

THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
GENERAL SECTION  
MILITARY HISTORY COMMITTEE  
FORT BENNING, GEORGIA

ADVANCED OFFICERS COURSE  
1946-1947

THE OPERATIONS OF THE FIRST U. S. ARMY AND THE  
NINTH U. S. ARMY IN THE ENCIRCLEMENT  
AND CAPTURE OF THE RUHR,  
28 MARCH - 18 APRIL  
1945

Type of operation described: Double envelopment

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\*This unpublished history, while only in draft form, is believed to be authentic and is, therefore, used as a source of information.

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the encirclement of the Ruhr from 28 March 1945 through the final and complete capture of this important area by the elements of the Ninth and First U. S. Armies of the 12th Allied Army Group on 18 April 1945.

In order to orient the reader, it will be necessary to give a short resume of the military background and events leading up to this great operation, which, according to available modern historians, constituted the largest double envelopment in history.

The Ruhr had always been a principal consideration in overall Allied planning, in that the master plan for the invasion of the European continent, Operation Overlord, called for the envelopment of the Ruhr in the final phase. (1)

The importance of the Ruhr and its inclusion in all Allied planning is understandable because this area is the greatest center of heavy industry and coal mining in all Europe. Rich and extensive coal and iron ore deposits in this area furnish the life blood for armament, steel, synthetic oil plants and chemical factories which are located conveniently nearby. The Ruhr, within its 6,000 square miles, contained the body and soul of the German materiel war effort, and it is doubtful that, without it, the Germans would have attempted the conquest of Europe. (2)

The concentration of heavy industries in a small area made the Ruhr vulnerable to attack by air from Britain. The Germans felt rather secure in spite of this vulnerability for two reasons; First, the constant

(1) A-7; (2) A-4, p. 166.

smoke screen the factories themselves produced and, Second, the haze and fog that concealed this low-lying river valley. These two factors made it impossible to distinguish landmarks even in bright moonlight and the bombing had to be accurate to destroy. For anti-aircraft protection of this area, the Germans had the largest concentration of anti-aircraft guns in Germany. In addition there was heavy fighter protection from nearby airfields. (3)

When the Second British Army, the Ninth, Third, and Seventh U. S. Armies crossed the Rhine River during the period 23 - 26 March 1945 and, with the First U. S. Army established in its Remagen bridgehead, the handwriting was definitely on the wall for the German Wehrmacht in the west. (4)

By 28 March 1945 strong elements of the First U. S. Army were poised in the vicinity of Marburg some seventy-five miles east and north of Remagen while the Ninth U. S. Army, under 21st Army Group control until 4 April 1945, was making progress to the east towards Paderborn. Thus the stage was set for elements of the First U. S. Army to turn north from Marburg and seal off the Ruhr pocket by effecting a junction with Ninth U. S. Army forces at Paderborn. (5) (Map 1)

#### GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

The Ruhr consisted of the thickly populated area to the north centered around its principal industrial cities of Duisburg, Essen and Dortmund. The terrain was generally open and rolling, however several canals provided excellent defense points. To the south and southeast lay the heavily wooded areas marked with definite hills and valleys and dotted by small streams. This latter area would have made excellent terrain for deliberate defensive works and historians agree that, had the Germans elected to place permanent defensive installations in this zone, our progress would have been very slow and costly. (6)

(3) A-4, p. 167-168; (4) A-1, p. 1113; (5) A-7,; (6) A-3, p. 137; A-6, p. 1.

### ENEMY ORDER OF BATTLE

The Germans had the greater portion of two Army Groups, consisting of some twenty-one Divisions in the Ruhr for the defense of that area. Because of the fluid situation, exact identification was not possible. In addition one hundred thousand anti-aircraft troops were on duty. It was apparent that Hitler meant to stay and fight for his prize, the Ruhr. (7)

#### THE ENCIRCLEMENT OF THE RUHR, 28 MARCH-1 APRIL 1945 (Map 1)

The encircling element of the First U. S. Army was the VII Corps with the XIX Corps of the Ninth U. S. Army performing a like mission for that army.

