

the
 a 10-mile frontage. The Army right flank extended along the Rhine for 30 miles and was guarded by the elements of newly arrived infantry regiments who were to complete training in the Rhine Valley prior to employment in combat. The most significant terrain feature in the Army sector were the rugged Lower Vosges Mountains which bisected the Army sector roughly parallel to the axis of advance and roughly corresponding to the boundary between the two Corps. On the East was the Alsace Plain and on the West was the gently rolling Saar River Valley. It was only in the Vosges sector, around Bluche, that the Maginot Line had not been reduced. Having failed in three weeks of determined effort to penetrate Seventh Army's positions, the enemy made no further serious offensive thrust. The spotlight shifted to the American-French operations to drive the Germans from the Colmar Pocket. The Ardennes offensive had failed, and the Russian drive toward Berlin was drawing first-class enemy troops from the Western front. To what extent outside influences were responsible for Seventh Army's defensive success will perhaps never be known. There can be no doubt, in any event, that the Germans attempted a major offensive and that they failed to break through. Excellent G-2 work pointed each new thrust by time for intelligent

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FRANK LUKSICH 411 Co D
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 Spec be pro vidual ing:
 Liet signs a Regula permat men) 1 (Lt) o Dec 11
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 Warrant officer—Those warrant officers whose dates of rank as such, in the case of Regulars, and dates of commencement of continuation
 (Please turn to Page 981)

sevent Army . . . "It was reported that enemy troops attacked standing up, singing and shouting as if intoxicated."
 Without benefit of intoxicants, some men in A Troop fitted carbines at rabbits and yucked it up a bit as they, too, walked upright that morning of Gambenheim. They were wrong if they believed the Germans would not defend the village. Sgt. Michael Klimko, A Troop's first battle loss, was killed there as he lay prone under mortar fire.
 Almost ludicrous was the way Gen. Patch informed Gen. de Brigade Schwartz, French military governor at Strasbourg, that the city would be defended (see page 979, left hand column).
 "I am sure you will be relieved to learn that I have received permission from higher headquarters to defend Strasbourg with all the means at my command."
 As one Liberator, who considers the subsequent orders for this defense of Strasbourg as leading to the consequent "do or die" for the 14th, commented, "sounds like he [Patch] was more concerned with refusing the French general of his anxieties than he was about the forthcoming battle, and its outcome or probable high number of casualties."
 Hatten, the name of a French village that will probably be most easily remembered, is mentioned for the first time in the Journal report this way: "When transpired during the period 8-23 January can be best told chronologically. The bitter fighting which saved Strasbourg does not fit into a neat picture. To emphasize the Gambenheim action at the expense of that of Hatten would be a distortion."
 (Continued on Page 979)

chaplain.
 The presentation was made in the Secretary's office in The Pentagon, Md., Gen.
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lar, uncertain factors related to separations from active service.
 "Separations from the Regular Army Om.
 (Please turn to Page 987)

7th Army in German Offensive (Continued from First Page)

abits of reserves, and the American Infantryman held his ground.

G-1 Picture

When the failure of the enemy to hold the reverse gap position North and South of Phalsbourg had resulted in the capture of Sarabourg and the split between the 10th and 1st German Armies, the 10th Army continued to offer strong resistance to efforts to drive it from the Vosges. As the Seventh Army turned Northwest, the 30th and 50th Divs. had been virtually destroyed as a force capable of protecting the Siegfried Line approaches to Eastern France. The enemy quickly remedied this deficiency, however, by successively screening with elements of the 11th Panzer, 20th Panzer Grenadier and 12th Volksgrenadier Divs. until the 20th and 24th Divs. arrived from Holland in early December.

The Seventh Army pressed steadily Northward towards the Siegfried Line while the German 1st Army attempted to withdraw with minimum expense to Siegfried positions. This was in contrast to the German's determined and aggressive effort to maintain his bridgehead in Alsace against forces of the First French Army seeking to close the Colmar Pocket. PW's from all the divisions facing Seventh U. S. Army mentioned that their divisions were to withdraw to the West Wall by about 16 December. One exception was that Blitche, a strong link in the Maginot chain, was to be held to the last man. PW's told of very strong enemy disciplinary measures, including orders to platoon leaders to shoot any man wounding or surrendering. Some PW's talked of orders from the Führer Headquarters to the effect: "In the West Wall you shall fight and die."

The major event affecting enemy forces facing Seventh U. S. Army during the period from 19 December to 23 December was the relief of elements of the 11th Panzer Div. by the 21st Volksgrenadier Div. in the area West of Blitche on 19 December. Since the German offensive at Elft had begun 16 December, it was suspected for a while that elements of 11th Panzer Div. had been hurriedly transferred Northward in order to participate in the all-out effort in the First U. S. Army sector. The possibility that Army Group G might be stripped of all its mobile units was considered. 21st Panzer Div. had not been satisfactorily identified since 19 December, and it was believed that the bulk of the division was needed as Army Group G Reserve. 11th 88 Panzer Grenadier Div. was especially well known to Seventh Army. Obviously, these retrained mobile elements might either go North or be available to German First Army in reserve for offensive operations in the future.

Last Flank Extended

By 19 December, it had become apparent that the German offensive against 7th Army Group was of major proportions. Seventh Army received orders to extend its left boundary to St. Avold in order to allow Third Army to regroup for operations against the Ardennes salient, and was assigned a defensive mission.

The extension of Seventh Army's left flank was rapidly put into execution. On 19 December, Third Army's XII Corps had assumed control of the III Corps' front and III Corps

than to endanger the integrity of its forces.

