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THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY G, 291ST INFANTRY
(75TH INFANTRY DIVISION) IN THE RUHR POCKET,
VICINITY OF CASTROP RAUXEL, 5-10 APRIL 1945
(CENTRAL EUROPE CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Company Commander)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY COMPANY
ATTACKING IN BUILT UP AREAS

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph deals with the operation of Company G, 291st Infantry, 75th Division, in the RUHR Pocket from the 5 to 10 April 1945.

So that a better understanding may be gleaned from this operation, it is best that we review briefly the background of Company G and its parent unit.

The 75th Division was activated at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, in the early spring of 1943. During the division's 19 months of training, cadre personnel was furnished for two other Units. The Division was brought up to full strength during maneuvers in the early fall of 1944. The replacements consisted mostly of young men 18 and 19 years of age who had been attending the various Army Specialty Training Program classes throughout the UNITED STATES. (1)

The 75th Division left from Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, at 2300 hours, 16 October 1944. After being processed through Camp Shanks, New York, the Division embarked and left NEW YORK harbor on 22 October 1944. A short time was spent in WALES, England and on 13 December 1944 the Division landed at LE HAVRE, France. (2)

After arriving in FRANCE the 75th Division was earmarked for assignment to the Ninth Army, but at this time, much to the surprise of our forces, General Von Rundstedt and his Panzer divisions broke through our lines on the BELGIUM front and created what was later known as the Bulge.

Assignment orders were changed and the 75th Division was rushed to the U. S. First Army zone where they received their baptism of fire on Christmas eve. (3)

(1) A-3, p. 21; (2) A-1; (3) A-3, p. 1.

From this time forward and until the Division crossed the RHINE River and participated in mopping up operations of the RUHR industrial area, it bounded back and forth across the European battlefronts. The German High Command thought surely there were two U. S. 75th Divisions because the Division would be fighting in one sector and then be reported in action a short time later, two hundred miles to the north or south. (4)

After the terrific battles fought in BELGIUM to help restore the original line, the 75th Division was in need of a good rest. Twenty-six days of fighting Hitler's best soldiers coupled with the elements had dwindled the Division's strength to about fifty per cent, but rest was not in store for the units. On 26 January 1945 the Division boarded forty-eight boxcars and trucks at PEPINSTER for transportation to the COLMAR pocket. After a successful operation in the COLMAR area the Division was again moved to HOLLAND where positions were held on the MAAS River. After crossing the MAAS River on 2 March 1945 the Division was moved to the LINTFORD and BUDBERG EVERSAL area where the, "Watch on the Rhine," began. (5)

After the successful drive to the RHINE River, the consolidation of positions, shifting of units and the task of quartering Engineer troops and equipment, the crossing of the RHINE River to deal a fatal blow to the WEHRMACHT Army was soon to become a reality.

On 23 March 1945 the Second British Army crossed the RHINE River in the northern sector at XANTER, WESEL and REESE. (6)

The Ninth and Third U. S. Armies broke across on the 24 March 1945. Ninth Army crossed on bridgeheads established north of DUISBURG. Third Army completed their crossing south of MAINE. (7)

The First U. S. Army swarmed across the RHINE River at REMAGEN and the Seventh U. S. Army crossed south of WORMS on 26 March 1945, two days later.

(4) A-2, p. 84; (5) A-1; (6) A-5; (7) A-5.

On the 24 March 1945 the 75th Division supported the crossing of the RHINE River, in the Ninth Army zone, of the 30th and 79th Infantry Divisions. The following day elements of the 291st Infantry crossed the RHINE River to protect the bridgehead. (8) Four days later the Division moved into an assembly area near IM LOH.

