowered the Corps southern boundary approximately to the southeast corner of the DUCHE OF LUXEMBOURG, at a point where the MOSELLE River crossed the Franco-German border(90095). On the 10th, the 9th Armored Division completed its concentration in the WITTLIBRUCK-MERSEM area, and the 14th Cavalry group with two squadrons closed in the Corps zone. The 9th Armored, however, was newly arrived on the continent, and elements of it were attached to the front line 83d Division to gain battle seasoning under defensive conditions.

Also on the 20th, the 83d Division staged a river crossing demonstration to tempt enemy exposure of his defensive positions, but only a light reaction occurred, consisting of some artillery and mortar concentrations.(Ibid.)

Organizationally, the VIII Corps passed to the First Army on 22 October, due to the Twelfth Army Group's shifting of the Ninth Army from between the First and Third to the north of the First.(Ibid.)

Action was defensive by the Corps during October, with some active patrolling and harassing artillery.(Ibid.) This latter was limited by ammunition allowances of only one to two tenths of a unit of fire per day. Air missions were very few because of overcast skies and low visibility.

November continued defensive in operations, and opened with the Corps divisions disposed North to South, the 2d, the 8th, and the 83d, with the

9th Armored in Corps reserve, and supporting the 83d Division with armored artillery and receiving some combat experience. (I,C) The Corps center was occupied by the 8th Division, which was spread over an extensive width, and this portion of the front was further weakened on 19 November, by the exchange of the 8th and the worn-out 28th Divisions. The latter moved from its fighting for the ROER dams, and needed rehabilitation and reinforcement, which was immediately undertaken. As in October, little aerial reconnaissance was possible, due to low overcast, frequent rain and fog.

As of 1 December, the VIII Corps continued maintaining its extensive line of defense of the First Army's southern zone. (I,D) This zone was between the First Army's northern area which was active during the October and November SIEGFRIED Line drives to capture AACHEN and the ROER River dams and the Third Army which captured METZ during its October-February drive towards the SIEGFRIED Line. Ranging North to South were the 2d, 28th, and 83d Divisions, with the 9th Armored in reserve and receiving battle indoctrination.

Changes in the Corps composition occurred during the first third of December, which, while not reducing the numerical number of divisions, did lower the Corps quality. (I,D) The 4th Division (V Corps) exchanged with the 83d Division on 7 December, moving from its Hurtgen Forest fighting to the VIII Corps for rest and rehabilitation. Then, four days later, the new, inexperienced 106th Division relieved the 28th Division, which, like the 83d, went to the V Corps. A four-kilometer front was given to the 9th Armored Division on 10 December, which had been obtaining front-line experience for a month and a half through attachment of elements to line divisions. However, only the 60th Armored Infantry Battalion and its supporting forces were given the new divisional front.

Thus, as of 11 December the VIII Corps was composed of the 4th, 28th, 106th Infantry Divisions and the 9th Armored, and they were the forces on the Corps line five days later when the Counteroffensive struck. The following tabulation indicates their battle conditions:

4th Div. : Very battle wise; relieved after several weeks of HURTGEN Forest fighting for rest and rehabilitation; in Ardennes position about a week prior to Counteroffensive, 7-15 December.

28th Div. : Battle wise; relieved from ROER River dams fighting for rest and rehabilitation; occupied Ardennes position 3 1/2 weeks, 19 Nov.-15 December.

106th Div. : Initial commitment and inexperienced; occupied Ardennes position five days prior to Counteroffensive, 11-15 December.

9th Arm'd Div: Received battle indoctrination through attachment of elements to line divisions during 7 weeks prior to 10 December; when assigned a divisional sector, only an armored infantry battalion and attachment occupied it from 10 December.

In summary, although battle wise, two of the four divisions were occupying rearward positions for rest and rehabilitation, during one and 3 1/2 weeks respectively; the other two divisions receiving their battle experience on this defensive, quiet front, on for only five days, the other through seven weeks of attachment of elements to line divisions. None of the four divisions was both battle experienced and in fighting condition when the Germans launched their 16 December offensive. (I, Ltr. 1, p. 1)

Corps operations during the last several days preceding the 16th of December indicated the lack of emergency protective measures which would be presumably taken if the Corps expected the large-scale enemy offensive. The VIII Corps G-3 daily periodic from 10 December, without exception, reported the operation thus: "Maintained defense of zone." (VI)

A singular security measure was taken by the VIII Corps, upon First Army orders, during the first half of December. (VIII) This was deception operation KOELENZ, designed by the Twelfth Army Group to tie down enemy divisions on the VIII Corps front and to attract enemy forces from the stubbornly held DUREN area. A build-up of forces was represented in the area north of LUXEMBOURG for a threatening attack north of the MOSELLE River toward KOELENZ. The name of the 75th Infantry Division was used, since it had not been committed, and the 12th Army Group made available the 23d Special Troops to simulate concentration of the division by occupation of command posts and billets, display of shoulder patches and truck markings, and by troop movements. Radio and telephonic traffic was also employed. The VIII Corps Artillery established another fire direction center, and conducted registration fire from new positions. The operation was faded out near the middle of the month, because the 75th Division was to be committed in the north, and instructions were issued to repeat the program with another mock division.

A commentary on this security action was provided Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton, the Commanding General of the VIII Corps, during a Combat Interview during January 1945. (VII, D) "General Middleton said he never had a word of 'rubber duck' operations, and that knowing the strength of what was on his immediate front, he was less than usually enthusiastic about this particular operation."

IV. Corps Interpretation of Enemy Activity.

When the VIII Corps moved to the Ardennes area in late September, it issued a G-2 Estimate on 1 October, which stated in its lead sentence: "The Siegfried Line on the front and flanks of the area to be occupied by the VIII Corps is being strongly defended by the enemy." (II, A) "The doctrine for its defense states that in case of a breach of the forward lines mobile troops located in suitable rear areas will immediately counterattack to restore the position." (Ibid.) Furthermore, "Documents captured by V Corps indicate that the enemy has been ordered to hold the

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Siegfried Line at all costs. The action of enemy forces against the V Corps from day-to-day and numerous statements of prisoners of war as to the mission of their units indicates conclusively that, for political reasons if for no other, the enemy will continue to hold the Siegfried Line as long as there is a chance of holding the Allied forces on the Western front." In view of the doctrine of defense, "it follows that the enemy will continue to counterattack and maintain an active defense at any threatened point so long as he retains his intention of defending this line."

Enemy activity was, therefore, a very serious consideration to the VIII Corps when it assumed responsibility for its Ardennes zone on 4 October.

On 19 October, the VIII Corps issued another G-2 Estimate whose first sentence explained: "For the past 30 days, activity on the front now occupied by the VIII Corps has been extremely light and there has been very little change in lines occupied by the opposing forces. ... Any advances made in limited strength has met with an immediate counter-attack, showing the disposition on the part of the German to stabilize the line on its present position. He has utilized this time to his advantage to strengthen certain parts of the Siegfried Line, to throw up temporary fortifications, seal off those areas through which our forces have penetrated and to regroup and reorganize his forces opposing us. While he has gained something by this, he still has not been able to raise the quality of troops on our front which remain still miscellaneous units consisting of artillerymen, airmen and other branches employed as infantry - convalescents with previous battle experience, recent inductees either very young or very old, and aged from the local home guard. As long as fortifications are occupied, such low quality troops can perform with a fair degree of success their mission to hold the Siegfried Line. Once the lines are penetrated and maneuver begun, the lack of training, physical stamina, shortage of equipment, materiel and vehicles can be especially exploited. The recent proclamation of Hitler's, drafting every man from 16 to 60 into the home guard and placing this under the SS Leader Himmler, and not the Army, indicates the shortage of manpower in the Reich, and the extremity to which the proud German Wehrmacht has arrived." (II, D)

This G-2 Estimate of 19 October remarked that "the enemy has shown very little inclination to commit his tanks in this area." Thirty tanks were believed by the Corps as available for commitment.

