

General Subjects Section
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE
1947 - 1948

THE OPERATIONS OF THE 502D PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT,
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, IN THE DEFENSE OF BASTOGNE
(ARDENNES CAMPAIGN), 24 DECEMBER TO 25 DECEMBER 1944
(Personal Experience of a Regimental Communications Officer)

Type of operation described: REGIMENT IN DEFENSE

Major Ivan G. Phillips, Infantry
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO 1

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Index	1
Bibliography	2
Introduction	5
General Situation	6
German Order of Battle	13
The Regimental Situation	14
The Defensive Action	20
Analysis and Criticism	28
Lessons Learned	31
Lessons Re-emphasized	32
Map A - General Situation, 16 - 18 December 1944	
Map B - Situation, 24 December 1944	
Map C - Line Route Map, 24 December 1944	
Map D - Regimental Situation, 24 December 1944	
Map E - Defensive Action, 25 December 1944	
Map F - Situation at Champs, 1700, 25 December 1944	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A-1 Bastogne The First Eight Days,
By Colonel S. L. A. Marshall (TIS Library)
- A-2 The Infantry Journal, December 1945,
Christmas Eve at Bastogne
By S. L. A. Marshall (TIS Library)
- A-3 First United States Army, Report of Operations
1 Aug 1944 to 22 Feb 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-4 Dark December, Full Account Battle of the Bulge
By Merriam (TIS Library)
- A-5 After Action Report to the Third US Army
Vol 1, 1 Aug 1944 to 9 May 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-6 Mission Accomplished, XVIII Airborne Corps, The Fighting Corps
(TIS Library)
- A-7 Destruction of the German Armies in Western Europe Headquarters,
12 Army Group, 6 June 1944 to 9 May 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-8 Report on the Pathfinder Drop and Re-supply to 101st Airborne
Division, Bastogne, Dec 1944 (TIS Library)
- A-9 Report of Re-supply to Americans in Bastogne by IX Troop
Carrier Pathfinder Group (TIS Library)
- A-10 Destruction of the German Armies in Western Europe
Restricted Document (TIS Library)
- A-11 Yank Continental Edition "Bastogne Payoff", 21 Jan 1945
By Saul Levitt (Personal possession of author)
- A-12 Four Stars of Hell
By Critchell (TIS Library)
- Report by the Supreme Commander to the Combined Chiefs of Staff
on the Operations in Europe of the Allied Expeditionary Force,
6 June 1944 to 8 May 1945 (TIS Library)
- Fighting Forces, Feb 1945
Ardennes Battlefields (TIS Library)
- Fighting Forces, Feb 1945
Strategy of the Battle of the Ardennes (TIS Library)
- Infantry Journal May 1947, p. 14-21, Hanson
Great Decision (TIS Library)
- Eisenhower's Own Story of the War, AEF
D767.6 A12 p. 75-80 (TIS Library)
- The Field Artillery Journal, March 1945
The West German Front, 16 Dec 1944 to 18 Jan 1945
(TIS Library)

Bastogne: American Epic, Saturday Evening Post
17 Feb 1945 (TIS Library)

Allies Squeeze the German Bulge, Life Magazine, 15 Feb 1945
(TIS Library)

Bastogne: Collier's Magazine, 10 Feb 1945
(TIS Library)

Newsweek, 8 Jan 1945
(TIS Library)

The Infantry Journal, July 1946, Page 64
(TIS Library)

D808.021 U3 #34, Restricted Document
(TIS Library)

Military Review, September 1945, Page 90
(TIS Library)

Yank, 1 July 1945, Battle of the Bulge,
By Sgt Ralph G. Martin (TIS Library)

Time Magazine, 25 Dec 1944, Western Front, Page 19
(TIS Library)

Time Magazine, 1 Jan 1945, Western Front, Page 18
(TIS Library)

Time Magazine, 8 Jan 1945, Western Front, Page 19
(TIS Library)

Time Magazine, 15 Jan 1945, Western Front, Page 25
(TIS Library)

Time Magazine, 22 Jan 1945, Western Front, Page 28
(TIS Library)

Epic of the 101st Airborne Division
(TIS Library)

Rendezvous with Destiny, Infantry Journal
(TIS Library)

Letter from Captain H. O. Roberts (Adjutant of the 502)
(Personal possession of author)

Letter from Colonel Steve A. Chappuis
(Personal possession of author)

Letter from 1st Sgt Eldon Herman
(Personal possession of author)

Monograph, Reserve Battalion in Reduction of a Penetration
Captain Clarence A. Thompson, Jr, Infantry (TIS Library)

Monograph, Company in Defense
Captain James F. Adams, Infantry (TIS Library)

THE OPERATIONS OF THE 502D PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT,
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, IN THE DEFENSE OF BASTOGNE
(ARDENNES CAMPAIGN), 24 DECEMBER TO 25 DECEMBER 1944
(Personal Experience of a Regimental Communications Officer)

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the 502d Parachute Infantry Regiment (101st Airborne Division) in the defense of Bastogne, Belgium, 24 December to 25 December 1944, during the Ardennes Campaign.

A resume of the events leading up to this Christmas Day battle will be necessary for the reader to appreciate and understand the reason for this operation.

In the early part of December 1944, the First US Army held the central part of the Allied West Wall, extending from a point north of Duren, Germany, south across the Ardennes rugged hills to the Moselle River. VIII Corps was a part of the First US Army occupying the majority of this extended front. VIII Corps front extended from where the Moselle River crosses the Franco - German border to Losheim, Germany, on the north. (1) (See Map A)

VIII Corps front was held by three infantry divisions, an armored division, and a cavalry group. The 106th Infantry Division, a green outfit fresh from the States, with the 114th Cavalry Group attached, held the northern sector in the vicinity of Schnee Eifel, while the 28th Infantry Division and the 4th Infantry Division, farther south, were supported by two ^{combat} commands of the 9th Armored Division. (2) (See Map A)

Major General Troy H. Middleton, Commanding General, VIII Corps, was using Bastogne, Belgium, for his headquarters. (3) (See Map A)

At 0500, 16 December 1944, the VIII Corps front became active with heavy German artillery concentrations, which were followed by the enemy launching the greatest counteroffensives of the west, penetrating the American lines with five newly equipped German Armies under the German Commander, Marshal (1) A-1, p. 1; A-3; (2) A-6; (3) A-1, p. 9.