Despite all security precautions, the rearward movement of supplies and troops could hardly fail to be obvious to civilian observers. The Seventh Army G-4 had to whittle down forward supply dumps to a minimum. Within seven days after 20 December, 8,000 to 9,000 tons of ammunition alone had been moved from dumps East of the Vosges to safer locations in the rear. In the same period, 8,000 tons of ammunition were hauled rearward from a forward dump in the XV Corps sector. This does not include a multitude of local moves which had to be effected from forward dumps which were practically under enemy mortar fire. On the other hand, Ordnance and Engineer personnel had to work feverishly transporting anti-tank and anti-personnel mines, barbed wire, pickets, demolitions, concertina wire forward into the combat areas.

In the period from 21 December to 31 December, Seventh Army had only limited physical contact with enemy units opposing it, but there was apparent a continued effort on the part of the enemy to retri and reorganize his divisions in preparation for an offensive action. In the XV Corps sector, the 20th Volksgrenadier Div. had been pulled out of the line and was redesignated Elements of 10th Volksgrenadier Div. appeared in the sector of the 11th 88 Panzer Grenadier Div., confirming the idea that the 11th 88 Panzer Grenadier Div. was leaving only a shell in contact. 50th Div., which had been employed on the Southern flank of the Third U. S. Army had not been satisfactorily identified since 19 December and was believed to be retreating. 13th Panzer Grenadier Div. appeared to have only a few scattered elements mounting the Siegfried positions, while the bulk of the unit retreated in the Zwihrucken area. It became known that the most important mobile unit of the German First Army, the 1st Panzer Div., had not gone North but was still in the VI U. S. Corps sector. Like 11th 88 Panzer Grenadier Div., it also had only a shell in the line.

G-3's Estimates

The offensive capabilities of the enemy on Seventh Army's front were strongly pointed out in Seventh Army G-3 estimate of the enemy strength, published 29 December. While admitting the enemy's overall attitude had been defensive up to that time, the document reported definite enemy buildup in two areas which might affect Seventh Army's (1) in the East Rhine Valley and the Colmar bridgehead; (2) in the Saarbrücken area.

The G-3 estimate stated that there were elements of nine divisions of the German First Army in contact with ours of the Seventh U. S. Army West of the Rhine. It was emphasized, however, that the German First Army mobile units, the 11th 88 Panzer Grenadier, 20th Panzer Grenadier, and 13th Panzer Div., was very light.

In addition to the enemy's obvious retreating operations, the G-3 estimate considered the fact that both the terrain and weather favored the enemy in an attack. Three major features contributed to the terrain advantages: (1) The Rhine River formed a continuous right flank for Seventh Army half as long as the West Wall; (2) The Lower Vosges and Hardt Mountains formed a barrier to lateral communication, not only providing the enemy with a natural defensive position, but offering him a temporarily secure flank for a counterattack in force if he could hold the mountain passes; (3) The Saar River flowing north about 10 miles west of and parallel to

could not be ignored.

Also, the tremendous morale factor involved for the Germans in a successful recapture of Alsace had to be considered. This would be all the more true if the attack in the Elft area failed to achieve any substantial success.

On the same day that the Advance CP of Sixth Army Group closed at Phalsbourg and withdrew to Vitry, 27 December, Seventh Army's newly arrived XXI Corps was given control of the 30th Inf. Div. and the 12th Armored Div. and told to assemble in the Phalsbourg-Sarabourg area as NIAAF Reserve. The Corps Commander, Maj. Gen. F. W. Milburn, received orders to be prepared to move on short notice to an area to be designated by higher headquarters.

These things were done in accordance with verbal instructions from the Commanding General, Sixth Army Group, confirmed by a Sixth Army Group Letter of Instructions, dated 28 December 1944, which laid down successive withdrawal positions and specified that the main defense line would follow the Eastern slope of the Vosges. In addition to the NIAAF Reserve mentioned above, the Letter of Instructions stated that a reserve of not less than one RCT and one Armored Combat Command would be held mobile in Sarabourg prepared to move on six hours notice on the authority of the Army Group Commander only. Seventh Army was to be prepared to receive the 2nd French Armored Div. then in contact below Sarabourg, upon relief from present assignment by First French Army.

A Combat Command of the 11th Armored Division was moved West to Phalsbourg. In the VI Corps sector, Task Force Herzer, composed of newly arrived Infantry elements of the 70th U. S. Inf. Div., was directed to retrace Task Force Harris along the Rhine and to prepare a M.I.L. on the Maginot line in case Task Force Harris was directed to assemble as VI Corps Reserve. XV Corps CP withdrew to Penetrance.

Blitche Sector Watched

On 30 December, as the 2nd French Armored Div. began its movement into the XV Corps sector, the following radio was received from Sixth Army Group:

"It is possible that hostile attack against your flank West of Blitche may force you to give ground from your main position. To meet such a possibility, it is necessary that your West Flank be protected by a reserve battle position. With this in mind, reconnaissance and organization of a reserve battle position will be instituted without delay along high ground on the general line: Hill East of Kandorf-Sarabourg-Sarre Union - Inweiler. One half of each division and attached troops presently earmarked as Blat Reserve located at XH-4100 may be employed at any given period of time to assist in organization of ground profiled troops so employed can be reassembled and prepared for movement on 6 hours notice. Maginot Hill East of Third Army is this construction."

Having received a qualified permission to use the Blat Reserve troops, the Commanding General, Seventh Army, on 31 December detached the 36th Inf. Div. and 12th Armored Div. from XXI Corps and placed them in Army Reserve. The two divisions and XV Corps received a directive providing that a reserve battle position would be reconstituted and organized along the high ground on the general line—Hill East of Kandorf-Sarabourg-Sarre Union-Lorwizen. This line

brunt of an enemy drive which penetrated to Hannelein before daylight. Presence continued during the day, and an aerial observer reported an estimated enemy regiment moving Southwest toward Hannelein during the afternoon. Armored Infantry was sent to the Hannelein area to reinforce the VI Corps left flank, and the 14th Armored Div. was given the mission of blocking the passage at Hannelein. Newmiller, Ingwiler, Rothbach and Zing-Hler, Elements of 10th Inf. Div. were rushed to the threatened flank.

