

R E P O R T N O. 185

HISTORICAL SECTION

CANADIAN MILITARY HEADQUARTERS

5 Nov 48

Operation "VERITABLE": The Winter Offensive  
Between the Maas and the Rhine, 8 - 25 Feb 45.

AMENDMENT NO. 1

Insert the following passages after para 208:-

208a. Since this report was completed, the British Army of the Rhine (B.A.O.R.) has turned out a series of highly interesting Battlefield Tour studies. These were written with the object of providing an accurate yet concise story of the most important battles and of the many problems concerned with them. The B.A.O.R. report on Operation "VERITABLE", while it does not make any changes in the Canadian narrative necessary, does have great historical value in that it provides a source of accurate information regarding.

(a) The operations of the British formations under General Crerar's command with particular reference to 15 (S) Inf Div, and

(b) (i) Tactical and administrative build-up.

- (ii) Problems of organization of traffic control.
  
- (iii) Report of the effect of various weapons.
  
- (iv) New lessons derived from tactical experiments.
  
- (v) Technical notes on the employment of certain specialist arms  
such as artillery.

These items are not dealt with in this account of Canadian operations, but may be set down later under separate heading. (British Army of the Rhine Battlefield Tour Operation VERITABLE)

(C.P. Stacey) Colonel,  
Director Historical Section

REPORT NO. 185

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OPERATION "VERITABLE": THE WINTER OFFENSIVE  
BETWEEN THE MAAS AND THE RHINE, 8 - 25 FEB 45.

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Operation "VERITABLE": The Winter Offensive  
between the Maas and the Rhine, 8 - 25 Feb 45.

Reference Maps: G.S.G.S.4336, N.E. France and Belgium,  
1/1,000,000, Sheet 4; G.S.G.S.254,  
Holland, 1/1,000,000, Sheet 5; G.S.G.S.  
4416, Central Europe, 1/1,000,000,  
Sheets P.1 and Q.1.  
G.S.G.S. 4414 France, Holland, Belgium  
1/25,000, Sheets 6SW, 12 NW, 19NW, 19SW,  
G.S.G.S.4414 Holland, Germany, 4102, 4103,  
4104, 4105, 4202, 4203. 4204, 4205. 4302.  
4304, 4305, 4402, 4403, 4405, 4502,  
4503, 5504, 4505.

1. The present report traces the planning of Operation "VERITABLE" from its inception during the autumn of 1944 and describes the actual course of the fighting by First Canadian Army through the Reichswald Forest in February 1945. Subsequent operations through the Hochwald to the Rhine opposite Wesel will be the subject of a further report. For obvious reasons the part played by Canadian formations is told in somewhat greater detail than is the case with other British units under command First Canadian Army.

THE C.-IN-C.'S INTENTIONS, AUTUMN 1944

2. Field-Marshal Montgomery, C.-in-C. 21 Army Group, had already begun to implement his further intentions for the Army Group while the operations to open Antwerp were in progress ([Report No. 154](#)). As he explained the situation in retrospect,

I was busy considering re-grouping for the next major battle which would precede the capture of the Ruhr. I had hoped to launch an offensive some time in the late Autumn to clear the area between the Meuse and the Rhine, but it was necessary first to clean up the considerable enemy forces which remained West of the Meuse, particularly in the Venlo area. We were not strong enough to do this and at the same time undertake a major thrust between the rivers.

These operations enabled us to economize forces by basing the front on the Meuse obstacle, and ensured a friendly western flank for the battle to follow. The weather was often appalling, and the fighting took place in difficult country against a very tenacious enemy. But by early December the Second British Army was lined up along the river Meuse as far south as Maeseyek, whence the front crossed the river to the area of Geilenkirchen and joined the Ninth U.S. Army.

To facilitate the Second Army operations, I transferred the responsibility for the Nijmegen bridgehead to the Canadian Army on completion of the Scheldt operations.

This re-grouping had a further object: The First Canadian Army was required to plan the battle of the Rhineland which was to be launched from the Rhineland which was to be launched from the Nijmegen area; the Second British Army was to plan the subsequent assault across the Rhine.

Journal of the Royal United Service Institution. Vol. XC, No. 560, November 1945: 21 (British) Army Group in the Campaign in North-West Europe, 1944-45).

3. At the end of January General Crerar advised the Minister of National Defence of First Canadian Army's forth-coming responsibilities:

In view of the commitments about to be undertaken by the Second British Army, complementary to the attack intended by the 12th U.S. Army Group, and of the existing administrative restrictions, it did not appear that First Canadian Army would presently be called upon for any large-scale offensive operations.

In accordance with the instructions of the C.in-C., however, the possibilities of such operations south-eastwards from the Nijmegen bridgehead between the Maas and the Rhine, or alternatively northwards across the Neder Rijn towards Apeldoorn were being examined and plans made to enable them to be mounted at short notice, and when additional formations were made available.

(AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/E: General Crerar's Despatch to Minister of National Defence, 31 Jan 45)

4. On 28 Nov General Crerar reported to the C.in-C. that he had made a study of the proposed operation between the rivers (referring to it by the code-name "VALEDICTION"), and that a general plan had ben prepared. He intimated, however, that he did not consider that it was practicable to initiate any such operation at that time, pointing out that it would now be more difficult and costly than under the conditions which faced Lt-Gen Dempsey in the previous October. "Weather, ground and communication conditions and the organization of enemy defences", he said, "have since developed to our disadvantage." (G.O.C.in-C. 1-0. Folio 107: Personal message Crerar to C.in-C., 28 Nov 44). The Field-Marshal proved to be much more immediately concerned, however, about driving the enemy off the eastern end of the "island" between Nijmegen and Arnhem. The drive south-east was not then a pressing matter.

There is no intention (he wrote) of launching this operation now, and I have never expressed any wish to do so. All I want you to do is to examine it and put the planners on to thinking it out. It will not be launched till the spring, i.e., March or later.

(Ibid, folios 109 - 110, Montgomery to Crerar, 30 Nov 44).

5. In the following week there was a sudden change of the C.in-C.'s plan, due, possibly, to the fact that an enemy attack on the sensitive eastern end

of the "island" had been repulsed, and that a large part of this area was now eliminated as a battle-field by enemy flooding, which precluded any operations northward across the Neder Rijn. On 6 Dec Field Marshal Montgomery arrived at General Crerar's Headquarters to discuss operations for breaking through the strong enemy positions south-east of Nijmegen, which it had now been decided should be undertaken at the beginning of the new year. The reasons for this decision are given by General Crerar in a despatch to the Minister of National Defence.

It was now the considered conclusion of higher command that the enemy be allowed no respite, but rather that he must be denied the time to build up his defences and the size and strength of his tactical and strategical reserves. This meant that neither winter weather, nor bad going conditions, must be allowed to check our offensive operations, no matter what the difficulties and despite discomfort. Secondly, the selected objective for such operations must be of decisive character. This pointed very definitely to the Ruhr. Thirdly, our operations must be so designed as to force the enemy to engage in mobile warfare in which he would be at a disadvantage owing to the shortage of petrol, mechanical transport and tanks. This requirement indicated the suitability of the area lying between the Rhine and the Meuse. The task required that we should break out from our limited deployment area east of Nijmegen (which was clear of the major water obstacles), and then driving south-east and south, with the Meuse on our right and the Rhine on our left, to join up, opposite the Ruhr, with a northerly thrust by the 12th U.S. Army Group then facing Cologne.

(AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/E, 31 Jan 45)

In order that I might have ample forces at my disposal, it was agreed that the Headquarters of the 30th British Corps, and Corps Troops, three additional British infantry divisions, one armoured division, four independent tank and armoured brigades and four army artillery groups would come under my command. As the GOC 30th British Corps had previously studied this operation in Oct and as, with a view to future regrouping I was required to employ that Corps on my right, Lt-Gen Horrocks was to be given the responsibility of launching the attack. Also, in order to avoid congestion and complications in the forward assembly area, the 3rd Canadian Infantry Division, then in position, was to be placed under Lt-Gen Horrocks for the first phase .<sup>1</sup> ...The C.in-C. decided, further, that all the resources for air support available to the 21st Army Group, including those of Bomber Command and the U.S. Army Air Force, should be made available. General planning and detailed studies thereafter proceeded with speed. The Headquarters of the 30th British Corps came under my command on 13 Dec and a considerable process of re-grouping was set in motion.

(Ibid)

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<sup>1</sup> Another reason for the employment of 3 Cdn Inf Div appears to have been an intimation from Lt-Gen Simonds that to leave the Canadians out of so important, and perhaps decisive, a battle would be a bitter disappointment to the troops. "Gen Crerar saw Monty the following day and as a result 3 Cdn Div was included in the 30 Corps attacking diva." (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Corps/K/F: Brig N.E. Rodger's Personal Diary, 10-13 Dec 44).

## THE OPERATION POSTPONED

6. By an ironical coincidence, however, on the day when the Field-Marshal issued a formal directive on the lines already indicated verbally to his Army Commanders, von Rundstedt opened his great counter-offensive in the Ardennes. As General Crerar records:

While these activities were proceeding, enemy attacks, beginning on 16 Dec and rapidly revealing themselves as a major offensive, were launched against the front held by the 12th U.S. Army Group in the sector east of the Ardennes between the Cologne plain and the Lorraine gap. At 5 p.m. on 19 Dec the C.in-C. informed me by telephone that the enemy's penetration of the First U.S. Army's front was deep and potentially serious. With that in mind, he had decided to make immediate re-dispositions in the 21st Army Group in order to secure his right flank. The Headquarters of the 30th British Corps was to move that night to Hasselt, coming under the command of Lt-Gen Dempsey at whose Tactical Headquarters Lt-Gen Horrocks was to report at once.

(Ibid)

7. This is not the place to discuss the Ardennes offensive or its repercussions on First Cdn Army. (This is done in considerable detail in General Crerar's Despatch of 31 Jan 45). Operation "VERITABLE" was not forgotten, however, as appears from the General's Notes on a conference held at H.A. 21 Army Group on 20 Dec.

The C.in-C. intimated that it was possible that the situation confronting the Allied Armies would improve materially within the next few days. If such turned out to be the case and 30 Brit Corps was not required for counter-offensive purposes on the right flank, then it was quite probable that HQ 30 Corps and several divisions would be returned to First Cdn Army, in order to proceed with speed on Operation "VERITABLE". With that in view, the work of improving the communications in First Cdn Army area, leading to the Nijmegen salient, would vigorously proceed.

(W.D., G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, December 1944, Appx. 4)

8. At a further conference during the following week the Field-Marshal again referred to the resumption of plans for "VERITABLE". General Crerar's notes of the meeting indicate that:

... from the point of view of the future mounting of Operation "VERITABLE", by First Canadian Army, he wished to keep HQ 30 Brit Corps, Corps Troops and the several British Divisions, earmarked for that Operation, uncommitted to any active, exhausting operations. "VERITABLE" would be mounted just as soon as the Boche became thoroughly involved in the counter-offensive which would shortly be launched by First U.S. and Third U.S. Armies. He would expect "VERITABLE" to be launched a fortnight after the date when 30 Brit Corps and the several Brit Divisions comprising it, became available to move to First Cdn Army area ...

As stated previously, he expected the enemy to make "nasty faces" and indulge in diversionary "jabs", along the front 12 and 8 Corps of Second Brit Army, and against sector held by First Cdn Army. He did not anticipate any serious attacks along such frontages, unless major thrust northwards of Five and Six Pz Armies showing promising results. He did not expect any such results. As soon, therefore, as 12 and 21 Army Group's counter-offensives developed favourably, it was his intention to transfer 30 Brit Corps, and the several British formations previously planned to be under its command, to Cdn Army and launch Operation "VERITABLE" as speedily and forcefully as possible. Although Comd Second Brit Army would temporarily have responsibilities on right (30 Corps) as well as on left (12 and 8 Corps) of First and Ninth U.S. Armies, as 30 Corps would be in a protective, rather than in an active, operational role, this inconvenience could be temporarily accepted.

(Ibid, Appx 6, 22 Dec 44)

9. On 31 Dec in a directive to his Corps Commanders regarding the steps to be taken to meet an expected German attack across the lower Maas, General Crerar reminded them that it was "most important, also, to solve such problems without dangerously compromising our ability later to launch Operation "VERITABLE" (Ibid, Appx 7).

10. The situation early in January is described at length by General Crerar in his despatch of 5 Apr 45:

The Allied armies in the west at the beginning of 1945 were deployed in three groups - the 6th, comprising the First French and Seventh U.S. Armies, the attenuated 12th, with, for the time being, only the Third U.S. Army under command, and an enlarged 21st Army Group composed of the First and Ninth U.S., the Second British and First Canadian Armies. The front now held by Field Marshall Montgomery extended some 300 miles from the line Givet - Cologne north-wards to Nijmegen and thence along the Rivers Waal and Maas to the sea. The general situation was one of continuing uncertainty in the face of von Rundstedt's great counter-offensive in the south and the preparation which the enemy had been making for a thrust with some four divisions across the Maas and on the islands of Schouwen and Overflakkee. The outlook over the west as a whole was further affected by an attack launched by the enemy with seven divisions along a twenty-mile front in the relatively quiet sector of the Saar held by the Seventh U.S. Army.