It was a few days later on Easter Sunday, 1 April 1945 that Combat Command B, 2d Armored Division of the Ninth Army contacted elements of the 3d Armored Division of the First Army at LIPPSTADT, Germany, and the encirclement of the RUHR industrial area was complete. (9)

The linking up of these two armies had created a huge pocket about 4,000 square miles which was generally between the SIEG River on the south and the LIPPE River on the north. (map)

This was a rich prize indeed, for this area not only contained the industrial might of the German Third Reich, but also an estimated one-third of a million German soldiers. (10)

On the 3d of April 1945, General Eisenhower issued the following statement:

"The encirclement of the RUHR by a wide pincer movement has cut off the whole Army Group B and parts of Army Group H, thus forming a large pocket of enemy troops whose fate is sealed and who are ripe for annihilation. The most vital industry is denied to the German war potential. This magnificent feat of arms will bring the war more rapidly to a close. It will long be remembered in history as an outstanding battle - the battle of the RUHR." (11)

XVI Corps, composed of the 29th, the 35th, 75th, and 79th Infantry Divisions, was given the mission of reducing the RUHR area south of the LIPPE River to the RUHR River. (12)

XVI Corps was successful in its drive and on 5 April 1945 the 75th (8) A-1; (9) A-4, p. 269; (10) A-4, p. 269; (11) A-10, p. 58; (12) A-10, p. 59.

Division had crossed the DORTMUND EMS Canal and held a line running east from the ZWEIG Canal, and just south of ICKERN and BRAMBAVER. (See Map B)

At 052000 April 1945 the Division received Field Order No. 15 from the XVI Corps which outlined a concerted drive by the 75th Division with the mission of reaching the RUHR River. The 95th Infantry Division and the 8th Armored Division, now assigned to XVI Corps would advance west from the HAM SOEST area. The 75th Division was to advance just west of DORTMUND, thus isolating most of the RUHR area. The 35th Division, on the 75th Division's right was to probe for an opening and also make a dash to the RUHR River. (13)

PRIOR TO THE ATTACK 5 APRIL 1945

The 2d Battalion, 291st Infantry left DATTEIN at 1445 hours and marched to ICKERN, arriving at 1755 hours. (14) Billets were secured by the quartering party which had preceded the troops. Guides met the Companies and led them to their respective areas which were made up of groups of civilian homes. Local security was established as the men settled down in their new quarters.

The Battalion Commander, who had preceded the foot troops, received very little information of the enemy situation or terrain from the battalion of the 289th Infantry that was being relieved.

At 1100 hours company commanders received orders to report to the battalion command post to receive the attack order. At this time the Battalion S-3 returned after making a reconnaissance of the line of departure, which was on the southern outskirts of ICKERN. Guide officers were then sent out to reconnoiter routes to the LD from their respective company areas. (15)

(map e) The 2d Battalion was to attack south 060700 March 1945 with the mission of clearing the CASTROP RAUXEL area in its zone and be prepared to continue the attack on Regimental order. The attacking echelon of (13) A-6; (14) A-7; (15) Personal knowledge.

The troops moved slowly and by 0645 hours were in position and getting ready for the attack.

CASTROP-RAUXEL AND THE VOLKSSTRUM

It would be best at this time to narrate briefly on the type of terrain and composition of man-made objects in the zone of Company G.

Generally the ground was level without any predominating hill masses. To the front lay the small town of RUTGERS which was on the outskirts of the area known as CASTROP RAUXEL. The town of RUTGERS and the section which made up CASTROP RAUXEL was definitely a built up area. Half of the buildings in the area were two story homes constructed of either stucco or wood. The other half were small industrial factories, usually one to two stories high. A marshalling area for trains was near the center of the area and many short railroad spurs interwove themselves from the main track through the town to the small manufacturing plants. The area had been hit frequently by our air force and debris was scattered throughout the town with the exception of Highway 2 and a portion of the civilian settlement. The partially destroyed buildings and civilian homes offered good cover, concealment and positions for snipers. Many of the 40-mm antitank guns that were not destroyed could be levelled and fired at foot troops.