Actual enemy action during October was described the Corps After/Action Report for that month as "defensive and confined to sporadic artillery and mortar fire, minor raids and an occasional ambush." (I, B) Artillery or mortar concentrations were immediately fired upon Corps troop movements and daytime activities, indicating alertness. Although deep probes were a common occurrence, there was only one visible enemy counterattack, 1 1/2 companies, on 7 October, and which was readily repulsed. The German air activity was negligible.

Enemy activity continued to be defensive during November, according to the Corps After/Action Report for the month. (I, C) There were

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occasional patrols, sporadic artillery and mortar fire. Inasmuch as the Corps observed considerable shifting of divisions, it believed the enemy was utilizing the sector to break in new units. Six German divisions were identified as of 1 November, but those found facing the Corps by the month's close were four different ones, the 18th, 26th, 212th, 352 VG Divisions.

Part of this movement of troops was apparently thought to have some connection with the V Corps SCHMIDT offensive on the north, and the G-2 Periodic for 3 November discussed this point in its section on ENEMY CAPABILITIES. (III, C) It observed: "As a result of the offensive by the V Corps on our north flank the enemy has reacted with vicious counter-attacks and the fighting around SCHMIDT has now become very fierce and stubborn." He was also reinforcing, but, as of that date, whether these reinforcements were new units or merely troops and material to be incorporated into existing divisional organization had not been established.

Defense continued to be the enemy's activity during the first half of December, according to the VIII Corps opinions. Daily G-2 Periodics 1-8 December reported defensive, inactive operation, except for a few patrols and light, scattered, harassing MG, artillery, and mortar fire. (L-540(30)) The enemy's inaction was described by the Corps G-2 Estimate #12, 9 December which summarized: "For the last six weeks, enemy activity on the VIII Corps front has been limited to patrolling and sporadic artillery and mortar fire. There has been no offensive action on the part of the enemy, although he has sent out patrols occasionally in an effort to penetrate our lines and secure information of the dispositions of our forces. He has stubbornly resisted our efforts to penetrate his defenses, and very few of our patrols have been able to get inside his lines. There has been a steady turn-over of enemy divisional units on VIII Corps front - the older divisions being pulled out for commitment in an active area to plug a gap, and a new Volksgrenadier division replacing it in order to gain front line experience." (II, E) This Estimate of 9 December stated there were no reports of contact with enemy tanks, and none of his divisions had organic armor. Eleven battalions of artillery had been committed on the Corps front.

This G-2 Estimate of 9 December summarized the enemy activity as having been defensive and inactive during the several previous weeks. German operations continued to be of that type from 9 December through the 15th. Daily G-2 Periodics described the enemy as being defensive, quiet and limited to some patrolling and usual light, scattered harassing small arms, mortar, and artillery fires. (IV, A) Beginning with the evening of 13 December, considerable motor traffic was heard daily, including on the 15th, but no interpretative comment was offered on this phenomenon. Enemy artillery on 15 December did not suggest attack preparations, judging by the Corps Artillery Intelligence Report, 142400A-152400A December, which described the enemy as continuing "his light scattered shelling in the central and northern part of the Corps Zone. All shellings were reported as harassing in nature. ..." (V, B, Msg. #30, 16 Dec.)

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V. Significant Evidence of German Offensive Intentions.

PREFACE.

As noted on the divisional level, three of the four VIII Corps divisions, which were assaulted on 16 December, acquired certain data during the approximate 12-15 December period, which, on their face value might appear indicative of enemy of enemy plans. Irrespective of their worth, THESE DATA CONSTITUTED THE GROUNDS ON THE DIVISIONAL LEVEL FOR ANY EXPECTATION OF A MAJOR ENEMY ATTACK. No Division, however, claimed that it possessed evidence of an impending counteroffensive.

The seeming evidential data acquired by the 4th, 28th and 106th Divisions consisted of the following:

- (1) An acceleration of enemy vehicular traffic during approximately 12-15 December;
- (2) A Luxembourg woman's description of the German build-up;
- (3) Statements by four PW's that they had heard rumors or had been informed that a major attack was to be launched between approximately 16-25 December.

For convenience of discussion, these three types of information are divided into seven data--seven instances as it were, based upon sources, although in most cases similar data was provided by multiple sources. For instance, two data were that observed by the 28th and 106th Divisions dealing with observations of increasing enemy activity. A third data was that furnished by the civilian woman who fled from the Germans and voluntarily gave herself up to the 28th Division's CIO on 14 December. The other four data comprised that of the four PW's captured by the 106th and 4th Divisions. Two wounded PW's from the 18th VC Division were taken on 15 December by the 422d Infantry and the 331st Medical Battalion of the 106th Division. The other two PW's were deserters from the 1st Co., 44th Easting MG Battalion, taken by the 8th Infantry, 4th Division, 15/16 December.

An examination of both divisional and VIII Corps documents resulted in the discovery that the Corps records possessed fuller details about these data. They contained some pertinent divisional explanations not included among the records of the respective division. The following discussion will, therefore, embrace both divisional and Corps versions.

In passing, may it be noted that this in fact is an example of the incompleteness of official records of individual commands. For instance, if a division sent a message to Corps, an important one, it might be found only in the Corps records, not the division's.

CONCLUSION.

An analysis of the data on an objective basis as possible yields the conclusion that (1) singly or collectively, these seven data

did not provide the requisite, detailed information upon which an American intelligence officer of a division could reasonably predict a major enemy counterblow. He would need other substantive, supporting information. Regardless of the data's completeness and value, (2) the divisions were deficient in their transmission of the data, whereas the VIII Corps promptly forwarded the messenger data it received. Only four of the seven data were sent to the Corps by the divisions; whereas, the Corps at least reported all four data in such distributable media as daily G-2 Periodics.

SUMMARY.

In view of the dominating fact that these seven data constituted the basic evidence of an approaching German major offensive, these seven data need scrutiny as to (1) reliability of sources, (2) scope and nature of the actual information, (3) whether or not both the divisions and the Corps forwarded their acquired data for the information and evaluation of higher commands.

(1) Reliability:

The 28th Division considered its woman informer "fairly reliable," although she was nervous due to a mine explosion. Observations of accelerated enemy traffic by the 28th and 106th Divisions were made and reported officially by their units. Reliability of the two 106th Division PW's was highly questionable, due to their wounded condition, and because their information was founded upon indefinite hearsay and rumor. Testimony of the 4th Division's two deserter PW's was derived from pep-talks, not direct orders.

Traffic observations by 28th and 106th Divisions. --- These observations by sight or hearing were made by divisional units.

28th Division's woman informer. --- She was considered "fairly reliable" by the Division, judging by the few checks made on the first day of her custody, but she was highly nervous from a detonated mine, although uninjured.

106th Division's two PW's. --- Their reliability was questionable, due to the PW's mental control, and the ambiguity of their information sources. Inasmuch as both PW's were wounded, surely their physical condition impaired their mental control. This was true at least of the 422d Infantry's PW, who had lost the most of his right leg, and being under morphine was "very incoherent," according to a late divisional report to the Corps, but unmentioned in the preliminary report to the Corps. Being held by a medical battalion, the other PW's mental control was probably not normal either. Neither PW provided definite information about precise details obtained from official orders. Although the 422's PW said he had been informed that the 18th VG Division was being pulled back for attack briefing, he had only belief, not certainty, that he belonged to this unit. Rumor was the source of the other PW's data.

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4th Division's two PW's. --- No opinion of the reliability of these two deserters was expressed by the 4th. Their testimony was based upon an orientation talk, which was more in the nature of a pep-talk, an exhortation by battalion officers. By the PW's own admission, they did not believe the appeal, in view of previous unfulfilled promises that reinforcements would be provided.