The encirclement plan called for a junction of the VII Corps and XIX Corps in the Paderborn-Lippstadt area. The VII Corps was to attack north from the vicinity of Marburg, while the XIX Corps was to attack east through Hamm and thence south and east to Paderborn.

The VII Corps consisted of the 3d Armored, 104th Infantry, 1st Infantry, 8th Infantry, and 78th Infantry Divisions and the 4th Cavalry Group. (8)

The XIX Corps was composed of the 30th Infantry, 83d Infantry, and 95th Infantry Divisions and the 2nd Armored and 8th Armored Divisions. (9)

The VII Corps plan used the 3d Armored Division as the spearhead and directed that unit to advance rapidly, by-passing pockets of resistance, and effect the junction with elements of XIX Corps as quickly as possible. The infantry divisions and the cavalry group were to protect the Corps flanks and wipe out enemy resistance by-passed by the 3d Armored Division. (10)

On 28 March 1945 the 3d Armored Division, with the doughboys of the 414th Infantry Regiment (104th Division) riding on the tanks, captured

(7) A-2, p.105; (8) A-6, p.1; (9) A-7; (10) A-6, p.2.

Marburg and turned northward to the Corps objective, Paderborn.

On 29 March 1945 the 3d Armored lashed forward and outran all resistance to the end that, by the close of that day, its leading elements were near Nieder Marsberg. (11)

By 30 March 1945 the going was getting tough. From a training camp in the vicinity of Paderborn, the enemy had ordered crack trainees from the SS Panzer Replacement Training Center and the SS Reconnaissance Training Regiment to oppose the 3d Armored. These well trained soldiers were equipped with small arms, bazookas, tiger tanks and a new tank destroyer mounting a 128 mm gun. This excellent equipment, coupled with their detailed knowledge of the terrain, made this trainee group a difficult and determined enemy. After the hardest kind of fighting, the 3d Armored neared the outskirts of Paderborn on this day. In this action, the 3d Armored lost its courageous commander, Major General Maurice Rose. (12)

On 31 March 1945 Paderborn, the so-called "Fort Knox of Germany", was cleared after bitter fighting with the school troops. Many of these school troops were officer candidates and they were subdued only after a stiff fight. On this day, elements of the 3d Armored turned west towards Lippstadt. (13)

In the meantime XIX Corps struck to the east on 30 March 1945 from its expanded Rhine River bridgehead. The 2d Armored Division, with the 377th Regimental Combat Team (95th Infantry Division) attached, was the spearhead. Practically no opposition was encountered and by the evening of 31 March 1945 the 2d Armored neared Lippstadt. (14)

On Easter Sunday, 1 April 1945, the 3d Armored Division established contact at Lippstadt with elements of the 2d Armored Division. (15)

Thus the trap on the Ruhr had closed, but there remained the task of capturing the encircled area and the final smashing of the enemy

(11) A-3, p. 141; (12) A-3, p. 144; (13) A-3, p. 145; (14, 15) A-7.

troops caught therein.

#### PLAN FOR REDUCTION OF THE RUHR POCKET

On 2 April 1945 representatives of the First U. S. Army and Ninth U. S. Army met at First Army Headquarters to plan and coordinate the joint attack on the Ruhr Pocket. The boundary between armies was set as the Ruhr River east to Meschede, thence north to Ruthen and northeast to Paderborn. This division gave the First Army the rugged terrain to the south, and to the Ninth Army the densely populated, heavy industrial area to the north of the Ruhr River. (16)

The reduction of the Ruhr was begun by four Corps, the XVI and XIX of the Ninth Army and the III and XVIII Airborne of the First Army. With this coordinated effort, the hammering could be renewed and continued until the Ruhr pocket was wiped out.