Von Rundstedt. (4)

The first few days the German Panzer attack went forward with increased momentum through VIII Corps lines with the enemy penetrating stubborn resistance of the 106th and 28th Infantry Division units. These hard hitting Panzer Armies were making an all out drive to split the Allied forces and capture the port of Antwerp. (5)

On 17 December 1944, SHAEF G-3 Section was pondering over a map on how to employ the two airborne divisions which composed all of SHAEF reserve. The G-3 ~~reached their decisions with~~ ^{MADE} recommendations, which were okeyed by Lieutenant General W. B. Smith, General Eisenhower's Chief of Staff, to use both airborne divisions at Bastogne, Belgium. General Smith could see by looking over the map that the two key centers in the Ardennes were the road nets at St. Vith and Bastogne. (6) (See Map B)

The two airborne divisions, ^{WHICH WERE} ~~comprised of~~ the 101st Airborne Division and the 82d Airborne Division, were under control of XVIII Airborne Corps. The 101st Airborne Division was located at Camp Mourmelon, France, and the 82d Airborne Division at Soissons, France, with XVIII Airborne Corps at Epernay. (7) (See Map A)

GENERAL SITUATION

At Camp Mourmelon, France, the 101st Airborne Division was recuperating after being withdrawn from a 72-day battle in the Holland Campaign. Units were undergoing reorganization, sending men on passes to Paris, turning in unserviceable equipment, and making a general police-up of the area. (8)

Replacements had been received for the parachute units, but not for the 327th Glider Regiment. These new replacements had brought most of the units up to T/O; however, the authorized strength of parachute units was found very inadequate. As a result, the 101st Airborne Division had been operating with over T/O strength through previous engagements in Normandy (4) A-1, p. 4; (5) A-1, p. 5-7; (6) A-1, p. 8; (7, 8) Personal knowledge.

and Holland. (9)

At 2100, 17 December 1944, the alert order was received by Lieutenant Colonel Ned Moore, Acting Chief of Staff, 101st Airborne Division, to alert the division. Colonel Moore immediately called a unit commanders' meeting. Regimental commanders and separate unit commanders began to trickle in to the division headquarters to hear the amazing news. (10)

The Commander of the 502d Parachute Infantry Regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Steve A. Chappuis, came back to his headquarters and called in all of his staff and battalion commanders. From 2200 to 2400 that night, the staff and battalion commanders reported to Lieutenant Colonel Chappuis to hear the news: Be prepared, combat-equipped, to move by 1000, 18 December 1944, destination Werbomont, Belgium. ^{THE} ~~This was a change~~ ^{FROM GASTONNE TO WERBOMONT} made as XVIII Airborne Corps passed from SHAEF Reserve to 12th Army Group. (11) (See Map A)

At this critical hour, the division was more unprepared than it had ever been. Officers and men were on pass in Paris; ~~the~~ equipment and clothing were short; and the assistant division commander with other officers was in England. The Division Commander, Major General Maxwell D. Taylor, was in Washington on official business. (12)

This was less than ten hours to have the division equipped. It looked impossible; however, staff officers and supply went to work in an effort to equip the division for another combat mission. All night the staff and supply personnel worked, and by morning, 18 December 1944, it looked as if the division would be ready. Ammunition and signal supplies were obtained in sufficient amounts; however, quartermaster equipment was short. This found many of the troopers without helmets or sufficient clothing. (13)

The 101st Airborne Division was finishing up the last hurried preparations that could be accomplished at the last minute while waiting for the transportation to be provided by Oise Base Section. A call to Oise Base
(9) Personal knowledge; (10) A-1, p. 9,10; (11, 12, 13) Personal knowledge.

Section for transportation resulted in a provision of 380 10-ton carrier trucks withdrawn for this emergency from main supply routes throughout the communication zone area. These trucks arrived with tired, weary drivers ready for the first troops to begin loading at 1400 that same day. (14) Brigadier General Anthony C. McAuliffe, Acting Division Commander, ordered the division to move in combat teams prior to his departure to the front. This combat team order grouped the combat units in the following order for the move:

501 Combat Team, composed of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment and the 907th Artillery Battalion.

506 Combat Team, composed of the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment and the 901st Field Artillery Battalion.

502 Combat Team, composed of the 502d Parachute Infantry Regiment and the 377th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion.

327 Combat Team, composed of the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment and the 463d Field Artillery Battalion. (15)

Orders for the convoy were oral. Each combat team leader was responsible for clearing the area in 40-truck serials, ten minutes between serials, with 50 men per truck. The route was ~~[a small strip map]~~ via Sedan to Werbomont, Belgium. (16)

Eighteen hours after receipt of orders by XVIII Airborne Corps, two airborne divisions and the forward echelon of airborne corps had cleared their respective areas. (17) After passing the light line at Bouillon, Belgium, several difficulties were encountered. XVIII Airborne Corps Headquarters vehicles passed the convoy in peacemeal formation, causing the first traffic tie-up, and before this difficulty was straightened out, VIII Corps vehicles, plus a hospital unit, were met, headed in the opposite direction. This caused a terrific traffic tie-up which could have been serious had it not (14) A-12, p. 234; (15, 16) Statement, Lt Col Chase; (17) A-6.

been for the eagerness of unit commanders and alert officers to clear the road in order to proceed on. Brigadier General Higgins (Assistant Division Commander) was forced to order a tank maintenance company out from in front of the convoy. (18) (See Map A)

While enroute, the 101st Airborne Division mission was changed back to Bastogne, Belgium. The changing of the mission did not in any way confuse the convoy since an MP was instructed to turn the convoy in the direction of Bastogne by Colonel T. L. Sherbourne, Acting Artillery Commander. (19)

It happened that General McAuliffe (Acting Division Commander) and party had gone to Bastogne to find out what he could from General Middleton's VIII Corps. By doing this, General McAuliffe had caused Colonel Sherbourne to follow the same route and reroute the convoy. Actually, Colonel Sherbourne had acted on his own initiative. (20)

Parts of the advanced party had gone to Werbomont; however, a group from the 502d and 506th Parachute Infantry Regiments that were separated from the advanced party in a traffic scramble with the 82d Airborne Division, were routed to Bastogne by the MP. (21)

The division forward assembly area was at Mandé St. Etienne. At 2200, 18 December, units of the division began closing on the assembly area by the use of the available guides from advanced party that were present. (22)

(See Map B)

Since the 501 Combat Team headed the march units, they drew the first mission. The Commander of the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, Colonel Julian Ewell, was in command of this combat team. Colonel Ewell was familiar with the area, having spent a couple of days in Bastogne during November. This was not known to his Commander, Brigadier General McAuliffe, at the time the 501 CT was sent out to reinforce the armored road block^{in the} vicinity of Longvilly. (23)

(18) Personal knowledge; A-1, p. 15; Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; (19, 20) A-1, p. 11, 12; (21, 22) Statement, Capt Willis; (23) A-1, p. 31.

