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**ARMOR AT BASTOGNE**  
A Research Report Prepared

by

Committee 4, Officers' Advanced Course

The Armored School

1948 - 1949

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**FORT KNOX, KENTUCKY**  
MAY 1949

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A RESEARCH REPORT PREPARED

BY

COMMITTEE 4, OFFICERS' ADVANCED COURSE

THE ARMORED SCHOOL

1948 - 1949

LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERT R. SUIERS

MAJOR LEM M. KELLY

MAJOR FREDERICK W. HAWKSWORTH

MAJOR IAN F. TURNER

CAPTAIN CLOVIS D. HEARD

CAPTAIN ELLIOTT C. CUTLER JR.

CAPTAIN JAMES T. KOLB

1st LIEUTENANT WILLIAM W. GIST, III

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PART I  
THE DEFENSE OF BASTOGNE

## PREFACE

The purpose of this report is the study of armor at BASTOGNE. The southern ARDENNES counteroffensive, of which this is a part, took place during December 1944 and January 1945. As this document is primarily a study of armor, strong emphasis has been placed on that role, while the roles played by other arms and units, even though they have actually been of equal importance in the action under review, have been of necessity either omitted or only briefly mentioned. The first chapter, however, is devoted to the initial employment of the 101st Airborne Division because its stalwart stand at strategically important BASTOGNE set the stage for the action of the armored units described in this report.

We have been fortunate in having at hand the facilities of the Library of The Armored School. Without the resources thus afforded us, as well as the capable and cheerful assistance of the personnel in charge, our search for information would have been very difficult. We have surveyed, as source material, the After Action Reports of the units actually involved plus those of adjacent units, pertinent publications of the Department of the Army, unit histories, several publications by recognized authors, and have also obtained personal interviews with some of the personnel concerned in the operation. Although we have had available a wealth of material concerning some of the large units, we have on the other hand had extreme difficulty in finding information about the smaller ones.

This operation was performed rapidly and thus allowed little time for detailed prior planning. Frequent changes of command, shifting of units, lack of written orders, failure to record oral orders, all resulting from the fluid action, were definitely understandable happenings but presented quite a puzzle to those of us who tried to sort them out. Obtaining maps of the area concerned caused us considerable trouble. Sheets which were plentiful during the war are now almost impossible to find. One section, a key part in our study, was not obtainable locally nor from Washington. We were very fortunate in that Major Ralph H. Click, who was among those present during the campaign, read an advertisement of ours and lent us his personal copy.

Major James B. Duncan, first the S-3 and later the Executive Officer of the 20th Armored Infantry Battalion, furnished us much valuable data. In addition to the detailed first-hand information given in several interviews, he produced a complete set of pertinent situation maps made immediately after the action.

Mr. Robert E. Merriam, author of Dark December, paid us a visit during his recent trip to The Armored School. He assisted us considerably in the clarification of certain obscure points.

It is desired to acknowledge the assistance given by the following officers: Lt Col Alexander Graham (then Colonel), formerly Commanding Officer, Division Artillery, 4th Armored Division, for information on the general situation; Lt Col Albin C. Irzyk (then Major), formerly Commanding Officer, 8th Tank Battalion, for details on the action of CCB of the 4th Armored Division; Lt Col Robert H. Parker, Jr., formerly Commanding Officer, 94th Armored Field Artillery

Battalion, for details of the final attack of Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division, through ASSENOIS; Major Edward Bautz, formerly Executive Officer, 37th Tank Battalion, for details on the action of that unit; Major Edward H. Markey, formerly S-4, CCB, 4th Armored Division, for details on the march to ARLON; Major Robert B. Crayton (then Captain), formerly Commanding Officer, Company C, 19th Tank Battalion, for details on the terrain, weather, and the action of his unit; and to Major L. J. L. Greene of the Research and Analysis Section of The Armored School for his advice and guidance in the organization and preparation of this study.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Problem

Armor and armored units played a vital role at BASTOGNE, Belgium, during the famous Battle of the Bulge. It is the intent of this report to examine the employment of armored elements during this phase of the campaign, both in the defense of the beleaguered city and in the brilliant attack that affected its relief. Primarily it is a study of armor in the mobile defense, and armor in a hastily planned and executed attack.

The basic principles of armored warfare are: mobility; shock action; surprise, gained by doing the unexpected; fire and maneuver, based on massed firepower and speed; concentration of effort; and cooperation, coordination, and teamwork of the combined arms. Successful armored action is characterized by deliberate planning and violent execution. In instances where these principles were violated we have sought to determine the reason and the result. Conclusions, regardless as to whether or not they are in accordance with these doctrines, are thoroughly analyzed in an attempt to determine their justification.

#### Major Units

Many armored units were employed in the BASTOGNE area during the period covered by this report. Numerous volumes would be required to cover completely the actions of each unit. Therefore, this report has been devoted to the activities of the 4th Armored Division and

CCB of the 10th Armored Division. The action of these units was varied enough to give an accurate picture of the employment of armor in the critical situation which existed for the Allies during those hectic days in late December 1944.

#### The German Home Front

Allied pressure and rapid gains, since the invasion of NORMANDY had greatly lowered the morale of the German people. Hitler realized this and, while recovering from the attack on his life on 20 July 1944, decided something must be done. His answer to the problem was the plan for a large scale German offensive. For this purpose he built up as large a force as possible; which, when assembled, consisted of four Armies.

#### The German Plan

The four Armies Hitler picked to carry out his plan were the Fifteenth, Sixth SS Panzer, Fifth Panzer, and Seventh. Fifteenth Army on the right was to continue its defensive mission in front of First US Army's left flank. The main effort through the center would be made by the Sixth SS Army under the command of SS General Sepp Dietrich, and Fifth Panzer Army under the command of General Von Manteuffel. Seventh Army would be given the mission of protecting the left flank.<sup>1</sup>

The German plan was to strike west between MONSIEUR and ECTERNACH from an assembly area north of the MOSELLE and west of COBLENZ. The Sixth SS Army would be on the right of center and the Fifth Panzer Army on the left. Each Army was to have a minimum of four panzer divisions. (See sketch No. 2, Appendix VII.)

With this plan and an overall mission to drive through the Allies, destroy thirty or more Allied divisions, and capture the city of ANTWERP, the German Army launched its ARDENNES offensive 16 December 1944. Hitler's dream of a large scale offensive to bolster the crumbling morale of the German people was now in action.

#### The Significance of BASTOGNE

There is no apparent relationship between the decision of the Germans to use virtually the same area for the ARDENNES offensive as they had used in their march into France in 1940. Hitler personally emphasized that the primary objective of the offensive was the destruction of enemy forces and not the acquisition of territory. The thrust toward ANTWERP seemed the best method to obtain this because it would cut off not only the Americans in the AACHEN area, but also the British who were deployed along the Dutch front. The mission called for the destruction of enemy forces north of the line ANTWERP, BRUSSELS, BASTOGNE.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Allied Situation

During the early part of December 1944, Allied plans called for the advancement of the northern and central groups of armies forward to the lower reaches of the RHINE River. It was believed that from these positions along the RHINE, the final crushing blows against the heart of Germany could be delivered. As a secondary effort the southern group of armies was directed to attack toward the RHINE. This move was designed to make the attack in the north easier by holding as many German forces as possible in the south.<sup>3</sup>

To carry out the above plan, maximum forces were concentrated

in the AACHEN area to insure rapid movement to the RHINE across the most favorable terrain. Remaining forces were employed to sustain the operations of the Third US Army in its planned offensive. The results of these concentrations of troops were that some sectors of the front were very lightly held. One such sector was that held by VIII Corps, on the right flank of First US Army. This corps was covering a distance of about 75 miles with very few troops. The divisions it did have were either battle weary from long periods of combat or "green", untested units. The maintenance of a very thin line to make more troops available in the north and south was a calculated risk taken by the Supreme Commander. This decision was based on the difficult terrain and the lack of any strategic objectives in the VIII Corps area.<sup>4</sup> It was into this zone that the German offensive broke on 16 December 1944. (See sketch No. 1, Appendix VII.)

#### The German Attack

The German attack hit a very weak and surprised Allied force as it rolled forward out of the dawn of that December morning. Many units fought courageously against the advancing enemy, but at best it was only delaying action against an overwhelming force. These actions harassed and hampered the enemy and slowed his advance, but did not stop him. By night of 20-21 December, BASTOGNE was completely encircled. The American units in the city were cut off from their supply lines and isolated from friendly forces on their flanks and to their rear.

## The Importance of BASTOGNE

The city of BASTOGNE lay in the path of the advancing German Fifth Panzer Army. At the beginning of the German offensive it was the site of VIII Corps Headquarters. It was a vital communication center controlling numerous good highways and smaller roads which converged on the city. As long as it was held by the Americans, it represented a thorn in the side of the German offensive.

The capture of the city would have given the enemy free access to the road net it controlled. As day after day went by, it became apparent to the German High Command that BASTOGNE would have to be taken. The town itself, with the immediate vicinity and cross-roads it controlled, was absolutely necessary for the rear area lines of communications and supply. Thus BASTOGNE had a vital meaning for the success or failure of the German offensive.<sup>5</sup> Such was the situation in BASTOGNE when the Third US Army was ordered to turn north.

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### NOTES ON CHAPTER I

<sup>1</sup>"Report of Operations, First US Army," 1 August 1944 to 22 February 1945, p. 103.

<sup>2</sup>Percy Ernst Schramm, "Preparation for the German Offensive in the ARDENNES," September to December 1944.

<sup>3</sup>"Report of the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, 6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945," p. 72.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 75.

<sup>5</sup>Percy Ernst Schramm, "Course of Events of the German Offensive in the ARDENNES," p. 9.

## CHAPTER II

### 101st Airborne Division

"I think that we should put them there," said Major General J. R. Whitely, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, SHAEP, "the place has the best road net in the area."<sup>1</sup> Thus began the movement of the 101st Airborne Division toward BASTOGNE, Belgium, with whose name their fame was to be thereafter inseparably linked.

When first reports began coming in over the wires at SHAEP that a breakthrough of undetermined strength had been made in the VIII Corps front during the early morning hours of the 16th of December 1944, Whitely turned to his troop list of reserves. This list indicated that the only available reserves on the continent were the 101st and 82d Airborne Divisions. These two divisions had been formed into the XVIII Airborne Corps under the acting command of Major General James M. Gavin. Employing this strategic reserve in a ground role had been the least of Supreme Headquarters' desires. It had been hoped that with the coming of spring these divisions could be used to exploit a success of one of the armies in crossing the great RHINE River barrier in Germany. Whitely's timely decision on the 17th of December was the difference between losing the critical communication hub at BASTOGNE and stopping the on rushing German panzers.

The 101st received its movement order while it was resting in Camp MOURMELON, France, having just completed 73 days of sustained combat in Holland. Companies were understrength and the division

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follow that McAuliffe decided to stop in BASTOGNE.

Even as the commanders spoke the 101st was proceeding to HERBOMONT under original orders. McAuliffe, with no quartering party to move the division into bivouac, directed that Colonel Kinnard, his accompanying G-3, and he take a swing west of town to see if they could locate an area. As it turned out, McAuliffe's decision placing the division west of town in a sheltered forward assembly area until it was ready to strike influenced the action to follow. Kinnard now found it necessary to get to the crossroads at SREIMONT west of town in an attempt to intercept the 101st column. Luckily the 82d Airborne Division had left France first and Kinnard directed an VIII Corps MP to divert the traffic following the 82d to BASTOGNE. This action smoothed the whole movement. Colonel Sherburne, Division Artillery Commander, was the first to arrive at the crossroads and posted an officer guide to insure that no units of the 101st slipped by in the approaching darkness. McAuliffe had placed the 501st Parachute Regiment at the head of the column and by 2300 on the evening of the 18th, Lt Colonel Julian J. Ewell, commanding the regiment, closed his unit into its area.

At 2200 the same evening, McAuliffe and Liddleton were trying to figure out where to commit the 501st. The situation being so fluid and obscure McAuliffe suggested to Liddleton that they send the 501st toward LONGVILLY, east of BASTOGNE, to develop the situation. Liddleton, knowing that units of the 28th Infantry Division and the 9th Armored Division were suppose to be holding in that vicinity, grabbed upon this idea as being a "good old Leavenworth solution

of the problem."<sup>2</sup> McAuliffe sent for Ewell of the 501st and outlined his mission. Specifically Ewell was told to seize a road junction well beyond LONGVILLY. In this way it was hoped the situation could be clarified and the enemy definitely located.

As the rest of the 101st closed on BASTOGNE during the night of the 18th of December, the 501st prepared to jump off at dawn. At 0600 on the 19th the 501st moved through town with the 1st Battalion leading. Ewell left the remainder of the regiment west of BASTOGNE, awaiting his orders to support the attack should it become necessary. The 501st met heavy resistance 5000 yards east of BASTOGNE and remained committed in that area for the rest of the operation.

On the morning of the 19th, McAuliffe ordered the 506th Parachute Regiment to proceed north on the road to NOVILLE and organize the high ground near FOY. As he issued the orders, Colonel William L. Roberts, commanding CCB of the 10th Armored Division, arrived at his CP. Roberts told McAuliffe that he had received a message from the 20th Armored Infantry Battalion in NOVILLE requesting permission to withdraw. Roberts wanted to know if McAuliffe would reinforce his unit. It appeared to be the first knowledge that the 101st had that someone else was fighting in the area with specific orders from VIII Corps to hold the town of NOVILLE. McAuliffe ordered the 1st Battalion of the 506th, commanded by Colonel La Prade, to proceed immediately to NOVILLE to support the 20th AIB. La Prade arrived at the CP of the 20th AIB at 1130, 19 December. The remainder of the battalion marched into NOVILLE

at 1330. Major William R. Desobry, commanding the 20th AIB, was in the midst of trying to stave off attacks from three directions. The 3d Battalion of the 506th was ordered to FOY on the afternoon of the 19th and the 2d Battalion was held in reserve. The 506th Regiment was now committed in the northern sector of BASTOGNE.

Mid-afternoon of the 19th saw MacLiff ordering the 502d Parachute Regiment to LONGCHAMPS west of the positions of the 506th.

By the morning of the 20th MacLiff found himself faced with the same situation as Roberts had the previous day. It was a decision between having the troops in NOVILLE withdraw to fight again or holding the ground at all costs. Corps gave its approval to the withdrawal and the operation began immediately. La Prade had been killed and Major Harwick, the executive officer, found himself hard-pressed to withdraw his battalion. The 3d Battalion of the 502d was ordered to attack toward NOVILLE parallel to and west of the road. It was hoped this would relieve the pressure on the units in the town since they were about to be encircled. This battalion established contact with the 3d Battalion of the 506th in the town of RECOGNE west of FOY and was ordered to halt. It was now felt that the 3d Battalion of the 502d might become involved in a costly fight to relieve NOVILLE. On the afternoon of the 20th the units in NOVILLE fought their way south to FOY.

MacLiff now had his 501st, 506th, and 502d Parachute Regiments arranged in a semicircular defense from NEFFÉ on the east to LONGCHAMPS on the northwest protecting the approaches of BASTOGNE.

In the meantime on the 19th of December, Colonel Joseph H. Harper, commanding the 327th Glider Infantry, took over his command post at MAUDE ST. ETI ENNE. The regiment had no sooner settled down than a call for help came from the 501st east of BASTOGNE. The 1st Battalion was dispatched immediately to support the right flank of the 501st which was being infiltrated. At 0400 on the 20th, the 327th Command Post and the 2d Battalion were moved to BASTOGNE. Without pause the 2d Battalion moved straight into MARVIE, east of town, and took over the village. The 3d Battalion of the 327th remained in the vicinity of FLAHERGE contacting the 502d on their right in LONGCHAUMPS. This final movement fully committed the troops of the 101st Division.

In the preceding actions it must be remembered that although McMuliffe was briefed on his mission in BASTOGNE by General Middleton, the VIII Corps Commander, McMuliffe gave no indication that he knew CCB of the 10th Armored Division had committed teams in NOVILLE, LONGVILLY, and WARDIN. Had McMuliffe known this, he certainly would not have sent the 501st down the road to LONGVILLY without securing further information from CCB of the 10th Armored Division. McMuliffe and Roberts both reported to the VIII Corps Commander at the same hour and were briefed on their missions. Both units were operating under their own commanders and this undoubtedly is the reason for the lack of coordination in the initial phases of the battle.

General Middleton attached CCB of the 10th Armored to the 101st on the 21st of December and they remained attached for the duration of the operation.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup>Colonel S. L. Marshall, BASTOGNE the First Eight Days,  
(Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1946), p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, p. 31.

## CHAPTER III

### CCB, 10TH ARMORED DIVISION MOVES TO BASTOGNE

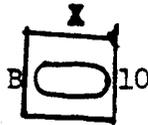
Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division played a prominent role along with the gallant 101st Airborne Division in holding BASTOGNE while Third US Army elements swung north. Due to their mobility, armor was first to arrive on the scene; and, although fewer in numbers and historically less conspicuous, can well be accredited for the initial salvation of the city. In this chapter we shall see how the combat command was shifted suddenly from a quiet sector near LETZ to rush to the assistance of the rapidly disintegrating Reserve Command, 9th Armored Division. The 9th Armored had been in VIII Corps reserve backing up the infantry divisions on the line; and, when the German attack started, it was committed to fighting hopeless delaying actions as the American forces fell back. We shall see how CCB, 10th Armored Division, moved into this fluid, vague situation stripped completely of sources of intelligence; and how it was deployed initially to block the three principal entries into the city.

On the crucial 16th day of December, Combat Command B, 10th Armored Division, was in the vicinity of REVELLING, France, undergoing a rehabilitation period from previous combat. Rumors, emanating from the north, circulated the vague story of a German attack on the First US Army front. Events developed rapidly. Early in the morning of 17 December<sup>1</sup> the combat command received orders to move

immediately to the vicinity of LUXEMBOURG. By 1320 elements hit the road, and by 2155 the rearguard closed in the vicinity of MERL and STRASSEN about three kilometers west and slightly north of the capital city. Here the combat command was placed on a one hour alert to move on division order to counter any enemy threat.

The troops assigned to CCB at this time consisted roughly of four battalions; one tank, two armored infantry, and one armored artillery battalion with normal complement of cavalry, antiaircraft, and engineers (see Organizational Chart No. 1).<sup>2</sup> With these elements Colonel William L. Roberts, venerable commanding officer, molded three teams of combined arms. Team Cherry, commanded by Lt Col Henry T. Cherry, (See Organizational Chart No. 2); Team Desobry, commanded by Major William R. Desobry (See Organizational Chart No. 3); Team O'Hara, commanded by Lt Col James O'Hara, (See Organizational Chart No. 4).

Shortly after 0900 on the 18th, orders came from division for CCB to join VIII Corps. A liaison officer, Major Johnson, S-2 of CCB, departed immediately for General Middleton's headquarters, then at BASTOGNE, Belgium. Simultaneously the column pressed on to ARLON to await the instructions of the Corps Commander. Major Johnson arrived at the headquarters in BASTOGNE at about noon and immediately went into a huddle with the G-3. The extent of the German attack still wasn't completely apparent, however, the original troops of the thinly held VIII Corps front were being severely mauled, and were rapidly falling back. Information, friendly and hostile, was paramountly vague and confused.



Hqs & Hqs Co, CCB

3rd Tk Bn (- Co C)

20th Afb (- Co C)

54th AFB (- Co A & C)

Co C, 21st Tk Bn

420th AFA Bn

Stray B, 796th A.A Bn

Co C, 55th AFB

Trp D, 90th Cav Sqd

Co C, 609th TD Bn (- 1pla)

TEAM CHERRY



Hqs & Hqs Co, 3rd Tk Bn

3rd Tk Bn (- Co B & 2 plus Co D)

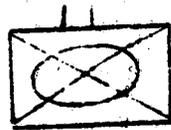
Co C, 20th AIB

1 Pln, Co C1 609th TD Bn

3rd Pln, Co C, 55th AEB

2nd Pln, Trp D, 90th Cav Sqd

TEAM O'HARA



(7)

54th AIB (- Co A & C)

Co C, 21st Tk Bn

1 Pln, Co D, 3d Tk Bn

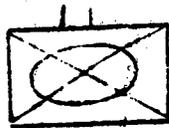
1 Pln, Co C, 55th AEB

3d Pln, Trp D, 90th Cav Sqd

1 Pln, Co C, 609th TD Bn

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART NO. 4

TEAM O'HARA



(7)

54th AIB (- Co A & C)

Co C, 21st Tk Bn

1 Pln, Co D, 3d Tk Bn

1 Pln, Co C, 55th AEB

3d Pln, Trp D, 90th Cav Sqd

1 Pln, Co C, 609th TD Bn

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART NO. 4

Reports were few and far between in addition to being exaggerated and often incoherent. About all that could be stated positively was "that the situation was fluid and obscure."<sup>3</sup> CCB was to move into an "assembly area" just southeast of BASTOGNE which the G-3 indicated on his situation map.

When the column reached ARLON, Colonel Roberts went ahead for more detailed instructions and by 1600 was in the presence of the VIII Corps veteran commander, Major General Troy H. Middleton.<sup>4</sup>

"The 28th Division and the 9th Armored Division are ahead of us," (east) said the General, "but badly cut up. The situation is fluid. How many teams can you make up?"<sup>5</sup>

Colonel Roberts replied that he was on the road in three balanced teams plus a battalion of field artillery in direct support of the combat command.

General Middleton's tone was terse, his directions concise: "CCB will move without delay in three teams to the following positions to counter enemy threats. One team to the southeast of VARDIN (610517); one team to the vicinity of LONGVILLY (639591); and one team to the vicinity of NOVILLE (588646). Move with the utmost speed. Hold these positions at all costs."<sup>6</sup>

There was no mistaking these instructions. The situation was not only "fluid," it was critical. Time was of the essence. The General expected his armor to exploit its speed. If the BASTOGNE area were to remain blue on General Eisenhower's situation map, it was up to CCB.

Roberts, who had witnessed mass retreat at CHATEAU-THIERY in 1918, recalled a vital factor: "Sir, there will be stragglers. I want authority to use these men."<sup>7</sup> To this the corps commander agreed.<sup>8</sup>

One mile south of BASTOGNE, Roberts met the vanguard of his column in the gathering winter dusk. As the team passed by in order, O'Hara, 420th AFA, Cherry, and Desobry, Colonel Roberts relayed instructions to each of the commanders. After briefly scanning a map for a favorable position, the armored artillery was sent into position just east of the town. The progress of the units through the streets of BASTOGNE, jammed with stragglers and bustling corps personnel, was greatly impeded. It became necessary to commandeer stragglers as IP's to supplement those which were organic to the combat command. At least one team (Cherry) employed its cavalry to guide the way.

At 1815 CCB was placed under direct control of the VIII Corps. Later the 35th and 158th Combat Engineer Battalions were attached to the combat command. Both units were used as infantry to supplement the defense of the city; the 158th to the north in the vicinity of LUZERY and FOY; the 35th to the south and south-east toward MARVIE and RHOIFOSSE.

For the balance of the night BASTOGNE was free of enemy action, but the affect of his advance was apparent. Hundreds of stragglers jammed the roads moving south and west. No attempt was made to stop these troops because Colonel Roberts did not feel that

it was proper to do so as long as a superior headquarters occupied the city. At times the confusion and terror of these bewildered refugees bordered on panic. One artillery organization abandoned their guns right in the city streets; although later an officer made them return to get them. Corps headquarters withdrew during the night to NEUFCHATEAU. In spite of the imminence of the Germans upon their very backs, many of the vehicles departed from BASTOGNE with their headlights blazing merrily. The Germans could hardly have missed the fact that troops were clearing out of the city. But for the 28th Infantry Division's stubborn stand at WILTZ and the 9th Armored Division's roadblocks east of LONGVILLY, the Germans might well have seized BASTOGNE that night.

CCB's three armored teams girded themselves for combat. Team Desobry probed north through FOY toward NOVILLE in a column formation. At about 2200 his advance guard, consisting of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, 20th AIB, and a section of the 1st Platoon, Company D, 90th Cavalry Squadron, entered NOVILLE to find it free of organized troops, friendly or hostile. Straggling GI's drifted in from the direction of HOUFFALIZE. Within an hour the complete team closed on the town. In the darkness Major Desobry decided that the establishment of a complete defense would be impractical, so a hasty perimeter of three outposts was established about a half a mile from NOVILLE where the ground overlooks the town. Each outpost was composed of a section of medium tanks and about a platoon of armored

infantry. One group was posted to the northeast on the important road to HOUFFALIZE, one on the BOURCY road to the east, and the third to the northwest on the road to VAUX. (See Sketch No. 1) The engineer platoon was directed to put in hasty mine fields, and, although the holes to receive them were dug, the mines were not emplaced due to the continued arrival of stragglers. Acting on Colonel Robert's instructions to commandeer these people, Desobry collected many stray infantrymen and attempted to fit them into his organization. However, it was later found that these demoralized individuals were of little value when things got hot. One organized platoon of fourteen men and an officer from CCA, 9th Armored Division, was the exception to this rule. They stayed with the team and fought well in the action which followed.

Shortly before 1800, on the high ground south of WARDIN, Team O'Hara stopped for the night. (See Sketch No. 1) A few outposts were put out to secure the area, but no strong defense was attempted. The night was quiet except for stragglers passing through; most of them rear area troops of the battered 28th Infantry Division, holding WILTZ to the southeast.

Team Cherry wheeled east to LONGVILLY in two teams, Hyduke and Ryerson, after detaching the trains in an assembly area near BASTOGNE. At 1920 1st Lt Edward P. Hyduke, commanding Company A, 3d Tank Battalion, halted the leading elements just west of LONGVILLY. The town, which nestled in a depression

between several adjacent hills, was jammed with the vehicles of elements of CCR, 9th Armored Division. Colonel Cherry and his S-3 went forward to ascertain the intentions of this outfit and to learn what he could of the enemy's advance. With one battalion of infantry, two batteries of artillery, and supporting tanks, CCR had set up roadblocks east and north of the town, and had received several attacks during the evening. At that time they had no orders, no plan, and did not know whether they would pull out or remain in LONGVILLY. At this very moment, although, of course, the Americans did not know it, the German columns were bypassing the town to the south. Cherry returned to his column refueling along the BASTOGNE road. He directed Lt Hyduke to reconnoiter the ground west of the town and occupy it with his forces before dawn. Ryerson's forces were to remain approximately where they were until there was a change in the situation of CCR. Colonel Cherry then returned via MAGERET to BASTOGNE with the report for Colonel Roberts. Along the route he observed CCR's trains moving rearward indicating CCR had made a decision. Colonel Roberts directed Cherry to cover this force if it withdrew, but to hold LONGVILLY in any case.

By 2339 the weary elements of CCR began their withdrawal. Colonel Cherry received the word from Lt Hyduke after midnight that he and Ryerson held the LONGVILLY area alone. This bad news was supplemented by the report of a wounded tanker that his vehicle had been hit near MAGERET. Another source reported a strong

German force in this town. The enemy was on the road between Team C and its CP at NEFFE. (See Sketch No. 1)

Captain William F. Ryerson, commanding Company C, 20th Armored Infantry Battalion, was directed by radio to dispatch a patrol westward from LONGVILLY to reopen the road to NEFFE. Two squads of armored infantry reinforced with a commandeered tank destroyer set out on this mission. East of MAGERET they dismounted and stealthily approached the village. Quickly they observed at least a company of German infantry reinforced with several tanks near the crossroads in the town. This they decided was too hot a target for their forces, so they scurried back to Captain Ryerson with the report.

Thus CCB was disposed on the night of their arrival at BASTOGNE. For an all too brief interval, the teams were precisely as had been directed in the corps commander's orders. Three teams in three isolated positions, widely dispersed, with long lines of communication, and without lateral contacts, or infantry support. Approaching were the aggressive and victorious German panzer columns; eager to seize what they could, particularly a prize like BASTOGNE, the principal communications center in the area. It was most fortunate for the Allied cause that the Germans had adopted the ricocheting tactics of an armored force in the exploitation; dodging to the right or left of a center of resistance, ever seeking an unopposed avenue westward to the LEUSE. However, the grey foggy morning of the 19th of December was to bring sharp action to each of the

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>After Action Report, 3d Tk Bn, states that CCB was alerted for this movement to LUXEMBOURG at 1830, on the 16th of Dec 44.

<sup>2</sup>Roberts' Interview, M-41, p. 1, and After Action Report, 3d Tk Bn. A slight discrepancy exists between the troop organization listed in the interview of Col Roberts and the After Action Report, 3d Tk Bn, in so far as the latter lists only two platoons of Co C, 20th AIB, rather than the whole company, and omits the tank destroyers and cavalry elements entirely. Later in the same report, however, both the 2d Platoon, Troop D, 90th Cavalry Squadron, and a tank destroyer unit are mentioned, indicating the discrepancy is in the 3d Tk Bn report.

<sup>3</sup>Roberts' Interview, M-41, p. 162.

<sup>4</sup>Col Roberts' Interview mentions the fact that Brig Gen McAuliffe, acting commander of the 101st Airborne Division, was present at the Corps Command Post when he visited it. He elaborated no further, but it is inferred that CCB at the time became aware of the intended employment of the 101st in the vicinity of BASTOGNE.

<sup>5</sup>Gen Middleton's remarks are extracted from Col Roberts' Interview, p. 2.

<sup>6</sup>Gen Middleton's remarks are extracted from Col Roberts' Interview, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>Col Roberts' remarks are extracted from Col Roberts' Interview, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup>Roberts' Interview, M-41, p. 3. Gen Middleton's confirmation of this agreement was as follows: "190106 Maj Gen Middleton directs that you have authority to take over all or any part of Reserve Command, 9th Armd Div, in case they show the slightest inclination to retire. Anything you do to prevent falling back in the area will be given fullest backing."

## CHAPTER IV

### WITHDRAWAL

By sending the armor to NOVILLE and LONGVILLY, General Middleton had hoped to thwart the attacking panzers well to the east and north of BASTOGNE. However, two factors of this plan did not lend themselves to success. First, as has been pointed out, the Germans were by-passing centers of resistance and using secondary routes. Second, a single combat command was not a strong enough force to hold on to these scattered positions without support. We shall see how two teams of CCB fared under these unforeseeable circumstances. These actions will be dealt with in rather minute detail in order to stress the vigor of the German assault, the lack of combat intelligence available to our forces, and the reactions of individuals and small units in a rapidly fluctuating situation.

#### Team Desobry at NOVILLE

At 0430 on the morning of December 19th, stragglers suddenly stopped streaming into Major Desobry's lines in front of NOVILLE. Immediately the troops became alert and suspicious; Germans were close at hand.

At 0530 a group of five to eight half-tracks clattered out of the darkness before the roadblock to the east of the town, along the road to COURCY. The men on the roadblock could not be sure these vehicles contained Germans or more American stragglers. Since mines

had not been laid on the road, and the two medium tanks supporting were several hundred yards to the rear, there was no physical barrier to stop the approaching vehicles. The first sentry stationed along the bank above the road called out "halt" four times before the leading vehicle ground to a stop directly beneath the men of the outpost. The driver muttered something in German. This was enough for the Americans. They immediately showered the vehicle with grenades from their vantage point on the overhanging bank. Many of the grenades landed directly in the carrier and exploded among the screaming Germans. The rest of the enemy quickly came off their carriers and took positions in the ditches on either side of the road. A sharp skirmish developed between these men and the outpost with grenades and small arms. After about twenty minutes, Sgt Leon D. Gantt, who commanded the outpost, realized that he would have to withdraw in face of this superior force. He gave the order to pull back about a hundred yards so as to escape the "potatoe masher" grenades which the Germans were flinging about. The two medium tanks supporting the outpost about a hundred yards away did not fire in spite of all the shooting which had gone on. This was probably because they feared hitting their own men, and also because it was too dark to see the German vehicles down the road. As soon as Sgt Gantt's men withdrew, the Germans darted back to their half-tracks, wheeled about, and disappeared in the darkness from whence they had come. Sgt Gantt went to 2d Lt Allen L. Johnson, commanding the two tanks, and asked why he hadn't

... Johnson claimed he hadn't been sure of what to do; which, as has been previously stated, seemed plausible. At this time, however, when his front was cleared of friendly troops he fired several rounds down the road. It was improbable that these rounds caused much damage. At dawn (about 0730) the roadblock fell back to NOVILLE as had been its instructions the night before from Major Desobry.

The significance of this action is enhanced to almost remarkable proportions in a statement by Colonel S. L. A. Marshall in his book, "Men Against Fire," as follows:

Again, could there be a better example of the miraculous possibilities of a small volume of fire than the incident at the BOURCY roadblock to the north of BASTOGNE on the morning of December 19, 1944? Twelve American armored infantrymen, twelve very nervous infantrymen fired erratically in the darkness at a group of approaching enemy soldiers. They fired and fell back. They were looking for better ground. They thought that they had probably turned back a German reconnaissance element and that their fire may have hit four or five men.

But the German group was the point of an infantry regiment which was leading the column of the 2d Panzer Division. It had recoiled on meeting the surprise fire. The commander reported, quite incorrectly, that he was being opposed by superior forces. The word was passed through two higher headquarters and a corps ordered 2d Panzer Division to change its route of march, and swing northward, thereby wasting precious time and traversing unnecessary space. Had the enemy made a good lunge against the BOURCY roadblock, he could have turned southward and entered BASTOGNE before the American forces had assembled. The whole body of evidence from our own and enemy sources supports the conclusion that had this happened, the ARDENNES campaign would have seen a far different course and the enemy would not have been checked short of the line of the MEUSE.

About a half a mile west and north the men on the HOUFFALIZE

1  
The outposts listened intently to the sound of the action on the road. Shortly after the sound of the firing had subsided, the tanks approached their position. Sgt Major Jones, Hqs Co, 20th AIB, had stationed himself about 75 yards ahead of the roadblock in a foxhole cut in the sloping bank beside the road. It seemed to him that these tanks sounded like the rumble of our M4's, and he believed more stragglers were coming in. As they neared his isolated foxhole, he shouted "Halt", and fired a quick burst from his BAR over the bow of the leading vehicle. The tank halted and Sgt Jones heard the occupants speaking in English; however, his caution was quickly restored by a burst of most unfriendly sounding .50 caliber fire inches from his head. Someone cried "Cease fire, they're friendly troops."<sup>2</sup> This may have come from the occupants of the tanks or from the roadblock behind. However, the two M4's supporting the roadblock, failed to heed the cry whether it was a warning or a hoax. The American tank on the right or east side of the road fired two rounds at the leading tank. Six quick rounds were received in reply, ending the indecision as to whether the force was friendly or hostile. Both M4's were destroyed in this deadly volley; however, the ruined vehicles somewhat blocked the road and provided some cover from which a friendly half-track could fire its machine guns on the enemy. A hot engagement blazed away for about an hour, during which an unsuccessful attempt was made to get at the enemy armor with an infantry borne bazooka. At 0730 the fog descended

sufficiently far for the platoon to disengage itself from the fire and fall back on NOVILLE. As the group withdrew the Germans were reinforcing their tanks with infantry.

The roadblock on the VAUX road had heard the action taking place at the more easternly positions, but had not itself been attacked. As they withdrew to NOVILLE in the fog, however, sounds indicated the approach of the enemy in that quarter too.

Capt. Gordon Geiger, Headquarters Commandant, 20th AIB had set up a perimeter along the outskirts of NOVILLE during the night of the 18th - 19th. This force consisted of a thin screen of infantry with automatic weapons reinforced with tanks and assault guns at the principal points of entry to the town. The limited number of infantry was mainly on the north and east circumference with the south and west guarded with lone tanks. This perimeter, though weak in spots, aided in the defense and afforded a line upon which the retiring outposts could fall back.

The roadblock crews had no sooner gotten back to the town when a German 88-mm began firing out of the fog from the north. The Germans, though they couldn't see at all, could tell from their maps that their fire would cause havoc in NOVILLE, as the HOUFFALIZE road, along which they were firing, ran straight into the town. Nor were they wrong. Within half an hour of continuous pounding three half-tracks, and a jeep were destroyed within the confined area of NOVILLE. Miraculously, no personnel were hurt.

At about 0830 two Mark VI "Tiger" tanks loomed out of the

not 20 yards from one of Capt Gieger's machine gun positions on the HOUFFALIZE road. Within visual range also was a friendly M4 tank and a 51-mm gun. Immediately, everyone opened fire; the machine gun crew employing a bazooka. All of these crews claimed credit for these Tigers as both began to burn. Their crews attempted to bail out of the fiery hulks and escape in the fog, but it was improbable that many escaped in the hail of small arms fire that greeted them. At any rate no prisoners were taken. Some infantry had advanced behind the Mark VI's, but discreetly withdrew at the sound of firing.

At about 0930 the enemy began a series of probes from the west, where the defenses were thin. The officer in charge of this sector, 2d Lt Eugene Todd, was new in action and felt that the whole German Army was upon him. When he requested permission to withdraw, Capt Geiger replied "Hell, hold your ground and fight."<sup>3</sup> Lt Todd courageously complied.

The rumbling of vehicles and tanks and other sounds of a build-up indicated to the defenders that a major attack was developing beyond the shroud of fog. Suddenly at 1030 the mist rose like a curtain. The landscape was filled with tanks. Capt Omar R. Billett, commanding officer of Company B, 20th AIB, saw more than 30 tanks from his second story schoolhouse OP. There was no one who could see all of the enemy's forces from any one spot, but it was estimated that there were at least 50 or 60 tanks. Surely an entire panzer division was attacking. On the ridge toward VAUX fourteen tanks

... in a similar line sending them to their doom. Everything  
... fire was brought to bear on these invaders. Even .50  
... machine guns, which obviously were ineffective against  
the armor, hailed heavily on the tanks sending off streams of  
ricocheting tracer bullets. At a range of about 800 yards, the  
tanks halted and began firing into the town. For an hour the  
fight raged in the swirling fog. Intermittently the curtain raised  
and lowered. Nine of the fourteen tanks were disabled on the ridge;  
three of them burning, which made them positive kills. One of the  
remaining five charged down the highway, and was set ablaze about  
500 yards from the town. So effective was the fire of our tanks,  
tank destroyers (which arrived just as the panzer force was first  
revealed) and assault guns that six other German tanks did not  
withdraw after the engagement. One panther was miraculously dis-  
abled by a single round from the 37-mm gun of an M8 armored car.  
Two other enemy tanks, which were at a closer range than the tanks  
on the VAUX ridge when the curtain went up, charged the command post  
at about 25 LPH in the manner of the "well known irresistible force."<sup>4</sup>  
Confusion reigned for a few minutes, but a 105-mm assault gun opened  
fire on the leading tank at a range of thirty yards. This round  
stopped the tank but did not disable its gun or crew. The German  
fired at the AG and missed; then he tried to back off. One more  
105 round finished him. The second German tank was destroyed by  
an M4 close at hand.

To the east of the town the Germans attacked with infantry.

...right the friendly fog machine...  
...members of foot troops advancing across the flat ground.  
...intent had been to sneak into assaulting distance under  
cover of the mist, but when the fog raised prematurely they  
turned and ran. Over 700 yards of open ground had to be covered  
before the nearest cover could be reached, and our automatic  
weapons fire cut them to pieces as they retreated.

During the fight the enemy had been placing heavy indirect  
artillery fire on the town.<sup>5</sup> In response to Major Dosobry's urgent  
request the 420th Armored Field Artillery, trying to support each  
of the elements of the combat command from a position east of  
BASTOGNE, fired at maximum range; their shells barely clearing the  
buildings of NOVILLE. It is doubtful if their fire knocked out  
any tanks; and, of course, the German artillery was beyond range,  
but, with exception of the sneak attempt on the right, it prevent-  
ed German infantry from joining the attack.

Major James B. Duncan, S-3 of the 20th AIB, speaking of this  
action several years later, remarked that during the morning the most  
difficult task of the staff was trying to make the tank commanders  
change their positions after firing. The targets were just too  
numerous for the tankers to spend time maneuvering their vehicles  
to alternate firing positions. Somehow the tank destroyer crews  
did not fall victim to this mistake, and made frequent changes in  
their location. As a result, one tank destroyer hit by enemy  
artillery was their only casualty; where as the tanks sustained

numerous losses. Here is conclusive evidence that a tank must not completely sacrifice its mobility in order to employ its fire power repeatedly.

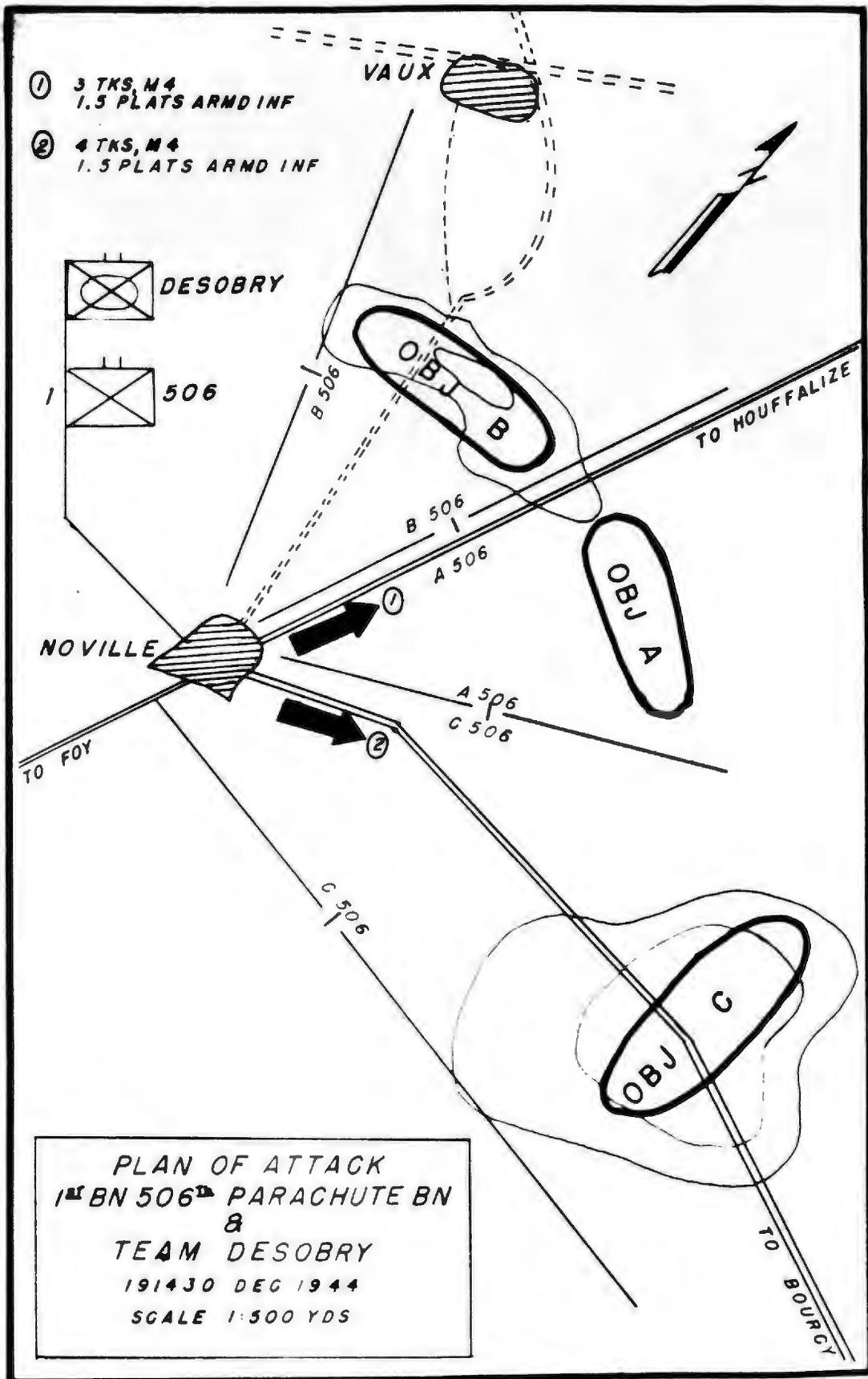
During the height of the attack, Major Desobry had requested of Colonel Roberts to withdraw to FOY. This request had been motivated by two factors. First, the ground was defensively poor, particularly when dealing with superior forces; as has been explained previously the ground now in German hands commanded NOVILLE with excellent routes into the town. Secondly, contact patrols which had been sent forward the rear that morning had not returned, indicating that the enemy might already be on the only escape route. Colonel Roberts, after conferring with General Higgins, Assistant Division Commander of the newly arrived 101st Airborne Division, and being promised immediate support of one parachute battalion, replied to the request as follows: "You can use your own judgement about withdrawing, but I'm sending a battalion of paratroopers to reinforce you."<sup>6</sup>

"I'll get ready to counterattack as soon as possible,"<sup>7</sup> returned Major Desobry.

By 1130 all was quiet, except for a few harassing rounds of artillery that did little damage to the defenders. At this time Lt Col James L. La Prade, Battalion Commander, 1st Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry, accompanied by his staff arrived at Desobry's CP. His troops, he said, were behind him along the FOY road eager to fight but short of equipment, arms, and ammunition,

due to their sudden departure from MOURMELON the day previous. Major Desobry immediately ordered his S-4, 2d Lt George C. Rice, to return to FOY for the necessary supplies. Enroute, Rice met the advancing 1st Battalion and inquired for their S-4. He was told this officer had returned to BASTOGNE, so he questioned them as to their most critical needs. This proved to be ammunition of all types. Off dashed Lt Rice to FOY where he loaded up his jeep with hand grenades and M1 ammunition. Returning to the paratroop columns advancing on either side of the road, Lt Rice made a running issue of his load. Two more leap-frogging resupply missions were made before the head of the column reached NOVILLE. On these trips Rice supplemented his jeep with an overloaded truck, and dumped the loads in piles according to type along the road. The troopers threaded among these dumps as they advanced to secure that which they individually needed. Emergency type rations that the tankers carried on their vehicles in quantity were distributed on an individual basis, in a manner which could most accurately be described as "bumming."

Colonel La Prade and Major Desobry immediately enjoined in an attack plan embodying a coordinated armor-infantry assault on all the high ground north and east of the town now in the hands of the foe. It was to be a "mutual affair"<sup>8</sup> since the status of one unit to the other had not been defined. The paratroopers would attack with three companies abreast, supported with tanks and armored infantry teams along the two main roads. (See Sketch No. 2.) Company C of the 500th would attack on the right along the axis of



the BOURCY road to seize the high ground to the east; Company A, with its left along the HOUFFALIZE road, would assail the ridge northeast of the town; while Company B, with its right on same road, would strike for the VAUX ridge, now a German tank graveyard.

Shortly after 1430 the attack got under way. There was no artillery preparation, and the unchallenged German batteries harassing the town succeeded in preventing proper reconnaissance and orderly assembly. The assaulting companies had barely cleared the town when a German tank effort over the very same ground descended upon them. Company A and the armor on both roads was immediately blocked by heavy tank fire and forced to return to the town. Company C on the right flank was hit hard, but managed to keep moving. Likewise on the left Baker Company was able to continue the advance until they reached the slopes of their objective. At this time the Germans launched tank-infantry counterattacks at the two flank companies. Again the friendly fog descended, shrouding a vicious small arms battle in which both sides could hardly see each other. At dusk, these gallant companies withdrew again to NOVILLE.

In the lull which followed, the paratroopers mingled with the infantry on the perimeter, and took the opportunity to dig in. Shortly after 1700 German artillery began anew its interdiction of the town. In the middle of this shelling a platoon of the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion arrived to bolster the defense.<sup>9</sup> It was decided, after a conference with General Higgins, that the

town would be defended for the night by elements of the 1st Battalion, 506th, holding the perimeter, with Team Desobry in the center of the town as a mobile striking force.

At 1800 an 88-mm shell entered the command post, and struck down both the infantry and the armored commanders. Lt Col La Prade was killed outright, and Major Desobry was wounded so severely that he was immediately evacuated. Major Robert F. Harwick, executive officer, 1st Battalion, 506th, assumed command of the combined force; Major Charles L. Husted took over the armor.

Throughout the night the Germans engaged in a series of probing attacks with tanks in twos and threes supported by infantry. The troopers were kept busy beating off these fog enshrouded sorties with bazookas and small arms. An occasional round of artillery fell in the town; however, several ammunition supply trucks were successfully brought forward from FOY. Sounds of a major build-up drifted in to the nervous defenders, but for some reason the enemy did not attack in strength throughout the night.

On 20 December action was vigorously renewed in the NOVILLE area. Two German tanks came roaring through the fields along the HOUFFALIZE road at 0730. As they reached the buildings on the edge of town they pulled to a halt in mutually protecting positions. Their guns blazed into the village. One American jeep was hit and demolished. Not ten yards from the invading tanks a para-troop bazooka team set one tank aflame with their first rocket. Staff Sgt Michael Lesniak, a tank commander, dismounted from his

vehicle to reconnoiter the situation on foot. Peering around a building he ascertained the exact position of the remaining enemy tank. Then he returned to his own tank, rotated his gun in the required direction, alerted his gunner, and drove directly into the main street in the path of the German. One quick round finished the surprised foe. But another enemy tank lurked on the road beyond in the fog. Apparently its mission had been to support the other two tanks or to cover them in the event of a hasty withdrawal. Perhaps it was just more timid or more discreet. At any rate it suddenly opened fire blindly along the road. One round struck Sgt Lesniak's tank in its turret, damaging the traversing mechanism so he was unable to rotate his gun to the left. Fortunately, the crew was unhurt.

By 1000 the fog thickened to "soup." Visibility was about ten yards. With a roar a Tiger tank drove blindly into NOVILLE. Evidently the Mark VI hadn't realized he had come so far, and he ground to a halt directly in front of the building used as the CP of Company B, 20th AIB. Slowly the big SS rotated to cover the door, so huge it practically touched the entrance. Capt Billett, and other in the headquarters, experienced several trying seconds. Again it was Sgt Lesniak to the rescue. Rotating his crippled turret slightly to the right he fired three quick rounds into the German without injuring him. Confused as to the source of this volley, the Tiger began to back up. As it did so, its track passed over a parked jeep, crushing it to a pile of junk. With

the jeep under one track the Mark VI tipped dangerously. This was enough for the crew, out of the tank they came, and sprinted away in the fog. Before the team departed from town, this undamaged Mark VI was destroyed with thermite grenades. Colonel Roberts fumed because the prize wasn't brought back to BASTOGNE, but drivers were becoming too scared to accomplish salvage missions.

Throughout the morning the tank destroyers of the 2d Platoon, Company C, 705th TD Bn, stationed south and southwest of the village, heard hostile track vehicles beyond the fog. Once a high velocity round from an unknown quarter scored a direct hit on one of their vehicles, killing the gunner and injuring the rest of the crew. Shortly after the Tiger tank paid its call on Company B's CP the fog suddenly lifted and the sky cleared. Fifteen German tanks appeared in front of the TD's heading for their own lines at about 1,000 yards range. Four of these tanks were disabled by the tank destroyers before their fire became ineffectual.

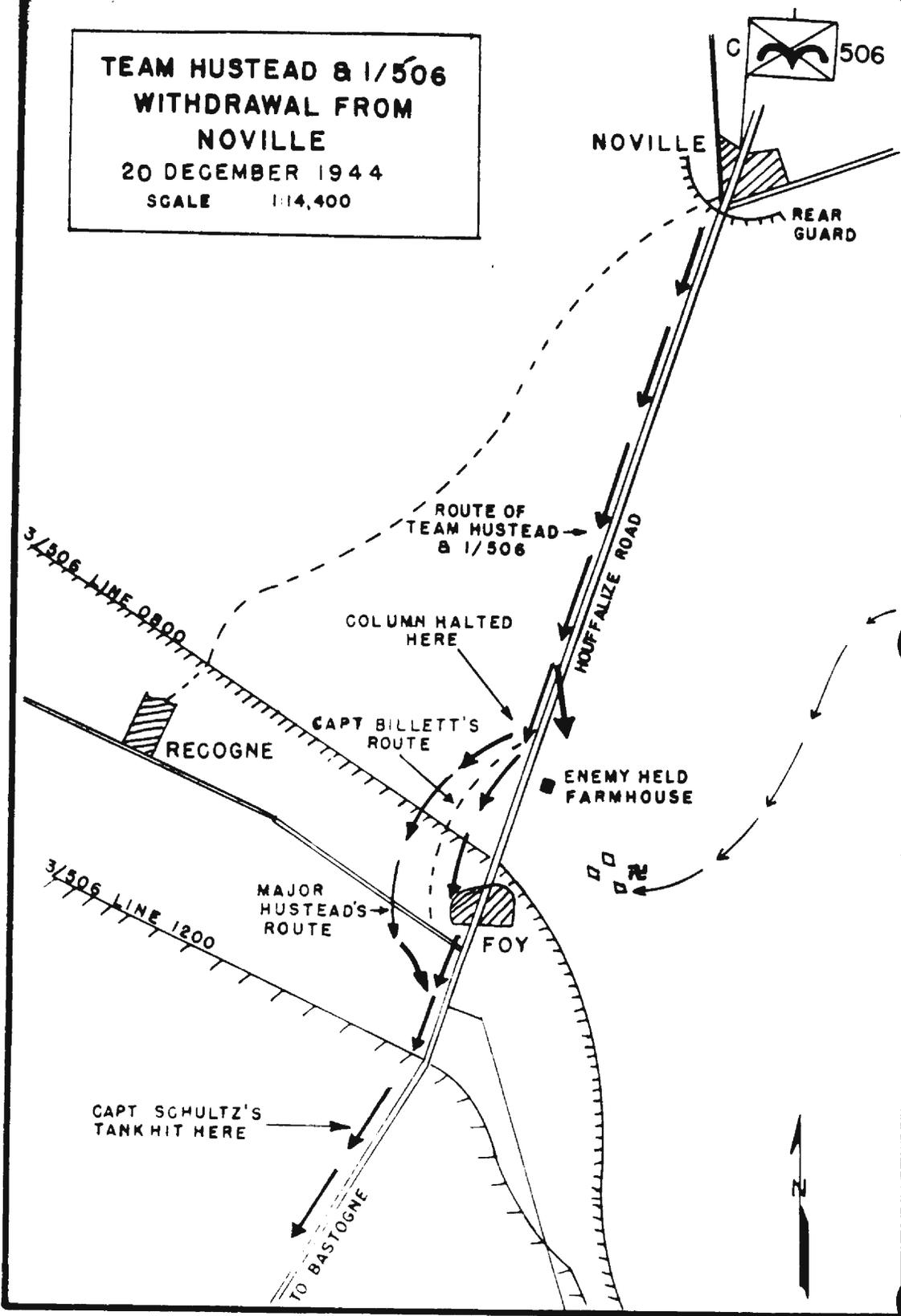
The brief clear spell now revealed what had been suspected for some time. Looking southwest toward BASTOGNE, NOVILLE'S defenders could see German armor before FOY and RECCOHE. During the night and under cover of the morning fog, Major Harwick and Husted had heard the hostile armor rumbling about them, now it was apparent they were surrounded. To add to the misgivings were two other critical factors. First, radio contact with friendly forces had been out for several hours; secondly, armor piercing ammunition was running low.

Before the fog lifted Major Husted sent 1st Lt Herman C. Jacobs, the adjutant, in a half-track to contact the 506th Parachute Infantry in the vicinity of FOY, and to relay the situation through them to CCB. Jacobs bucked through several small enemy groups to FOY only to find that the 506th wasn't there; pressure that morning had forced the single battalion (the 3d) to retire south of the town. Jacobs continued on to BASTOGNE and reported to Colonel Roberts. The combat command reserve, consisting of one antiaircraft platoon, was sent to reinforce Husted, but before it could reach FOY the enemy had firmly blocked the route.

At 1300 radio communication was re-established with Major Harwick and Husted via the artillery net. They were informed that the second and third battalions, 506th Parachute Infantry, would make a diversionsary attack on FOY to relieve the pressure on NOVILLE. When this attack got under way the forces were to make a break for BASTOGNE via the BASTOGNE-HOUFFALIZE road. (See Sketch No. 3.)