As a temporary measure during this operational 'alert' on the northern flank of First Canadian Army, I assumed responsibility on 3 Jan for consolidating the defences of Walcheren and the two Bevelands, an arrangement which the C.-in-C. regarded as being greatly desirable in order that the whole northern sector of the 21st Army Group should be under unified command. The garrison was composed of the 4th Commando Brigade with the Royal Netherlands Brigade and certain anti-aircraft units under command. The Army boundary was changed accordingly, and the direction of the defence of the islands and peninsula assumed by the 1st British Corps. From Venlo on the Meuse to Westkapelle on the

sea-coast of Walcheren the front under my command stretched for 175 miles.

(W.D., G.O.C.-in-C, First Cdn Army, April 1945: Appx "B")

11. But the prospects of reverting from such purely defensive dispositions began almost immediately to improve. General Crerar writes:

It soon began to appear that the enemy's offensive intentions north of the Maas might have undergone substantial change. Reports of troop movements and air photographs showing the evacuation of gun sites indicated a withdrawal from the Land van Altena. I was drawn to the conclusion that while the enemy might still be intending to mount a large-scale raid with, perhaps, a brigade group, from the island of Schouwen, he was either limiting or abandoning his intended effort directed across the Maas through Breda to Antwerp. In view of the possible recurrence of such threats from over the rivers, the tactical policy then agreed upon with the RAF was to disrupt the enemy's communications between his forward assembly areas and the country north of the Waal. Thus if General Student, the C.-in-C. Army Group 'H', decided to deploy his troops offensively at some later stage, his intentions would be revealed by evidence of a renewed concern to improve his roads and repair his bridges. Meanwhile, active patrolling and small local actions characterized the exchanges during the first week of January.

12. General Crerar's appreciation that the enemy was thinning out his forces across the Maas, induced him to take advantage of the opportunity to regroup his own formations during the ensuing week. According, 4 Cdn Armd Div took up position on the right flank of 1 Brit Corps, with 1 Pol Armd C. Regt on the left and 62 A.Tk Regt facing the sea. 4 Cdn Inf Bde Gp reverted from Army reserve to 2 Cdn Inf Div. (Ibid).

13. Events on the eastern front now also began to have a powerful effect on allied calculations in the west. The Russians were bringing their successful Balkan campaign to a climax in the capture of Budapest, and farther to the north their great winter offensive was about to break in irresistible fury upon the enemy in Poland. Four weeks after this amazing onslaught was let loose, the Soviet Armies were lining the River Oder almost three hundred miles beyond their start-line in front of Warsaw and less than forty from Berlin (W.O. Weekly Int Review, January - February 1945). The terrific strain extended remotely into Holland. As the G.O.C.-in-C. records:

Almost immediately I received a report that the 711th Infantry Division, which had been deployed across the Maas during the enemy's recent concentration against my northern sector, had been identified by the Russian General Staff in Hungary. This was the first time the Germans had found it necessary to withdraw a division away from the west since 6 Jun 44. In the Ardennes the enemy salient, under continuous pressure, had already begun steadily to shrink. The offensive by First Canadian Army could now rapidly be remounted, for I had made it clear, a month previously, that I considered the operation to be only temporarily

postponed, and the necessary preparations had gone on, therefore, without interruption.

(General Crerar's Despatch, Apr 45)

#### PREPARATIONS RESUMED, JANUARY 1945

14. Such was the background to the resumption of planning and preparing for Operation "VERITABLE". The General thus described the subsequent developments:

On 16 Jan I attended a conference with the C.-in-C. 21st Army Group, at his Tactical Headquarters. The Field Marshal said that he appreciated that von Rundstedt, basing himself on the Arnhem and thence along the rivers to the sea, might again strike out offensively on the frontage held by the now weakened US Armies which would require time to be built up again to offensive requirements. It was quite essential, however, that we recover the initiative, and it was therefore necessary to decide upon a potentially decisive Allied operation and then to allot enough forces to carry it through successfully. He had already represented his views on these matters to the Supreme Commander and that morning had been informed by telephone of their acceptance. The essential of the Field Marshal's strategic plan was to get Allied forces in strength across the River Rhine, north of the Ruhr. To achieve this purpose fully adequate resources must needs be allotted, specifically for the 21st Army Group, in which he desired to retain the Ninth US Army. It

followed that the intention, objective and available resources for an attack by First Canadian Army south-eastwards from the frontage between the rivers east of Nijmegen remained generally as agreed upon early in December. There was a change, however, in his subsequent plan for the crossing of the Rhine. He had now come to the conclusion that the river crossings required to be handled by one army commander instead of two, a condition imposed by limitations of equipment of bridging and boating and in the supply of amphibians. He had therefore decided that when I had secured my objectives, he would regroup to give the necessary frontage of the Rhine and the responsibility of forcing crossings to Lt-Gen Dempsey.

The C.-in-C. confirmed the arrangements whereby Headquarters, 30th British Corps and Corps Troops, the infantry divisions and the bulk of the remaining formations previously allotted of the remaining formations previously allotted to me for this operation were to be placed at my disposal, the concentration and assembly of these forces as from 18 Jan to be carried out in accordance with my orders. The C.-in-C. stressed the importance of concealing our intentions from the enemy until the last moment. The target date was tentatively set for 10 Feb, on the assumption that the Ninth US Army would have taken over the line south and south-east of Roermond from the Second British Army by 1 Feb.

While the C.-in-C. realized the handicap of the 1st British Corps' very extended frontage, he felt it necessary to leave with me the continued responsibility for the security of the Beveland and the

Walcheren Islands, and to assist in this, the command of the 4th Commando Brigade. In addition, he proposed to transfer the 1st Commando Brigade to me from Lt-Gen Dempsey at a later stage. My right boundary was to be restored to the line of the road between boxmeer in Beek. On my returning to my Headquarters I took the necessary steps immediately to implement these instructions, which Field Marshal Montgomery carried a stage further with the issue of a directive on 21 Jan.

(Ibid)

#### THE C.-IN-C.'S DIRECTIVE OF 21 JAN

15. A directive issued by Field Marshal Montgomery on 21 Jan cancelled the previous one of 16 Dec, although much of it was word for word the same. It went into considerable detail running to six folio pages and bore the unmistakable stamp of the C.-in-C.'s vigorous style. In the opening paragraphs he thus summed up the general situation.:

The enemy has suffered a tactical defeat in the Ardennes, with severe losses in men and material.

12 Army Group is continuing offensive operations in the Ardennes in order to take advantage of the enemy's present unfavourable situation, to inflict further losses on him, and to seize any opportunity to breach the Siegfried Line. These operations are going to be continued so long as they continue to pay a good dividend: thereafter it is the intention

to pass to the defensive in the Ardennes, to re-group, and to attack further to the north on the right flank of 21 Army Group.

The enemy is at present fighting a defensive campaign on all fronts; his situation is such that he cannot stage minor offensive operations.

Furthermore, at all costs he has to prevent the war from entering on a mobile phase; he has not the transport or the petrol that would be necessary for mobile operations, now could his tanks compete with ours in the mobile battle.

The enemy is in a bad way; he has had a tremendous battering and has lost heavily in men and equipment. On no account can we relax, or have a "stand still" in the winter months; it is vital that we keep going so as not to allow him time to recover and so as to wear down his strength still further. There will be difficulties caused by mud, cold, lack of air support during periods of bad weather, and so on. But we must continue to fight the enemy hard during the winter months.

The main objective of the Allies on the western front is the Ruhr; if we can cut it off from the rest of Germany the enemy capacity to continue the struggle must gradually peter out.

A further, and very important, object of our operation must be to force mobile war on the Germans. We still therefore continue throughout the winter to conduct such operations as will:

(a) gain intermediate objectives towards the Ruhr.

(b) Place us in good jumping-off position for a mobile campaign in the Spring.

(c) Wear down the enemy's strength at a greater rate than our own.

The first stage in carrying out this policy must be to close up to the line of the Rhine.

The immediate objective is the line of the Rhine north of Dusseldorf. Thereafter our hold on the west bank of the river will be extended southwards to Bonn, and beyond. When the opportunitie moment arrives the Allied Armies will cross the Rhine in strength north of the Ruhr and at such other places as may be ordered by the Supreme Allied Commander.

(G.O.C.C.-in-C. file 1-0: Directive M 548, from C.-in-C., 21 Army Gp, 21 Jan 45)

16. The C.-in-C.'s intention was "to destroy all enemy in the area west of the Rhine from the present forward positions south of Nijmegen as far south as the general line Julich - Dusseldorf, as a preliminary to crossing the Rhine and engaging the enemy in mobile was to the north of the Ruhr". For these operations 21 Army Group was to consist of First Cdn, Second Brit and Ninth U.S. Armies. The outline plan was for:

Canadian Army to attack south-eastwards with its left on the Rhine (Operation "VERITABLE").

Ninth Army to attack north-eastwards with its right on the general line Julich - Dusseldorf (Operation "GRENADE").

Second Army to hold in the centre and to cross the Meuse in the Venlo area when ordered.

The operations of Ninth U.S. Army were to be supported by the left wing of 12 Army Group. It may be noted that the original plan did not provide for Operation "GRENADE", nor for the inclusion of Ninth U.S. Army in 21 Army Group, although 12 Army Group was to have made a concurrent thrust toward the Rhine farther to the south. (Ibid).

17. The initial grouping as laid down by this directive shows an impressive aggregation of strength under General Creerar's command.

Canadian Army

Second Army

H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps

H.Q. 8 Corps

H.Q. 1 Corps

H.Q. 12 Corps

H.Q. 30 Corps

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2 Cdn Div

3 Div )

3 Cdn Div	52 Div ) <sup>2</sup>
15 Div	11 Armd Div )
43 Div	6 Airborne Div)
49 Div	---
51 Div	4 Armd Bde
53 Div	1 Commando Bde
Gds Armd Div	115 Inf Bde
4 Cdn Armd Div	Royals
Polish Armd Div	
---	
6 Gds Armd Bde	
8 Armd Bde	
33 Armd Bde	
34 Armd Bde	
2 Cdn Armd Bde	
---	
4 S.S. Bde	
R. Netherlands Bde	
116 R. Marine Inf Bde	
117 R. Marine Inf Bde	

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3 The inclusion of 7 Armd Div was later cancelled owing to commitments elsewhere (see para 25 below). 33 Bde also appears to have been dropped from subsequent orders of battle for "VERITABLE". On the other hand 3 and 52 Inf and 11 Armd Divs later came under command First Canadian Army after the operations had begun.

Five AGRAs were also assigned to 30 Corps for the operation.

79 Armd Div was held in Army Group reserve, but most of its resources in assault equipment were made available (Ibid).

18. First Cdn Army's "strong offensive" south-eastwards between the rivers was to be carried "as far south as the general line Xanten - Geldern". (In the previous directive it had been the line Orsoy - Venlo). The target date was now 8 Feb (Ibid).

19. The Directive continued as follows:

Dry or hard ground would be the most suitable conditions for the operations. If these conditions exist, then the basis of the operation will be speed and violence. The aim will be to pass armoured columns through to disrupt and disorganize enemy resistance in rear and to achieve the object in the quickest possible time.

If the ground is wet and muddy, then a slower and more methodical progress may be

Two alternative plans will therefore be necessary.

30 Corps was to be kept on General Crerar's right flank in order to simplify the business of regrouping for subsequent operations in which all Canadian formations were to be kept under his command (Ibid).

20. While the Army commander was to plan to cross the Rhine at Emmerich, it was considered that this might not be possible until Second Brit Army had crossed the Rees farther south. Moreover, he was to bear in mind that eventually it would be necessary to establish road and rail communication across the Neder Rijn at Arnhem, a task likely to fall to him later. He still remained responsible for keeping the Nijmegen bridgehead secure, holding defensively the general line of the Waal and Maas westwards from Nijmegen and for the security of North and South Beveland and Walcheren (Ibid).

21. Ninth U.S. Army, comprising four corps (one liable for service with Second Brit Army - a contingency cancelled later on), was to prepare for Operation "GRENADE", which was to begin as soon as possible after 15 Feb. Starting from the line of the Reer between Julich and Roermond, the Americans were to launch a strong attack towards the Rhine with their right flank on the general line Julich - Neusse (Ibid).

22. Second Brit Army was "to hold a firm-front facing east of the line of the Meuse" and "to assist the attacks of Canadian and ninth Armies by every means possible". They were to establish bridgeheads across the Meuse and prepare "in due course, and when ordered, to force the crossing of the Rhine at Rheinberg, Xanten and Rees".