West from the Hardt Mountains to the Saar River the enemy pressed against the XV Corps line. The 10th Cavalry Group repulsed five counterattacks and the 41st Inf. Div. inflicted bloody losses in thwarting enemy's attempts to cross the Iller River. The administrative defense out by the 41st and 100th U. S. Inf. Divs. inflicted extensive heavy casualties on the 11th 88 Panzer Grenadier Div., 20th and 10th Volksgrenadier Divs.—forcing the enemy to change his plans. It was reported by some of the 41st Inf. Div. defenders that enemy troops attacked standing up, singing and shouting as if intoxicated.

During the day, the Commanding General, Seventh Army, received permission from Sixth Army Group to commit the 36th Inf. Div. of the 12th U. S. Armored Div. If necessary, it will be remembered that these units had been earmarked for Blat Reserve. As enemy pressure grew, it was directed that the 12th Armored Div. would establish a reconnaissance screen west of the Saar River and south of the Maginot line; and that the 36th Inf. Div. would move one RCT at once to the Waldambach area for attachment to the 30th Inf. Div. and the general mission of protecting the XV Corps right flank. The 2d French Armored Div. was to be prepared to replace the 11th Armored Div. and carry out its assigned mission.

When the first day of the New Year ended, Seventh Army troops had maintained essential positions against enemy attacks without serious loss of ground. Late in the day it was decided that the Army CP would be withdrawn to Lunerville at once. All equipment and majority of personnel departed before midnight to the new CP west of the Vosges.

On 2 January, the Army Commander received a personal cable from the Commanding General, Sixth Army Group, expressing the concern of higher headquarters lest divisions in the Hagenau area be severely handled or cut off in the event of successful enemy penetration north toward Sarabourg or north from the Colmar pocket. In summary, it was made plain that Seventh Army must accept the loss of Sarabourg and territory east of the Vosges rather than in any way impair its ability to:

- (a) Release to Blat as soon as possible one Armored and one Infantry Div. as Blat Reserve.
- (b) Reconstitute as soon as possible Seventh Army's own local Army Reserve and the prescribed Army Group Reserve west of the Vosges.
- (c) Preserve the integrity of Seventh Army units in advance of the main position.

Blitche Penetration

Unable to make good progress against XV Corps west of the Vosges, the Germans attempted to exploit their initial penetration achieved against the lightly-held left flank of VI Corps in the area Phillipbourg-Blitche. The mountains were anything but ideal for

21 December, XII Corps had passed control of its area to Seventh Army's XV Corps and began its movement to Luxembourg. XV Corps identified 17th SS Panzer Grenadier and 44th Inf. Div. in its widened sector.

All Third Army units had been released by 26 December and the Seventh Army occupied a 20-mile front from the Rhine to a point a few miles west of Saarbrücken. VI Corps, under command of Maj. General R. H. Brooks, held a line from the Rhine River to Blücher with the 7th and 45th Inf. Divs. in the line and the 14th Armored Div. in reserve. On the Corps left flank, holding a frontage of about 10 miles in the Lower Vosges-Hardt area was Task Force Hudson. This task force had been constituted by VI Corps on 21 December and consisted of CO "R" 14th Armored Div. (less one tank battalion); Company "B", 85th TD Bn; Company "D", 85th Chemical Mortar Bn; and the 11th Cavalry Recon. Squadron, XV Corps, commanded by Maj. General W. H. Halliday, had the 100th, 41st and 104th Inf. Divs. in the line, the 100th Cavalry Regiment on the left flank. The 12th Armored Div. was at Forstgraben. The 26th Inf. Div. was in Army Reserve southwest of Phalsbourg.

The greater part of the Rhine flank, extending for about 40 miles, was a responsibility of Task Force Harris and Task Force Linden under Army control. These task forces were composed of infantry elements of the 63d and 42d Inf. Divs. respectively, whose supporting troops had not yet arrived in the Army area.

Change To Defensive

The change from offensive to defensive action came to Seventh Army officially in the form of a Sixth Army Group Letter of Instructions, dated 21 December 1944, which emphasized that, subject to securing essential lines of communication, Sixth Army Group would be prepared to yield ground rather

than the Lower Vosges, offered a natural corridor.

Weather favored the enemy because it was very poor. Fog, rain, and limited visibility might be expected to reduce the effectiveness of our air support. As it turned out, there were only three days of good flying weather between 1 January and 25 January.

Enemy Capabilities

Taking all these things into consideration, the G-2 estimated the following capabilities: (1) To attack South from Blücher-Sarreguemines with 5.5 divisions, initial objective being Sarrebourg and Ingwiller Passes. The objective of this attack would be to clear the Rhine Valley, capture or destroy the bulk of the Seventh Army, and indirectly to relieve pressure of the Third U. S. Army against German forces in the Elbe area. It was expected that this attack would probably be coordinated with a drive northward by the 19th Army from the Colmar bridgehead. If establishment of a bridgehead in the Gumbelheim area—North of Strasbourg. These operations would, if successful, isolate Strasbourg, cutting the communications of all units in line, and complete the encirclement of Seventh Army forces East of the Hardt Mountains. (2) With forces currently in contact, and in immediate reserve, launch a series of limited objective attacks. The purpose of these attacks would be to keep Seventh Army units under sufficient pressure to prevent dispatching of troops to the Elbe area.