Many of the homes were flying white flags in token of surrender. Citizens had been hastily organized into units which were known as the Volksstrum or Citizens Army. The Volksstrum would fight fanatically at times and then surrender in droves. They did not possess full uniforms and some fought in their everyday clothes. It seemed that their technique of fighting was to inflict as many casualties as possible and then be prepared to discard their weapons and assume the role of surrendering citizens when their position was to be captured or overrun. (19)

(19) Personal knowledge.

It was this type of soldier that faced G Company but they were soon to learn that the Volksstrum was augmented by a group of well trained German fighters.

THE ATTACK 6 APRIL 1945

At 0650 hour^s the platoon of tanks had not as yet arrived. Just prior to H hour the tanks could be heard closing in, so the 1st Platoon Leader was ordered to hold his platoon in position, ^{where} meet the tanks, and then follow the attack. The 2d Battalion crossed the LD at 0700 hours. Company G attacked in its zone with the 3d Platoon on the left, 2d Platoon on the right and the 1st Platoon riding the tanks and following at 200 yards. The mortar section was placed in position to support the attack and was to displace on order. The heavy machine gun section, under Lieutenant Craig of H Company, was to follow the 2d Platoon and be prepared to fire upon targets of opportunity.

The attack progressed rapidly with only light resistance but as the outskirts of RUTGERS was reached, the company began to receive increased sniper and 120-mm mortar fire.

The first German soldier captured was from the "Citizen Army", and he had been shot through the left hip. He stated that as he stepped out of his position to wave a white flag to surrender, he was shot from behind by a soldier of the 2d German Parachutist Division. The Company Commander also learned from the prisoner that the Parachutists had received orders to fight to the last man. (20)

By this time the fighting was well under way. Hostile snipers were firing from all positions and angles. Enemy 120-mm mortars were falling to the front and rear of the attacking platoons. The 3d Platoon was meeting as much resistance as the 2d Platoon. The enemy seemed to be everywhere, to the front, to the rear and to the flanks. Homes were being searched and the enemy flushed out. White phosphorous grenades (20) Personal knowledge.

tossed into buildings were very effective in inducing determined enemy to surrender. Groups of two or three men from each platoon were dashing from house to house in pursuit of discovered snipers.

Word was then received by the Company Commander ^{where} that Lieutenant Ripley, 3d Platoon Leader had been hit in the stomach by a sniper. It took the company aid man and two soldiers fifteen minutes to find him. Lieutenant Ripley had rolled behind some debris to escape further injury from the sniper who was still firing.

By this time the front line ^{was indefinite} was nil, the situation was very fluid and control was gone. The 2d Platoon had lost contact with F Company on their right and C Company 1st Battalion, was meeting stiff resistance in their zone and their progress was slowed down.

The Company Commander tried to contact the platoon of tanks and the 1st Platoon by radio and was unsuccessful. A messenger was sent back and he returned with the information that the tanks were being held up by the debris and railroad tracks. The only avenue forward for the tanks was Highway 2 and the tank commander believed this route was covered by antitank fire.

The first platoon was ordered to move forward on foot and the tank platoon leader continued to try ^{to} and find a suitable route to the front.

By 1200 hours Company G had advanced through the railroad marshaling yard and had reached the near tracks of the main line which ran perpendicular to the front and divided the town in half. This had been designated phase line A by the Company Commander in his order and now was the time to gain control before continuing the attack. (See Map C)

A quick survey of the company and attachments revealed that four men had been killed and two wounded. The enemy casualties consisted of eight known dead, four wounded and seven prisoners. Three of the prisoners were from the Volksstrom and informed the Company Commander that they were forced to fight or be killed by the 2d Division Parachutists.