Major General Troy H. Middleton, Commander of VIII Corps, before leaving the Bastogne garrison, had ordered three teams of the Combat Command B, 10th Armored Division, to establish road blocks at Noville, Longvilly, and south of Wardin. (24) (See Map B)

At 0600, 19 December, in fog so thick birds had to walk, Colonel Ewell's combat team moved out towards Longvilly with the order to develop the situation. Near Neffe a meeting engagement was made with the German Panzer Lehr Division. Both units engaged in a firefight; however, the paratroopers deployed and the German armor remained on the road. This was an ideal target for the artillery battalion supporting Colonel Ewell. The artillery guns pulled off the road and began firing on the blind target. The effects of the artillery fire and the fire from the front-line troops and 81st AA Battalion were more than the Germans could take, for they withdrew to Mageret. (25) (See Map B)

The road block at Longvilly was cut off by the road block the Germans placed at Mageret. The other road blocks were contacted at Noville and south of Wardin with fierce fighting against all odds by the tenacious defenders, resulting in the enemy bypassing these positions. (26) (See Map B)

By this time the 705 Tank Destroyer Battalion, less eight TD's, had moved south to Bastogne to join the forces for the battle of Bastogne that was now well under way. (27)

The actions that happened in the early stages of this siege would fill a volume of its own. It was ~~through~~ these early actions that made the defense of Bastogne possible. There were actions at Neffe, Wardin, Marvie, Bizory, and Noville that defeated the orders of the German 47 Panzer Corps Commander to sieze Bastogne. (28) (See Map B)

Contact had been made with the 10th Armored Teams by the determined commanders of the 501st.

(24) A-1, p. 23; (25) A-1, p. 32-38; (26) A-11, p. 8, 9; (27) A-11, p. 8, 9; (28) A-1, p. 185-192.

On 20 December, the German 47 Panzer Corps had moved the 2d Panzer Division around the north and the Panzer Lehr around the south of Bastogne. (29)

Late on the same date, the enemy completely surrounded the Bastogne forces. This had been expected by General McAuliffe, and for this reason, he had purposely had the artillery battalions occupy a position around the city to cover 6400 mills traverse of the compass. By doing this, all guns were able to fire in any direction. This later proved the key to a successful defense when artillery ammunition ran low and the enemy failed to find it out since all artillery guns fired on the same target. (30)

By firing all artillery guns on the enemy at one place, the German commander reasoned that US Forces had sufficient supplies with an enormous amount of artillery guns. So effective was the fire of all artillery pieces that never once did the enemy realize the critical shortage of supplies. (31)

The forces of Bastogne consisted of three commands, that of the 101st Airborne Division, Combat Command B, 10th Armored Division, and the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion. General Middleton ordered the defense under the unified command of Brigadier General McAuliffe.

The enemy closed completely around the Bastogne city by morning, 21 December 1944, thus denying any physical contact with the outside American forces. This had been expected, but not at this hour. (32) (See Map D).

The situation soon after the garrison was surrounded found the four regiments occupying an overextended perimeter defense on the key terrain surrounding Bastogne. The responsibility for sectors started with the 502d Parachute Infantry Regiment occupying the north area extending west to the 327th Glider Regiment and east to the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment. Adjacent to the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment was the 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, closing the gap with the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment (29) A-1, p. 192; (30, 31) A-1, p. 133, 195; (32) A-1, p. 108.

on the south. Armor and field artillery supported the entire perimeter with the 326th Combat Engineers and 54th Armored Infantry Battalion reinforcing the center of the 327th Glider Infantry lines. (33) (See Map ^FD)

On the night of 20 December, the Germans had overrun the 101st Division medical unit at Herbaumont, which had been considered the rear area. The entire unit was captured. (34) (See Map B)

The supply situation was fast becoming critical with one artillery battalion down to 200 rounds. In an effort to reconstitute the supplies, urgent radio messages were sent to VIII Corps for an air resupply drop. In turn, VIII Corps requested Third Army to supply the surrounded forces by air, giving them the requirements for ammunition and rations. Arrangements were made with IX Troop Carrier, based in England, to resupply the Bastogne forces. (35)

On 23 December 1944, the sky cleared and a pathfinder team led by Lieutenant Gordon C. Rothwell jumped from a pathfinder ship. Lieutenant Rothwell's team set up the necessary navigational aids to bring the supply planes over the drop zone. One hundred and forty-four tons of ammunition and rations were dropped by parachute from 241 C-47 transport planes. "This was a God-send to the bewildered troops." (36)

Rations received by the air-drop were only sufficient to augment the subsistence found from stocks in the community. Since troops had been authorized to forage, the rations were treated as a gift. (37)

Because of adequate communications facilities, the surrounded US Force commanders were able to keep superior control of the 101st Division and attached units. An example of this was the powerful high frequency radio transmitter-receiver that the division signal officer personally managed to bring in from Liege, Belgium. This radio was used by the Air Corps party. The correct crystal was found in a tanker's radio. This radio was utilized by the air support party in directing the P-47 pursuit planes to knock out

(33) Personal knowledge; A-1, p. 121, 131, Map 14; (34) A-11, p. 9; (35) A-1, p. 133; A-5; (36) A-1, p. 137; (37) A-1, p. 139; Personal knowledge.

a big share of the German 47 Panzer Corps elements. (38)

Wire communications throughout the Bastogne forces consisted of double lines to all major units with lateral contact between adjacent regimental sectors. This proved a vital factor in maintaining contact during the severe attacks by the German Panzer units. (39)