Since the most logical and economical employment of forces here in contact and known to be in reserve, would be in limited objective attacks, designed to contain Seventh Army units in present position, capability number 2 was favored over number 1. However, the indications of enemy buildups in the Saarbrücken area, in the East Rhine Valley, together with the 19th German Army's determination to hold the Colmar bridgehead,

ward positions, XV Corps also moved two regiments from Task Force Harris into position to bolster the 100th and 44th Inf. Divs.

As further insurance against a Saar Valley penetration, VI Corps directed the 14th Armored Div. then in Corps Reserve, to be prepared to move to the vicinity of Phalsbourg on Corps Order as a counterattacking force in event of an enemy breakthrough in the XV Corps sector. The 27th Inf. Regt. of Task Force Harris began movement to Niederbronn for attachment to the 42d Inf. Div.

On New Year's Eve, the Army Commander went to XV Corps CP at Frenschgraben. There he informed both XV and VI Corps Commanders that an enemy attack was to be expected during the early hours of New Year's Day, insofar as was possible, Seventh Army had made itself ready.

The Attack Begins

Before the new year was more than a few minutes old, the Germans in fact launched their offensive against Seventh Army along the general line Neunhohen-Bannstein-Blücher-Sarreguemines. They attacked with six divisions, identified from East to West as 200th Volksgrenadier, 361st Volksgrenadier, 50th Volksgrenadier, 17th SS Panzer Grenadier, 30th and 19th Volksgrenadier Divs. The code name of the offensive, so called in commemoration of Hitler's entry into France, was "10 May 1940." Spearheading the attack was the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Div. "Goets von Berlichingen," up to strength and newly fitted. The division's mission was to break through to Rohrbach, on the western slopes of the Hardt, and thus secure an opening through which the 21st Panzer Div. could debouch into the Saar Valley. 21st Panzer Div. was believed to be lurking at Zweibrücken.

Troops of Task Force Hudson took the

were reported shifting over toward Blücher. Apparently the intention was to open up the mountain passes and possibly secure a springboard for armor in the Rohrbach area.

VI Corps on 2 January reacted swiftly. The 45th Inf. Div., with two regiments of 19th Inf. Div. attached, threw its weight against the shoulder of the salient. Task Force Harris, also attached, occupied positions to block further infiltration. This maneuver made possible relief of Task Force Hudson, which reverted to control of 14th Armored Div. in the vicinity of Bonwiller. Troops in the apex of VI Corps' defense into Germany, around Wissembourg, withdrew under orders to Maginot positions. On the right flank, Task Force Linden was attached to 7th Inf. Div.

Decision to Hold Strasbourg

The necessity for withdrawal from Strasbourg and the Alsatian Plate presented diplomatic as well as military problems. Numerous officials had been moved into this area by the French Government, and residents of the area had shown their loyalty to France in a manner which would, both, them, should the Germans return. It was highly desirable, if not an actual moral responsibility, that these people be warned of Seventh Army's intentions in time to get out. On the other hand, to broadcast the Army's intentions to all and sundry was obviously unditchable from a tactical point of view.

Dirig. Gen. John S. Wain had been designated U. S. Military Representative in the Strasbourg area to insure continuity of policy and action so long as the area remained in Seventh Army's combat zone. The French Military Governor at Strasbourg was General de Brigade Schwartz. These officers worked together in a highly efficient manner.

The French attitude toward the planned withdrawal from Strasbourg became apparent.

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7th Army in German Offensive

(Continued from preceding page)
set when a courier from General Schwartz's headquarters delivered a letter to the Seventh Army Commander's quarters at Insartelle early in the morning of 3 January. In this letter, General Schwartz stressed the perilous situation which would be made an inevitable situation by retreating German and implored the Army Commander not to go forward with the plan. Shortly thereafter a letter was received from General Wain, passing on General Schwartz's urgent plea that Seventh Army endeavor to hold Strasbourg and as much as possible of Alsace Lorraine.

Fortunately, just as the matter was coming to a head, word came by telephone from higher headquarters about noon on 3 January that Strasbourg would be held. The Seventh Army Commander thereupon sent the following letter to General Schwartz:

"My dear General:
I received your letter which was delivered to my HQ by your aide on the night of 2-3 January.

I understand fully your concern over the evacuation of your beloved Strasbourg, which was so dearly bought at the price of French and American blood. I am sure you will be relieved to learn that I have received permission from higher headquarters to defend Strasbourg with all the means at my command.

(S) A. K. PATTON,
Lieut. Gen., U. S. Army, Commanding.
After the decision to hold Strasbourg, Seventh Army received approval of a plan to hold the Maginot Line east of the Vosges and the Rhine south from its intersection with the Maginot Line. This was considered the logical line to hold because its siting was good, the ground was already fortified, and lines to the rear were on terrain of indifferent defensive value.

With Strasbourg and the Alsace Plain at issue, the Germans during 3 January and several days thereafter continued to beat their heads against XV Corps—where success would yield the richest prize. Meanwhile they kept strong pressure against the eastern shoulder of the Blücher salient, from Philippsbourg to Wildersgruth, and attempted to deepen their penetration by infiltration.

11th SS Panzer Grenadier Div., despite bloody losses inflicted by the 4th Inf. Div., aggressively pushed into Achen and Ors. Researching with armor. Both towns were retaken the same day by CC "II" of the 2d French Armored Div. which attacked north on XV Corps order. The remainder of the French division was holding in the vicinity of Drillingen after completion of its relief by First French Army south of Strasbourg. The 26th Inf. Div. was shifted to Mouchonn.

Next day XV Corps acted forcibly to restore original positions of the 4th Inf. Div. The 2d Bn., 1st Inf. Regt., made unsuccessful attempts to retake 2d French Armored Division elements in Ors. Researching. It was bloody fighting, but the Corps aggressive defense was whitening the enemy down to size. 36th Inf. Div. was told to be prepared to attack east against the Blücher salient on Corps Order.