#### COMPLICATIONS AND DEVELOPMENTS

23. On 23 Jan the C.in-C. held another conference with his Army Commanders to discuss several complicating factors that had arisen. General Crerar summarizes the conference as follows:

The Field Marshal said that Lt-Gen Simpson's projected counterpart of my south-eastward thrust could not be initiated until the Ninth U.S. Army had been brought up to the agreed strength of twelve U.S. Divisions, of which two were to be allotted to the Second British Army for a subsequent operation across the Meuse on my right flank at Venlo. He had the impression, moreover, that the Supreme Commander was thinking of placing a higher priority on an intended operation by the First U.S. Army along the axis Euskirchen - Bonn. If this operation were to go very well and the enemy situation showed signs of further deterioration, then the operation by First Canadian Army might be ordered to go in independently of the converging attack by the Ninth U.S. Army. I could be assured, however, that unless such favourable situation promised to obtain, the assault by the Canadian Army would not be launched without the assistance afforded by the Ninth U.S. Army to the south. Should the concentration of the additional divisions required by Lt-Gen Simpson and their subsequent regrouping and deployment be protracted, it might be necessary to postpone the offensive as a whole.

(General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45)

24. On 1 Feb, in a telephone conversation with the Acting Chief of Staff at H.Q. 21 Army Group, General Crerar was informed of further developments in the

Allied plan for the winter offensive (W.D., G.O.C.in-C. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 1), information which Field-Marshal Montgomery enlarged upon a conference held at his tactical headquarters on 4 Feb.

The C.in-C. opened his remarks by stating that S.H.A.E.F. had now decided that Operation "VERITABLE" by First Cdn Army and Operation "GRENADE" by Ninth U.S. Army were to be carried out as first priority tasks. The only exception to this situation would be the operations about to be undertaken by the First U.S. Army, to capture the dam controlling the River Roer. Apart from the operation so mentioned, the remainder of the Allied Armies were to follow an "aggressively defensive" tactical policy.

However, in the circumstances in which the U.S. Armies found themselves, it was very difficult to regroup, quickly. As a result, "GRENADE" Operation would not be as "full blooded" as he would have wished...

As a result of the difficulties experienced by S.H.A.E.F., he had now been compelled to accept a total of ten U.S. Divisions, all for Ninth U.S. Army. In the circumstances, no U.S. Divisions could be spared for Lt-Gen Dempsey, and in consequence, Operation "VENTILATE" (proposed attack across the River Maas by Second Brit Army) would either not take place, or would be carried out in a somewhat tentative way...

(Ibid: Appx 3, Notes on Conference, 4 Feb 45)

General Crerar was also warned that 7 Armd Div would no longer be in his order of battle. On the other hand, 3 Brit Inf and 11 Brit Armd Divs of Second Brit Army were to be "available for reinforcement, or replacement, if the situation warranted". (Ibid: Appx 1).

25. It may be added that the Field-Marshal took this occasion to make an announcement of great interest to the Canadian Army, and summarized in General Crerar's notes:

The C.in-C. stated that he would then refer to certain conversations he had had in the U.K. and the information which he was about to give required to be kept on a high "Top Secret" level. The Chiefs of Staff Committee had reached the decision, yesterday, that forces in 15 Army Group were to be reduced and, as a first result, 1 Cdn Corps was to come from the Mediterranean to N.W. Europe and join up with First Cdn Army. 1 Cdn Corps would commence its movement in March, and it was hoped to complete transfer in April. There was also the hope that three Brit Divisions would follow 1 Cdn Corps. It was understood that all Canadian troops would come under command First Cdn Army and he hoped that I would do what I could to ensure that every Canadian now in 15 Army Group was moved to this theatre.\*<sup>3</sup>.

#### THE ARMY PLAN FOR OPERATION "VERITABLE"

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<sup>3</sup> \* See [Report No. 181](#), Operation "GOLDFLAKE", The Move of 1 Cdn Corps from Italy to North-West Europe, February - March 1945.

26. Meanwhile, on 25 Jan General Crerar had issued a directive for Operation "VERITABLE", informing his Corps Commanders of the situation and its requirements as they then appeared. His plan had not materially changed since it was first conceived in December.

It is necessary to assume (he wrote) that the enemy will strongly man and fight his several lines of organized defences in the operational area given above. On the basis of his assumption the operation, as a whole, will comprise several phases, and, after each phase is completed, it will be necessary to move up the artillery and supporting weapons and commence the next phase with coordinated and heavy fire support, and with controlled movement. Operation "VERITABLE" will, therefore, be basically planned on the following principal phases, and objectives.

Phase 1 The clearing of the Reichswald and the securing of the line  
Gennep - Asperden - Cleve.

Phase 2 The breaching of the enemy's second defensive system East and South East of the Reichswald, the capture of the localities Weeze - Udem - Calcar - Emmerich and the securing of the communications between them.

Phase 3 The "break-through of the Gochwald "lay-back" defence lines and the advance to secure the general line Geldern - Xanten.

The initiation of the offensive and completion of its first phase was to be the responsibility of 30 Brit Corps under command of Lt-Gen B.G. Horrocks. However, should the enemy's resistance Crumble, 30 Brit Corps was to lose no opportunity, however, of fully exploiting any favourable situation irrespective of the plan as laid down (W.D., G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army, January 1945: Appx 3, Directive to Corps Commanders, 21 Jan 45).

27. The grouping for the first phase was to be as follows:

<u>1 Brit Corps</u>	<u>2 Cdn Corps</u>	<u>30 Brit Corps</u>
1 Pol Armd Div	29 (W.R.) Inf Div	2 Cdn Inf Div
4 Cdn Armd Div	2 Cdn Armd Bde	3 Cdn Inf Div
4 Cdo Bde (i.e., S.S.)	18 Cdn Armd C. Regt	
15 (S.) Inf Div		
R. Netherlands Bde		43 Inf Div
11 H. (Armd C.)		51 (H.) Inf Div
		53 (W.) Inf Div
		Gds Armd Div
		6 Gds Armd Bde
		8 & 34 Armd Bdes
		Resources 79 Armd Div
		Five A.G.R.As.

On the completion of Phase 1, the operation was to be developed on a front of two corps - 30 Brit Corps on the right and 2 Cdn Corps on the left, with the

Wylter - Cleve - Calcar - Xanten road inclusive to the latter. The exact timing of this was to be a matter for future decision. The Canadian Corps was also responsible for the security of the Nijmegen bridgehead (Ibid).

28. Prior to the commencement of the second phase, 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs, certain elements of 79 Armd Div and A.G.R.A. resources were to be transferred to 2 Cdn Corps. About mid-February, 4 Cdn Armd Div was to be replaced by one or two miscellaneous brigades and to be taken into Army reserve where it would be available for possible employment in the later stages of "VERITABLE".

(Ibid; AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/1: Notes on G.O.C.-in-C.'s Conference, 24 Jan 45).

29. The principal responsibility of 1 Brit Corps was to implement and maintain the cover plan. This was designed to suggest that First Cdn Army, with 30 Corps under command, was intending to initiate operations in the direction of Utrecht before 20 Feb. It was hoped that the initial large-scale movement and concentration of reinforcing formations from Second Brit Army would sustain this conception. (W.D., G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army, January 1945: Appx 2, Address by General Crerar to Senior Officers, 22 Jan 45). It may here be noted that it was intended eventually to set up a "H.Q. Holland District" to take over the Royal Netherlands, Royal Marine and Commando Brigades south of the Maas and responsibility for the river line, thus releasing H.Q. 1 Brit Corps for further operations (Notes on G.O.C.-in-C.'s Conference, 24 Jan 45).

30. At the C.-in-C.'s conference on 4 Feb General Crerar again outlined his plan and enlarged on it as follows:

In Phase 1 - of the "break-in" attack against the very strong Reichswald defences - Lt-Gen Horrocks will employ 15 (S.), 51 (H.) and 53(W.) Divisions, 3 Cdn Div and a portion of 2 Cdn Div. Each division will have strong armoured support. This assault, weather permitting, will receive maximum assistance from the air. It is the intention to retain the greatest practicable element of surprise and definite and detailed steps have been taken to that end. The programme of fire support decided upon by Lt-Gen Horrocks, (and so, positive indications of time and place of attack) will not be revealed until "D" Day, and a few hours before the attack goes in. On the other hand, from D-3 onwards, it will be increasingly difficult to conceal from the enemy the necessary forward assembly, in the Nijmegen area, of the large assaulting force. While, therefore, it would be otherwise desirable to delay "D" Day until weather conditions promised full air support, if this situation does not obtain on 8 Feb, the attack will go in, anyway, and with fire support from ground weapons only. One thing that must not be allowed is time and opportunity for the enemy fully to prepare his defensive arrangements and every day and hour that passes after forward assembly commences, increases this risk.

If weather is suitable, the air support which will be afforded this operation will be on a maximum scale. In direct support of the assaulting divisions, will be the Second Tactical Air Force with a

potential of 1,000 fighters, or fighter-bombers, 100 medium day, and 90 medium night bombers. 84 Group, R.A.F. - which is that portion of the Second Tactical Air Force operationally and directly linked to First Cdn Army, will provide the "close-in" support. Bomber Command will attack targets in the immediate battle area with up to 1,000 heavy bombers and support is also expected from the medium bombers of Ninth and the heavy bombers of Eighth U.S. Army Air Force.

Ground fire support will be provided by over 1,200 guns, of which more than one third are mediums, heavies and super-heavies. The resources of 79 Armd Div will be fully utilized, including "Crocodiles" (flame throwers), "Flails" (mine destroyers) and Armoured Personnel Carriers - such as first were utilized by the Canadian Army South of Caen, last August. The Canadian Rocket Projector Battery will also be employed.

As I intimated, I cannot forecast, with any degree of reliability, the time which will be taken to complete "VERITABLE", after it is launched. If everything broke in our favour, weather, ground, air support, enemy dispositions and reactions - I would not be surprised if armour of 30 Corps reached the Geldern - Xanten line in a few days. On the other hand, if conditions are against us, I see three "set-piece" operations, one for each Phase, and the battle may well last three weeks.

(W.D., G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 3, Notes for Remarks - C.-in-C.'s Conference, 4 Feb 45)

It may be added that the total number of tanks available was over 3,400 including reserves (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, March 1945: Appx "KK", fol 48, Interesting Statistics, Operation "VERITABLE" - See Appx "E" to this Report).

31. The Air Support plan was to begin properly before D - 2. Top priority was to be given to the road and rail bridges over the Rhine at Wesel and once these bridges were out of action, any usable ferries would be attacked wherever possible. Further back in the enemy sector the tactical Air Force programme would give considerable attention to any bridges over the R. Ijssel and rail interdiction would be carried out about Dorsten, Borcken, Zutphen, Deventer and from north to south into Emmerich as well as Venlo, Geldern and Wesel. On the night of D - 1 and D Day, Cleve, Goch and Emmerich were to be destroyed while night intruders would strafe and drop both fire and A.P. bombs on any villages and small towns in the forward area which were known to accommodate enemy troops. On D Day itself, Nutterden (8445) and the Materborn (8853) feature were to be attacked with fire bombs and high explosive air burst. The bombing of the former town must be complete by 1500 hours, while in the sortie against Materborn the last bomb was to fall at about 2100 hours. The battlefield was to be isolated by armed reconnaissances along all roads leading into it and on the Rhine crossings. Tac/R would also be up in strength to cover the area. The greatest available number of fighter bombers were to be on hand for Cab Rank to operate against any hostile guns which might still be firing after the counter battery programme finished. Kranenburg (8156) and Hekkens (8347) were to be saturated with instantaneous fuse bombs; the timing for the Kranenburg attack to be 1000 hours: the

Hekkens area any time on D Day. The villages of Zyfflich (7859), Niel (8260), and Mehr (8358), were in high priority for an incendiary attack before 1800 hours, while any Headquarters or telephone exchanges or in fact any special target which A.P.I.S. could pin-point would also receive a considerable weight of attention: top priority at present being Headquarters 86 Corps. A maximum effort of artillery reconnaissance was to be staged. Concentrated attacks on Geldern, Kempen and Huls would take place on the night D plus 1 with the object of interrupting the movement of the enemy's reserves. Added to this night intruders would operate against the roads and river crossings selected as a result of the D Day tactical reconnaissance. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/S/H: Air Plan for Op "VERITABLE", 6 Feb 45; AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/I: 30 Corps Op Instructions No. 47, 3 Feb 45, Appx "C"; W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde Appx 2, 9 Cdn Inf Bde O.O. No. 3, Op "VERITABLE", Appx "X", Air Sp Plan).

32. The targets of D plus 1 would naturally depend on the developments of the battle during D Day. Interdiction, however, on the railways around Kempen, Huls, Geldern or Uerdingen and Moers was to continue. Armed reconnaissance, Tac/R and Arty/R sorties would go on as usual, and the Hekkens area, if not already bombed would then receive its share of high explosive destruction on this day, weather permitting. Thus, the air plan listed some 80 targets of all types ranging from the enemy's forward positions to vital points far east of the Rhine. Bridges, rail junctions, fuel and ammunition dumps, communication centres and enemy headquarters; - each was covered with precise instructions to the pilots concerned as to how they were to be destroyed, whether by high explosive or by fire, and how much cratering was

permissible in each case. Before the actual assault, the air force was to make every effort possible to destroy and demoralize the enemy troops in his forward defences, and during the battle apart from the daily pre-arranged support, impromptu support would be on hand whether and when required. (See Appx "A"). The extent of the air support was finally settled within the week before the operation began (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, March 1945: Appx 16, Notes of Conference re Pre-planned Air Support, 25 Jan 45; and Notes of Conversation between G.O.G.-in-C. and A/C. of S., 21 Army Gp., 2 Feb 45).