#### THE CAPTURE OF THE RUHR. NINTH ARMY PHASE (MAP 2)

Ninth Army's plan of attack called for a converging effort by two Corps aimed at the heart of the Ruhr. XVI Corps was to attack south to the Ruhr River from its present position north of the Rhein-Herne Canal. XIX Corps, striking from the Hamm and Lippstadt areas, was to drive southwest to the Army south boundary. At the same time, First Army forces would be driving north and northwest to effect a junction all along the Ruhr River. (17)

Pushing against the north face of the Ruhr, the three infantry divisions (35, 79th and 75th) of XVI Corps were well suited for the task that lay ahead, which was largely one for foot soldiers. The battlefield was composed of industrial, urban, suburban and rural areas containing many strong points that had to be reduced and then combed for last-ditch defenders and possible saboteurs. Ahead lay key cities with large pre-war populations such as: Essen, 668,000; Dortmund, 550,000; Duisburg,

(16, 17) A-7.

457,000; and Gelsenkirchen, 322,000. (18)

In XVI Corps zone on 1 April 1945 the 79th Division found the enemy extremely alert and sensitive to all efforts to cross the Rhein-Herne Canal and made no advance. The 35th Division fought its way east four miles and captured Recklinghausen. Along the Corps east flank, the 75th Division pushed forward nine miles. On 2 April 1945, the day was devoted to consolidating gains and cleaning up overrun areas. (19)

During the period 1 - 2 April 1945, the XIX Corps, consisting of the 8th Armored Division, the 83d and 95th Infantry Divisions, moved. The 8th Armored Division now passed through one regiment of the 83d Infantry Division and attacked towards Soest from the Lippstadt-Paderborn area, gaining four miles against determined enemy resistance. The 116th German Panzer Division, an elite German unit which had opposed the initial XVI Corps attack across the Rhine River, had disengaged from contact near Recklinghausen and moved east to spearhead an attempt to break out of the pocket. It was on 2 April 1945 that the 8th Armored first met the 116th Panzer and from this time on the two units were in contact until the 8th Armored finally drove their opponents out of the Army zone and south of the Ruhr River. During that night, the enemy attempted an abortive counterattack south of Hamm. If successful, such attacks would have a two-fold result in that they would smash open an escape route from the trap and in so doing might relieve the pressure on the German forces attempting to hold the northern and southern flanks of the pocket. (20)

On 3 April 1945 the 8th Armored continued the attack toward the key German communications center of Soest and, while reconnaissance elements maintained contact with First Army units, the division drove four miles deeper into the pocket. The enemy continued his escape efforts, probing into the eastern wall in an attempt to locate a weak point. (21)

(18, 19, 20, 21) A-7.

Favorable terrain, well suited for a stubborn defense, aided the miscellaneous German forces in limiting the XIX Corps advance. The 95th Infantry Division relieved the two remaining Regiments of the 83d Division along the Lippe River, thus releasing the entire 83d Division for employment to the east of the Ruhr pocket. This relief placed the 95th Division west of the 8th Armored Division and made possible the continuation of the attack into the pocket, in conjunction with the 8th Armored. (22)

The same day, in the XVI Corps zone, the 75th Division, attacking across the Rhein-Herne, Dortmund-Ems Canals with three Regiments, scored gains of from two to five miles. During this initial period, the German artillery fire was light, however the large concentration of heavy anti-aircraft guns in this area created a problem. The employment of these weapons in both direct and indirect fire against ground targets proved effective resistance at selected points. (23)

On 4 April 1945 Ninth Army reverted to the control of 12th Army Group, with the new boundary between First and Ninth Armies following the Ruhr River. (24)

On this day, elements of XIX Corps moved across the Lippe River and the 378th Infantry Regiment of the 95th Division ran into bitter enemy resistance at Hamm as the Germans battled to deny that key rail center to the Ninth Army. With the XIX Corps striking deeply southwest into the pocket, any possible enemy plans for organized escape to the southwest of Lippstadt were eliminated. (25)

On this day, only limited gains were made by XVI Corps due to blown bridges over the Rhein-Herne Canal.