It is an interesting commentary on the quality of German military intelligence that enemy division commanders opposite XV Corps did not know that the 2d French Armored Div. was in the area until they had

sketchy information from higher headquarters on the movement of Allied units. Moreover he apparently had no idea of the real scope of the German offensive. He was simply given day-to-day objectives, or so he said. This lack of information was not due to lack of effort. Robbed of his aerial eyes by Allied air superiority, the Germans sent over numerous short-range agents whose communications were effectively frustrated by Seventh Army counter-intelligence agencies. No less than 44 airplanes and sabotage agents were arrested during the period 1 December-15 January.

Enduring Blücher Salient
The Blücher salient became increasingly troublesome. By 4 January elements of four German divisions—8 SS Mountain Div., "NORD," and 20th, 31st and 50th Volksgrenadier Divs.—were known to be in the area, with 21st Panzer and 25th Panzer Grenadier Divs. not far away. Forward elements of the fresh 8th SS Mountain Div. infiltrated into Wingen, thus cutting the Ingwiller Pass road. This was the deepest penetration of the campaign.

VI Corps, which had withdrawn to Maginot positions in the Wisliden-Blücherbach-Rosenheim sector, was engaged in bitter fighting from Barrinsbourg to Dambach. Task Force Hertz moved to eliminate the Germans at Wingen, and the penetration was quickly sealed off. By 7 January, the 4th Inf. Div. had mopped up Wingen and cleared the road to Lichtenberg. Enemy losses were heavy. Pressure around Blücher continued, but the identification of PW's from 21st Panzer Div. around Ingelshelm on 6 January had already pointed to a shift of armored weight east to the Wissembourg Gap.

Design on Rhine Flank
On 6 January, the Germans began to probe seriously into Seventh Army's vulnerable, lightly held Rhine River flank which extended for some 26 miles above and below Strasbourg. An estimated battalion of enemy crossed to the general area Gambahelm-Ofendorf, and further small elements continued to cross during the day. This was the beginning of a troublesome infiltration which the Germans subsequently exploited to full extent and which, considering the heavy pressure on the Army front, Seventh Army was not in a position to wipe out.

Fortunately, the Rhine flank was shortened, so far as VI Corps was concerned, when First French Army's north boundary was shifted north along the river as far as Gambahelm. Elements of the 3d Algerian Infantry Div. had already begun relief of Task Force Linden in the Strasbourg area by 5 January, but due to enemy action, the French were unable to assume control of the sector until 7 January at 101A.

Although pressure was building up in the North, VI Corps 7th Inf. Div. began operations immediately to destroy the Gambahelm bridgehead. Delta in the Maginot Line were relieved by Task Force Linden. The 23rd Inf. Regt. (Task Force Linden) cleared Killstett and reached the woods north of Gambahelm. On 6 January Rohrwiler, Drumsheim, Reesheim and Hattmatten were cleared.

Next day operations made little progress against stiffening resistance. Tanks and self-propelled guns had been ferried across.

If the Rhine situation had been the only problem confronting VI Corps, things would have been simple. But enemy armor pressed

the Vosges toward Rothbach did not find success, he shifted 21st Panzer Div. 20 miles farther east to Wissembourg Gap. Any break in this sector would undoubtedly attract the 25th Panzer Grenadier Div. To meet this threat, Combat Command "A" of the 14th Armored Div. was attached to 7th Inf. Div. and on 8 January began moving to an assembly area north of Haguenau.

Army Reserves Move East
With the Schwerpunkt of the German offensive apparently moving east, Seventh Army on 8 January detached the 12th Armored Div. from XV Corps and attached it to VI Corps. General Brooks, commanding VI Corps, received authority to move one normal combat command plus a tank destroyer battalion east of the Vosges, but the remainder of the division was not to be moved except on Army authority. CC "II" of the 12th Armored Div. began movement through the passes to Hochbuck.

Feeling that more armor was needed to deal with his situation, General Brooks at 1130A on 7 January telephoned Seventh Army Headquarters for authority to move the remainder of the 12th Armored Div. to Hochbuck. General Brooks was told to go ahead. Next day CC "II" began a series of operations against the Gambahelm center.

It was not only from the front and flank that VI Corps was threatened, but also from the rear. The German 19th Army had been pushing up its forces to the Colmar Pocket for a drive north on Strasbourg. It was reported that Heinrich Himmler had taken personal command of German forces in the Colmar Pocket, and that Strasbourg had been promised to Hitler by 30 January as a sort of gift in commemoration of the 12th Anniversary of his rise to power. On 7 January, First French Army's II Corps received a strong attack in the Neunkirch-Rittershoffen area, and withdrew to Rosfeld. The attack from the south was obviously being coordinated with that from the Gambahelm Pocket in the north. The enemy appeared to be bringing more armor into play.

Hatten-Rittershoffen Action
What transpired during the period 8-20 January can best be told chronologically. The bitter fighting which saved Strasbourg does not fit into a neat picture. To emphasize the Gambahelm action at the expense of that at Hatten would be distortion. Nor should it be forgotten that enemy threats from the Blücher salient and on the VI Corps front continued to be very real long after the Rhine flank claimed first priority.

As expected, the Germans drove viciously into the VI Corps Maginot position in the vicinity of Lechbuck on 8 January—shortly thereafter, 25th Panzer Grenadier Div. made its appearance in the Hatten area, apparently operating under command of 21st Panzer Div. in an attack called "Operation Feuchtinger" after the Commanding General, perhaps with the intention of effecting a junction there with enemy troops crossing the Rhine and with forces emerging from the Hardt Mountain salient.