33. The Artillery plan was on a similar scale, for the resources under the command C.C.R.A. 30 Corps for the opening of the operation included seven Divisional Artilleries, 2 Cdn and 3, 4, 5 and 9 Brit A.G.R.As., elements of two anti-aircraft Brigades used in the ground role, and the 1st Canadian Rocket Unit. The outline plan was as follows:-

- a. Starting at 0500 hours 8 Feb, a 5 hour period of Artillery preparation. This would include a deceptive smoke screen along the entire front from 0730 hours until 0740 hours. For the next 10 minutes there would be a complete lull across the whole front. All guns would be silent; but at 0750 hours at Artillery preparation would re-commence with renewed fury.
  
- b. The standing barrage containing both smoke and high explosive. The smoke screen which would begin at 0940 hours would cover the forming

up for the assault. 10 minutes later the barrage would start and stand on the opening line until 1030 hours (H hour).

- c. The thickening of the barrage. This would commence 30 minutes before H hour by which time it would have reached its climax. A H hour the guns would lift forward for the first time and the infantry would advance (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/RCA/C/D: Account by Brigadier F.N. Lace, C.R.A., 2 Cdn Inf Div, 13 Feb 45; AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/I Docket III(c): Op "VERITABLE", 3 Cdn Inf Div O.O. No. 12, 28 Jan 45, para 21). In addition to do this gigantic artillery plan, a "Pepperpot" was to be carried out during the periods of artillery bombardment. The object of "Pepperpot" was to absolutely soak the enemy's front line as well as the flanks of the attack with fire from small arms, M.M.G., L.A.A. and tank-gun fire. (Ibid) (See Appx "A").

#### TOPOGRAPHY OF THE BATTLE AREA

34. The topography of the area of intended operations presented some unusual difficulties. A study of the map will show that 40 to 50 miles south-east of Nijmegen, at Duisburg, and at Venlo, the Rhine and Maas flow in a northerly direction some 20 miles apart. Gradually they approach and begin to swing to the west, so that at Mook (7251) the Maas, now turning due west, is only six miles south of Nijmegen on the main channel of the Rhine, which here becomes the Waal. Immediately west of Nijmegen the two rivers are connected by the Maas - Waal Canal, while farther south a smaller stream, called the Niers,

runs parallel to them through the intervening plain. The Allied front line followed the course of the Maas as far north as Cuijk (7249) and thence ran north-east and north, close to the German frontier, to meet the Waal some three miles east of Nijmegen. It will be appreciated that to reach the forward assembly areas all formations except 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs had to cross the Maas, and in many cases, the Maas - waal Canal as well. Some had to pass through the built-up area of Nijmegen and all had to wheel through more than 90 degrees to line up opposite the enemy's defensive positions. (Maps 1/1000,000: Holland, sheet 5, Germany, sheets P.1 and Q.1; AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/C/F: 21 Army Gp Report on Operation "VERITABLE", AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/L/F: 2 Cdn Inf Div Int Report No. 1, Operation "VERITABLE", 2 Feb 45; AEF: 45/30 Corps/L/F: Operation "VERITABLE" Planning Int Dossier, No. 4, 29 Jan 45) (See Map "B").

35. Both the Maas and the Rhine run through low plains which were inundated during December. By January most of the floods had receded but the ground was left mucky and covered with scattered pools. Further obstacles were abandoned channels, ditches, marsh and backwaters. The outstanding geographical feature is the Reichswald, a large diamond-shaped forest some nine miles from east to west, and five miles from north to south, lying between the town of Cleve and the German - Dutch frontier. There are some clearings and a few farms in the forest. The Materborn ridge, some 200 to 250 feet above sea level, extends from Cleve in a south-westerly direction along the northern edge of the forest, commanding a flat and featureless countryside. The trees are mostly pine of fairly recent growth, planted four to seven feet apart and divided into blocks by narrow ridges. South-east, the Hochwald and Balberger Wald lie to the west

of Xanten. The rest of the country between the rivers is low and gently undulating with a number of small woods. Movement over cultivation was interrupted only by occasional tree-lined fields, rises in ground, and small ditches along the fields. The rolling nature of the country and frequent coppices made covered approaches possible, but in the predominantly wooded areas movement off the roads was difficult. An abundance of cover among the trees was limited only by the season of the year. In such country the view was often obstructed even from the eminences which themselves were nearly all wooded. During the long quiescent period prior to 8 Feb, the Canadian outposts were on relatively high ground overlooking much of this future field of battle. Their positions had the advantage of being largely wooded, and they afforded excellent cover for even the larger formations involved (Ibid).

36. The main roads run south-east from Nijmegen, one along the east bank of the Maas through Gennepe to Venlo, the other across the German frontier north of the Reichswald to Cleve, where it divides. The northern branch continues to Calcar and Xanten and thence south-east towards the Ruhr; the other runs southwards to Goch and on through Weeze and Kevelaer to Geldern. Other roads from Cleve run north-east to Emmerich on the Rhine, south-east to Udem and south-west through the Reichswald to Gennepe. Fortunately most of the civilians had been evacuated from the considerable number of small towns scattered about this corner of Germany. (Ibid).

37. During January the weather had been cold with considerable snow and ice, but early in February a thaw set in. It was realized that any prolonged operation after severe frost was likely to churn up the ground very badly.

Further, it was clear that the Rhine could be flooded by blowing the winter dykes, although complete breaching was considered impracticable. In addition, it had to be borne in mind that if the Americans did not succeed in capturing the Roer dams before they were destroyed, their failure might have far-reaching effects. All these hazards had to be taken into consideration in the planning and the risks accepted. (Ibid).

#### THE ENEMY'S DEFENCES

38. The German defensive system presented three main features:

- a. The construction of three principal lines of defence, namely, the forward line, the Siegfried Line and the Hochwald "lay back".
- b. The apparent sub-division of the area enclosed by the principal line of defence into self-contained defensive "boxes".
- c. The transformation of towns and villages into strongpoints.

(Ibid. The 21 Army Gp Report contains a diagrammatic map illustrating these three lines of defences; for details see Defence Overprints of Holland 1:25,000, sheets 6 S.W., 12 N.W., 12 S.W. and Eastern Holland, 4102, 4202, 4302, 4103, 4203, and 4303, dated 19 Jan - 6 Feb 45).

During the winter the enemy's forward line comprised a double series of strong outposts to the main Siegfried defences. North of the Nijmegen - Cleve road they were only weakly held, but in the area south from Wyler (7558), a frontier village four miles south-east of Nijmegen and immediately west of the Reichswald, the enemy was in greater strength. Most of his positions were in woods and houses, and all roads running at right angles to the front were held in considerable depth. Especially was this the case with the Wyler - Kranenburg and the Mook - Gennepe - Hekkens roads, along which anti-tank ditches, road-blocks, anti-tank guns and diggings had been observed. (Ibid).

39. The main Siegfried defences ran south from Kranenburg (8056), a village two miles beyond Wyler, through the Reichswald to Hekkens (8244), a road junction south of the forest, then east and south to Goch. This line continued south from Goch, circling slightly west of Weeze. Numerous anti-tank ditches zig-zagged across the whole territory from Goch south to the Maas, one of them dug round to the north of Goch itself. North-east from Kranenburg a similar ditch extended towards the Rhine. During the winter another line had been constructed east of the Reichswald between Cleve and Goch, thus making the forest a self-contained centre of resistance. There were also continuous lines of trenches and weapon-pits along the eastern bank of the Maas. The only concrete constructions to be found in this sector were shelters and infantry pillboxes, some 70 of which had been mapped by our intelligence. Eight large casemates of the original Siegfried Line defences had also been observed, although they were believed to contain only machine guns (Ibid).

40. The third main line had been very recently constructed, from the Rhine opposite Rees along the undulating ground south to Geldern (0225), roughly ten kilometres east of the Reichswald, and along the western side of the Gochwald and Balberger Forests. It consisted of two and sometimes three lines of continuous trenches and, except in front of the Gochwald, of an anti-tank ditch between the trenches. There was also an almost unbroken belt of wire in front of each trench line and a mine-field in the sector between the Hochwald, and the Rhine (Ibid).

41. The whole system was designed to convert the entire area into a "defence net", built up into a series of self-contained boxes. Most of the towns and villages such as Cleve, Goch, Weeze, Kevelaer, Udem and Calcar had also been transformed into strongpoints defended by elaborate trench works and anti-tank ditches. A close study of the defence overprints revealed a tremendous number of trenches, weapon-pits, machine gun and anti-aircraft posts, wire fences and mines. Yet this very elaborate and formidable system lacked sufficient personnel to keep it fully manned. (Ibid).

#### THE ENEMY'S ORDER OF BATTLE

43. As for the enemy's order of battle,

A review of the enemy situation on 3 Feb showed that the whole front of First Cdn Army was opposed by tps of Army Group H under General

Student.<sup>4</sup> To the North was Twenty-Fifth Army. South and West of the Rhine along the Maas was First Para Army consisting of 84, 180, 190 and 606 ZGV divs.<sup>5</sup>

The Reichswald Sector, which may be taken to extend from the bend in the Rhine near Erlekom 7863 to Middelaar, appeared to be controlled by 84 Inf Div. This Div was caught in the Falaise pocket and destroyed, and was reformed in Sep... It now consisted of two regts, each of two bns, and was thought to include Battle Group Katzmann of probably three bns, and also to have under command 2 Para Regt (three bns) which ordinarily belonged to 2 Para div.

There was evidence, also, of two police bns in the sector, identified North of the Nijmegen - Cleve road.

It was estimated that there was a total of eight bns manning the forward line of defences, with five bns in reserve, or possibly in "lay back" positions. They were likely to be up to strength and despite German reverses on other fronts, their morale was considered high...

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<sup>4</sup> As appeared afterwards, Student was recalled to Berlin at the end of January and the Army Group taken over by Generaloberst Blaskowitz (AEF/First Cdn Army/L/F, Docket III: Special Interrogation Report, Generaloberst Student).

<sup>5</sup> Presumably 606 Z.B.V. Div. (AEF: 45/Second Army/L/F, Docket I: Second Army Int Summary No. 238, 27 Jan 45, and Appx ", Sheet 3) This was a "phantom" divisional headquarters used administratively to co-ordinate the relief of one operational division by another.

Including HAA, the maximum estimated number of guns capable of firing on the "Veritable" area as 114...

At the time when "Veritable" was about to open the enemy had nine divs holding the 101 *fsic*, mile sector from Nijmegen to Düren F.14.\*<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, he had some 45 odd divs along the 250 mile stretch from Düren to Strasbourg.

(21 Army Gp Report)

44. 7 Para Div proved to be in immediate reserve as anticipated. It was expected that the enemy would reinforce the Reichswald sector from the cologne area and that by the end of the first week after the assault had gone in he would have brought up three infantry and three or four panzer grenadier divisions (Ibid, and General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45). It was also noticed a few days before D Day that some reorganization was taking place in the Reichswald (First Cdn Army Int Summary, 4 Feb 45). Part of the enemy's reserve had to be kept to guard against an American offensive from the south, while the demands from the Russian front were inexorable.

In the middle of Dec the Germans had possessed reserves in the form of 5 and 6 Pz Armies. At the end of Jan the situation was that 5 Pz was endeavouring to recover from the severe handling it had received

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<sup>6</sup> \* The actual distance between Nijmegen and Düren is over 150 miles.

in the Ardennes battle, while 6 Pz had been switched to the Eastern front to meet the Russian offensive which had opened on 12 Jan.

(21 Army Gp Report)

#### THE ENEMY'S DEFECTIVE APPRECIATION OF OUR INTENTIONS

45. By extensive camouflage and by confining most troop movements to the hours of darkness the greatest care was taken to conceal the Allied preparations from the enemy. The state of his preparedness for the attack is discussed in the Army Commander's despatch:

...Until 6 Feb it was fairly clear that the enemy had no specific knowledge of my intentions in the Reichswald. On that day, however, I had to assume that his aircraft, flying over the Army area on tactical reconnaissance, had observed the unavoidable signs of our enterprise, especially in the district between Grave and Nijmegen, where the many hundreds of vehicles and tanks, many of them impossible to conceal as the only hard standings were roads and streets, could hardly have escaped the vigilance of the camera. General Student <sup>\*\*7</sup> must have now had a shrewd suspicion that I was going to attack in the Reichswald sector. He could not rule out an attack north of the Maas, but his reconnaissance was so widespread as to give him an accurate comparative view of activity along the whole of our front. But in surveying the

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<sup>7</sup> \*\* See first footnote to para 43.

enemy's problems and possibilities, I decided that there was little he could do to improve his situation as it then stood. Most of von Reichswald's available forces were required either to remain in the south to meet the American threat from Roermond to the Ardennes, or to move to the east to fight the Russians.