During reorganization the majority of men ate their K rations. Continuation of the attack was ready to commence at approximately 1300 hours.
(21)

On the main railroad tracks to the front were a series of boxcars and the majority of them consisted of the coal and gravel hauling type. They were stretched from Highway 2, the Company's left boundary, for about 200 yards to the right. As the platoon scouts started to crawl through these obstacles they were fired upon with automatic rifle fire. The scouts withdrew and the advance was held up for a half hour until PFC Ferrel picked off two of the enemy gunners from a position in a railroad control tower. (22)

The attacking platoons then surged forward and there began another series of house to house fighting. Control was again lost as the men sought to track down individual snipers. It was soon discovered that the best means for moving forward was to advance from house to house by means of windows and side doors. To move down the streets invited a volume of sniper fire.

The machine gun section had set up and was covering Highway 2.

The fighting continued and by 1700 hours the southern outskirts of the town ^{were} reached.

It was a short time later that contact was established with C Company on the left. F Company was meeting stiff resistance from a strong point located in a castle type building, 1,000 yards to the right. (See Map C)

Lieutenant Craig, machine gun platoon leader, had been killed by a sniper. Another man was wounded in the neck and his companion killed when they ran into an enemy ambush while pursuing a sniper. (23)

The tanks had finally broken through and were not concealed behind buildings located along Highway 2.

At 1730 hours orders were received from battalion headquarters to
(21), (22) Personal knowledge; (23) Statement of T/Sgt Philip Kennedy, 1st Platoon Leader, 7 January 1949.

move into the next built up area to the south. This attack was to be coordinated with C Company on the left. C Company Commander was contacted for coordination but C Company Commander had orders to stay where he was for the night and he prepared to attack the following morning.

F Company on the right was just beginning to overcome the resistance in their area.

THE AMBUSH

(See map D)

G Company was again told to move forward and that orders for C Company would be changed. It was now growing dark so the 2d Platoon was sent forward to probe the new area, followed by the 3d Platoon.

at 2100 hours
The machine guns and mortars were set up on the outskirts of the town to cover their advance. The 1st Platoon now had three squads on line also covering the advance.

All was quiet and not a shot was fired as the two platoons melted into the darkness. Fifteen minutes later contact with the 2d and 3d Platoons, by 536 radio, was lost. Twenty minutes later a messenger arrived back with the information that the two platoons had gained a portion of the built up area and that no resistance ^{had been} ~~was~~ met.

Plans were then made for the remainder of the company to move forward in two columns which would guide on Highway 2, followed by the tanks.

It took about a half hour to get the remainder of the company organized and oriented. The platoon leader of the tanks could not be found at first but when located and oriented he informed G Company Commander that he could not move his tanks in the dark and that the tanks were in the process of refueling.

A platoon sergeant from C Company stated that as yet their orders had not been changed and that his platoon was now in the process of putting out local security.

The Company Commander then decided to leave two squads behind for

the purpose of guarding the tanks, and to take the rest of the company forward to meet the 2d and 3d platoons.

The move forward was uneventful until the point of the column and a few of the men following had passed a road block that had been put up to canalize traffic. Then all Hell broke loose. Three or four automatic weapons spat death from the front and flanks. The German Panzer-fausts, antitank weapons, hit the road block and men could be seen scurrying for the ditches along Highway 2. (See Map D)

The column was entirely taken by surprise and complete confusion resulted. Both columns now on either side of the road, started to withdraw. Immediately following, two parachute flares were set off by the enemy and the majority of men froze in position and hugged the ground.

A volume of sniper fire was placed on the few men who did move but fortunately none were hit. As the flares died out everyone again started to move to the rear. The men on the right side of the road experienced no difficulty in their withdrawal but as the men on the left withdrew they were suddenly fired upon by the local security of C Company. (24)

The outguards of C Company kept firing as the men continued to crawl back to the rear but no casualties resulted from this fire. The men were finally able to crawl across Highway 2 and into their own zone.