Through January 20, when the VI Corps executed a planned withdrawal, the fighting in the Hatten-Rittershoffen area continued to be extremely fierce. Both 21st Panzer and 25th Panzer Grenadier Divs. suffered heavy losses in armor and infantry. The enemy reinforced his troops in the Rittershoffen

WHEN You've Licked The Enemy, Come Live Among Friends —UP IN— ASHEVILLE NORTH CAROLINA 14th and 7th JOIN FORCES

(Continued from front page)
Further down, it says, "Through January 20, when the VI Corps executed a planned withdrawal, the fighting in the Hatten-Rittershoffen area continued to be extremely fierce."

Much of Hatten was in flames the night a troop entered the village. Unbelievable was the amount of artillery being fired into and around the place. The stench of burning houses and barns was strong. I saw Germans walking toward us under their own artillery blasts. Many dropped. Coward horses went berserk from that hell.

Our orders were to "Hold at all costs." The word was that the Germans held three-quarters of Hatten and we had one-quarter. Shortly after VE-Day an ex-German soldier who had fought against us in Hatten told me, "Fighting the Americans was bad enough, but when you fight the Russians your eyes pop out."

In a letter I received in March 1976, Leland M. Hickman Jr. of Westfield, N.J., had written, "I was a private, first platoon, Company C, 125th Armored Engineers. It was day after day of cold days and colder nights. After I got hit outside Rittershoffen on January 14, 1945 I was afraid I would freeze before I had a chance to show my 'million dollar' wound to the medics.

"We had no overcoats. Our overcoats were taken to the rear and we were left with only jackets because some military idiot, whose leadership should never be forgotten or forgiven, decided that we should not wear our overcoats because the Krauts were wearing theirs.

No one who survived Hatten will ever forget the bombardment that followed a short period of almost absolute silence. Is the war over? somebody asked during that lull. The answer came at 5:20 a.m. The pounding, unbelievable intensity, lasted till 9 a.m.

CAPTURED SPANISH P.W.'s. An arrogant young
division commander captured near Rimling
on 4 January said that he had received only

Div. front from the direction of Wissem-
bourg. The German was intent on keeping
the initiative and, when his push through

100 area on 12 January with elements of the
20th Parachute Regt., a recent arrival from
(Continued on Next Page)

Better to have loved and not lost!

Burma-Shave

The Journal's mentioning that "The First
French Army's 3d Algerian Inf. Div. attacked
in the vicinity of Gambenheim" reminded me
of, to me, the funniest sight of the war: long-
tubed foreign troops single-file through a
woods, with helmets sitting on top of tubans
and pots and pans dangling from their belts.

Was it these same troops that gained the
reputation of being so quiet they could slip
unheard into a foxhole at night? Then feel the
bumps of the occupants and bayonet those
white footgear were without faces?

... enemy losses in killed and wounded on
Seventh Army's front during the period 1-25
January was about 15,000," according to the
Army Navy Journal. "This figure," it adds,
"includes only infantry combat effectives. The
enemy lost 4,782 P.W.'s during the same
period." If tank losses totaled 171.

I wonder how many Americans were killed
and wounded on that front "During the period
1-25 January (1945)."

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7th Army in German Offensive
(Continued from Preceding Page)

Holland. The 10th SS Panzer Div. "Fronsbere" was reliably reported in the Kaiserlautern area. Meanwhile, considerable re-arming of enemy units was on in the Harst Forest area.

XXI Corps on Left

The Commanding General, Sixth Army Group, halted Seventh Army Headquarters on the morning of 9 January to confer on future operations. Originally, it had been intended that the newly arrived XXI Corps would be assigned the three new Infantry Divisions and would take over the Rhine sector. In view of more recent developments, it was decided that XXI Corps would take over a sector on the left of XV Corps.

Seventh Army on 9 January issued a directive providing that Seventh Army would regroup with XXI Corps on the left bank. The following combat troops were assigned to each Corps:

- XXI Corps: 103d Inf. Div., 100th Cav. Gp., XV Corps; 20th Tac. Div., 44th Inf. Div., 100th Inf. Div., TP Harris (less 1 Inf. Regt.); 10th SS Panzer Div., "Fronsbere"; 12d French Armored Div. (DB).
- VI Corps: 45th Inf. Div., 7th Inf. Div., 14th Armored Div., 12th Armored Div., TP Harris; TP Linden.

The new Corps became operational at 1200A, 11 January.

The XV Corps sector was rather quiet during 8 January, with the 35th and 100th Inf. Divs. making successful limited objective attacks and securing the high ground in the vicinity of Sigelsberg-Spietberg-Mochnhof. In the VI Corps, the 7th Inf. Div. continued to repulse enemy tank and infantry attacks on Margriet positions in the vicinity of Aachen. The 1st Panzer Div. suffered heavy losses. Further to the East, CC "B" of the 12th Armored Div. counterattacked the Gumbelheim pocket south from Rohrwiler, but was held up by blown bridges and made little progress. As reserves in event of an enemy breakthrough, VI Corps had the 14th Armored Div. (less one combat command) and the 12th Armored Div. (less CC "B").

Confirming verbal instructions issued previously, Sixth Army Group on 9 January issued orders directing Seventh Army to continue the defense and to organize a reserve battle position on the general line Landroff-Bonestroff-Sarrebourg-Ingwiller. A switch position was also to be organized along the general line of the Moder River between Ingwiller and Sarrebourg. Withdrawals to these positions were only to make in case of strong enemy pressure.

With substitution from Seventh Army, XV Corps directed the 44th, 100th and 103d Inf. Divs. to attack on 10 January to hold and hold tactically desirable terrain in preparation for a resumption of the offensive. An attack between the 44th and 100th Inf. Divs. in the vicinity of Rimling gained little ground. In the VI Corps, the 7th Inf. Div. broke up several attacks and by the end of the day was wiping out an enemy penetration in the vicinity of Hatten. On the Rhine, Seventh Army elements attacking Gumbelheim reached Herrlshelm and cleared the Northern part of the town. Strong resistance was encountered throughout the entire bridgehead sector.