After the American forces were completely surrounded, an ultimatum was sent out by the German commander hoping that Bastogne would surrender. World recognition was made from that famous reply, "Nuts" which was sent back as the American Force commander's answer to this ultimatum. The answer was suggested by the G-3 from his conversation with General McAuliffe. (40)

To add to the discomfort of the besieged forces, it started to snow. By the night of 23 December, the ground was covered with six inches of snow. (41)

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE

The German order of battle identified by captured prisoners, intelligence reports, and documents on enemy dead is shown:

Panzer Lehr Division

560th Volksgrenadier Division (elements)

26th Volksgrenadier Division

2d Panzer Division

5th Parachute Division (elements) (42) (See Map B)

The actual units used against Bastogne were later found out by a conference with the German commanders after V-E Day. These units included:

26th Volksgrenadier Division

Panzer Lehr Division

2d Panzer Division

All under the control of XLVII Panzer Corps. (43)

(38) Personal knowledge; A-1, p. 140, 141, 179; (39) A-1, p. 141, 142; Personal knowledge; (40) A-1, p. 115-117; (41, 42) Personal knowledge; (43) A-1, p. 178, 179.

THE REGIMENTAL SITUATION

The 502d Parachute Infantry Regiment had been moved into position with front lines at Longchamps and Recogne. (See Map D) The 1st Battalion was used as the division reserve while the regiment was patrolling vigorously the area north to Bertogne. (44) (See Map B)

Enemy armored action in the vicinity of Recogne against the 3d Battalion had forced the unit to withdraw and occupy the high ground at Sonne - Fontaine, 24 December 1944. This now gave the 502d Regiment a defense sector of 8000 yards. (45) (See Map D)

Company A, attached direct to regiment, occupied four road blocks and strong points on a reverse slope defense that did not take in the two buildings outside the village. ^(CHAMPS?) These two buildings could not be defended by the limited amount of troops on hand to defend the large area assigned to this company. These two houses were not destroyed since they were outside of the sector of defense. This point must be remembered since it has a bearing on the actions that will be described. (46) (See Map D)

wow

Disregarding any limiting point with Company A, the 2d Battalion defended the Longchamps area on the forward slope with the 3d Battalion on the high ground at Sonne - Fontaine. ~~The~~ terrain in this area was generally rolling, highly suited for the employment of armor. To the northwest of Champs was a prominent hill. The town was on a small bench with a dip through a deep swail before approaching the prolongation of the hill to the north. Between the towns of Champs and Longchamps was a wooded draw that partially extended through the entire regimental area. At Longchamps there was a very dominant hill ideal for observation to the north in the vicinity of Bertogne and to the south to Bastogne. The area was open on this hill, giving fields of fire of over 1000 yards forward of the military crest. It was an ideal area to defend. ~~In~~ the 3d Battalion area at Sonne - Fontaine the high ground was (44, 45, 46) Personal knowledge; Statement, Maj Hatch.

wooded. It was not an effective obstacle, but more of a constant threat to the defense because of the numerous trails and small roads running to Recogne and Foy. (47) (See Map D)

To defend the 8000-yard area, the Regimental Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Steve A. Chappuis, ordered strong points to be held and defended in depth. Each company was to have one platoon to constitute a reserve. This reserve would occupy positions and be available for commitment by the battalion commanders where needed. All occupied positions were ordered defended from foxholes and dugouts with few reinforcements of the village buildings. (48)

First Battalion troops, including Company A, were tired and almost exhausted from the actions as division reserve. For this reason, Company A was not in condition to carry on extensive patrolling in the Champs area, where the 502 lines met with the 327th Glider Infantry Regiment. (49)

The regimental command post was located in the center of the oval-shaped defenses at Rolle. At the CP were located the motor pool and ammunition point. South of the CP in the woods was the assembly area for the mobile reserve of the 1st Battalion, less Company A. (50) (See Map D)

On 24 December, another resupply was furnished the Bastogne garrison. At 1540, 160 C-47 cargo planes dropped an estimated 139½ tons of ammunition and 3½ tons of signal equipment by parachute. These supplies were flown from Camp Mourmelon, France. (51)

All hands available on instant notice were sent from each regiment to the drop-zone to recover supplies. Because of the difficulty in supervising such mass details as this from the whole division, the G-4, Lieutenant Colonel Carl Kohls, was never able to ascertain the actual amount of supplies dropped. Reports from the units indicated a total of 100 tons were recovered; however, many supplies were never reported. (52)

(47) Personal knowledge; Statement, Maj Roy Martin; (48) Statement, Maj James H. Hatch; (49) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; (50) Personal knowledge; (51) Statement, Lt Otis Winn; Personal knowledge; A-9; (52) A-1, p. 139.

The wounded casualties of the 502d Parachute Infantry were bedded down in the chateau stables with attendants from the CP personnel doing double duty to aid the Regimental Surgeon, Major Douglas T. Davidson.

(AT ROUETTE?)
The chateau was a fortified position as it stood, with rock walls over three feet thick, reinforced by cement. (53)

Patrol actions during 24 December consisted of one patrol led by Lieutenant David E. White, Assistant S-2 of regiment, in the vicinity of Rouette. Before reaching the village, the patrol received fire from the German outposts and ^{WAS} ~~were~~ forced to return without complete detailed information.

Information gained from patrol activities 22 - 24 December indicated a German buildup going on north of Rouette to Bertogne. Actually this was later determined to be the backtracking of the 2d Panzer Division. (54)

The ground covered with snow became icy and crusted near the roads making it difficult to trace the damaged wire lines. Instead of repairing old lines, the Regimental Communications Officer, Captain Phillips, recommended that new lines be laid. This meant re-laying several lines within the regimental area. The wire section consisted of eleven wiremen, three switchboard operators, one telephone and switchboard repairman, and a section chief. The T/O called for thirteen men, two of which were designated as switchboard operators; however, it had been found necessary to have an over-strength in the wire section.

The wire crews were hard at work laying double lines to each of the front-line battalions and Company A. A switchboard was set up for Company A with operators furnished from First Lieutenant George Gunn's 1st Battalion Communications Section. Double lateral lines were laid between Company A and 2d Battalion. One line was laid between 2d and 3d Battalions, while Company D, 2d Battalion, laid a lateral to Company G of the 3d Battalion, giving two channels of wire communication between the two battalions. Third (53) Personal knowledge; (54) Personal knowledge; A-1, p. 193, 194.