(2) Scope of Data:

The actual information was quite meager for intelligence evaluation and planning purposes. Three data described traffic and equipment movements, but the instances were isolated and separated geographically, with only a few vehicles involved anyway, and demonstrating no coordination, and above all, no recognizable pattern of enemy action. Four data consisted of PW claims of an impending offensive, but which were derived from hearsay and rumor, and completely unsubstantiated by the capture of official orders or plans providing precise details. Neither divisional nor Corps versions of the seven data intimated that the information was considered significant, prophetic, and attack symptoms.

Traffic observations by 28th & 106 Divisions. --- Beginning approximately on 12 December these two divisions noted increasing vehicular traffic in their sectors, especially at night. No importance was attached to it at the time by the 106th Division, however, and the 28th Division considered the action normal relief of a division.

28th Division's woman informer. --- She did not mention attack possibilities. Although she described troop and river-crossing equipment movements in the general vicinity, the Division stated that "nothing of military significance" was observed on her main route, a foot path from VIANDEN to BITBURG.

When the 28th's records were examined, the only source of information concerning the nature of her data was the post-campaign Combat Interview with divisional officers by an official combat historian (Lt. R.G. Jackson), who mentioned that the woods towards BITBURG were full of German equipment. On that basis, the woman's testimony appeared significant. However, the Corps records possessed the 28th's own message to the Corps G-2 at 2320 on 14 December, the day of her surrender, which stated: "Part of her return trip was along foot paths and nothing of military significance was observed." This return trip was the route to which the combat historian referred. Nevertheless, this woman described considerable troop and river-crossing equipment movements in the VIANDEN to BITBURG area during the several previous days, which impressed the Division G-2, judging by the specific questions he stipulated for the interrogation. She did not mention an impending attack, nor did the Division seem to consider the possibility as the result of her descriptions of enemy build-up.

106th Division's two PW's. --- One of the wounded PW's was uncertain of his unit's designation, but understood that he was to be pulled out and briefed for a 17-25 December attack, and the other PW heard a rumor of an impending major attack.

The 422d Infantry's PW, the very seriously injured one, believed he belonged to the 18th VG Division, but was uncertain, and had arrived on the front on 13 December. He had been informed (source not stated) that the 18th VG Division was being pulled out for briefing and attack 17-25 December. According to the 333d Medical Battalion's PW, he had heard a rumor of a large-scale attack to be launched between 17-25 December, definitely before Christmas. His unit had relieved another company, and had been told it would be on the line only four or five days then pulled back.

The references to prospective attacks between 17-25 December were the salient and virtually sole information provided by these two PW's, but no details were given, as aid to the American intelligence officers' evaluation of the enemy's intentions.

4th Division's two PW's -- Attack evidence was limited to an orientation talk by battalion officers, which was an exhortation, not an explanation of assignment.

These two deserters described a sort of pep-talk by battalion (Festung Bn.) officers who stated that a Panzer and two Infantry divisions were in the rear to execute an offensive of major proportions. The front line troops were warned to hold out until these forces arrived. Reaction of the troops was a shoulder shrug and the thought that unkept promises concerning reinforcements had been made before. Their battalion (Festung) relieved an unknown unit of regimental strength, whose mission was not definitely known. One PW thought this unit was sent to the rear for training, the other to a more active front, already well equipped.

(3) Forwarding of Data:

For proper evaluation purposes, a practical distinction needs to be drawn between the essential character of the seven data, which fall into two groups. Non-personal data, such as the 28th and 106th Divisions' official, organizational observations of an acceleration of enemy vehicular traffic, would be expected to be naturally reported in official descriptive issuances such as daily G-2 Periodics. On the other hand, personal data acquired from individuals through a surrender, capture, etc., as represented by the 28th's woman informer and the 4th and 106th Divisions' four PW's, could logically be expected to be reported not only by prescribed issuances, but by informal messages and telephone phone, as expeditious media of notification. If a PW or informer gave important information, a command would be expected to forward it promptly to its superior for information and evaluation. In this respect, this personal category of data was, therefore, highly pertinent, and, of the seven data instances five were of this type. A statistical survey of both groups informs that the divisions were very deficient in forwarding the personal data type, where the VIII Corps met its responsibility; and, both divisions and the Corps forwarded their non-personal data.

Personal Type: --- Of the five personalized data from the civilian woman and the four PW's, the three divisions---28th, 106th and 4th respectively, forwarded the data to the VIII Corps in only two instances. In both cases, the forwarding medium was by message. None of the five instances was reported in the daily G-2 Periodics of the three divisions. The VIII Corps, in contrast, promptly reported the two cases in its G-2 Periodic for the day, but no Corps message to First Army was located. Furthermore, in the case of the woman's information, the Corps reported it immediately in two other documents, in the distributed daily Intelligence Summary and in the G-2's informal, typed daily review, titled SUPMAY.

Non-personal Type: --- Both the 28th and the 106th Divisions properly reported their observation of increasing vehicular traffic in their daily G-2 Periodics. In fact, the descriptions were sometimes detailed. Similarly, the VIII Corps recorded these divisional data in its own G-2 Periodic, which were doubtless distributed to higher commands for information.

28th Division's woman informer. --- Her data was reported to the Corps by message an hour after the Division G-2 himself was notified, and the Corps was seemingly kept well informed about the progress of her case.

Information did not indicate when she was captured on 14 December, but at least as of 2220 the Division G-2 knew about her, inasmuch as he discussed her case with the C/S. Then, apparently the first notice the VIII Corps G-2 required of her was a detailed preliminary report messaged by the Division G-2 an hour later, at 2320. Calls were exchanged the next day, the 15th, and at 1305 the Corps G-2 commanded that she not be released except on his order, which was given at 2225A when the Division requested permission to send her to the First Army cage for further interrogation. Although the 28th Division did not report her in its G-2 Periodic for 14 December, the Corps did in its own periodic and in its Intelligence Summary, 141800A-182400A December, as well. Furthermore, the Corps G-2 included a five-line resume of her information in his informal typed daily review, SUPMAY, 140900A-150000A December.

106th Division's two PW's. --- Significantly, this Division reported only one of its two PW's, but was prompt in that instance, having notified the Corps by message 36 minutes after the Division G-2 learned of the case. The information from the 422d Infantry's PW was forwarded to the Corps at 2006 on 15 December, 36 minutes after the Division's receipt of initial data from the regiment. The Division's G-2 Periodic for the day did not report the incident, but the Corps Periodic did record it in a paragraph summary. No evidence was located that the data of the 331st Medical Battalion's PW was forwarded to the Corps, in either message form or in the Division's G-2 Periodic for the day.

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4th Division's two PW's. --- The data described by the reporters taken at 1830 on 15 December was not transmitted to the VIII Corps, by either message or the Division's G-2 Periodic for the day. In fact, although the evidence was not conclusive, apparently the Division G-2 did not learn himself of the PW's claim of an impending attack until his receipt of the regimental interrogation team's report about midnight. Of course, the Corps intelligence issuance carried no report.

ANALYSIS BY SUBJECTS

The foregoing discussion of the Significant Evidence of German Offensive Intentions was less of a recapitulation than a consideration of the overall aspects of this evidence, such as reliability, scope, and whether forwarded or not. At the risk of repetition, the following section deals with this evidence according to its subject matter: Observation of Traffic by 28th and 106th Divisions; Civilian Information; PW Information Obtained by the 106th and 4th Divisions. This section has the merit of descriptively coordinating the various data pertaining to each individual evidence, and providing citations to the DOCUMENTATION. It draws together the several bits of information on these subjects that are dispersed in the DOCUMENTATION. Chronological details will be found in this section, which encompasses both divisional and Corps documents in the interest of completeness.

Observation of Traffic by 28th and 106th Divisions. --- Beginning approximately on 12 December, two VIII Corps divisions noted an acceleration of enemy vehicular activity, particularly during darkness, within their sectors, as noted on the divisional level. No significance was attached to this enemy effort, although the two divisions were impressed by it. It was reported only on their daily G-2 Periodics. Neither divisional nor Corps records contained messages sent to the Corps calling attention to this activity. The VIII Corps cognizance of this enemy effort was reflected only in its daily G-2 Periodics, which mentioned the occurrences on the Corps front. Only the fact of occurrence was reported, without interpretative commentary by the Corps.