Swiftly the withdrawal plan was made. Company C, 506th, already in reserve positions south of the village would become the rear guard. Three tanks would support it. Company A, 506th, would lead out on foot, while the balance followed on the vehicles of Team Husted. At this time there were more than fifty non-ambulatory casualties to be evacuated. Of course, these men received priority, and the vehicles upon which they were loaded were placed between the leading armor and the main body. There was a good deal

**TEAM HUSTEAD & 1/506**  
**WITHDRAWAL FROM**  
**NOVILLE**  
20 DECEMBER 1944  
SCALE 1:14,400



of ammunition to be destroyed so Major Hustead and Lt Frank, the engineer officer, had it piled against one tottering building, hoping the blast of its explosion would cause the structure to fall across the highway. Hustead personally remained behind to insure that all vehicles were under way before giving Lt Frank the word to detonate the charge.

Fortune continued to smile on the Americans' cause. Throughout the noon hour, and up until 1300, the sky was clear as a bell. Now at 1325 as the column began to move, the fog sat down again. In the haste of the departure tactical unity was somewhat impaired, however, as they got under way most of the men quickly located their respective outfits. There was little doubt that the Germans could hear the clattering vehicles, the question was would the enemy try to hit the moving column in the flank? Behind them the blast of Lt Frank's ammunition dump was heard, but the column moved on easily toward FOY.

Not long after the start one of Hustead's crippled lead tanks broke down and had to be abandoned. While the crew paused to destroy the tank with thermite, the lone M3 armored car with point continued down the road at full speed. This vehicle went clear to BASTOGNE without a mishap.

Just a couple hundred yards north of FOY some German infantry had positioned themselves in and around a farm house east of the highway. It was at this point that the serenity of the withdrawal changed completely. For some reason, perhaps surprise,

this group let the MB through without a scratch. With the column it was a different story.

Major James B. Duncan, S-3 of the 20th AIB, and for a day now Husted's "exec", rode in the leading half-track. The Germans greeted the cavalcade with a fusillade of automatic fire and grenades from the farm house. Machine gun bullets splattered the steel windshield of Duncan's half-track; dropping the visor shutter and throwing fragments into the driver's face. Major Duncan reached for the hand brake. The half-track following had had its brakes shot out and due to the suddenness of the halt crashed into the rear of Duncan's vehicle. Behind the entire column ground to a standstill. Machine gunners on the half-tracks blazed away, supported by dismounted riflemen in the ditches. In ten minutes the skirmish was over and the enemy driven off in the fog. The three leading half-tracks, less Major Duncan's, loaded up and moved out toward FOY.<sup>10</sup>

But the heavy fire in the south where the 3d Bn, 506th, was attacking north misled the column to feel that they were still being strongly opposed. Major Duncan had gone back to bring up the tanks. He and Major Husted, who came forward when the column halted, finally succeeded in locating two usable tanks and sent them against the now abandoned farm house. Several rounds set the building on fire and the tanks backed up for instructions. During these precious minutes three German tanks, perhaps alerted by the infantry retreating from the farm house, crept in from the

east to open broadside on the two M4s. Both American tanks were hit before the fire could be returned.

Captain William G. Schultz, CO of Co B, 3d Tk Bn, commanding the fifth tank in line walked forward to see if he couldn't help out. The third tank on the road, now in the lead, (tanks one and two were those described in the paragraph above) was short of crewman, so the captain swung aboard and moved out past the two knocked out M4s. Obviously, these tanks were beyond helping; but since no hostile fire was drawn he drove on, feeling the column would follow. But they didn't. Schultz drove on through FOY and continued 500 yards beyond it before enemy fire disabled his commandeered vehicle. He and the crew escaped unhurt, and later hitch-hiked into BASTOGNE.

Meanwhile, the officers of Team Mustead strove to get the column rolling again. One of the 705th tank destroyers came up around the stalled train to get a shot at the enemy tank that had knocked out the M4s. As he approached the number four tank (since Schultz departed it was now in the lead) suddenly backed up. The TD reversed quickly to prevent a collision and ran over a 20th AIB jeep which was normally assigned to Major Duncan. Number four tank had just been maneuvering, and soon moved forward again to seek out the German armor. But again the foe got the drop. Tank four exploded with a terrific blast. Its turret blew off into the road, and effectively blocked it to further vehicular traffic.

Now the fifth tank sat driverless in the road. Capt Schultz had sent his driver forward to man the number two M4 that was demolished in the first volley; and he himself had gone out with the third tank through FOY. Major Husted, Capt Billett, and the first sergeant of the tank company fanned up and down the column seeking a driver. The paratroopers and armored infantrymen felt that the tankers had deserted them; but actually all the tank operators were now killed, wounded, or driving elsewhere.

Meanwhile the wounded in the stalled carriers were taking a beating. Captain Jack Prior, battalion surgeon, worked without cover during the action on the road ahead, patching the wounded on their open carriers. Many of these casualties were rewounded by the occasional small arms and mortar fire directed on them from ~~enemy east of the highway.~~ Prior himself was struck by a mortar fragment, but remained dutifully at his post, caring for the more seriously injured.<sup>11</sup>

Soon after the first tank clash had started the paratroopers behind dismounted and started forward on both sides of the road. Those who swept around to the right went all the way to FOY, encountering but few enemy enroute, taking most of these as prisoners. The group which went to the left didn't progress much beyond the site of the farm house before they encountered the phantom German tanks in the fog. They hurried back to Major Duncan with the report that prompted him to order the tanks forward.

Capt Billett, unmindful of the paratroopers successful swing

to the right, felt his infantry ought to attempt to clear a route for the tanks and half-tracks. He sent back for his company, less the drivers; and although one platoon did not arrive, he moved out with the other two platoons to the west of the road. This group reached FOY and reported to the commander, 3d Bn, 506th Infantry. The poor visibility had masked both of these flanking movements from Major Husted who at this time adopted a similar plan. He gathered twenty or so paratroopers and set out on still another hook around the west flank.<sup>12</sup> This group swung much wider than the first two parties and entered FOY almost directly from the west. Enroute they captured twice their own strength in German prisoners. Husted asked the troopers of the 3d Bn advancing to the north if the armor had gone through. He meant, of course, his main body. The parachutist had seen first the L8 armored car, later Capt Waddell and the three loading half-tracks, and finally Capt Schultz's tank go by, so they answered "Yes, the armor has gone through." So Husted borrowed a jeep and headed for BASTOGNE. On the edge of the town he met Capt Waddell and learned that the column had not arrived. When Major Husted reported to Colonel Roberts, he could only say that the team was on the way.

Major Husted, via Waddell's radio, and Capt Billett over the infantry net from FOY both urged the column to come around the right. However, Major Duncan and 2d Lt Burliegh P. Oxford, motor officer, 20th AIB, unmindful of both messages, were already jockeying the column over that route. Paratroopers had climbed aboard the

crewless fifth tank vowing that they would run the "Sonovabitch,"<sup>13</sup> and they did. Just west of FOY the ground became soft and muddy and the vehicles began to bog down. By pushing and pulling and winching with the trooper manned tank and dismounted infantry the tired caravan reached FOY about dusk. The original plan had been for the team to set up a defensive on the first high ground south of the village, but since the outfit was so depleted and exhausted Colonel Roberts ordered them on to BASTOGNE.

Team Desobry had gone to NOVILLE with fifteen tanks completely unaware of the situation. Only four remained when the team limped back into BASTOGNE. The bitter fighting in the north had taken its toll in armor, but throughout the struggle the enemy had paid with 31 known tanks and many more probables.

#### Team Cherry at LONGVILLY

The position of Team Cherry was none too secure as the murky dawn of the 19th broadened. The forces under Lt Hyduke was "set up on three sides of LONGVILLY and ready to defend to the rear."<sup>14</sup> During the night these men had already brushed with the enemy. Eastward on the road to BASTOGNE the vehicles of CCR, 9th Armored Division, jammed the roads, unable to withdraw because their way was blocked by Team Ryerson.<sup>15</sup> In turn, Ryerson was stymied by the enemy force in MAGERET. Beyond that town, Colonel Cherry and his headquarters company had established a command post in a stoutly walled chateau a couple hundred yards south of the village of NEFFE. It was obvious to Colonel Roberts and Colonel Cherry

that LONGVILLY could not be held in this manner, so orders were issued whereby Lt Hydeke would become the rearguard, while Ryerson and the main body battered their way back through the enemy force in MAGERET. When these orders were received, Cherry's command post was already under attack.

At 0630 the Reconnaissance Platoon, Hqs 3d Tank Battalion, outposting the crossroads in NEFFE was hit by German infantry and tanks from the east. The CP was notified, and Cherry organized the chateau for defense. At the same time he dispatched two medium tanks to reinforce the reconnaissance platoon in NEFFE. This combined group destroyed two German tanks before being forced to withdraw to the chateau. During the retirement, however, one of the battalion headquarters tanks was knocked out by an enemy infantry-borne rocket launcher. Throughout the day the small detachment in the chateau beat off attempt after attempt to overwhelm it. Automatic weapons were stripped off the vehicles and emplaced in the windows to cover the approaches to the building. While this furious fight was raging the 3d Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, which had been dispatched from BASTOGNE at 0600 to "restore the roadblock east of LONGVILLY,"<sup>16</sup> was probing eastward out of MONT. Toward mid-afternoon elements of this organization were engaging the enemy's right flank north of NEFFE and their fire compelled the Germans to diminish their attacks against Colonel Cherry's chateau bastion. Shortly thereafter a platoon of paratroopers maneuvered around the

right flank and entered the fort. But the reinforcements had arrived too late. The roof of the building was afire and the blaze and smoke were fast making it untenable. At dusk the force withdrew to the trooper lines at MONT. As he departed Colonel Cherry flashed this message to BASTOGNE -- "We're not driven out-- we were burned out. We're not withdrawing--we're moving."<sup>17</sup>

The rearguard and mainbody were having their tribulations too. At daybreak Hyduke's positions received heavy rocket fire, which was followed by an interval of deadly silence. At 1000 the dim outline of two enemy tanks was discernable about 1500 yards southeast of LONGVILLY. They were after the CCR armor jammed on the road. All the American armor opened fire and both enemy tanks exploded in flames. This action provoked a heavy shelling of the town by German artillery.

At 1400 the bolt struck! Enemy tanks closed in from the front and left flank. In five minutes two half-tracks, two medium tanks, and a light tank of Hyduke's command were destroyed. Near panic flared up among the vehicles on the road. A group of stragglers, organized to cover the left flank, fled their position, leaving but 23 armored infantrymen of C/20th to hold that entire sector. In spite of this confusion, Lt Hyduke maintained excellent control of his own force, and continued to fight until at 1430 an order from Cherry's fire-swept chateau directed him to fall back on Ryerson.

It was a black half-hour for Hyduke; the order simply couldn't be carried out. The routes were absolutely blocked with

vehicles, and enemy small arms fire now scorching the area prevented a dismounted withdrawal. Many of the vehicles sought to turn around and return to the ground they had defended. As they milled about, five light tanks, a tank destroyer and a tank recovery vehicle were destroyed. The half-tracks in front were abandoned, and enemy artillery knocked out two medium tanks. Of the two medium tanks left, one lost a track and was abandoned, the other was cut off and surrounded by Germans. The crews of the remaining three light tanks destroyed their vehicles to prevent capture by the enemy.

Cherry's main body troops had their taste of battle too. Having received Col Cherry's order to smash back through MAGERET at 0830, Ryerson's troops began to weave their way through the congested vehicles of CCR toward their objective. As the lead tank rounded a bend in the road 300 yards east of the town, a concealed AT gun opened fire on it. The tank was destroyed right where the MAGERET-LONGVILLY road ran through a deep cut, and its hulk effectively blocked the road to the vehicles following.

In the hail of shells and bullets the infantry came off their carriers and pressed forward to the reverse slope on either side of the road where the tank had been hit. They could go no farther because of the intense fire falling on the forward or western slope. Finally, two 105-mm assault guns were maneuvered up to the ridge, and brought to bear on the eastern edge of the town. With these guns firing the hostile shelling diminished.

At 1500 Lt Hyduke's men began to filter back to Team Ryerson from their bitter struggle around LONGVILLY. Small arms and mortar fire from MACERET had slackened considerably, and a force of infantry supported by two M4 tanks and an assault gun probed around the right flank. This group received some fire from the southern portion of the village, but finally succeeded in entering the northeastern fringe of buildings. Enemy vehicles were visible, but the tanks and the assault gun with the party couldn't find suitable firing positions to engage them. To dislodge the Germans, it would be necessary to attack it from another direction.

Toward this end Capt Ryerson organized a group of 40 stragglers (mostly Hyduke's men and the 9th Armored Division) into four squads and reinforced them with two medium tanks. At 1600 this force advanced against the southeastern portion of MACERET. The tanks proved incapable of negotiating the ground south of the road and the advance quickly bogged down.

As darkness fell Team Ryerson, with the remnants of Hyduke's forces and miscellaneous stragglers from other actions, continued to cling to the northeastern edge of MACERET as the enemy whittled at their front, flanks, and rear. At 2145 the Germans launched a fairly well coordinated tank and infantry assault through the village. This lunge was finally beaten off by the weary Americans supported by the fires of the 420th Armored Field Artillery.

In the early morning darkness of 20 December, Capt Ryerson

was ordered to fall back to BIZORY. Using back roads the team reached that village at 0730 and joined elements of the 501st Parachute Infantry. For the next 24 hours they rendered direct fire support to this unit with their tanks and assault guns. On the afternoon of the 21st they were withdrawn to BASTOGNE.

Thus, two teams of OCB were forced to retire from their advanced roadblocks in front of BASTOGNE. (See Sketch No. 4, App VII.) The enemy had attacked each vigorously and with apparent intent to carry them. Being unsuccessful in this, he had by-passed the armor and sought other unopposed routes toward the city. Both teams, finding themselves "out on the limb", were forced to fight their way back to the rapidly forming 101st perimeter. Heavy casualties in men and vehicles resulted. However, the German attacks had been met with determination; men and equipment had functioned efficiently. Whenever the conventional "solution" failed, the troops had been quick to improvise an alternate, in spite of the heavy odds that constantly prevailed against them. Most important of all, precious time had been gained in which the 101st Airborne Division could complete their dispositions for the defense of BASTOGNE.

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#### NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV.

1. Mr. S. L. A. Marshall, Men Against Fire, ps. 69 and 70.

2. Desobry's Interview, M 45, p. 4; Mr. S. L. A. Marshall, BASTOGNE, The First Eight Days, p. 54

<sup>3</sup>Desobry's Interview, II 45, p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>5</sup>Major Duncan's Interview, 16 February 1949. Four or five vehicles and a tank destroyer were knocked out, and about 13 men of Company B, 20th Armored Infantry Battalion were wounded.

<sup>6</sup>Mr. S. L. A. Marshall, BASTOGNE, The First Eight Days, p. 60.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid; Desobry's Interview, II 45, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p. 8.

<sup>9</sup>Mr. S. L. A. Marshall, BASTOGNE, The First Eight Days, p. 65.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p. 94; Major Duncan's Interview, 16 February 1949; Desobry's Interview, II 45, p. 18. These vehicles under command of Capt Maddell, S-3, 20th Armored Infantry Battalion, CCB, 10th Armored Division.

<sup>11</sup>Major Duncan's Interview, 16 February 1949; Desobry's Interview, II 45, p. 20. For his heroic work before, during, and after the withdrawal, Capt Prior was awarded the Silver Star Medal.

<sup>12</sup>Desobry's Interview, II 45, p. 20. Speaking of his actions later, Major Husted stated, "I don't know if this was the correct decision or not, but at the time it seemed the only logical thing to do. I didn't know that these other two parties had gone out."

<sup>13</sup>Desobry's Interview, II 45, p. 21; Major Duncan's Interview, 16 February 1949.

<sup>14</sup>After Action Report, 3d Tank Battalion; Mr. S. L. A. Marshall, BASTOGNE, The First Eight Days, p. 48.

<sup>15</sup>Major Walter M. Heir, S-2 and 3, CCR, 9th Armored Division, states that he and vehicles of CCR by-passed Ryerson's vehicles to the north on the night of 18-19 December and returned to BASTOGNE. He further stated that he followed secondary roads all the way and came into BASTOGNE from the northeast between the railroad and BIZONY.

<sup>16</sup>After Action Report, 10th Armored Division, 19 Dec 1944.

<sup>17</sup>Mr. S. L. A. Marshall, BASTOGNE, The First Eight Days, p. 50.

## CHAPTER V

### CCB DEFENDS

Since WARDIN was closer to BASTOGNE than the other objectives assigned to CCB, Team O'Hara was to fare better than the other units. Although initially Team O'Hara was forced to withdraw slightly to take advantage of more easily defended ground, we shall see how they dug in on the southeastern approach to BASTOGNE, and held a sector between the 501st Parachute Infantry and the 327th Glider Infantry. Here we see an armored infantry battalion reinforced with tanks employed in the sustained defense, while the balance of the combat command functions as the mobile reserve of the major combat unit. The armor demonstrates its versatility and easy adaptation to varied missions. In this chapter also we shall see exemplified the mobility of the arm; how it was committed on short notice to rush to threatened fronts, and how, when its job was completed it was quickly released to be again available to the commander as his "ace in the hole."

Colonel O'Hara's team south of WARDIN needed information badly. The only way to find out what lay beyond the fog was to get out after it. Promptly, patrols were dispatched to the east and southeast toward BRAS, and to the north and northeast to WARDIN.

As the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon, 54th

Armored Infantry Battalion approached ERAS about 1140 a lone Volkswagon was observed advancing along the WILTZ-BASTOGNE highway. T Sgt Stillman D. McMahon, commanding, figured this might be a point vehicle for a larger column, so he allowed it to come in close. The vehicle continued within 75 yards of the patrol and as it still appeared alone, the sergeant gave the order to open fire. At the very moment they opened fire, the anticipated column appeared---two Mark IVs, a half-track, and many more close behind in the mist. The platoon had no weapons to deal with armor, therefore, they quickly radioed their predicament to O'Hara, and withdrew as the 420th Field Artillery Battalion shelled the town. (See Sketch No. 4.)

Simultaneously, the northern party made contact. Capt Edward A. Carrigo, S-2, 54th Armored Infantry Battalion, and 1st Lt John D. Deveraux, commanding Company B, jumped in a jeep and proceeded west along the BASTOGNE road, then northeast into WARDIN. Here in the fog wrapped town, they encountered the other security patrol and were informed that all was quiet. The two officers continued through the village toward the high ground to the northeast. Suddenly their jeep was struck by a round on the front bumper. Without looking for the gun that had fired upon them, the two officers sped back to WARDIN to alert the patrol there, and pass the word to Col O'Hara.

At 1200 the visibility somewhat increased, 2d Lt Theodore R. Honor, the artillery observer from the 420th AFA, moved his tank



to a small crest (609555) in front of the main position in an effort to locate targets for his batteries. Five other tanks of the team already occupied the hill. Almost immediately Lt Hamer's tank received a direct hit from a high velocity weapon somewhere to the left front. Simultaneously, one of the other M4s was hit in the turret, dealing death to the gunner. The unnerved driver of this vehicle backed wildly down hill, refusing to stop until he bogged down in the muck at the base of the incline. This tank could not be salvaged, and was later destroyed. The other tanks quickly quit their positions on the crest without ever locating the guns which fired upon them. In the wake of this sudden sortie, German artillery fire began to fall.

The next enemy move occurred on the WILTZ-BASTOGNE road where the team had laid a hasty minefield. Shortly before 1300 a Volkswagen drew up to the minefield. Calmly the occupants dismounted from the carrier and began to remove the mines. At a range of just 200 yards five infantry half-tracks and five medium tanks opened fire at this daring crew, but somehow the Germans managed to get back to their vehicle and dashed away in the hail of bullets. As this incident took place an outpost of Company B, 54th AIB, on the south flank spotted German infantry moving northeast through the woods in front of the main position. Apparently these troops came from the vicinity of ACHINECH and were advancing on WEDIN. One American M4 was sent forward and put them under fire.

Men in strange green uniforms suddenly appeared from the woods in the rear of O'Hara's position. Company I, 501st Parachute Infantry had arrived. Their green, close fitting jumpsuits confused the tankers momentarily; but the good news traveled fast. Company I was attacking northeastward, across O'Hara's left rear, to WARDIN. With paratroopers in the village, the outpost of the 54th AIB was withdrawn.

Instead of forcing their way westward along the MILTZ-BASTOGNE highway as Col O'Hara had expected, the enemy sought to by-pass to the north through WARDIN. To accomplish this the Germans cleverly began to infiltrate small groups of infantry up a gully parallel to O'Hara's front until at least a hundred had made it. The gully was sufficiently deep to afford cover from direct tank fire, and sufficiently far away to prevent much small arms damage. The BASTOGNE artillery, which could have broken up this venture, was completely occupied supporting Major Desobry's cause in NOVILLE. As a result, German infantry were able to reinforce their effort at WARDIN.

Through out the afternoon the enemy continued his activity in front of Team O'Hara. Once, a group came in close enough to fire a bazooka round at a tank. No one spotted the source of this shot, but the half-tracks and tanks sprayed the vicinity with bullets and shells. At about 1530 direct high velocity fire came from the vicinity of WARDIN. The American tanks withdrew a few hundred yards to a defiladed spot and the fire stopped.

The AT fire from his left front caused Colonel O'Hara great concern. Had not Company I been sent to seize WARDIN? Four walking wounded from I Company drifted into the tankers lines with an answer to this query. The company had gone into WARDIN, but had been practically wiped out and forced to withdraw. This information wasn't too much to base a decision on, but with an aggressive enemy on the left flank, constant pressure on the front, and no friends on the right, the armored position was at best precarious. At length O'Hara requested CCB for permission to withdraw.

In reply Colonel Roberts radioed, "Contact friends on your left, hold what you have."<sup>1</sup> Apparently combat command still thought there were "friends" in WARDIN: this wasn't consistent with the way things had developed. Rather than discuss it on the air, Colonel O'Hara sent his S-3, Capt George A. Renoux, to Colonel Roberts with the details of the situation, while he himself went rearward to reconnoiter for better ground. At about 1715, CCB ordered the team to withdraw to the high ground north of HARVIE, the exact ground Colonel O'Hara had selected on his reconnaissance.

Headquarters company, heavy weapons company, and the engineer platoon began the withdrawal. When they were emplaced on the new position, the rest of the force fell back on them, covered by a heavy barrage by the 420th Armored Field Artillery. In front of the new defense line, a hasty mine field was emplaced

on the road. The tanks were positioned in the hedges for concealment. Several M4s were sent to cover the left (north) flank, and after contact was established on the right with elements of 326th Airborne Engineers in MARVIE,<sup>2</sup> five light tanks were sent there. Lt Clendenon, 55th AEB, took a squad of his engineers several hundred yards forward along the WILTZ-BASTOGNE road to construct a roadblock. Machine guns of the infantry on the hill were placed to cover this block, and the artillery assigned a concentration to it. By 2200 the withdrawal was complete. Throughout the night the 420th harassed WARDEN.

At daylight German artillery began to fall on Colonel O'Hara's roadblock, a thousand yards southeast of his infantry positions. (See Sketch No. 5.) The fog masked all observation, but by 0300 the movement of armor was audible out beyond the barricade. An hour later the curtain rose, revealing a dozen industrious enemy soldiers trying to remove the trees. Concentration 56 Able, prepared the previous evening by the 420th AFA, was promptly called for. Two Germans were killed and the balance beat a hasty retreat. Another attempt was made to breach the block, this time under the cover of smoke. O'Hara's men, fearing an infantry assault through the screen, took the entire smoked area under fire with assault guns and mortars. The attack materialized. Thwarted by tankers guns, the enemy had diverted his attentions to MARVIE, due west of the roadblock.

At 1100 the 2d Battalion, 327th Glider Infantry, in the



process of relieving elements of the 326th Engineers in MARVIE, began to receive artillery fire. The five light tanks sent to the village the night before remained to support the newly arrived glidermen. Twenty minutes after the shelling commenced, four Mark IV tanks, a self-propelled 75 gun, and six infantry-carrying half-tracks moved out of the woods east of the town. Apparently they had seen the light tanks as they concentrated their fire against the armor. The M5s replied with their 37-mm, but these guns lacked the range to do any damage. Bolder grew the Germans, and more intense their fire. The light tank commander realized that he wasn't helping the infantrymen, but was only drawing high velocity fire onto them. On these grounds he requested permission to withdraw. Colonel O'Hara approved.

Darting from cover to cover among the buildings the M5s made towards the northern edge of town. But they weren't altogether successful in their elusive tactics. One tank was set afire, (though it got back just the same) and another was struck in its suspension system. The damage on this latter tank was such that it had to make its way back to Team O'Hara in reverse gear.

All during this engagement O'Hara's medium tanks on the hillside held their fire, waiting for the enemy to advance sufficiently to show his flank. With the light tanks in retreat the Germans were overcome by the chance for an easy kill, and came barrelling in with the SP leading. This was what the tanks

had waited for; the enemy armor was now broadside at 700 yards. One Sherman destroyed a Mark IV, The second Sherman hit another tank and a half-track. The third enemy tank ran wildly for MARVIE, where the glidermen set it blazing with a bazooka; the remaining Mark IV hightailed it back to the woods.

As O'Hara's tanks fell upon the Mark IVs, the German half-tracks increased their interval one from the other and made a dash for the village. Once inside the fringe of buildings, they jumped down from their carriers and ducked into the houses. For two hours the 2d Battalion, 327th, battled with this force from house to house. But in the end thirty German infantry were killed and the rest were captured.

Summary of Operations, CCB, 10th Armored Division

December 21st to 31st

21 December 1944

General Middleton had called Colonel Roberts personally on the morning of 20 December and announced that the combat command was now attached to the 101st Airborne Division. "Your work has been quite satisfactory," said the General, "I'm attaching you to the 101st, because I have so many divisions that I can't take time to study two sets of reports from the same area."<sup>3</sup> Roberts immediately reported to General McCalliffe to perform command liaison, and remained at his headquarters throughout the siege. CCB was assigned the mission of mobile reserve, to be held at

BASTOGNE in readiness to counterattack any threat on division order. The "fire department of BASTOGNE" had come into being. (See Sketch No. 5, App VII.) It had become necessary, due to the proximity of the 501st Regiment's perimeter to move the 420th AFA to new firing positions southeast of SENONCHAMPS. Capt Ryerson's remnant forces reinforced the reserve at 1455 on the 21st after having battled their way to BIZORY from their exposed position east of LAGERET. (See Sketch No. 6.) O'Hara remained on the MARVIE front occupying a defense sector between the left of the 327th Glider Infantry and the right wing of Col Ewell's 501st Regt. Also on this day the 755th Field Artillery Battalion, with seven M1 155-mm howitzers, went into position near the 420th and fought gallantly throughout the battle.

It was on this morning of the 21st that the Germans completed the encirclement of BASTOGNE by cutting the highway to NEUFCHATEAU. Shortly before 1000 Capt Keith J. Anderson, D Troop, 90th Cavalry Squadron, with two assault guns and a TD moved down the highway on reconnaissance. At CLOCHIMONT he observed enemy soldiers in American uniforms and mounted on American vehicles. A little later 1st Lt Arthur B. Arnsdorf, also D/90, led another armored patrol to MASSENOIS. Here too the enemy was in force, dug in, and ready for trouble.

These reports, coupled with others that Germans were in VILLEROUX, SIBERT, MORHET, and CHEMOGNE made Lt Col Barry D. Browne, commanding the 420th AFA, feel rather "out on a limb."<sup>4</sup> Indeed,

both his flanks and his rear were unprotected. Accordingly, he turned one of his batteries toward SIBERT, and rushed a forward observer to register on that town. Even as this was being accomplished a motorized column of the 333d FA Group came dashing down the road from CHENOGNE. They had occupied that town until Germans were upon their very backs, then withdrew without guns or ammunition. Not far behind the 333d, a second column of American jeeps and M8 cars appeared bearing down on the batteries. As this cavalcade came into range they suddenly deployed and began firing into Col Browne's troops. Team Pyle,<sup>5</sup> which had been alerted to support the artillerymen, returned the fire and the "wolves in sheep's clothing" turned off into the BOIS DE FRAGOTTE. More armored support arrived from Team O'Hara's now quiet sector, consisting of a platoon of tanks and a platoon of armored infantry. This combined force pushed forward through the forest driving the enemy before them. One German SP 75-mm gun was destroyed and in turn a tank was lost. By night fall, Colonel Browne had 19 tanks and over 300 infantrymen supporting his cause. With these troops he established a perimeter some 4,000 yards long extending south out of SENONCHLIPS toward the NEUFCHATEAU-BASTOGNE highway.

That night an attempt was made to break through to the combat command trains in VAUX-LES-ROSIERES. Well after dark, 1st Lt Yantis with a medium tank, two light tanks, and two squads of armored infantry moved out on the MARCHÉ road. Beyond MONTY they struck out to the southwest on secondary roads and by cross-

country movements. Suddenly, without the slightest warning, brilliant searchlights played on Yantis' vehicles, followed by a fusillade of small arms fire. In the scrap that followed all of the American vehicles were lost, but the men infiltrated back to BASTOGNE with the report of this new tactical innovation.

Throughout the day, artillery harassed BASTOGNE. There was a time when the accuracy of this fire on CPs and moving vehicles gave cause to fear that an observer was right in the town. Team Snafu (such was dubbed the miscellaneous personnel commanded by CCB by authority of General Middleton's order) instituted a thorough house to house search, but no observer was found.

22 December 1944

The 22d of December was a day of comparative respite. (See Sketch No. 7.) The snow which began the evening before, blanketed the area in white, gently obliterating the recent scenes of bitter combat. Back in BASTOGNE the supply officers were searching for white paint and bedsheets with which to camouflage vehicles and men. Weary soldiers crept out of their foxholes to shave, and visit straddle trenches.

At 1027, Troop D, 90th Cavalry Squadron (less the third platoon with Colonel O'Hara at MARVIE), pushed a patrol northwest through CHIEFS. At GIVRY the enemy was observed in large numbers with tanks, infantry, trucks, and guns. Throughout the day BASTOGNE's

artillery interdicted that town.

Three separate sallies were made against Col Browne's forces at SENONCHMPS. But each attempt was beaten off with tanks of Team Pyle and the artillery. Lt Col William T. S. Roberts, Executive Officer, CCB, was sent to command these miscellaneous forces so Colonel Browne could concentrate on his artillery duties.<sup>6</sup>

An hour before noon the Germans made their now famous ultimatum attempt, and received as a reply General McAuliffe's immortal "Nuts." The Nazi major, bearer of the surrender terms, huffed off down the road toward REMOIFOSSE at 1350 exclaiming, "We will kill many Americans. This is war."<sup>7</sup>

Team Grnsdorf made another reconnaissance down the NEUF-CHATEAU highway at 1406 to the VILLEROUX-ASSENOIS road. The enemy was noted in force in the area, but no attack came.

That night the Luftwaffe paid its initial respects to BASTOGNE.

23 December 1944

Dawn heralded the beginning of the clear and cold weather which was to favor the balance of the siege. (See Sketch No. 8.) At 0955 a fleet of C-47 aircraft arrived over the drop-zone prepared just west of the city, and rained precious artillery ammunition and medical supplies from the sky. Escorting the cargo airplanes came waves of P-47 fighters, which cavorted up and down the perimeter, scorching the Germans wherever they exposed

themselves. The Air Force was just beginning to unleash their pent-up venom. Throughout the BASTOGNE battle, fighters and freighters dominated daylight operations.

The hardened ground also greatly increased the efficiency of armored movement. Early in the morning W.T.S. Roberts' forces at SENONCHAMPS sent patrols into the forest before them, and found the enemy still there. The activity of allied aircraft kept the Germans lying low in the woods until 1417, when nine camouflaged tanks with supporting infantry moved against the Americans. The attack was met with a stronger attack by Col Roberts' men, and by 1430 the Germans had retreated beyond range.

The principal enemy effort of the day was thrown against Col O'Hara's team and the 327th Glider Infantry at MARVIE. Team Cherry, the division reserve, had been sent to counter threatened penetrations, toward MONTY and CHAMP at 1820. Ten minutes later Team O'Hara was hit hard, frontally and in the right flank with tanks and infantry supported by withering artillery fire. It was more than the defenders could handle; they called immediately for help. The 420th AFN fired all their batteries on the assaulting Germans; and Team Cherry, well on the road toward CHAMPS, was ordered to return to BASTOGNE in light of the new development. Simultaneous with the assault on O'Hara's front, Nazi tanks and infantry stormed the 2d Battalion, 327th Infantry, from the south. Colonel Harper, commanding this battalion, screamed to O'Hara for tanks, not knowing the 54th was fighting for their

own lives. Finally at 2000, Harper radioed to O'Hara, "It is the commanding general's order that two Sherman tanks move into MARVIE at once and take up a defensive position."<sup>8</sup> This was not the truth, but it brought results. A few minutes later two M4s arrived to support the 2d battalion. Meanwhile, the Germans sent a self-propelled gun charging up the MILTZ road. O'Hara's tanks took it under fire and set it blazing beneath a hay-laden farm building. Both the gun and the building burned so fiercely that it illuminated the entire American front. To escape detection, O'Hara withdrew about a hundred yards to a new defensive line.

Advance patrols of the 4th Armored Division were reported at RELICH-LIPAGNE, at 231320 Dec.

24 December 1944

At 240115 Team Cherry was ordered to support the 327th Glider Infantry in the bitter fight at MARVIE. (See Sketch No. 9.) Colonel O'Hara's two Shermans had greatly assisted the cause in this village by knocking out three Mark IV tanks. This had discouraged further armored attacks, but the Germans persisted with infantry and intense artillery fire. It was not felt that Col Cherry's armored force could help very much in the darkness, but their presence would bolster morale, and would be quite effective at daylight. Cherry's men and two batteries of the 81st ... Bn formed a second line along the high ground just above the town.

But it never became necessary to commit the armor and anti-aircraft. The Germans had again made the mistake of attacking on only one front. Company A, 501st Parachute Infantry, alerted from the quiet LONGVILLY road sector, counterattacked through MARVIE and restored the 327s grip on the situation. Cherry's men remained north of MARVIE until 1325 when it became apparent that the Germans were through in that sector. Five light tanks under Lt Arnsdorf took over, and Team Cherry returned to BASTOGNE where they once again reverted to division reserve.

Colonel W.T.S. Roberts sent patrols into the woods in front of him at 1000, and this time it was found unoccupied. However, at noon the Germans began shelling the 420ths exposed positions, mortally wounding Lt Col Barry Browne.<sup>9</sup> It was obvious that the artillery would have to move. At 1504 the 420th was ordered to new positions northwest of BASTOGNE (P543583), and by 2000 had completed the displacement. 1st Battalion, 327th Glider Infantry, assumed control of Col W. T. S. Roberts' miscellaneous forces and took over the sector shortly thereafter.

The Air Force continued their activity throughout the day. At 0905 and again at 1505 C-47s dropped more supplies to the besieged. P-47s had a field day striking the Germans everywhere. The most successful sortie was against an armored column moving out of MORHET at 1115.

During the night the Luftwaffe paid two calls on BASTOGNE, at 1945 and 250320. Capt Jack Prior, medico of the 20th AIB, and

Lt Talbot of the 80th Medical Battalion had established a hospital in a building in the south portion of the city. A bomb in the first raid scored a direct hit on this installation, killing a French civilian nurse, and burying twenty casualties in the debris. Another bomb of the same sortie fell on CCB headquarters. Lt John Burke, liaison officer from the 20th AIB, was killed.

25 December 1944

Christmas was far from merry, but the weather wasn't bad. The Germans seized the opportunity to employ their armor over the hardened ground, free from aerial harassing, by launching a coordinated attack on CHALPS at 0350. (See Sketch No. 10.) This sector was being defended by the 502d Parachute Infantry supported by Troop D, 90th Cavalry Squadron and elements of the 705th TD Battalion. By 0700 these troops had been pushed back east of the village by the savage onslaught of eighteen hostile tanks that had broken through the 327th Infantry, and swung north into their left rear. Confusion reigned for over an hour, but in the end all eighteen German tanks perished along with the supporting infantry. It was a gallant fight by the paratroopers and tank destroyers. Team Cherry was ordered to support this action at 0800, but the fight was about won when they arrived on the field. Throughout the day Cherry remained in an overwatching role and returned to BASTOGNE at 1725.

Just before Cherry had moved out towards CHAMPS another

threat had arisen along the road to MONTY. Team Ryerson moved out to counter the threat, which developed into an attempt to infiltrate German infantry on either side of the road. Ryerson's men moved aggressively into the infiltrators, and by 1250 the survivors had withdrawn westward toward MAMDE ST ETIENNE.

At 1145 a fighter located eight field guns just south of ASSENOIS and notified BASTOGNE. The 420th AFA had the data on the town and were able, with a few corrections from the pilot, to quickly destroy these guns. From this time forward hostile daylight artillery diminished remarkably.

26 December 1944

At dawn the Germans tried again in the CHAMPS area. Troop D, 90th Cavalry Squadron reported seven enemy tanks heading for the 502d lines at 0335. (See Sketch No. 11.) Immediately they were engaged by the supporting TDs and light tanks and the sortie was beaten off. But shortly after 0600 four Mark IVs succeeded in breaking through the infantry defenses at HETROUILLE, and headed for the 420th's guns. Direct fire from the batteries and lightning swift maneuver of the tank destroyers spelled doom for these invaders. By 0800 the original perimeter had been restored.

Another threat developed along the MONTY road where the attempted infiltration had occurred the day previous. Team Ryerson of Colonel Cherry's reserve moved out of BASTOGNE to counter. By 1025 Ryerson's patrols hit a large German force in the woods

500 yards northwest of ISLE LA HESSES. Throughout the morning the team engaged these Germans by frontal assaults, until the balance of Team Cherry arrived at 1637 to counterattack around Ryerson's right flank. By 1720 the enemy had been destroyed.

As dusk fell the leading elements of CCR, 4th Armored Division, pushed through to contact the 326th Airborne Engineers in the sector south of BASTOGNE. This was the beginning of a new era for CCB. By morning armored reinforcements would be pouring into the city. On the heels of the 4th came the 6th and elements of the 11th Armored Divisions to the relief of the weary BASTOGNE tankers and their battered, and shot-up equipment. It had been a rugged fight, with bitter episodes; but the combat command was proud to have served in a major role in the salvation of this critical objective. The gallant 101st Airborne Division, for which the tankers had developed a sincere respect, was to go forward with the fresh Third Army troops and further distinguish itself in assisting to drive the enemy to the OUR. For three more weeks the 101st continued to operate in the BASTOGNE area, and while it did so the combat command remained as the division mobile reserve. But the "first eight days" were past, those critical days when the fate of the ARDENNES hung so precariously.

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NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

101st Hara's Interview, M 44, p. 5; Marshall, S.L.A., BASTOGNE the First Eight Days, p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>O'Hara, op cit., p. 6, refers to the troops in MARVIE at this time as the 327th Glider Infantry. However, the 327th did not get to the MARVIE area until 1100 on the 20th.

<sup>3</sup>Colonel Robert's Interview, M 41, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>Marshall, op cit., p. 113.

<sup>5</sup>Team Pyle was composed of tanks and armored infantrymen from the 9th Armored Division, After Action Report, CCR, 9th Armored Division.

<sup>6</sup>After Action Report of the 9th Armored Division makes no mention of the consolidation of these forces under Colonel M.T.S. Roberts.

<sup>7</sup>Marshall, op cit., p. 117.

<sup>8</sup>Marshall, op cit., p. 126.

<sup>9</sup>Colonel Browne died at noon Christmas Day in BASTOGNE.

PART II

THE RELIEF OF BASTOGNE

## CHAPTER VI

### THE 4TH ARMORED DIVISION MOVES TO ARLON

The 4th Armored Division played an outstanding part in the operations to relieve BASTOGNE. Before it could participate in the fighting in the breakthrough area, however, it had to move up to the area of ARLON from its position near SARRALBE far to the south. The events leading up to this march, the march itself, and the preparations preceding the attack occupied the period from the 16th through the 21st of December 1944, and are covered by the first chapter of this part. This chapter is the story of a classic example of the strategic mobility of armor.

Since the full implications of strategic mobility are not to be found in the numerical speed attained by a unit, but rather in the relationship of its movements to that of other units, both friendly and enemy, it is necessary to consider first of all the situation of the larger units of which the 4th Armored Division was a part. On 16 December 1944, Third US Army was holding the front between BESCH and HOTT EILER. A 30-mile wedge had been established in the Siegfried Line across the SARR River, and General Patton was preparing plans for an all-out offensive through the wedge. This was scheduled for 21 December.<sup>1</sup> The Army had three corps in line from left to right; the XX Corps, commanded by Major General Walton H. Walker; the III Corps, commanded by Major General John Millikin; and the XII Corps, commanded by Major General Hanton S.

The 4th Armored Division, commanded by Major General Hugh J. Gaffey, was in XII Corps reserve and was located in a rear assembly area in the vicinity of FENETRANGE, France, south of SARRALBE, the XII Corps Headquarters. XII Corps had the 2d Cavalry Group, the 35th Division, and the 87th Division in line from left to right, and was preparing to move the 80th Division and the 4th Armored Division into line abreast of the 87th. In preparation for this operation the 37th Tank Battalion of the 4th Armored Division was attached to the 87th Division, and the Division's 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron was patrolling the gap between the 87th and 7th Army's 44th Division. The remainder of the Division was engaged in rest, rehabilitation, training, and maintenance. At a G-3 meeting at XII Corps on 17 December, plans were tentatively made to move the 4th Armored Division by echelons to the vicinity of SARRALBE, with priority to CCB and the 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron.<sup>2</sup>

On 16 December the enemy opened up with a series of battalion and company size attacks along the VIII Corps front. They hit a newly arrived division and two tired depleted divisions. On 17 December there were twelve new divisional identifications on the VIII Corps front, bringing to 16 the number of enemy divisions identified in the attack.<sup>3</sup> The first word of this great attack came to the 4th Armored Division in a TXK from XII Corps:

"To G-2, 4th Armored Division:

"Germans counterattacked in First Army Sector using

estimated 11 divisions believed to be the following: 1st SS Panzer Division, 2d Panzer Division (east of CLERVAUX), 116th Panzer Division (southwest of PRUM), 326th Infantry Division (southeast of MONSCHAU), 276th Infantry Division at ECHTERNACH, 5th Paratroop Division, 18th Infantry Division, 26th Infantry Division, and an unidentified division. Paratroops were dropped on a CP north of VIII Corps CP using 50-90 troop carrier planes. Germans made a 3000-4000 yard penetration and took the following towns: ECHTERNACH and BERDORF. Enemy planes were very busy bombing and strafing. Unconfirmed report that 350-500 tanks were used. PW taken by First Army stated that this was the all out effort and that the initial objective was ST. VITH."2

Third Army reacted rapidly to the German attack, anticipating its commitment against the enemy's south flank. On the 18th of December, General Patton telephoned his chief of staff, Brigadier General Hobart R. Gay, and directed that the attack of the 80th and 4th Armored Divisions be halted. The 4th Armored Division was to be prepared to move on the night of the 18-19 December, with one combat command to move on LONGWY at midnight, followed by the remainder of the Division at dawn.<sup>4</sup> The 4th Armored was transferred to III Corps, which was being shifted to attack to the north.

At 190800 a meeting was called by General Patton in the Army G-3 office. He announced that the Germans had made a major breakthrough in the ARDENNES. He had talked to Generals Eisenhower and Bradley the day before by telephone, and they were all three to meet at VERDUN at 0930. His general plan, subject to change, was to have XX Corps move northeast, III Corps move north, and XII Corps take over the Army front with one combat command of the

4th Armored Division in corps reserve. He also approved the Army  
staff officer's recommendation that the VT fuze be released.<sup>5</sup>

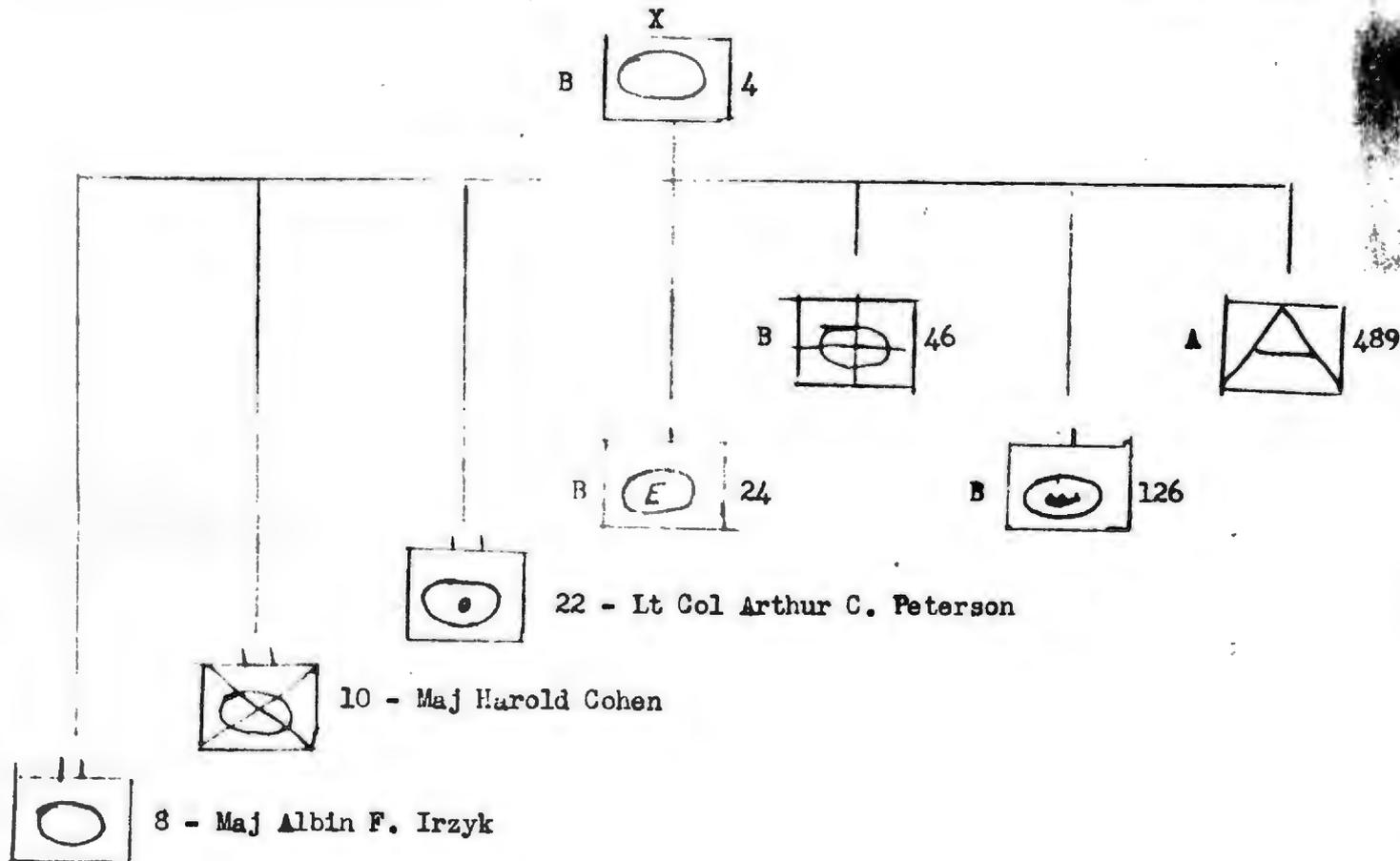
The actual plan adopted was slightly different. There  
had been much German activity and evidence of attack preparations  
on XX Corps front, and XX Corps was left on the Army front. III  
and XII Corps were to make the attack to the north. The actual  
execution of this movement "was a brilliant military accomplish-  
ment; corps and army staff work of the highest order were dis-  
played."<sup>6</sup> III Corps Headquarters moved to ARLON. When SHAEF  
transferred operational control of First and Ninth Armies to  
21st Army Group on 20 December, VIII Corps was given to Third  
Army. Third Army consisted of four corps, and included ten  
infantry, four armored, and one airborne divisions. (See Appen-  
dix I.)

On the 17th of December the 4th Armored Division, located  
in its rear assembly area, had little inkling of the part it was  
to play in a few days in the Third Army's northward counter-  
offensive. CCB was making plans to move into SAMR-UNION on the  
19th and was ready to move on one hour notice after 2400 17 Dec-  
ember. Arrangements were being made for the relief of the 25th  
Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron which had been supporting the  
80th Division. At 0100 on the 18th one of the paratroop scares  
that were so frequent immediately following the German attack  
occurred in the division,<sup>7</sup> and the division area was hastily  
organized into zones and patrolled. The report proved to be

Unnumbered.

On the 18th of December, 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion, commanded by Lt Col James W. Bidwell, moved out to assist the 87th Infantry Division. The 37th Tank Battalion, commanded by Lt Col Creighton W. Abrams, was also supporting the 87th Division at this time. Staffs continued to make arrangements for the move of CCB to the area west of SARRALBE to back up the 35th Division, and at 1530 Operation Instructions No. 11, directing this move, were distributed. Then all of a sudden everything was changed. At 1630 word was received that the eastward movement was called off. All units of the Division were alerted. At 2030 CCB received word to be ready to move at midnight.<sup>8</sup> CCB, which was commanded by Brigadier General Holmes E. Dager, included at this time, and for most of the ensuing two weeks, the units shown on Organizational Chart No. 1. CCB left CUTTING at 0300 on the 19th. The route passed through MORHANGE, PONT-A-MOUSSON, CHAMBLEY, BRIEY, AULETZ, LONGNY, HESSANCY, L'EGLISE, and terminated at VUX-LES-ROSIERES. During this march the leading vehicle in each company used full headlights until reaching the vicinity of ARLON. Some maintenance difficulties harassed the unit motor officers since no one had had an opportunity to completely catch up on their maintenance during the rest period.<sup>9</sup> At halts the trains sent forward gasoline on trucks to refuel the tanks. Gasoline was a critical item at this time because the change of front being executed by Third Army required a relocation

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Composition of CCB for the march to ARLON.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART NO. 1.

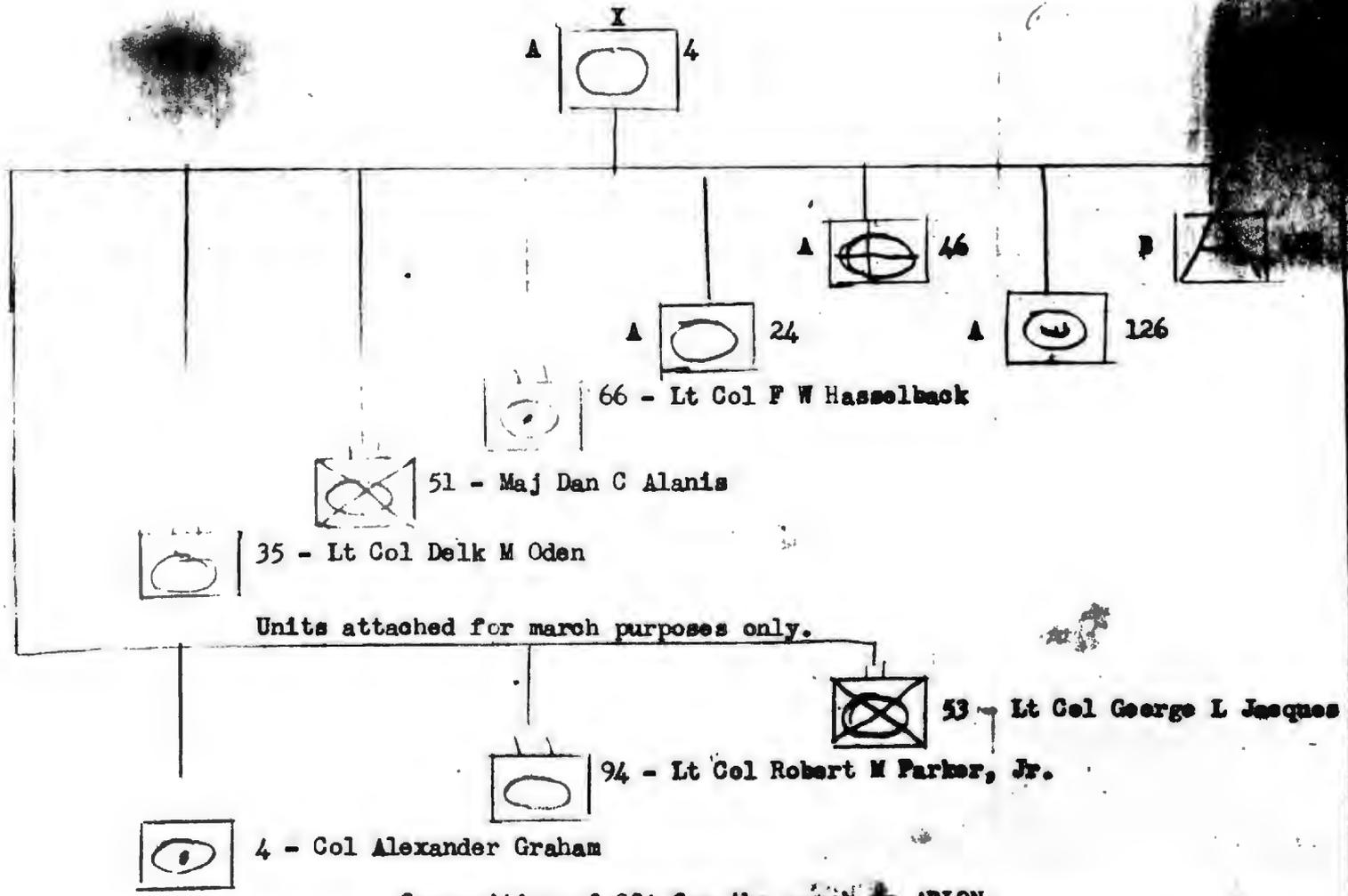
of army supply points. During the march Third Army moved a high priority gasoline convoy past CCB to establish a class III dump at LONGWY, where CCB refueled upon its arrival.<sup>10</sup> The column closed in VAUX-LES-ROSIERES at 2000, and came temporarily under the control of VIII Corps.

The Division was attached to III Corps on the 19th and marched at 0900 on that day toward ARLON, where III Corps Headquarters was established. (See Appendix VI, No. 1.) CCA, commanded by Brigadier General Herbert Earnest, was composed of the units shown in Organizational Chart No. 2,

In a memorandum to General Earnest, General Gaffey indicated that the eventual destination of the Division was still unknown, and tentative plans were made to bivouac in the area BRIEY-AUDUN. (See Appendix VI, No. 2.) Following the same route that CCB had taken, CCA reached its assembly area near LONGWY at 1600. At 1830 orders were received to continue the march after refueling in place, and all units of the Combat Command closed in the area WOLKRANGE-AUBANGE, south of ARLON, by 0230 on the 20th.

Meanwhile, the Division encountered difficulty in gathering together those elements that had been left behind. The relief of the 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron by the 92d Squadron of the 12th Armored Division progressed very slowly.<sup>11</sup> The Squadron returned to the Reserve Command area at 1915. Meanwhile, the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 37th Tank Battalion had returned from the 87th Division. At 0730 on the 20th, Reserve Command left

-66-



Composition of CCA for the march to ARLON.

the old area and moved in two columns; the inner or eastern route followed generally the same roads that were used by the earlier portions of the Division, and the outer route went through NANCY, the southern edge of PONT-A-MOUSSON, THIAUCOURT, LAIZERAY, LONGUYON, and LONGNY, a route farther to the south and west than the inner route. Reserve Command, commanded by Colonel Wendell Blanchard, closed at RACHECOURT, south and west of ARLON, at 2400 on the 20th. The 53d Armored Infantry Battalion was attached to Reserve Command at that time and the 25th Squadron reverted to Division troops. A company of the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion also joined each combat command.