The period 5 - 6 April 1945 found substantial advances in the XIX Corps zone by the 95th Infantry and 8th Armored Divisions converging on

(22, 23, 24, 25) A-7.

Soest from the northwest and northeast respectively. The city fell to the 95th Division on 6 April 1945 while the 8th Armored Division advanced five miles to the east. Further to the north, other elements of the 95th Division cleared two-thirds of Hamm. On the east flank of the pocket, the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment of the 17th Airborne Division, now attached to the 8th Armored Division, drove south four miles over the Mohne River in order to thicken the eastern wall of the pocket. (26)

In order to concentrate more power on the XVI Corps front, the 17th Airborne Division, less the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, was transferred from XIII Corps on 6 April 1945 and went into the line on the XVI Corps west flank as the 79th Infantry Division side-slipped to the east. (27)

On 7 April 1945, the 79th Division crossed the Rhein-Herne Canal on a four mile front and moved forward through the area between Essen and Gelsenkirchen. The 35th Division remained in position on the north bank of the Rhein-Herne Canal ready to launch an attack across that barrier the next day. On the eastern flank of the XVI Corps front, the 75th Division continued its advance and pushed into the suburbs of Dortmund. (28)

The XIX Corps, in order to unify command, formed Task Force Twaddle on 7 April 1945. This task force, commanded by Major General Harry L. Twaddle of the 95th Division, was composed of the 95th Infantry and 8th Armored Divisions, the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, the 15th Cavalry Group, and supporting troops. On this date, the 95th Division completed the clearing of Hamm while the 8th Armored Division reached the north bank of Mohne-Talsperre Lake. (29)

On 8 April 1945, Task Force Twaddle pushed west on a twenty-two mile front. Gains up to eight miles were made. (30)

Also, on 8 April 1945, the 17th Airborne Division joined the XVI

(26, 27, 28, 29, 30) A-7.

Corps attack when elements of that unit passed through the Rhein-Herne Canal bridgehead of the 79th Division and moved southwest. By the end of the day, all divisions of XVI Corps were south of the Rhein-Herne Canal. Fighting was bitter in this urban area and each separate house had to be cleared by infantry. (31)

On 9 April 1945, Task Force Twaddle was transferred from XIX Corps to the XVI Corps and thus all Ninth Army units fighting in the Ruhr valley came under one Corps command. The shortening of lines and the push of First Army's III Corps northwest made this move possible and desirable, in that the Germans were no longer deemed capable of smashing eastward out of the trap. This day found a general enemy movement to the south, but with the defense of the large urban areas remaining strong. The XVI Corps attack met varied resistance. Elements of the 79th Division pushed a deep salient into the enemy lines within two miles of the Ruhr River. Task Force Twaddle made rapid progress. The 95th Division advanced six miles along an eight mile front. Elements of the 8th Armored Division reached the junction of the Ruhr and Mohne Rivers just north of Neheim while other elements cleared Werl. Southeast of the Mohne-Talsperre Lake, opposition to the advance of the Glider troops was spotty and consisted mainly of road blocks, mines and booby traps. (32)

On 10 April 1945 Essen, site of the great Krupp armament works, was captured and cleared by the 79th Infantry and 17th Airborne Divisions without major contact with the enemy. The city had been evacuated by the German Army, but passage was difficult because of the many blown and blocked intersections and underpasses and the extensive damage wrought by long months of aerial bombardment. Also, on this day the 79th Division entered Bochum and the 35th Division captured Herne. The 75th Division was still meeting tough resistance west of Dortmund,

(31, 32) A-7.

but late in the afternoon there were indications that this city might also be evacuated. (33)