Lieutenant Allen, the Company Executive Officer, was walking near the head of the column when the gunners opened fire at the ambush point. The Lieutenant hit the ditch with four of the men and remained quiet till the flares had died down. They then threw their grenades and crawled back to the outskirts of RUTGERS. Not finding anyone in the area that the company had previously started from, the Lieutenant and the four men circled to the right flank and started back toward the road block.

As they neared the road block from the right side, two wounded men
(24) Personal knowledge.

were heard moving. An attempt was made to reach the men but every time they moved close to the road three automatic weapons fired wildly in all directions. On the second attempt they were successful in getting one of the wounded men off the road, through a window and into the basement of a duplex type home.

German civilians were encountered as they searched the main floor, but they were so scared they just stood and stared. Blankets were secured from the beds for the wounded man. The group then moved back into the basement after hearing voices and boots thumping in the other part of the house.

Twice during the early morning, Lieutenant Allen and one soldier crept back to RUTGERS to try ^{to} find the battalion command post or an aid man, but ^{was} ~~was~~ unsuccessful. (25)

After the rest of the men from the ambushed column had succeeded in getting back to RUTGERS, reorganization took place. It was discovered that the Company Executive Officer and several men were missing. A patrol of five men was formed and they went forward and returned in about an hour with two prisoners. The prisoners stated that a reinforced platoon from the 2d Parachute Division had filtered into the CASTROP RAUXEL area just after dark and the Companies 2d and 3d Platoons had been captured. The prisoners also said that the two captured platoons had been evacuated to the rear in trucks. (26)

In the meantime Battalion Headquarters had moved forward and established their command post in the center of RUTGERS. (See Map C)

After notifying the Battalion Commander of the situation, it was decided to wait and continue the attack in the morning at daybreak.

A few minutes later G Company Commander was contacted over the SCR 536 radio by a group of men who had been cut off by the ambush. It was learned that this group consisted of four men who were in a basement of

- (25) Statement of Lt. Allen, Company Executive Officer, 19 Sep 1948;
(26) Personal knowledge.

a house using their SCR 536 radio with the antenna protruding from a window. A sergeant was with this group and he stated that it was pitch dark outside but he could hear German voices giving orders. There seemed to be a lot of milling around and maybe this was a reorganization for a withdrawal or an attack. (27)

The Battalion Artillery Liaison Officer was contacted and he suggested placing artillery fire in the area.

With the sergeant doing the adjusting over the SCR 536 radio, artillery time fire was placed in the built up area until the range was reached that exploded the shell approximately over the sergeant's position. This fire was placed on call and was repeated every time the sergeant reported movements of the Germans. If the enemy was planning an attack or reorganization, this time fire held them in position or was instrumental in having them change their plans.

THE ATTACK CONTINUES 7 APRIL 1945

*not was
company
was that
is time?*

The plan of attack the following morning was to have the two squads of the 1st Platoon of G Company ride the two lead tanks followed by a tank destroyer. The two remaining tanks would take positions on the outskirts of town and support the attack with fire. The mortars were set up and the section of machine guns were placed in the upper story of two houses for the purpose of also supporting the attack. (See Map D)

The attack started at 0700 hour with C Company on the left moving out on foot. The three tanks in G Company's zone sped down Highway 2 with the members of the 1st Platoon hanging on for dear life. Just as they ⁷cleared the road block the tanks were hit with a volume of small arms fire. As the tanks slowed down the men of the 1st Platoon started jumping off and seeking cover offered by the houses on either side of the road.