Battalion wire section laid two lines to the 3d Battalion, 506th Parachute Infantry. One line made direct contact between the two battalion CP's and the other between the adjacent front-line companies. One of the communication wire lines running to 3d Battalion was tapped onto by the 2d Platoon of B Company. This platoon was occupying a road block on the Longchamps - Bastogne Highway. Another single line was laid to the reserve battalion in the woods south of Rolle, and a line was tied into Lieutenant Colonel Roy C. Allen's 3d Battalion*, 327th Glider Regiment, on the Bastogne - Champs Road. Company A tied in with B Company, 327th, thus giving similar lateral wire communications on both flanks of the regiment. (See Line Route Map C) The 377th Field Artillery Battalion, in support of the regiment, had one line laid to the switchboard and one to the field artillery radio operator located in the WHOLE? (CHATEAU A TROLLE?) servant's quarters. Installations within the regimental command post consisted of one line to S-2, also one line to S-3, with S-1 and S-4 sharing one line together. The artillery liaison officer had a special line as well as the regimental commander. Other installations included one line to each of the following:

Motor pool

Supply and ammunition point

PW tent

Demolition platoon, Headquarters Company

Commandant and Service Company Commander

Message center

Signal repair shop

Regimental surgeon partied to their sleeping quarters

Division radio partied with the radio operator's quarters

Communications officer (55)

*3d Bn, 327th, was the 1st Bn of the 401st Glider^{DEK} Regt that had been broken up previously, having the lettered Companies A, B, and C; (55) Personal knowledge.

The regimental wire chief, Staff Sergeant Waymon Blondell, was insistent upon using terminal strips at road crossings, command post installations, and prior to entering battalion CP's. These terminal strips** were not a T/O and E item. Staff Sergeant Blondell, regimental wire chief, was very practical about his work. The rough characters in the wire section respected him because of his consistent orders and the coolness ^{WITH} ~~IN~~ which he went about his duties. (56)

Sergeant Blondell felt the wire crews were laying more wire lines than could possibly be maintained. Captain Phillips agreed he was correct; however, it seemed apparent that the regiment needed the additional wire lines. Captain Phillips still insisted on the extra lines, even though radio operators would have to be used to spell off the weary wire crews in maintaining the lines. (57)

After a section of weary, tired wiremen reported in with all lines intact at 1700 hours, 24 December, the 1st Battalion moved from the woods south of Rolle to Hemroulle. This was a killjoy to the wiremen. Captain Phillips sent a wire crew to Hemroulle to investigate an old division wire line that had been abandoned. It was found good, thus eliminating another wire line to be laid that night. (58) (See Map E)

Captain Phillips had the message center personnel help the wire chief make a twenty-line cable, fifty feet long. This cable was made against the recommendation of the communications chief, he having read an article appearing in the Infantry Journal highly criticizing the use of cable lines within the command post. (59)

On the afternoon, 24 December 1944, the Demolition Officer, Lieutenant Hughes, had made a reconnaissance in the Longchamps and Champs sector for placing mines in the valley at the bottom of the Longchamps hill. Lieutenant

**Terminal strip is a strip of bakelite having binding posts whereby all lines can be controlled; (56) Personal knowledge; (57) Eye witness; (58) Personal knowledge; (59) Eye witness.

Hughes also had the bridges on the Champs - Longchamps Road and the bridge just south of Champs (both concrete bridges) prepared with demolitions. Two men for each bridge from the Regimental Demolition Platoon stayed in position ready to blow the bridges if necessary. Chain antitank mines were also made available for placing across the road at both of these points. (60)

Because the German armor and infantry had closed in closer to the defensive positions, the patrol activity carried out by the 2d Battalion was forced back to the extent of observation posts. (61)

One of the highlights of 24 December 1944 was a Christmas message distributed to the troops by the division commander. The message read as follows: "What's merry about all this, you ask? We're fighting - it's cold; we aren't home. All true, but what has the proud Eagle Division accomplished with its worthy comrades of the 10th Armored Division, the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, and all the rest? Just this: We have stopped cold everything that has been thrown at us from the north, east, south, and west. We have identifications from four German panzer divisions, two German infantry divisions, and one German parachute division. These units, spearheading the last desperate German lunge were headed straight west for key points when the Eagle Division was hurriedly ordered to stem the advance. How effectively this was done will be written in history, not alone in our division's glorious history, but in World history. The Germans actually did surround us; their radios blared our doom. Allied troops are counterattacking in force. We continue to hold Bastogne. By holding Bastogne, we assure the success of the Allied armies. We know that our Division Commander, General Taylor, will say: 'Well done!' We are giving our country and our loved ones at home a worthy Christmas present, and being privileged to take part in this gallant feat of arms are truly making for ourselves a Merry Christmas." (62)

The Division G-2, Lieutenant Colonel Paul A. Danahy, made an overlay

(60) Personal knowledge; (61) Statement, Maj Roy Martin; (62) Personal possession of author; A-1, p. 155.

of the enemy positions as of 24 December 1944. Inspired by the effect it would have on morale he wrote "Merry Christmas" across the US Forces' position and published a full distribution to the troops. (63)

During the night, the Bastogne area was bombed. As it happened, the 1st Battalion troops resisting at Hemroulle were awakened on a ready alert by the double bomb run. One bomb dropped in the Rolle courtyard destroying the prepared mess-kit line and knocking out a 1/4-ton jeep. No other apparent damage was noted since the heavy walls of the servant's quarters afforded good protection for the troops. (64)

THE DEFENSIVE ACTION

At 0245 an artillery barrage opened up on A Company's position at Champs. Lieutenant Colonel Cassidy, Regimental Executive Officer, called Captain Swanson of Company A to find out the situation. Captain Swanson reported his position was active with a heavy shelling from an artillery barrage. He had no definite information on where the probable attack would hit. (65)

At 0300, 25 December, the road patrol from Company F, 2d Battalion, reported enemy movement in the woods north of the road. Shortly after that the machine-gun position guarding the bridge sighted enemy on the bridge and opened fire. This chased the enemy back in^{to} the woods. The Germans did succeed in removing the demolition charges on the bridge. This was reported to regiment by telephone. (66) (See Map E)

By this time all the machine-gun positions in the 2d Battalion were firing. Positions of Company F were being fired on by the enemy. The 2d Battalion mortars traversed 1600 mills and laid a concentration down in the woods with the machine-gunners calling back the observed firing data on the sound power phone provided. ~~By~~ the screeching of the enemy wounded ~~is~~ clearly indicated the woods were occupied in strength by the enemy. This mortar fire was all tree bursts, making it very effective. (67)

(63) A-1, p. 155; Personal knowledge; (64) Personal knowledge; Statement, Maj Hanlon; (65) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; (66, 67) Statement, Maj Roy Martin.