One of the two divisions was the 106th, which reported in each daily G-2 Periodic, 12-15 December, and in its retrospective After/Action Report for December and post campaign Combat Interviews with ranking officers, that unusual motor activity was heard, particularly during darkness. (Div. Level, p. 28, 113-114) Although the observed activity was described in the current G-2 Periodics, they did not express opinions as to the meaning of the activity, if any. The only estimates of significance were made later by officers in Combat Interviews, who expressed the recollection that the vehicular movements were not regarded as important at the time.

The 28th Division was also aware of increasing enemy activity, especially vehicular, during December, but mainly during the last few days prior to 16 December. (Div. Level, p. 28, 147-148) Detailed descriptions were

reported in the daily G-2 Periodics, about hearing or seeing various numbers of vehicles containing troops and/or equipment, moving in specified directions. No extraordinary significance was attached to this activity. Perhaps the opinions of the CO and the S-3, 112th Infantry, as expressed in a Combat Interview during January 1945 were representative of the attitude. They considered this traffic normal for relief of divisions, according to the precedent instance of three weeks previously, which demonstrated similar characteristics.

Similar to the 106th and 28th Divisions, the VIII Corps mentioned, in less detail however, the various vehicular movements in its daily G-2 Periodics. (IV, A) Neither the divisions nor the Corps referred to the motor movements in their periodics as being increased. They were simply noted as facts. The interpretative element of being described as accelerating, was performed by the After/Action Reports and Combat Interviews of the two divisions, whereas, no commentary of any form was ventured by the Corps.

Civilian Information. --- Information about the enemy from civilian sources, as obtained by the divisions, consisted of the data supplied by a woman taken into custody by the 28th Division on 14 December. (Div. Level, p. 161-163; V, B: IV, A) A report was made to the Corps, and her statements were of distinct interest to both the 28th Division and Corps' G-2's, but the records of the two commands differed as to circumstances of her being taken into custody, and, more importantly, as to her information.

The following chronology traces the divisional and Corps events respect this woman and her information:

(1) Official divisional records did not indicate when and how the woman fell into the 28th's custody. But, a post-campaign manuscript describing the 28th's operation in the Counteroffensive, by an official combat historian (Lt. H.G. Jackson), based substantially upon Combat Interviews with participating officers, was stated: "On 14 December, a woman who had been captured by the Germans and later escaped, turned herself in to the GIC. She said she had been taken as far back as BITBURG and that the woods were full of German equipment."

(2) Divisional records recorded that at 2220 the Division G-2 called the C/S about a woman's interrogation.

(3) Then, apparently the G-2 notified the Corps G-2 about her, at 2320, an hour later, inasmuch as the Corps records contain the message sent by the 28th to the Corps G-2. Because of its detail of description beyond the combat historian's statement, in fact a contradiction of it, this message is cited:

"The woman following is a preliminary interrogation of a Luxembourg woman who had been interrogated by the 28th Inf. Div.

"The woman reports that she had been given permission to

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BIEBELS P9052 where her home is to pick up clothes on December 10th. However, while there a German ren patrol took her into custody. She was first taken to BAULER P9053 and given a preliminary interrogation. She was then taken to GEICHLINGEN P9451. Between these two points she observed no traffic. However, at Geichlingen she observed many trucks and horse-drawn vehicles, pontoons, and small boats and other river-crossing materiel. In addition she observed many arty pieces, some of which were horse-drawn and other truckdrawn. She was again interrogated at Bitburg and while in this town she observed many troops in light gray uniform with black collars (SS Troops). In Bitburg she heard from conversations of troops that it had taken them 3 weeks to get here from Italy. She observed heavy military traffic moving toward Bettingen P9450 and Oberweis 10552. She reports having seen no armor during this trip. She was told that she was to proceed to TRIER by train, 2 of which left Bitburg daily, one in the morning and one at 2000A. She escaped at Bitburg, proceeding back toward our lines via Oberweis 10552 10552, Muxerath P9555 to Berscheid and thence to Bauler P9053. Women then went to Vianden where she was picked up taken across the river. Part of her return trip was along foot paths and nothing of military significance was observed.

"28th Div considers the informant fairly reliable from what few checks they have so far been able to make. Woman's condition is highly nervous having stepped on a trip wire which detonated mine. However, she was not injured. Further check and interrogation is continuing and complete report will be submitted as early as possible."

(4) The 28th Division did not mention this woman's surrender nor her information in its G-2 Periodic for 14 December, but the VIII Corps summarized her data in approximately ten lines in its G-2 Periodic of that day. Moreover, the Corps Intelligence Summary, 141800A-142400A December, carried a five-line summary. Both documents presumably procured their information from the 28th Division's message of 2320 hours.

(5) Another records was kept of this incident by the Corps G-2, in his informal, typed daily review, titled SUMMARY, for the period of 140800A to 150800A December. This was a five-line resume of the woman's information.

(6) The Division's interest in the woman increased during the next day, as did the Corps. At 1045, an officer, probably of the interrogation team, called the Division G-2 that he had further information. The G-2, however, gave the Lieutenant nine questions to ask the woman about what she saw, types of boats and equipment, etc. At 1450, the Lieutenant called the G-2 that he had a complete report and would deliver it shortly. (The answers to the G-2's questions were not contained among the Division's records.) In the meantime, almost two hours previously, at 1350, the VIII Corps G-2 had called the Division G-2 "and inquired about the woman that crossed our lines the other day." He required a thorough investigation of her reliability, of ered Corps aid, and ordered that she not be released except on his order and to inform him of the investigation's progress. The Division G-2 called the Corps G-2 at 2225A, stating that the woman was considered reliable, but requested permission to send her

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to the Army for further interrogation, which was granted. The next morning, 160300, a CIC officer was given the Division's permission to take her to the First Army's cage.

EE Information Obtained by the 106th Division: --> Records of this Division noted the capture of two wounded PW's from the 18th VC Division on 15 December, who referred to a possible German offensive between 17-25 December (Div. Log, p. 111-113). In the case of one PW, his information was forwarded to the VIII Corps 36 minutes after the Division learned of the data, but there was no evidence that the other PW's data was sent to Corps.

One PW was captured by the 422d Infantry. An account of his capture was dependent upon the divisional records and post-campaign Combat Interviews, inasmuch as the regimental documents were destroyed or captured when the 422d Infantry itself was captured on 19 December. E Co. of the 2d Battalion fired upon a German patrol, and picked up a Pole wounded in the foot. He had arrived on the front on the afternoon of the 14th, relieving an unknown unit, which was to be pulled out and briefed for an attack along the entire front between 17th and Christmas. The PW did not know if the front was to be regimental, division, or G. He had heard rumors that SS troops would participate, but did not know their location. Searchlights were to be used.

The information from this PW was received by the Division at 1930, and message to the VIII Corps 36 minutes later, at 2006. No report on this PW was included in the 106th's G-2 Periodic for the 15th or the 16th, which were distributed to the Corps.

The wounded PW held by the 331st 331st Medical Battalion was also from the 18th VC Division, and was captured sometime on the 15th. He related that he had heard a rumor of a large-scale attack to be launched between 17-25 December, and definitely before Christmas. He was an infantryman, and went on the line when another German company moved out, but had been told he would be on the line only four or five days then pulled back. This PW report was made by the S-2, 331st Medical Battalion, and entered in the Division G-2 Journal 152200 December. No mention was made of it in either the G-2 Periodic for the day or the 16th, or in other pertinent records. Nor was there indication that the Corps was informed of this interrogation.

As noted above, the Corps was notified about only the 422d Infantry's PW, not about that of the 331st Medical Battalion. Data about the former PW was reported in the Corps G-2 Periodic for 15 December, in a paragraph as vary. (IV,A) Inasmuch as the 106th did not report the PW in its G-2 Periodic for the day, which would be distributed to Corps, the source of the Corps initial information was apparently the 106th's message of 2006. Further details were obtained by the 106th that night, than which were reported to the Corps by message the next morning, the 16th, at approximately 0700 (V,B). The precise time of this message's receipt was undeterminable in the Corps records, and was not mentioned in the divisional ones.