Sarrebourg Threat Grows

103d Inf. Div.'s sub-sector was to be backed up by one BCT of the 26th Inf. Div.

VI Corps' 7th Inf. Div. continued to be heavily engaged in the Hatten area with elements of 21st Panzer, 25th Panzer Grenadier, and 7th Parachute Divs., and one battalion of 47th Volksgrenadier Div. CC "A" and CC "B" of the 14th Armored Div. attacked in the Hatten area to restore Margriet positions. Before Sarrebourg, French reinforcements of Rosafeld and Herrlshelm withdrew under pressure to Hattenheim. German armor stopped a counterattack on Kraft.

In the VI Corps sector, CC "A" of the 14th Armored Div. gained control of the road between Ritterhaffen and Hatten, and CC "B" attacking from the south got three companies into the west edge of Hatten, where a battalion of the 7th Inf. Div. had been isolated. The 45th Inf. Div. continued to attack against stiff resistance.

Pivotality at Gumbelheim

Despite all efforts to reduce the troublesome Gumbelheim bridgehead, the Germans succeeded not only in maintaining it but in reinforcing it. When it had become apparent that the Hatten-Ritterhaffen effort was stalemated, the enemy transferred his attention to the Gumbelheim bridgehead. Accordingly, 10th SS Panzer Div., "Fronsbere" was ferried across the Rhine into the bridgehead. On 10 January, elements of 22d SS Panzer Grenadier Regiment were identified just southeast of Rohrwiler, and the following day elements of the 7th Parachute Div., which were originally destined to be committed at Hatten, were re-routed East across the Rhine and then ferried into the bridgehead. The purpose of this drive undoubtedly was to capture Sarrebourg.

In order to wipe out the Gumbelheim pocket, VI Corps directed the 12th Armored Div. to attack on Corps order through elements of the 7th Inf. Div. and destroy enemy forces west of the Rhine River in the Obendorf-Herrlshelm-Drusenheim area. The attack was to be given maximum support by Corps artillery. Day was 16 January.

On 15 January, while the 100th Inf. Div. was moving into line on the VI Corps front and bitter fighting continued in the Hatten area, preparations were made for the 12th Armored Div.'s attack. Sixth Army Group had authorized the Seventh Army Commander to use the 36th Inf. Div. and 12th Armored Div. as he saw fit. A plan to use the 12th Armored Div. for two days on an offensive mission was subsequently authorized.

Armored Attack Falls

Next day 12th Armored Div.'s drive made headway—initially. Intelligence sifted and all units withdrew west of the Zorn River. The First French Army's 2d Armored Div. attacked in the vicinity of Gumbelheim. House-to-house fighting continued in the Ritterhaffen-Hatten area, where the 7th Inf. Div. and 14th Armored Div. were in contact with elements of three enemy divisions.

By 17 January, the Gumbelheim pocket had been linked up with German forces to the north. The 12th Armored Div. continued its attack across the Zorn River, but on 18 January was forced to withdraw from Herrlshelm after heavy and bloody fighting. Sarrebourg fell. Next day a battalion of the 7th Inf. Div. was surrounded at Drusenheim. Farther west, in the Hiltche salient, the 45th Inf. Div. was attacking to regain

for their attack had failed to materialize. They stated that their own artillery output, in comparison to that which harassed their every movement, seemed like less than one per cent.

A PW captured on 8 January near Camp de Hiltche identified himself as being from the 410th Volk Artillery. He said his battery had received no permission to fire its guns because there were only 8 rounds of ammunition per gun on hand. However, PWs from crack assault units such as 11th SS Panzer Grenadier Div., stated that ammunition was plentiful.

Air Effective Despite Weather. Needless to say, Seventh Army's air support was of tremendous value in repelling the German offensive despite poor weather. XII Tactical Air Command, under Lt. General Gordon P. Sattle, flew 1,111 sorties during the week prior to 1 January. Fighter-bombers harassed enemy troop movements behind the lines and Tac/R planes brought back vital intelligence.

Snow and fog obscured the battlefield during most of January, but XII Tac was able to deal savage blows at enemy strongholds such as Wiltelshausen, Erbling and Hiltche. The latter suffered four attacks on 4 January. Herrlshelm was attacked four times on 10 January, when 137 missions were flown in close support. All efforts were made to bring close support to front-line troops.

Enemy Air Slept Up

The German Air Force, after two months' dormancy, showed signs of coming to life on 17 December—and from that day on scarcely a day of suitable flying weather passed without report of hostile air activity. On 1 January a flight of 14 mixed types made an abortive attack on installations along the Rhine in VI Corps sector. During the period 17 December-23 January, the enemy flew 118 missions consisting of 424 aircraft against Seventh Army. Fifteen aircraft were destroyed and 25 more probably destroyed. Practically all enemy air activity was in the area roughly bounded by Sarrebourg, Nevers-Hiltche-Lauterberg. One bomb was dropped at Sarrebourg on the night of 23 December. A disconcerting trick was the employment of enemy-operated P-44 over forward areas. Approximately 32 enemy P-44 sorties occurred during the period.

The jet-propelled ME-262 made its appearance in strength on 10 January. Three swift and elusive planes were used for strafing, low-level bombing and reconnaissance. During the next two weeks 60 ME-262s were reported, of which three were destroyed. It was the first time these planes had been used to any extent on any front—and after 20 January they apparently were shifted elsewhere.

Two Changes of Station

A decision involving only \$450, clarifying the dispositions of similar change of station orders, was rendered this week in favor of Comdr. Robert O'Hagan, (SC), USN, by the U. S. Court of Claims.