(General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45)

46. As revealed by later interrogations, however, the enemy's appreciation was confused. From the time when the front in the Reichswald became stabilized, it was obvious that an attack must come shortly on the northern part of the line. But General Schlemm, Commander of the First Parachute Army, had known nothing of our plans for an offensive to be launched early in January, nor had anyone been aware that preparations were already well advanced for an attack through the Forest when the German offensive in the Ardennes caused them to be postponed. When it was realized that the Ardennes counter offensive had not succeeded in preventing the Allies from being able to undertake a winter campaign, frequent discussions took place as to the locale of the new assault.

Schlemm claims that Blaskowitz at Army Group and Rundstedt, the C.-in-C. West, believed the next big Allied move would be an American offensive launched from Roermond together with a British attack across the river at Venlo. This was opposed to Schlemm's personal view who expected the big blow to come south through the Reichswald as it eventually did. He advanced this view to his seniors but was constantly assured that there

was not evidence of large concentrations in the Nijmegen E 77 area. The worst that could be expected there was a holding attack launched by two or three Canadian Divisions, he was told.

(Special Interrogation Report, General Alfred Schlemm)

As a result Blaskowitz sited his reserves (including 47 Pz Corps) in readiness for attacks from Roermond and Venlo. According to Schlemm, von Rundstedt deduced from an analysis of the intensified Allied air bombardment that an assault would be coming from the region of Venlo between 6 and 12 Feb. On the other hand, Schlemm avers that he expected the attack where it came, but could not convince the higher command that the signs of movement through Nijmegen were not merely a blind. Deep patrolling had failed to reveal the presence of any formations in the vicinity other than Canadian, and it was not until the battle was a day old that Schlemm was able to confirm his suspicions with the news that four British divisions had been identified in the Forest. 'We were wrong', admitted Army Group, 'you may have 8 Para Division'." (Ibid).

#### THE CONCENTRATION FOR THE ATTACK

47. In thus keeping the enemy in the dark as to the force and direction of our aggressive intentions we were fortunate, for the transference of all the British formations of 30 Corps to their assembly areas west of the Reichswald had itself been a major operation of war, most difficult to conceal from the enemy's intelligence. Before coming under Canadian Command, these British divisions were from 50 to 100 miles south of Nijmegen, between Roermond and

Liège on the upper Meuse, and still farther south in the Ardennes, where several of them had been engaged in the fighting. Until late in January, 43 (W.) Inf Div and other British formations were taking part in an operation by 12 Brit Corps to reduce the enemy salient on the left bank of the Roer. To move these great bodies of troops northwards to their very restricted assembly area, accessible only by two bridges across the Maas, in the short time available and withdrawn during the latter part of January to concentrate about Louvain, between Antwerp and Boxtel and north-east of Eindhoven. Thence, starting on 5 Feb, they all moved north-east along two main routes, one through Tilburg crossing the Maas at Grave, the other through Eindhoven crossing the river at Mook, to the forward assembly areas near Nijmegen (21 Army Gp Report, paras 37 and 38 and Diagram 6; AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/Q/1: Provost Move Schedules 17 and 22 Jan 45 and First Cdn Army Instrs on Assembly for "VERITABLE", 1 Feb 45).

48. These considerable movements, which strained Army and Corps provost resources to the utmost, were further complicated by the terrible state of the roads. The situation has been thus described:

...During Jan the roads had been universally icebound. Just prior to the time when movement was to reach its peak, from 3 Feb onwards, came the thaw with all its attendant troubles. Many roads deteriorated rapidly and eventually ruts developed to a depth of 18 inches to 2 feet, and others collapsed completely at various points. Diversions were extremely difficult to improvise as the surrounding country in most places became water logged. The very carefully planned forward movement

from staging areas to concentration areas and onwards across the r. Maas had to be recast daily in the light of existing road conditions. That final assembly was completed by the right time in spite of these abnormal and most difficult conditions says much for the high standard of staff work of the traffic control personnel and the RE concerned with road maintenance...

First Canadian Army controlled all roads South and West of the line Eindhoven - s'Hertogenbosch and 2 Cdn and 30 Brit Corps those to the North and East of that line. There was a very close liaison maintained between the three APMs concerned. Five CMP Traffic Control Coys, two Army Provost Coys, and some twenty officers and three hundred ORs of a LAA Regt. R.A., altogether some 1,600 men, were utilized in the over-all traffic control plan. In spite of all the numerous difficulties final concentration was completed to time-table.

(21 Army Gp Report, paras 39 and 42; see also AEF: 45/2 Cdn Corps/C/F: Summary of Ops, 28 Jan - 4 Feb 45)

49. Fortunately, for the first time since the landing in Normandy, an adequate railway system was available which greatly eased the supply situation. Although the railway bridge across the Maas at Ravenstein connecting the line to Nijmegen was not opened until 8 Feb, there were numerous railheads immediately south of the river. As a result, during the last eight days it was possible to dump 10,000 tons of supplies, fuel, ammunition, ordnance, engineer and miscellaneous stores, each day. Most of

the railheads could actually have handled a considerably greater tonnage than they did (Ibid). In all some 446 freight trains arrived at 15 different railheads of which one, Haps (3045), was only three miles from the front. (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 144, Statistics, Operation "VERITABLE").

50. Statistics serving to illustrate the size and scope of the staff and service problems involved were given by General Crerar at a press conference on the eve of the battle:

1880 tons of bridge equipment have been used in the construction of the five military bridges which have been thrown across the R. Maas, and lead into the forward assembly area. The Ravenstein "high level" pontoon bridge - known as the Quebec Bridge, is the longest Bailey bridge yet constructed - 1280 ft long.

British and Canadian "Sappers" in the past few weeks have constructed, widened and improved approximately 100 miles of road. For this purpose about 20,000 tons of stone, 20,000 logs and 30,000 pickets have been used.

To move troops and their fighting equipment and supplies into position prior to "D" Day will involve 35,000 vehicles travelling an average 130 miles each and using approximately 1,300,000 gallons of petrol.

In order to ensure that convoys reach their appointed destinations, approximately 10,000 route signs were erected, and 1,000 troops have been employed on traffic control duties.

Demands have entailed the production of over 500,000 air photographs and 15,000 enlargements. Over 800,000 special maps, requiring over 30 tons of paper, have been produced.

If the ammunition allotments for the operation, which consists of 350 types, were stacked side by side and five feet high, it would line a road for 30 miles. The total ammunition tonnage, provided for the supporting artillery from "D" Day, to D plus 3, would be the equivalent in weight to the bomb-drop of 25,000 medium bombers.

1,100 tons of smoke materials, exclusive of artillery, will be used in the ground plan, which will produce what is believed will be the longest smoke screen in the history of this war. At the conclusion of Phase 1, a 20-mile smoke screen should be in operation.

(W.D., G.O.C.-in-C., February 1945: Appx 3a, Remarks by G.O.C.-in-C, to WARCOS, 7 Feb 45; for further statistics see W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army: Appx 144)

51. For the troops standing to their arms, and for all who guided and supported them in an endless variety of function and responsibility, Field Marshal Montgomery wrote his personal message. He told them that the

operations of the Allied on all fronts had now brought the German war to its final stages. He compared the battle to a boxing match:

And so we embark (he said) on the final round, in close co-operation with out American allies on our right and with complete confidence in the successful outcome of the onslaught being delivered by our Russian allies on the other side of the ring.

Somewhat curious rules, you may say. But the whole match has been most curious; the Germans began this all-out contest and they must not complain when in the last round they are hit from several directions at the same time.

Into the ring, then, let us go. And do not let us relax till the knock-out blow has been delivered.

Good luck to you all - and God bless you.

(W.D., "G", H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 28: Personal Message from the Commander-in-Chief, Holland February 1945)

General Crerar likewise had his own words of encouragement for the hundred of thousands of soldiers now under his command:

Six months ago, almost to a day, history was made by formations of this Army in their Southward drive which broke the "Caen hinge" and closed

the "Falaise pocket". The same, and other formations shall again record great achievements in the days ahead by breaking through the "Reichswald pivot" and turning this key sector of the Siegfried Line.

(W.D. "G", H.Q. First Cdn Army, March 1945: Appx "KK", folio 50, Personal Message from the Army Commander, February 1945)

#### THE 30 CORPS PLAN

52. Lt-Gen B.G. Horrocks' plan was to attack with five divisions up, from left to right: 3 Cdn Inf Div, 2 Cdn Inf Div, 15 (S.) Inf Div, 53 (W.) Inf Div, 51 (H.) Inf Div, keeping Gds Armd and 45 (W.) Divs in reserve to follow up whatever opportunities the initial successes might offer. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/I, Docket III(c); 30 Corps Operation Instruction No. 47, "VERITABLE", 3 Feb 45) (See Appx "A"). The tasks allotted in order of precedence were for 2 Cdn Inf Div - both Canadian divisions were to be supported by elements of 13/18 H. - first of all to seize the areas Den Heuvel (7756) and Wyler (7858), then to open the main road from Bergen en Dal (7459) to excluding Kranenburg (Ibid). 15 (S.) Div, with elements of 6 Gds Tk Bde in support, was to capture Kranenburg and the spur to the south in the region of Galgensteeg (8154). from this objective the Scottish infantry would breach the Siegfried defences north of the Reichswald and take in succession the Nutterden (8355) and Materborn (8753-8754) features. Once these tasks were completed, strong mobile columns were to be despatched eastward to capture, if possible, Idem and Calcar, and to clear the Emmerich road up to the bank of the Rhine. During this exploitation Cleve was to be consolidated. (Ibid).

53. The first task of 53 (W.) Div was the capture of the Branden Berg feature (8053) at the north-western tip of the Reichswald. This was to be followed by an advance along the high ground which runs through the northern part of the forest, with the final objective of firming up on the Stoppelberg heights (8553), some two miles south of Nutterden. Thereafter, this formation was to concentrate in mobile reserve for future operations (Ibid). 51 (H.) Div was to capture, clear, and firmly hold the area bound by Freuden Berg (7851-7852), Riethorst (7450) and Nijerf Colonies (7553), then to open the route Mook - Gennepe - Hekkens - Goch. After this the Highlanders would take over Goch, and pass on to destroy the enemy between the Mook - Goch road to the Maas River. Both 53 (W.) and 51 (H.) Inf Divs would have the support of 34 Armd Bde. 43 (W.) Div was eventually to pass through 15 (S.) Div on the line of the Materborn feature and carry out the assault on Goch, then, having handed the town over to 51 (H.) Div, it would exploit south-east to take Weeze (9337), Kevelaer (9633) and Geldern (0125). (Ibid). The Commander of 30 Corps ordered Gds Armd Div to be prepared to follow 43 (W.) Div across the Materborn feature and advance on the axis Udem - Hammerbruch (0736) - Wesel, seizing the high ground north of Sonsbeck en route and pushing forward with a mobile group with the object of capturing the Wesel bridge if it was still intact, or alternately to assault Xanten.

54. In the north 3 Cdn Inf Div was to protect the left flank of the attack and advance to gain control of the low ground between the main road Wyler - Kranenburg - Cleve and the River Rhine up to the line of the railway Cleve - Griethausen (9159) (Ibid). Primary exploitation was to be the responsibility of H.C.R., who were to operate initially under 15 (S.) Div, with orders to pass

through Gds Armd Div when that formation cleared 15 (S.) Div's forward positions. 2 H.C.R. were then to be prepared to fight under control of either 43 (W.) or Gds Armd Div, and on being ordered forward would deploy on a wide front in a protective reconnaissance role between the Maas and the Rhine, pushing patrols as far south as the road Westebroek (9716) - Rhert (1219) - Rheinberg (2128). H Hour for the attack by 2 Cdn, 15 (S.), 53 (W.) and 51 (H.) Inf Divs was 1030 hours 8 Feb. 3 Cdn Inf Div was to be launched on the evening of D Day (Ibid). (See Appx "B").

#### DIVISIONAL PLANS

55. Within the Corps plan 2 Cdn Inf Div's contribution was to be an attack by a single brigade. The task fell to Brigadier W.J. Megill's already famous 5 Cdn Inf Bde. Calg Highrs and R. de Mais advancing simultaneously, would clear the small triangle of territory south of the Nijmegen - Cleve road, which was considered to be a corner-stone in the enemy's first line, and consolidate; the Calg Highrs advance would be made on the left from inclusive anti-tank ditch (784574) south of Vessendaal (7756) to inclusive Wyler, R. de Mais on the right to include that section of the inter-divisional boundary in the region south of Den Heuvel and Hochstrasze (7956). (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/I, Docket III(c): 5 Cdn Inf Bde, O.O. No. 1, Op "VERITABLE", 6 Feb 45). Under command 5 Cdn Inf Bde for the operation were "C" Sqn 13/18 H. and 18 Cdn Fd Amb; in direct support of the brigade were No. 3 Tp "C" Sqn 1 Lothians (Flails), No. 1 Tp 617 Aslt Sqn 42 Aslt Regt (A.Vs.R.E.), all the field artillery in 2 Cdn Inf Div, 4 Cdn Med Regt, Tor Scot R. (M.G.) less one M.G. company, 7 Cdn Fd Coy R.C.E. and Tcl Assu. The success of this attack

was essential to the rapid advance of 15 (S.) Div along the axis Kranenburg and Nutterden to breach the Siegfried Line and clear the high ground west of Cleve. (Ibid) (See Appx "C").