In the meantime the reserves about the 2d Battalion Headquarters - cooks, clerks, company men - were rushed into position to back up the machine guns, but never had to fire as the enemy withdrew into the woods and ceased fire on 2d Battalion's positions. A few enemy had infiltrated through to Champs. (68) (See Map ^{D-4} E)

At 0330, Colonel Cassidy called Captain Swanson (Company A) asking him about the situation at Champs. In the course of this conversation, Colonel Cassidy learned that the Germans had come in on A Company's front. Just as Captain Swanson stated, "the Krauts were on top of us", the wire line went out. Colonel Cassidy tried the radio but failed to make contact with Captain Swanson. (69)

The Regimental Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Steve A. Chappuis, was awakened and given a resume of the situation by Colonel Cassidy. Colonel Chappuis then called Major John D. Hanlon, 1st Battalion Commanding Officer, by radio to alert his battalion and report to the Rolle CP at once. (70)

By this time it was evident to all CP personnel at Rolle what was happening. The artillery barrage had lifted to the CP at Rolle. For fifteen minutes the outside was untenable. (71)

As the artillery fire calmed down, the ^{HQ} Commandant, Regimental Headquarters Company, alerted all troops under his command to move out and occupy the high ground in the vicinity of the motor pool. The Demolition Platoon Leader, Lieutenant Laurence A. Hughes, influenced a change of these orders because of darkness and the lack of positions to occupy. Headquarters Commandant was also alerted later to occupy Road Block No. 3. (72) (See Map E)

The 2d Platoon of Company B, manning a third road block on the Long-champs - Bastogne Road, was sent by Colonel Steve A. Chappuis to fill the gap that existed between Company A and the 2d Battalion. (73) (See Map E)

Lieutenant Stewart, Platoon Leader of this 2d Platoon of B Company, (68) Statement, Maj Roy Martin; (69, 70) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; (71, 72) Personal knowledge; Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; (73) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy.

moved up the draw through regiment and into position near the woods by the No. 2 bridge and occupied the position. (74)

Major Hanlon (1st Battalion Commanding Officer) reported to the command post at Rolle for further orders. Upon learning that contact had been lost with Company A, he wanted to go forward to Champs and report back the situation. (75)

Colonel Chappuis (Commanding Officer) and Colonel Cassidy (Executive Officer) had made an estimate of the situation, thinking the main effort would either be at Champs or west of Champs, which later proved correct. (76)

Before Major Hanlon had left for Champs, he was ordered to send Company B forward to the vicinity of the road block and report to regiment when they arrived. Major Hanlon then ordered Company B to move forward to Bridge No. 1. After giving this order by radio, he proceeded to Champs to find Company A swarmed with enemy. The US Forces were firing at everything that moved from their dug-in foxhole positions outside of the buildings. The enemy was so stunned to find the American troops not occupying the houses in this freezing weather that it completely confused them. The enemy was all over the position, yet not an inch of ground was gained by the Germans. (77)

Major Hanlon managed to reach Captain Swanson of Company A after several perplexing movements had taken place outside the company CP. (78)

An estimated strength of one battalion was on the Champs position. This was later confirmed to be the 77th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. (79)

Major Hanlon then called regiment giving Colonel Chappuis the situation. Colonel Chappuis ordered Major Hanlon to retain Company B in their present position and wait until daylight to make a counterattack. This would avoid confusion and keep A Company's men from shooting up any of B Company's troops in the dark. Colonel Chappuis agreed this was a sound decision and gave

(74) A-16; (75) Statement, Maj Hanlon; & 76, 77) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; A-1, p. 198; (78) Statement, Maj Hanlon; (79) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; A-1, p. 198.

instructions for Major Hanlon to make a coordinated counterattack with his battalion as soon after daybreak as he could. Major Hanlon was ordered to move Company C into position for the counterattack. (80)

Major Hanlon called his CP by radio and ordered Company C to move up and join Company B in preparation for a counterattack. Company C, under the command of Captain George Cody, moved up the Bastogne - Champs Road near the Rolle crossroads. From this point, Captain Cody went forward to make a reconnaissance. (81) (See Map E)

Back at regiment, the staff made a quick estimate and came up with a coordinated thought. Colonel Chappuis determined the next blow would hit on the left of Champs. This sector was thinly held by the 3d Battalion, 327th Glider Regiment. (82)

Major James J. Hatch (Regimental S-3) tried to call division at 0715 and the wire line was out. Captain Phillips, Regimental Communications Officer, led Major Hatch to the radio in contact with division. After getting the message cleared, Major Hatch departed for Champs to coordinate the use of two tank destroyers and find out the situation. A few moments later, the switchboard was hit and all lines went out. The operator was unharmed except for shock which caused a serious case of jitters. The radio in contact with division was knocked out by a second shell. (83)

Captain Phillips directed the wire chief to relocate the switchboard, using a repaired 12-drop switchboard in the signal repair shop. Remaining wiremen were dispatched to terminal strips within the CP to check lines. The wire chief with another wireman went out to the terminal strip near the Rolle crossroad. Another radio was opened up in the woodshed near the chateau. (84)

Before lines could be checked through and a new board installed, Lieutenant Nickels, S-2 of the 1st Battalion, came running into the CP with one

(80) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; A-1, p. 198; (81) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; (82) A-2; (83, 84) Eye witness.

excited sentence, "Seven tanks and infantry were coming from the left." Before further details were known, the news flashed by voice throughout the CP in a matter of seconds. The chateau and courtyard were emptied like a coordinated assault. Section and platoon leaders led their groups up the CP road through the dip and established a skirmish line along the row of trees on the high ground near the crossroad. Captain James Stone, ^{aka} Commandant, Headquarters Company, rushed forward to command the scratch force composed of cooks, radio operators, wiremen, demolition troops, and staff personnel.