According to this new information, the PW was Polish, a deserter, was seriously ~~injured~~ injured in a German minefield. He was uncertain of his unit, but believed he belonged to the 18th VG Division, and had arrived at the front on 13 December. He was informed that the 18th VG Division was being pulled out to be briefed and prepared for an attack between 17-25 December. This message included other data corresponding to that already reported. The 106th added: "Evaluation: PW's condition very serious having lost most of his right leg and being under the influence of morphine was very incoherent."

Supplementing the Corps 15 December G-2 Periodic's six-line paragraph description of this PW's information, the Corps Consolidated Interrogation Report of 16 December, annexed to the G-2 Periodic of that day, carried the details of his information. (IV, C)

PW information Obtained by the 4th Division --- Two deserters from the 1st Co., 44th Panzer MG Battalion were taken by the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry at 1830 on 15 December. (Div. Log, p. 182, 189, 204) Among other data about their organization, these two PW's described an orientation talk two days previously during which was stated that a Panzer and two Infantry divisions were in the rear, and would execute an offensive of major proportions. The front line troops were warned to hold out until these forces arrived. The troops reaction, however, was a shoulder shrug and the thought that unkept promises had been made before. Their battalion relieved an unknown unit of regimental strength. One PW believed the old unit had no training and was being sent to the rear for training, the other PW thought this unit was well equipped and therefore sent to a more active front.

The 4th Division's G-2's knowledge of this information was not obtained until about midnight of the 15th, and there was no evidence that it was reported to the Corps. (Ibid.) A preliminary report that the capture had occurred at 1830 was made by the 8th Infantry to the Division G-2 at 2135, indicating also that the 8th did not yet have information from them. Then, information about their organization obtained from the two PW's was summarized in a message to the G-2 at 2300 from the regiment, but no mention was made about the impending attack claim. A report ~~xxxxxx~~ upon this claim was not available to the Division until its probably midnight receipt of the distributed 8th Infantry's IPW Team #34's Report for 151800-152400 December.

Divisional records did not provide evidence that these PW's information was forwarded to the VIII Corps by message, nor were their capture and/or data mentioned in the 4th Division's G-2 Periodics for 15, 16, 17 December, which the Corps doubtless received. The Corps G-2 was aware of the capture, nevertheless, but his information was apparently limited, and did not include the PW's mention of a possible, planned attack. Inasmuch as the details about the PW's was contained in the 8th Infantry IPW Team #34's Report, perhaps the Corps procured its information from that source. The Corps was not listed for distribution, only the Battalion, 29th PA Bn., S-2, S-1, and the Division. However the information was

acquired, the Corps G-2 Periodic #181, 142400A-152400A, took notice of the capture incident in its Max Identifications listing under Units in Contact: "PW from 1st Co., 44th Festung KG Bn relieved a unit of regt size in this sector one week ago. (Comment: If true, regt involved would be the 220th Inf Regt, 212th VG Div.)" (IV,A)

VI. Corps Concern Over Lack of PW Information.

According to the VIII Corps Consolidated Interrogation Reports attached to daily G-2 Periodics, 38 individuals were interrogated within the Corps zone during 1-15 December, excluding 11 taken on 14-15 December who obviously lacked attack information, inasmuch as they were attempting a return to Germany from the distant METZ forts. (L-54(30)) Of these 31, at least 20 were designated as deserters. In contrast, the divisions reported among their records the custody of 32 PW's, some of whom were deserters. (Div. Level, p.5) Some of the Corps reported PW's were doubtless apprehended by Corps troops.

The above statistics were compiled with the care permitted by the inadequacy of PW descriptions, but exactitude was unlikely. An error was probably an overcount, caused by the train among interrogation reports to discuss the same PW on different days, and in some cases may have been counted twice. Neither divisional nor Corps records provided compilations, and statistics were necessarily deduced, as carefully as possible.

According to a Combat Interview with the Corps G-2 during January 1945, the lack of PW's and the failure of patrols to take them had been a worry to the Corps. (VII,A) Raids were ordered by the Corps, and the 26th Division was verbally ordered to conduct a reconnaissance raid in force. The Corps G-2 said he went to that Division and discussed the subject with its Commanding General. He remarked that the raid was practiced several times, but never "pulled off." Perhaps not to the Corps G-2's knowledge, the raid was executed. Only one PW was captured, the event of which was noted in the G-2 Periodics of 4 December of both the 26th Division and VIII Corps. Neither command, however, associated this PW with the raid in their respective issuances. The manner of the Corps acquisition of information about the PW was not evident from the records.

Briefly, the chain of events concerning this raid were the following. (L-540(30); Div. Level, p. 153,166-167) The 26th's CG was concerned over the lack of PW information, but the inspiration for his remedy was not clear. He was concerned during early December, and patrols were increased until a company size one (Co. A, 109th Infantry) was sent over the GUR River on 3 December, returning at 1400 the next with only one PW, from the 6th Co., 915th VGR, 352d VG Division. He confirmed that his regiment had relieved the 916th Regiment on the east side of the GUR.

The 28th's G-2 Periodic for the 4th mentioned his capture and information, but the Corps periodic for the 4th mentioned his capture only. Then, the Corps Consolidated Interrogation Report, annexed to the periodic of 6 December, provided a detailed account of his information, concluding with this sentence: "PW claims the troops were told that when the snow falls and the cold winds set the German will launch a big offensive on the Eastern Front, and the American troops cannot stand a severe climate."

A less concerned attitude towards PW's was expressed by Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton, CG of the Corps, during a Combat Interview on 19 January 1945. (VII,D) Because of this differing view from that of the G-2 also expressed during a combat interview during the same month, note is taken of the interview's circumstances for any bearing they might have upon accuracy. According to the combat historian (Capt. L.B. Clark), no notes were taken during the interview, but were immediately after the 40 minute conversation. The General was "extremely friendly and unprejudiced."

"Gen. Middleton said that every day up to the time the Germans attacked, the Corps got at least one prisoner from its front. But he said that patrols from the divisions ~~would~~ couldn't be expected to get deep on enemy strength back around BITBURG. He said that at all times they knew all the enemy divisions in contact, but the Germans knew as much about our shifts since they were just as active and had patrols in our lines every night. They knew we were using the area, the VIII Corps front, as a rest and rehabilitation area."

N.B.-- Regarding the General's claim about identification of enemy divisions, please note that the Corps had identified only four of the ten assaulting divisions prior to the 16 December, as discussed in the section in this Critique titled: Initial Recognition of the Assault's Gravity. His analysis of the enemy's strength did not conform to the facts. He made a further illuminating remark during an interview with Captain Clark on another occasion, on 20 April 1945, when the Capt. in went to see him about other subjects but the conversation informally passed to various topics, including this: "Gen. Middleton said he could very much like to talk to some German officers to see what the corps really was hit by. He doesn't believe it was anything like the 14 or 16 divisions that were identified in the first two days. Four or five divisions would have been enough to do what they did against two worn-out and one brand-new divisions (plus a little armor), holding a 85-mile front." (VII,C)

VII. Air Reconnaissance by the Corps.

Among the five VIII Corps divisions discussed on the division level (Div. Level, p. 7), the 28th Division referred to air reconnaissance by armor can force, and it noted that weather prevented patrols for the most part, and when planes did fly, they observed little enemy activity, none of it suggestive of a large attack.