56. At the same time on the immediate right, 227 (H.) Bde and 46 (H.) Bde of 15 (S.) Div would move forward supported by elements of 6 Gds Tk Bde. The divisional plan was divided into four phases. In the first, 227 (H.) Bde would capture Kranenburg while 46 (H.) Bde would seize the high ground between that town and Auf dem Hovel (8054) to the south. This phase, it was anticipated, would be completed by 1600 hours on D Day. Once this line was secure, 44 (L.) Bde with 2 Gordons under command would pass through to carry out the second phase, in which the anti-tank ditch and obstacle belt to the east would be carried and the areas Wolfsberg (8454), Hingstberg (8455) and Nutterden consolidated with a view to clearing the road from Kranenburg to Nutterden. At this point 46 (H.) and 227 (H.) Bdes would resume their advance. 46 (H.) Bde was to secure the high ground south-west of Cleve by first light on D plus 1. 227 (H.) Bde was to complete the clearing of the Cleve - Kranenburg road, establish itself in the area north-west of Cleve and make contact with 3 Cdn Inf Div on its left. This would wind up the third phase and the reconnaissance regiments and 2 H.C.R. would again exploitation. (Ibid: 15 (S.) Inf Div, m O.O. No. 8, Op "VERITABLE", 4 Feb 45).

57. On the narrower front to the right of 15 (S.) Div, 53 (W.) Inf Div planned first to launch 71 Inf Bde against the Branden Berg feature. Then, 160 Bde with under command one battalion of 158 Bde, all moving in the rear of 71 Bde, was to pass through to breach the Siegfried Line south of Frasselt

(8253), and leaving the battalion of 158 Bde to protect its right flank, the brigade was to move on to secure the Stoppelberg heights in the Reichswald south of Nutterden. As 160 Bde was on its way to the latter objective, 158 Bde was to pass by 71 Bde, assist in mopping up within the divisional boundaries and occupy the elaborate trench system in that area (8251-8252). Here the battalion under command 160 Bde would revert to 158 Bde; furthermore, should 160 Bde meet with very heavy opposition in breaching the Siegfried defences, 158 Bde was itself to be prepared to advance to seize the Stoppelberg feature. 147 R.A.C. would furnish the armoured support. (Ibid: 53 (W.) Div, O.O. No. 27, Operation "VERITABLE", 4 Feb 45).

58. The right wing of the assault was the responsibility of 51 (H.) Div, which broke down its divisional tasks accordingly into three phases. In the first phase 154 and 153 Bdes would secure the high ground on the western edges of the Reichswald. 154 bde had the primary task of seizing the two spot heights, Point 62, (7751) Point 70 (7951) and the intervening ground. During these operations the villages of Breedeweg (7652) and Bruuk (7752) must be cleared and a defensive right flank formed facing the village of Grafwagen (7652) so that the area within the brigade boundary could be mopped up to allow the field artillery to move into that area on the night of D/D plus 1. It was proposed that 153 Bde would pass through 154 Bde at about 1300 hours on D Day, for it was estimated that by this time 154 Bde's objectives and lines of communication thus far would be clear enough to allow 153 Bde to move up to capture the wooded hills north and east of Reithorst and form a firm base facing south. From here 153 Bde would exploit to clear the road Mook -

Kanonskamp (7649). This phase, apart from 153 Bde's exploitation, was to be completed by dawn D plus 1.

59. For the second phase 152 Bde would pass through 154 Bde, clear the southern edge of the Reichswald and gain control of the area about Hekkens. 153 Bde was to continue clearing along the east bank of the River Maas to open the route Mook - Drie Kronen (7747). On the northernmost flank 154 Bde would probe deeper into the forest while protecting the left of 152 Bde. During the last phase, while 152 Bde maintained its firm base at Hekkens, 154 Bde, using both northern and southern axes through the Reichswald, was to drive on and capture the Asper bridge, the crossroads on the eastern fringe of the forest north of the bridge and the homeland directly to the east. By this time 153 Bde would be ready to mop up the area south of the Reichswald and north of the Niers River. Phase III was forecast for first light D plus 2. The tanks of 107 R.A.C. would support the Highland infantry. (Ibid: 51 (H.) Inf Div O.O. No. 26, Operation "VERITABLE" 2 Feb 45). These then were the orders passed to the four divisions which were to make the initial thrust.

#### THE ATTACK COMMENCES - 8 FEB

60. On 8 Feb the offensive opened. Most of the prearranged air plan was effectively carried out, and during the preceding night the troops waiting for H Hour could see the flashes of the bombs and the fires raised as some 900 heavy bombers dropped their loads on the towns of Cleve, Goch, Weeze, Udem and Calcar. The air support continued throughout the first day, for the weather was good for that time of the year. There was some cloud but the supporting

aircraft were able to operate through it, thanks to a new device called the Mobile Radar Control Post, which was used with great success. Only one enemy aircraft was seen. (AEF: 45/30 Corps/S/F: Air Notes 228 and 229, 8 and 9 Feb 45).

61. The preliminary artillery bombardment began at 0500 hours. Targets included enemy forward positions, headquarters and communications, with a minimum of six tons directed on each target. The success of the assault was later attributed largely to this fire support. Prisoners declared that it had a shattering effect on their morale, the intensity being such that crews were unable to man their guns until the barrage had ceased; communications were totally disrupted. The Germans had "the impression of overwhelming force opposed to them, which, in their isolated state, with no communications, it was useless to resist". On the other hand, prisoners generally agreed that casualties from the bombardment were not high, on a rough average only five per cent. Equipment suffered more than personnel. (First Cdn Army Int Summary, 11 Feb 45). Counter-battery fire seems to have prevented very much enemy shelling during the attack. During the day well over half a million rounds were fired without a single case being reported of a round falling short. (21 Army Gp Report, paras 153-174).

62. The diapason was augmented by the firing of thirteen "land mattresses" - the saturation of targets by batteries of the newly created 1st Canadian Rocket Unit, which took part in major operations for the first time. The grouping of such miscellaneous weapons as medium machine guns, light anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns for the purposes of co-ordinated fire was another

device employed, and in this battle these "pepper pots" were organized by 2 Cdn Inf Div on the left and 51 (H.) Div on the right. In addition to the 4.2-inch mortars and the medium machine guns of the support battalions of all the divisions, the resources of two armoured regiments, approximately two light anti-aircraft regiments and two batteries of 17-pounder anti-tank guns were utilized. Since these miscellaneous weapons were fired continuously through-out the day, the ammunition expenditure and tremendous. The group organized by 2 Cdn Inf Div artillery alone fired 1,300,000 rounds of medium machine gun ammunition, 69,000 40-millimetre shells, 14,000 4.2-inch mortar bombs and 12,000 17-pounder shells. This great weight of metal was hurled against the enemy by 156 guns (including 24 tank guns), 48 4.2-inch mortars and 96 medium machine guns. (Ibid: Account by Brigadier F.N. Lace; AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/I: Op Instr 45, "Pepper Pot", 27 Jan 45; 21 Army Gp Report, para 52) (See Appx "D").

63. Some idea of the effect of this tremendous on-slaughter may be gained from quoting a description by an Historical Officer who watched the opening of the battle from an observation post on high ground about a mile north of Groesbeek:

The weather promised to be fair, and the sight of the airbursts and tracer in the sky, against the yellow light of the rising sun was very impressive. There was continuous roll of heavy gunfire that was punctuated by staccato bursts of MG fire from all sides... At 0740 hrs, almost a complete silence descended on the entire front for a period of

a full ten minutes... to enable the Flash Spotters and Sound Rangers to locate active enemy btys not previously known.

A few birds were still flying across the sky in a bewildered manner, as the artillery took up their theme again, and the tempo accelerated as the full weight of 1,000 guns was brought to bear against the enemy. Beyond the occasional airburst, and the odd round over a wide area, there was little reply from the enemy and, at this stage, the spectator was left with the impression that hostile positions were being simply smothered.

The gaunt trunks and torn branches of trees, ruined farm buildings, and the smoke and cordite fumes that swept across the area all contributed to the strangely fascinating panorama of war.

As H-hr approached, in anything, the noise increased and a new note was added by the sound of armour moving forward and planes passing overhead. The combined effect produced a vivid picture of a war of machine -- a war of calculated and terrible efficiency.

A wounded soldier, with face covered by a field dressing, was directed to a nearby R.A.P. as pockets of smoke began to fill the contours in the ground. The historical officer and war artist were compelled to shout at each other in order to make themselves heard above the noise. Carriers rattled by, with red cross flags prominently displayed, and a tp of "Cromwell" tanks that had been camouflaged with straw against the

walls of a demolished barn added their guttural roar to the din of battle. "Churchill" and "Sherman" tanks began to move east along the draw in square 7556, through the scattered debris of gliders that remained from the airborne attack of the previous September.

At 0950 hrs the barrage, which represented the climax of the preliminary bombardment, was observed to be beginning. Capt Hunter and Capt Pepper proceeded down the draw to observe the armour and specialized assault equipment moving forward. Besides the orthodox types of tanks, there were "Flails", "Crocodiles", A.Vs.R.E., all with their fluorescent panels (for identification from the air) glowing like red hot plates against the dull background. A tank officer enquired anxiously about minefields, but could not be satisfied. The armour lurched forward with all vehicles stripped for action - one tank still had a frying pan dangling from the back of the turret. An Air O.P. flew slowly overhead, and smoke shells continued to drop a short distance in front, as the deafening noise increased. Some enemy rounds dropped about 300 yards distant and personnel took cover, but the armoured advance went on without hesitation. There was an air of urgency and tense expectation evident everywhere as H-hr approached.

(W.D., 2 Cdn Fd Hist Sec, February 1945: Appx 1, Diary of 2 Div Det, 8 Feb 45)

64. The infantry attack which went in at 1030 hours was unique in that the four divisions, extended across a six-mile front between the Nijmegen -

Kranenburg road and the Maas River near Mook, moved forward simultaneously. Prior to this attack the whole area was held by 2 Cdn Inf Div, while 3 Cdn Inf Div occupied the northern end of the front between the Nijmegen - Cleve road and the River Waal. On the previous day these two divisions had come under command 30 Corps, which at the same time took over responsibility for the whole front east of Nijmegen. The Scottish and Welsh divisions then moved into the area immediately behind 2 Cdn Inf Div's front line which, in order to deceive the enemy, the Canadians continued to occupy with only two brigades. When the attack opened the British divisions passed through together with the attacking elements of 2 Cdn Inf Div, which after their successful attainment of the divisional objectives were to go into reserve. (21 Army Gp Report, paras 64 - 65: AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/I, Docket III(d): folio 33 Op Instruction No. 12, 3 Feb; AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket I: Weekly Summary of Ops, 4 - 10 Feb 45; AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/G; Trace of dispositions as at 070800 Feb 45; AEF: 45/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/G: Trace of dispositions as at 020800 Feb 45).

65. The assault went well all along the front, making better progress on the left than on the right, where opposition was much stiffer. On 2 Cdn Inf Div's front the counter-battery and counter-mortar programmes were extremely effective as a whole, but on the right, in the rear of R. de Mais and particularly on the extreme left in the area held by R.H.C., the enemy made a furious attempt to disrupt the operation. However, the "pepper pots" which had been laid down to saturate all enemy defences within range and the "land mattress" put down by 1 Cdn Rocket Unit had been remarkably effective. There had been no casualties in the assembly areas or forming up places. Under

cover of this excellent barrage R. de Mais and Calg Highrs went in to the attack.

66. The troops, keeping right up to the line of bursting shells quickly cleaned out the forward localities. It appeared that the enemy had anticipated the main thrust along the obvious route leading south-east around Berg en Dal (7459), and as a result, he was surprised by the manoeuvre which Brigadier Megill's seasoned and well trained infantry executed to cut off Wyler from the south. Schu mines provided one of the principal obstacles in the path of the advance. They took the form of several roads of mines laid quite openly on the surface, with other mines interspersed and concealed below the ground. In attempting to avoid the visible mines the losses. This was particularly the case in the area of Calg Highrs, who lost about 24 men.

(AEF: 45/5 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I, The Role of 5 Cdn Inf Bde in Operation "VERITABLE", 8 Feb 45. Account by Brigadier W.J. Megill, D.S.O. commanding 5 Cdn Inf Bde, given to the Historical Officer, 2 Cdn Inf Div, 11 Feb 45).