A moment later the tank destroyer received a direct hit and started
(27) Personal knowledge.

to burn. The remaining two tanks immediately turned around and dashed past the road block into RUTGERS from whence they had come. (28)

(See Map D)

Three men, after leaping from the lead tank, dashed around to the rear of a house and surprised a German crew of six who were just getting ready to fire a 120-mm mortar. The Germans were killed and a thermite grenade dropped into the barrel of the mortar. (29)

Sergeant Bond, a squad leader, who had jumped off the second tank and dashed for the houses, now ran back into the road and pulled the four tankmen from the burning tank destroyer. With the wounded, half crawling and stumbling, Sergeant Bond was able to lead them to the cover of a garage. Although this group of men ^{were} were fired upon several times, none were hit. For this heroic display, Sergeant Bond was awarded the Silver Star. (30)

A battalion medical jeep dashed into town and picked up Lieutenant Allen and the wounded man that he had in the basement of a house. The jeep was able to dash back into RUTGERS after being fired upon several times by enemy snipers. (31)

By this time C Company was closing in on the town from the left and killing Germans who were trying to escape to the left. About 15 Germans fled toward the right across open ground towards the woods. These were exposed to the position of the machine guns mounted in the house in RUTGERS. The gunners did not fire because they were not sure whether the men were Americans or Germans. (32)

About this time the 1st Platoon was meeting up with men from the 2d Platoon. The 2d Platoon which was commanded by the platoon sergeant had moved deeper into the town after the Germans had opened fire at the

(28) Statement of T/Sgt. Philip Kennedy, 1st Platoon Leader, 7 Jan. 1949; (29) Statement S/Sgt Leo Marcott, 1st Platoon Guide, 8 Jan 1949; (30) Personal knowledge; (31) Statement of Lt. Allen, Company Executive Officer, 19 Sep 1948; (32) Personal knowledge.

road block. A captured prisoner had told the platoon sergeant that the town was swarming with parachutists. Because of the darkness and not knowing what had become of the 3d Platoon and after hearing all the firing at the road block, the sergeant had decided to wait until daylight so that he could better see the entire situation.

Mopping up of the town continued for about another half-hour and then elements of the 3d Platoon started coming in from a small built up area on the right.

The platoon leader stated that after his platoon had arrived in CASTROP the night before, they immediately occupied the buildings on the right side of the road. A half-hour later, after darkness had really set in his position was fired upon several times. A little later three grenades were thrown in the windows of the houses occupied by his men. After this latter incident, the lieutenant gathered up his men and moved about 300 yards to the right in a small built up area. A perimeter defense was then set up. The platoon could hear the movement of soldiers and artillery shells exploding from then on so all the men were put on a constant alert. (See Map D)

In the morning when all the fighting began, a patrol had been sent out to seek information. It was this patrol that contacted the remainder of Company G as they were reorganizing.

C Company 1st Battalion received orders to push through CASTROP-RAUXEL and continue mopping up operations to the south.

G Company received orders to attack to the southwest with the mission of clearing that portion of CASTROP in their zone. Then tie in with E Company on the right and hold the line along Highway 2. (33)

(See Map C)

As Company reorganization was taking place, K rations were passed out to the men by members of the kitchen crew who had been brought forward by the Battalion S-4. (34)

(33) Statement of Lt. Col. Jesse C. Drain, Jr., 2d Battalion Commander, 17 January 1949; (34) Personal knowledge.

*See Map C
Company reorganization
As Company reorganization was taking place, K rations were passed out to the men by members of the kitchen crew who had been brought forward by the Battalion S-4. (34)*

MOPPING UP OPERATIONS, 8 - 9 APRIL 1945

The next two days found G Company advancing and mopping up resistance in the towns of BEHRINGHAUSEN and SCHELLENBURG. Determined resistance was met at a few strong points but generally the enemy was smart enough to realize that a continuation of the fight was futile. They were surrendering in large and small groups.

On the 10 April 1945 Company G was busy setting up a defensive position on the southern edge of CASTROP-RAUXEL, prior to continuing the attack to the south.

G Company did accomplish the mission assigned. The results of the Company's actions from 5 - 10 April 1945 not only helped in the compression of the RUHR pocket but also deprived the enemy the use of hundreds of tons of military equipment which was found in the miles of boxcars located in their zone.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In analyzing this operation it must be remembered that XVI Corps ordered a concerted drive to the RUHR River. Consequently, every echelon of command was applying pressure to their subordinate units to press forward as rapidly as possible. It is felt that the push to the RUHR River more or less became a race with all Units trying to outdo each other.