The march by the 4th Armored Division to the vicinity of ARLON was a major achievement. A large part of the march was made at night; the prescribed speed was eight miles per hour and only "cat's eye" lights were permitted during the latter portion. Units had to march without knowing where they would finally halt, and route reconnaissance was executed more or less "on the run" and frequently at night. Enemy air was reported active and a distance of 70 yards between vehicles was maintained in daylight.<sup>12</sup> Radios on listening silence could not contribute to column control. The most adverse weather conditions prevailed, and many histories mention the bitter cold under which all these operations took place. In spite of these obstacles, a road march of 160 miles was executed without accident,<sup>13</sup> and a powerful division placed in a position where it could act at a crucial moment with the

greatest speed.

CCB was the first element of the division to arrive in the vicinity of ARLON. They bivouacked in the vicinity of VAUX-LES-ROSIERES on the main road leading from NEUFCHATEAU to BASTOGNE. (See Sketch No. 1.) NEUFCHATEAU was the new headquarters of VIII Corps, which had pulled back from BASTOGNE and left the 101st Airborne Division, reinforced by elements of the 9th and 10th Armored Divisions, preparing to meet the oncoming Germans. Friendly troops, possibly from the 28th Division, were reported to be occupying REMOIVILLE and REMICHPAGNE.<sup>11</sup> 28th Division Headquarters was at SIBRET during the night. At 0300 on the morning of the 20th, CCB ordered the 8th Tank Battalion and the 10th Armored Infantry Battalion to send out small tank-infantry patrols to patrol the towns and roads to the north and northwest.<sup>14</sup> These patrols were composed of two platoons of Company D, 8th Tank Battalion (eight tanks), and two platoons from the 10th Armored Infantry Battalion. No contact was established with the enemy. At 0945 CCB ordered a task force composed of Company A, 8th Tank Battalion; Company C, 10th Armored Infantry Battalion; and Battery C, 22d Armored Field Artillery Battalion; and commanded by Captain Ezell of the 8th Tank Battalion, to proceed to BASTOGNE to aid the 101st Airborne Division as needed. On the way to BASTOGNE the task force encountered elements of two battalions of friendly artillery in position but deserted. Some of the vehicle motors were still running.<sup>9</sup> The battalions had apparently been

counterattacked early that same morning and left their equipment intact.<sup>16</sup> The task force brought as much of this equipment as it could back to CCB when it returned later in the day. In BASTOGNE the task force commander contacted the 101st Airborne Division and was told to get in touch with Colonel Roberts, commanding CCB of the 10th Armored. Roberts gave Ezell several missions, but when he was about to execute the first one, he was recalled on orders from the 4th Armored Division, and the task force rejoined CCB.<sup>9</sup>

After its short halt near LONGVY late on the 19th, CC1 reached its bivouac area during the night of the 19th to 20th. The units were disposed in the general vicinity of LESSINCY, south of BELTON and astride the BELTON-LONGVY highway. (See Sketch No. 2.) At this time Division Artillery, the 53d Armored Infantry Battalion, and both Troops A and B of the 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron were under the control of CC1, an arrangement which had been made for march purposes. During the morning, the area east of the BELTON-LONGVY highway was assigned to the 26th Division, and CC1 moved northwest. At the same time CC1 regrouped, Troop B of the 25th Cavalry joining CCB, and the 53d Armored Infantry Battalion being attached to Reserve Command upon its arrival. (See Sketch No. 3.) During this move General Patton was conferring with General Millikin and General Gaffey in BELTON. They discussed plans for the forthcoming operation, and the Division was successful in getting approval for the reassignment of CCB to the Division.<sup>17</sup> This gave the Division Commander an opportunity to consolidate the Division, and CCB was

moved south and east on the afternoon of the 20th to the area LELLIER-L'ÉGLISE. (See Sketch No. 4.) At the same time Division ordered CCA to reinforce the security elements north of ARLON and push out an additional kilometer.<sup>17</sup> To implement this order a task force under Captain Rockafeller of the 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, consisting of assault guns, armored infantry, and light tanks, moved north of ARLON and prepared removable roadblocks for the three main roads north and east out of the town. Patrolling was conducted between the roadblocks, but they were not emplaced as units of the 26th Division were known to be out in front. (See Appendix VI, No. 3.)

On the night of the 20th-21st December, the Germans cut off BASTOGNE on the north and south. Their columns subsequently joined west of BASTOGNE and the garrison was finally besieged. The German 5th Paratroop Division, having an estimated strength of 8,000 men, held the line below BASTOGNE.<sup>18</sup>

On the 21st of December the situation had not clarified. Sick and starving remnants of the 28th Division, the 9th Armored Division, and Corps Artillery and Engineer units stumbled in.<sup>18</sup> The enemy situation was very vague. The nearest enemy was reported at REDANGE in the 26th Infantry Division zone northeast of ARLON, and tanks were reported at GROSEOUS further to the northeast.<sup>19</sup> BASTOGNE was known to be cut off and estimates placed the German strength in the BASTOGNE area at one infantry and one panzer division.<sup>20</sup> III Corps decided to attack as soon

as coordination could be obtained with three divisions abreast; 4th Armored Division on the left, 26th Division in the center, and 80th Division on the right. The 4th Armored issued its attack order on the morning of the 21st. (See Appendix VI, No. 4.) The order called for an attack in two columns with CCA on the right. (See Sketch No. 5.) The division had the mission of overcoming and destroying all enemy resistance in its zone as well as providing flank protection for the Corps. This meant that the attack could not be conducted as a true penetration, and was a major reason for the relative slowness of the advance as compared with the normal concept of an armored attack. Reserve Command was to follow CCA prepared for commitment as division reserve. Engineers and logistical elements were placed in normal support roles, but artillery battalions were attached to combat commands. Corps had placed two additional armored field artillery battalions under division control, the 274th and 253d, and one of these was attached to each of the combat commands. The 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion was held under Division Artillery control in general support prepared to furnish direct support to Reserve Command if it were committed. The 25th Cavalry Squadron, which was at this time screening along the line HIBAY-LA-NEUVE--ARLON,<sup>21</sup> was to be relieved by the cavalry troops attached to combat commands, and was to screen the division left flank. Strict security measures, including troop movement control by the Division Provost Marshal, were

prescribed, and special measures were ordered to prevent ammunition, vehicles, weapons, and gasoline from falling into enemy hands. Liaison planes were forbidden to fly until the attack jumped off.

At the same time the Division Commander, General Gaffey, conceived of an alternate plan which he communicated to General Dager, commanding CCB, in a letter. (See Appendix VI, No. 5.) In this letter he stated that if CCA were held up at the bridges in MARTELLANGE, which were known to be blown,<sup>19</sup> he planned to divert CCB from its assigned axis eastward to the main ARLON-BASTOGNE highway, where it would lead the attack followed by CCA. As it turned out this alternate plan was not placed in effect.

These plans were all made for D-day, H-hour, which was expected to be some time on the 22d. At 212000, Corps announced that the attack would jump off at 0600 the following day,<sup>20</sup> and Division notified its subordinate units. The latter had meanwhile been making their own plans.

CCB planned to attack in a single column. (See Appendix VI, No. 6.) The IP was set at LOUFTELMONT. The point was to consist of Troop B, 25th Cavalry, reinforced by a platoon of light tanks and a platoon of armored infantry. The point would precede the main body and maintain contact with CCA on the right and the 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (minus) on the left. Company B of the 24th Armored Engineer Battalion would furnish a mine party to accompany the point. The advance

guard was to consist of Company A of the 8th Tank Battalion reinforced by assault guns, reconnaissance elements, engineers, and tank destroyers. The main body followed. The Combat Command CP was moved to HABAY-LA-VIEILLE in preparation for the attack, and radio silence was ordered at 210900 to last until contact was made with the enemy. The axis of attack ran through LOUFELMONT, FAUVILLERS, and CHAUMONT. After dark on the 21st, CCB assembled in attack assembly areas in the vicinity of HABAY-LA-NEUVE and L'EGLISE to organize for the attack.

Upon receipt of the division order, CCA immediately sent Troop A, 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, up to screen north of ARLON. They operated along the line NOBRESSART-ATTERT-NIEDERCOLPACH with their CP at LETZERT. The Troop reported that friendly engineers were all set to blow the bridges at NIEDERCOLPACH and OBERCOLPACH, but that the CO of the Troop prohibited this. A bridge north of these bridges (exact location unknown) had been blown, and a 20-foot crater was in the main road south of NEUPERLE.<sup>22</sup> Obstacles like these, many of which were executed after the need for them was over, were to prove to be a considerable hindrance to the advance of our troops.

CCA planned to attack in two columns. (See Appendix VI, No. 7.) The left column, called Task Force Alanis, was composed of the 51st Armored Infantry Battalion minus one company, reinforced by Company B, 35th Tank Battalion. The column also had engineer, tank destroyer, and medical support. The right column,

called Task Force Oden, was formed around the 35th Tank Battalion (minus), with Company C, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion attached, and with engineer, tank destroyer, and medical support. CCA placed the 274th Armored Field Artillery Battalion in direct support of TF Alanis and the 66th Armored Field Artillery Battalion in direct support of TF Oden. The 274th went into position near STOCKEL and the 66th near CLAIRFONTAINE on the afternoon of the 21st to carry out their mission of being prepared to support the movement to forward assembly areas during the night, and to support the attack. CCA prohibited registration by its artillery in the interests of secrecy. The two task forces assembled during the afternoon, TF Alanis in TOERNICH, and TF Oden in WOLKRANGE. After dark the task forces moved up to their attack assembly areas, TF Alanis near TATTERT, and TF Oden near QUATREVENTS.

Reserve Command notified all elements under its control to be ready to move northwards on short notice, the command planned to move to the old CCA assembly area, WOLKRANGE-TOERNICH-UDANGE, at 220730, after the attack had jumped off. The Division Trains were to consolidate at RACHECOURT and LIEUX-LE-TIGE under the Reserve Command S-4.<sup>23</sup>

Division Artillery Headquarters moved to ARLON and set up in the same building with Division Headquarters in order to promote close coordination during the attack.

By 0600 on the 22d, the 4th Armored Division was prepared to launch its attack as part of III Corps. The Division was

concentrated, not dispersed, ready for employment in mass. It was reinforced by additional artillery firepower. The high command had insured that the most important conditions for the favorable employment of armor existed. This was to be the initial stroke of the great counteroffensive of all the Allied Forces to destroy the still-deepening German penetration.

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NOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup>Wallace, Patton and His Third Army, p. 136.

<sup>2</sup>G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 17 December 1944.

<sup>3</sup>Wallace, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>4</sup>Patton, Army Commander's Notes on the Bastogne Operation.

<sup>5</sup>Wallace, op. cit., pp. 148-150.

<sup>6</sup>Marshall, Biennial Report to the Secretary of War, pp. 44-45.

<sup>7</sup>G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 18 December 1944.

<sup>8</sup>After Action Report, CCB, 4th Armored Division, 18 December 1944.

<sup>9</sup>Interview, Lieutenant Colonel Albin F. Irzyk.

<sup>10</sup>Interview, Major Edward H. Markey.

<sup>11</sup>G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 19 December 1944.

<sup>12</sup>After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 19 December 1944.

<sup>13</sup>After Action Report, 4th Armored Division, 19 December 1944.

<sup>14</sup>After Action Report, CCB, 4th Armored Division, 20 Dec 1944.

<sup>15</sup>Clarke, Combat History of the 4th Armored Division, 20 December 1944.

- 16 After Action Report, 8th Tank Battalion, 20 December 1944.
- 17 G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 20 December 1944.
- 18 Oden, The 4th Armored Division in the Relief of Bastogne, p. 41.
- 19 After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 21 December 1944.
- 20 Clarke, op. cit., 21 December 1944.
- 21 After Action Report, 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, 20 December 1944.
- 22 After Action Report, CCA, 4th Armored Division, 21 December 1944.
- 23 After Action Report, Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division, 21 December 1944.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE 4TH ARMORED DIVISION ATTACKS TO REACH BASTOGNE

During the period from the 22d through the 26th, the 4th Armored Division attacked to reach BASTOGNE. This chapter is the story of the problems met and overcome by the Division; how the Division acted to clear its zone and open a route into BASTOGNE; how the attack was supported by air and artillery; and how the initiative was maintained by the use of the Reserve Command.

22 December 1944

At 0600 on the 22d of December, the III Corps attacked with three divisions abreast. In the 4th Armored Division, CCA advanced in two columns and crossed the line of departure, HEIN-  
STERT-ATTERT, at the prescribed time in a heavy snowfall. (See Sketch No. 6.) The right column, composed of the 35th Tank Battalion, reinforced, and called Task Force Oden, moved out through BONNERT and OBERPALLEN to NIEDERCOLPACH, following a route to the west of their assigned axis. A blown bridge at NIEDERCOLPACH halted the column. Troop A of the 25th Cavalry, scouting out in front of the column, also reported that a bridge just north of PETITE NOBRES-  
SART was blown. Consequently General Earnest ordered the column to move via NOTHCHES and PARETTE and join the west column on the main highway west of PARETTE.<sup>1</sup> The left column, composed of the

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Appendix VI, No. 8.) The companies were both to be prepared to establish a bridgehead across the SURE River. At 1330 Company A started the attack and in half an hour had occupied the western portion of HAUT-MARTELANGE unopposed. Company B moved up on the left and was near the center of town when considerable small arms and bazooka fire struck them from the west side of the town. Bitter street fighting continued all afternoon, during which one platoon of Company B (of the 51st) was pinned down for several hours by fire from commanding buildings as they lay on the road embankment. Artillery shells set fire to some buildings but the resistance continued. After dark the bright moonlight and new fallen snow made any movement in the open conspicuous. At 1800 the attack was renewed and the fighting continued all night. The town was finally cleared at 0400 the following morning.

Units of CCB were up at 0300 to start getting in order for the attack. The snow and darkness made it very difficult to assemble the units. CCB left its attack positions at 0430. The column was formed at LOUFTEMONT as the various elements arrived from the west and south by interspersing the infantry and tank elements in the column as planned. At 0600 the 8th Tank Battalion crossed the IP. At 0838 the column was two kilometers south of the blue phase line at FAUVILLERS. The first halt was at the initial objective, FAUVILLERS. Patrols were sent out, which returned at 1000 and reported no contact. The column resumed its advance through FAUVILLERS, HOTTE, and LENUFONTAINE, receiving some small arms fire from

the latter. Just south of BURNON the bridge was found destroyed and Company B of the 24th Engineers prepared to span the stream. The 8th Tank Battalion was given the job of patrolling to the east, and they received direct fire from the vicinity of STRAIN-CHAMPS. Elements of the 10th Armored Infantry forded the stream and outposed BURNON at 1700 after fire from the 8th Tank Battalion had silenced some enemy resistance that had developed in the town. At 1900 the bridge was completed. Orders were received to continue the move all night, but at 2040 CCB had not started moving.<sup>4</sup> Two liaison officers returning from CCB headquarters to the 8th Tank and 10th Armored Infantry Battalions with orders for the continuation of the attack made the wrong turn at FOUVILLERS and were ambushed by the Germans on the road to BODANGE. One of them escaped, but the leading battalions did not receive the word to continue until late at night.<sup>3</sup> They were held up by fire coming from the woods north of BURNON and were not able to advance until after midnight. (See Sketch No. 8.)

On 0730 on the 22d, Reserve Command moved as planned to the UDANGE area. Plans had already been made for a further displacement to QUNTRE-VENTS. Orders for this move were issued at noon as soon as Reserve Command had closed in UDANGE. The displacement to QUNTRE-VENTS was completed at 1525. (See Sketch No. 9.) By this time the division commander had received the report from CCA that the enemy occupied BIGONVILLE in strength. He issued orders for Reserve Command to attack BIGONVILLE. Reserve

Command issued orders at 2300 for a move to HOLTZ to commence at 0600 the following day. A tank company reinforced by a platoon of armored infantry was to form the advance guard, followed by the 37th Tank Battalion and the 53d Armored Infantry Battalion. The 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and Battery C of the 177th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzers) were attached.<sup>5</sup>

Division Artillery continued to support the attack. During the morning the 177th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzers) was attached to the Division. At 1400 the 776th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzers), was attached to the Division and was further attached to CCB. However, this battalion did not arrive until later. These two battalions were short on clothing, equipment, and supplies, including ammunition, and were very glad to come under the wing of a division which could look out for them and resupply them. Fortunately the 4th Armored Division made a practice of carrying 155-mm ammunition, although they had no organic medium artillery, on the chance that corps artillery medium battalions attached to the Division from time to time might be short on ammunition.<sup>6</sup> This gave the Division a total of seven artillery battalions supporting the attack; its own three organic battalions, two armored 105-mm battalions, and two towed 155-mm battalions.

The 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron got off to an inauspicious start on the 22d when Troop C and squadron headquarters found themselves blocked by the column of CCB at MELIER until 1630.

Troop D managed to infiltrate forward in the CCB column and move north and west to set up a screen extending from MITRY to a blown bridge about a half kilometer northeast to VOLAIVILLE. Troop C finally got through and outposted to the north and west of BURNON. (See Sketch 8.) During the day both troops identified 8th Company, 15th Parachute Regiment, of the German 5th Paratroop Division as the unit that had been in BURNON.<sup>7</sup>

On this day the 4th Armored Division delivered its attack. The situation was still so confused as a result of the disruption caused by the German breakthrough that the enemy dispositions were unknown when the attack commenced. Stragglers from American units added to the confusion. The 25th Cavalry picked up some from the 28th Division; CCA found eighty who had been previously cut off; and CCB picked up two officers and twenty men reported to be from the 707th Tank Battalion and the 44th Armored Infantry, who had been wandering around for four days and had to be evacuated for medical attention.<sup>4</sup> As might be expected resistance encountered in the zone was uneven, placing CCB about six and a half kilometers ahead of CCA, and leaving its right flank considerable exposed. The Division Commander decided to continue to push the attack in spite of this danger, but he was still very concerned about his right flank. The Division received a warning during the day from III Corps not to let itself be cut off as the forces in BASTOGNE were,<sup>4</sup> and the Division Commander decided quickly to commit the Reserve Command when a dangerous threat to his

flank developed at BIGONVILLE.

23 December 1944

At 0400 after an all night fight, CCA finally cleared MARTELANGE of the enemy. The bridge across the SURE River on the main highway was completely demolished, but the bridge on the RADELANGE road leading west out of town was only partially destroyed and was passable for foot troops. By 0500 Company A of the 51st Armored Infantry Battalion was across the river and had secured the high ground to the north of the town without opposition.<sup>8</sup> CCA reported that about 100 paratroopers had been holding the town. Corps engineers (the 186th Engineer Combat Battalion) came up to install a 90-foot Bailey bridge. By 1430 the bridge was ready, and TF Oden, the reinforced tank battalion, crossed the river, followed by TF Alanis. At about 1600, a mile north of MARTELANGE, enemy 20-mm fire caused some casualties among the infantry riding the lead tanks, but the fire was soon silenced. The enemy was overrun by the tanks and armored infantry and an estimated company of the German 5th Paratroop Division and two antitank guns were wiped out.<sup>9</sup> A little further to the north, about three kilometers from MARTELANGE, the head of the column ran into heavy small arms, antitank, and mortar fire from the direction of WARMACH, which is located a short distance east of the main highway. Company C of the 51st Armored Infantry Battalion lost two half-tracks to the fire, and a platoon of this company supported by four

light tanks moved on WERNICH. The enemy repulsed this force with considerable loss.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, CCB had sent word to CCA that it had observed enemy vehicles moving south on the BASTOGNE-MARTELANGE road, apparently to reinforce the German forces facing CCA. General Earnest decided to by-pass WERNICH with the bulk of his force. Accordingly Company B of the 51st, mounted on tanks of Company B of the 35th, moved west off the road a mile north of MARTELANGE, and followed the tank battalion to the northwest by bounds. Meanwhile, after a preparation by the supporting artillery a force of tanks and infantry attacked the town and drove the enemy out into the woods to the north. When the woods were attacked, however, the town was left unguarded, and the enemy infiltrated back into the town from the east. Attempts to drive out the enemy after dark failed. Meanwhile, forward elements of TF Oden reached the high ground south and east of STRAINCHAMPS where they halted for the night. (See Sketch No. 10.)

After refueling and resupplying after their fight at BURNON on the 22d, CCB resumed their advance during darkness early on the 23d. Before daylight the leading elements of CCB reached the road junction southwest of CHAMONT. At this point strong enemy direct fire was received, and CCB was forced to halt until daylight. The 8th Tank Battalion lost two light tanks.<sup>3</sup> By noon CCB was on the high ground southwest of CHAMONT: the enemy were active in the woods northwest and south of the town. This was the first day of good weather, and our planes shot down two enemy planes in CCB's

rear area. During the afternoon, CCB mounted an attack against CHAUMONT. Under covering fire from Company A of the 8th Tank Battalion, infantrymen of the 10th Armored Infantry, mounted on tanks of Company B of the 8th, attacked and captured CHAUMONT. Under covering fire from Company A of the 8th Tank Battalion on the high ground southwest of CHAUMONT, infantrymen of the 10th Armored Infantry, mounted on tanks of Company B and a platoon of Company C of the 8th, attacked and captured CHAUMONT. At the same time another platoon of Company C of the 8th attempted to outflank CHAUMONT to the west. Five tanks bogged down in a patch of mud, which was unexpected inasmuch as most of the ground was frozen at this time. The tanks were so solidly stuck that when they were recovered two days later it required three tank recovery vehicles to pull each one out of the mud.<sup>3</sup> While reorganizing in CHAUMONT, CCB was strafed by friendly planes, who had not been informed that the town was taken.<sup>10</sup>

At 1720 the Germans launched a strong counterattack against CHAUMONT. The first indication of the counterattack was German infantry infiltrating into the town, and this was reported by an outpost of Company C of the 8th in the north edge of town. Suddenly direct fire opened up on CCB from hill 490 northeast of CHAUMONT and the town immediately became untenable. The tank guns of Company A southwest of the town could not reach the enemy.<sup>3</sup> The Germans used twenty-two tanks, and German infantry outflanked the town on the east and west.<sup>11</sup> Among the enemy tanks were

American Shermans, with stars and panels. The 8th Tank Battalion lost 11 medium tanks in the town, although some of them were only mired in the mud.<sup>12</sup> After the fight, CCB regrouped on the high ground southwest of CHAUMONT to hold their positions. (See Sketch No. 10.)

Reserve Command had been ordered to attack BIGONVILLE on this day, and it departed early from its assembly area near QUATRE-VENTS, but icy roads delayed its movement and it did not reach HOLTZ until 1000.<sup>13</sup> CCB had reported that FLATZBOURHOF was occupied by the enemy. A company of the 37th Tank Battalion and a company of the 53d Armored Infantry moved through HOLTZ and attacked FLATZBOURHOF and by 1230 had seized the high ground north of the town. Numerous mines hindered the attack at FLATZBOURHOF and the enemy had mortars zeroed in on the road junction there.<sup>14</sup> The attackers repulsed several enemy tanks, and captured a number of prisoners wearing white capes and helmets. Next the 53d cleared the woods south of BIGONVILLE in an attack in which fixed bayonets were used;<sup>15</sup> 30 Germans were killed and 15 taken prisoner. They were from the 13th Parachute Regiment of the 5th Paratroop Division. Many mines were encountered on the approaches to BIGONVILLE and Reserve Command was unable to take the town before dark. (See Sketch No. 11.) At 1700 about 200 enemy reinforcements were observed entering the town from the north.<sup>13</sup> At 1900 orders were issued for an attack at 0745 the next day.

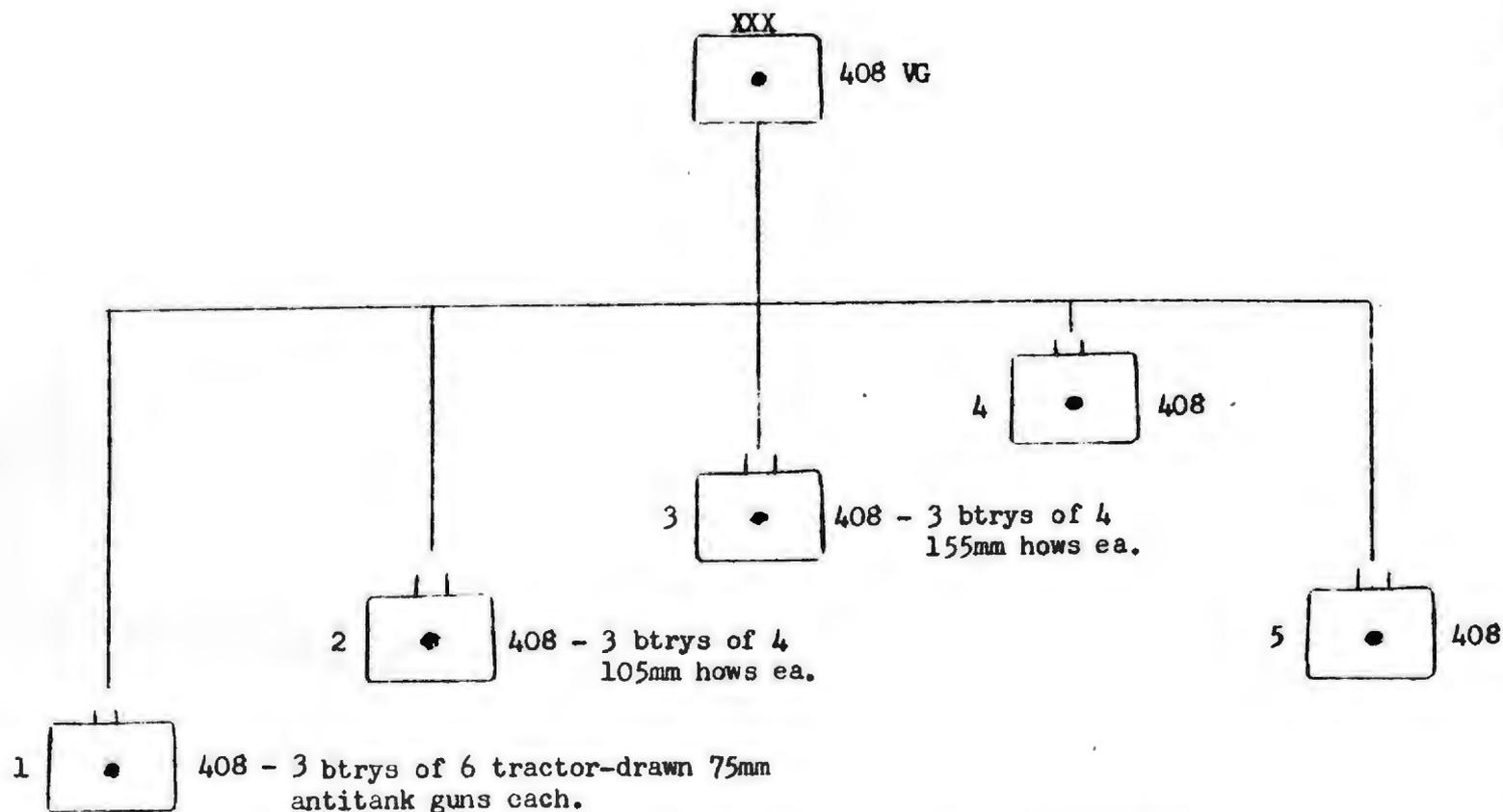
The 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (minus) continued

to screen the division's left flank during the day. At the end of the day its screen extended from CCB's position southwest of CHAMMONT to VOLAIVILLE. (See Sketch No. 10.) The squadron observed an enemy build up in the REMOIVILLE-NIVES area, on which Troop E fired with some effect. Prisoners taken by the cavalry indicated their opponents were the 3d Battalion, 14th Parachute Regiment, supported by a battalion of the 408th Volksgrenadier Artillery Corps. Other prisoners indicated the presence of the 2d Battalion of the 14th Parachute Regiment, and at least a company of the 5th Parachute Engineer Battalion, both of the German 5th Paratroop Division on CCB's front. The organization of the 408th Volksgrenadier Artillery Corps is interesting as an example of the hastily formed Volksgrenadier units the Germans were forced to make use of at this time. (See Organizational Chart No. 3.)

On this day the 4th Armored Division encountered some of the hardest fighting of the campaign. The enemy counterattacked strongly against both of the leading combat commands, and succeeded in their counterattack at CHAMMONT in driving CCB out of the town. As an example of the severity of the fighting, the 8th Tank Battalion reported that its Company B had no tanks left, and that the Battalion's effective medium tank strength was 22.<sup>10</sup> At the same time the flank security problem provided the greatest difficulties to the division and combat command commanders. On the left the enemy had driven the 28th Division out of VAUX-LES-ROSIERES, and the troops there had withdrawn to NEUFCHATEAU.<sup>10</sup>

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Composition of the German 408th Volksgrenadier Artillery Corps.

The composition of the 4th and 5th battalions was unknown to the prisoners captured from the unit, and those battalions were not believed to be with the corps. The unit had come from VIENNA on the 2 December, and the personnel were mostly Austrian, with only a few months service and little training.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time the enemy were building up forces in the REPOUVILLE-NIVES area. General Dager requested that division direct Reserve Command to send something up around VOLLEVILLE to protect his left flank, but Reserve Command was already committed to an attack on another flank threat to the division at BIGONVILLE. General Dager was also worried about the enemy in BODANGE and asked to find out what CCA was going to do about them. Division informed him that they were his responsibility and he would have to clean them out.<sup>10</sup> The reason for this assignment of responsibility was that BODANGE lay west of the SURE River, which was the boundary between combat commands, but at this time the bulk of CCB was just southwest of CHAUMONT, about seven kilometers to the north. CCA was in somewhat the same situation, having by-passed WARMACH and cleared it with a small force, only to have the enemy retake it and thereby block the ARLON-BASTOGNE highway. At about noon calls from the III Corps Chief of Staff and G-3 stated that LUCKY 6 (Gen Patton) wanted General Dager to by-pass CHAUMONT and that he (Gen Patton) says "There is too much piddling around--by-pass these towns and clean them up later."<sup>10</sup> The division was having difficulty in using these tactics inasmuch as there were no infantry for follow-up troops and the division mission was to open a route into BASTOGNE.

On the favorable side the weather cleared for the first time since the German offensive started, and during the morning CCB received close air support. In the afternoon all planes were

diverted to the VIII Corps sector,<sup>10</sup> but forward elements of the division could see C-47s dropping supplies into BASTOGNE. Most of all the ground was frozen and full cross-country mobility was restored for the first time since October.<sup>9</sup> As a result the Division's morale was high.

At midnight the 101st Airborne Division called in to find out the situation and to drop the reminder that there was only one shopping day remaining before Christmas.

24 December 1944

During the night and early morning intermittent fighting continued in WIRLING, but CCA was unable to dislodge the enemy. Finally at 0530 a coordinated attack was launched by Company B of the 51st Armored Infantry mounted on the tanks of Company B of the 35th Tank Battalion. They moved east across the main highway into the town. (See Sketch No. 12.) Meanwhile, the remainder of the combat command halted northwest of WIRLING for regrouping and servicing from 0600 to 1300.<sup>17</sup> Several hours of bitter street fighting in WIRLING were required to drive the enemy into the northern portion of the town, but there they held. The American troops withdrew a short distance to the rear of the church, and brought heavy artillery fire on the Germans. Following this they continued the attack, but the resistance was so bitter that it required the rest of the day to eliminate the pocket of resistance. WIRLING was finally cleared at 1715.

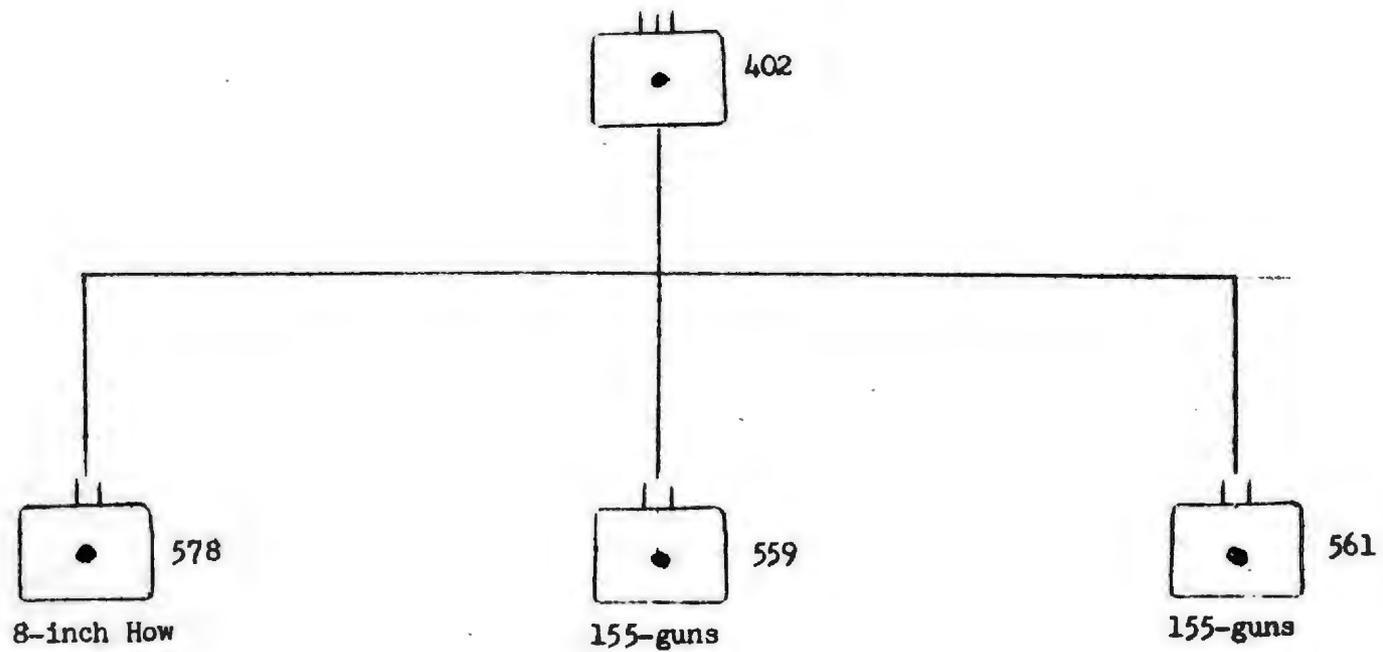
The task force pushed on to the edge of TINTANGE, but found it very heavily defended, so withdrew to more favorable positions in the vicinity of WARMACH for the night.

Meanwhile, the remainder of CCA was not idle. At 1300 Company A of the 51st Armored Infantry teamed with Company C of the 35th Tank Battalion to clear out the southern portion of the SCHOCKBUSCH, the woods north of WARMACH. They pushed the advance all afternoon, and by 1645 reached a position along the TINTANGE-STRAINCHILPS road, where they halted for the night. At the same time Company C of the 51st, attached to Company A of the 35th, advanced northwards west of the highway and cleared out the BOIS DE MORIEVAL southeast of STRAINCHILPS. At the end of the day they were abreast of the task force to the east of the highway and facing the TINTANGE-STRAINCHILPS road. During the day CCA killed an estimated 160 enemy, wounded 40, and captured 135, and accounted for several tanks and assault guns.<sup>18</sup>

CCB spent most of this day in their positions south and southwest of CHAMONT recovering from the blow they had taken the day before. The enemy constantly probed their positions with patrols, but these were repulsed by outposts of the 10th Armored Infantry Battalion and the 25th Cavalry. Enemy troops in the woods south of CHAMONT continued to harass the command so an air strike of eight P-47s was requested and obtained on the woods, after which a company of the 10th Armored Infantry, reinforced by a platoon of tanks and two cavalry reconnaissance platoons, entered the woods (LAMBAY CHENET). They engaged in a sharp fight and drove the enemy out. By 1600 they had driven north into the small woods between LAMBAY CHENET

During the day the 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron continued to protect the left flank of the Division. They checked several towns, among which were BERCHEUX, JUSERET, and CHEME, which they found clear of enemy. They also contacted some engineers who were engaged in laying mines and constructing roadblocks and who gave information that there were enemy tanks northeast of BERCHEUX. These engineers were a part of Task Force Lion, a group built around the 178th Engineer Regiment as a nucleus, and having the job of protecting the left flank of III Corps with defended obstacles.<sup>24</sup>

On the 24th, Corps Artillery designated the 402d Field Artillery Group to reinforce the fires of the 4th Armored Division Artillery.<sup>23</sup> The composition of this group is shown in Organizational Chart No. 4. This raised to ten the total number of battalions supporting the 4th Armored Division. Division Artillery placed counter battery fire on BOULADE, north of BIGONVILLE. The fire direction center moved to WOLBELINGE and reported that they were very busy with three committed combat commands to support. The Division ordered that harassing artillery fire be delivered on enemy positions during the night to assist the renewal of the attack the next day. Late in the day the chief of staff of III Corps called to ask whether Division Artillery could give a battery of 105-mm self-propelled howitzers to Task Force Fickett, of which the 6th Mechanized Cavalry Squadron was to take position between the 4th Armored and the 26th Infantry



Composition of the 402nd Field Artillery Group.

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on the following day. Colonel Graham put up a stout artilleryman's defense pointing out the disadvantage of the lost power of concentration, "But if the CG wants, he'll get it." The response from III Corps was, "We thought you would concur with us on that."<sup>23</sup>

The results of the action on the 24th showed that the Division's attack had bogged down. This was due to several reasons. The enemy's defense had been skillful and bitter, and not only so in front of the attacking units. He had been successful in infiltrating back into two towns, WARRICH and BIGONVILLE, after they had been cleared once, and had forced the Division to retake them. He had similarly infiltrated into the LIMBY CHENET woods behind CCB and caused them trouble. The Division was feeling the effect of the lack of follow-up infantry. Also all the combat commands were committed and the division commander was faced with the problem of exercising his influence in some way to get the attack rolling. The necessity for resuming the advance was all the more urgent, as the enemy opened a four-division attack on BASTOGNE; the 560th German Infantry Division attacked from the east, the 5th Parachute and Panzer Lehr Divisions from the south, and the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division from the west.<sup>25</sup>

General Gaffey solved this problem by a number of measures. He felt he must shake the Reserve Command loose from the BIGONVILLE pocket and use it more decisively. The advance of troops on the right flank would diminish the threat to the Division from the BIGONVILLE area. The Corps Commander agreed with this and arranged

for the 26th Infantry Division to take responsibility for BIGONVILLE and the sector to the east of it.<sup>23</sup> He attached the 249th Engineer Battalion to the 26th Division for this purpose. He also attached the 188th Engineer Battalion, which had built the MARTE-LARGE bridge, to the 4th Armored to be used to defend the bridge and the sector to the east as far as BIGONVILLE. (See Appendix VI, No. 9.) The Corps Commander also detached two battalions of infantry (the 1st and 2d of the 318th) from the 80th Division and sent them to the 4th Armored. They were met by guides and reached the Division in the evening. The 1st Battalion, 318th Infantry, was attached to CCA and reached its assembly area in the woods southeast of WARMICH at 2215. It was at 40% combat strength,<sup>17</sup> having been engaged previously in bitter fighting to the east. The 2d Battalion, about 750 strong,<sup>26</sup> was attached to CCB and reached CCB's area at 2100. This infantry was to supplement the infantry strength organic to the Division, and to prevent the recurrence of infiltrations by the Germans in considerable numbers as had happened at WARMICH and BIGONVILLE. CCA felt that henceforth it must clear the zone to and hold along the SURBACH River on its right if it were to avoid being held up by enemy action in its rear.<sup>9</sup> It is important to remember that the mission was to open a route into BASTOGNE.

The division order for the attack on the 25th provided for a resumption of the attacks of CCA and CCB, now reinforced by an additional infantry battalion each, and the movement of

Reserve Command to an assembly northeast of NEUFCHATEAU during the night. From this locale they would launch an attack towards BASTOGNE on the 25th to the left of CCB. (See Appendix VI, No. 9.) The 25th Cavalry (minus) was then to maintain contact between CCB and Reserve Command. The 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm) and a battery of the 177th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm how) were attached to Reserve Command to provide artillery support. Troop D of the 25th Cavalry was to be attached to Reserve Command upon its arrival on the division's left flank. Reserve Command planned to leave BIGONVILLE at 0100 and arrive in the vicinity of HOLENFANG northeast of NEUFCHATEAU prior to daylight, moving under radio silence.

In order to further strengthen the attack in this sector, III Corps was planning to employ CCA of the 9th Armored Division on the left of the 4th Armored Division. The 4th Armored was informed that this additional combat command would be attached upon its arrival,<sup>27</sup> but it actually did not launch its attack until the 27th of December, three days later.

25 December 1944

CCA planned to attack on the 25th with two infantry battalions abreast. The 1st Battalion of the 318th Infantry was to attack on the right and the 51st Armored Infantry Battalion on the left. The 35th Tank Battalion was placed in general support of both infantry units. (See Appendix VI, No. 10.) The boundary between battalions

was the north-south 55 grid line. The 51st planned to attack with Company C on the left and Company A on the right of the main highway, which was their axis of advance. The initial objective was to clear out STRAINCHAMPS. (See Appendix VI, No. 11.) The initial objective of the right battalion was TINTANGE.

At 0800 the attack was resumed. On the left Company A of the 35th Tank Battalion went into position on the high ground overlooking STRAINCHAMPS and Company C of the 51st sent a platoon to clear the town. No resistance was encountered, and the two infantry companies astride the road moved forward abreast. (See Sketch No. 13.) From STRAINCHAMPS the 51st could see OCB attacking north on the BURNON--CHAUMONT road, and also an extensive dug-in enemy position by-passed by OCB southwest of HOLLANGE, but in OCB's zone.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion of the 318th had launched its attack on TINTANGE. At 0915 they had only progressed a hundred yards from the line of departure and were receiving heavy small arms fire. The enemy launched a counterattack of company strength, which was beaten off. By 1035 OCA had obtained air support on TINTANGE, and even though the town was strongly held, the 318th was able to take the town with little opposition after the bombardment. The battalion spent the remainder of the day consolidating its position in the vicinity of TINTANGE.

When Company A of the 51st started to move north across the STRAINCHAMPS--TINTANGE road, they ran into fire from the northern portion of the BOIS DE MELCH. Company D of the 35th moved up to

spray the area with fire. This was very successful and when the attack was resumed at noon, some 200 prisoners were captured. After a delay due to an attack on the battalion's forward positions by American P-47s, the 51st resumed its advance and by 1630 reached the high ground 500 yards south of HOLLANGE. A patrol determined that HOLLANGE was occupied and air reconnaissance reported that it was held in strength. CCA decided to halt for the night about 1630, and heavy artillery fire was directed on HOLLANGE to soften it up for the next day's operation.

During the day CCA left Company B of the 51st and Company B of the 35th in WERNACH to guard against infiltration. (See Appendix VI, No. 10.) Troop A of the 25th Cavalry continued screening from WERNACH to MERTELANGE, engaging in a sharp fight with the enemy at GREELANGE. They also screened to a point three miles north of WERNACH.

CCB planned to attack with one infantry battalion against CHAMMONT and the other enveloping CHAMMONT on the east. It was first necessary to clean out the woods south of CHAMMONT again as the enemy had infiltrated into them during the night. The attack was launched at 0850. Company C of the 8th Tank Battalion reinforced by armored infantry attacked the LIMBAY CHENET woods to clear out the snipers. (See Sketch No. 13.) The 2d Battalion of the 318th attacked the woods just south of CHAMMONT. They were held up by heavy machine gun fire, but tanks of Company A of the 8th Tank Battalion came to their support. The woods were finally

cleared by 1050. CCB then launched its main attack against CHAUMONT. The 2d Battalion of the 318th moved directly against the town supported by Company A of the 8th, while the 10th Armored Infantry Battalion, supported by Company C of the 8th, moved around CHAUMONT to the east. By 1340 this force had a platoon of tanks across the stream and road east and north of CHAUMONT, and by 1510 the 8th Tank Battalion was on the high ground east of GRANDRUE. Meanwhile, at 1440 the 318th had elements in the town and also had moved some forces through the woods and onto the high ground east of CHAUMONT. The town was finally cleared at 1950, and CCB outposted their positions for the night. The 8th Tank Battalion recovered seven of the eleven tanks they had previously left in CHAUMONT,<sup>29</sup> and CCB reported taking 67 prisoners during the day.

Reserve Command started its movement in bright moonlight from BIGONVILLE at 0100. The route followed took them behind CCA and CCB and into an assembly area between MOLINFANG and BERCHEUX. (See Sketch No. 13.) The head of the column reached BERCHEUX at 0500. Immediately a patrol was sent into VILUX-LES-ROSIERES; the town was unoccupied. At 0800 the commanders of the 37th Tank, 53d Armored Infantry, and 94th Field Artillery Battalions assembled at the Reserve Command CP to receive verbal orders. Their plan designated Company D of the 37th and Company B of the 53d to be the advance guard under the command of the S-2 of the 37th Tank Battalion.<sup>30</sup> The axis of advance selected did not follow the main NEUFCHATEAU-BASTOGNE highway, but turned southeast at

PETITE ROSIERE, then north again at REMOIVILLE, and on to BASTOGNE along the secondary road. The artillery displaced from MASSUL to positions in the vicinity of JUSERET, Battery C of the 177th (155-mm how) reinforcing the 94th. Company D of the 37th (light tanks) and Company C of the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion were to block to the north and west of PETITE ROSIERE while Troop C of the 25th Cavalry was to protect the command's left flank. The time of attack was set at 1100 in order to allow time for removal of a roadblock found at the edge of VAUX-LES-ROSIERES.<sup>31</sup>

The attack jumped off on time and met no resistance until the leading elements had passed through PETITE ROSIERE, when they were fired on by enemy infantry to the north.<sup>30</sup> While the town was being cleared, Company D of the 37th Tank and Company C of the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalions pushed the enemy to the north and outposted PETITE ROSIERE as planned. Reserve Command reported an enemy column moving west through MORHET.

After Company B of the 53d had cleared PETITE ROSIERE, the A Companies of the 37th and 53d attacked NIVES, receiving some antitank fire. The maneuver of the tanks was considerably restricted by the stream southeast of the town,<sup>14</sup> but they soon took the town, and the two C Companies continued on to COBEVILLE. Here they encountered sharp, but short-lived small arms resistance and entered the town at 1410. A crater was blocking the road where a small bridge had been blown east of COBEVILLE, so a tank dozer from the 37th pushed a stone wall into the crater and the column

moved on.<sup>32</sup> REMOIVILLE was strongly held by the enemy, and a surprise attack without artillery support was rapidly organized and launched at 1515.<sup>14</sup> The C Companies set up a base of fire on the high ground west of town, and the A Companies launched the attack. Direct fire and flame throwers helped to rout the enemy,<sup>32</sup> and by 1800 the town was secured and almost 400 prisoners captured. Meanwhile, Troop C of the 25th Cavalry, protecting the left flank, was in contact outside of MORHET, and Company D of the 37th and Company C of the 704th Tank Destroyer repulsed an enemy thrust north of PETITE ROSIERE. Company C of the 37th moved out to the north and Company B of the 37th to the northwest to outpost REMOIVILLE for the night. At 1700 Reserve Command CP moved up to V.UX-LES-ROSIERES, along with the 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion CP. The system of leap-frogging tank-infantry teams constantly carried out by the 37th Tank and 53d Armored Infantry Battalions during the day was a vital factor in maintaining the momentum of the attack of Reserve Command. During the night an unidentified plane strafed the PW enclosure at BERCHEUX. During the confusion several prisoners attempted to rush the guards, but they were unsuccessful as ten were killed and twenty-two wounded.<sup>32</sup>

During the day the 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron maintained their screen on the left of CCB, observing very little enemy activity. Hearing at 1600 that Reserve Command was up to REMOIVILLE, they pushed forward across the intervening terrain, capturing 26 prisoners in SURE at 1800, and contacting Reserve Command's flank in REMOIVILLE at 2200. (See Sketch No. 13.)

On this day, Christmas Day, 1944, the 4th Armored Division renewed its attack successfully on three fronts. Reserve Command completed its night march from BIGONVILLE and attacked on the Division's left, making considerable progress. The Division was now getting close to its objective, but there was still great urgency impelling it forward. On this same day, BASTOGNE was attacked by three enemy divisions. The enemy penetrated some of the 101st Airborne Division's artillery positions, but were repulsed; General McMuliffe informed the 4th Armored Division's Chief of Staff, Colonel Bigby, that it "was a little sticky here, but we will be able to handle it."<sup>31</sup> On this day further to the west the 116th Panzer Division was stopped between HOTTON and MARCHE, and the 2d Panzer Division was caught out of gas at CELLES.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless General Millikin called up to report indications of enemy build-up south and east of BASTOGNE,<sup>31</sup> and the 101st Airborne reported a build-up between LUTREBOIS and VILLEROUX southwest of BASTOGNE. This was right in the Division's path. On the other hand the Division was well assisted by the air arm. The air support was superior during the day and contributed particularly to the capture of THYLANDGE. The air also reported that HOLLANGE in front of COA was strongly held and enabled the Division to fire the attached heavy artillery battalion on it during the night to soften it up for the next day's attack.<sup>28</sup> The Division received the attachment of still another supporting unit, Company C of the 3d Chemical Mortar Battalion (4.2" mortars), which was further attached to

CCA, although it did not arrive until the next day.<sup>33</sup> To take care of the Division's flanks the 6th Cavalry Group arrived in the Division's area, and received the attachment of Battery A of the 253d Armored Field Artillery Battalion. The group (less the 6th Cavalry Squadron) received the mission of protecting the Corps' left flank north and west of the NEUFCHATEAU--BASTOGNE highway and the 6th Cavalry Squadron was given a zone from the left boundary of the 26th Division to CCA's right flank. Contact was made by the 6th Squadron on both its flanks. The organic 25th Cavalry Squadron was given the mission of maintaining contact between CCB and Reserve Command until it was pinched out, and then protecting the main supply route of CCB, which was expected to become the supply route for convoys into BASTOGNE.

Meanwhile, detailed plans were made for the link-up with the 101st Airborne Division. (See Appendix VI, No. 12.) They arranged for close coordination between any units of the 4th Armored making contact and the 101st Airborne and alerted these units to the possibility of enemy counterattacks after they had successfully reached BASTOGNE. Areas and sectors of defense were assigned, and responsibility for the preparation of counterattack plans in several directions was fixed. (See Sketch No. 14.)

26 December 1944

CCA planned to continue their attack on the 26th along the same lines as on the 25th. This involved slow progress, as the

attack was conducted by the infantry battalions on foot supported by tanks, and it was necessary to clear the zone and screen to the right flank as the leading elements progressed. The 51st Armored Infantry, on the left, was faced with the defended town of HOLLINGE. The enemy were dug-in southwest of HOLLINGE across the STRLINGE Brook, and also on the commanding ground, hill 490, northeast of the town. The 51st planned to seize hill 490 first with Company A of the 35th Tank Battalion, reinforced, and then move Company C of the 51st directly against the town. Meanwhile, Company A of the 51st was to advance on the west side of the highway, and Company B was still left in reserve in WERNACH. The attack was coordinated with an artillery preparation and jumped off on time at 0800. At 0945 Company A of the 35th, whose objective was hill 490, was held up south of the road running east out of HOLLINGE by fire from the northwest and northeast. (See Sketch No. 15.) Meanwhile, Company A of the 51st had reached a point 500 yards north of the STRLINGE--HONVILLE road where they were held up by artillery fire. This impasse was broken by Company A of the 35th, which moved up and seized hill 460, located to the east of the highway. This enabled the troops on the right of the highway to move up abreast of these on the left. Meanwhile, CCA reported that an enemy column had been sighted moving south on the BASTOGNE highway, and they requested air support. At 1210 the air support arrived but could find no trace of any enemy column, so they bombed some enemy gun positions

600 yards north of HOLLANGE. At 1400 Company B of the 35th succeeded in taking hill 490. Immediately Company C of the 51st followed it, and launched an attack at 1425 with artillery support against HOLLANGE from the northeast. The town and 174 prisoners were finally taken by 1730.

While the attack on HOLLANGE was going on the 1st Battalion of the 318th Infantry, attached to CCA, moved north from TINTANGE. By 1000 they had advanced 600 yards. They progressed slowly as they had to clear out the BOIS DE MELCH on their way. By 1245 they were west of HONVILLE. Aided by direct fire of Company C of the 35th they assaulted the town and captured it by 1710. CCA consolidated along the line HOLLANGE--HONVILLE for the night. Both towns had been battalion CPs of the German 5th Paratroop Division and both battalion commanders were captured. Company B of the 51st came up from WERNACH and went into the line between Company A of the 51st and the 318th. Defensive fires were planned for the area north of the 48th grid line. Troop A of the 25th Cavalry continued to screen both flanks of the combat command during the day. The 2d platoon screened WERNACH, the 3d platoon screened from HOLLANGE to STRAINCHAMPS, and the 1st platoon screened from STRAINCHAMPS to BODANGE, where the Troop CP was established.

CCA planned to continue the attack at 0800 on the 27th following generally the same plan. However, due to the release of the companies that had been held in reserve in WERNACH, the combat command commander specified a reserve that each attacking

battalion commander should hold out initially. He also called attention in his order, which was issued the evening of the 26th, to the amount of supporting artillery and mortar fire available, and insisted that it be fully used. (See Appendix VI, No. 13.)

CCB commenced its attack on the 26th by moving elements of the 318th around GRANDRUE and then launching a company of infantry in an attack supported by medium tanks of the 8th Tank Battalion against GRANDRUE from the north. This force captured the town by 1030. The 10th Armored Infantry then entered the woods opposite GRANDRUE. (See Sketch No. 15.) They encountered only small delaying forces and by noon had taken the high ground south of HOMPRES.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion of the 318th Infantry was moving northwards along the axis of the road. They met fierce resistance and a number of well dug-in antitank guns. The Air Corps came to the rescue and knocked out eight 88-mm guns, and supported by the 8th Tank Battalion, the 318th reached the road junction west of HOMPRES by 1630.<sup>35</sup> The principal portion of the battalion then moved east and occupied positions north and west of HOMPRES while elements moved further north to the vicinity of SALLVACCURT. The 318th surrounded HOMPRES by 2030, and CCB outposted their positions for the night. During the day they had suffered very high infantry casualties, particularly in the battalion of the 318th. Plans were made to continue the attack on the following day to support Reserve Command, and during the night patrols from the 318th reached the BOIS BECHU.

Reserve Command planned to attack on the 26th along the axis REMICHAIMPAGNE-CLOCHERONT-SIBRET. Company C of the 53d Armored Infantry and Company C of the 37th Tank Battalion (the "C" team) were to occupy positions on commanding ground west of REMICHAIMPAGNE, and support by fire the attack of Company B of the 53d and Company B of the 37th (the "B" team) into town and on to the next town, CLOCHERONT. The A Companies of both battalions were to form the reserve. A radio channel had been provided on which the forces in BASTOGNE could be called. The call was, "Tony, this is one of Hugh's boys,"<sup>36</sup> presumably an effort at signal security.

The attack began with an artillery barrage on REMICHAIMPAGNE, and the BOIS-DE-COHET to the west of the town. The attack jumped off at 0930, and at 0955 the "C" team was in position on the high ground west of town. Artillery concentrated on the town and Company C of the 37th Tank Battalion fired direct fire into it. The "B" team assaulted it and by 1055 had moved through the town and seized the high ground to the north. (See Sketch No. 15.) The bridge in REMICHAIMPAGNE was seized intact. The attack on REMICHAIMPAGNE is remembered by those who participated in it as one of the best coordinated attacks they were ever able to launch. All supporting weapons, including air, played their part.<sup>14</sup>

Meanwhile the 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion and Battery C of the 177th Field Artillery Battalion displaced to SURE. Late on the 25th the 94th had registered one gun from each

of two batteries near the exit south of SURE in order to be able to displace early on the 26th. During the displacement the early morning missions were fired by the medium battery of the 177th.<sup>14</sup> Battery A of the 94th, upon entering the town, found it occupied by some enemy although the 25th Cavalry had cleared it the preceding afternoon. The enemy had probably infiltrated back into SURE during the night. After a brisk fight, Battery A cleared the town and the artillery went into position to support the attack on CLOCHIMONT.<sup>37</sup> At the same time friendly planes broke up an enemy concentration on the left flank.