Although light to heavy opposition by fire of all types harassed the westward movement of Task Force Twaddle, the 8th Armored Division gained five miles and cleared Unna, an important communications center. The 95th Division gained up to eight miles and entered Kamen. The 194th Glider Infantry Regiment completed its mission of clearing the wooded areas between the Mohne and Ruhr Rivers. The only major objective left in the Ninth Army portion of the Ruhr pocket was Dortmund. (34)

On 11 April 1945 the 75th Division reached the western outskirts of Dortmund, and the 95th Division began attacking toward the city from the east. Little progress was made during the day. According to statements by prisoners of war, evacuation had been halted and the city was to be bitterly defended. The 17th Airborne Division, pushing south and west from Essen against crumbling resistance, reached the Ruhr River, captured a bridge intact at Mulheim, and established a small bridgehead on the south bank. Much of the Ruhr River line was now held by the XVI Corps, which was now rapidly clearing its zone. The 17th Airborne Division was closed up along the Ruhr River; from the Rhine River six miles to the east, the 79th Division held a stretch of about twelve miles of the north bank of the Ruhr River, and the 35th and 75th Divisions each held four miles. Task Force Twaddle had cleared an additional six miles of the north bank. (35)

On 12 April 1945 the enemy continued his bitter defense of Dortmund by house to house fighting. This was an effort to keep open a bridgehead south of the city through which he could evacuate his troops under the cover of a determined rear-guard action. Further west, combat patrols from the 17th Airborne Division entered Duisburg and found the city

(33, 34, 35) A-7.

evacuated. (36)

Air operations against the Ruhr pocket were discontinued on 12 April 1945 when the XVI Corps no longer had a battlefield over which fighter-bombers could effectively operate. In fact, during the preceding week, there was little that the planes could do in this area, other than aiding ground forces in the reduction of isolated strong points. A directive had been issued from Ninth Air Force Headquarters prohibiting the attack of stationary railroad cars and locomotives within a radius of fifty miles of our front lines. This ban, affecting the entire Ruhr pocket, was issued for the purpose of saving from destruction all rolling stock which might possibly be used later by Allied Forces. (37)

By 13 April 1945, Ninth Army's role in the reduction of the Ruhr had reached the mopping-up stage. Task Force Twaddle was dissolved on this date. The 76th and 95th Divisions cleared Dortmund. At the close of this day, the Ruhr River line in the Army zone was completely cleared except for one small pocket five miles square in size in the zone of the 79th Division. Units were now strengthening their hold on the north Ruhr River bank and waiting to contact the advancing forces of First Army. (38)

As the Ruhr pocket narrowed, careful and effective precautions were taken by Ninth Army units and First Army units regarding artillery "no fire" lines. With two friendly forces compressing the pocket and pushing closer together, it was necessary for each to exercise care in shooting toward each other's lines. The exchange of liaison officers and the strict supervision of artillery fires insured successful accomplishment of artillery support without endangering approaching friendly troops. (39)

On 14 April 1945 the last resistance was cleared. The Ruhr pocket became two rapidly vanishing small pockets late in the afternoon when

(36, 37, 38, 39) A-7.

contact was established between the 79th Division of XVI Corps and the 8th Infantry Division of XVIII Airborne Corps just south of Wetter. (40)

On 16 April 1945 resistance ceased in the eastern pocket of the First Army's III Corps. The Ninth Army prisoner of war totals swelled as the First Army continued to push northward. A total of 36,960 prisoners of war had been taken by Ninth Army in its zone of the pocket. (41)