(85) (See Map E)

Major Davidson, Regimental Surgeon, rallied his patients and issued rifles in case they had to defend the place. (86)

 The fog was dense with visibility limited to less than 100 yards. This was a big obstacle for the attacking force. (87)

Company C had been moving up the Bastogne - Champs Road with attachments from Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, in an approach march formation. By following the division SOP policy, Captain George Cody, Company C Commanding Officer, had his company deployed in a perimeter defense, while he went forward for a reconnaissance. Captain Cody came back after seeing the tanks to find one platoon already engaged in a firefight. Captain Cody withdrew two platoons to the woods south of the Rolle crossroads. (See Map E) The third platoon, already engaged, was fighting in front of the 3d Battalion, 327th Glider Regiment, command post. (See Map E) Captain Cody withdrew two squads of the 3d Platoon with the squad heaviest engaged left to fight it out. This squad was captured along with everything left by 3d Battalion CP when they evacuated. (88)

As the German tanks came over the hill, two tank destroyers of Company B, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, engaged the enemy tanks in a running battle. It was a matter of who made the first hit. Both tank destroyers (85, 86, 87) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; Personal knowledge; (88) Statement, Capt Cody.

22

were hit, but not severely, after knocking out two or three enemy tanks. As they backed off to a concealed position near a haystack, both TD's were destroyed. One sergeant managed to escape; the remaining crew personnel were burned to death. (89)

While this action was going on, the tank destroyers east of the chateau had been alerted by a runner. Lieutenant Colonel Cassidy (Executive Officer) had sent orders for the two tank destroyers to move into the woods south of Rolle and take the tanks under fire. (90)

The two tank destroyers came over in the draw and started in the wrong direction, but were reoriented by several individuals and sent to the correct position. (91) (See Map E)

In the meantime, Company B had turned about face and set up a skirmish line across the Bastogne - Champs Road. Company C was getting established in the woods after having received fire from the German tanks.

The German troops that could be seen were milling around the captured command post of the 3d Battalion, 327th Glider Regiment. The tanks were coming forward boldly by now, firing as they moved, with no effects of accuracy. (92)

Fire opened up from all sides of the American defensive positions with a combination of machine-gun and rifle fire supported by the antitank rocket launchers and mortars. This avalanche of fire was more than the attacking enemy could stand. The enemy around the captured command post site withered under the devastating fire. The enemy riding piggyback on the tanks died in positions. A few were pitching from the tanks to the snow screeching from their wounds. More enemy infantry troops came out of the woods to be caught in the line of American fire. (93)

Two mortar crews had combined and set up one mortar near the Rolle command post. By the use of four SCR 536 radios, the mortar crew was able

(89) Personal knowledge; After Action Report extract taken by Lt Rapport and sent to author from 705 TD Bn; (90, 91, 92, 93) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; Eye witness.

to concentrate effective fire on the German troops in the vicinity of the captured command post site. (94)

One hundred and two rounds of 81 mm mortar ammunition were fired by this mortar section before Major Haire, Regimental S-4, stopped the action to keep his ammunition from being depleted of the last one hundred rounds. By this time the two tank destroyers went into action. The combined effects of all the fire delivered on the German tanks and infantry broke up the German attack. (95)

One Mark IV tank made a break for Champs as it passed the Rolle crossroads. A bazooka man fired, but having failed to pull the pin on the shell, it failed to explode and the tank got away. This Mark IV broke through B Company's lines. At the bridge south of Champs a demolition man tried to blow the bridge, but the dynamite was frozen. This gave the Mark IV tank a clear run into Champs. A scout car opposite Captain Swanson's command post had the turret facing the wrong direction and was unable to use the 37 mm gun mounted in the turret. This Mark IV had stirred up a little commotion along Company A's position, even scaring the wits out of the Regimental S-3, Major Hatch. (96)

The alert road block crew made a knockout blow when the combination of a bazooka and 57 mm gun took the German tank under fire. As it passed the road block, the tank went up in flames. (97) (See Map E)

A second German tank making a break to follow the first one met its doom near the Rolle crossroads as Sergeant Schuyler Jackson (Demolition Platoon) made a cleancut hit when he rushed forward to fire his loaded bazooka. A third enemy tank was knocked out by the combination of the tank destroyer fire and bazooka fire from Company C. The two remaining enemy tanks were destroyed by the tank destroyers. (See Map E) The team leader of the German tanks escaped towards Hemroulle only to be captured. From (94) Eye witness; (95) Statement, Capt Hugh O. Roberts; (96, 97) Statement, Maj Hatch.

the prisoners of this enemy tank, it was learned that they had knocked out the two tank destroyers after the running battle engagement. (98)

This action accounted for sixty-five German dead and thirty-five prisoners in a furious thirty-minute battle. The action was all cleared up by 0900.

Back at the command post at Rolle, the wire crews were busy restoring the wire communications. Captain Phillips, Regimental Communications Officer, had to pull the wiremen off the skirmish line one by one as the tank battle was beginning to take action. (99)

The cable cord made the previous day was a big time-saver in connecting the relocated switchboard to the outgoing terminal strip. From the terminal strip, the lines were repaired and put back in order by 0900. (100)

A new line was laid to Company A and the 2d Battalion. Contact to division was maintained through the lateral line between the 502d's 3d Battalion and the 506th Parachute Infantry Regiment wire communications lines. The wire lines laid to 2d Battalion and Company A were shelled again, resulting in additional repair by the wire maintenance team. A new line was laid to the forward command post of the 1st Battalion in the woods in preparation for the counterattack. (101) (See Map F)

Major Hatch (Regimental S-3) was still forward at Champs completing the details for the counterattack. (102)

At 1230 the attack jumped off with Company C and Company B. Company C was to clear the west side of Champs and Company B the east side of the village. Company C moved into position with no difficulty; however, B Company took a severe shellacking from observed German artillery fire. The 3d Platoon suffered heavy casualties with the platoon leader being killed by artillery fire. The observed enemy artillery was controlled by a German artillery observer located in a house in Champs. This house had been unoccupied or defended by Company A. It was later learned that during the night 24-25

(98) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; Eye witness; A-1, p. 169; (99) Eye witness; (100, 101) Personal knowledge; (102) Statement, Maj Hatch.