The "B" team moved into supporting fire positions southwest of CLOCHIMONT and Company A of the 37th moved into blocking positions northwest of the town against any enemy move from SIBRET. At 1500 the "C" team captured CLOCHIMONT against light opposition. Abrams and Jacques, the two battalion commanders, met in CLOCHIMONT immediately to plan the continuation of the attack.<sup>34</sup>

Meanwhile, the Division Commander had changed the direction of attack from SIBRET to a thrust through ASSENOIS. The plan called for Company B of the 37th to block to the left on the high ground north of CLOCHIMONT, "A" team to remain in CLOCHIMONT in reserve, and the "C" team to attack through ASSENOIS immediately following an artillery concentration. Company B of the 53d Armored Infantry was to follow the "C" team and mop up ASSENOIS, and engineers were attached to the 53d for clearing mines.<sup>37</sup> The final assault jumped off at 1600. The 94th Armored Field Artillery radioed to CCB and

called for 10 volleys to fall on ASSENOIS from the 22d, 253d, and 776th Field Artillery Battalions as well as from its own guns and the attached battery of the 177th. This included all the artillery of the Division that was within range. At the edge of town the "C" team tried to get the artillery to lift, but a short round had struck near the  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ton of the forward observer and he was injured. An alert observation plane lifted the fire,<sup>14</sup> but one half-track had been hit, and a good deal of confusion was created.<sup>34</sup> As a result there was a 300-yard break in the column, and the enemy recovered from their shock rapidly enough to throw teller mines in the road in front of the column following the break. These knocked out a half-track, but Capt Dwight, S-3 of the 37th, got out of his tank and, with the aid of uninjured members of the half-track, removed the mines. The column rolled on and passed by the woods north of ASSENOIS, spraying them with machine gun fire. The enemy were so surprised they failed to fire their bazookas on the leading tanks, but they knocked out several of the following half-tracks. Lt Boggess, commanding Company C of the 37th, and riding the lead tank, contacted the BASTOGNE defenders at 1645. The enemy persisted in attempting to cut the road in the woods north of ASSENOIS and Company A of the 53d moved in on foot at midnight and fought for three hours to clear out the edge of the woods. This allowed a convoy of 50  $2\frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks and ambulances to get through to the besieged town during the night.<sup>38</sup> Reserve Command started to move their command post into BASTOGNE.

With the contact between the B.STOGNE defenders and the 4th Armored Division finally achieved, the second phase of the Division's operations were concluded. In the five days since 0600 on the 22d, the division had covered only about 16 miles as the crow flies, but had overcome some of the most bitter resistance it met during the entire war. Most of the time the entire combat strength of the division was committed. Towns which were taken once had to be retaken. The operation took place in severe cold, and roads were so icy that vehicles could proceed only very slowly, and frequently tanks got out of control and skated down icy slopes in spite of the efforts of their crews. It is debatable whether the mud prevailing during the first day or the ice later were a greater hindrance to armor, but neither was very helpful. The operation cannot be characterized as an armored penetration because of the mission to open a route into B.STOGNE, and much of the fighting was accomplished by infantry on foot supported by tanks. The final assault by Reserve Command through MASSENOIS was an example of a penetration by tanks supported by infantry in carriers, and it is noteworthy that in spite of its success, the real mission of getting supplies into B.STOGNE could not be accomplished for another nine hours until infantry on foot had cleared out the zone the tanks had pushed through.

The Division had expected that the relief of B.STOGNE would be followed by a push on in the direction of ST. VITH, the Third Army's objective. The severe fighting made it necessary to reorganize

before continuing and in order to do this the corridor into BASTOGNE had to be defended and widened. This was to be the next mission of the Division, and for this purpose CCA of the 9th Armored Division prepared to launch an attack on the left of the 4th Armored, to which it was now attached. The 4th Armored prepared to widen the corridor to include the main ARLON-BASTOGNE highway. The Germans had other ideas.

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NOTES ON CHAPTER VII

- <sup>1</sup>After Action Report, CCA, 4th Armored Division, 22 Dec 1944.
- <sup>2</sup>After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 22 December 1944.
- <sup>3</sup>Interview, Lieutenant Colonel Albin F. Irzyk.
- <sup>4</sup>G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 22 December 1944.
- <sup>5</sup>After Action Report, Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division, 22 December 1944.
- <sup>6</sup>Interview, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Graham.
- <sup>7</sup>After Action Report, 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, 22 December 1944.
- <sup>8</sup>After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 23 December 1944.
- <sup>9</sup>Oden, The 4th Armored Division in the Relief of BASTOGNE, p. 42.
- <sup>10</sup>G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 23 December 1944.
- <sup>11</sup>After Action Report, CCB, 4th Armored Division, 23 December 1944.
- <sup>12</sup>After Action Report, 8th Tank Battalion, 23 December 1944.

13 After Action Report, Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division,  
23 December 1944.

14 Interview, Lieutenant Colonel Robert L. Parker, Jr.

15 Clarke, Combat History of the 4th Armored Division,  
23 December 1944.

16 Interrogation Report, G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division,  
23 December 1944.

17 After Action Report, CCA, 4th Armored Division, 24 Decem-  
ber 1944.

18 Clarke, op. cit., 24 December 1944.

19 After Action Report, 53d Armored Infantry Battalion,  
24 December 1944.

20 After Action Report, Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division,  
24 December 1944.

21 Interview, Major Edward Bautz.

22 Oden, op. cit., p. 43

23 G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 24 December 1944.

24 G-3 Periodic Report, III Corps, 22 December 1944.

25 12th Army Group Report of Operations, Vol III, p. 27.

26 Interview, Major Edward L. Markey.

27 Koyen, History of the 4th Armored Division, p. 68.

28 After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion,  
25 December 1944.

29 After Action Report, 8th Tank Battalion, 25 December 1944.

30 After Action Report, 53d Armored Infantry Battalion,  
25 December 1944.

31 G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 25 December 1944.

32 Clarke, op. cit., 25 December 1944.

33 After Action Report, 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron,  
25 December 1944.

34 Clarke, op. cit., 26 December 1944.

35 After Action Report, 8th Tank Battalion, 26 December 1944.

36 After Action Report, Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division,  
25 December 1944.

37 Ibid., 26 December 1944.

38 After Action Report, 53d Armored Infantry Battalion, 26 Dec-  
ember 1944.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE 4th ARMORED DIVISION WIDENS THE CORRIDOR

On the 27th of December, the 4th Armored Division began a new phase in their mission of relieving BASTOGNE. Having gained contact north of ASSENOIS with the garrison of the city, they now had the job of widening the supply corridor into the city and of defending it against the inevitable German reaction. For this purpose CCA of the 9th Armored Division, commanded by Colonel Thomas L. Harrold, was attached to the 4th Armored Division. In accomplishing its new mission, the 4th Armored gave an excellent demonstration of the flexibility of the combat command type of organization in regrouping rapidly to handle a new task.

It may surprise the reader to find CCA of the 9th Armored Division injected so abruptly into the picture, but that is just the manner in which they entered it. Prior to this time CCA had been holding the shoulder of the German penetration on the left of the 4th Infantry Division west of ECHERENACH, Luxembourg. On the 26th, they were pinched out of the line by the attack of the 5th Infantry Division and were relieved by CCA of the 6th Armored. At 1300 on the 26th orders were received placing CCA of the 9th Armored under the 4th Armored. The combat command commander reported to General Gaffey at ARLON, and received orders to attack west of the 4th Armored from the vicinity of CONPLON, Belgium, with the mission

of capturing the high ground southwest of BASTOGNE and making contact with the BASTOGNE defenders. CCA closed in the vicinity of LONGLIER during the night of the 26th after a march of 55 miles, and prepared to attack at 0800 on the 27th alongside of the 4th Armored. By this maneuver the combat command was withdrawn from action in one sector, moved over 50 miles, and committed in another sector within the space of 24 hours, a remarkable demonstration of the strategic mobility of armor.

27 December 1944

At the beginning of this phase the 4th Armored Division was disposed with combat commands abreast echeloned to the right rear in order, Reserve Command, CCB, CCA. Reserve Command had just made contact with the 101st Airborne Division. The Division's forward elements were generally along the line: ASSENOIS-HOIMPRE-HOLLANGE-HONVILLE. CCA of the 4th Armored resumed the attack at 0800 on the 27th against elements of the German 14th Parachute Regiment of the 5th Paratroop Division. (See Sketch No. 16.) The 1st Battalion of the 318th Infantry, attached to CCA, attacked northwards from HONVILLE in its zone east of the 55 north-south grid line, with its first objective LIVARCHAMPS. Company C of the 35th Tank Battalion supported them. The 51st Armored Infantry Battalion attacked northwards from the positions they last held with two companies abreast against SAINLEZ and the woods to the west. One company of this battalion was to support the initial attack by

fire and then maneuver into a position from which they could deliver fire into SAINLEZ from the southeast.

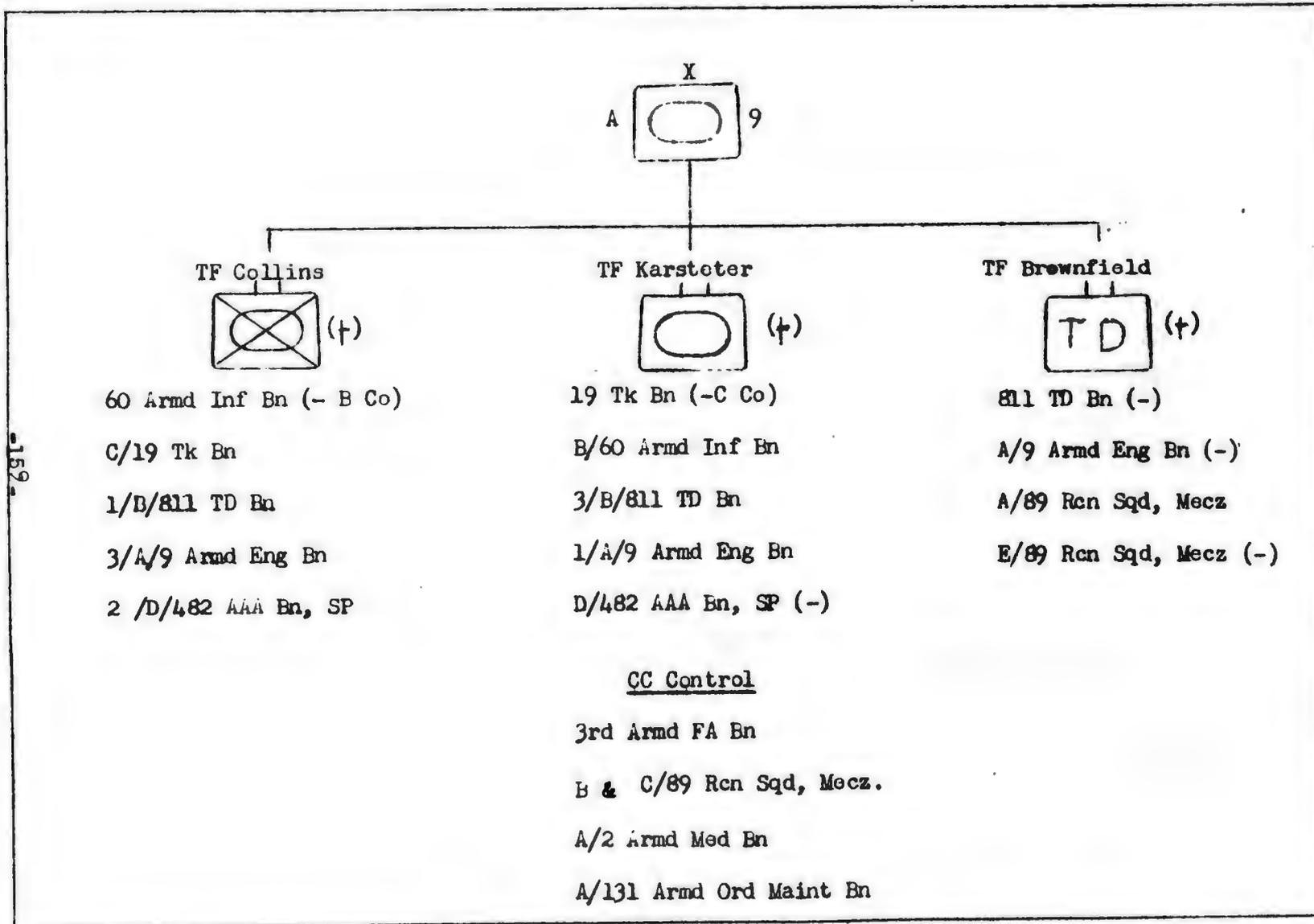
Both battalions jumped off together at 0800. They advanced against light resistance until at 0940 the 51st was held up just south of SAINLEZ. In half an hour the reserve company went into position and tanks came up. Company C of the 51st was then able to advance past SAINLEZ on the west. Meanwhile, the battalion of the 318th moved through LIVARCHAMPS, and at 1040 were on high ground to the north. They continued to push forward and at 1455 were two kilometers north of SAINLEZ. An artillery concentration was called down on SAINLEZ and at 1350, Company A of the 51st seized the town and outposted it. Enemy withdrawing from SAINLEZ to the east caused some confusion as they moved across the rear of the 318th.<sup>1</sup> The 51st continued across the open ground to the north and moved into the thick woods of BOIS DU VICAIRE. About halfway through the woods they were held up, and they consolidated along that line at 1630 for the night, leaving one company in SAINLEZ to protect the combat command's left flank.

CCB attacked with the mission of protecting the flank of Reserve Command and of widening the line of contact with the 101st Airborne. The attack jumped off at first light, but the advance was slow. The 10th Armored Infantry took the high ground southeast of MASSEMOIS, and, supported by the 3th Tank Battalion, entered the BOIS BECHU. The progress in the woods was difficult with many snipers delaying the advance, but at 2200 the northern edge of

the woods was reached and the battalion made contact with the forces in BASTOGNE. (See Sketch No. 16.) The 2d Battalion of the 318th Infantry, attached to COB, and supported by Company A of the 8th Tank Battalion, cleared HOLPRE, entered the SOIS D'HEIZY to the east of the 10th, and penetrated the woods by 2200, where they went into a defensive position for the night.<sup>2</sup>

Reserve Command had the mission of widening the corridor that it had already established into the city of BASTOGNE. The command posts of Reserve Command, 37th Tank Battalion, 53d Armored Infantry Battalion, and 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion were established in the city by 1200. The armored infantry patrolled the woods northeast of ASSENOIS during the day while tanks patrolled the COBREVILLE-ASSENOIS road. The 94th went into position east of BASTOGNE to support the 101st Airborne.

To the left of Reserve Command, CCA of the 9th Armored Division launched a strong attack. The Combat Command was organized into three principal task forces; TF Collins, built around the 60th Armored Infantry Battalion, and commanded by Lt Col Kenneth W. Collins; TF Karsteter, the 19th Tank Battalion (reinforced), commanded by Lt Col Burton W. Karsteter; and TF Brownfield, commanded by Lt Col A. R. Brownfield, and having as its nucleus the 81st Tank Destroyer Battalion. The complete organization of CCA is shown in Organizational Chart No. 5. Field Order No. 5, issued at 0100 on the 27th, prescribed an attack at 0800 in a column of task forces, TF Collins leading. (See appendix VI, No. 15.) CCA was greatly assisted in preparing for this attack by the



ORGANIZATIONAL CHART NO.5

~~whole~~-hearted cooperation of the staff and personnel of the 4th ~~Armored~~ Division in such important matters as briefing commanders on the enemy and friendly situation, supplying the necessary maps, and furnishing all types of logistical support including enormous quantities of gasoline and ammunition.

CCA of the 9th Armored launched its attack at 0800. Troop C of the 89th Reconnaissance Squadron crossed the LD at 0715 and moved to the northeast until they contacted the enemy near SIBRET. TF Collins followed the troop and passed through them near SIBRET. After that Troop C screened the left flank of CCA while Troop B screened the right flank.

With little opposition, TF Collins cleared SIBRET and took some 40 prisoners. Interrogation of the prisoners revealed that they were from elements of the rear guard units of the 5th Paratroop Division and the 26th Volksgrenadier Division, which were withdrawing to ST. HUBERT. (See Sketch No. 17.)

SIBRET having been cleared, TF Collins directed its efforts to the capture of the lightly defended villages of JODENVILLE and FLOHALMONT to the west and northwest of SIBRET. Here some 60 Germans from the previously mentioned units were captured along with quantities of ammunition and equipment.

Orders from CCA changed the direction of attack for TF Collins from the west to the east to capture the high ground north of SIBRET. This mission was accomplished just prior to darkness so the defenses for the night were established. Company C of the

60th Armored Infantry was assigned the responsibility of patrolling SIERET. Company A of the same battalion occupied positions on the high ground just taken. Roadblocks were set up on all roads leading into the area.

Meanwhile, TF Karsteter, which had been following TF Collins initially, passed by SIERET on the south along the main highway, and attacked VILLEROUX. This placed both task forces abreast in the line with their fronts facing generally to the north. CCA held TF Brownfield in reserve, moving it to VAUX-LES-ROSIERES during the day. Company A of the 2d Medical Battalion established the clearing station supporting CCA initially in NEUFCHATEAU. While here the town was bombed and strafed by enemy aircraft causing many casualties, especially among men of the 28th Infantry Division and the civilian populace of the town. Later in the day the clearing station moved by infiltration to LONGLIER. The station remained here through 3 January 1945, and during that period treated many casualties from the 4th and 11th Armored Divisions and the 101st Airborne Division, as well as from CCA of the 9th Armored.

As a result of the operations of its four combat commands during the 27th, the 4th Armored Division had succeeded in widening the front on which it had contact with the garrison of the city. Truck convoys were started into the city and 652 wounded were evacuated. The enemy attempted to block this traffic with artillery fire, but were unsuccessful. The pressure maintained by the Division prevented the enemy from regrouping to counterattack.

28 December 1944

The mission of the division for the 28th of December was the same as on the 27th. CCA of the 4th Armored planned to attack with the same two battalions abreast as on the 27th. In addition the 1st Battalion of 318th was to take LUTREBOIS, a town which was to develop into the focal point of German efforts to cut the ARLON-EASTOGNE highway, and which became the scene of some of the fiercest fights of the war. The 35th Tank Battalion also planned to send a tank force around to the left of the 51st Armored Infantry on a reconnaissance in force. (See Appendix VI, No. 14.)

The 51st jumped off at 0800 with B and C Companies abreast, Company A remaining in SAINLEZ. (See Sketch No. 18.) Initially resistance was light, but at 1115 Company B met considerable resistance at the CHATEAU LOSANGE, reputed to have been a German Regimental CP. Tanks of Company B of the 35th Tank Battalion brought direct fire on the chateau and it was taken. The leading companies continued the advance to the north edge of the woods where they were held up by fire from hill 530 to the north. Meanwhile at 1600 Company A of the 51st moved up from SAINLEZ, detrucked from their carriers 400 yards south of CHATEAU LOSANGE, and moved east through the woods to the edge of woods facing LUTREBOIS, where they halted for the night. At 1710 they tied in with Company B on their left.

The 1st Battalion of the 318th Infantry was unable to attack

on the 28th. This battalion, whose combat elements were at 40% strength when they joined CCA, had now only 90 riflemen for its rifle companies. They were hit by German artillery in their assembly area just prior to the scheduled time of attack, and were unable to advance.<sup>3</sup>

At 1500 word was received that the new boundary between the 35th Division and the 4th Armored, which was located only 800 yards east of the main highway, was in effect. (Shown on Sketch No. 16.) At 1700 the 3d Battalion of the 134th Infantry of the 35th Division relieved the 1st Battalion of the 318th, and this exhausted unit returned to its own division, the 80th. Plans were made in coordination with the 134th to repel an expected counterattack.

The units of CCB consolidated their positions and there were few changes in dispositions, other than pushing out outposts. During the day the 8th Tank Battalion received seven of the new M4A3 medium tanks. All units were informed that these new tanks resembled the German tanks from the front. In the Reserve Command zone the 53d Armored Infantry cleared the woods north of ASSENOIS, into which the enemy had infiltrated. Contact was established with CCA of the 9th Armored Division and CCB on the flanks. On division order, Reserve Command CP moved out of BASTOGNE, closing in REMICAMPAGNE at 1630.<sup>4</sup> The Division CP moved up to BODANGE and the Division Artillery Fire Direction Center to REMOIVILLE.

In the sector of CCA of the 9th Armored, Company C, 19th Tank Battalion, attached to TF Collins, attacked the woods north

of ~~SECRET~~, but were driven back by heavy enemy fire. The remainder of the day was devoted to the consolidation of positions and vigorous patrolling. TF Brownfield maintained a constant roving patrol on the NEUFCHATEAU-BASTOGNE highway.

During this day the 4th Armored Division made very slight advances. Word was received that corps expected a large scale German counterattack of a division or more troops, and General Gaffey and his staff made plans to counteract this eventuality.<sup>5</sup> Among the measures taken to meet this threat was the firing of a TOT concentration by all artillery units with the Division on expected enemy assembly areas and avenues of approach. These concentrations were fired at 0500 and 0700 daily, and later investigation of the target areas attested their effectiveness.<sup>6</sup>

29 December 1944

On the 29th, advances were made on both flanks of the corridor. CCA of the 4th Armored attacked in conjunction with the 2d Battalion of the 134th Infantry's attack on LUTREBOIS. The attack jumped off at 0800 and almost immediately ran into resistance on hill 530 and in REMOIFOSSE. Company B of the 35th Tank Battalion overran hill 530 and placed direct fire on the houses of REMOIFOSSE, which the infantry cleared by 1045. During this action the 51st was slowed by an enemy self-propelled gun firing from the vicinity of LUTREBOIS. At 1130 contact was made with the outposts of the 101st and with the 10th Armored Infantry

on the left. (See Sketch No. 18.) The command then consolidated positions on a line about 800 yards from the highway and facing to the east. Reserves were formed and held ready for use as the 35th Division's attack on LUTREBOIS had uncovered strong resistance in the woods to the northeast of that town.

CCB and Reserve Command were not in contact with the enemy during the day. The 8th Tank Battalion of CCB moved to contact CCA. The 2d Battalion of the 318th was relieved from CCB and left the Division's control. Reserve Command grouped its units in the area of ASSENCIS and the towns to the south. (See Sketch No. 18.) They were preparing for the expected German attack. During the night BASTOGNE and the surrounding area were bombed five times by the Germans. One man in the 94th Field Artillery was killed and equipment in several units was damaged.<sup>7</sup>

In the sector of CCA of the 9th Armored the enemy attacked an outpost just north of VILLEROUX with a force estimated as an infantry company. The outpost, which was manned by Company B, 19th Tank Battalion, replied with a hail of high-explosive and machine gun fire, killing approximately 12 of the enemy and decisively repelling the thrust.<sup>8</sup>

Later in the day, with TF Karsteter and TF Collins abreast, CCA launched a coordinated attack to seize SENONCHALPS and CHEKIGNE, respectively, and to clear the woods and secure the railroad between these towns. The attack was preceded by fighter-bomber support and an artillery preparation on suspected

enemy gun positions. Company A, 19th Tank Battalion, and Company B, 60th Armored Infantry Battalion, led the attack of TF Karsteter on SENONCH, MPS from the high ground to the southeast of the town, while Company B, 19th Tank, supported the attack with direct fire from positions on the high ground some 1500 yards south of the town. The town was entered at 1630, but due to heavy antitank and artillery fire from the high ground to the north, the troops were forced to withdraw to their original position along the high ground just south of the town.

Company C, 60th Armored Infantry, led the attack of TF Collins on CHENOGNE. With little fighting the woods south of town were entered and cleared of all enemy. This intermediate objective having been taken, Company A of the 60th, supported by Company C of the 19th, passed through to attack the town of CHENOGNE, clearing it by 1900 hours.

When darkness came this force, relieved by a platoon of Company B, 89th Reconnaissance Squadron, withdrew to the positions occupied prior to the attack. Later, at 2000 hours, the one platoon of reconnaissance troops was forced to withdraw to the high ground south of town by an undetermined number of enemy infantry and tanks. Near midnight the position along the high ground was probed by a platoon of enemy infantry and two tanks.

During the early morning of the 29th, General Middleton, the VIII Corps commander, had gone into BASTOGNE through the area of CC, of the 9th Armored to make arrangements with the 101st

~~Airborne~~ Division relative to future operations. VIII Corps was being built back up to effective strength at this time, and was to take over direction of the battle in the BASTOGNE area. CCA of the 9th Armored was to come under VIII Corps control at 0600 30 December, the following day. The 4th Armored Division would remain under III Corps with the mission of holding the corridor open in their sector.

30-31 December 1944

On the 30th the Germans launched their expected counter-attack. Its strength was estimated at a panzer division, elements of two Volksgrenadier divisions, and remnants of the 5th Parachute Division. The attack came from the east and reached LUTREBOIS. The 3d Battalion of the 134th gave warning and CCA of the 4th Armored was alerted. The enemy pushed through LUTREBOIS and started infiltrating through the woods in an effort to cut off the main highway south of REMOIFOSSE. (See Sketch No. 19.) A little excitement ensued at the 51st Battalion CP as the enemy started moving down the slope toward the CHATEAU LOSANGE. Headquarters personnel and two tanks from Company A of the 35th drove the enemy back. It was necessary to mop up the woods west of LUTREBOIS through which the attack had come, and two companies of the 51st were detailed for this job. At 1020 a liaison plane reported twenty to twenty-five enemy tanks moving from LUTREANGE northwest toward LUTREBOIS.<sup>9</sup> This report was delivered to the 35th Tank Battalion

by the liaison plane dropping a marked map directly on the deck of one of the tanks.<sup>6</sup> Company B of the 35th took them under surprise fire as they emerged from LUTREBOIS and destroyed 11 out of 13 that appeared. By 1400 the counterattack was broken and lines were consolidated with the 134th. The 51st was unable to clean out the woods entirely in two sweeps through them during the day, and efforts were continually made during the next two days to eliminate the small German pocket west of LUTREBOIS. The pocket was not entirely liquidated until the first of the new year. The 4th Armored Division's artillery played an outstanding part in the repulse of this German attack, in which the enemy lost 55 tanks.<sup>10</sup> The 35th Division, of course, bore the main brunt of the attack. The Germans clung to the LUTREBOIS pocket for another week at a terrible cost to themselves.

During this attack and the day following, CCB was alert to assist CCA if needed. A company each of the 8th and 10th took over positions vacated by CCA when they had to shift south to clear out the woods. Reserve Command was alerted, and assembled the 37th Tank Battalion in CHAILLOIT, preparatory to their commitment in an emergency. This was not necessary.

On the 30th an enemy attack in the estimated strength of a brigade developed on CCA of the 9th's left flank with an apparent mission of cutting the NEUFCHATEAU-BASTOGNE road. (See Sketch No. 17.) Approximately one battalion of infantry supported by a company of tanks attacked the position of TF Collins both from the front and

the flank. Company A, 60th Armored Infantry, and Company C, 19th Tank Battalion, were forced from their position on the high ground south of CHENOGNE, falling back to the southwest. Just prior to the attack, Company C of the 60th occupied the reserve position of TF Collins just north of SIBRET. The remnants of Company C, 19th Tank Battalion, and a platoon of Company B, 811th Tank Destroyers, moved back to strengthen the reserve position. The enemy thrust struck the reserve position and was repulsed with heavy losses. From prisoners captured the enemy forces were identified as parts of the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division, the 26th Volksgrenadier Division, and the Remer Brigade.<sup>11</sup> The seriousness of this enemy threat to the left flank of CCA prompted the Combat Commander to move his reserve, TF Brownfield, to the vicinity of JODENVILLE to strengthen his threatened flank and prevent an armored penetration by the enemy at this point. Fortunately the 11th Armored Division was conducting an attack at the same time to the northeast through JODENVILLE. This was a great threat to the flank of the enemy thrust and aided CCA by causing the enemy to withdraw to the high ground just south of CHENOGNE, permitting the reorganization of CCA's line. With the pressure off, TF Brownfield was withdrawn to its original reserve position in the vicinity of VAUX-LES-ROSIERES. The 31st was spent in consolidating and preparing for a New Year's Day attack.

The actions on the last two days, the 30th and 31st of December, tell the story of the last desperate efforts of the

Germans to regain their position at BASTOGNE. Their effort to cut off the ARLON-BASTOGNE highway, the west shoulder of the corridor, was finally stopped less than 800 yards from its goal by CCA of the 4th Armored, aided particularly effectively by artillery support. Their attack to cut the NEUFCHATEAU-BASTOGNE highway, the east shoulder of the corridor, was halted by CCA of the 9th Armored north of SIBRET, also not far from its objective. These actions show that armor does possess strong defensive capabilities.

1-3 January 1945

During the remainder of this phase, the 4th Armored Division remained in substantially the same positions that it occupied at the end of the year. CCA and CCB received intermittent artillery and rocket fire as the enemy held on tenaciously to their positions. On the first of the year a new troop list was published transferring the 53d Armored Infantry Battalion and the 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion to CCA. The 53d moved to SAINLEZ to act as reserve for CCA. On the 2d the Division was attached to VIII Corps, which took over direction of operations in the BASTOGNE area. On the 3d a new troop list was placed in effect. The 8th Tank and 10th Armored Infantry Battalions were attached to CCA without changing their positions, giving CCA responsibility for the entire defensive front facing east. CCA now had two-thirds of the Division's combat units, including two tank, two armored infantry, and two artillery battalions. CCB picked up the 37th Tank Battalion from Reserve Command and the 53d Armored

Infantry from CCA, and assembled at FAUVILLERS under VIII Corps control as a Corps reserve. Reserve Command was left with a handful of small units. (See Sketch No. 19.)

On New Year's Day, CCA of the 9th Armored launched its final attack to seize its objective, the line of the SENONCHAMPS-CHENOGNE railroad. At the same time the 11th Armored attacked on CCA's left. TF Collins prepared to launch its attack from its position on the high ground just north of SEPRET. A hasty reconnaissance made prior to the attack failed to locate exact enemy positions in the zone of advance. The attack was preceded by a 30-minute pre-arranged artillery barrage fired by the 3d Armored Field Artillery Battalion followed by 15 minutes of fire by supporting weapons. Company A, 60th Armored Infantry, with a platoon of machine guns attached, led the attack. All other units of the TF, except Company C, 60th Armored Infantry, and the 3d Platoon of Company A, 9th Armored Engineers, which constituted the reserve, followed closely. Due to the vastness of the woods, it was decided early to attach an additional platoon of armored infantry to the leading company in order to widen the front of the attack. Within some five or six hours after the attack began the woods had been flushed and TF Collins was digging in on the objective. The woods were lightly defended by small groups of well dug-in enemy without much artillery support. Mortars were used to cover routes of approach, but their fire was not observed. Machine guns were employed with no apparent plan of fire. In the forest two abandoned

88mm guns and five other antitank positions were found. Fresh tank tracks indicated the withdrawal of armor from the woods.

TF Karsteter remained in its position just north of VILLEROUX until the attack of TF Collins reached the north edge of the forest. At 1455 they attacked to retake the town of BENON-CHAMPS. Company A of the 19th Tank Battalion and Company B of the 60th Armored Infantry entered the town at 1600, but the enemy still had the town under direct antitank fire from the high ground to the north, and made the town untenable for tanks. Company B of the 60th was so depleted that they were unable to neutralize the enemy antitank weapons. Additional infantry was requested but not received as there was none available. The tanks and infantry were withdrawn from the town at 1650 and all troops ordered to dig-in where they were at that time. Heavy enemy action continued, necessitating the withdrawal of all troops of TF Karsteter to their original position prior to the attack. In addition to the opposition being offered by the enemy the move was deemed advisable in order to facilitate artillery support for the attack being planned by the 11th Armored Division, CCA of the 9th Armored, and the 101st Airborne Division for the next day.

It was in this day's action that the first prisoners other than German were taken. The morale of the enemy was very low. Equipment, consisting primarily of the hand-carried type, was plentiful, but supply transportation was almost totally absent, and rations consisted of food that could only have been locally

procured. Prisoners stated they had been living off the country for the past five days.

With the attack of TF Karsteter on the right and the 11th Armored Division on the left not progressing as planned, TF Collins was well forward in a position with exposed flanks and insufficient troops to protect them. CCA attached Troops B and C, 89th Reconnaissance Squadron, to TF Collins to maintain contact with flank units. Prisoners of war reports during the night 1-2 January indicated that the enemy planned to withdraw to the north of SENONCHIMPS that night. The accuracy of these reports was borne out by the information reported by CCA's night patrols, and was proven when the coordinated attacks were launched on 2 January.

On the morning of 2 January Troops B and C of the 89th attacked and cleared the small woods north of the railroad. Opposition here was very light, consisting only of stragglers. When the woods were cleared, the Troops occupied a position along the northern edge until the late afternoon, when they were withdrawn and reverted to control of CCA.

Meanwhile, TF Karsteter launched an attack on SENONCHIMPS, capturing and clearing it in 27 minutes. Prisoners stated that the town had been evacuated during the night 1-2 January. TF Karsteter pushed on to the north as far as the MARCHÉ-BASTOGNE road, where they occupied a position. Little enemy action occurred in this area throughout the remainder of the day and night of 2 January.

During the day elements of the 11th Armored Division on the

left flank of CCA made contact with elements of the 101st Airborne Division north and east of SENONCHAMPS and established a front line well forward of the line held by CCA, 9th Armored Division. The 17th Airborne Division relieved CCA of the 9th Armored Division on the afternoon of 3 January, and after assembling at WITRY, CCA marched to LECHENSE, France, near SEDAN, to rejoin the 9th Armored Division, which was at this time attached to Fifteenth Army and in SHAEF reserve.

The activities of the 4th Armored Division in the BASTOGNE area subsequent to the 3d of January were mostly concerned with protecting the routes into BASTOGNE. On the 11th of January they participated in an attack northeastwards out of BASTOGNE abreast of the 101st Airborne Division, but were withdrawn the same day, and moved into Third Army reserve in the vicinity of LUXEMBOURG City.

During the phase since the 26th of December the 4th Armored Division and CCA of the 9th Armored Division had successfully pushed their attacks to the outskirts of BASTOGNE on the fronts of four combat commands. A large part of these attacks were through woods, where the need for infantry in the armored division was made very apparent. CCA of the 9th Armored found that a combat command with only one infantry battalion was too weak in infantry for combat in woods. They were also impressed with the advantages of fighting in tank-infantry teams, particularly in clearing towns. Both the 4th Armored and CCA of the 9th Armored were forced on the defensive during this period, and demonstrated the defensive capabilities of

armor. The 4th Armored executed almost a right face to assist the 35th Division in repulsing a strong German counterattack, and at almost the same time formed a combat command as reserve for the Corps. The ease with which this regrouping and change of front was accomplished is an example of the advantageous flexibility of the combat command system of organization.

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#### NOTES ON CHAPTER VIII

- <sup>1</sup>After Action Report, CCA, 4th Armored Division, 27 Dec 44.
- <sup>2</sup>Interview, Lieutenant Colonel Albin F. Irzyk.
- <sup>3</sup>After Action Report, CCA, 4th Armored Division, 28 Dec 44.
- <sup>4</sup>After Action Report, Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division, 28 December 1944.
- <sup>5</sup>Clarke, Combat History of the 4th Armored Division, 28 December 1944.
- <sup>6</sup>Interview, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Graham.
- <sup>7</sup>Clarke, op. cit., 29 December 1944.
- <sup>8</sup>After Action Report, 19th Tank Battalion, 29 December 1944.
- <sup>9</sup>After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 30 December 1944.
- <sup>10</sup>Patton, Army Commander's Notes on the BASTOGNE Operation.
- <sup>11</sup>The Romer Brigade was also known as the Fuhrer Begleit (Escort) Brigade. (See Appendix II).

PART IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The outstanding characteristic demonstrated in the employment of armor at BASTOGNE is the strategic mobility of armor. On the 18th of December the 4th Armored Division was located near CUTTING, France. In a little over 24 hours the bulk of the division was assembled near ARLON, having covered an average distance of 160 miles. On the 17th of December, CCB of the 10th Armored Division moved 45 miles from REMLING, France, to the vicinity of LUXEMBOURG CITY, and on the following day moved into BASTOGNE. On the night of the 26th of December CCA of the 9th Armored Division made a move of 55 miles from the vicinity of CHRISTNACH, Luxembourg, to an assembly area southwest of SIBRET, and followed the move with an attack toward BASTOGNE on the 27th. Armor was concentrated from many different localities in the THJPD Army's zone at the vital point of BASTOGNE, and this characteristic strategic mobility of armor was one of the chief factors in the bold offensive counterstroke which started the destruction of the German salient.

Several conclusions can be drawn from this operation concerning the organization and employment of the armored division. The first of these is that the armored division cannot perform the infantry type mission of clearing a zone efficiently. There is not enough infantry in the armored division to accomplish this type of mission. The 4th Armored Division was given

this mission and as a result their attack was slowed considerably. In an effort to remedy this situation two additional battalions of infantry were attached to the Division. This, coupled with the type of mission assigned, caused the division to fight as an infantry force supported by tanks. Unfortunately no sizable infantry unit was available to follow the armored division in a mopping-up role, and they were forced to clear the zone as they advanced. This is the type of operation that would always take place if the universal type of division were adopted in the Army; the armor would be held down to the infantry rate of advance. A single division commander could not adequately control both an armored spearhead executing a deep penetration and the follow-up infantry behind, and communication and artillery support problems would be extremely difficult to solve. The optimum employment is to have the armored division strike deep without a zone-clearing responsibility, and have an infantry division follow it up and reduce the by-passed enemy defense areas. The 4th Armored was not able to use these tactics because of the absence of follow-up infantry. The only time a real penetration was executed was during the final assault of Reserve Command through ASSENOIS to make contact with the BASTOGNE defenders, and while this penetration contributed considerably to the opening of the corridor, the Division's mission of clearing a route for relief supplies into BASTOGNE could not be accomplished until infantry had cleared out the woods along the route of penetration into

the besieged city.

The 4th Armored Division was fortunate in being employed as a unit, an advantage not enjoyed by the 9th and 10th Armored Divisions. At first CCB of the 4th Armored was attached to VIII Corps and was disposed separately northeast of the Corps headquarters. Corps also ordered a tank-infantry-artillery task force to proceed into BASTOGNE to aid the 101st Airborne Division. General Dager, the commander of CCB, was opposed to this move as he felt CCB was being frittered away in small pieces. When the Combat Command reverted to Division control under III Corps, the Division was reassembled as a united force. This was fortunate as the attack to relieve BASTOGNE could hardly have been executed by anything less than the entire division. CCB of the 10th Armored was not as fortunate in this respect. They felt the need for additional armor in BASTOGNE, and at one time, Colonel Roberts requested an additional combat command. The rest of the Division was tied down on the southern part of THIRD Army's sector, and could not be brought into the BASTOGNE picture. As a result it was very difficult to hold CCB of the 10th together, and portions of it were drawn into separate isolated actions instead of being employed decisively as a unit. Every effort should be made to employ armor in mass.

The flexibility of the armored division's combat command type of organization was well demonstrated in the 4th Armored Division after they had completed their break-through into the

BASTOGNE perimeter. A serious German counterattack threatened the command from the east. The Division, which had been attacking north, was now required to face to the east and occupy defensive positions. This defense was effected by transferring a tank and an armored infantry battalion to CCA from CCB in order to give CCA sole responsibility for the sector. This required only a minor shift in the dispositions of these battalions. CCB was to organize a team in Corps reserve, and this was accomplished by attaching to it the battalions of Reserve Command, which was then out of contact. Had the organization been fixed, it would have been necessary to carry out an exchange of units by executing a relief of the battalions formerly with CCB while they were in contact with the enemy. At the same time the formation of balanced tank-infantry teams was well demonstrated in CCB of the 10th Armored Division at BASTOGNE. The flexibility of armor's organization contributed materially to its mobility.

Reserve Command of the 4th Armored Division was employed twice in the short period of six days. At one time it counter-attacked an enemy threat to the Division's flank and two days later it jumped off on the opposite flank of the Division in a decisive attack to maintain the initiative for the Division and reach the Division objective. The reserve command of the armored division must be organized and trained to fight just as much as the two combat commands, and it must expect to be committed whenever the fighting is heavy.

Both tank destroyer and mechanized cavalry reconnaissance units were used largely on security missions during this operation. The 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion, attached to the 4th Armored, was employed in small detachments on outposts at critical road junctions and terrain features on the flanks instead of on a strictly tank destroyer mission. In BASTOGNE the tank destroyer units rendered outstanding service in stopping enemy tanks. They used the tank destroyer method of fire and movement to exceptional advantage, and were superior to the regular tank units in this respect. They were still employed in small units, however, instead of in mass. Tank units in the future should be given more training in this method of fighting enemy tanks, but since the tank destroyers could never be employed in mass as originally conceived, there is no necessity for their separate organization in non-divisional units. What is needed is tank units appropriately equipped that know how to fight like tank destroyers.

In BASTOGNE attempts were made to employ reconnaissance units in the role they were designed for, but they found themselves outgunned by the Germans and could not fight effectively for information. This occurred to the third platoon of Troop D, 90th Cavalry Squadron, at MARVIE. In the 4th Armored Division the reconnaissance squadron was initially used to screen the line of departure prior to the attack's jump-off. After contact with the enemy was made the squadron screened the Division's exposed flank and covered the gaps between combat commands. The experiences of reconnaissance

units in the BASTOGNE operation justify the post-war changes in organization and doctrine, which have increased the firepower of the cavalry units and emphasized their security type of missions.

Artillery played a very important part in the armored operations near BASTOGNE, and armor cannot operate effectively without artillery support. When Team Desobry attempted to attack north out of NOVILLE on the 19th, they found that while their artillery could fire close defensive fires from their positions just east of BASTOGNE, they were too far back to reach out any further. As a result the German artillery was free to shell the troop concentrations and assembly areas without fear of counterbattery interference, and this fire effectively disrupted the attack before it was launched. On the other hand artillery support for the 4th Armored Division was plentiful. At the peak of the attack, seven artillery battalions were either attached to or reinforcing the three battalions of division artillery. In fact, III Corps fired on average of 25,000 rounds of artillery per day during this attack. Some of the artillery battalions attached to the 4th Armored were towed, and armored artillerymen must, therefore, have the knowledge and training necessary to be able to control and properly employ all types of artillery. The organic artillery of the division will never be sufficient for a full scale attack, and as demonstrated in this historical action additional artillery support from Corps will be the rule rather than the exception.

By the time the siege of BASTOGNE was lifted the airborne

infantry and the armored units which fought there had, for the most part, formulated a much higher opinion of one another. Unfortunately this was not the case at the outset of the struggle, and even as late as this writing there still smolders in some a bitterness which time and understanding have not erased. Already it has been mentioned that ill-feeling flared up to provoke profanity on the withdrawal from NOVILLE. The paratroopers and even the closely associated armored infantry immediately accused the tankers of "letting them down" when tank drivers could not be found. Actually, it was proved that every qualified driver was killed, wounded, or driving elsewhere. At MARVIE an infantry commander cursed Team O'Hara for withdrawing out-gunned and, therefore, ineffective light tanks from their supporting role. Twenty minutes later the medium tanks of this team fell on the flanks of the German armor lured into the trap by the retreating M5s and annihilated them.

It is more difficult to find evidence of ill-feeling among the tankers for the infantry. However this is hardly "a feather in their cap", as it was undeniable that the exposed armored elements literally thirsted for infantry support and were prone to welcome the newly arrived paratroops with open arms.

There was the intimation that the commanders, General McMuliffe and Colonel Roberts, experienced some disagreement in the early stages of the attachment of CCB to the 101st Airborne. Later their differences were ironed out as each began to appreciate

the true efforts of the other, until finally we found close liaison and cooperation dominating the scene.

Needless to say these aren't the only instances of this kind that occurred during the war, nor has cooperative understanding between ground arms been yet completely established. It should not, and must not, take days of combined operations for components to understand and appreciate the capabilities and limitations of other components. Future operations won't allow time for such an acclimatization. It is the duty of all arms to go into battle clearly acquainted with activities of those elements with which they are apt to fight; particularly infantry, artillery, and armor. We are accomplishing much in this respect with the peace time exchange of officers between branch and service schools; but much can be done by individual broadening of viewpoint to minimize this universal deterrent to the efficiency of the team of combined arms.

Air power proved a big stick in the BASTOGNE picture. As the German High Command had planned it, the first week of the ARDENNES offensive was characterized by weather that grounded the powerful US Air Forces. When the skies cleared at dawn of December 23d, both sides took to the air to support their cause. Needless to say, the American Air Forces soon demonstrated their complete superiority, with 250 sorties daily in the BASTOGNE area between the 23d and 26th of December.

On 19 December Captain James E. Parker of the Ninth Air

Force arrived at BASTOGNE as air controller for the troops there. Initially he had trouble locating a high frequency radio with which to contact the planes, but one was finally located on a jeep of CCB of the 10th Armored Division. For five days Parker waited for the weather to clear.

The 23d was a hey-day for the fighters. The snow was a great aid; vehicles stood out in contrast and the tell-tale tracks leading into the forests assured the pilots that targets were hidden therein. The fir forests burst into flames from the incendiaries, and soon there was a ring of burning woodland completely encircling BASTOGNE. German antiaircraft didn't fire on this first day. Perhaps it was unprepared, or maybe it sought to cover up the position of the guns. Whatever the cause of this reticence, their method soon changed, for after the 23d heavy flak was encountered over the entire front.

Throughout the period of clear weather the Air Force continued the pounding with skill and fury. Captain Parker worked diligently and well directing the planes to the priority targets. Each town around BASTOGNE was hit at least once, and some, such as NOVILLE, as many as eight times. On the 24th a very successful mission was flown in support of CCA, 4th Armored Division, at TINTANGE, in addition to the already mentioned strike on German armor moving out of MORHET.

The interdependence of ground arms and tactical air was clearly evident in this campaign. After the arrival of the

"aerial umbrella" that General Eisenhower had promised the saviors of BASTOGNE, the task of the tanker, doughboy, and artilleryman was greatly simplified. Hostile daylight bombardment and shelling became negligible. With the long range eyes of aerial reconnaissance ground commanders could watch the enemy build-up, movements, and supply efforts to gauge the proper proportions of their limited troop strengths in threatened sectors. Throughout the enemy felt the paralyzing effect of the "vertical envelopment." The pilots relied on the ground observer to determine the priority of targets, to guide them to camouflaged installations, and to mark the friendly lines.

It becomes completely evident that in modern warfare close coordination and cooperation of the air forces with ground troops in carrying out tactical bombardment becomes of ever increasing significance to commanders of both arms.

The efficiency of armored operation increased sharply with the arrival of the clear cold weather after the 23d. This was due in some measure to the efforts of the Air Forces and the resultant decrease of observed artillery fire; the most significant factor, however, was the hardening of the ground surface which permitted cross-country mobility. Hitler's initial armored thrusts over seemingly untankable terrain had achieved a tremendous degree of surprise, and should not be lightly dismissed. Nevertheless, it is undeniably a fact that the tank columns operated for the most part on or very near the roads.

It was virtually impossible to employ massed tanks across-country except where the drainage was ideal. North of NOVILLE elements of the 2d Panzer Division did succeed in grouping about a company of Panthers, but this was the exception rather than the rule. On both sides it was found that overland employment of armor was restricted to individual or small groups of vehicles. Even then the treacherous ground caused bog-downs. Several instances have been mentioned; Captain Ryerson's attempt to throw tanks against the southern portion of MAGERET; Colonel O'Hara's loss south of MARDIN, and others.

The clearing weather with the cold and snow brought new problems to the tankers, but none that were unsurmountable. There was some difficulty with slipping tracks on the ice and snow. It was most troublesome on the hills, roads, and in the villages where continued traffic caused alternating slush and ice. The vehicles of the 10th Armored Division arrived in the BASTOGNE area equipped with rubber tracks. The 4th Armored Division had steel tracks and experienced the most trouble. An improvised method of improving the traction was obtained by removing every fifth block of the rubber track and replacing it with a steel block to which a magnesium lug had been welded. The steel tracks were modified by welding the lug directly to every fifth track block. Varied comments were obtained in regard to the effectiveness of this alteration. There were claims that the lugs simply broke off and quickly lost their purpose. The consensus, however, was

that this adaptation greatly increased the movement of armor.

Camouflage became difficult against the new fallen snow. The Germans were quick to adapt themselves to this change, and on the first day after the first snowfall blossomed out with white camouflage suits and whitewashed tanks. The troops in BASTOGNE were able to improvise with requisitions on civilian stores of white paint and sheets, and to a degree adapted themselves like chameleons to their background. The fast moving 4th Armored Division's tanks and men did not have the opportunity to take these measures and arrived in BASTOGNE decked out in O.D. While it hardly seems pertinent to add contingency camouflage materials to TO's and E's or basic loads, it would be wise for unit supply officers to be cognizant of the possibility of its employment, and give the matter ample consideration in their advance planning.

Stepping back from these tactical and technical conclusions, and surveying the whole panorama of armored operations at BASTOGNE, we can perceive the true strategic lesson here demonstrated. From all parts of the front, armored units converged on BASTOGNE and, in the space of a few days, completely reversed the balance of combat power in favor of the Allies. This is the meaning of the strategic mobility of armor. In the future we may meet a foe who outnumbered us in the theatre of operations, but with a first-class armored force we need never be outnumbered nor outfought in the decisive battle.

APPENDICES

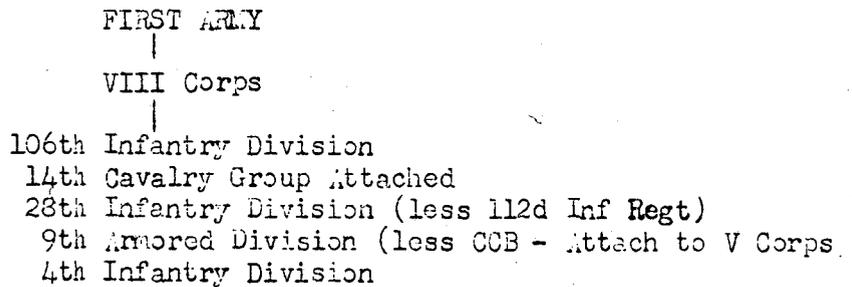
A P P E N D I X I

US ARMY ORDER OF BATTLE

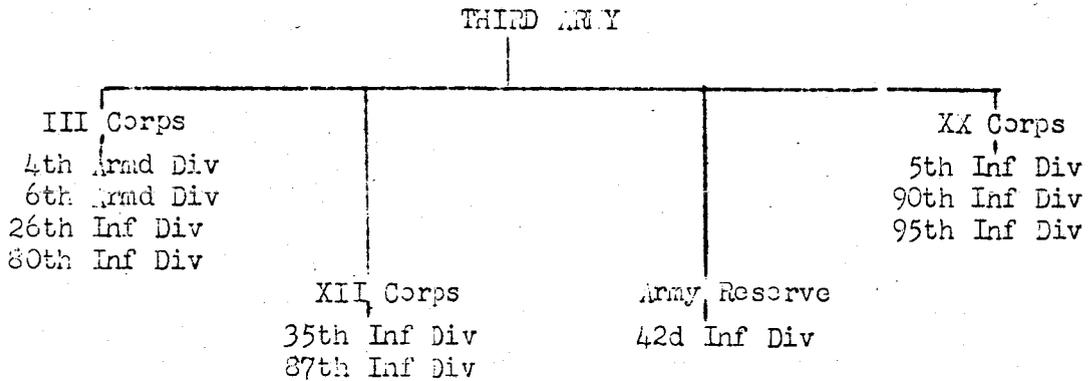
APPENDIX I

US ARMY ORDER OF BATTLE

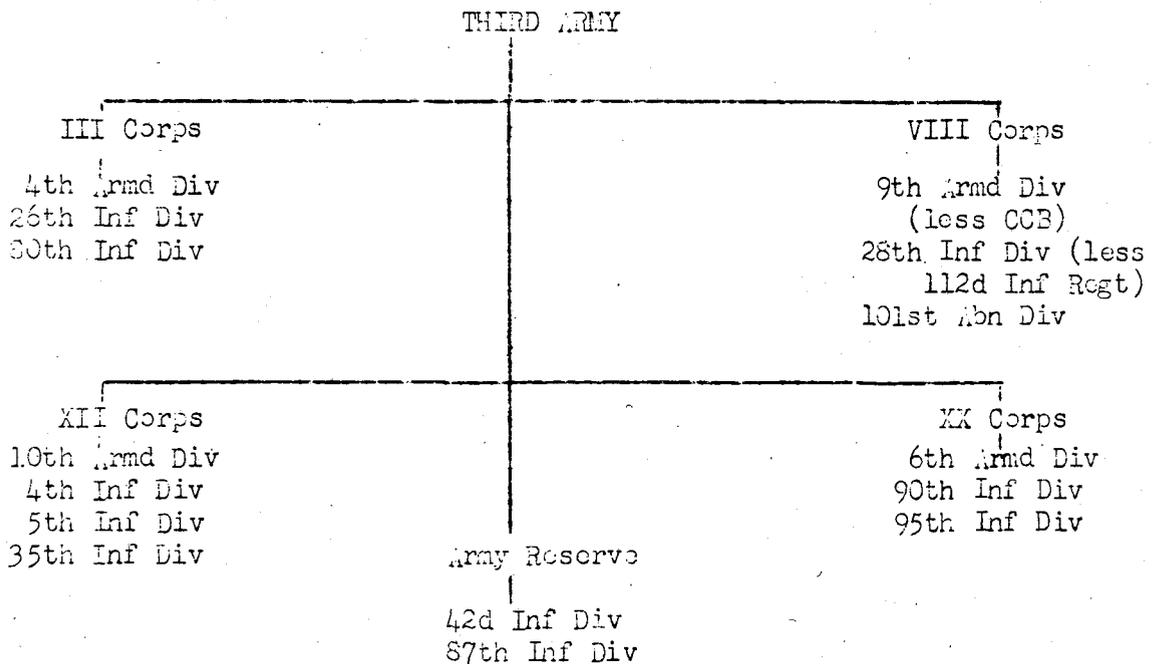
Section I  
16 Dec 44



Section II  
19 Dec 44

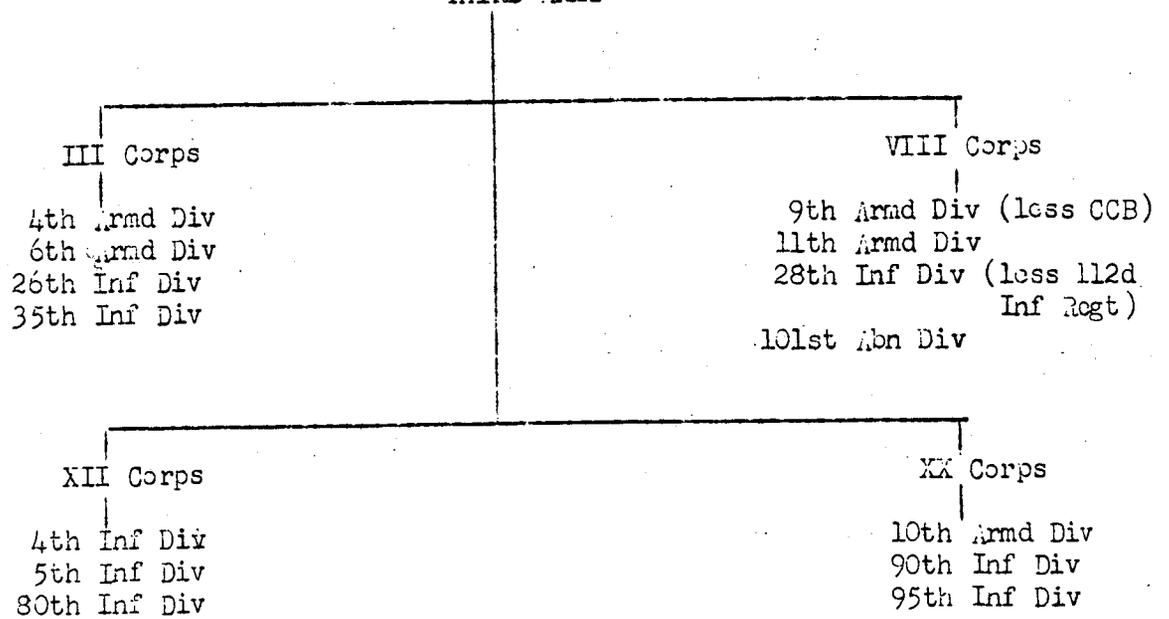


Section III  
22 Dec 44



Section IV  
31 Dec 44

THIRD ARMY



Section V

Troop List

Units operating with the 4th Armored Division during the period of this report.

a. Units organic to the 4th Armored Division.