When the industrial section of the Ruhr fell to Ninth Army, although seemingly complete destruction was the first impression, the years of aerial bombing and the recent ground fighting had by no means knocked out the potential productive capacity of one of the richest industrial areas in the world. Many of the great plants were in fair shape and capable of continued operation. Although most installations showed considerable damage, many were continuing to operate and others could be put into operation after repairs. With typical German thoroughness, building supplies were usually available nearby to repair damages, and raw materials were generally on hand to continue production. In many cases, whole sections of plants either had been moved to protected places or had been so sheltered from bombing and artillery fire that production could continue up to the time they were overrun by our troops. The more vital materials and equipment had often been dispersed to give greater security from bombing. Thus some industries were extended over a wide radius, with special shops located in isolated positions not charted by Allied Air Forces. At the time of Ninth Army's occupation of the Ruhr industrial area, industry was estimated to be operating at an average of fifty percent of capacity, and this rate probably could have been raised to eighty-five percent in four to six weeks. (42)

THE CAPTURE OF THE RUHR, FIRST ARMY PHASE, (III CORPS) (MAP 3)

The III Corps mission in the reduction of the Ruhr pocket was to

(40, 41, 42) A-7.

attack northwest from the vicinity of Frankenburg. To accomplish this mission the Corps had, initially, the 9th and 99th Infantry Divisions and the 7th Armored Division. (43)

The Corps zone of advance was wedge-shaped, with the wide base running generally north from Marburg to Eder See. The right flank was a line from Eder See northwest to Brilon and thence west along the Ruhr River to the Lenne River at Westhofen. The left flank ran southeast from Westhofen along the Lenne River and a line in prolongation of the Lenne River to Marburg. (44)

On 5 April 1945 the III Corps jumped off with the 99th Infantry Division on the left, the 7th Armored Division in the center, and the 9th Infantry Division on the right. The initial assault was successful and the Corps advanced four miles against moderate to stiff resistance. (45)

The attack continued through 8 April 1945 with satisfactory gains all along the line. On that date, the 5th Infantry Division was made available to the III Corps to speed the accomplishment of the Corps mission and this veteran unit was committed on the Corps right. (46)

During the period 8 - 11 April 1945 average daily gains of five miles were scored by Corps elements against resistance that was stubborn in towns and at key terrain features, but very light to non-existent in the heavily wooded areas. Six thousand prisoners were taken. (47)

On 12 and 13 April 1945 real evidence of disintegration in German units appeared as the Corps moved forward fifteen miles, taking approximately 9,000 prisoners. (48)

On 14 April 1945 the advance of the III Corps troops continued rapidly and the Hemer prison camp with its 23,000 Russian prisoners was overrun. Russian prisoners found in this camp had had little or no food for the past ten days and were dying at a rate of 150 per day. Tuberculosis,

(43, 44, 45, 46) A-8, p. 27; (47, 48) A-8, p. 29.

the severe winter and malnutrition had taken their toll. With the prompt arrival of American food, medical supplies and doctors, the death rate declined rapidly. (49)

On 15 - 16 April 1945 complete collapse came to the Germans trapped in the III Corps zone due to the concurrent action of all First and Ninth Army units fighting in the Ruhr pocket. With prisoners taken on these two days, the III Corps total for the operation grew to 105,768. (50)

THE CAPTURE OF THE RUHR, FIRST ARMY PHASE. (XVIII CORPS) (MAP 4)

On 1 April 1945 the XVIII Airborne Corps, consisting of the 97th, the 78th, and 8th, and 86th Infantry Divisions, became operationally available to the First Army. The XVIII Corps was to attack on the south-east - northwest axis; Siegen - Essen, with its left flank on the Rhine River and its right flank on the Lenne River, generally from along the line of the Sieg River on a sixty-seven mile front. (51)

From 1 April 1945 to 8 April 1945 the attack continued against stubborn enemy resistance, particularly in the Siegen area of the 8th Division sector. (52)

In order to reduce the Ruhr pocket quickly, the 13th Armored Division was assigned to the XVIII Corps on 8 April 1945. (53)

On 10 April 1945 the XVIII Corps jumped off on what was to be the final assault, in its sector, of the Ruhr pocket. The plan for this final assault called for a double envelopment, the right wing being executed by the 86th and 8th Infantry Divisions on a relatively narrow front with a total of three Regiments abreast. The 78th Infantry Division attacked in the center, while the 97th Infantry and 13th Armored Divisions made up the left wing effort. This was to be the payoff attack with all "stops" pulled. All troops were committed, the Corps withheld no reserve. (54)

(49, 50) A-8, p. 30; (51, 52, 53, 54) A-5, p. 25.