December, the observer had set up his radio for the early morning attack.

(103) (See Map F)

Positions were restored and all buildings occupied by 1700, 25 December. A meager counterattack was made by the Germans, but was stopped before it could materialize. (104)

In counting the casualties at Champs, there were 98 German dead, 8 American paratroopers dead, with 15 US casualties and 81 Germans, including two officers who were captured. (105)

Over in the 3d Battalion area of the 327th Glider Regiment where the German tank-infantry teams had broken through, eleven other tanks had been knocked out by the combined efforts of the tank destroyers and the 463d Field Artillery Battalion firing direct fire. Front-line companies of the 3d Battalion, 327th, had made a tenacious stand to stop the infantry troops and tanks without moving from their dug-in foxhole positions. (106)

Eighteen enemy tanks in all were knocked out in this Christmas morning action. (107)

Information contained in captured enemy documents showed the 115th Panzergrenadier Regiment (recently brought up from Italy) and two battalions of the 77th Volksgrenadier Regiment supported by the 26th Volksgrenadier Division Artillery had participated in the German attack. Later reports revealed that two regiments of the 15th Panzer Grenadier Division had gotten off to a poor start in the 3rd 77th Sector, while the 77th Regiment made an attack on the east side of Champs. The Reconnaissance Battalion of the 15th Panzer Grenadier had hit the 327th Glider Regiment lines farther south. (108)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

For the purposes of clarity this Christmas day action was explained in four separate individual actions. Actually the enemy had made a double envelopment on Champs with the plan of capturing the American Forces' CP at Rolle.

(103, 104) Statement, Maj Hatch; (105) Statement, Lt Col Cassidy; A-1, p. 169; (106) A-1, p. 162; (107) A-1, p. 167; (108) A-1, p. 197, 198.

The initial attack in the wooded draw between Champs and Longchamps failed in the initial stages because of the effective fire laid down by Company F's two light machine guns and the speed in which 2d Battalion mortars had brought the enemy under accurate fire. The fact that the concentration was tree bursts was not planned; it just happened.

The enemy attacking at Champs moved in with assurance^{AS TO THE POSITION} of the position. The buildings were occupied without a great deal of opposition; however, when Company A road blocks and dug-in positions opened up with accurate, well-aimed fire on the enemy outside the buildings, it completely confused the German commander. The excellent targets for the tank destroyers were made by the enemy occupying the houses. It is apparent that Company A was fighting in all directions and firing at all moving targets. In this particular situation, it worked without firing into their own troops.

Had the enemy that penetrated over the entire village of Champs employed armor, there is no doubt that the Champs position could have been taken.

In the combined tank and infantry battle at Rolle CP, it may appear that the reserve was committed piecemeal; however, it was not. Company C quickly took up positions in the woods and was reinforced by regiment along with Company B. The action of the tank destroyers was an effective morale booster to the troops, plus the fact they accounted for a considerable amount of enemy armor knocked out.

The running battle of the two tanks which destroyed three enemy tanks before they themselves were destroyed is an example of the tank destroyers' actions. The enemy riding the tanks were quickly cleared and the enemy tanks deprived of infantry. For this reason, the tanks were in no position to have any further firefight since they were buttoned up.

The success of this combined action was a direct result of the regimental commander and executive officer making a correct estimate of the enemy (capabilities.)*

The efficient use of the CP personnel was very effective. It was accomplished only through the fact that the entire CP was alerted for a penetration in any area.

The timely dispatch of tank destroyers to the critical points of the action, just when needed, was a decisive factor in annihilating the enemy.

Through the successful decisions of the commanders, small unit leaders could spur on the determination of the troops to resist.

The patrolling action of our forces that had ceased on Christmas eve played well into the plans of the enemy. Had this patrolling been accomplished, the enemy would not have ^{OBTAINED} ~~opened~~ surprise on the various positions. The assembly areas and avenues of approach would also have been an excellent target to drop artillery on before the enemy attack could have got started.

The use of the mobile reserve was very effective by being in the proper place at the right time to take the enemy under fire.

Criticisms of US Forces

The criticisms of the US Forces are few, since their actions were an achievement of battle success with very few losses sustained. Since there are always a few criticisms that can teach many lessons no matter how small, some of the most noted are as follows:

The failure of Company A to destroy the last two houses in the north part of the Champs village, since it was not a good position to defend, resulted in the enemy using the upper story of one of the houses to call down observed artillery on the position. Had the last two houses been destroyed, the enemy artillery observer would not have been able to locate himself in this position to call down the artillery on Company B. Again, the SCR 300 radio at A Company's position went out of order at a crucial moment because of undependable batteries and due to improper maintenance.

The lateral communication lines between Company A and the 2d Battalion were laid laterally along the road unprotected. These wire lines should have

been laid in a V-shaped depth and not near the main line of resistance.

Company A let down on their patrolling and contact with the 327th on their left during the night 24-25 December. This happened for some unknown reason; however, the regiment should have taken steps to insure that the area was patrolled by using troops from one of the other battalions.

The regimental switchboard should not have been located above ground floor since installations of this type are always a target for the enemy artillery. Despite this an auxiliary switchboard should have been installed in a protected location; also, wire lines to both of the switchboards should have been dug in for protection against artillery fire. This could have been accomplished had the communications officer foreseen the probable actions that were to take place.

Enemy Criticisms

The Germans used the principles of mass⁺ surprise, with economy of force, to gain the initial advantage in the enveloping movement. These principles were sound and feasible. The enemy had remarkable success in gaining complete advantage with a victory in sight. Instead of pressing home this initial advantage, the enemy lost what had been gained by not using adequate security in movement, and coordination of effort. These unforgivable glaring deficiencies cost the enemy the one chance to seize Bastogne on Christmas day.

The failure of initiative on the part of the enemy at Champs to find out the area was defended from dug-in foxhole positions and not from the buildings lost a complete surprise of effort. After the enemy had moved in on the Champs position, they became confused and bewildered to find fire concentrating on them from all directions. When the enemy found such a defense, actions should have been taken to overcome the positions and not