According to the VIII Corps daily G-2 Periodics this was the case. (IV, F) Bad weather reduced air reconnaissance to negligible. No tactical recon photo reconnaissance were flown on 10 of the days during the 1-15 December period, due to weather. Even on the other days all missions were cancelled except the following few: 3 December--1000 hours Tac/R mission; 4th--the first two Tac/R missions; 8th--1400 hour mission; 10th--one Corps and one artillery reconnaissance recalled due to weather; 14th--only one Tac/R mission; 15th--two Tac/R missions were abortive due to weather. The observed activity was minor, consisting of movements of two trains and of a few motor vehicles, locations of some field fortifications, and on the 14th considerable rail activity and some false positions in the TAIR area.

VIII Commanding General's Pre-Counteroffensive Evaluation.

Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton, the VIII Corps Commanding General preceding and during the Battle of the Ardennes, expressed post-campaign opinions upon the Corps and the enemy's pre-Counteroffensive potentialities to the Historical Section, European Theater of Operations. (VII, B, C, D) In response to a series of questions submitted by the Theater Historian, Col. S. L. A. Marshall, concerning the Corps participation in the Ardennes fighting, General Middleton answered them in a five-page letter on 30 July 1945. Most of the questions and answers dealt with the operations subsequent to the initial assault on 16 December. Two questions, however, pertained to the pre-Counteroffensive period, and, inasmuch as they were self-explanatory, they are cited verbatim. The General made various observations during two Combat Interviews held with him on 13 January 1945 and 29 April by Capt. L. B. Clark of the 3d Infantry Division Historical Service, which was attached to the Third U.S. Army, but directed by the Theater Historian. These remarks ~~xxxx~~ likewise extracted and cited verbatim.

A. Questions by Theater Historian, and Answers by General Middleton:

"Q. During the ten weeks of inactivity on the VIII Corps front before 16 December were any steps taken to prepare reserve defence positions? Was permission sought from First U.S. Army to withdraw to a stronger defence line in the event of a heavy attack?

"A. Sufficient troops were not available to organize a strong defense. Troops available were, in fact, hardly more than enough for an outpost. We had, in fact, a deployed defense covering key approaches. The outpost was quite thin in order to have some local reserves and a few reserves for regimental and division commanders. Units were used extensively. General Robertson, 2nd Division, told me it would take the 2nd Division a week to pick up the units on the front he turned over to the 106th Division.

"There was not a stronger defensive position than the one held except on the northern part of the 106th Division front. Several changes were made on this front and on the left of the front occupied by the 28th Division in order to add strength to the position. This was

194. VII. Army. (Continued).

zone and then reported to Army. Army did not want the bulge held by the 106th Division through the Siegfried Line given up. A stronger position could have been one generally northeast of St. Vite. However, to have voluntarily given up the large area in and through the Siegfried Line and have gone back several miles to the position would have been foolish. When the German attack got under way on the 16th I advised General Jones that I thought it best to withdraw to the rear position. Jones did not consider a withdrawal proper. He felt that he could hold. He was on the ground, I was not. As it turned out he made a mistake. It was an honest one. I think he is a good Commander. He had a fighting heart. I did not order Jones to withdraw at that time for I felt that he knew more about local conditions than I did. In fact he did. As it developed it just happened that my hunch was right. When Jones decided to withdraw his left it was too late."

"Q. After First US Army G-2 on 10 Dec. reported the distinct possibility of a large-scale German offensive in the West (the likely area of attack was given as the ROER-Rossmun-Schleiden area, north of the VIII Corps sector, did Gen. Middleton take any steps to alert his divisions, shift reserves or request additional troops from First Army or was the corps considered to be as well prepared as possible to meet such an attack?

((N.B.-- The interpolation within parenthesis in the above paragraph were part of the manuscript.))

"A. The Commanders were always kept abreast of the situation. Just prior to December 16th, the First Army took a combat command from the 9th Armored Division, my reserve, and gave it to the V Corps. I then moved the Reserve Combat Command, 9th Armored, from the south to the north to back up the right of the 106th Division and the left of the 28th Division. This Command took station near Trois Verges, Belgium. No request was made to First Army for troops because the First Army was taking troops from the VIII.

"The high command could not have been alarmed about my 88-mile front because during this period I was directed to put on a deception program in order to draw more enemy divisions to my front. (Note: I should have been regarded for a successful program). Three Infantry divisions on an 88-mile front backed up by part of an armored division could never be well prepared to meet a full scale enemy attack. There was not any belief, insofar as I know, on the part of G-2 personnel that a German attack would be made on VIII Corps front."

N.B. --- The FUSA document referred to in the Questions was the First Army's G-2 Estimate #37, 10 December. The following extracts are made to indicate the substance of this document:

"1. SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION.

"a. General. Since the publication of G-2 Estimate No. 36, dated 20 November 44, the enemy has stubbornly contested every foot of ground in the zone of action of the First U.S. Army. ... Back of the line of the ROER he has intensified his defense zone by

fortification in depth, converting each village into a strongpoint, and has notably strengthened the Strotz field fortifications on the line of the WEST. It is plain that his strategy in defense of the Reich is based on the exhaustion of our offensive to be followed by an all-out counterattack with armor, between the WEST and the WEST, supported by every weapon he can bring to bear. The suspension of V-1 fire from the BANNINGBER AREA and the BORN sites is believed to be based on the use of his railroads for the bringing in of new Volksgrenadier divisions west of the RHINE and for the buildup of the necessary artillery and supplies to support his all-out ground counterattack. It is apparent that Von Rundstedt, who obviously is conducting military operations without the benefit of intuition, has skillfully defended and husbanded his forces and is preparing for his part in the all-out application of every weapon at the focal point and the correct time to achieve defense of the Reich west of the RHINE by inflicting as great a defeat on the Allies as possible. Indications to date point to the location of this focal point as being between ROERFORD and SCHLEIDEN, and within this bracket this concentrated force will be applied to the Allied force judged by the German High Command to be the greatest threat to successful defense of the Reich." (Source: FOIA, G-2 Periodics & Estimates, Dec, '44. In L-535(22))

B. Interview of 19 Jan. 1945.

(Combat Historian's statement: "No notes were taken during interview, but notes were made immediately after its conclusion. The interview lasted for approximately 40 minutes. Gen. Middleton was extremely friendly and understanding.")

Concerning the 106th Inf Div.

"The line held by the 106th was the most difficult one to defend on the Corps front. The two northern regiments, 422d and 423d, in the SCHNEF RIFEL area were through the STEGFRIED Line in exposed position. Gen Middleton expected that if an attack came on his front it would come in the sector of the 106th Div. (Ten out of the 13 Bns of Corps Artillery were in support of the 106th Div.) The Gen said that when the 2d Inf Div, which was the first division to occupy the line held by the 106th 16th Dec, took over the line he said that two battalions' positions were so exposed that it was impossible to reach them in the daytime that all supply had to be done at night. He requested permission to withdraw from this ground, but 'the High Command' was reluctant to give up even these un sound positions. On his own authority at a later date he did withdraw the two exposed battalions, and the Corps Engineers executed demolitions on approximately 25 pillboxes in the STEGFRIED Line so that the enemy could not reconquer and repair these fortifications. He said he never was directly censured for this action, but he believed that it was not viewed favorably by the High Command.

Corps mission and orders from First US Army.

"Gen Middleton's reaction to my statement that it was

rather difficult to 'defend in place', which was the Corps mission in its sector--was to state that there is no answer to the defense problem of an 88-mile front with 3½ divisions, the Corps reserve consisting of a handful of engineer battalions. He said the engineers did a magnificent job. He said 'we teach' a 7000-8000 yd front for defense. He said he has been protesting against wide fronts during his whole combat experience in the ETO. In SICILY he had 45 miles with one division. In ITALY he also had every wide front. He said he remarked then to Gen Bradley that some day we were going to get into trouble with our wide fronts. This was it.

"When asked what orders or change of mission received from First US Army after the strength of the attack was realized, the Gen said that he talked to the G/S First US Army (Maj. Gen Kean) and received orders to 'fold with the attack.' (I am fairly but not absolutely positive of the exact wording of this quote. LSC) Gen said he never did understand exactly what this directive meant.

"G-2 Situation.