The plan worked well and all units pushed rapidly forward so that by 14 April 1945 the end was in sight. Prisoners were taken in sizeable quantity. (55)

On 14 April 1945 contact was gained with the Ninth Army units on the north bank of the Ruhr River on the Corps right, while on 17 April 1945 the 13th Armored Division contacted elements of the 17th Airborne Division in Duisburg on the Corps left. (56)

This final push from 10 April to 17 April 1945 had cut the Ruhr pocket in two parts and may have strongly influenced the mass surrender of German forces opposing the III Corps on the XVIII Corps right. (57)

It was mission accomplished for the XVIII Corps at 0630 hours, 18 April 1945 when the last organized resistance had been overcome. In the accomplishment of this mission, the XVIII Corps captured 160,892 prisoners during an advance of seventy-two miles. (58)

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In making a study of the encirclement and capture of the Ruhr, it is difficult to justify the apparent German High Command decision to stay and fight for this area. This decision was firmed when the enemy erroneously expected U. S. Forces to turn immediately north from the initial Rhine River bridgehead at Remagen sometime during the middle of March 1945. This error in judgment, coupled with the natural German distaste for withdrawal and the realization that an organized retreat would be most difficult, played right into Allied hands. The fine sense of timing and judgment exercised by the Commanding General of the 12th Army Group, General Omar N. Bradley, in taking advantage of the enemy situation and capabilities in this operation, will forever mark him as one of our truly great military leaders.

In carrying out their assigned missions during the encirclement and

(55, 56, 57) A-5, p. 26; (58) A-5, p. 27.

capture of the Ruhr, elements of the First and Ninth U. S. Armies again proved the soundness of our Infantry-Tank Team doctrine. Tanks and Infantry, working together, provided the two hard-hitting, rapidly moving spearheads that sealed off the Ruhr when they junctioned at Lippstadt.

This operation further re-emphasized the doctrine of war which holds that, to defeat an enemy, infantry must close with and destroy or capture that enemy. In spite of the terrific aerial pounding given the Ruhr by both tactical and strategical air units and the excellent support rendered by artillery during the operation itself, it was necessary for infantry to gain the final decision. The writer does not seek to imply by expression or implication that infantry can successfully carry the load alone. Aerial and artillery support are absolutely essential to successful attack, but in the final analysis, while the air forces may saturate the area with bombs and strafe ground targets and artillery deliver its well known avalanche of devastating fire, it is still necessary for the infantry to close with the enemy, destroy him and hold ground thus gained.

By excellent cooperation and coordination, units engaged in this operation were able to move rapidly and not interfere with each other's movements. In the final phase of the capture of the Ruhr, this coordination and cooperation was evidenced by the exchange of artillery liaison officers and their close control of artillery "no fire" lines.

To sum up the results of this operation: In twenty-two days the First and Ninth Armies encircled and captured the key German Ruhr area of approximately 6,000 square miles. The two Armies captured 325,000 prisoners and decisively defeated twenty-one German Divisions, and by this action they insured a speedy completion of the war in the west.

#### LESSONS

Some of the lessons to be learned and/or re-emphasized from this

operation are:

1. Surprise is an essential element of a successful attack.
2. Surprise is desirable both on the immediate battlefield in the application of small unit tactics and, as was shown in this operation, in the overall planning of large scale operations.
3. The doctrine of employing tanks and infantry together as a team is sound.
4. Cooperation and coordination between all units in an operation is essential.
5. Infantry remains the basic decision-getting element of an armed force.
6. Air and artillery support are essential to successful ground operations.
7. The right decision at the right time by the commander determines the degree of success attained in an operation.