(The numbers shown below in parentheses identify units that are listed in orders only by number.)

- (8) 8th Tank Battalion  
Major Albin F. Irzyk, CO
- (10) 10th Armored Infantry Battalion  
Major Harold Cohen, CO
- (22) 22d Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm How)  
Lt Col Arthur C. Peterson, CO
- (24) 24th Armored Engineer Battalion  
Lt Col Louis E. Roth, CO
- (25) 25th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron  
Lt Col Leslie D. Goodall, CO
- (35) 35th Tank Battalion  
Lt Col Delk M. Oden, CO
- (37) 37th Tank Battalion  
Lt Col Creighton L. Abrams, CO
- (46) 46th Armored Medical Battalion  
Lt Col Robert E. Maillard, CO
- (51) 51st Armored Infantry Battalion  
Major Dan C. Alanis, CO
- (53) 53d Armored Infantry Battalion  
Lt Col George L. Jacques, CO
- (66) 66th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm How)  
Lt Col Neil M. Wallace, CO
- (94) 94th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm How)  
Lt Col Robert H. Parker, Jr., CO
- (126) 126th Armored Ordnance Maintenance Battalion  
Lt Col Richard B. Fuller

(144) 144th Armored Signal Company  
Capt Lucien E. Tresclair, CO

b. Units attached to the 4th Armored Division

(1) Normal attachments

(489) 489th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion  
(SP) Lt Col Allen M. Murphy, CO

(704) 704th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
Lt Col James W. Bidwell

(2) Attached during the period of this report.

(3) Company C, 3d Chemical Mortar Battalion (4.2 inch)

(16) Platoon of the 16th Field Hospital

(177) 177th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm How)

(188) 188th Engineer Combat Battalion

(253) 253d Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm How)

(274) 274th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm How)

(318) 318th Infantry Regiment (less 3d), 30th Infantry Division

(444) 444th Quartermaster Truck Company

(776) 776th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm How)

(995) 995th Treadway Bridge Company

(3304) 3304th Quartermaster Truck Company

c. Units associated with the 4th Armored Division during the period of this report.

(6) 6th Cavalry Group (on left of 4th Armored Division)  
Col Edward H. Fickett

(6) 6th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (part of  
6th Cavalry Group on right of 4th Armored Division).  
Lt Col Samuel L. Coburn

(178) 178th Engineer Combat Regiment (nucleus of Task Force  
Lion, protecting III Corps left flank).

- (249) 249th Engineer Combat Battalion (attached to 26th Infantry Division on right flank of the 4th Armored Division)
- (420) 402d Field Artillery Group (reinforcing the fires of the 4th Armored Division artillery)
- (559) 559th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm gun)(part of 402d Field Artillery Group)
- (561) 561st Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm gun) (part of 402d Field Artillery Group)
- (578) 578th Field Artillery Battalion (8-inch How)(part of 402d Field Artillery Group)

#### Section VI

Troop List of units operating with the 101st Airborne Division during the period of this report.

a. Units organic to the 101st Airborne Division

501st Parachute Infantry Regiment  
Lt Col Julian H. Ewell, CO

502d Parachute Infantry Regiment  
Lt Col Steve A. Chappuis, CO

506th Parachute Infantry Regiment  
Col Robert F. Sink, CO

1st & 2d Bn, 327th Glider Infantry Regiment  
1st Bn, Lt Col Hartford F. Salez, CO  
2d Bn, Lt Col Roy L. Ingham, CO

1st Bn, 401st Glider Infantry Regiment  
Lt Col Roy C. Allen, CO

321st Glider Field Artillery Battalion  
Lt Col Edward L. Carmichael, CO

907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion  
Lt Col Clarence F. Nelson, CO

377th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion  
Lt Col Harry W. Elkins, CO

463d Parachute Field Artillery Battalion

Lt Col John T. Cooper, Jr., CO

81st Airborne Antiaircraft Battalion

Lt Col K. B. Cox., CO

326th Airborne Engineer Battalion

Lt Col Hugh A. Mozley, CO

426th Airborne Quartermaster Battalion

Capt George W. Horn, CO

101st Airborne Signal Company

Capt William J. Johnson, CO

801st Ordnance Maintenance Battalion

Capt John J. Patterson, CO

326th Airborne Medical Company

Major William E. Barfield, CO

b. Units attached to the 101st Airborne Division

705th Tank Destroyer Battalion

755th Field Artillery Battalion

969th Field Artillery Battalion

Company C, 9th Armored Engineer Battalion

Combat Command B, 10th Armored Division

Combat Command R, 4th Armored Division

c. Organic and attached units of the 10th Armored Division

Combat Command Commander - Colonel William L. Roberts

Units under the direct command of the Combat Command  
Commander in EASTON.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company

3d Tank Battalion (less Company C)

Company C, 21st Tank Battalion

54th Armored Infantry Battalion (less Companies A & C)

20th Armored Infantry Battalion (less Company C)

Company C, 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less  
 platoons with teams)

420th Armored Field Artillery Battalion

Battery B, 796th Antiaircraft Battalion

Troop D, 90th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance  
 Squadron (less platoons with teams)

Team Cherry

Lt Col Henry T. Cherry, CO (also CO of 3d Tk Bn)  
3d Tank Battalion (less Company B and 2d Platoon,  
Company D) CO Company A; Lt Edward P. Hyduke  
20th Armored Infantry Battalion  
CO Company C; Capt William F. Ryerson; Lt Earl  
B. Gilligan  
3d Platoon, Company C, 55th Armored Engineer Battalion  
One Platoon, Company C, 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
2d Platoon, Troop D, 90th Mechanized Cavalry Recon-  
naissance Squadron

Team Desobry

Major William R. Desobry, CO (also CO of 20th AIB.  
Major Charles L. Haustead assumed command after  
Major Desobry was wounded)  
20th Armored Infantry Battalion (less Companies A & C)  
Headquarters Company; Capt Gordon Geiger; Lt  
Eugene Todd Company B; Capt Omar M. Billott  
Company B, 3d Tank Battalion  
One Platoon Company C, 609th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
One Platoon Company D, 3d Tank Battalion  
One Platoon Company C, 55th Armored Engineer Battalion  
One Platoon Troop D, 90th Mechanized Cavalry Recon-  
naissance Squadron

Team O'Hara

Lt Col James O'Hara, CO (also CO of the 54th AIB)  
S-2, Capt Edward A. Carrige  
54th Armored Infantry Battalion (less Companies A & C)  
CO Company B, Lt John Devereaux  
Company C, 21st Tank Battalion  
One Platoon Company C, 55th Armored Engineer Battalion  
One Platoon Company D, 3d Tank Battalion (light tanks)  
CO Lt Sherwood D. Wishart  
One Platoon Troop D, 90th Mechanized Cavalry Recon-  
naissance Squadron  
Force Charlie 16

APPENDIX II

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE

Section VI

27-31 Dec 1944

5th Panzer Army

47th Panzer Corps

15th Panzer Grenadier Division  
26th Volksgrenadier Division  
3d Panzer Grenadier Division  
Panzer Lehr Division  
Fuehrer Begleit Brigade

6th Panzer Army

1st SS Panzer Corps

1st SS Panzer Division

7th Army

53d Infantry Corps

5th Parachute Division

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Section VII

3 Jan 1945

5th Panzer Army

47th Panzer Corps

3d Panzer Grenadier Division  
15th Panzer Grenadier Division  
26th Volksgrenadier Division  
Fuehrer Begleit Brigade  
Panzer Lehr Division

6th Panzer Army

1st SS Panzer Corps

1st SS Panzer Division

7th Army

53d Infantry Corps

5th Parachute Division  
9th Volksgrenadier Division  
Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade

Section VIII

15 Jan 1944

5th Panzer Army

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47th Panzer Corps

15th Panzer Grenadier Div  
26th Volksgrenadier Division  
2d Panzer Division  
Panzer Lehr Division  
Fuehrer Begleit Brigade

58th Panzer Corps

116th Panzer Division

6th Panzer Army

1st SS Panzer Corps

1st SS Panzer Division  
12th SS Panzer Division

7th Army

53d Infantry Corps

5th Parachute Division  
9th Volksgrenadier Division  
79th Volksgrenadier Division

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A P P E N D I X I I

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE

The following order of battle does not include all the German forces that were involved in the ARDENNES Offensive. The units listed below are those that were directly involved in the action of this report located on the flanks, or in reserve where they could be used to influence the action. A Group B was in command of 5th, 6th, and 7th Armies during this operation.

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Section I

19 Dec 1944

5th Panzer Army

47th Panzer Corps

26th Volksgrenadier Division

15th Panzer-Grenadier Division

9th Panzer Division

Panzer Lehr Division

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Section II

21 Dec 1944

5th Panzer Army

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47th Panzer Corps

58th Panzer Corps

26th Volksgrenadier Division

116th Panzer Division

15th Panzer Grenadier Division

Panzer Lehr Division

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Section III

24 Dec 1944

5th Panzer Army

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47th Panzer Corps

58th Panzer Corps

26th Volksgrenadier Division

560th Volksgrenadier Div

2d Panzer Division

116th Panzer Division

15th Panzer Grenadier Division

Panzer Lehr Division

6th Panzer Army

2d SS Panzer Corps

2d SS Panzer Div

7th Army

5th Parachute Division

Section IV  
25 Dec 1944

5th Panzer Army

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47th Panzer Corps

58th Panzer Corps

26th Volksgrenadier Div  
15th Panzer Division  
2d Panzer Division  
Panzer Lehr Div

560th Volksgrenadier Div

6th Panzer Army

2d SS Panzer Corps

2d SS Panzer Division

7th Army

5th Parachute Division  
Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade

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Section V  
26 Dec 1944

5th Panzer Army

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47th Panzer Corps

58th Panzer Corps

26th Volksgrenadier Div  
2d Panzer Division  
15th Panzer Division  
Panzer Lehr Division

560th Volksgrenadier  
Division

6th Panzer Army

2d SS Panzer Corps

2d SS Panzer Division

7th Army

53d Infantry Corps

5th Parachute Division

Section IX

Types of Units

- Panzer Grenadier Regiment - - - -Motorized infantry regiment in a Panzer Division. It has two battalions instead of the usual three. It is somewhat more heavily armed than the usual infantry regiment.
- Grenadier Regiment - - - - -Regular infantry regiment. There are usually three to an infantry division.
- Panzer Regiment - - - - -Tank regiment. One per Panzer Division. It consists of three tank battalions.
- Panzer Lehr Regiment- - - - -Armored Instruction (School) Regiment.
- Volksgranadier Division - - - - -Infantry division.
- Fuehrer Begleit Brigade - - - - -Fuehrer's escort brigade. A special unit formed from picked personnel to serve as Hitler's escort in the field.
- SS Panzer Division - - - - -An armored division composed of members of the Elite Corps of the Party.

Section X

The German Command

Commander in Chief of A Group B  
Genfldm Model

Chief of Staff of A Group B  
Gen Inf Krebs

Commanding General, Fifth Panzer Army  
Gen Pz von Manteuffel

Commanding General, Sixth Panzer Army  
Obstgrf of the Waffen -- SS Sepp Dietrich

Commanding General, Seventh Army  
Gen Art Brandenberger

Chief of Staff, Fifth Panzer Army  
Genmaj Wagener

Chief of Staff, Sixth Panzer Army  
Brigf of the Waffen -- SS Kraemer

Chief of Staff, Seventh Army  
Genmaj von Gersdorff

Commanding General, 1st SS Panzer Corps  
Gruf of the Waffen --- SS Priess

Commanding General, II SS Panzer Corps  
Obgruf of the Waffen -- SS Bittrich

Commanding General, XLVII Panzer Corps  
Gen Pz von Luettwitz

Commanding General, LIII Infantry Corps (zbv)  
Gen Kev Graf Rothkirch

Commanding General, LVIII Panzer Corps  
Gen Pz Krueger

Commanding General, 1st SS Pz Division  
Oberf of the Waffen -- SS Mohnke

Commanding General, 2d SS Pz Division  
Brigf of the Waffen -- SS Lemmerding

Commanding General, 2d Panzer Division  
Genmaj von Lauchert

Commanding General, 3d Panzer Grenadier Division  
Genmaj Denkert

Commanding General, 5th Parachute Division  
Genmaj Heilmann

Commanding General, 9th SS Panzer Division  
Oberf of the Waffen -- SS Stadler

Commanding General, 12th SS Panzer Division  
Oberf of the Waffen -- Krass

Commanding General, 15th Panzer Grenadier Division  
Genlt Rott

Commanding General, 26th Volks Grenadier Division  
Genmaj Kokett

Commanding General, 79th Volks Grenadier Division  
Obst Hummel

Commanding General, Panzer Lehr Division  
Genlt Bayerlein

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Commanding General, Fuehrer Begleit Brigade  
Genmaj Romer

Commanding General, Fuehrer Grenadier Brigade  
Obst Kahlert

APPENDIX III

TERMINI AND WEATHER

## APPENDIX III

### Terrain and Weather

The terrain of the ARDENNES in Belgium is primarily of a defensive nature. Many rivers cut through the country, running generally northeast and southwest. Thus, it is a country of many hills and valleys, also running generally northeast and southwest. These hills are not unusually high, but are so close together that they form many little valleys wherein most of the towns and villages are located. Most of the roads also follow these valleys. Along the streams and rivers there are many steep slopes and tortuous gorges. The hills are made up primarily of steep bluffs and slopes, forming ridges between the rivers and streams.

As compared with other sections of Europe, this area of Belgium has a tremendous amount of coniferous forest. This is especially true in the ST. HUBERT area west of BASTOGNE. In the immediate vicinity of BASTOGNE it is not quite so dense. The entire area is characterized by many small patches of woodland and forest.

The MEUSE River is the largest and most important in the western ARDENNES. It flows northward some fifty miles west of BASTOGNE. The OUNTHE, AMBLEVE and LESSE Rivers empty into the MEUSE, along with numerous other smaller rivers and streams. The ROSELLE River, to the southeast, is the largest and most important river. It flows south of BASTOGNE about forty miles.

The SURE, WILTZ, CLERF and OUR Rivers all rush southward. They all empty into the MOSELLE, along with numerous other smaller rivers and streams.

The city of BASTOGNE is located on the ridge line which separates the MEUSE and MOSELLE tributaries. The WILTZ River, flowing into the MOSELLE, has its head-waters east of BASTOGNE. The OURTHE River, flowing into the MEUSE, has its head-waters generally west of BASTOGNE. The location of BASTOGNE on such a ridge, which runs generally north and south, was a great advantage to the 4th Armored Division in its drive up from the south. It permitted them to attack along the ridge line and eliminated the necessity of having to attack across a maze of cross-corridors. It also made it more difficult for the German forces to defend.

The ARDENNES has many paved roads, the main numbered highways being considered very good military routes. The secondary roads can be used, but they are primarily very narrow and winding, especially in and near the many small villages. Almost all roads follow the valleys, especially the main highways. The best and most used highways converge at the key centers of population which are BASTOGNE, ST. VITH, MONSIEUR, and MARCHE. BASTOGNE has several good highways leading in from many directions. It has an excellent primary road net to all of the major cities in the area.

The road net was the important factor which led to the bitter contest for control of BASTOGNE. The town itself, with

its immediate vicinity and crossroads, was unconditionally necessary for the rear area lines of communications and supply. BASTOGNE, due to its road net, had a decisive meaning for the success or failure of the German offensive.<sup>1</sup>

#### Weather

Normally during the winter months the weather in the ARDENNES area is cold and snow falls quite frequently. The ground remains frozen and covered with snow for long periods of time. Often rain comes down instead of snow, swelling the rivers and causing the earth to become soggy. Standing for vehicles is very soft when this occurs.

For weeks, prior to the German offensive, troops all along the front had been having bad weather. Snow, rain, fog, overcast skies, cold---they had it all. This condition continued during most of the first week of the German offensive. It greatly restricted the use of planes and held air activity to a minimum. This restriction and the fog cut all types of observation almost to zero. This lack of observation, especially aerial, played a large part in permitting the German attack to gain so much initial surprise. Our air was unable to keep watch on German troop concentrations and movements. Weather prevented air support in any strength during most of the first week of the offensive.

#### Side Lights on Weather

At 0400 hours 22 December, when the 4th Armored Division

launched its attack south of BASTOGNE, it moved out into a blinding snow storm. Tanks and infantry drove into the hazy confusion and unknown to the north.

By 23 December the weather changed to clear and cold. The ground froze solid, giving firm standing to vehicles, but numbing the hands, feet, and spirits of the troops. The cold weather was hard on troops, but it cleared the skies and let our air power back in action in full force again. This was the first day our Air Force had been able to operate effectively since the offensive began.

North of BASTOGNE, where CCB, 10th Armored Division, was engaged there was no snow on 19 and 20 December. The snow began on 22 December and by 23 December had snowed very hard putting a 14-inch snow blanket over the area.

This area is very open and the main highway north of BASTOGNE to NOVILLE is above the level of the land on either side in most places. Such was the area where CCB, 10th Armored Division, was engaged. During their action in this area the weather was very foggy. The fog would rise and fall, somewhat as one would raise and lower a window shade. This action of the fog is credited with being a deciding factor in CCB's ability to hold that area on 19 December. The Germans would form an attack under cover of the fog, and as they would launch it, over the open terrain, the fog would lift, leaving the German tanks at the mercy of our tank crews. Many attacks during the day were

broken up in this manner.

CCB was ordered to withdraw on 20 December. True to form, the fog settled down to cover the withdrawal. It was so thick that visibility was limited to about 25 yards.<sup>2</sup>

December 31, 1944: General Patton in his account of the action stated that on this date the weather had become so bad, snow and sleet so heavy, that tractors could not be used in many sectors to tow guns. Diamond-6 trucks had to be used.

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NOTES ON APPENDIX III

<sup>1</sup>Percy Ernst Schramm, Course of Events of the German Offensive in the ARDENNES, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Major James B. Duncan. Personal Interview.

APPENDIX IV

PERSONALITIES

MAJOR GENERAL HUGH J. GAFFEY  
Commanding General, 4th Armored Division

Major General Gaffey, 4th Armored Division Commander during the action studied, was born in Hartford, Conn. in 1895.

A graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, he entered the Army as a reserve second lieutenant of Field Artillery in 1917, and was promoted to first lieutenant in 1918.

Between the wars he was promoted to captain in 1920, major in 1935, and lieutenant colonel in 1940. He graduated from The Field Artillery School in 1923, and the General Staff School in 1936. He was a member of the General Staff Corps from 1940 through 1942. Prior to World War II he was fortunate in that he served with two of the early pioneers in armor, Lieutenant General Daniel Van Voorhis and Major General Adna R. Chaffee. This association and experience crystallized his views on employment of armor.

Shortly after the entry of the United States in World War II, he was promoted to colonel (February 1942), and to brigadier general (August 1942).

He went overseas in command of Combat Command B of the 2d Armored Division. He was with the forces that invaded French Morocco on 8 November 1942. Later he served briefly as chief of staff of the II Corps under General George S. Patton, Jr. In the spring of 1943 he was promoted to major general and took command of the 2d Armored Division which he led in the Sicilian campaign. He again became chief of staff to General Patton when the latter took over the Third Army. He stayed with Patton during the march across France.

General Patton placed him in command of the Fourth Armored Division for the break-through to relieve BASTOGNE. For that feat the Division was awarded the Distinguished Unit Badge. Concerning this action the New York Times said of General Gaffey, "—commander of the 4th Armored Division during its spectacular cross-country

offensive to the Rhine in World War II had a reputation as a tough 'tanker' who believed in audacious bull dog attack."

In March 1945 he was given command of the XXIII Corps, later becoming the Military Governor of that portion of Germany which later became the French Zone of Occupation.

In August 1945 he returned to the United States and became the Commandant of The Armored School at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Just shortly before his untimely death in an airplane crash on 16 June 1946 he was given command of Fort Knox.

In the course of his brilliant career he was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Silver Star, and the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster. His European Theater Ribbon carried eight battle stars. His foreign decorations included the Legion of Honor and Croix de Guerre with Palm (French), and the Order of the Crown with Palm and Croix de Guerre 1940 with Palm (Belgian), and a decoration from the Sultan of Morocco.

MAJOR GENERAL HERBERT L. EARNEST  
Commanding General, CGA, 4th Armored Division

Major General Herbert L. Earnest who commanded Combat Command A of the 4th Armored Division during its fight to relieve the garrison in BASTOGNE was born in Virginia on the 11th of December 1895.

General Earnest's long military career began in the

1st World War when he was a private in the 1st Cavalry Squadron of the Virginia National Guard. Earnest was honorably discharged from the National Guard on the 14th of August 1917 and assumed a civilian role as a 2d Lt, Cavalry, in the Organized Reserve Corps. Shortly thereafter he vacated this position and was taken into the Army as a regular in 1919.

In 1939 Earnest was graduated from the Command and General Staff School. On the 24th of December 1941 he was promoted to the rank of colonel, AUS. 1943 saw him a brigadier general. After Third Army became operational in August of 1944, he was serving on General Patton's staff as Tank Destroyer Brigade Commander.

When Supreme Headquarters ordered the Third Army to shift its weight to the north in an attempt to stop the on-rushing Germans, General Earnest was sent to the 4th Armored Division and placed in command of Combat Command A. In the action around BASTOGNE it was not unusual for him to appear at battalion command posts in the early morning hours to discuss the day's operations with the commanders. He would then proceed to the forward units and talk to the men and see if the units were disposed as depicted on operation maps at Combat Command. All details of an operation were at his finger tips and he was known among the commanders as a meticulous planner. When German counterattacks were expected momentarily in the early morning hours, he demanded that all members of the command be up and

about. Battalion commanders were expected to be on the front line at all times directing their operations. Promotions and decorations were awarded by him on the spot; similarly, he was never too busy to recognize a job well done.

For his superior demonstration of leadership in the 4th Armored Division he was shifted to the 90th Infantry Division in March of 1945 and there received his second star. In all the actions of the 90th Division, Earnest fought the Division with the tactics that he knew best, Armor. The attached armor of the Division was always put in support of the infantry regiments and the Division was always known as a unit that moved more than the prescribed infantry distances. On one occasion the Division fought without one regiment and no reserve and accomplished its mission.

During his distinguished career in the Army, General Earnest was awarded the DSM, SS, BSM with two oak leaf clusters. His complete knowledge of armored tactics was demonstrated in the manner in which his units fought, and the real characteristic he possessed was in the intangible something he left with every man he contacted.

COLONEL WM. L. ROBERTS

William L. (Kid) Roberts was born in Ohio September 17, 1890. At the age of eighteen he was appointed to the United States Military Academy, from West Virginia, March 1, 1909. He graduated with the class of 1913 and was appointed Second Lieutenant of Infantry on June 12, 1913.

Roberts served with distinction during World War I and rapidly rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel, a rank he held until September 30, 1919. On that date he reverted to his permanent rank of captain and was advanced to permanent major on July 1, 1920.

During the years between the two great wars, General Roberts served in many varied assignments. Graduated from the Command and General Staff School in 1926, he later completed the Tank School in 1931. He also attended the Advanced Course at The Infantry School, graduating in 1925. Three years were spent as instructor of tank tactics of The Infantry School; three years as commanding officer of a tank battalion at Ft Devens, and two and a half years in Hawaii as executive officer of the 21st Brigade. In 1940-41, he was Commandant of Cadets at the Citadel, under President Charles P. Sumnerall.

At the beginning of the war he commanded the 36th Armored Infantry Regiment. From there he moved to the Command and General Staff School, later going to Camp Gordon, Georgia, where he first

joined the 10th Armored Division.

Robert's first command, after joining the 10th Armored Division, was Reserve Command. He had the additional duty of Director of Infantry training for the Division. Later, he was given command of Combat Command B, the unit he was destined to command in the historic BASTOGNE operation.

Time and time again during the BASTOGNE operation Colonel Roberts proved his ability as a tank unit commander, his understanding of men and his ability to cope with the situation, regardless of what that situation might be. Here we will only point out a few of those instances wherein Colonel Roberts demonstrated some of his basic traits of leadership and understanding.

During the BASTOGNE operation he was reluctant to have his Command attached to the 101st Airborne Division, feeling that the Division Commander did not know the principles and proper methods of armor employment well enough to employ it to the best advantage. A veteran tanker, he was particularly concerned that armor be used properly, used to the maximum effect and not wasted. He strongly resisted the attempts of infantry commanders to use tanks as roadblocks. He worked specifically to get his armor released quickly, after each engagement, so that there would always be a maximum strength in General McAuliffe's mobile reserve for the next emergency. In the middle of the siege he published a mimeographed memorandum to the infantry

officers on the correct way to use tanks.<sup>1</sup>

Roberts' ability to gain and use knowledge of past experience was demonstrated in his request to General Middleton, that he be allowed to pick up stragglers and put them into action. He had witnessed mass retreat at CHATEAU-THIERRY in 1918. He recalled the vital factors of stragglers and mass confusion that existed, and thus wanted advanced authority of the Corps Commander to take necessary action in putting stragglers back into the line and cut confusion to a minimum.

Good use was made of that authority. Whenever and wherever stragglers were spotted, whether it be individuals or units, he pressed them into action to bolster his forces. That action resulted in adding several units plus some 800 individual stragglers to his forces.

Roberts' ability to know and understand his officers and to anticipate their reactions was demonstrated when, upon arrival in BASTOGNE, he ordered Major Desobry to move his unit north of BASTOGNE and hold the city of NOVILLE. "It will be a close race to get there before the enemy," Roberts said. "You are young and by tomorrow morning you will probably become nervous. By midmorning the idea will probably come to you that it would be better to withdraw from NOVILLE. When you begin thinking that, remember that I told you it would be best not to withdraw until I order you to do so."<sup>2</sup>

Desobry stayed at NOVILLE until ordered to withdraw.

One officer, who served under Roberts during the BASTOGNE operation, spoke of him as a rugged, plain spoken, well liked commander. A commander, who was very meticulous as to details and insisted that all orders be plain and clear. His knowledge of armor, his constant insistence that it be used properly and to the best advantage, paid huge dividends in the BASTOGNE operation.

After the action around BASTOGNE, Roberts was promoted to Brigadier General and assigned as assistant Division Commander of the 4th Armored Division. He ended the war in CZECHOSLOVAKIA, rounding up Germans and contacting our late allies, the Russians. His last assignment in Europe was Assistant Division Commander, 9th Infantry Division.

Kid was married in 1920 to Ella Adair. They plan to live in Arizona or Southern California when he retires. Meantime, he is serving another overseas tour, as advisor to the Director of International Security, US Military Government in Korea.

Robert, William L. (03597) B.G.  
(Col Commanding CCB, 10th Armored Division)

Permanent List Ranks

Cadet USMA	1 Mar 09
2d Lt, Inf	12 Jun 13
1st Lt, Inf	1 Jul 16
Captain	15 May 17
Signal Corps	6 Sep 18 to 5 Dec 19
Major	1 Jul 20
Lt Col	1 Aug 35
Colonel	1 Aug 42

Temporary Ranks

Major, Inf	17 Jun 18	NA
Lt Col	2 May 19	NA
Colonel	26 Jun 41	AUS
Brig Gen	5 Jan 45	AUS

Decorations

Silver Star Medal  
Legion of Merit  
Bronze Star Medal (OCL)  
Croix de Guerre (avec Palme (France))  
Military Cross (Czechoslovakia)  
Order of Motherland (Russia)

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NOTES ON APPENDIX IV

<sup>1</sup>Colonel, S. L. A. Marshall, Bastogne, the First Eight Days, p. 109.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

Personality Sketch  
of  
GENERAL DER PANZERTRUPPEN MASSO ECCARD VON MANTUEFFEL  
Commanding General, Fifth Panzer Army

Manteuffel, the commander of the German Fifth Panzer Army in the Battle of the Bulge, was born at Potsdam Havel on 14 January 1879 and was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1916. He received several decorations for his actions during the first World War. Between the wars he published several works on military subjects and had progressed to the grade of major by 1936. Between 1939 and 1943 he held several commands involving the use of both armor and infantry. He received several decorations during this period and had reached the grade of brigadier general by May 1943. Manteuffel came to Hitler's personal attention in late 1943 as commander of the 7th Panzer Division. That autumn the Russians captured KIEV and headed toward Poland. Manteuffel improvised a counterstroke weapon from odd units, broke in behind the rear of the advancing Russians, ejected them from ZHETONER JUNCTION by a night attack, and drove on north to recapture KORESTEN. By dividing his meager forces into a number of small mobile groups he created an impression out of proportion to this strength. Hitler was delighted and invited Manteuffel to spend Christmas with him. In early 1944 Hitler gave him the Panzer Grenadier Division "Gross Deutschland" and promoted him to major general. Later that year he was jumped to command of the Fifth Panzer Army and promoted to Lieutenant

General (General der Panzertruppe), at the age of 47.

Professor Schramm (the German Historian) in The Preparations for the German Offensive in the ARDENNES has this to say of Manteuffel, "-- a mind adverse to petty details, a quick grasp of any situation, and an ability to make rapid decisions.--He, too, spent much of his time with the troops (during the ARDENNES offensive his staff car was shot to pieces three times in succession)."

Shulman in Defeat in the West describes him as "--a lean, sad-looking man whose long, thin face gave him the appearance of a thoughtful priest."

Liddel-Hart in The German Generals Talk states that although the ARDENNES stroke was Hitler's own idea, the little success it had was due to Manteuffel who persuaded Hitler to adopt his tactics, (in part only).

The New York Times for 5 May 1946 records the surrender of Lt Gen Manteuffel, Commander of the Third Panzer Army, to the British Second and US Ninth Armies.

Liddel-Hart, who interviewed Manteuffel after his surrender, reports that "--in a cheerless camp deep in a remote mountain valley, Manteuffel retained his sense of humor, to a remark concerning the dismal place he replied with a smile, 'Oh, it might be worse. I expect we shall be spending next winter on a barren island, or else in a ship anchored in mid-Atlantic'."

According to the Historical Division of the Special

Staff of the United States Army, from whom the data as to assignments, promotions, decorations, and publications contained in this sketch was obtained, Manteuffel was wrong in his prediction and has since December 1947 been living at DROCHTERSEN, Kreis Stade (24).

## Personality Sketch

of

Colonel General Josef "Sepp" Dietrich  
Commanding General, Sixth Panzer Army

Colonel General Josef "Sepp" Dietrich, who enjoyed the popularity of the general public (probably because they know little about the other generals), rose from technical sergeant to Army Commanding General during times of political upheavals within his country. This outstanding rise in military command and popularity with both military leaders and the public was due to the political developments and his own personal audacity; his relations with leading personalities and his unrestrained joviality. During Dietrich's time in the lower command echelons he had plenty of time to develop his abilities as a leader, however, as commander of the 1st SS Panzer Division in its fight for ROSTOV it was necessary for him to start leaning heavily upon his assistants. Being a favorite of the Fuehrer and a member of the Waffen--SS, it was only natural that the members of the Waffen--SS were anxious to push this favorite of the Fuehrer's to the top. Thus, he became an Army commander. Some of his deficiencies were recognized by the higher command as well as by Dietrich himself and for this reason Brigf Kraemer was assigned to the Sixth Army as his chief of staff. It was to Kraemer that he relied completely in matters pertaining to higher command functions. In spite of his deficiencies he

continued to enjoy his noisy parties with plenty of drinks and also enjoyed the devotion of his companions. Although the Fuehrer knew of no change, "Sepp" had lost his enthusiasm for self-sacrifice and now first thought of himself and his family. He also had lost his capacity to inspire his division with the usual amount of enthusiasm that formerly had emanated from him. The bluntness and straight-forwardness of Dietrich, his comrade-like ways and the fact that he could occasionally, at the right time, put in a good word to the higher command made him very popular with the other generals.

On 13 May 1945, Dietrich was captured by the United States Army. He stood trial at DACHAU and in July of 1946 was sentenced to life imprisonment. Following the trial, he was sent to LINDSBERG prison where it is reported that he is in charge of the vegetable gardens.

## Personality Sketch

of

General der Panzertruppen Heinrich Freiherr von Luettwitz  
Commanding General, Forty Seventh Panzer Corps

During the time of the great German offensive in the ARDENNES, General der Panzertruppen von Luettwitz served as the Commanding General of the XLVII Panzer Corps which played the major enemy role. The XLVII Panzer Corps had as one of its objectives the city of BASTOGNE, but as pointed out in this report Luettwitz, after much fighting and heavy losses never was able to take this objective.

### Biographical Data:

Born on 6 December 1896 at Krampach, Bez Brealau

### Assignments

8-26-39 Commanding Officer, Reconnaissance Bn  
9-3-39 Hospitalized after being wounded  
5-21-41 Fuehrer Reserve  
6-29-41 Regimental Commander, Rifle Regiment 59 (Russia)  
5-1-42 Commander, Rifle Brigade 20  
10-1-42 Acting Commander, 20th Panzer Division  
12-1-42 Commander, 20th Panzer Division  
10-1-42 Fuehrer Reserve  
2-1-44 Commander, 2d Panzer Division  
9-5-44 Acting Commander, XLVII Panzer Corps  
11-1-44 Commander, XLVII Panzer Corps

### Promotions

12-1-14 Second Lieutenant  
5-1-25 First Lieutenant  
3-1-31 Captain  
10-1-35 Major  
3-1-39 Lieutenant Colonel  
10-1-42 Colonel  
12-1-42 Brigadier General  
6-1-43 Major General  
11-1-44 Lieutenant General (General der Panzertruppen)

## Decorations

1915	Iron Cross 2d Class
1917	Iron Cross 1st Class
1917	Wound Badge, Black
3-2-40	Wound Badge, Silver
8-7-41	Tank Assault Badge
12-28-41	German Cross (in Gold)
5-27-42	Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross
8-31-42	Wound Badge, Gold
9-3-44	Knight's Cross of the Iron Cross with Oak Leaves

A P P E N D I X V

S T A T I S T I C S

APPENDIX V

Statistics\*

Comparison of Personnel Casualties  
Received and Inflicted by  
the 4th Armored Division

Date	U.S.									German		
	Killed			Wounded			Missing			Killed	Wounded	Prisoners
Dec 44	O	EM	T	O	EM	T	O	EM	T			
22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	3	14	17	6	86	92	2	21	23	443	-	118
24	0	34	34	8	137	145	1	2	3	195	40	540
25	2	8	10	1	55	56	0	1	1	146	456	743
26	1	24	25	3	68	71	0	2	2	300	570	1103
27	2	19	21	3	81	84	0	4	4	128	340	680
28	0	19	19	4	31	35	0	4	4	16	67	44
29	1	6	7	1	44	45	0	1	1	30	120	27
30	1	28	29	4	64	68	1	4	5	120	150	32
31	0	10	10	1	28	29	0	3	3	-	-	-

Jan '45

1

2 - - - - - Division - - not - - actively - - engaged - - - -

3

90\*      10\*      40\*

\*Three day report of Reserve Command for 27 - 29  
December, not included in previous reports for those  
dates.

TOTAL	10	162	172	31	594	625	4	42	46	1468	1753	3337
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\*Source: Clarke, Combat History of the 4th Armored Division,  
22 December 1944 - 3 January 1945

German Materiel Losses  
 Inflicted by the 4th Armored Division

December 1944	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	27-29 <sup>1</sup>	TOTAL
Mk IV Tanks	1		5		2			4		12
Mk V Tanks	1	5		1						7
Mk VI Tanks								11		11
Self-propelled guns	2	2			2			3		9
Armored Cars <sup>2</sup>		1								1
Half-tracks <sup>2</sup>	1		4	4	13	5		2	1	30
Trucks <sup>2,3</sup>	7	4	8	1	11	7		1	5	44
Antitank guns <sup>2</sup>	1	2	5	7	12	2			14	43
Artillery pieces					7	1			2	10
Antiaircraft guns		2			6	2	1			11
Mortars		4	2		18	1				25
Rocket Launchers	3	3			11				40	57
Machine guns	5	200	64	2	45	10				331

- NOTE: 1. Separate report covering three-day period submitted by Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division.
2. Includes US equipment destroyed or recaptured.
3. Includes staff cars, ammunition cars, prime movers, and command and reconnaissance vehicles.

A P P E N D I X V I

O R D E R S A N D R E P O R T S

APPENDIX VI

ORDERS AND REPORTS

Number 1: March Order, CCA, 4th Armored Division, for the move from the vicinity of FEMETRANGE, France, to ARLON, Belgium, on 19 December 1944.

SECRET

AUTH: CG, CCA

MARCH ORDER<sup>1</sup>

Hq, CCA, 4 AD

LUDREFING, France

Initial: HCP

19 Dec 44

Date: 19 Dec

Map: Europe Road Map, 1:200,000 - Sheet 57

1. CCA moves at 0900 19 Dec in one column to assembly area vicinity LONGMY. The command may bivouac the night of 19-20 in the area BRIEY-AUDUN.

2. a. ORDER OF MARCH

CLM HIT IP

35 <sup>2</sup>	0900
Hq CCA and Pltn/B/489	0940
51	0955
A/24 and Pltn/905	1030
A/46	1045
Hq, Div Arty)	
66            )	1055
94            )	
53	1210
A and B/25	1245
Tns (incl A/126)	1300

b. Route: Hwy D126--CG131--W74--N399--W410--POINT-A-  
LOUSSON. N on hwy N52--N62B--W406--N52 to destination. (Marked  
map atchd).<sup>3</sup>

c. IP: RJ route D35 and D126.

d. Average rate of march: 12½ mph.

e. Halts: Forst halt 1045, thereafter 10 minute  
halt every two hours ending on the hour.

3. a. There will be no movement from bivouac areas until  
time necessary to hit IP.

b. Each unit establish ln with preceding unit.

c. Limited IP traffic control by CC. Units will  
post own guides at critical points.

d. "A" trains march with units.<sup>4</sup> "B" trains remain  
in biv areas until ordered out by CC S-4. Service Co Cmdrs report  
to CC S-4 at CP CCA at 0800 19 Dec.

e. Areas and billets will be policed prior to depart-  
ture.

f. Advance parties for each bn and separate unit will  
be limited to one ½-ton truck. Report at IP at 0800 to Colonel  
Withers.

4. Radio - Nets silent.

EARNEST  
Cmdg

OFFICIAL:

MURDOCK

S-3

xlix

238

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, No. 1

<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 19 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

<sup>3</sup>Marked map referred to was not included in After Action Report.

<sup>4</sup>"A" trains referred to are combat trains; "B" trains are field trains.

Number 2: Memorandum from Gen Gaffey to Gen Earnest prior to  
the march from FENETRANGE to ARLON.

18 December 1944

MEMORANDUM:<sup>1</sup>

TO: General Earnest, CCA, 4th Armored Division.

CCB marches at midnight tonight on LONGY via route shown. The remainder of the division will march at 0900 19 December. You will command CCA and certain units that will be attached to it for the march and will proceed over route shown. Send an advance party over in time so that they may meet you on the road tomorrow evening and put you in bivouac. Plan to bivouac in the general area BRIEY-AUDUN, unless you get orders to the contrary.

HUGH J. GAFFEY

Major General, US Army

Commanding

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 2

<sup>1</sup>Source: G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 18 December 1944.

Number 3: Order of 51st Armored Infantry Battalion establishing security north of ARLON on 20 December 1944.<sup>1</sup>

Enemy information same.

D/35 is in position north and northeast of ARLON.<sup>2</sup>

51 will send a task force at once under command of Capt Rockafeller, consisting of C/51, section of recon pltn/51, D/36, aslt gun pltn/35, pltn/A/24, to establish roadblocks north and northeast out of ARLON.

C/51, section of recon pltn/51, and A/24 will move at once, picking up assault guns/35 at ARLON, to join D/25 north of ARLON, prepare 3 defended double roadblocks N and NE of ARLON, and patrol between roads of the road net. Roadblocks will be prepared, but not actually put in position as long as friendly troops are known to be in front of them. TF/CP in vic junction of 3 roads.

Remainder of Bn remain in posn prepared to move to reinforce TF Rockafeller.

Radios on listening silence except in emergency.

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, No. 3

<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 20 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

Number 4: Attack order of 4th Armored Division issued on 21 December 1944.

FO#8<sup>1</sup>

21 December 1944

Maps: France, Belgium--1:100,000

1. a. See 4 AD G-2 Special Report #40, dated 21 Dec 1944.<sup>2</sup>  
b. III Corps advances N on ST. VITH at H-hour, D-day, as shown. XIX TAC will support with close support missions and armed recon over area.
2. 4 AD atks on Corps O on D-day to overcome and destroy all en resistance encountered in Z and will protect left flank of Corps.<sup>3</sup>

Troop List

CCA--35, 51, 66, 274, A/704, A/25, B/489; In support: A/24, A/46, A/126.<sup>4</sup>

CCB--8, 10, 22, 253, B/704, B/25, A/489; In support: B/24, B/46, B/126.

Res Cnd--37, 53, 704, (-, B, and pltn/C), 24 (-A and B, plus 995 atchd), 489 (-A, B, C, and D).

Div Trs--25 (-A and B, plus pltn/C/704 atchd), Hq Div Arty, 94.

Trains-- 126 (-), 46 (-), 144 (-) 3804, 444, C/489, pltn/16 F Hosp.

3. a. CCA move from present positions during night D-1-D to atk posns N of ARLON. Atk on O at H-hour, overcome en in Z. Maintain contact with 26 Inf Div on right.

b. CCB from present posns assist in screening movement of CCA and Arty into atk posns. Atk on O, overcome and destroy en in Z.

c. Res Cmd fol CCA on Div O prepared to reinforce CCA or CCB or repel ctr atk on either flank.

d. 25 Cav (-A and B), when relieved by elms of Cav with combat commands, assemble in area S of HAMBLY-La-NEUVE. Protect west flank of Div during atk. Maintain contact with CCB and elms of VIII Corps when gained.

e. 4 AD Arty: atchd--253 and 274 Armd FA Bns (105-mm SP). Div Arty (plus) will be placed to support initial phases of atk. 66 and 274 atchd CCA; 22 and 253 atchd CCB; and 94 direct support for Res Cmd and general support for Div.

f. (1) No traffic will be allowed on roads in 4 AD area and on main road leading N of ARLON without approval of this Hq. All cmdrs will submit requests for use of roads in time for approval or disapproval. Provost Marshal is charged with enforcing this restriction. He will be furnished a list of all troop movements scheduled and will coordinate with III Corps Provost Marshal.

- (2) During adv units will keep roads clear. Distances of at least 25 yards between vehicles will be maintained.
- (3) Strict measures to insure air security will be enforced.
- (4) Each unit comdr will take special measures for all-around security to insure against being surprised.
- (5) No gasoline, weapons, vehicles, or ammunition will be allowed to fall into enemy hands without being destroyed.
- (6) Reporting lines will be used for coordination and as references in reports to this headquarters.
- (7) CC's report progress and air targets.
- (8) Cub planes will not go up prior to atk except on O of the headquarters.

4. Units continue to supply from division control point.

5. a. Current SOI.

b. Radio silence until contact is made.

c. Div axis of Sig Com: ARLON-MARTELANGE and then as announced.

d. CC's report CP locations.

GAFFEY

Comdg

OFFICIAL:

SULLIVAN

G-3

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 4

<sup>1</sup>Source: G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 21 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>Not included in After Action Report.

<sup>3</sup>See Sketch No. 5, Part II.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

Number 5: Letter from Gen Gaffey to Gen Dager on 21 December  
concerning an alternate plan of maneuver.

21 December 1944

SUBJECT: Alternate Plan<sup>1</sup>

TO: Commanding General  
Combat Command B

1. The town of BASTOGNE is still held by our troops assisted by 101st Airborne Division and elements different other units under the command of Major General (sic) MacAuliffe. The town is surrounded on all sides--considered to be remainder of two German divisions--one panzer and one infantry. The defense ring held by our troops around the town is approximately two to three kilometers in radius.

2. It is my intention to relieve this force by you, aided by Earnest, or by you alone. In the first case the operation conforms with the original plan where Earnest passes SE of the town and attacking in that direction, while you drive into the town by the most practical route by phase line Green.

3. In the second case, if Earnest is held up by the bridge at MARTELANGE, I will divert you from your original route to the BASTOGNE-MARTELANGE-ARLON highway. You will then drive straight north into town. Earnest will follow you.

4. In the above case, you will drive in, relieve the force, and proceed from BASTOGNE to the NE, still followed by Earnest. In either case keep close touch with Goodall<sup>2</sup> so he will be informed. I hope to be able to discuss this with you before it happens and want to make plans for both operations.

HUGH J. GAFFEY

Major General, US Army

Commanding

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 5

<sup>1</sup>Source: G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 21 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>Lt Col Leslie C. Goodall, Commanding Officer, 25th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron.

Number 6: Summary of oral orders issued by CCB to assembled unit commanders at 211300 for the attack on 22 December 1944.

1. 4 AD, 26 Div, 80 Div now attached to III Corps. Corps attacks north with divs abreast. H-hour probably tomorrow. 4th AD on left, 26 Div center, 80th Div on right. 4 AD atks cln of CC's abreast, CCB on left, CCA on right. Res Cnd to fol CCA. 25 (-A and B) to screen left flank of CCR.<sup>1</sup>

2. CCB will attack H-hour along route LOUFTEMONT-FAUVILLERS-CHAUMONT. IP LOUFTEMONT, leading clns cross at H-hour (overlay to fol).<sup>2</sup>

#### TROOP COMPOSITION

Point - B/25, pltn/D/8,<sup>3</sup> pltn/A/8.<sup>4</sup>

Adv Od - Rcn/8, 2 pltns/D8, A/3(-) and 2 pltns/C/10 mtd on tanks, C/10(-) in tracks, Aslt/8 and pltn/B/24 mtd on guns, pltn/C/704, Aslt/10.

Main Body - 8 and 10 and GP, B/8 and 2 pltns/A/10 mtd on tks, A/10(-) in tracks, 22, mortars/8, C/8, and 2 pltns/B/10 mtd on tks, B/10(-) in tracks, Hq 8 and 10, 253, A trains/8 and 10, B/46, B/126, Tns.

3. a. B/25 (reinforced) will move ahead of cln, maintain contact with CCA on right and 25(-) on left.

b. B/24 furnish nine party to accompany B/25.

c. Corps arty to support atk.

4. a. PW enclosure vic HABAY-LA-VIEILLE.

b. Units cautioned subversive tactics being used by  
enemy.

BY COMMAND OF BRIGADIER GENERAL DAGER:

OLBON

EX-O

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 6

<sup>1</sup>Source: G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 21 December  
1944.

<sup>2</sup>Same as overlay with division attack order (See Sketch  
No. 5, Part II).

<sup>3</sup>Company D had light tanks under wartime table of  
organization and equipment.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the  
4th Armored Division.

Number 7: Attack order of CCA for 22 December 1944

SECRET

Auth: CG, CCA

Initial: MCP

Date: 21 Dec 44

Hq CCA, 4 AD

Udange, Belgium

21 Dec 1944

FO #1<sup>1</sup>

VIRTON, TINTIGNY, ARLON, LUXEMBOURG, DUEBUY, VIELSAIN,

1. a. See intelligence overlay.<sup>2</sup>

b. III Corps attacks to the north with divisions abreast from right to left 80th Div, 26 Div, 4th Armd Div, 4th Armd Div atks with CC's abreast, CCA on right, with Res Cmd following CCA by bounds on Div order. 25 Cav (-A and B) will screen to north of CCB and upon contact protect left flank of the Division. CCB will maintain contact with CCA and be prepared to screen the movements of CCA and artillery into their attack positions.

2. CCA will move to attack positions during night 21-22 Dec and attack to north at H-hour (see overlay).<sup>3</sup> Both task forces will cross phase line RED at H-hour.

COMPOSITION OF FORCES<sup>4</sup>

Left Column (Alanis)<sup>5</sup>

51 Inf (-1 Co)

Co/35 (B)

Right Column (Oden)<sup>5</sup>

35 Tk Bn (-1 Co)

Co/51 (C)

Left Column (Alanis) (Cont'd)

A/24 (-1 pltn plus 2 B r trks)

A/704 (-1 plat)

274 FA Bn

Medical support

Right Column (Oden)

Pltn/A/24 plus 2 Br trks

Pltn/A/704

66 FA Bn

Medical support

3. a. A/25 operate under CC control. Move at once and establish screen north of CCA along phase line RED (see Opns Overlay). Report when screen is established. Establish and maintain contact with 26th Div on our right. Move to north and screen CCA on CC order; upon contact with enemy, report and develop situation until main forces come up, then screen right flank of CCA.

b. TF Alanis assemble this afternoon vicinity TOERNICH; move to attack assembly area north of ARLON on CC order after dark; attack north crossing phase line RED at H-hour (see Opns Overlay).

c. TF Oden assemble this afternoon (less outpost forces) vicinity WOLKRANGE; move to attack assembly area north of ARLON on CC order after dark and consolidate outpost forces into task force there; atk north across phase line RED at H-hour (see Opns Overlay).

d. Arty will move into positions along route of respective clms west of ARLON afternoon 21 Dec. Be prepared to support the attack to the north. Registration not permitted.

e. (1) All units be especially alert for enemy air attacks; local security will be constant and thorough.

(2) TF Cmdrs recon routes as far north as phase

Line RED this afternoon: minimum number of vehicles.

4. a. "A" trains with units;<sup>6</sup> held to a minimum.
  - b. Task Force Cmdrs arrange with subordinate unit cmdrs immediately for supply of same.<sup>7</sup>
- 

NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 7

<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry B attalion, 21 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>Not included in After Action Report.

<sup>3</sup>Sketch No. 5, Part II.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

<sup>5</sup>The columns were called task forces and were named after their commanders, i.e., Major Dan C. Alanis, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion and Lt Col Delk M. Oden, CO, 35th Tank Battalion.

<sup>6</sup>"A" trains referred to are battalion combat trains.

<sup>7</sup>Par 5 and the authentication of this order were not included in the After Action Report.

Number 8: 51st Armored Infantry Battalion order for the attack on MARTELANGE issued at 221200 Dec 1944.<sup>1</sup>

En rptd in and around MARTELANGE; A/25<sup>2</sup> revd IG fire from west end of HAUT-MARTELANGE.

TF Oden supports us by fire from high ground N of PERLE.

TF Alanis atks immediately to clear MARTELANGE, and secure a crossing over the river.<sup>3</sup>

Formation: A/51 and B/51 abreast, A on right.

Boundary between companies: ARLON-BASTOGNE highway.

A/51 on foot, suptd by pltn/B/35 clears HAUT-MARTELANGE, outposts it, prepared to continue on to river abreast of B/51 and secure a bridgehead.

B/51, mounted on 2 pltns/B/35 and Sec/A/704, moves out when A/51 reaches HAUT-MARTELANGE, and clears west side of town up to river, prepared to secure a bridgehead.

A/24 be prepared to repair MARTELANGE bridge after bridgehead is secured.

CP initially at P564358,<sup>4</sup> then follows axis of advance.

Hand-carry radios.

---

NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 8

<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, 51st Armd Inf Bn, 22 Dec 1944.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armd Div.

<sup>3</sup>Sketch No. 7, Part II.

<sup>4</sup>Railroad Halt in NEUPERLE on the main road south of MARTELANGE.

Number 9: 4th Armored Division order for resumption of the  
attack on 25 Dec 1944.

242300 December 1944

OPERATIONS INSTRUCTION)<sup>1</sup>

NUMBER . . . . .13)

1. Following list<sup>2</sup> is effective 250001A Dec:

CCA - 35, 51, A/24, A/25, A/704, B/489, 66, 274, 177(-),  
1/318, In support: A/48, A/126.

CCB - 8, 10, B/24, B/25, B/704, A/489, 22, 253, 776,  
318, (-1 and 3), In support: B/46, B/126.

Res Cnd - 37, 53, 704 (-A and B), D/25, C/24,  $\frac{1}{2}$ D/489, 94,  
Btry/177.

Div Troops - 25 (-A, B, and D), Hq Div Arty, 24 (-A, B and  
C) plus 995 atchd, 489 (-A, B, C, and  $\frac{1}{2}$ D), 188.

Trains - 126 (-), 46 (-), 144 (-), 3804, 444, C/489, pltn/16,  
F Hosp.

2. 26 Inf Div takes over eastern portion of present Div  
zone to include BIGONVILLE and will defend and block it using 249  
Engr C Bn.<sup>3</sup>

3. 188 Engr C Bn, attached to 4th AD, defend and block  
portion of Div zone from BIGONVILLE (excl) to MARTELANGE (incl)  
coordinating with 249 Engr C Bn.

4. CCA reinforced by 1st Bn, 318 Inf resume atk just

prior to daylight 25 December.

5. OCB reinforced by 318 Inf less 1st and 3d Bns, resume attack just prior to daylight 25 Dec.

6. Res Cnd, upon relief by 183 and 249 Engr C Bns via BIGNOVILLE, will move during night 24-25 Dec to assembly area via AMFOULTEAU and atk in direction of PASTOONE early 25 Dec, destroying any enemy encountered, assist advance of OCB, and protect left flank of Div and Corps.

7. 25 (-) continue present mission until Res Cnd arrives abreast then maintain contact between Res Cnd and OCB.

BY COMMAND OF MAJOR GENERAL GAFFEY:

W. A. HIGBY

Colonel, GSC

OFFICIAL:

Chief of Staff

J. B. SULLIVAN  
Lt Col, GSC  
AG of S, G-3

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 9

<sup>1</sup>Source: G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 24 Dec 1944.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

<sup>3</sup>The boundary was moved slightly west to a line through BALBROUGH--BOFTSCHETTE--BRIDGE, these towns inclusive to the 26th Division--G-3 SETREP, III Corps, 240600 December 1944.

Number 10: Order for resumption of the attack on 25 December  
issued by CCA, 4th Armored Division.

SECRET

Auth: CG, CCA

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 24 Dec 1944

FO #2<sup>1</sup>

Maps: TINTIGNY, BASTOGNE (1:50,000)

Hq, CCA, 4 AD

MARTELANGE, Belgium

24 Dec 1944

1. a. See intelligence overlya.<sup>2</sup>

b. 4th Armored Division continues attack north with  
CC's abreast from left to right CCB, CCA. 26th Div zone extended  
west to include BIGONVILLE and will hold that town with 249 Engr  
Bn. 188 Engr Bn attached to 4th Arm Div will defend and block  
portion of Div zone from BIGONVILLE (excl) to MARTELANGE (incl).  
Res Cnd, upon relief by 188 and 249 Engrs, will move during night  
24-25 Dec to left of CCB and attack north early 25 Dec. 2/318  
attd to CCB.

2. CCA, with 1/318 attd, will attack north at 250800 in  
zone and link up with friendly troops south of BASTOGNE. Formation  
Inf Bns abreast, 51 on left, with 35 Tk Bn in general support pre-  
pared to immediately exploit a breakthrough.