67. "A" and "D" Coys Calg Highrs pushed eastwards through Vossendaal and established themselves astride the Wyler - Kranenburg road. By 1200 hours "A" Coy had made contact with 10 H.L.I. of 227 (H.) Bde as far east as Richters Gut (7956) and "C" Coy following close behind "D" had reached the area of Lagewald (7857). "C" Coy had had comparatively heavy casualties here for the troops were too thin on the ground to do the job against the more numerous enemy. "C" Coy, however, pressed on, working north-west of Lagewald along the road in the direction of Im Thal (7758). Meanwhile "D" Coy began to clear the high ground immediately on the edge of the flooded area, north of the

Kranenburg - Wyler road, towards Wyler. They forged on, passing "C" Coy which, through an error in map reading, had been reported some 500 yards ahead of its actual position. Fierce fighting was taking place, in the course of which "C" Coy's commander was killed and "D" Coy lost contact with Battalion Headquarters. By 1400 hours the progress had become very slow and "C" Coy was asked whether additional fire support was required; a gallant answer came back, "No, this is an infantry job, but we need reinforcements." Accordingly, one platoon of "D" Coy was despatched to join the depleted "C" Coy in the Lagewald area. As Calg Highrs fought fiercely to attain its objectives the sappers were at work clearing the road to the south, freeing it of the mines, booby trap and other obstacles which the enemy had counted on to delay our progress. (Ibid).

68. By this time the attack on the right by R. de Mais on Den Heuvel and Gochstrasze had been successful. Both "A" and "B" Coys having fought their way on to the objectives were consolidated, and "C" Coy, which had so far been in reserve, was ordered to relieve "A" Coy of the Calg Highrs along the main road north of Hochstrasze. The situation about Wyler was still in a confused state and communications between the forward companies and battalion headquarters was unsatisfactory. The C.O. Calg Highrs now decided to send the remainder of "B" Coy forward to assist in the clearing of Wyler. Fire support was requested and came down at 1725 hours as "D" and "B" Coys pressed into the town. Wyler was subsequently reported clear of all enemy by 1830 hours. Casualties had been quite heavy. Calg Highrs lost two officers and eleven other ranks killed, one officer and 60 other ranks wounded. R. d Mais had two other ranks killed and one officer and nine others ranks wounded.

Approximately 40 per cent of these casualties, however, were due to mines. On the credit side 5 Cdn Inf Bde captured seven officers and 308 other ranks. (Ibid).

69. The operation revealed that the enemy had positioned more troops in the northern end of Wyler than had been anticipated and that he had constructed very strong dugouts in the banks of the Wyler Meer, to form a complete network of communication trenches throughout the area, by means of which it had been possible for him to move at will from Wyler to Den Heuvel without being seen. That Wyler would prove the hardest nut to crack had been apparent from the beginning, but in avoiding the obvious line of approach and in striking at the German garrison from the south-east, Brigadier Megill's men had sealed off Wyler and prevented the enemy's escape. (Ibid).

70. While 2 Cdn Inf Div had been battling for its objectives, the entire field of operations to the south flared up as the other three divisions went forward. Immediately to the right of 5 Bde, 227 and 46 (H.) Bdes of 15 (S.) Div, supported by 6 Gds Tank Bde advanced against moderate opposition. Casualties were light, but here again the main obstacles in the path of the advance were mines of every description. However, by 1800 hours, on the northern flank, 10 H.L.I., 227 (H.) Bde were clearing Kranenburg and both 2 A. & S.H. and 2 Gordons were moving up fast on the right between that place and Galgensteeg. On 46 (H.) Bde's sector, 2 Glas H. had already consolidated Haus Kreuzfuhr (7954) while 9 cameronians pressed on towards Frasselt. By this time some 200 prisoners had been taken. (AEF: 45/21 Army Group/C/F, Docket

III: Op "VERITABLE" para 65; and W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 32, Ops Log, 8 Feb 45, Serials 30, 55, 61, 72, 74, 78).

71. The battle went equally well in front of 53 (W.) Div: despite the fact that many of the supporting tanks of 34 Armd Bde found the ground too soggy for extensive manoeuvre and were thus confined to single tracks. The flails and crocodiles met more immediate disaster, for they bogged down soon after crossing the start line; added to this, the divisional axis began to show definite signs of giving way under the weight of heavy traffic. It was the sheer perseverance on the part of the infantry and few tanks which kept up the momentum of the advance. (30 Corps Operation "VERITABLE", Report on 34 Armd Bde Ops, p. 2) 4 R.W.F. of 71 Bde drew first blood and quickly seized the built-up area on the road south of Boersteeg (9854) allowing 1 H.L.I. and 1 Oxf Bucks to pass through towards the edge of the forest and the brigade objective, which was reached at approximately 1800 hours. Within a short while both battalions had consolidated with 1 H.L.I. holding the high ground south-east and east of point 75 (8152), and 1 Oxf Bucks on the Branden Berg (8053) (Ibid, Serial 80).

72. On the far right (H.) Div also made substantial gains in the face of somewhat severe opposition. 1 B.W. reached its objective on the northern part of the Freuden Berg by 1400 hours; 7 B.W., however, had a more difficult time in clearing the regions Breedeweg and Bruuk, and 5/7 Gordons were put under command 154 Bde and ordered to pass through to keep up the pressure to the east. The general situation improved slightly in that by 1900 hours, resistance in Breedeweg and Bruuk had been quelled, 5/7 Gordons were on the

move towards the southern part of the Freuden Berg, and 5 B.W. has struck out in a southerly direction with the object of seizing Pyramide, point 78 (7751). At this time 1 Gordons were preparing to follow up 7 and 5 B.W. to assault the high ground about St. Jansberg (7650). (Ibid, Serials 31, 49, 55, 59, 78, 92).

73. The battle was developing favourably and the enemy was already reeling back from a series of well directed blows at the midriff of his defence. To the north of Wyler it now remained for 3 Cdn Inf Div to deal out some telling head punches. General Spry's attack was divided into two phases. The first was to be carried out by 7 & 8 Cdn Inf Bdes, on the right and left respectively, with the object of clearing the area to the line of the A.Tk ditch which ran from Donsbruggen (8657) north to Diffelward (8760): the second, by 9 Bde, to break through the Siegfried Line in that area and advance to consolidate the line of the Spoy Canal (9057 - 9060). The plan called for 7 & 8 Bdes to first lunge out from the firm base at present held by 9 Cdn Inf Bde; 7 Bde with on the right Regina Rif on the left 1 C. Scot R. in reserve R. Wpg Rif. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/I, "VERITABLE", Docket III(c): H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div Op Order No. 4, Op "VERITABLE"). In turn 7 Bde sub-divided its task into three phases with under command one platoon "D" Coy C.H. of O. (M.G.), two platoons 6 Cdn Fd Coy, one company 14 Cdn Fd Amb, one section 4 Cdn Pro Coy; and in support "A" Coy C.H. of O. (M.G.), one squadron 13/18 H., two troops 1 lothians, one section of 3 Ram Wasps, one troop 617 Aslt Sqn R.E., and approximately 57 Buffaloes. (H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde Op Order No. 4, Op "VERITABLE").

74. The first task was to break in an secure an advanced firm base on Quer-Damm (7660-7760) to include the strong-point (7761) at the north end. This would require Regina Rif with in support three troops 13/18 H. and one troop 1 Lothians first to establish positions on Quer-Damm to map reference 774608, a point about half way down the feature; whereupon 1 C. Scot R. would pass through to capture in succession the enemy posts at the northern end of Quer-Damm (776614), and the Dyke to the south-east along the Holland - German border (786612), and mop-up the Damm area to link up with Regine Rif. In the second phase the Regina Rif group would seize Zyfflich (7859) and press on to form company positions at the three bridge sties - one (813572) on the road between Niel and Kranenberg, another (820585) on the road to Mehr, and a third (812584) on the road to Kranenberg; while 1 C. Scot R. consolidated a fourth bridge (801602) further north, captured Niel and the nearby bridges on the road leading south to Mehr. At this point R. Wpg Rif would be prepared to move up. In the last phase, while Regina Rif assaulted Mehr and exploited to the line of the A.Tk Ditch and Siegfried defences between Bartekamp (8660) just west of Duffelward and the rail and road junction (8657) west of Donsbruggen, R. Wpg Rif, on orders from H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, would pass through 1 C. Scot R. to capture Keeken (8562) and consolidate the line of the water barrier formed by the Rhine opposite Bimmen (8563) to Muhlenbergshof (8760) on Oude Rijn, north and west of the Spoy Canal, where a link-up with H.L.I. of C. would be made later. Meanwhile, 1 C. Scot R. was to reorganize, bold a firm base at Niel, but be ready to assist either of its sister battalions in the event of trouble. This then wound up the first phase of the Divisional plan inasfar as it affected 7 Cdn Inf Bde. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/I Op

"VERITABLE" Docket III(c): H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde Op Order No. 4, Op  
"VERITABLE").

75. At the same time on the left, 8 Cdn Inf Bde with under command one platoon "D" Coy C.H. of O. (M.G.), two platoons 16 Cdn Fd Coy, R.C.E. one section 4 Cdn Pro Coy; and in support "B" Coy C.H. of O. (M.G.), one troop 1 Lothians and 25 Buffaloes of 5 Aslt Regt R.E., was to attack across the flooded area; one battalion in Buffaloes, the second battalion in assault boats immediately available to pass through, and the reserve battalion ready to push on to the final objective. 8 Cdn Inf Bde's operation was in three phases; in the first N. Shore R. were to advance in Buffaloes to clear the Dyke from the houses (798631) to the dyke and road junction (794632) just south-west of Kuilschen Hof (794624) and capture the village of Zandpol (7962). Once this area was in Canadian hands R. de Chaud would pass through in its assault boats to complete the clearing of the dyke road to as far south as the bend below Heuvelsche Straat (7961) and occupy Leuth (8061). In the second phase both battalions would commit fresh companies to consolidate from left to right the line of the Dyke west and north of Kekerdom (8164) south-eastwards along the Spaldropsche Straat, (8164) taking in the molen Straatje to its termination in the area of Polder Millingen (8263). For the final phase the reserve battalion, Q.O.R. of C. was to pass through R. de Chaud, capture Millingen and firm up along the Rhine bank from the circular lake above that town to the outskirts of Bimmen. As soon as this area was under control, H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde would order N. Shore R. to mop-up to the river in the Millingsche Waard (8065) - 8165) region and the factory sites

which line the Rhine directly west of Kekerdom. (Ibid, H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde Op Order No. 28).

76. If all progressed according to expectation, the completion of Phase I of the divisional plan would mean that 8 & 7 Bdes held an almost semi-circular area beginning north of Erlekom (7862), following the bank of the Rhine to its infusion with the Oude Rijn opposite Tolkamer (8762), then down the canal to join the Siegfried defences which commenced west of Duffelward and carried on to the south in the region of Donsbruggen. They way would now be open for 9 Cdn Inf Bde to begin Phase II of the divisional plan, which called for the capture or destruction of all enemy between the railway line of Donsbruggen to Cleve on the right, the Alter Rhein on the left, and as far forward as the Spoy Canal. This attack would be carried out in two phases: the first constituting a break-through of the Siegfried Line north of Donsbruggen by S.D. & G. Highrs and south of Duffelward by H.L.I. of C., the second, subsequent exploitation eastwards by both battalions with S.D. & G. Highrs on the right occupying the area Rinden (8858), then resuming the advance eastwards to line the Spoy Canal and thus consolidate the triangle formed by the railway and canal north of Cleve. On the left H.L.I. of C., having captured Duffelward, would strike east again to firm up the region of Wardhausen (8959). Nth N.S. Highrs in reserve, must then be prepared to pass through on either flank during the operation, to mop-up in the wake of the leading battalions and to be ready to take over the Duffelward sector from H.L.I. of C. For its part in the battle 9 Cdn Inf Bde would have under command "C" Coy and one platoon "D" Coy C.H. of O. (M.G.), two platoons 18 Cdn Fd Coy R.C.E., one company 14 Cdn Fd Amb R.C.A.M.C., one section 4 Cdn Pro

Coy, and in support one squadron 13/18 H., two troops 1 Lothians and one troop 617 Aslt Sqn R.E. As a matter of interest it may be noted that the plan for 3 Cdn Inf Div as outlined here represented the limit of that division's participation in the first overall phase of the Corps' plan.