"Gen Middleton said that every day up to the time the Germans attacked, the Corps got at least one prisoner from its front. But he said that patrols from the divisions could't be expected to get dope on enemy strength back around BITBURG. He said that at all times they knew all the enemy divisions in contact, but the Germans knew as much about our shifts since they were just as active and had patrols in our lines every night. They knew we were using the area, the VIII Corps front, as a rest and rehabilitation area.

"Regarding the simulated presence of the 75th Inf Div on his front. Gen Middleton said he never had approved of 'rubber duck' operations, and that knowing the strength of what was on his immediate front, he was less than usually enthusiastic about this particular operation (operation 'COBLENTZ').

"City of Luxembourg.

"The Gen said that we were always concerned about the 4th Div on the south and its ability to hold and defend the city of Luxembourg. He said that this division was short 1400-1500 infantrymen at the time of the German attack, and that if the Germans had ever followed up the attack which they started down the stream line SCHWARZENTZ (I'm not absolutely sure this is the stream he meant since he indicated it on the map for only a moment.) It might have been serious. ...

II. Initial Recognition of Assault's Gravity.

Summary. --- Corps Intelligence Summaries, issued four times daily, described operations, but did not express opinions on the new attack's meaning; and, the First Army's ISUM for the period ending 16000 simply described operations of the V, VII, VIII Corps, without being suggestive as to the enemy's intentions. However, during the evening of the 16th, the VIII Corps acquired the texts of the Commander-in-Chief West's Order of the Day prool laing the Counteroffensive to the German forces, and some other related documents. But the Corps G-2 Periodic for the day seemed to disregard the documents' significance, and stated that the current enemy capability was counterattacking to restore lost positions.

#29. VIII Ops. Critique.

The Commanding General expressed the thought during a Combat Interview that he realized the attack's weight by the morning of 17 December, and the G-2 admitted in an interview that the attack was a surprise to him.

Corps Intelligence Summaries. --- The first report that the VIII Corps made concerning the German onslaught of about 0530 on 16 December was in its ISUM #286, at 0800, for the period 252400A-160800A December. (L-540(8) Msg. #76) In the 106th Division's area light artillery and mortar fire began at 0530A upon the TFI, and the 424th Infantry received heavy artillery and mortar fire at 0540. An estimated company was reported in the sector at 0600A. One tank with 75 men in white suits moved against KREINKLE, and at 0815A three tanks and an estimated company moved against BOMM. In the 28th Division's area heavy artillery fire was received at 0630A. There were no operational changes in the sectors of the 9th Armored and 4th Infantry Divisions.

As noted, this initial ISUM described operations, but did not advance opinions of the action's significance. Some consideration of the seriousness of the enemy's action was denoted in the succeeding ISUM #287, issued at 1200 for the 0800A-1200A period. (V,B, Msg. #77) Regarding the 106th Division's sector, it reported, "enemy launched an attack, scope and objectives as yet undetermined, on N and S flanks at 0700A. Heavy arty fire preceded the attack, which employed infantry supported by tanks. ..." The remainder of this ISUM for 0800-1200 was descriptive of the divisions' operations, which were defense and receipt of enemy artillery in the 28th, 9th Armored, and 4th Divisions' sectors.

This slight reference to the offensive's scope and objective as stated in the ISUM issued at 1200 was the only such comment in the Corps ISUMS during 16 December. (V,B) ISUM's for 1200A-1800A, 1800A-2400A merely described operations, and no consideration was given to overall scope and objectives. The same was true of the ISUM #290, 162400A-170800A.

Meanwhile, various data were flowing into the Corps providing more or less evidence for opinion formulation.

FUSA ISUM. --- Only limited aid for evaluation purposes was furnished by the First Army's Intelligence Summary for the period ending 0900, and which was not received by the Corps G-2 until 1338A by telegram. (V,B, Msg. #79) This ISUM contained data from all FUSA corps, and those from the V and VII Corps were as follows, but their information was not particularly suggestive, at least as much so as that of the VIIIth: "Usual amount of artillery fire reported by V Corps in BERGSTEIN(F0633) area at 0530A. Considerable artillery fire in Corps southern sector. Sporadic arty fire reported in WAIMEDI(K7804). VII Corps sector: MARIANELER(F0497) and HOVEN(O849) at 0530A received increased arty fire. Artillery fire continued all night in KUFFERSATH (F1040) and ~~BERGSTEIN~~ BERGSTEIN(F1041) area. South of MARIANELER enemy counterattack started at 0600A repulsed by 0800A." The VIII Corps account was summarized in the Corps own ISUM for 152400A-160800A, previously described.

This first Army USYN for the period ending at 0900 was the only FUSA ISUM received by the Corps during the day, nor did the Corps records indicate informational messages from FUSA.

Cancelled German Orders. --- Of high significance was the acquisition by the Corps of the Order of the Day by the Commander-in-Chief West, 16 December, proclaiming the Counteroffensive. The Corps first received the text at 2120 when the V Corps Special Intelligence Summary for 1600 arrived, and which contained the text. (L-540(S), 16 Dec. Msg. #90) This Order of the day and several other revealing documents were captured by the 1-6th Division, and they were in the Corps possession as of ~~2310A~~ 2310A. (V, B, 16 Dec., Msg. #100)

According to the translation by the O/S Team #44, of the 106th's G-2 section, this Order of the Day issued by Fieldmarshal Von Rundstedt declared:

"Soldiers of the ~~East~~ West Front!
 "Your great hour has arrived.
 "Large attacking armies have started against the Anglo-Americans.
 "I do not have to tell you anything more on that.
 "You feel it yourself."

No gamble everything!

"You carry with you the holy obligation to give everything to achieve things beyond human possibilities for
 Our Father and Our Fuhrer!

Von Rundstedt
 C in C West
 General Feldmarshall"

Although the V Corps Special ISUM quoted only this C in C Order of the Day, the collection of documents from the 106th Division also included the Orders by the Army Group B's co-commander and the Sixth Panzer Army, a document explaining Operation GREIF, and several minor papers.

Corps G-2 Periodic, 16 December. --- ~~His~~ Cognizance was taken of these documents, but seemingly no more than that, in the Corps G-2 Periodic #182, for 152400A-162400A December. (IV, C)

This issuance's review of the 16th provided data (1) naked the fact that the Corps had notably underestimated the enemy's strength, and (2) felt that the attack of the day was only a counterattack to restore lost positions, (3) ostensibly disregarding in its opinion the scope of the assault as announced by the Commander-in-Chief West's Order of the Day, the text of which was possessed by the Corps G-2.

40. VIII Corps, Coltaque.

Analysis of the units in contact listed in this G-2 Periodic for 16 December marks the fact that the Corps had previously identified only four of the ten enemy divisions which struck during the 16th. The 18th, 26th, 212th, 352d VG Divisions and the 44th Festung FG Battalion were known to face the Corps. Yet, six other divisions also assaulted during the day, six divisions whose proximity was completely unknown to the Corps. They were the 62d, 560th, 276th VG Divisions, the 2d and 116th Panzer Divisions, and the 5th Para Division.

This four to ten accuracy ratio of pre-identification to actual assault divisions on the Corps level, agreed with the divisional level ratios of four to ten. (Div. Level, p. 7). According to the divisional records, the 106th Division knew of only one of three, the 28th two officers, the 4th accurately identified its single assault division, but the 9th Armored was assaulted by a difference division than that previously believed to be in its sector. In general, the Corps was aware of the presence of all enemy divisions that the divisions knew of prior to the assault, and its list of the assault divisions agreed with those of the Corps divisions, except the Corps also listed the 5th Para Division, not mentioned by a division. Respecting the statistical comparison, the 116th Panzer Division was reported twice, by the 28th and 106th Divisions.

ENEMY CAPABILITIES

were listed and discussed in this G-2 Periodic, 152400A-162400A, under that title. The appraisal did not suggest a well defined realization of the enemy's attack purpose. In fact, as observed in Capability #1, the conception seemed to be that the attack was regarded as only a counterattack to restore lost positions. The capabilities declared:

"(1) The enemy can continue present counterattack to restore lost positions with the forces now on his front.