3. a. 51 Inf, with plat/A/24 and plat/A/704<sup>3</sup> atchd, atk in zone at 0800 and gain contact with friendly troops vic BASTOGNE.

b. 1/318 with plat/A/24 and plat/A/704 atchd atk in zone at 0800, take town of TINTANGE and drive north and gain contact with friendly troops vic BASTOGNE. Bn will assemble vic 5642<sup>4</sup> during night 24-25 Dec and move out in time to attack from LD at 0800. Arty preparation will be on call obsvr with 1/318 when it reaches LD.

c. 35 Tk Bn with A/24 (-2 pltns) and A/704 (-2 platoons) atchd in general support of both Inf Bns and will coordinate atk with them. Be prepared to exploit a breakthrough at any point in CC zone. Send Ln O with 1/318 with radio.

d. Arty: 66, 274 Armd FA Bns in direct support; 177 FA Bn in general supt. Fire harassing fires during night 24-25 Dec, and preparation for atk as requested by Combat Comdr and Inf Bn Comdrs. Support the atk.

e. Engrs: Platoons with Inf Bns responsible for clearing mines from all roads in Inf Bn zones of advance keeping well up to the forward elements. Platoon with 1/318 blow all bridges on right flank of zone. CO A/24 rpt to CCA CP for coordination.

f. A/25 continue patrols on both flanks of CCA.

g. (1) Ln from left to right. CCA will send Ln O with radio to 1/318.

(2) Tk Co and Inf Co in WARMACH will remain there for security reasons until released to their Bns by CC order.

(3) Units to be especially alert against enemy air attack and ground infiltration.

4. a. S-4 1/318 contact S-4 CCA and arrange for supply.

b. PW evacuation to Bn CP's by units: from Bn CP to CCA enclosures by CC, upon notification from units.

c. M/46 Med Co in PERLE; collecting point, MARTELANGE.

5. a. CC axis advance: Main road MARTELANGE to BASTOGNE. Roving CC Cnd CP along same route.

b. Current SOI. Call sign for 1/318: 25 Dec HJX

26 Dec IRH

EARNEST

Cndg

OFFICIAL:

MURDOCK

S-3

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 10

<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 24 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>Not included in After Action Report.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

<sup>4</sup>High ground southeast of WERNACH.

Number 11: 51st Armored Infantry Battalion order for resumption  
of the attack on 25 Dec issued at 242200 Dec 1944.<sup>1</sup>

Concentration on vehicles vic SAINLEZ. 10 to 20 on tks  
vic CHAUMONT. En rptd massing tks south of BASTOGNE.

CCA continues atk north; 1/318 atchd to CCA and atks on  
right of 51; 35 in general support. CCB on left of CCA, 26th Div  
on right.

51 atks at 0800 to adv in zone of action and contact  
friendly troops south of BASTOGNE; plat/A/24 and plat/A/704 atchd  
to 51; arty and air on call.<sup>2</sup>

Left boundary: RR. Right boundary: N-S grid line 55.

Axis of adv: BASTOGNE hwy (also bdry between Cos.)

LD: STRAINCHAMPS-TINTINGE road.

Phase lines: See map.<sup>3</sup>

C Co on left of hwy clear STRAINCHAMPS with one pltn,  
with A/35 in support on high ground NE of town; then clear out  
woods and advance north, keeping contact with Co ..

Co .. on the right of hwy adv N abreast of C co after  
STRAINCHAMPS is cleared.

Co B remain present pos in reserve until further orders.

Plat/A/704 supt A/51 and C/51 with one section each.

Plat/A/24 sweep roads in zone of advance, be prepared to  
blow bridges on exposed flanks on order.

Supply and evacuation: axis of advance.

Current SOI; CP will be on axis of advance, Ex 0 in east zone, S-3 in west zone. Capt Lashinske Ln 0 to 1/318.

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 11

<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 24 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

<sup>3</sup>Not included in After Action Report.

Number 12: Letter from Gen Gaffey to Combat Command Commanders on 25 December concerning dispositions to be taken upon reaching BASTOGNE.

25 December 1944

SUBJECT: Disposition of Final Objective<sup>1</sup>

TO: Combat Commanders

1. You are being furnished an overlay<sup>2</sup> showing the approximate dispositions of the division upon its arrival at the final objective. Keeping the plan on this overlay in mind, it is desired, insofar as the situation permits, you close your troops to these dispositions upon arrival. However, in case a combat command arrives well in advance of the remainder of the division, it is essential that the commander adopt such initial dispositions and take such actions as he deems necessary while awaiting the arrival of other elements of the division.

2. All commanders of troops arriving early must work in close conjunction with the Commanding General, 101st Airborne Division until arrival of the Commanding General, 4th Armored Division. Plan shown on overlay will be made known to him.

3. It is considered particularly desirable that the division, or elements thereof, stay out of town and operate from favorable ground outside.

4. In any event all commanders must be prepared to repel an enemy counterattack which will probably occur shortly after arrival.

HUGH J. GAFFEY

Major General, US Army

Commanding

NOTE: Combat Commanders must arrive on the spot early in order to effect coordination: see par 2.

H. J. G.

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 12

<sup>1</sup>Source: G-3 Journal, 4th Armored Division, 25 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>Sketch No. 14, Part II.

Number 13. Order of CCA, 4th Armored Division, for continuation  
of the attack on 27 December 1944.

SECRET

Auth: CG, CCA

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

26 Dec 44

FO #3<sup>1</sup>

Hq CCA, 4 AD

WARMACH, Belgium

26 Dec 1944

1. a. See intelligence overlay.<sup>2</sup>

b. CCB and Res Cnd, 4th Arm'd Div, continue atk to N  
night of 26-27 Dec. 6 Cav Sqdn will continue its advance north  
along right flank of CCA. 35th Div arrives in sector between 4th  
Arm'd Div and 26th Div and prepares to advance to the north, 27 Dec.

2. CCA continues atk in zone to join with friendly forces  
south of BASTOGNE at 0800 27 Dec. Units will move to assembly and  
defensive areas, as given to Ln Os this afternoon, when contact  
with friendly troops is attained. No change in zones of action.

3. a. 1/318 and 51<sup>3</sup> will secure towns and objectives  
within their zones, supported by 35th Tank Bn. Each Bn initially  
hold out a minimum of one Co minus one platoon as bn reserve. Atk  
will be pushed vigorously and relentlessly.

b. 35 Tk Bn support both Inf Bns paying particular  
attention to assisting in securing key terrain features.

c. Arty, air, and 4.2 missions on call. It is insisted that this be used to the maximum. Arty will fire 10 minute preparation from H-5 to h/5.

d. A/25: Outpost road south from HOLLANGE to BODANGE and patrol road from CR at 539456<sup>4</sup> south to CR east of WARNACH 550425.

e. Tank Destroyer: Block roads within zone of attachment, esp. roads to east of 1/318 sector.

f. Engrs: Continue present mission. Be prepared to be used as an Inf reserve in case of counterattack. Probable employment in present zone of action.

g. Units will designate air targets as far in advance as possible. Target designation must be specific as to type and location.

4. a. CCA control point and water point at HEINSCH (567241).

b. Axis evacuation--main road BASTOGNE-MARTELANGE. Med Co at MARTELANGE. Collecting point at WARNACH.

5. a. Current SOI.

b. Cp CCA initially WARNACH; then axis of movement.

EARNEST

Crdg

OFFICIAL:

HURDOCK

S-3

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, NO. 13

<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 26 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>Intelligence overlay not included in After Action Report.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

4. Intersection of the STRAINCHAMPS-HONVILLE road and the main highway.

Number 14: Order for continuation of the attack on 28th December  
1944 by Combat Command A, 4th Armored Division.

SECRET

Auth: CG, CCA

Initials: \_\_\_\_\_

27 Dec 1944

FO #4<sup>1</sup>

Maps: BASTOGNE 1:50,000

Hq, CCA, 4th AD

WARMACH, Belgium

27 Dec 1944

1. a. En situation to our front unchanged other than we know the 5th Paratroop Div has been reinforced by elms of 104 Regt Pz Gren Div.<sup>2</sup>

b. 4th Arm'd Div continues mission of driving north in zone and establishing contact with friendly elms vic BASTOGNE. Order of units from left to right: CCA/9 Arm'd Div (atch), Res Cnd, CCB, CCA. CCA./9th Arm'd continues atk tomorrow; Res Cnd, now in BASTOGNE, will continue patrolling road from ASSEMOIS to BASTOGNE and clear out zone. CCB continue atk tonight and join with friendly forces. 35th Inf Div on our right continue atk in zone.

2. CCA with Inf Bns abreast continues atk to N at 0800 to join with friendly forces vic BASTOGNE. See opns overlay for new boundaries.<sup>3</sup>

3. a. 51 Arm'd Inf Bn atk N in zone at 0800, clearing

area from present lines to first road to north, then continue N in zone, join contact with friendly forces.

b. 1/318 with pl<sup>t</sup>/A/25<sup>4</sup> atchd atk N in zone at 0900, take town of LUTREBOIS, continue N and make contact with friendly forces.

c. 35 Tk Bn continue present mission. Move D/35(-) around left flank on order Lt Col Oden to assist movement of 51st and reconnoiter in force.

d. Arty: Fire 5-min preparation from H-5 to H for respective Inf Bns prior to their atk. Coordinate no-fire area with CCB arty. Fire harassing and interdiction fires night of 27-28 Dec.

e. Engrs: continue pres mission. Be prep for employment as Inf reserve.

f. 4.2 mortar CO: continue present mission.

g. Tank Destroyers: continue present mission. Guard carefully avenues of approach esp tk avenues. Patrol main road from VERNICH to SABLEZ.

h. Cavalry: Attach 1 pltn to 1/318. Outpost west and east flank of CCA as perverbal orders combat commander this afternoon.

4. No change.

5. CCA CP VERNICH; Fwd CP along route of advance.

ERNEST

OFFICIAL:

Comdg

HURDOCK

S-3

LXXVIII

267

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, No. 14

<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, 51st Armored Infantry Battalion, 27 December 1944.

<sup>2</sup>The 104th Grenadier Regiment (Motorized) was part of the 21st Panzer Division. This division was not identified on the ARDENNES front during this action, so the identification was either incorrect, or only one regiment or elements thereof were shifted to this sector.

<sup>3</sup>Operations overlay not included in After Action Report.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix I for troop list of units with the 4th Armored Division.

Number 15: Order issued by CCA, 9th Armored Division, for  
the attack on 27 December 1944.

Hq, CCA, 9AD  
LONGLIER, Belgium  
270100 Dec 44

FO #5<sup>1</sup>

Map: France and Belgium 1:50,000, Sheet 121, BASTOGNE.

1. a. x x x x  
b. 4th AD continues the attack 0300, 27 Dec 44, with  
CCs abreast, CCA, 9th AD, on the left.
2. a. CCA, 9th AD, attacks at 0800, 27 Dec from assembly  
position vic LONGLIER in conjunction with 4 AD to seize the high  
ground to the SE of BASTOGNE (5558) and make contact with friendly  
units vic BASTOGNE.  
b. LD: Church at 395449 on BASTOGNE-NEUFCHATEAU road.  
c. Formation: Single column, TF Collins leading.

TROOPS

TF COLLINS

60 AIB (-B)  
C/19 Tk Bn  
1/B/811 TD  
3/A/9 Engrs  
2/D/432 AM

TF KARSTETER

19 Tk Bn (-C)  
B/60 AIB  
3/B/811 TD  
1/A/9 Engrs  
D/432 AM (-)

TF BROWNFIELD

811 TD (-)  
A/9 Engrs (-)  
A/89 Rcn  
A/89 Rcn  
E/89 Rcn (-)

3 FA: DIRECT SUPPORT

3. a. C/89 Rcn: Cross LD 0715, move rapidly, establish

Lxxx

269

liaison w/0/28 Ren via VAUX-LES-ROSIERES, gain contact w/enemy, and when passed through cover left flank.

b. B/39: Cover right flank. Push ren along route of advance of CCB, 4th Armd Div (overlay)<sup>2</sup>, gain and maintain contact w/CCA, 4 AD on right, and keep CO, CCA, 9 AD informed of their progress.

c. TF COLLINS: Move via NEUFCHATEAU-BASTOGNE road, seize or contain SIBRET (P495545), continue to final objective (overlay)<sup>2</sup>.

d. TF KARSTETER: Follow TF COLLINS via NEUFCHATEAU-BASTOGNE road, seize or contain VILLEROUX.

e. TF BROTHFIELD: Move to vic VAUX-LES-ROSIERES; prior to 0800 prepared to reinforce or c/attack.

f. 1 plat D/19 Tk: Report to CO Serv Co 60 AIB for train protection vic schoolhouse LONGLIET.

g. Bn Tns: Move to ETALLE night 26-27 Dec.

h. (1) Air party w/TF Collins.

(2) Collecting point VAUX-LES-ROSIERES.

5. CP CCA: Initially LONGLIET, then along axis of advance.

HARROLD

OFFICIAL:

Col

MORTIMER  
S-3

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NOTES ON APPENDIX VI, No. 15

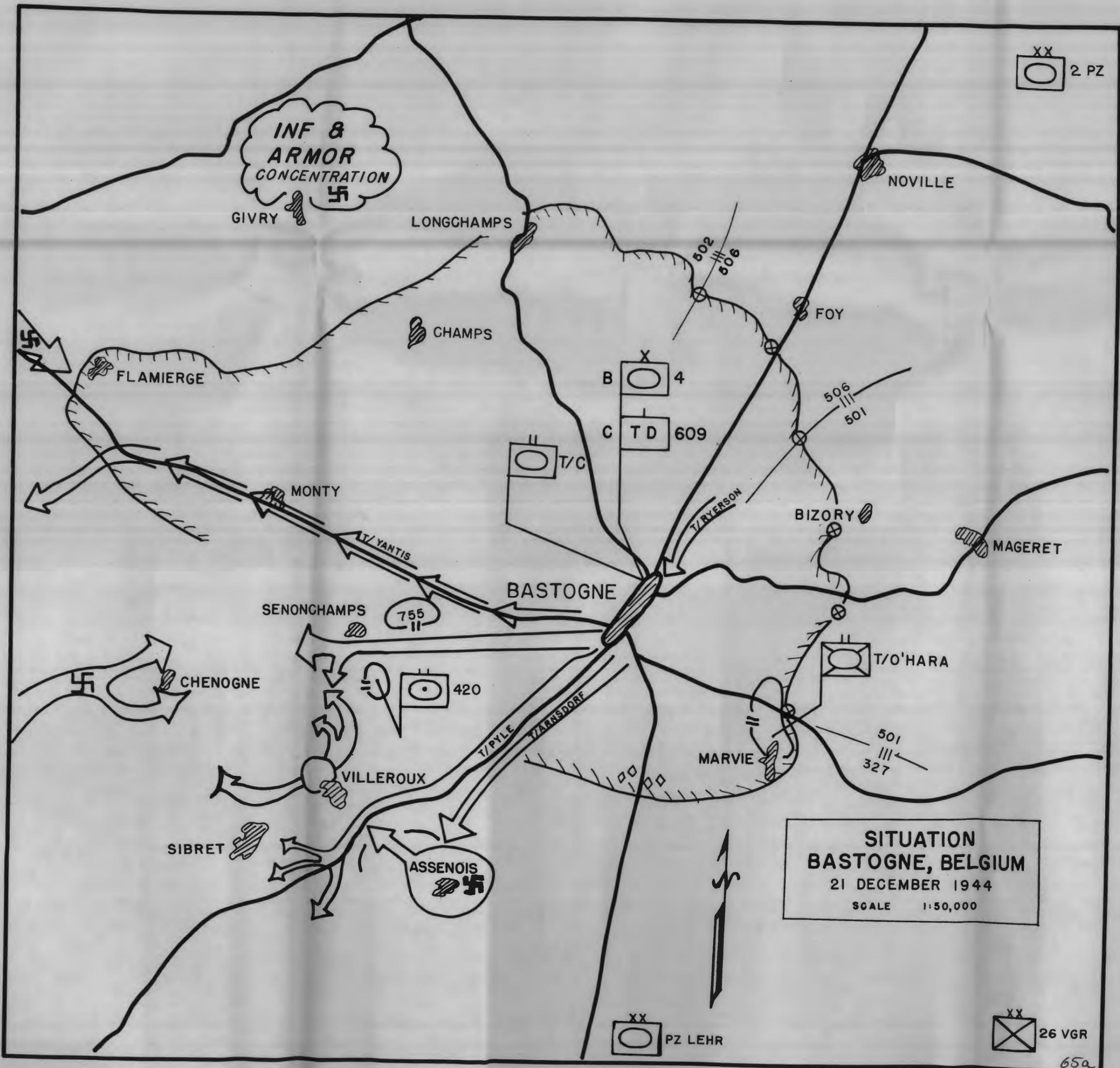
<sup>1</sup>Source: After Action Report, CCA, 9th Armd Div, 27 Dec 44.

<sup>2</sup>Not included.

APPENDIX VII

MAPS AND SKETCHES





INF &  
ARMOR  
CONCENTRATION

XX  
O 2 PZ

NOVILLE

GIVRY

LONGCHAMPS

502  
506

FOY

CHAMPS

FLAMIERGE

B X 4

C T D 609

T/C

506  
501

MONTY

BIZORY

MAGERET

BASTOGNE

SENONCHAMPS

755  
II

T/O'HARA

CHENOEGNE

420

VILLEROUX

MARVIE

501  
327

SIBRET

ASSENOIS

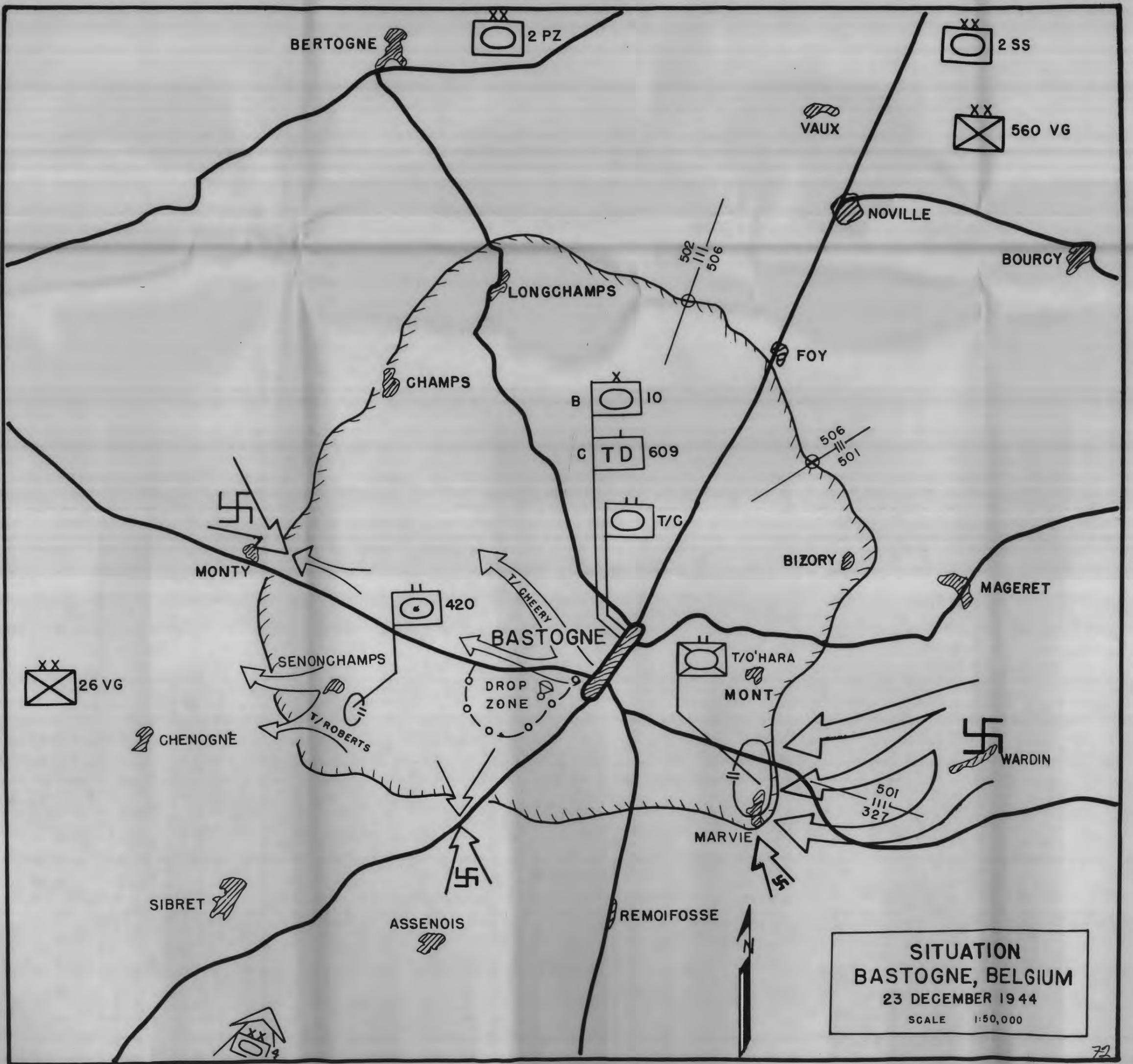
T/PYLE  
T/WANSDORF

SITUATION  
BASTOGNE, BELGIUM  
21 DECEMBER 1944  
SCALE 1:50,000

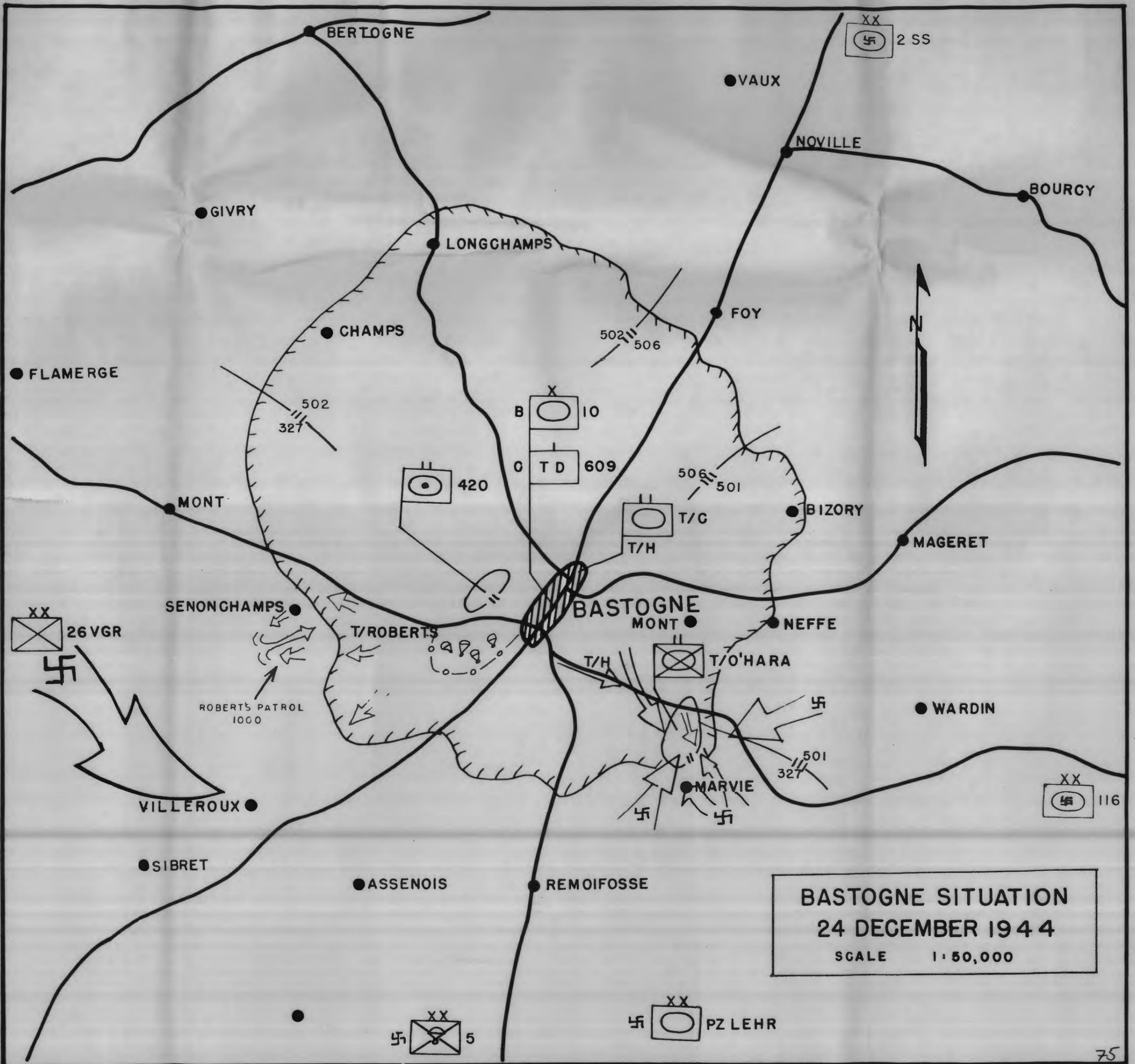
XX  
O PZ LEHR

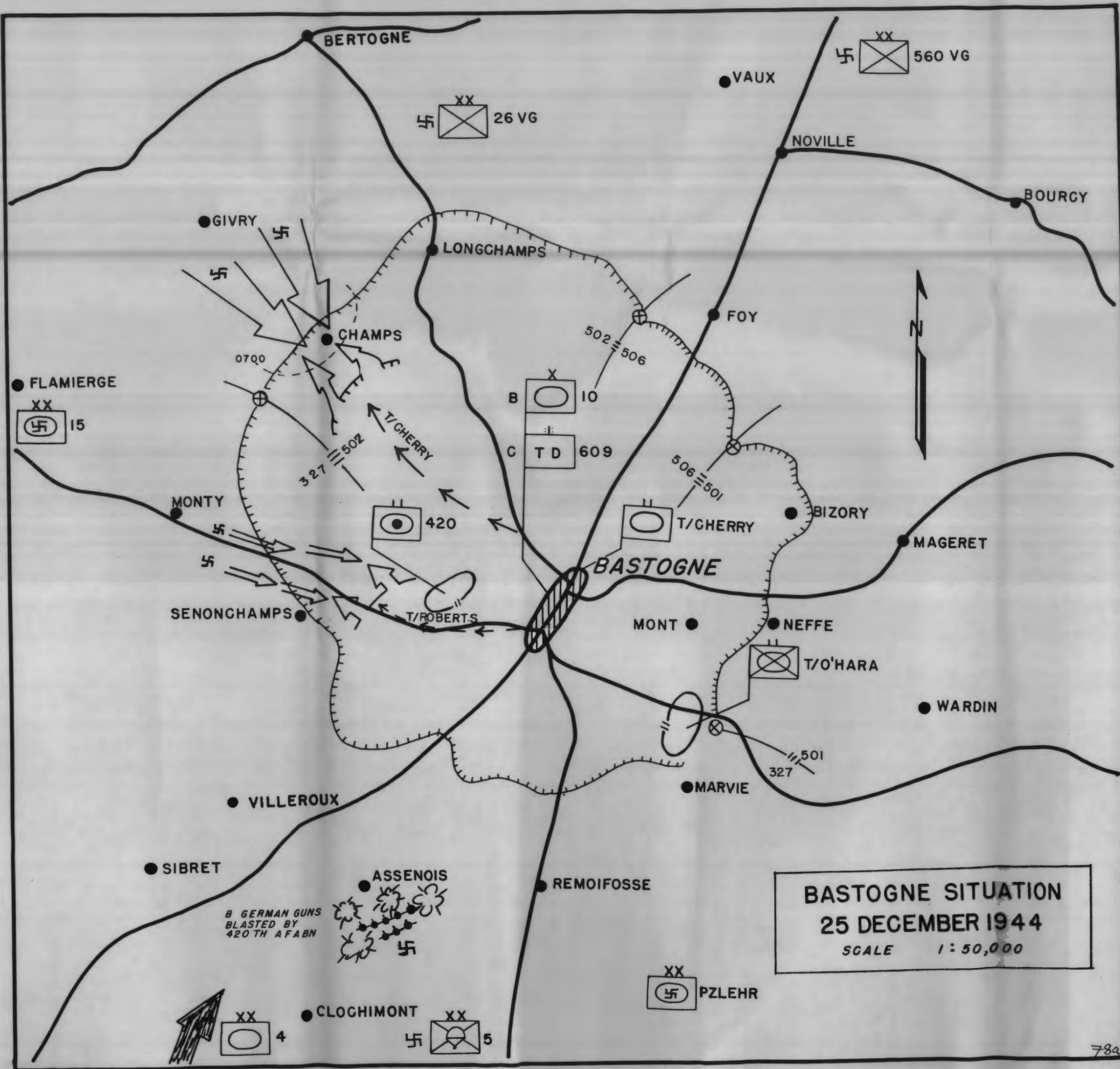
XX  
X 26 VGR

65a

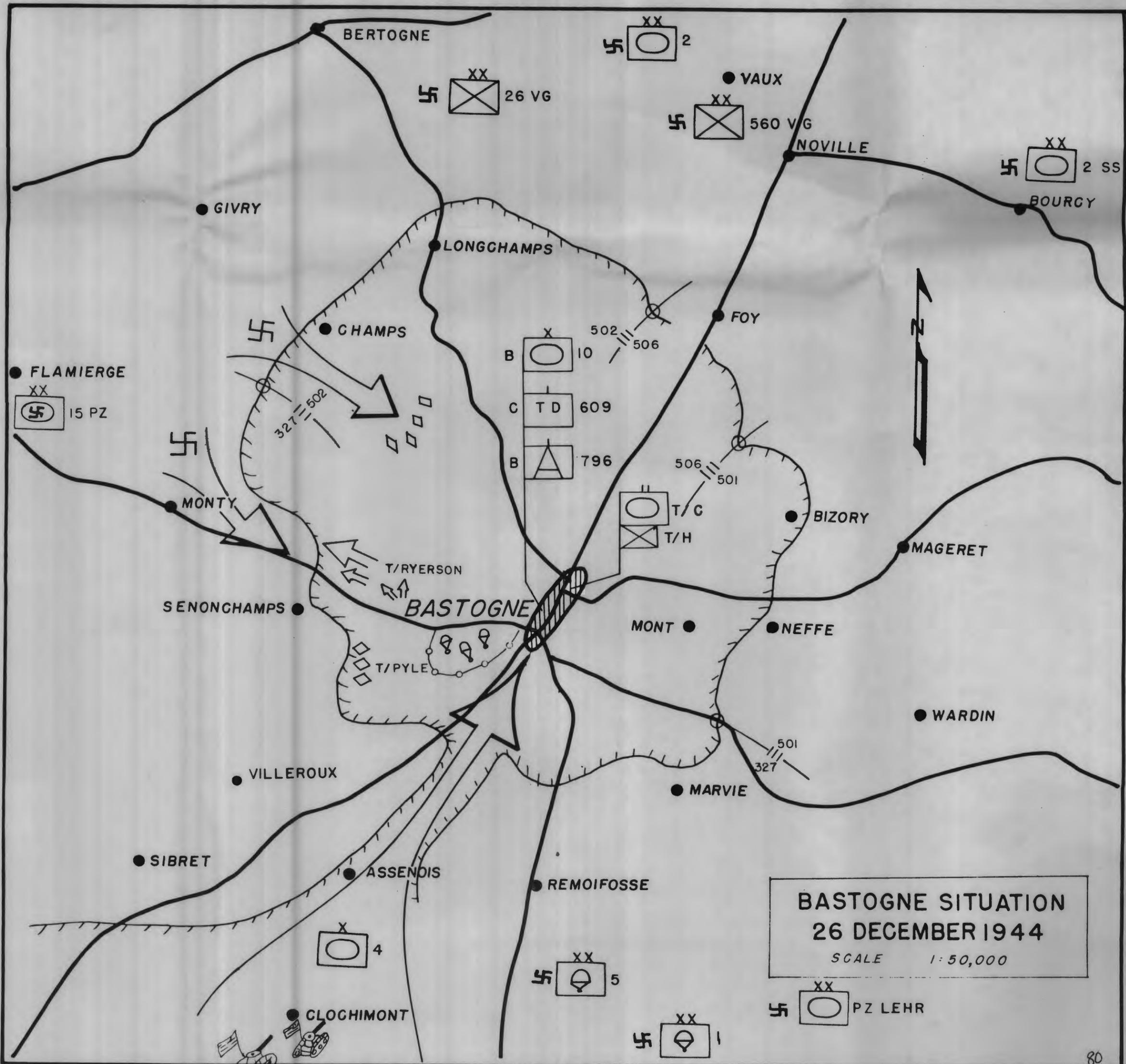


**SITUATION**  
**BASTOGNE, BELGIUM**  
 23 DECEMBER 1944  
 SCALE 1:50,000

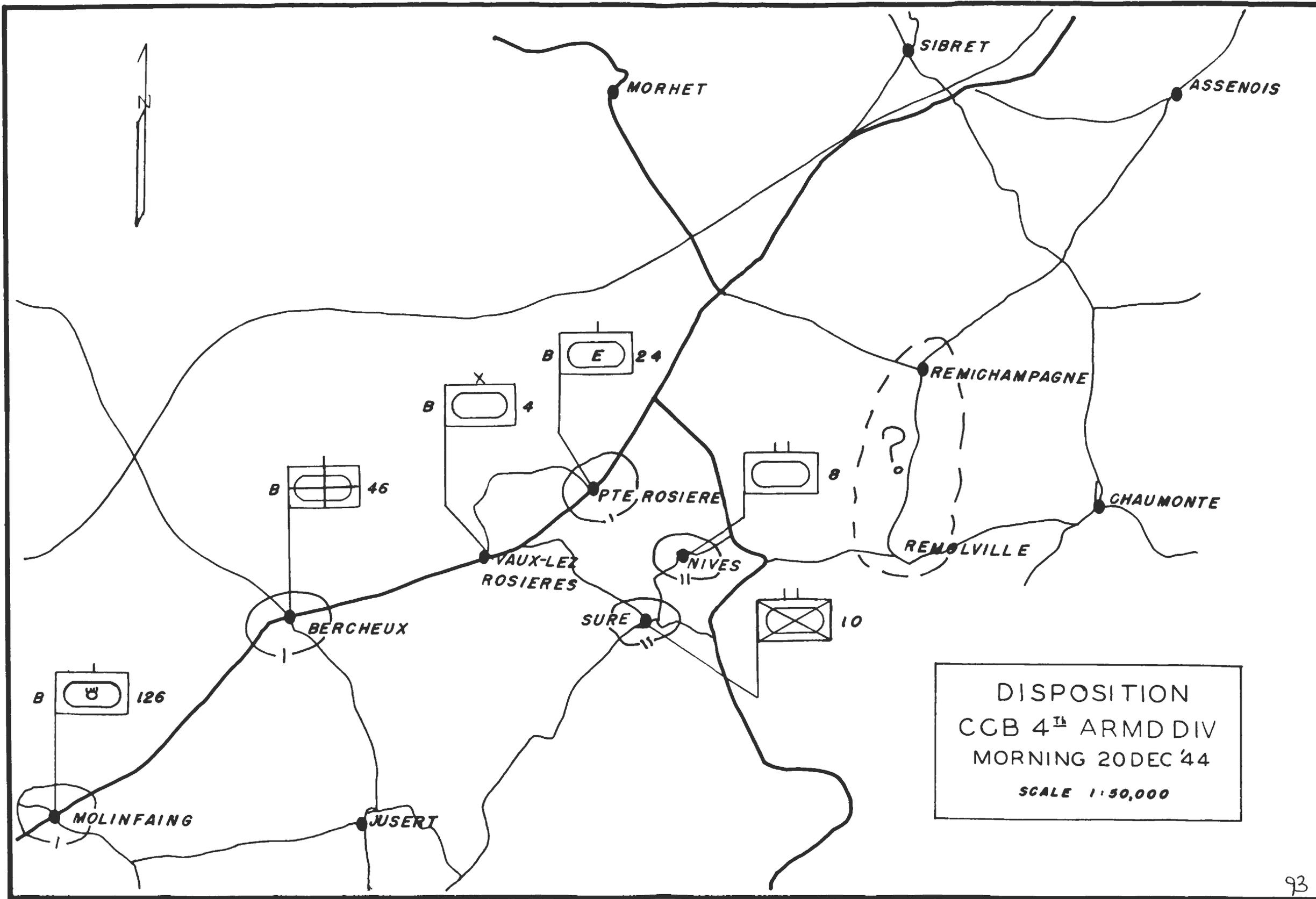




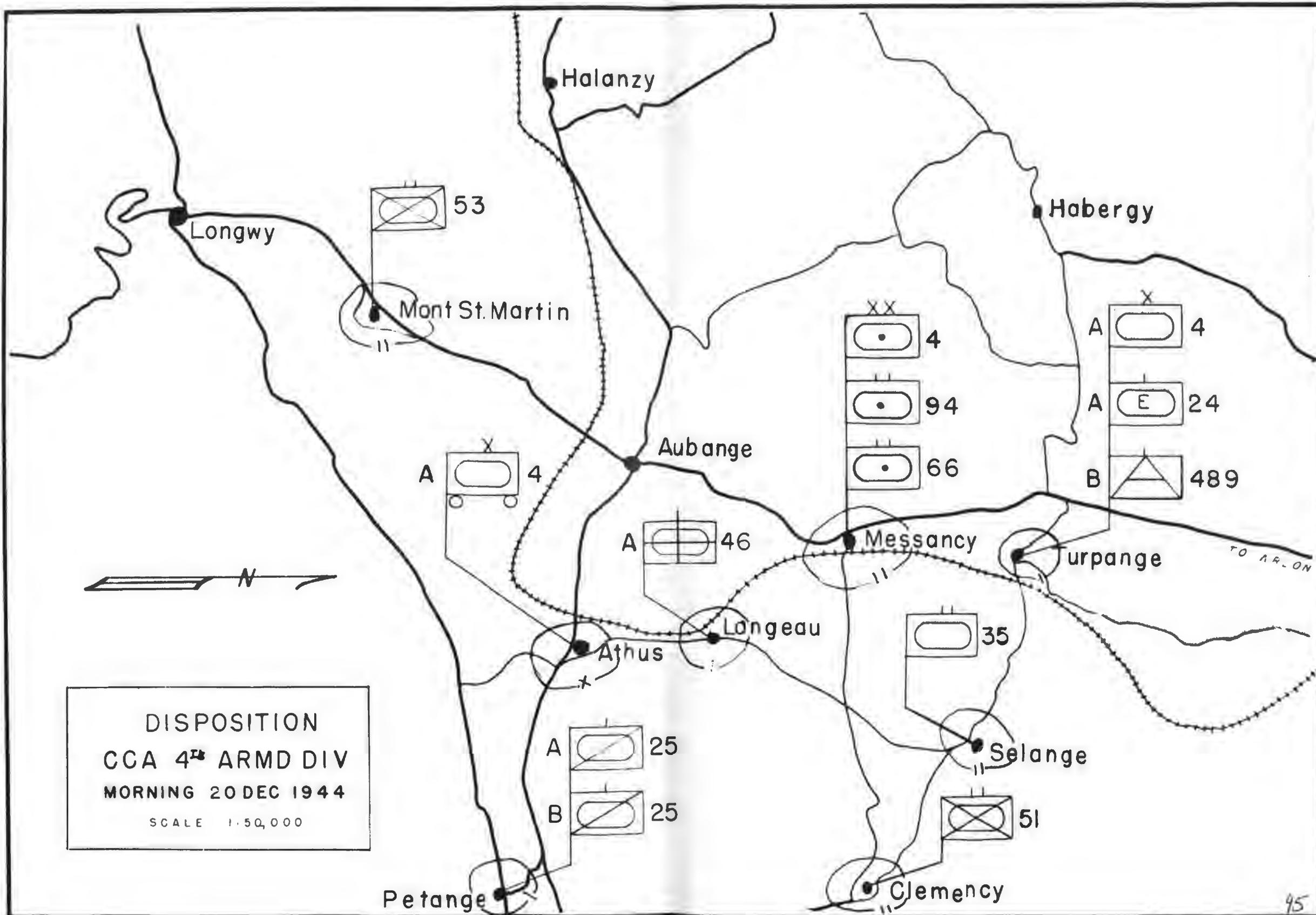
**BASTOGNE SITUATION**  
**25 DECEMBER 1944**  
 SCALE 1:50,000



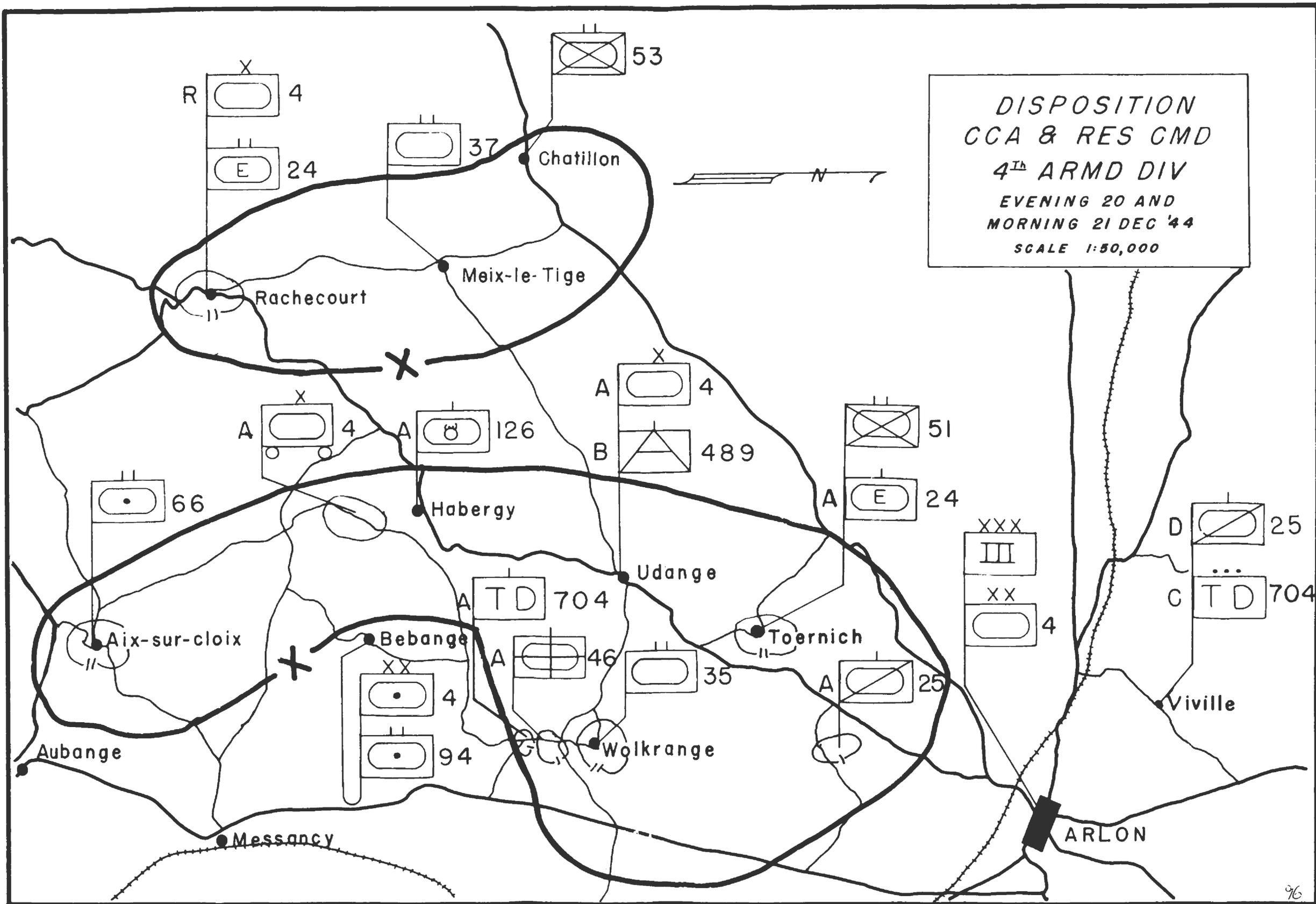
**BASTOGNE SITUATION**  
**26 DECEMBER 1944**  
 SCALE 1:50,000



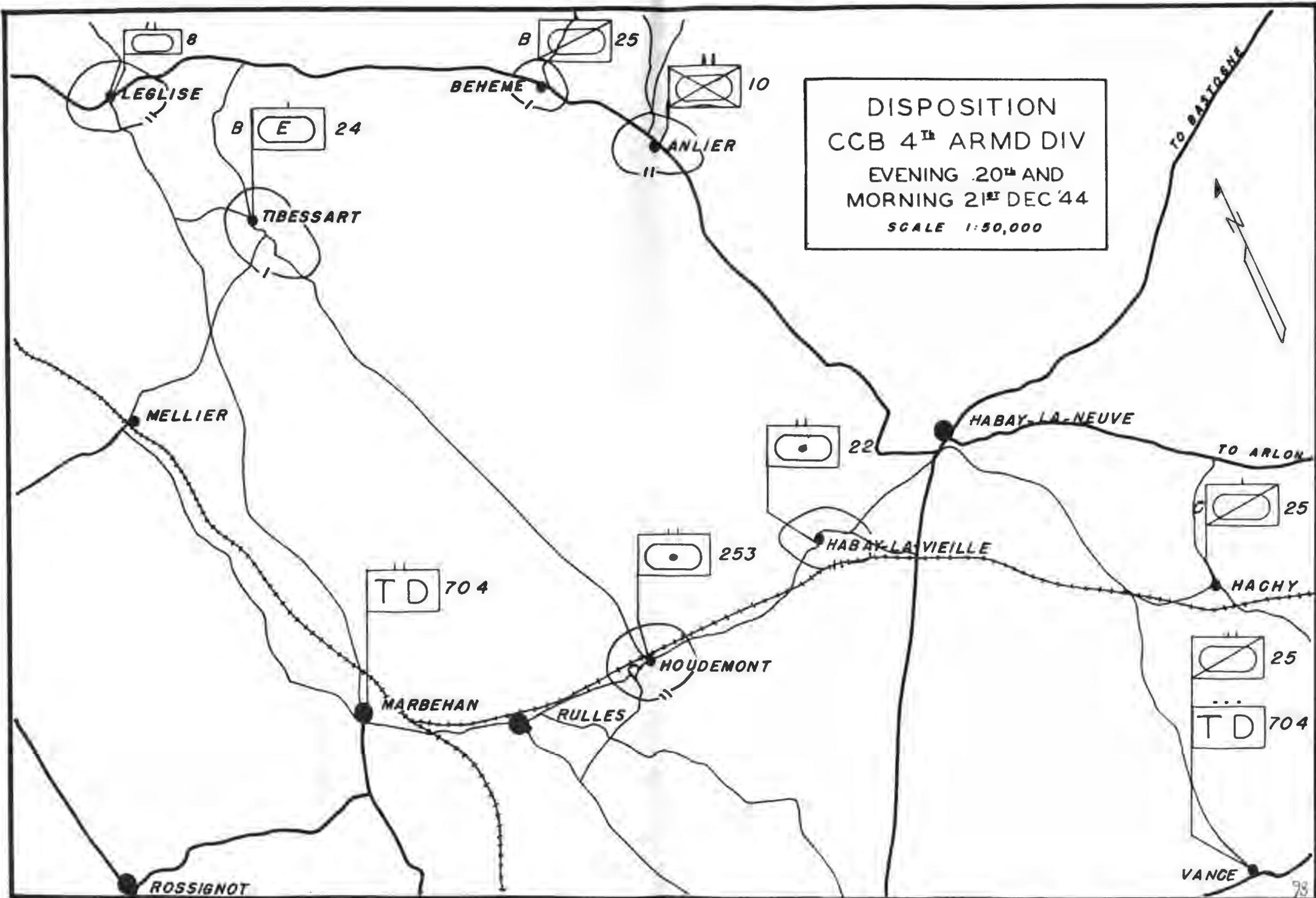
DISPOSITION  
 CCB 4<sup>th</sup> ARMD DIV  
 MORNING 20 DEC '44  
 SCALE 1:50,000



DISPOSITION  
 CCA 4<sup>th</sup> ARMD DIV  
 MORNING 20 DEC 1944  
 SCALE 1:50,000

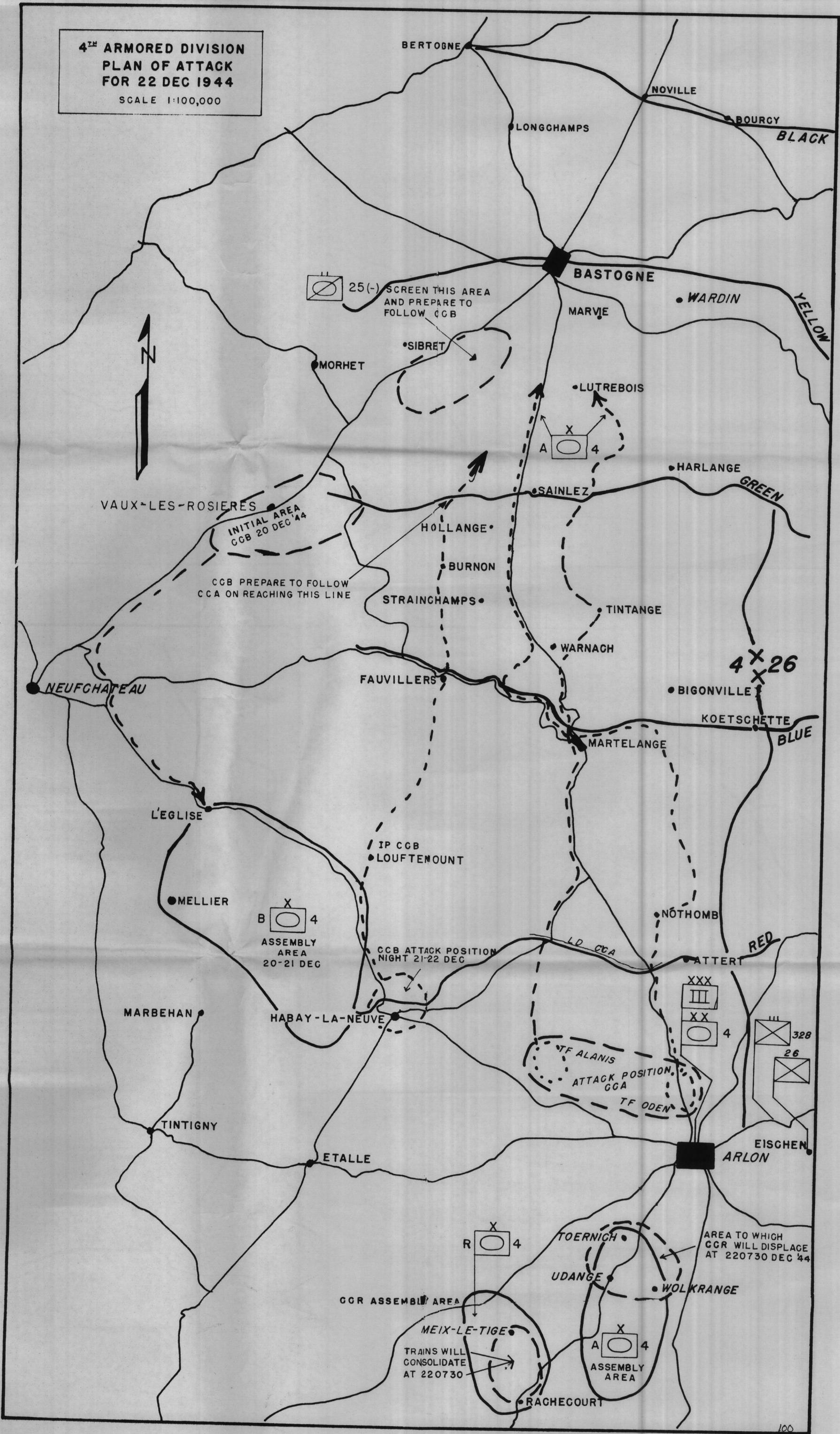


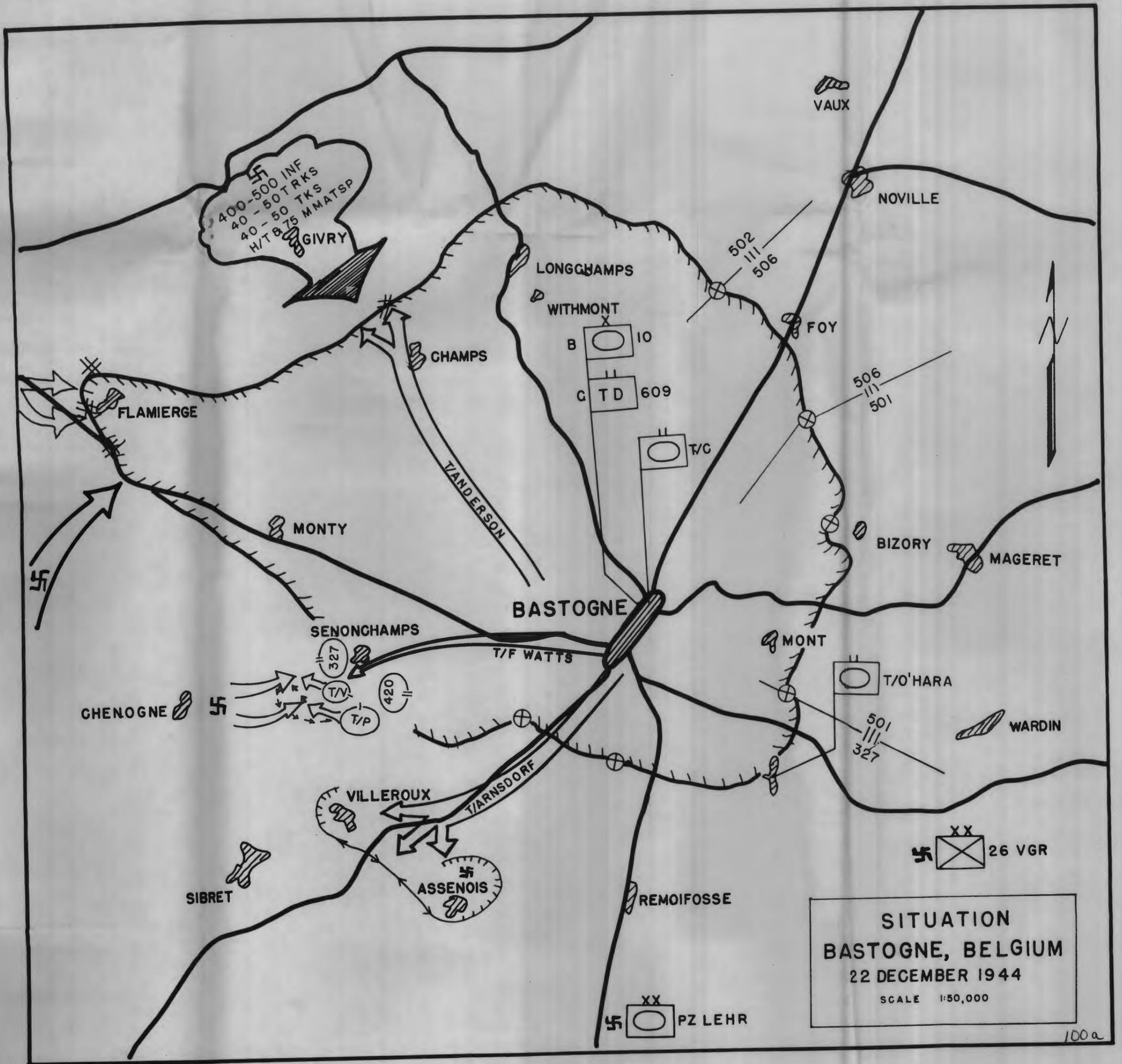
DISPOSITION  
 CCA & RES CMD  
 4<sup>TH</sup> ARMD DIV  
 EVENING 20 AND  
 MORNING 21 DEC '44  
 SCALE 1:50,000