✓ When the 2d Battalion, 291st Infantry relieved the 3d Battalion, 289th Infantry, at ICKERN, very little information of the enemy or terrain was obtained. The relief took place at night and the incoming battalion was at a distinct disadvantage as far as visibility was concerned. With the attack commencing the following morning at 0600 hour, ground reconnaissance was not possible. *effect of this lack of info?*

✓ As the attack progressed and phase line A reached, the company commander, now seeing the type of fighting that existed, should have given his platoons very definite zones for operations. The platoon zones in

turn should be broken down to individual squad areas. Only then can success be assured in the mopping up operations in a company zone.

Control at higher headquarters was undoubtedly difficult because of the type of fighting involved. It must be remembered that a definite front line was lost soon after the attack began. Units would push forward as rapidly as the situation would permit and then find themselves stopped or delayed by a stubborn resistance group of the enemy. This type of fighting had put G Company ahead of C Company and F Company for a short period of time. In this type of forward movement, it would be very easy for higher headquarters to order a company to advance and at the same time not realize the unexpected delays that might be experienced by units on the right and left. This is probably what happened when G Company was ordered to advance without the coordination and help of C Company.

At the same time it must be expected that information passed over to a unit on a flank, that this information will be disseminated to the individuals concerned. If this had been done C Company would have known the situation and not fired on G Company men withdrawing from the road block area. If complete coordination had been effected, C Company would have been in a position to cover the advance of G Company.

When the 2d and 3d Platoons of G Company moved into CASTROP-RAUXEL, contact should have been maintained for future coordination and mutual support. Instead of doing this the two platoons separated and confusion resulted. *More analysis needed.*

As no firing was heard prior to the ambush, the enemy must have attacked the 3d Platoon during the firing. This was probably a part of a well coordinated plan.

The 3d Platoon leader, when forced to move and knowing that he had lost radio contact with the rest of the company, should have dispatched a patrol to let the situation and his position be known. *More analysis needed.*

The plan to have the three tanks dash down Highway 2 into CASTROP-RAUXEL was not sound. It was known that a road block had been erected for the purpose of canalizing traffic into a certain location that was probably covered by an antitank weapon. An approach, and an area for maneuver, was available to the tanks on the right flank and should have been used. No plan was adopted for the employment of the tanks once they gained the built up area. After the tank destroyer was hit, the other two tanks not knowing what assistance could be expected from the Infantry, had little choice other than to withdraw. Planning and coordination by both the Infantry and the Tank Commander can be readily pointed out in the following statement: "The key to successful infantry-tank employment is detailed planning and time for joint reconnaissance. A complete understanding as to what one arm expects of the other is necessary through all schedules of command down to the tank commander and the squad leader." (35)

LESSONS LEARNED

1. If possible, ground reconnaissance should always be made prior to an operation.
2. To successfully overcome resistance in a built up area, and to avoid confusion, strict control must be maintained by the Commander.
3. In order for the Commander to maintain strict control, phase lines should be designated block by block.
4. Each squad and platoon should be given (very) definite zones for operations. The zone restrictions should not be violated and movements forward should be slow and thorough.
5. Try to stay off the streets while fighting in a built up area. Advance if possible from house to house.
6. The messenger is still the basic means of communications in an infantry unit.

(35) Statement verified by Lt. Col. W. G. Dolvin, Armored Sec., T.I.S., 20 Jan 49.

7. Platoons should operate as a part of a company team and not independently.

8. Tank commanders and Infantry commanders should have the time for joint reconnaissance and should know the potentialities and capabilities of each others command.

9. Tanks can and should move off hard surface roads whenever the situation so dictates.

10. If contact is lost with an element of command, regain it as quickly as possible.