"(2) The enemy can further reinforce his front line strength with additional reserve forces and mount an offensive, either in the HABSCHEID-SCHNEE BIFEL area or the VIADEN-ESCHTERNACH area.

"(3) The enemy can take up an active defense of his present positions or those which he may fall back on."

Capability (1) was considered as being currently implemented. Although then too early to predict (2), PW statements as listed in CH Notes favored it. (3) was thought "likely to be implemented if he is stopped along present positions and his attack does not meet with success."

The overall scope and objectives of the German attack were not ~~discussed~~ discussed among those three capabilities. The seriousness of that deficiency was emphasized by the apparent lack of consideration given to the capture Von Rundstedt Order of the Day proclaiming the Counteroffensive. Inasmuch as the

#32. VIII. Corps. Critique.

Corps acquired this document as of 2120 and again by 2310A, surely it could have been taken into account as part of the Corps opinion of the enemy's intentions and possibilities. Seemingly the Corps G-2 comprehended the import of this and the accompanying documents, in that the filing notation within the G-2 Journal File asserted: "These documents indicate the scope of the German offensive and its importance becomes apparent from the impressive list of high-ranking German General whose signatures appear thereon." Yet, the G-2 Periodic's statement of enemy capabilities did not reflect the import of this Order of the Day.

Awareness of these documents' revelations was demonstrated by the fact that the Staff G-2's Periodic for the 16th included translations of most of them in its Order of Battle Notes, prefacing with the above quoted statement about their indication of the offensive's scope. Strangely, however, the text of the most important of the documents, the Von Rundstedt Order of the Day, was not printed in this G-2 Periodic. The omission was curious. It was possessed by the Corps from two sources, from the V Corps and the 106th Division, the latter command its own division. Why it of all the documents was the only one to be omitted was odd. Surely if the G-2 had taken it seriously, which he seemingly did, he would have associated its significance with Capability #1, and not expressed the view in that capability that the attack was only a counterattack to restore lost positions.

Commanding General's Orders. --- Ostensibly the seriousness of the enemy attack impressed the Commanding General during the evening of the 16th, inasmuch as he sent an urgent teletype at 2035A to the CG's of his divisions, the 4th, 28th, 106th, and 9th Armored:

"Troops will be withdrawn from present positions only repeat only if positions become completely untenable. In no event with enemy be allowed to penetrate west of line HOLZHEIM-BETZ-LOHRSWEILER-VAUFELT-LIYLER-SOCKHOLZ-LELLINGEN-MAESSLER-BURDEN-COIMAR-HEISENBERG-ERNZEN-REIDWEILER-NECKER-MERTERT- which will be held at all costs. Letter of Instructions follows."

CG's Statement on Realization. --- Inasmuch as official Corps records did not include statements as to when the Corps recognized the assault's true severity and if the attack was a surprise, Combat Interviews provide the only information. During his account of an interview on 19 January 1945 with the CG, the combat historian, Capt. L. B. Clark, wrote: "Gen Middleton said he realized the full weight of the German offensive by the morning of 17 Dec. ..."(VII,D) Captain Clark also interviewed Col. A. J. Reeves, Corps G-2, on the previous day, reporting: "Col. Reeves says that, frankly, the attack was a surprise to him. He

#33. VII Corps Critique.

referred me to the Twelfth Army Group G-2 periodic of the week before which he said was extremely optimistic about the situation on the Corps front. (VII, A) Perhaps the Colonel referred to the Twelfth Army Group Weekly Intelligence Summary, #18, for the week ending 9 December 1944, issued 12 December, instead of a Periodic. The ISUM's text more nearly corresponds with his thought than did descriptive data within periodics. (L-320(3))

X. Forwarding of Intelligence about the Enemy.

Pre-Counteroffensive Period. --- The Corps divisions, the 4th, 28th, and 106th acquired seven data, only four of which were transmitted by the divisions to the Corps. Of the five most significant of the seven, only two were forwarded, and they by message, not in daily G-2 Periodics. Only two data instances of the seven were reported in divisional G-2 Periodics, and they might be characterized as the least significant.

The following two paragraphs simply summarize the forwarding data. For details, please see the Critique's section titled, Significant Evidence of German Offensive Intentions, which contains the full analysis of the forwarding of this pre-Counteroffensive data.

As mentioned above, the forwarding of data by the divisions to the Corps was slight. The 28th and 106th Division observed increasing enemy vehicular traffic during the 12-15 December period, and this activity was described in detail in their G-2 Periodics. A civilian woman was taken by the 28th Division on 14 December, who described some German build-up in the enemy zone, and the Corps was notified promptly about her information, by message, but not in the Division's G-2 Periodic of the day. Four PW's were captured by the 4th and 106th Divisions on 15 December, who claimed to have heard statements or rumors of an impending German attack between 17-25 December. The 106th Division reported the data about one PW immediately by message to the Corps, but not about the other PW, and the 4th Division reported neither of its two PW's data. Neither division reported the incidents in their G-2 Periodics for the day.

In contrast to the divisional lack of transmission of its acquired data to the VIII Corps, this command promptly reported its acquired data from the divisions. Of the seven data instances, the Corps reported promptly the four data it received from the divisions, in the G-2 Periodic for the day. The Corps, however, apparently did not report any of it by message to the First Army. In the case of one data, the Corps distributed it also in its ISUM.

16 December. -- During the day the VIII Corps acquired from the V Corps and mainly from its own 106th Division the texts of certain significant documents, which could contribute to the G-2's opinion of the attack's seriousness. These documents were the Order of the Day, 16 December, of the Commander-in-Chief West (Field Marshal Von Rundstedt), the Orders of the Day by the Army Group B and the Fifth Panzer Army, a document describing the Operation GREIF, and several minor papers. Due to the importance of these documents, the sequence of events and the documentary evidence concerning their transmission to the Corps is reviewed.

The first of these accessions from the V Corps and the 106th Division was from the former. The text of the Von Rundstedt Order of the Day had been captured by the V Corps during the morning, and was disseminated in its Intelligence Summary for 1600, which arrived at the VIII Corps G-2 some four hours later, at 2120 (L-540(8), 16 Dec., Msg. #90). To be sure, the text of this valuable document was mingled with other and lesser informative ones. Nevertheless, the text of it was physically in the Corps G-2 hands well prior to his issuance of his G-2 Periodic for the day.

In the case of the 106th Division's documents, at 1320 the 424th Infantry, messaged the Division G-2 that "possible 162 VG Div and 116 Inf Div documents taken from officer indicate large scale attacks to be made by Germans. Translation following." (Div. Level, p. 106) Ten minutes later, at 1330, that message was repeated verbatim, omitting the last two words. (Ibid.) At 1420 Corps was messaged by the 106th: "We have captured document with lots of info. Would like you to come to CP after it." (Ibid.)

This document was not further identified with exactness by the 106th, nor were the time and manner of acquisition by the VIII Corps completely indicated. Notwithstanding, the Corps received some documents, one of which was without doubt the one referred to by the 106th. Probably the 106th actually fastened the several documents together as single one. As of 2310, the Corps possessed translations of several key documents, among them Orders announcing the Counteroffensive. At that hour a group of documents were inserted into the Corps G-2 Journal File, including a translation of the Von Rundstedt Order of the Day, of Army Group B's (Field Marshal Model), etc. (V,B) As their identifying data denoted, they were so seized by the O/B Team #44, G-2, 106th Division, and taken from a dead German officer of 6th Co., 156th Regt., 116th Pa Division. Their filing notation also stated "These documents indicate the scope of the German offensive and its importance became apparent from the impressive list of high-ranking German Generals whose signatures appear thereon. The GREIF operation appears to be a part of a large scale counter-offensive."

Thus, the 106th Division forwarded to the Corps the highly significant captured documents which explained the new enemy attack.