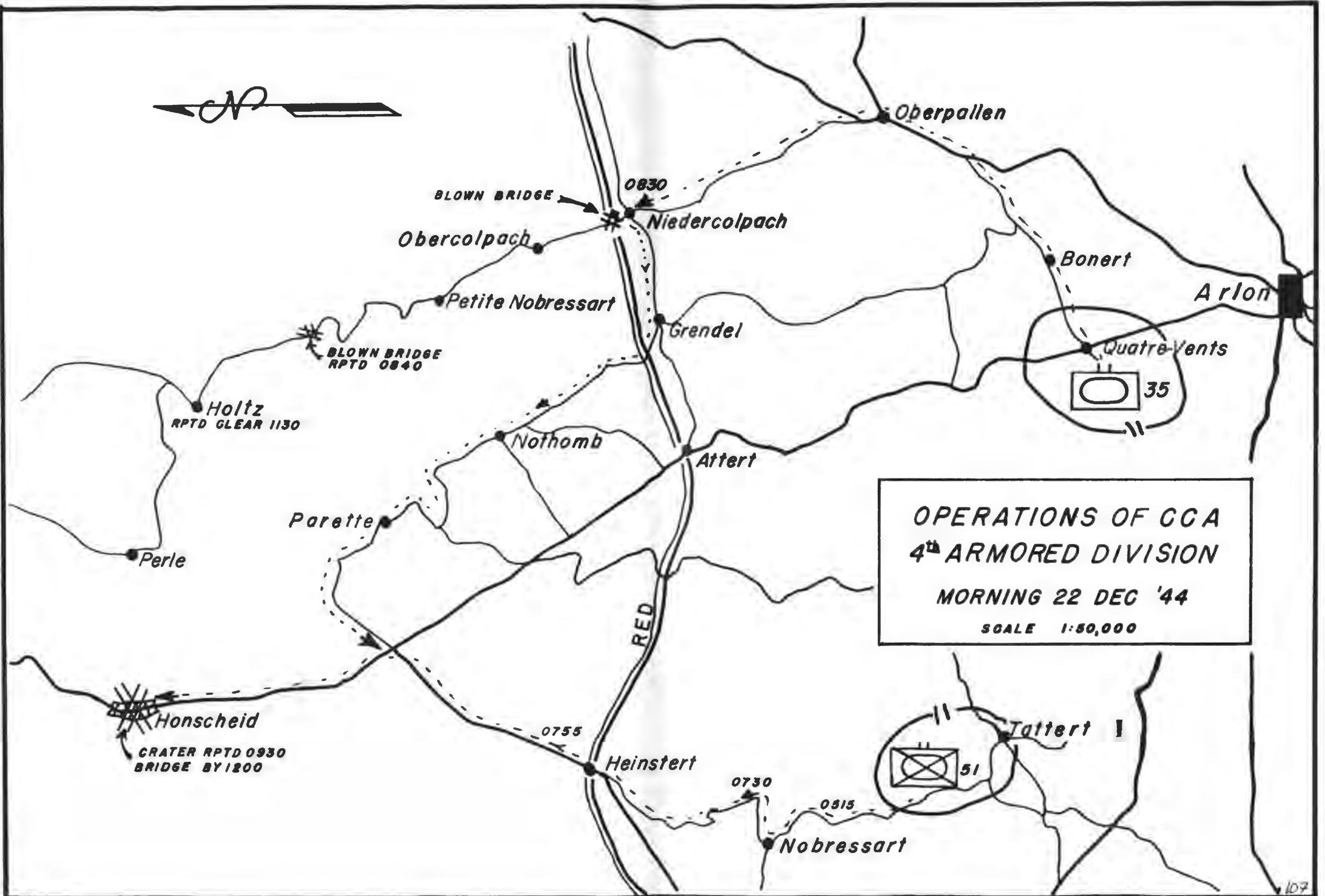


**4<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED DIVISION  
PLAN OF ATTACK  
FOR 22 DEC 1944**

SCALE 1:100,000







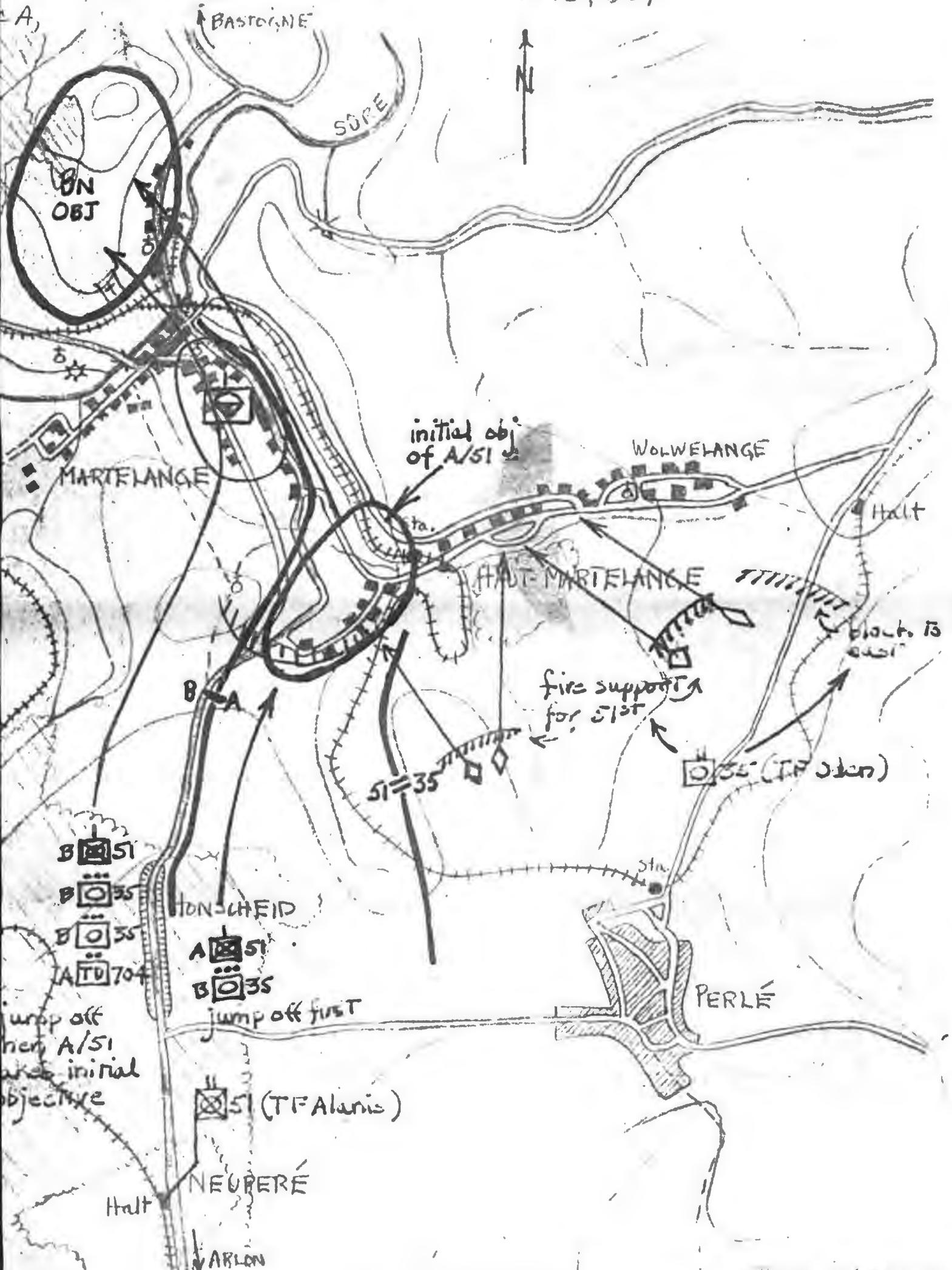
**OPERATIONS OF GCA  
4<sup>th</sup> ARMORED DIVISION  
MORNING 22 DEC '44  
SCALE 1:50,000**

Map #7 - Plan of attack against MARTELANGE

22 December 1944

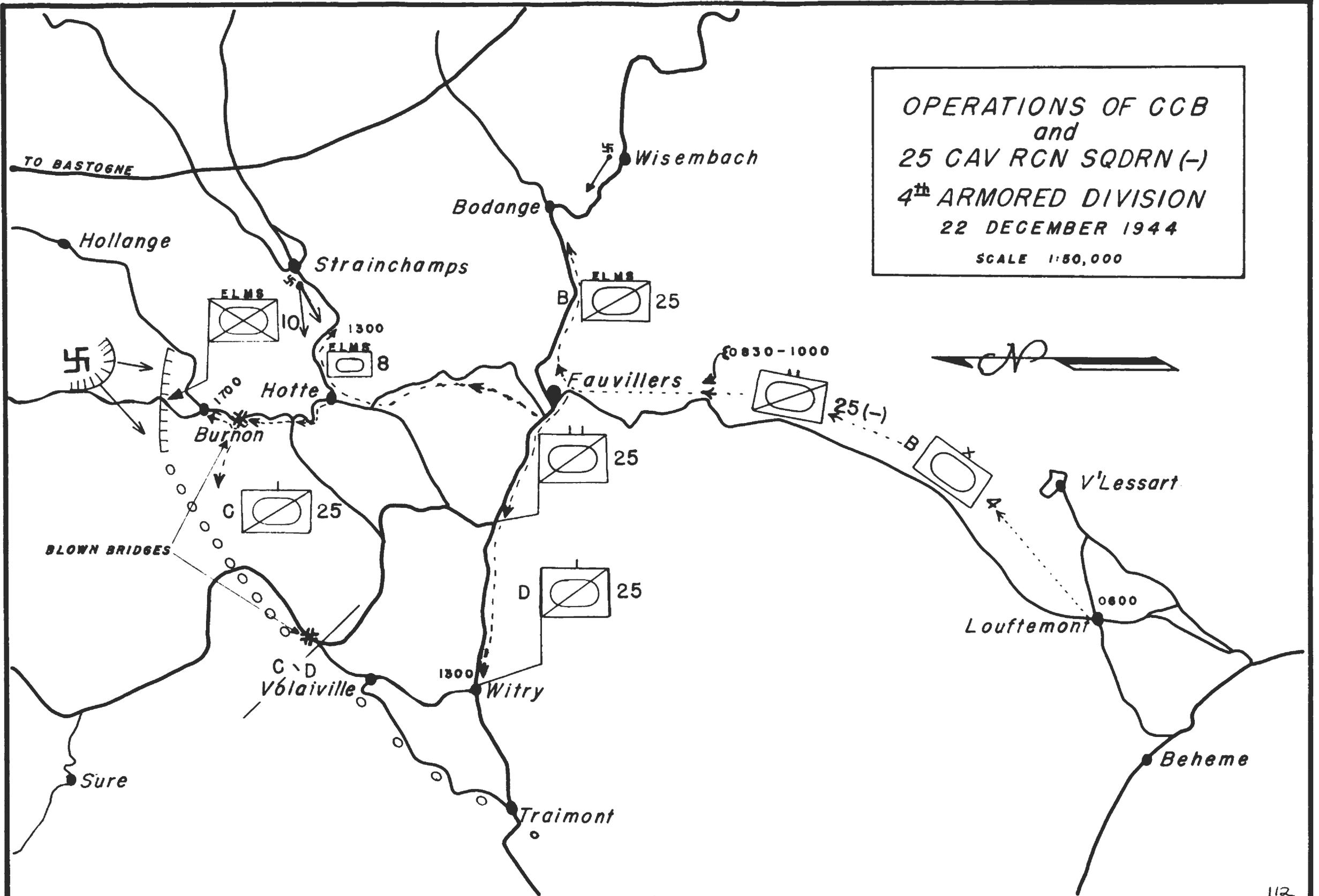
4th Armored Division

Scale  
1:16,667

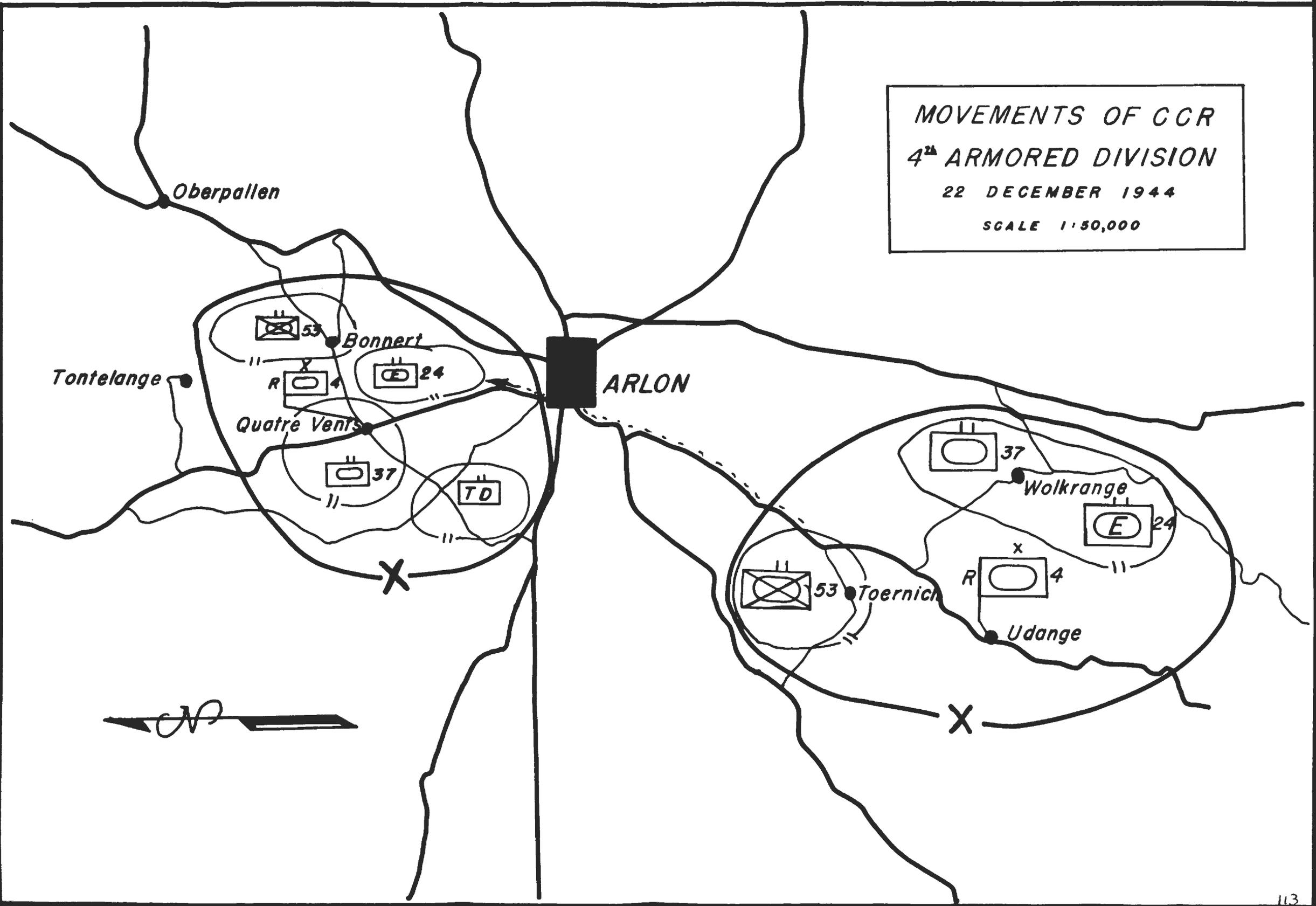


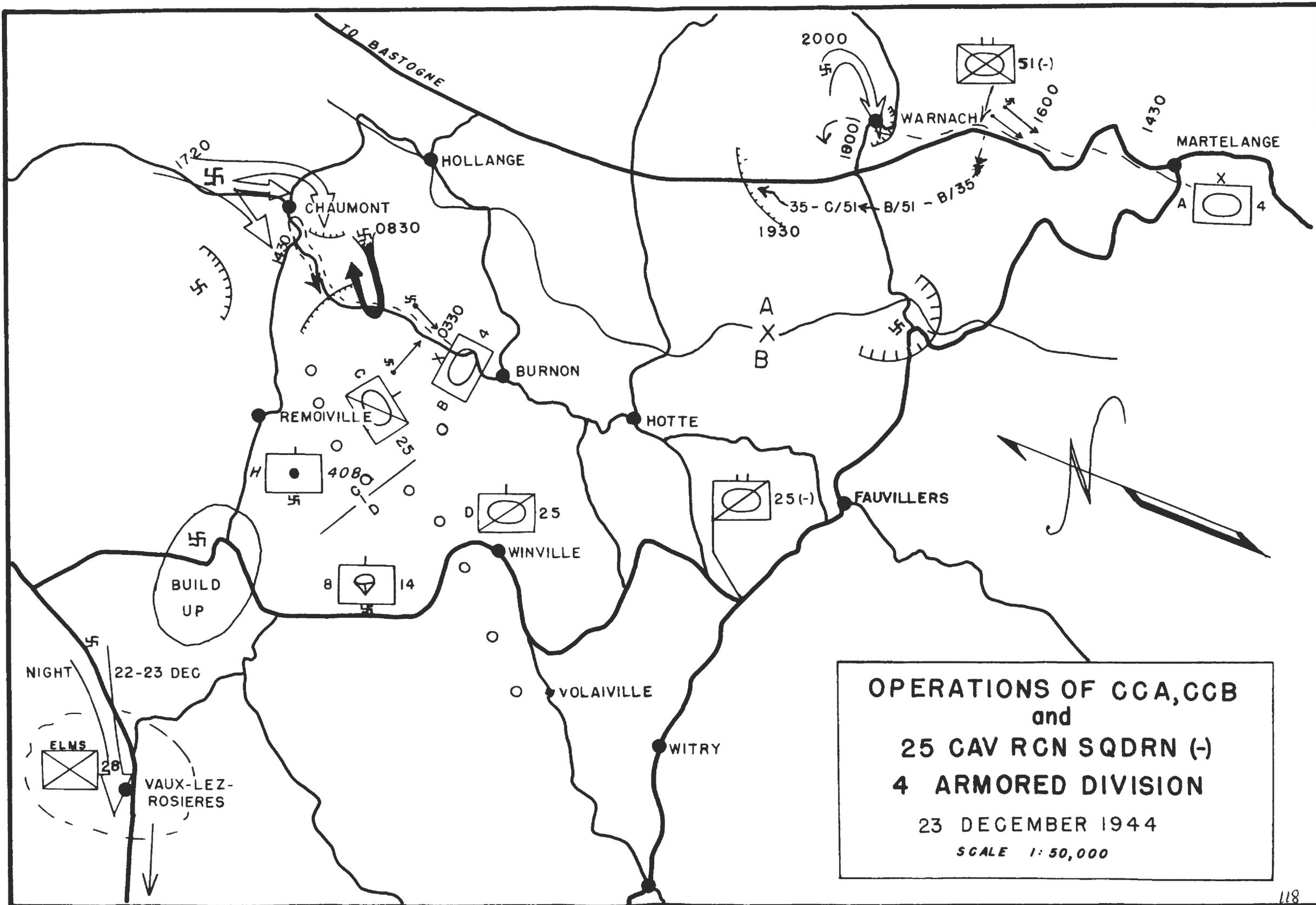
OPERATIONS OF GCB  
and  
25 CAV RCN SQDRN (-)  
4<sup>th</sup> ARMORED DIVISION  
22 DECEMBER 1944

SCALE 1:50,000

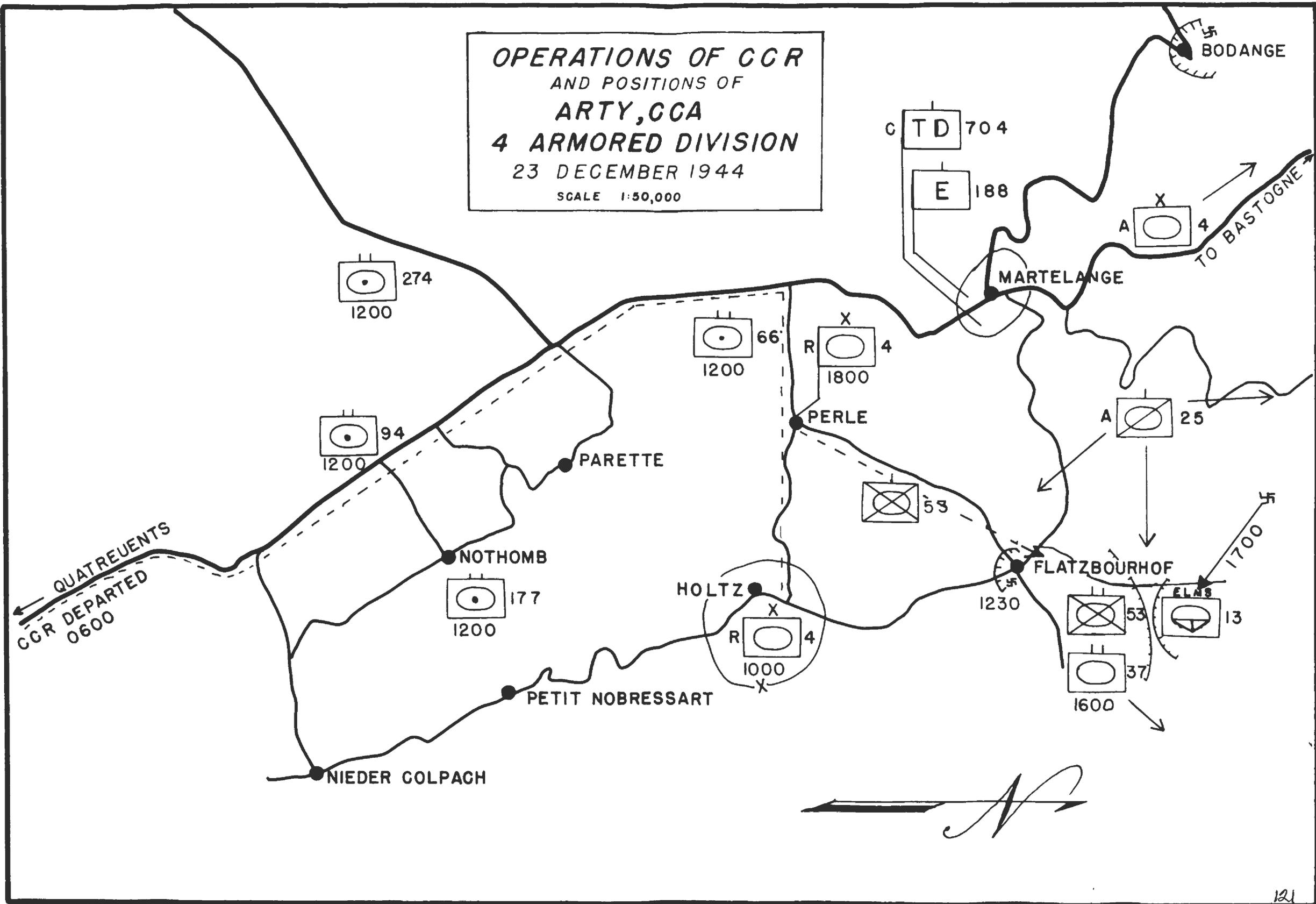


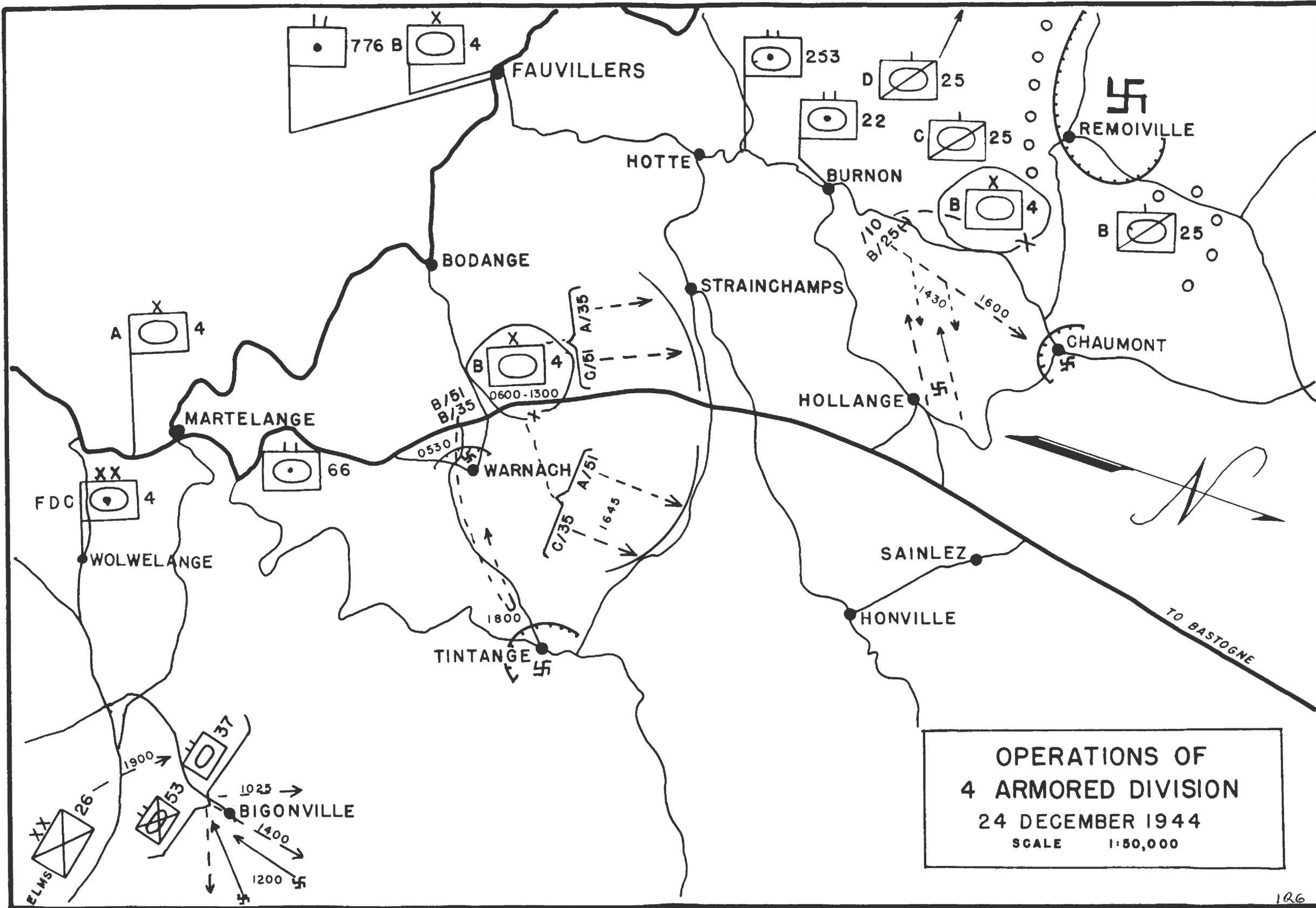
MOVEMENTS OF CCR  
 4<sup>th</sup> ARMORED DIVISION  
 22 DECEMBER 1944  
 SCALE 1:50,000



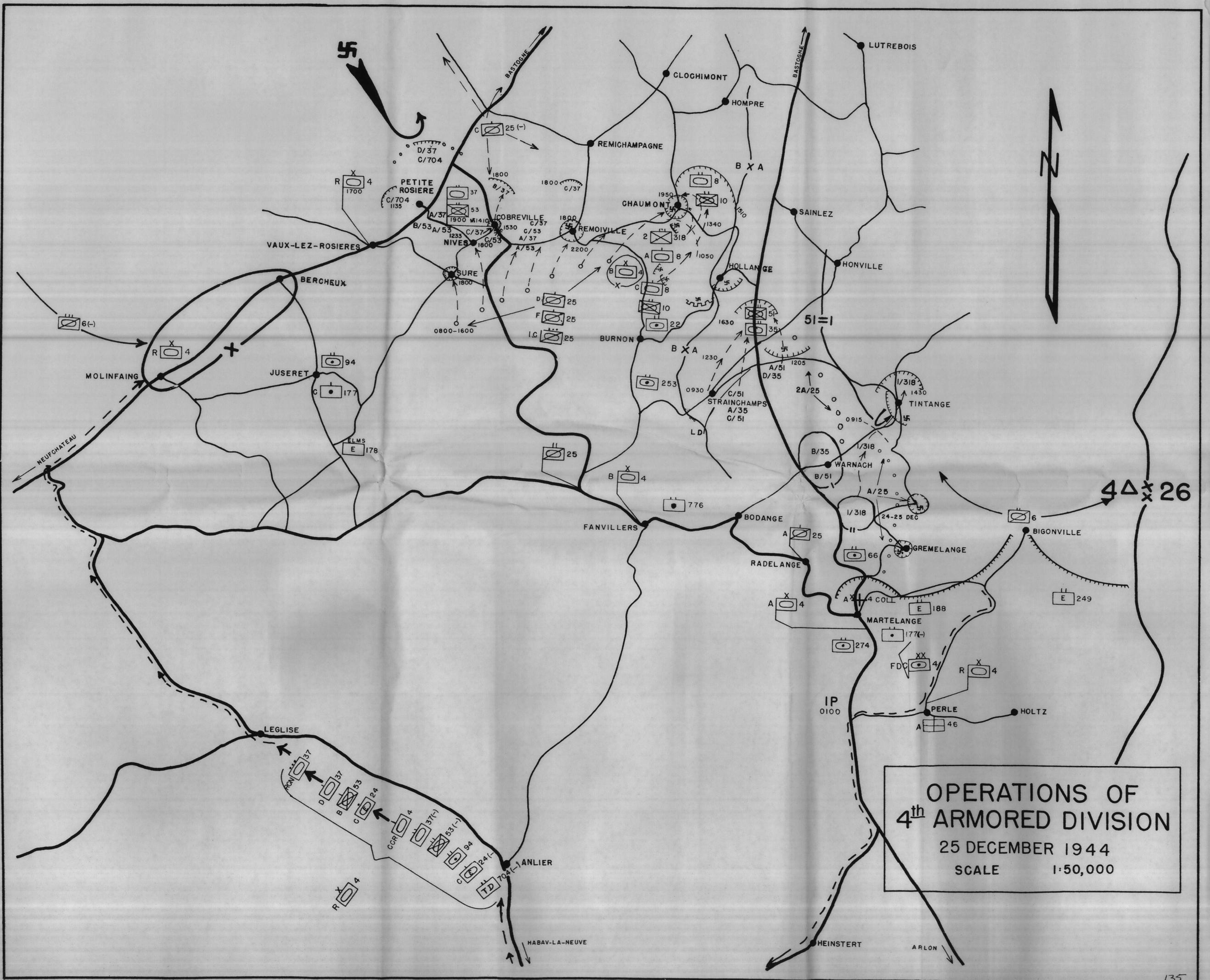


**OPERATIONS OF CCR  
AND POSITIONS OF  
ARTY, CCA  
4 ARMORED DIVISION  
23 DECEMBER 1944  
SCALE 1:50,000**





**OPERATIONS OF  
 4 ARMORED DIVISION  
 24 DECEMBER 1944  
 SCALE 1:50,000**

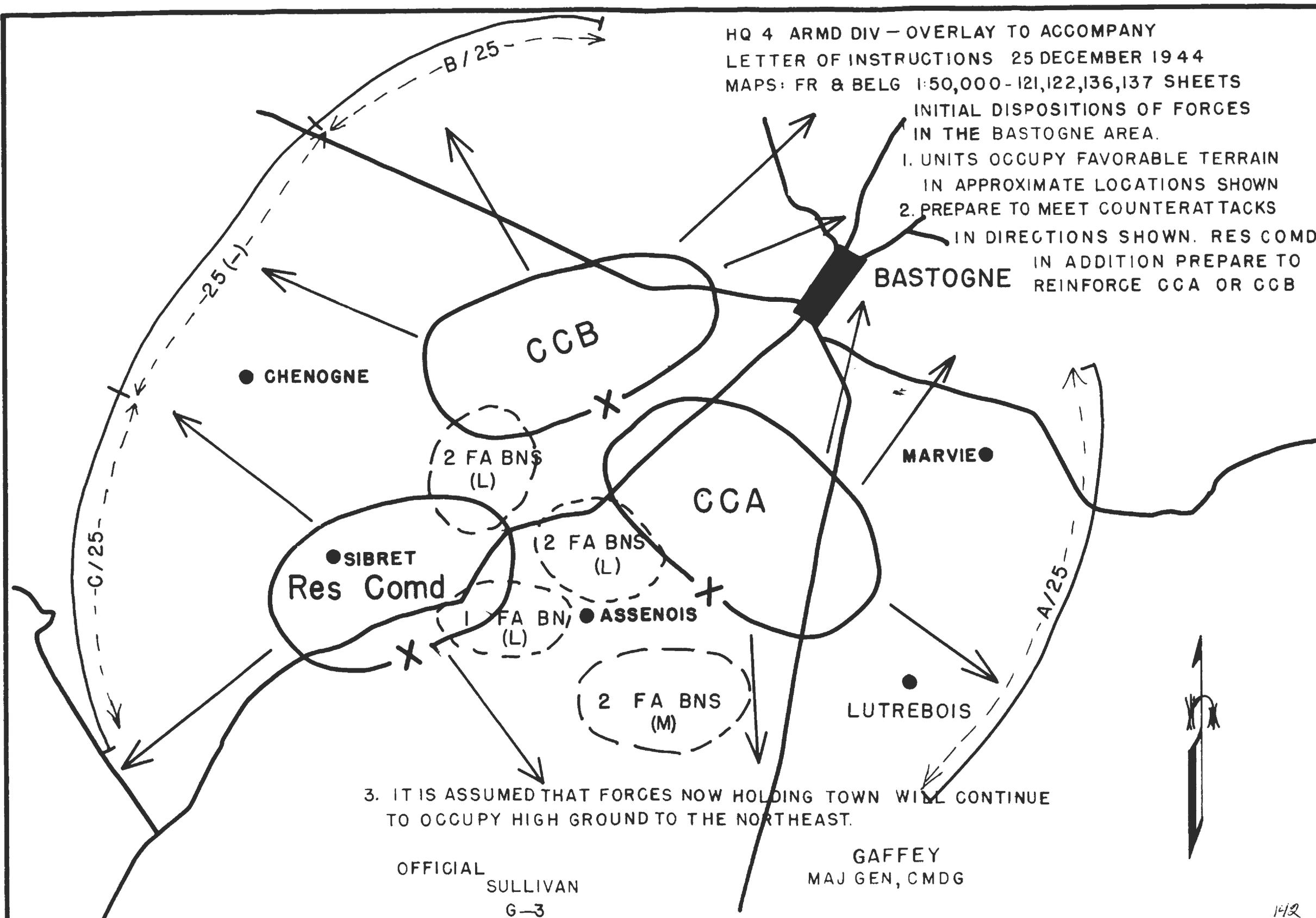


**OPERATIONS OF**  
**4<sup>th</sup> ARMORED DIVISION**  
 25 DECEMBER 1944  
 SCALE 1:50,000

HQ 4 ARMD DIV - OVERLAY TO ACCOMPANY  
 LETTER OF INSTRUCTIONS 25 DECEMBER 1944  
 MAPS: FR & BELG 1:50,000 - 121,122,136,137 SHEETS

INITIAL DISPOSITIONS OF FORCES  
 IN THE BASTOGNE AREA.

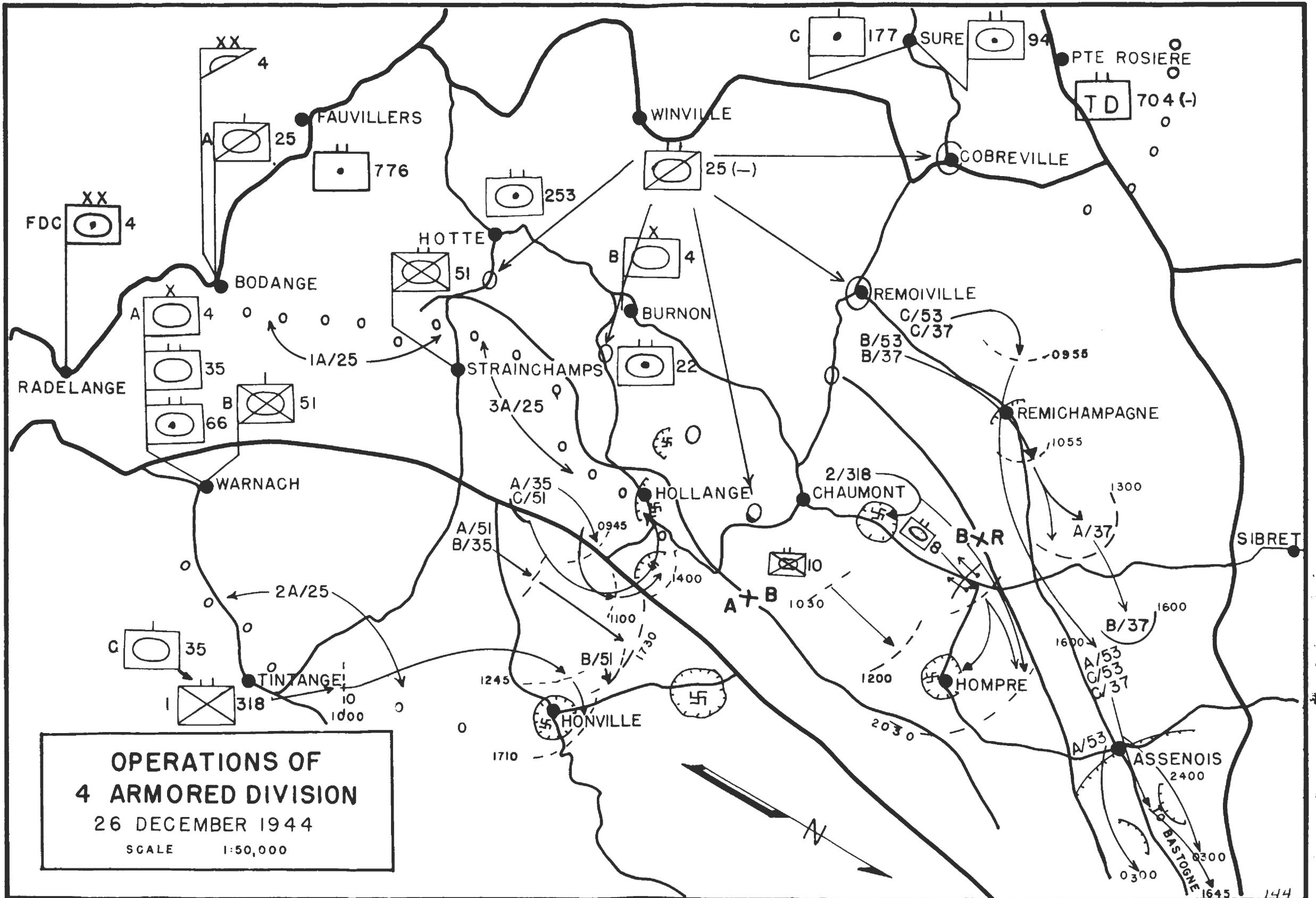
1. UNITS OCCUPY FAVORABLE TERRAIN  
 IN APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS SHOWN
2. PREPARE TO MEET COUNTERATTACKS  
 IN DIRECTIONS SHOWN. RES COMD  
 IN ADDITION PREPARE TO  
 REINFORCE CCA OR CCB



3. IT IS ASSUMED THAT FORCES NOW HOLDING TOWN WILL CONTINUE  
 TO OCCUPY HIGH GROUND TO THE NORTHEAST.

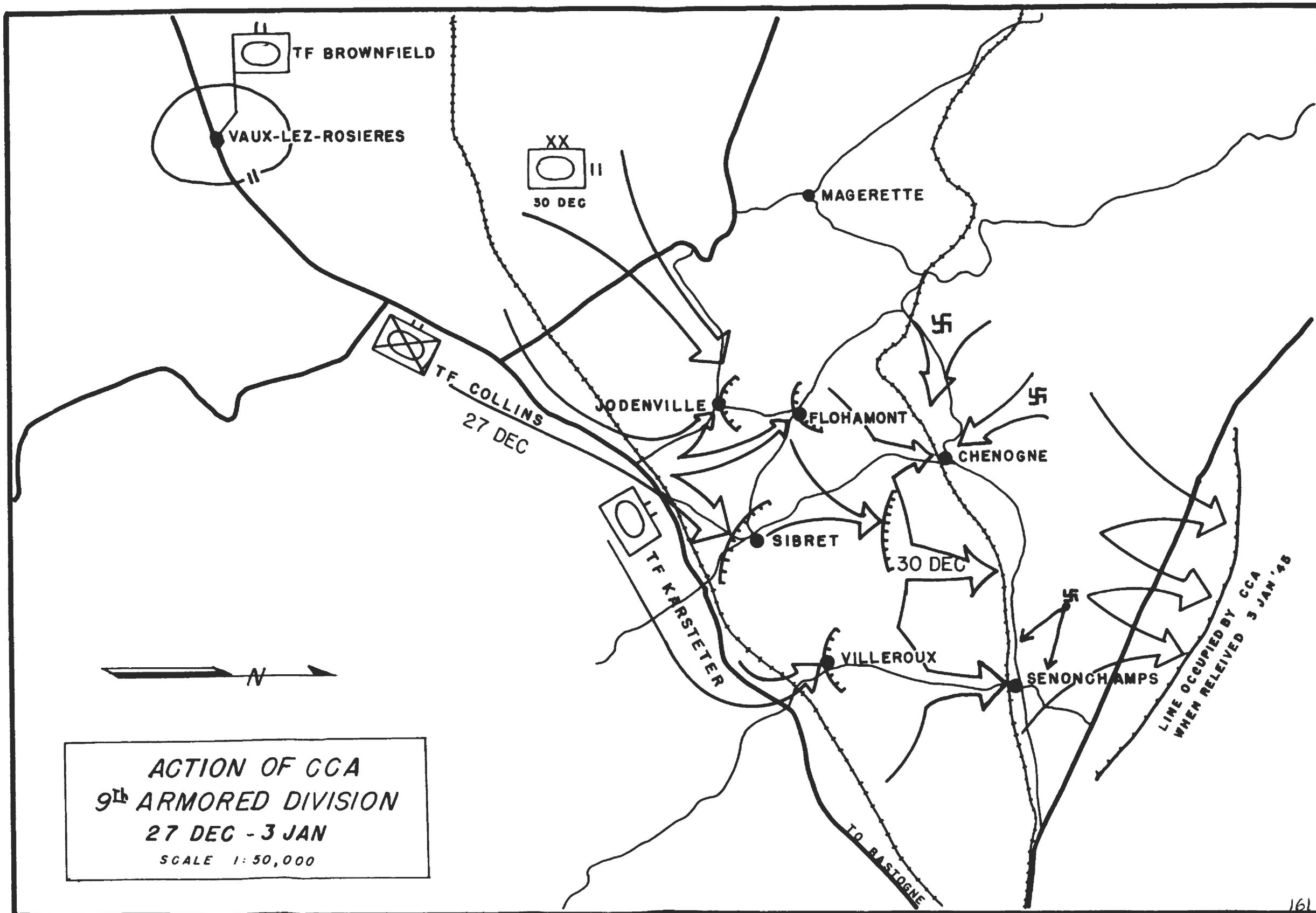
OFFICIAL  
 SULLIVAN  
 G-3

GAFFEY  
 MAJ GEN, CMDG



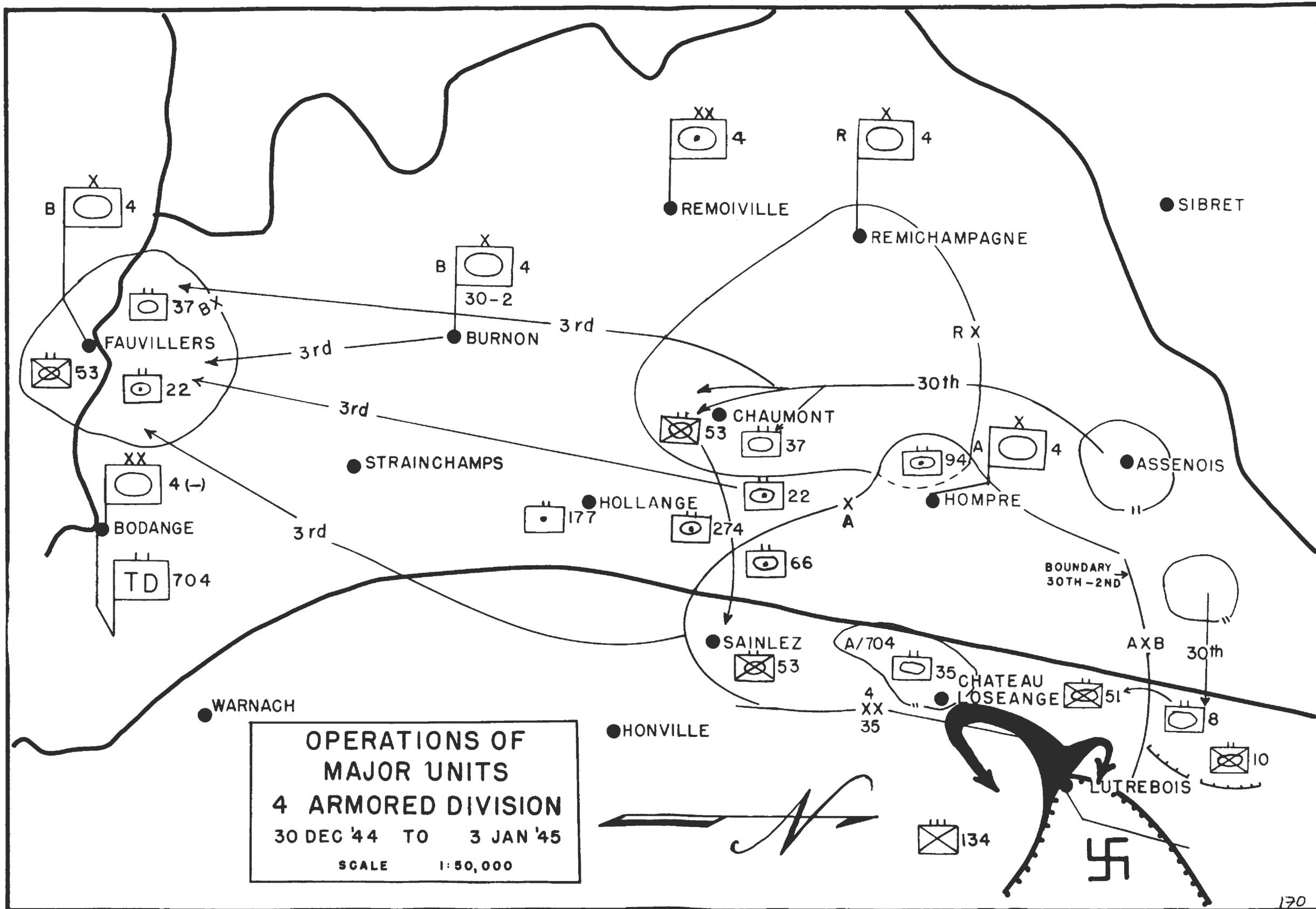
**OPERATIONS OF  
4 ARMORED DIVISION**  
26 DECEMBER 1944  
SCALE 1:50,000





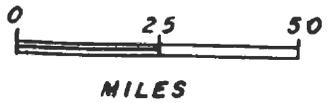
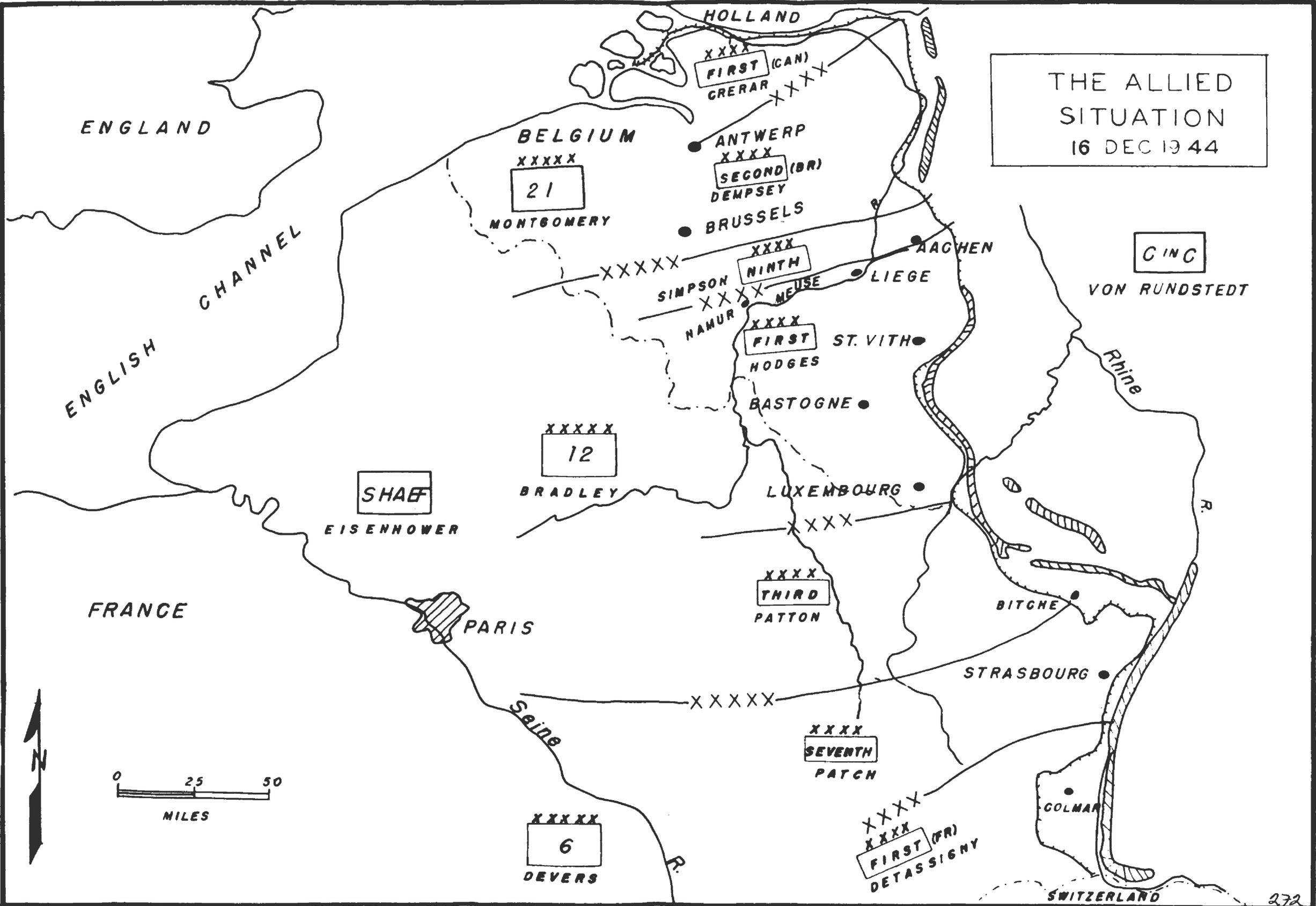
**ACTION OF CCA**  
**9th ARMORED DIVISION**  
**27 DEC - 3 JAN**  
 SCALE 1:50,000

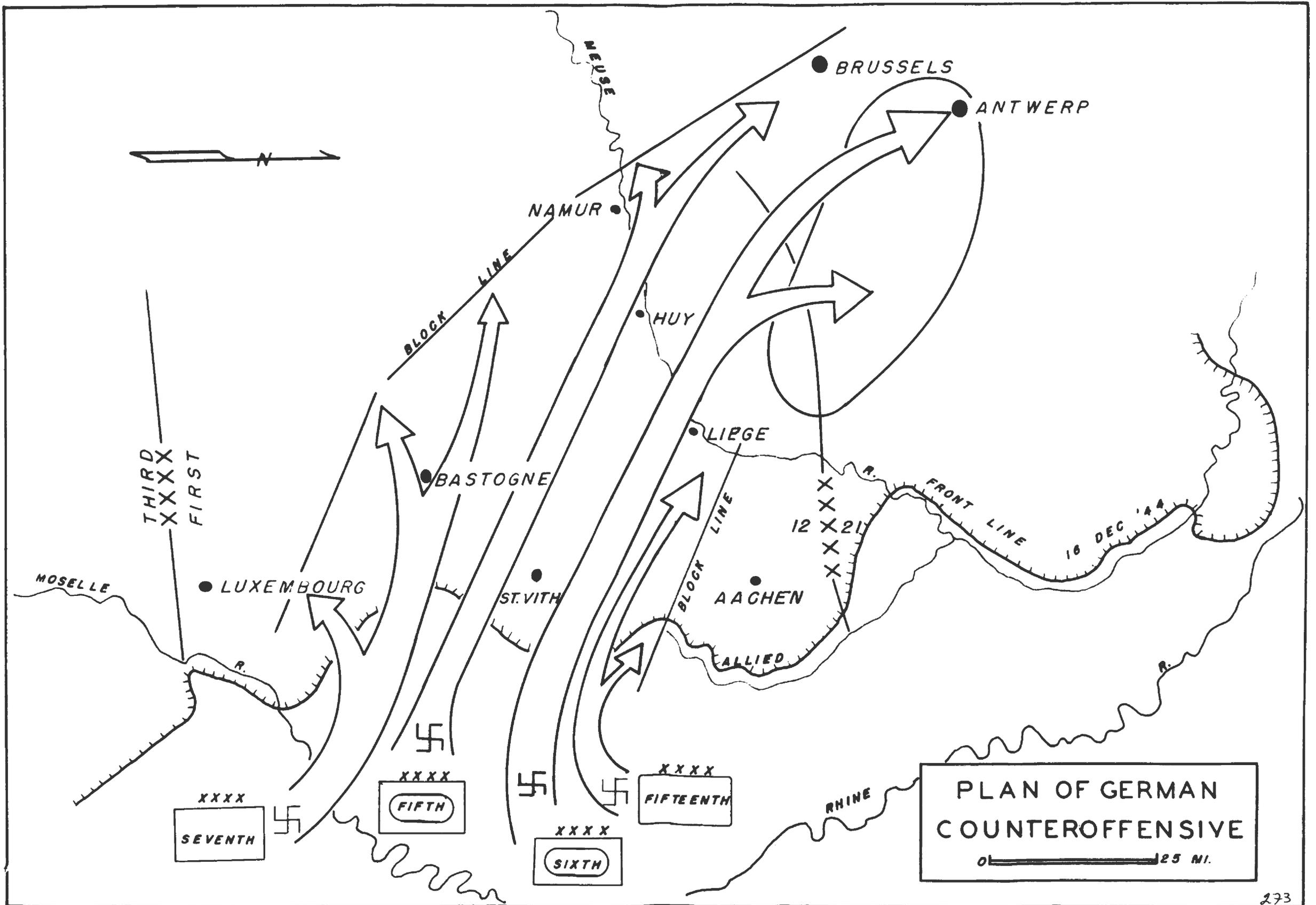




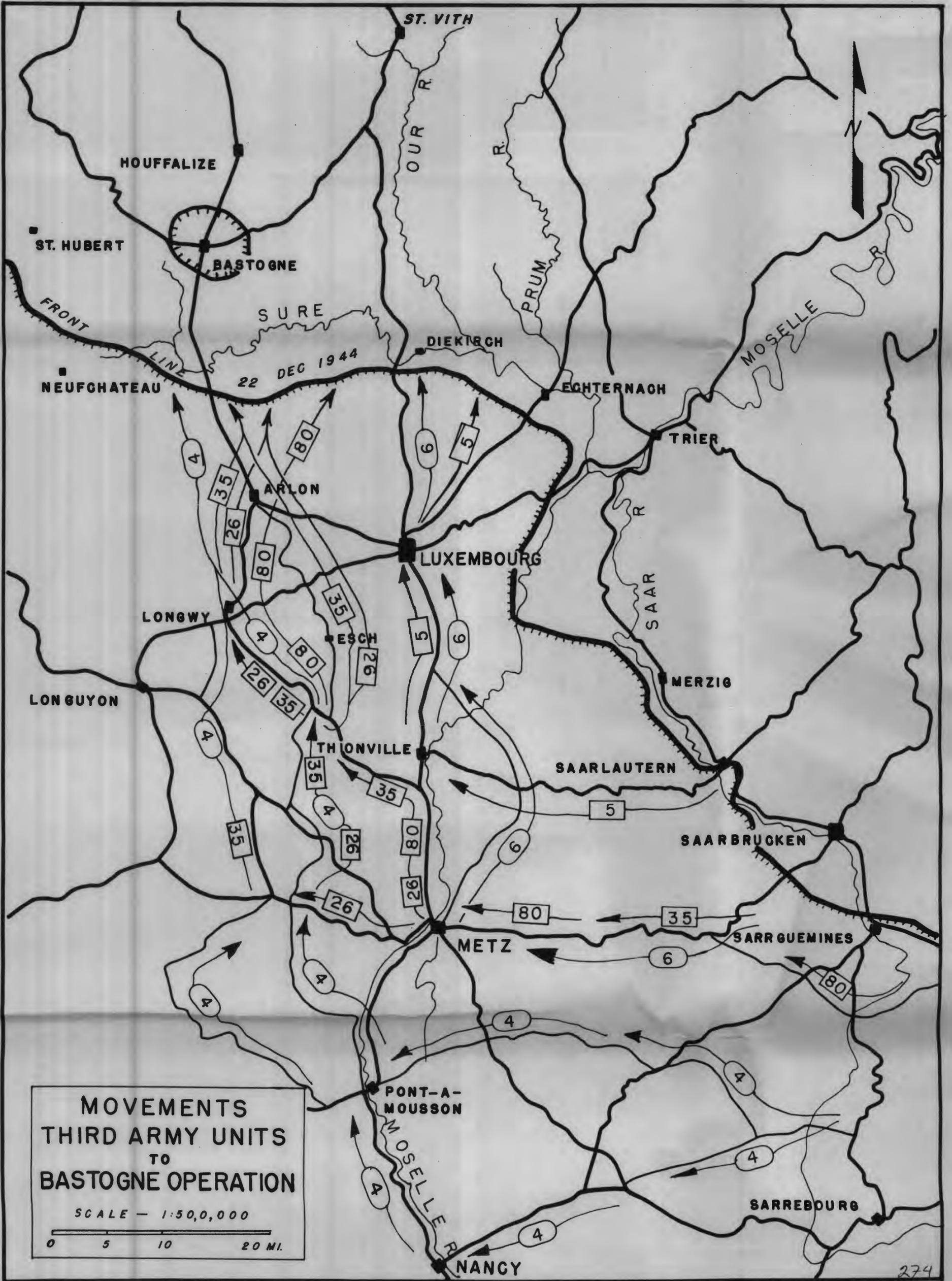
OPERATIONS OF  
 MAJOR UNITS  
 4 ARMORED DIVISION  
 30 DEC '44 TO 3 JAN '45  
 SCALE 1:50,000

THE ALLIED SITUATION  
16 DEC 1944





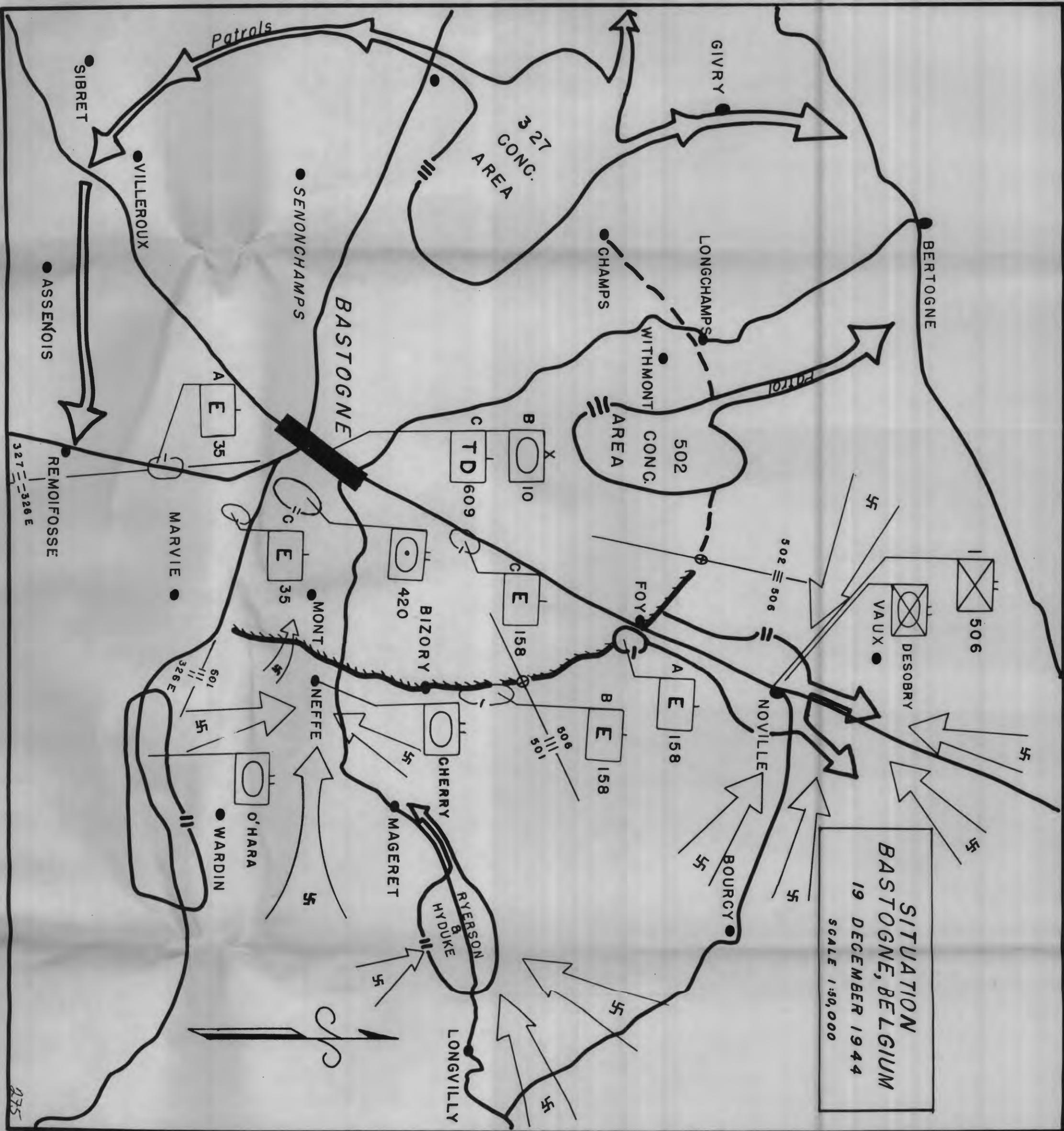
PLAN OF GERMAN  
COUNTEROFFENSIVE  
0 ————— 125 MI.