Commander O'Hagan sued for transportation of his wife and son from Miami, Fla., to New York, thence to Great Lakes, Ill., the Navy having paid transportation from Miami direct to Great Lakes. The officer contended that when he arrived at New York—to which place he

FROM THE FILE OF

The enemy drive to take Strasbourg was growing in intensity. On 10 January, First French Army troops were forced out of Gerbheim and, along contact with German infantry and armor was reported in the vicinity of Kraut—only 10 miles from Strasbourg. To the north, elements of CC "B" of the 12th Armored Div. succeeded in occupying two-thirds of Herrlisheim. A French request to the 2d French Armored Div. in XV Corps reserve West of the Vosges, for aid to relieve Strasbourg had to be refused. It was essential to keep some armor behind the Saar River line.

In view of the enemy buildup and thrust towards Strasbourg from the Colmar Pocket, Seventh Army on 11 January sent a G-3 representative to II French Corps in order to get first-hand information. The liaison officer sent back an urgent cable to the effect that II French Corps had only scanty reserves and that the situation could be considered serious. A French garrison at Obenheim had been forced to capitulate and fighting was heavy around Roserwald and Hertsheim.

The enemy in the Ombenheim bridgehead remained comparatively quiet on 11 January, although heavy artillery was received on the bridge south of Rohrweiler and Drusenheim. Small gains were made in the 45th Inf. Div. sector but heavy fighting continued in the Ellershoffen-Hatten area. Infantry and tanks were in close contact. CC "B" of the 12th Armored Div. had withdrawn to defensive positions southeast of Blieswiller after heavy fighting at Herrlisheim.

On the following day, VI Corps' position was bolstered by the Army Commander's decision to withdraw the 105th Inf. Div. from XV Corps left flank and shift it to VI Corps in place of relatively inexperienced infantry elements then in the line. Meanwhile, the

contact with the isolated 3d Inf. of the 12th Inf. Regt. and other elements cut off by enemy infiltration. Not much progress was made.

Withdrawal to Moder, River
Upon authority from Seventh Army, VI Corps on 20 January discontinued the enemy and commenced withdrawal to the general line Rothbach-Nieder-Moder-Hagenau-Blieswiller-Weyersheim. This shortened the 24-mile Corps front to 20 miles. A road junction one (1) kilometer southeast of Althorn was designated as limiting point between VI and XV Corps. Two battalions, the 2d Bn. of the 12th Inf. Regt. and the 2d Bn. of the 31st Inf. Regt., remained isolated and all efforts to rescue them failed, although some personnel managed to slip back through the lines.

On Sunday, 21 January, the withdrawal to the Moder River line was completed as planned except for a few minor elements. The Germans were left in thin air, and troops were disposed more favorably for Strasbourg's defense. The 86th Inf. Div. attached to VI Corps on 17 January, had now been moved into reserve positions east of the Vosges and had completed relief of the 12th Armored Div. on the Rohrweiler-Weyersheim line.

Plans For Colmar Offensive
While yielding ground temporarily in the Haguenau area, Sixth Army Group was planning to take the offensive elsewhere. On 18 January the Group issued a letter of instructions which provided for continuation of the defensive by Seventh Army while First French Army—assisted by American troops—moved to wipe out the troublesome Colmar Pocket south of Strasbourg. It was stipulated that Seventh Army would immediately turn over to the French the 2d French Armored Div. and one additional U. S. Armored

apparently been discouraged.

The month of January had seen Seventh Army engaged with more enemy armor than at any other time since D-Day in Southern France. The major effort in the attack which began 1 January had been provided by two Panzer and two Panzer Grenadier Divs., with the total strength of approximately 250 tanks and self-propelled guns, and a maximum strength at any one time of 170-180. The enemy had employed his tanks in comparatively large groups of 15 to 20 in his abortive efforts to break through the Alsace position. It is estimated that his total tank losses on the Seventh Army front were about 171.

Artillery Was Effective
Nor had the German infantry come off unscathed. According to G-2 estimates based on PW interrogations, enemy losses in killed and wounded on Seventh Army's front during the period 1-25 January was about 15,000. This figure includes only infantry combat effectives. The enemy lost 4,872 PWs during the same period.

Undoubtedly, most of the German casualties were caused by artillery. Forward observers, both air and ground, had many field days. During the period 1-10 January, Seventh Army's 80-odd artillery battalions fired a daily average of 43 rounds per 100-mm howitzer and 27 rounds per 155-mm howitzer. Counting troops attached for supply, Seventh Army expended 190,000 rounds of 105-mm and 48,000 rounds of 155-mm ammunition during the first ten days of January.

German artillery increased appreciably during the offensive, particularly at vital points, but was not comparable to the American in intensity. Several PWs from 19th Volksgrenadier Div., captured near Habkirchen on 1 January, remarked with some bitterness that the artillery support promised

had not been transferred with a delay en route—he found new orders awaiting, transferring him to Great Lakes, with another delay en route. The second orders did not expressly modify or revoke the earlier orders and were addressed to New York, creating the obvious impression, in the eyes of the court, that they were intended as a further change of station, inasmuch as they could not logically be expected to be received by Commander O'Hagan until he had executed the first orders.

The court also allowed claim of Col. Milton A. Hill, USA, for damage to goods on a transfer of station, the claim having been allowed by the War Department but rejected by the Comptroller General on the ground that the goods were in storage, not transit.

A third decision held Lt. Comdr. Roy W. Drier, USN, entitled to increased allowances for a dependent mother.

Ammunition Production

Under Secretary of War Patterson announced 3 April that the favorable progress of the battle had rendered it no longer necessary to continue construction of certain artillery and mortar ammunition plants which could not be completed and reach capacity of production until the late months of 1945.

"Requirements will be met," Mr. Patterson said, "by full output from the plants now in production and from the new plants that have early completion dates."