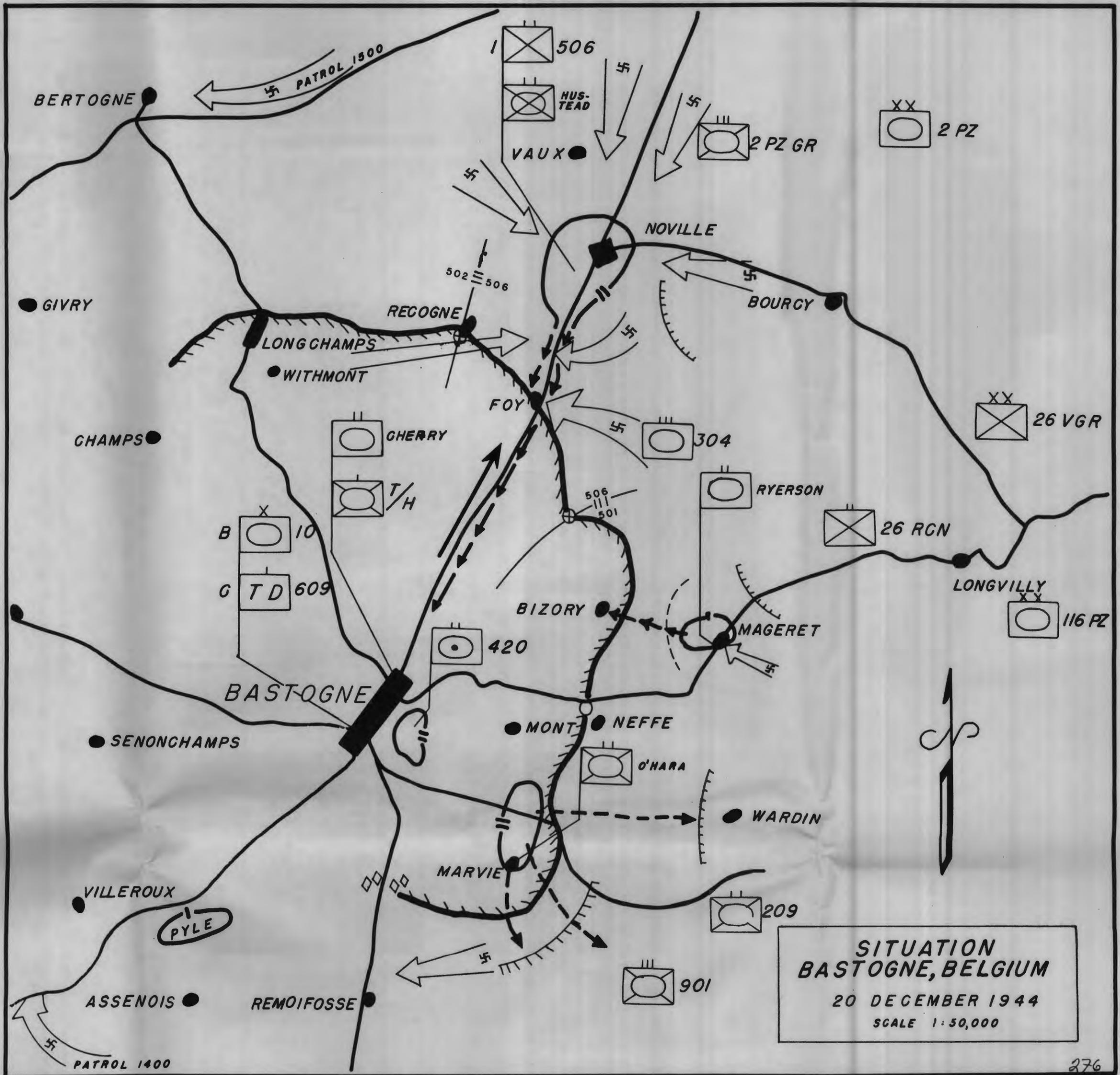


**MOVEMENTS  
THIRD ARMY UNITS  
TO  
BASTOGNE OPERATION**

SCALE - 1:500,000

0 5 10 20 MI.





**SITUATION  
BASTOGNE, BELGIUM**  
20 DECEMBER 1944  
SCALE 1:50,000

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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NEUNKIRCHEN - - - - - Sheet U. 1.

France and Belgium, 1:50,000

ST. HUBERT - - - - - Sheet 106  
HOUFFALIZE - - - - - Sheet 107  
BASTOGNE - - - - - Sheet 121  
WILTZ - - - - - Sheet 122  
TINTIGNY - - - - - Sheet 136  
ARLON - - - - - Sheet 137  
VIRTON - - - - - Sheet 151  
LUXEMBOURG - - - - - Sheet 152

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operation.

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4th Armored Division

CCA, 4th Armored Division

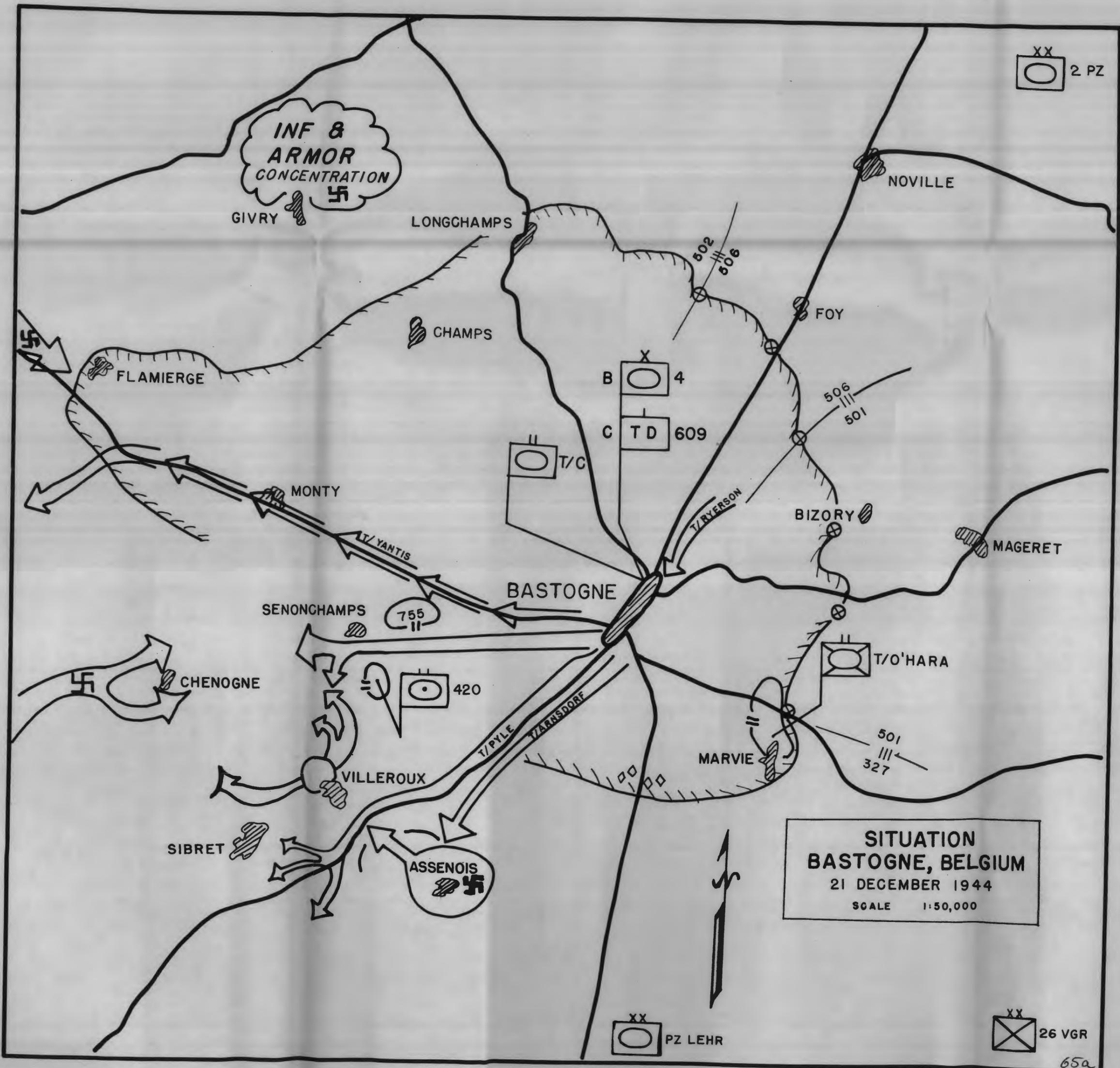
CCB, 4th Armored Division

Reserve Command, 4th Armored Division

8th Tank Battalion

35th Tank Battalion  
51st Armored Infantry Battalion  
53d Armored Infantry Battalion  
25th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron  
704th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
10th Armored Division  
CCB, 10th Armored Division  
2d Tank Battalion  
3d Tank Battalion  
52d Armored Infantry Battalion  
73d Armored Field Artillery Battalion  
420th Armored Field Artillery Battalion  
55th Armored Engineer Battalion  
90th Mechanized Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron  
9th Armored Division  
CCA, 9th Armored Division  
19th Tank Battalion  
60th Armored Infantry Battalion  
Reserve Command, 9th Armored Division  
9th Armored Engineer Battalion  
811th Tank Destroyer Battalion





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ARMOR  
CONCENTRATION

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NOVILLE

GIVRY

LONGCHAMPS

502  
506

FOY

CHAMPS

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FLAMIERGE

C T D 609

506  
501

T/C

MONTY

BIZORY

MAGERET

T/YANTIS

BASTOGNE

SENONCHAMPS

755  
II

T/O'HARA

CHENOEGNE

420

501  
327

VILLEROUX

T/PYLE

T/WANSDORF

MARVIE

SIBRET

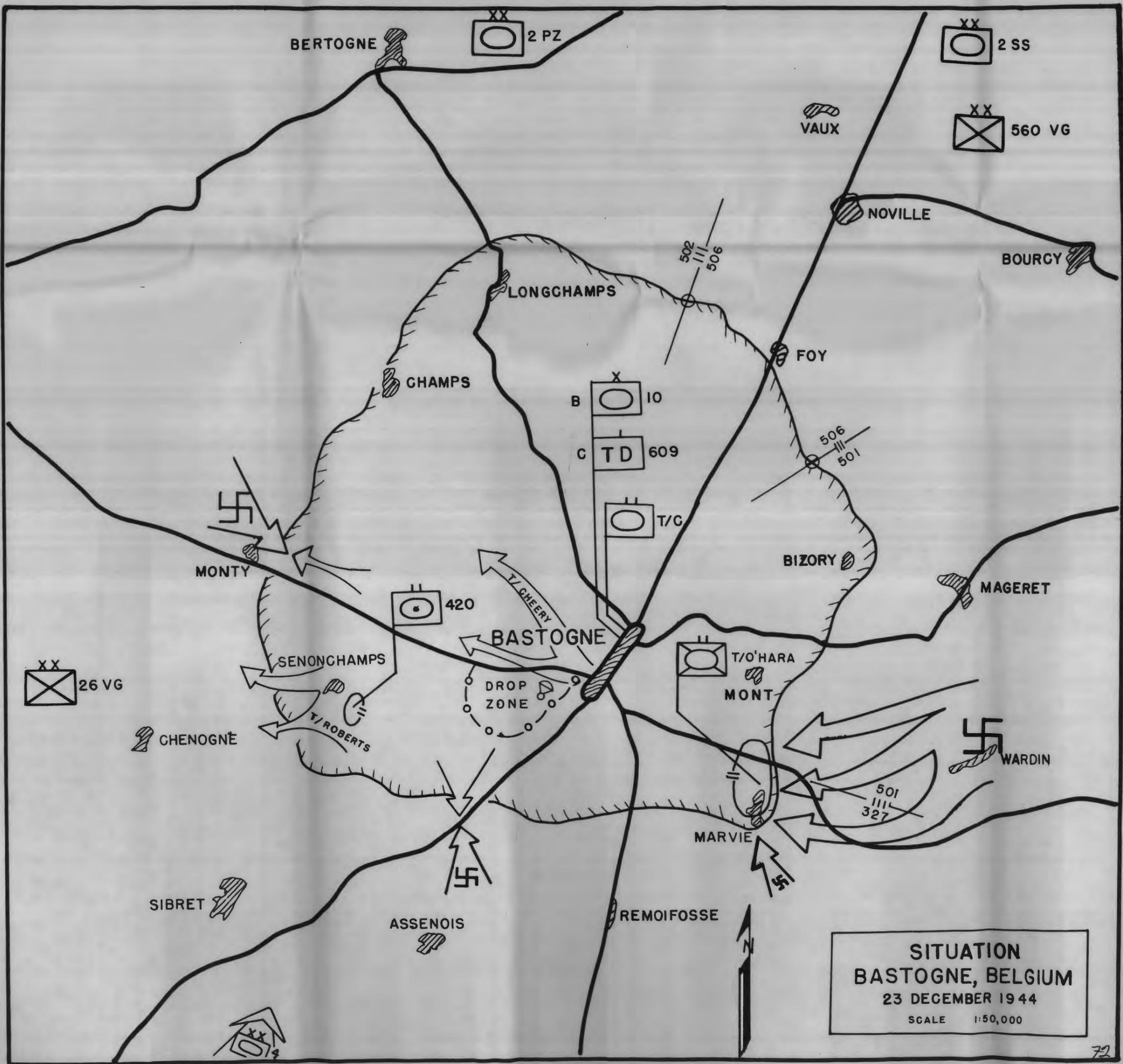
ASSENOIS

SITUATION  
BASTOGNE, BELGIUM  
21 DECEMBER 1944  
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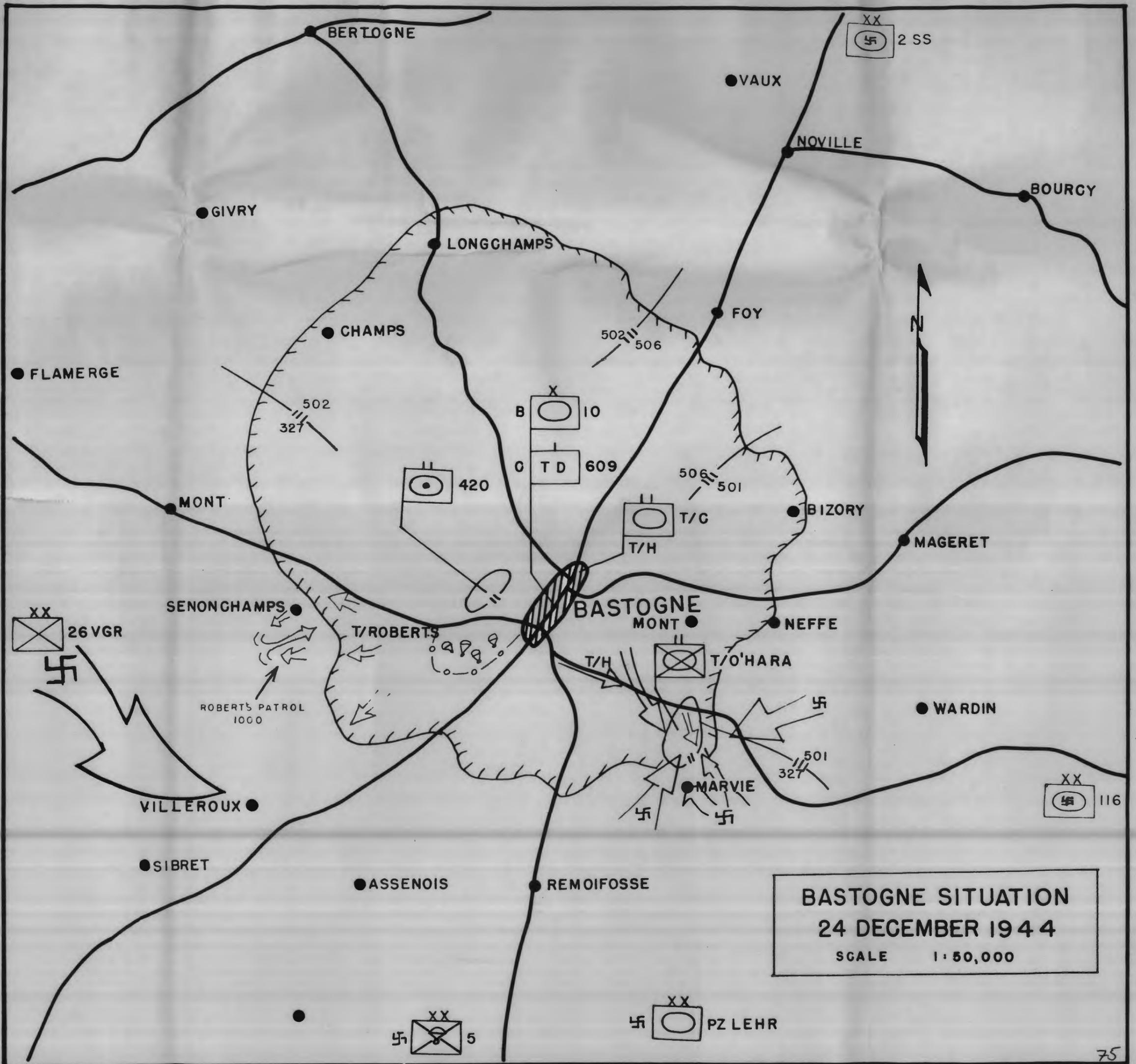
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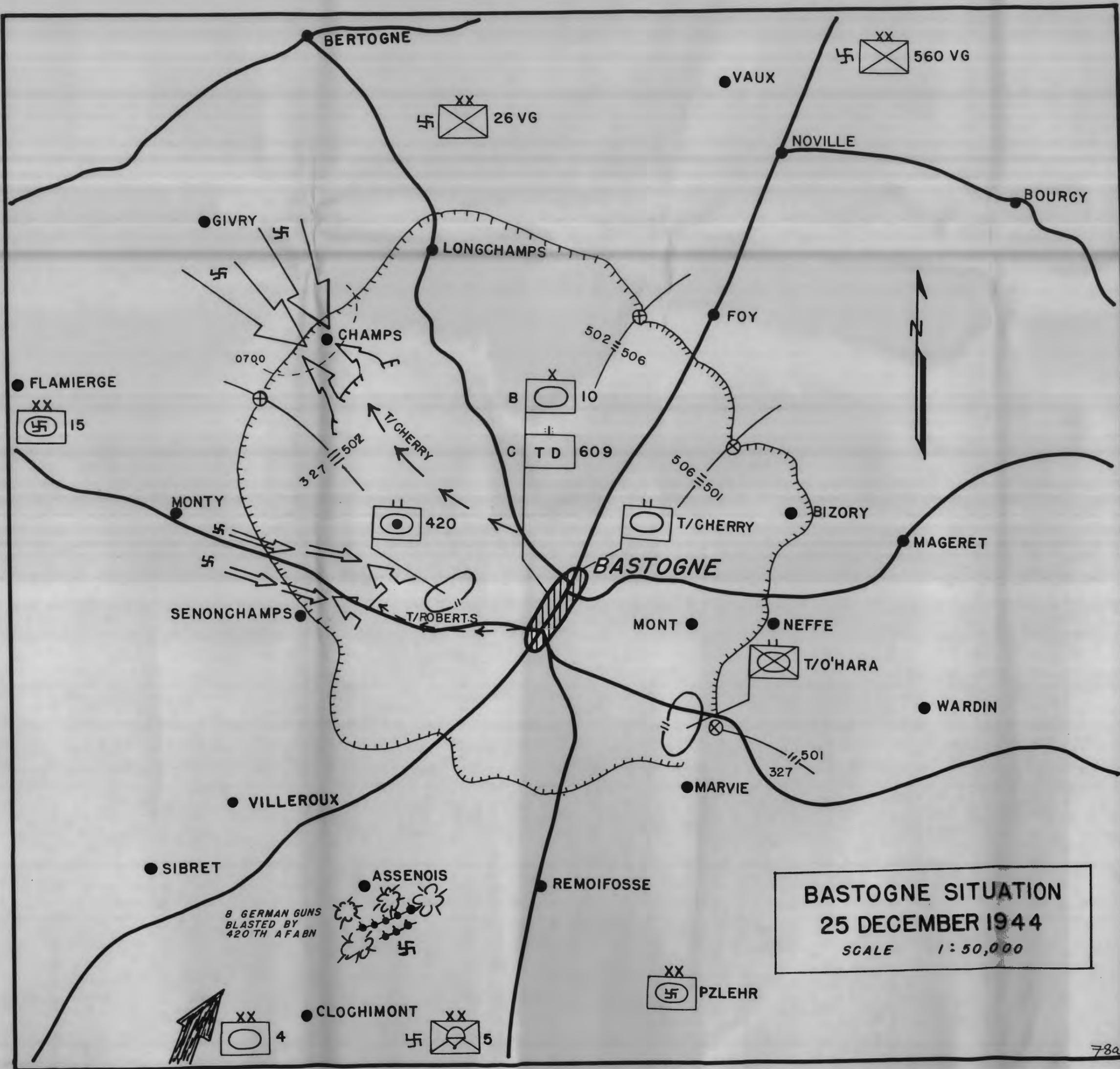
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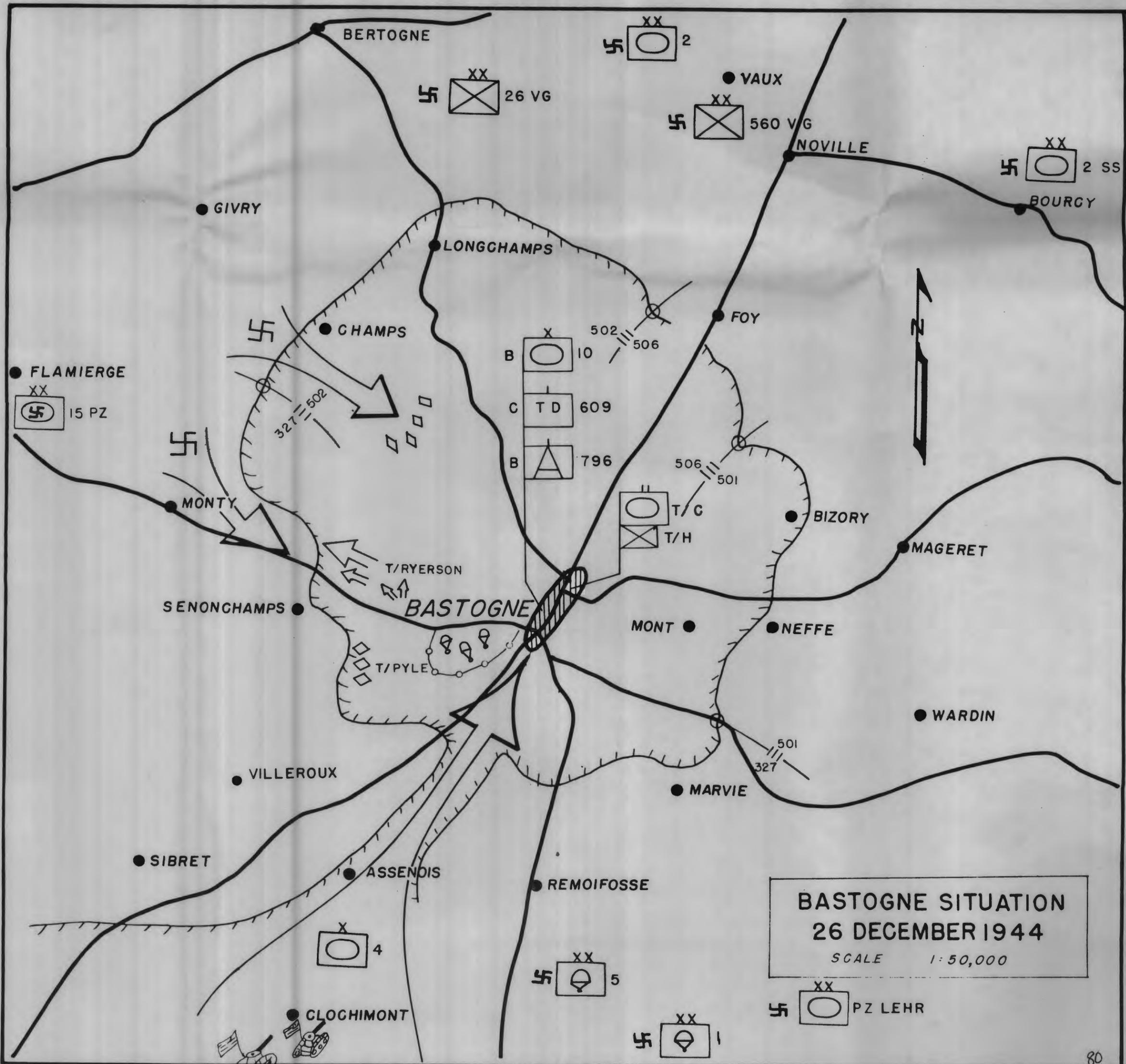
**SITUATION**  
**BASTOGNE, BELGIUM**  
 23 DECEMBER 1944  
 SCALE 1:50,000



**BASTOGNE SITUATION**  
**24 DECEMBER 1944**  
 SCALE 1:50,000



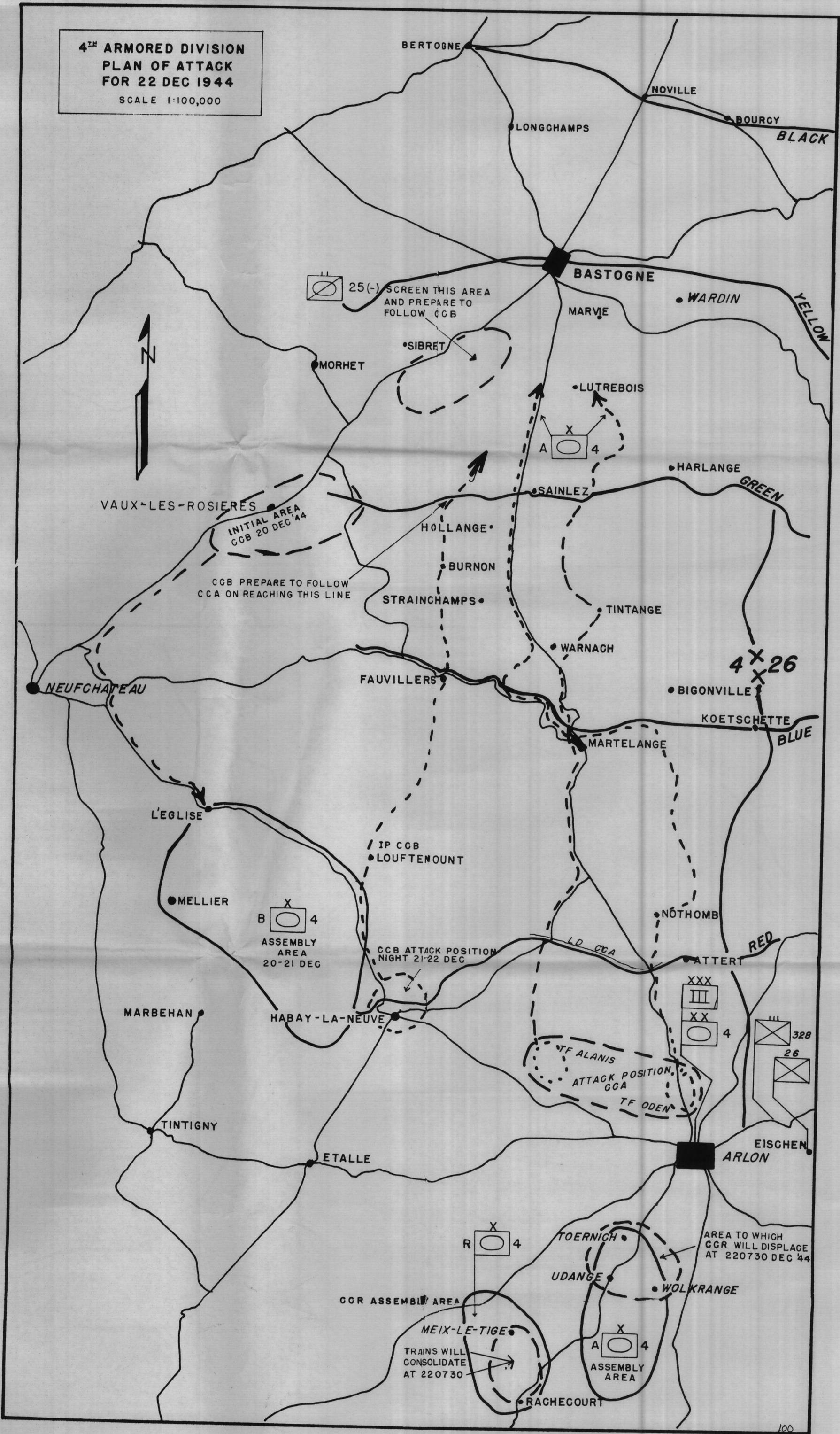
**BASTOGNE SITUATION**  
**25 DECEMBER 1944**  
 SCALE 1:50,000



**BASTOGNE SITUATION**  
**26 DECEMBER 1944**  
 SCALE 1:50,000

**4<sup>TH</sup> ARMORED DIVISION  
PLAN OF ATTACK  
FOR 22 DEC 1944**

SCALE 1:100,000



25(-) SCREEN THIS AREA AND PREPARE TO FOLLOW CCB

INITIAL AREA CCB 20 DEC '44

CCB PREPARE TO FOLLOW CCA ON REACHING THIS LINE

B X 4  
ASSEMBLY AREA  
20-21 DEC

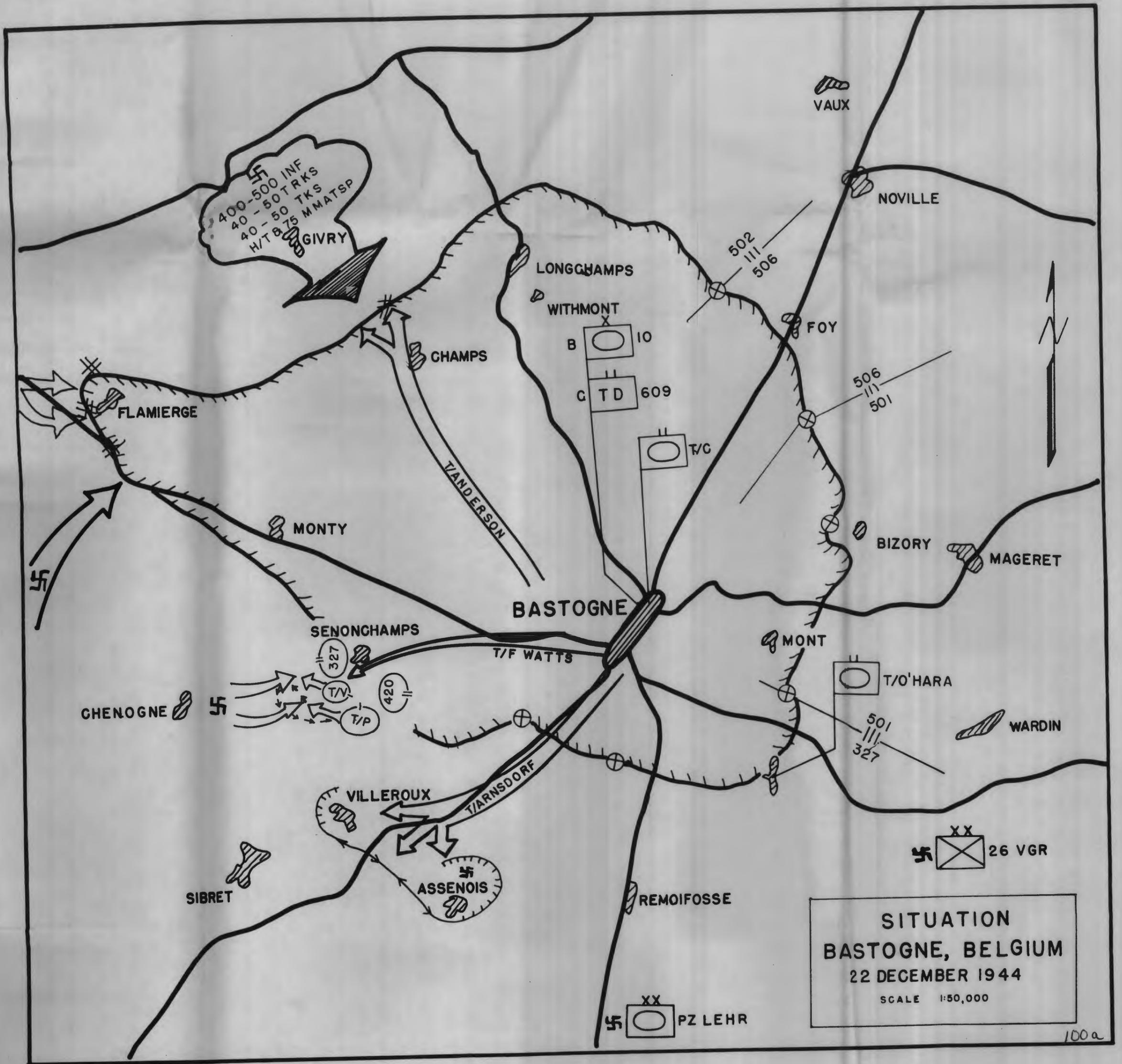
CCB ATTACK POSITION  
NIGHT 21-22 DEC

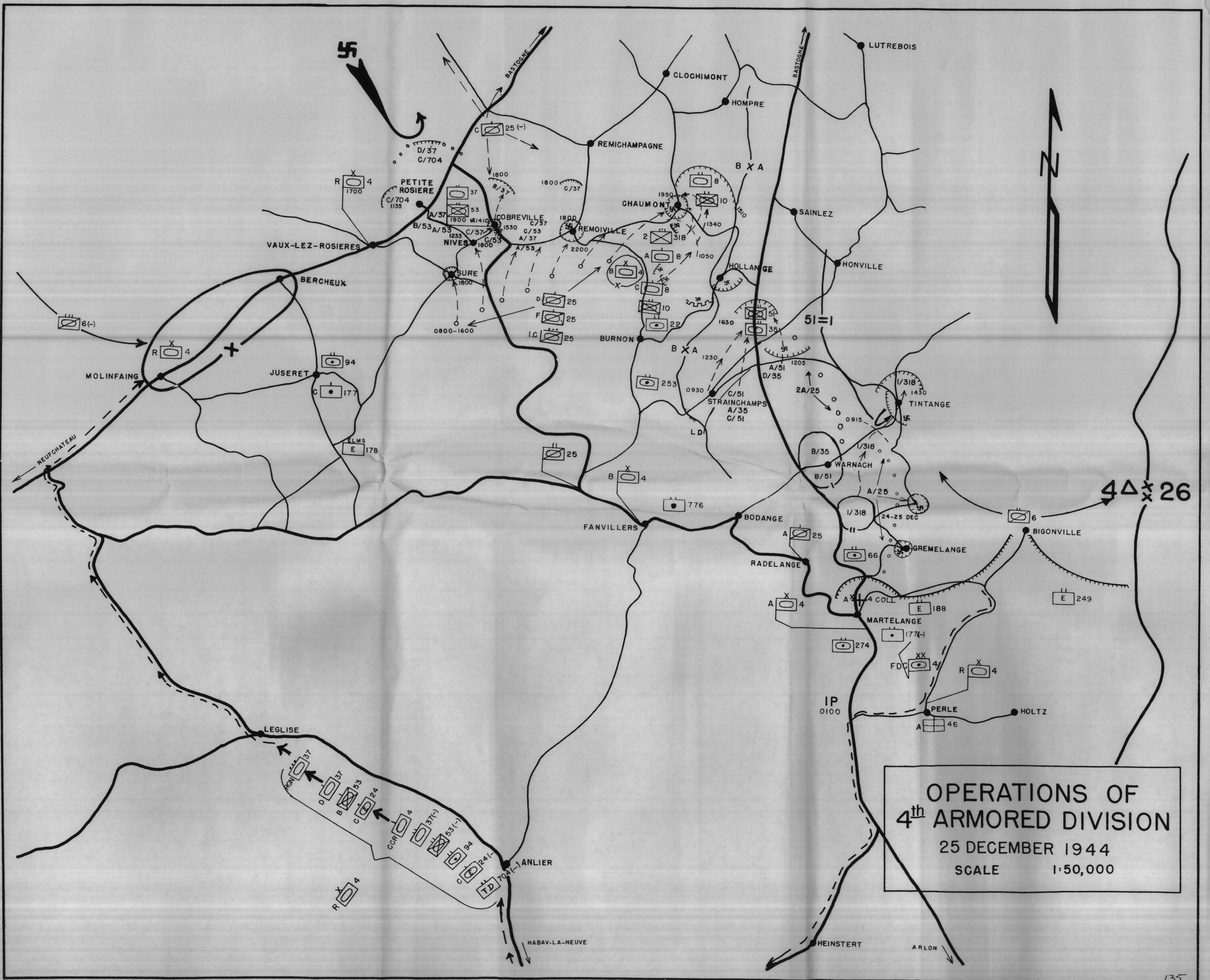
TF ALANIS  
ATTACK POSITION  
CCA  
TF ODEN

AREA TO WHICH CCR WILL DISPLACE AT 220730 DEC '44

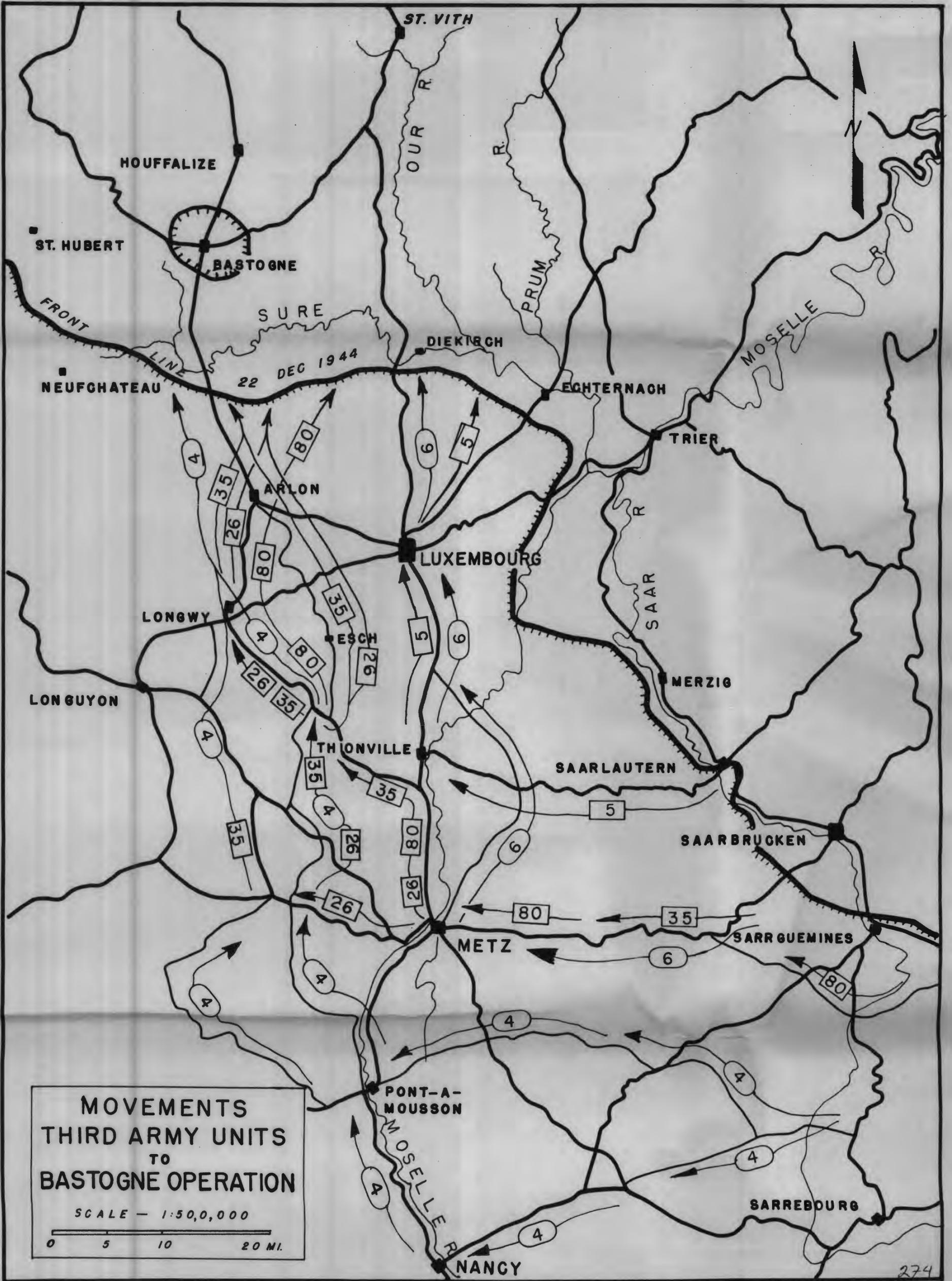
TRAINS WILL CONSOLIDATE AT 220730

A X 4  
ASSEMBLY AREA

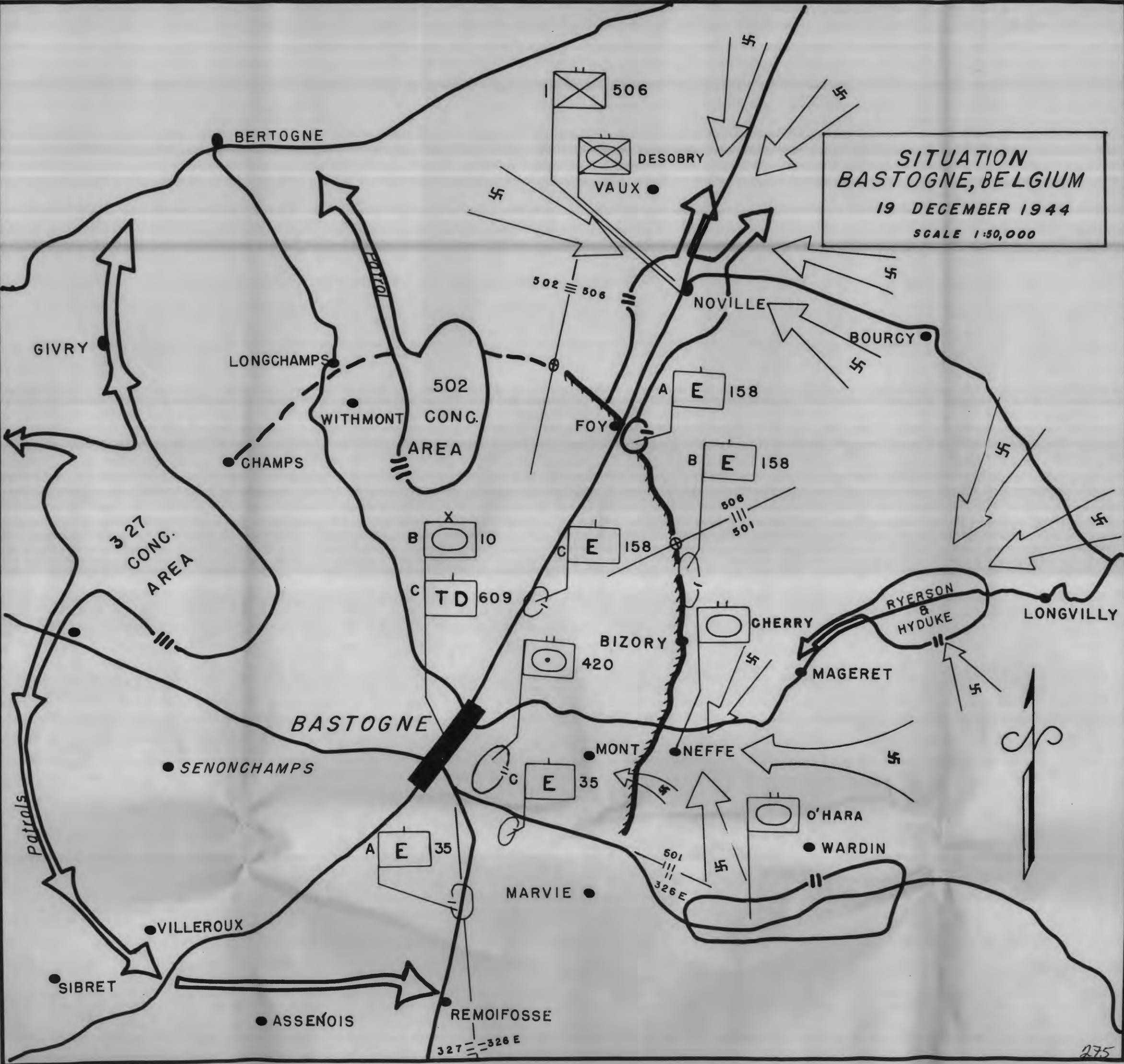


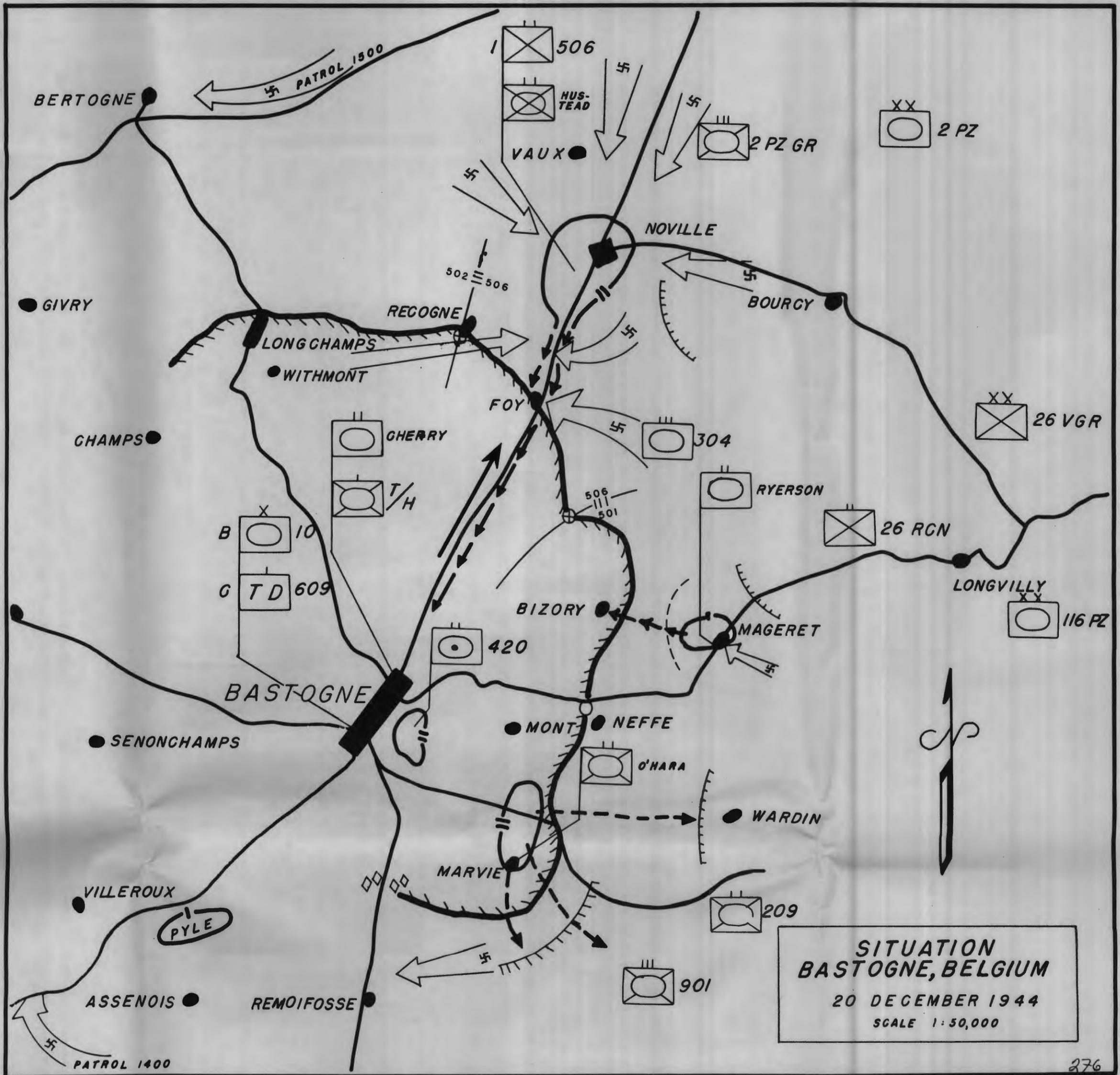


**OPERATIONS OF**  
**4<sup>th</sup> ARMORED DIVISION**  
 25 DECEMBER 1944  
 SCALE 1:50,000



**SITUATION  
BASTOGNE, BELGIUM  
19 DECEMBER 1944  
SCALE 1:50,000**





**SITUATION  
BASTOGNE, BELGIUM**  
20 DECEMBER 1944  
SCALE 1:50,000