77. As the British divisions improved their positions to the south, 3 Cdn Inf Div moved forward to the attack at 1800 hours; on the right 7 Cdn Inf Bde launched Regina Rif, whose "D" Coy quickly occupied the southern part (7660) of Quer Damm, taking about 20 prisoners, yet suffering only very light casualties. The next move in this sector took place at 1840 hours, when "B" Coy 1 C. Scot R. moved up from the south and passed through the Reginas' first objective to take out the strong-point at the north end of the Damm. While two of the "B" Coy platoons worked their way up the Dyke, the third sub-unit riding on Buffaloes approached the enemy position from the south-west. Here, however, there was considerable disorganization, caused mostly by ill-timing of the artillery fire, with the result that the company commander decided to re-group his small force. Meanwhile the Reginas had met with better success; shortly after 1 C. Scot R. had passed through, "B" Coy, together with a troop of tanks and one flail crossed the dyke, followed by "C" Coy, and advanced on Zyfflich to the east. This isolated village was reached at 2000 hours, whereupon both "B" and "C" Coys commenced a mopping up which netted another 100 prisoners at a cost of 1 officer killed and 12 O.R.s. wounded. By 2313 hours Zyfflich was consolidated and 1 C. Scot R. was ordered to start out for the waterbound hamlet of Niel. "A" Coy 1 C. Scot R. was instructed to capture the south part of the village, "D" Coy the north, with "C" Coy passing on to the east as soon as the situation permitted. In accordance with the Battalion

plan, "A" & "D" Coys loaded into Buffaloes, set course by compass and vanished into to the black night. Within a few minutes "C" Coy sailed out behind them. Lt-Col D.G. Crofton and his staff settled down to await developments, but as things turned out it proved to be some considerable time before any word of these companies was received. "B" Coy, though in continuous wireless contact, was still some distance short of the Quer Damm strong-point, and sent a message to say that that operation would have to be held up until daylight. (AEF: 45/7 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I: folio 3, Report on Op "VERITABLE" prepared by H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde; AEF: 45/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket II: Op "VERITABLE", Report No. 1; W.Ds., Regina Rif, 8 Feb 45, 1 C. Scot R., 8 Feb 45).

78. By this time on the left flank 8 Cdn Inf Bde, who had moved off at 1845, had completed their part of the first phase. N. Shore R. had by 1850 hours with "A" Coy taken over the line of Dyke road (7962) running north to south-west of Zandpol (7962); ten minutes later, "B" Coy passed across the dyke. The journey to Zandpol held its own dangers; mines and booby traps were plentiful, and these accounted for the first casualties, killing one officer and four men. Nevertheless "B" Coy pressed on, and at 2015 hours, as "A" Coy reported its consolidation complete, "B" Coy requested an artillery concentration on Zandpol. The guns quickly supplied the supporting fire and at 2055 hours Zandpol was in Canadian hands. (W.D., N. Shore R., 8 Feb 45).

79. R. de Chaud's part in the operation had begun as soon as N. Shore R. took the Dyke land west of Zandpol. "A" Coy, followed by "D" Coy, led the way towards Lauth, and by 2200 hours had taken 77 prisoners (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 3

Cdn Inf Div, February 1945, Appx 4: Ops Log, 9 Feb 45, Serials 129, 135, 138). The going was slow and as R. de Chaud moved across the watery lands they could hear the sounds of battle at Zandpol, where at about 2300 hours the enemy counter-attacked N. Shore R. positions, though without success. "A" Coy finally reached Leuth at about 0200 hours. (Ibid, 9 Feb 45, Serials 6, 11). At this time the remaining companies were strung out to the west, and it was not until two hours later that "D" Coy caught up with the leading troops and entered the village. Just before 0500 hours R. de Chaud Headquarters received the message that Leuth was clear and that another 20 prisoners had been taken; "B" and "C" Coys were then instructed to move up to complete the consolidation (Ibid, Serial 25). The advance for 3 Cdn Inf Div so far had been most difficult, for in many places troops had had to wade through several feet of water (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, 8, 9 Feb 45).

80. A notable feature of the division's advance was the tremendous smoke screen laid by four smoke companies under Army control. Since the sector was dominated by high ground on the other side of the Rhine, a continuous smoke barrier was put down along the south bank. By the end of the operation an unbroken line of smoke belched from some 85,000 generators which had been set along a distance of 30,000 yards. 400,000 gallons of fog oil and 40,000 gallons of "derv" were used to produce the screen, which was considered "a contributing feature in the success of the operation. Formations were more than satisfied." (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/F, Report on Smoke Screens).

81. By midnight 8/9 Feb, the five assault divisions had all entered Germany, they had taken over 1,2000 prisoners and they had destroyed or decimated five

of the eight enemy battalions engaged. Allied casualties had not been heavy; but the effect of the flooding was indeed serious, for the water level on the left bank of the Rhine had risen 18" during the day, and the Nijmegen - Cleve highway and its dyke was in jeopardy. (21 Army Gp Report, para 66). The past hours had seen marked improvement in the situation for the British Divisions. On 15 (S.) Div's front, on the left of 227 (H.) Bde, 10 H.L.I. of C. had consolidated Kranenberg, 2 Gordons were astride the railway about a mile east of the station (8055) and on the right 2 A. & S.H. of C. had established a strong position between the railway and Kinkenberg (8154) just west of Tuthees (8254). Further to the right, while 9 Cameronians of 46 (H.) Bde were expanding their gains in the region of Frasselt (8253), 2 Glas H. remained at Haus Kreuzfhrt (7954) with 7 Seaforth moving up in the rear. So far, neither 53 (W.) or 51 (H.) Divs had much else of interest to report, though of the former, two battalions, left 6 R.W.F. and right 1 E. Lan R (under command 160 Bde from 158), had gone past 71 Bde's forward localities and gained a start line running south from roughly point 22 (8352) to the Spur west of point 35 (8252) through which it was intended to push the remainder of 160 Bde - 4 Welch and 2 Mon on to the Stoppelberg feature (8553). On the southern flank, 1 B.W. of 154 (H.) Bde was now firm on its FreudenBerg objective, and while 5/7 Gordons ploughed on up and over the hill to the lower portion of the feature, 5 B.W. reached the high ground at Pyramide (7750) and allowed 1 Gordons to begin probing westwards. (AEF: 45/30 Brit Corps/C/H. Docket III: folio 161, 0/433, Sitrep as at 2400 hours 8 Feb 45; 2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 9 Feb 45, Serial 6).

82. The enemy's re-action to allied pressure on this day had varied from fanatical to deplorable. Certainly the German 84 Div had had a very bad day. On the morning of 8 Feb it had held strong positions 6,000 to 7,000 yards in advance of the Siegfried Line, with some seven Battalions forward and possibly three held back in reserve: by midnight 8/9 Feb the majority of these battalions had received a severe mauling and the fighting strength of the division was near the breaking point. Prisoners and dead had provided a clear picture of identification and disposition from north to south; at the western tip of the Reichswald the enemy's order of battle read as follows: - south of Waal, though as yet not fully contacted was Bn Munster; the flats around Zyfflich were held by 2 Bn, 1052 Gr Regt; south from here in the area Wyler was 2 Bn, 151 Gr, with 84 Fus Bn north of the Groesbeek - Kranenberg railway and a battalion south of it. On the enemy's left flank, 1222 Gr of 180 Inf Div had been identified before the Freuden Berg, while 1062 Gr had been positioned around the western corner of the Reichswald. Apparently 84 Div's position, sited well forward and stretched out to the limit, had been considered enough to hold the approaches to the Siegfried. But its troops had not been able to stand the hammering. Its mobile reserves, according to prisoners, were not near enough to influence the battle, and thus the enemy's dispositions in this phase anyway, could hardly have been more favourable to us. The important question at present was, how was the Reichswald itself defended? Prisoners from 84 Fus Bn had said that there were not concrete defences in the forest and that it was not manned. If this was the case the defence of the west wall in the Reichswald must lie in the strength of the forward defences to it, and there we had already breached (First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 223, 8 Feb 45). Discussing the enemy's action, General Crerar

pointed out that the resistance offered by the dazed and shaken troops "proved to be a lesser handicap than the appalling conditions of the ground". "It was evident" he added, "that while the Germans had appreciated our concentrations for an attack they had failed to anticipate at least its timing." A considerable measure of tactical surprise had been achieved. (General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45).

#### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE BATTLE, 9 - 10 FEB

83. On the following day the rain started. 2 Cdn Inf Div having completed its task, the four divisions now left in the battle continued to advance against light opposition, but going through the water-logged fields and narrow roads of the forest was heavy and progress was limited. It became increasingly apparent that the main problems of the operation would be those of deployment and supply. (Personal Diary, Major W.E.C. Harrison, His Offr, First Cdn Army, February 1945).

84. Early on 9 Feb, 3 Cdn Inf Div assumed its advance, which had, for divers reasons, slow down slightly. On the left in 8 Cdn Inf Bde's sector, N. Shore R. having received word that R. de Chaud was fully established in Leuth, directed its "C" and "D" Coys on to Kekerdom (8164). "C" Coy reached the point at about 0845 hours, and after a confirming reconnaissance had declared it free of enemy, the company moved in, followed by "D" Coy. The third ("B") company also moved up to consolidate at 1800 hours, while "A" Coy extended its present positions to take in Zandpol. Thus N. Shore R's. portion of the divisional plan was over, for flooding made it unnecessary to occupy the three

factory sites along the river to the north-west. The battalions losses to date were one officer and 9 O.Rs. killed, and one officer and 12 O.Rs. wounded. (W.D., N. Shore R., 9 Feb 45). By this time, to the south, in the area of Niel, the situation of 1 C. Scot R., so long cloaked in mystery, had cleared itself. Early that morning, "C" Coy had returned to Wyler Meer reporting boat trouble which had prevented them going on; the C.O., not having heard from "A" and "D" Coys, but sensing that Niel must by now be taken, set off with his command group, in two Buffaloes. Niel was reached without incident and Lt-Col D.G. Crofton, presuming that he had touched-down in a part of the village already cleared, gave the order to proceed. The enemy, however, was as yet by no means subdued in this area, and attacked the Buffaloes in which the command group was riding. For a few moments pandemonium reigned; the C.O.'s craft was hit by bazooka fire from all sides, and Lt-Col Crofton and his I.O., both wounded and badly shaken, only just managed to crawl to the shelter of some nearby buildings; the remaining occupants of the Buffaloes, with the exception of 2 O.Rs., who tough wounded, waded back to report to the 2 i/c of the battalion, were all killed. Simultaneously, the second Buffalo was also subjected to fierce fire and driven back. (W.D., H.Q. 1 C. Scot R., 9 Feb 45).

85. While the command group was experiencing this most uncomfortable situation "A" and "D" Coys were in action, but at Germenseel some 1500 yards to the south-west; here the two companies cleared the group of houses, and realizing their error, struck out once more north-west, towards Niel, "A" Coy along the road through St. Johannshof (8159) and Blankenstein (8159) and "D" Coy approaching the village in Buffaloes from the south-west. In the dim

light, the two companies set about clearing the area, which gave up 110 prisoners; they then consolidated the village, about which the flood waters were rising rapidly (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 9 Feb 45). The capture of Niel gave "A" and "B" companies of R. Wpg Rif a base from which to jump off when they arrived from Wyler Meer at 1315 hours. It also protected the left flank of Regina Rif, whose present position had improved considerably; for apart from the fact that "B" and "C" Coys were firm in Zyfflich, "B" Coy C. Scot r. had cleaned out the troublesome enemy posts at the north end of the first objective, and "A" Coy Regina Rif had already exploited to Mehr (8358), which it had found unoccupied and entered that morning. (AEF: 45/7 Cdn Inf BDE/C/D, Docket I: Report on Op "VERITABLE"). Good progress was made during the afternoon by both 7 and 8 Bdes; Q.O.R. of C. reached Millingen at about 1430 hours with "A" and "B" Coys, who rolled up the main road from Leuth, with "C" Coy approaching the town from the west and "D" Coy mopping up in the rear (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 9 Feb 45). At the same time "A" and "B" Coys R. Wpg Rif were directing their efforts on Keeken, with on the left "B" Coy, on the right "A" Coy. This small village was entered in mid-afternoon, and shortly after "C" Coy pushed through to attack south in the direction of the Customs House (8662), on the Oude Rijn and while the two leading companies pressed on to their own objectives against moderate opposition, "D" Coy moved into Keeken itself. By now "B" Coy had established contact with Q.O.R. of C. on its left. (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 9 Feb 45). It remained for 9 Cdn Inf Bde to complete the division's part in the first phase of the 30 Corps plan. This attack was set for the morning of 10 Feb (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 9, 10 Feb 45).

86. In contrast with the widespread manoeuvres of the Canadian brigades who were battling the flood water as well as the enemy, the divisions to the south had made excellent progress against somewhat weakening enemy opposition, but with poor roads and boggy terrain hampering the advance. In the far south 153 Bde of 51 (H.) Div had completed mopping the area of Breedeweg (7652) and 5 B.W. had thrust south from their objective at pyramide to cut the Mook - Gennepe road near Kanonskamp (7649); 1 Gordons had made contact with the Camerons of C. of 6 Cdn Inf Bde near Riethorst in their drive to the west. Good gains were also made in the forest to the east, where 152 Bde, having passed through 154 Bde were moving fast towards Hekkens. Earlier that day the Freudenberg position had been exploited, first by 7 A. & S.H. on the left, then by 5 Camerons on the right; but late in the afternoon 5 Seaforth passed through 7 A. & S.H. and went on to cut the Kranenberg - Hekkens road about a mile and a half north of Hekkens, while 2 Seaforth came up through 5 Camerons at about 2100 hours and reached a position just inside the German boundary, 1000 yards north of Lange Horst (8048). 2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 10 Feb 45, Serial 7).

87. On the narrow front between 51 (H.) and 15 (S.) Divs, 53 (W.) Div's advance to the Stoppelberg feature had been much easier than expected. The operation began in the early hours of 9 Feb with 160 Bde passing 6 R.W.F. and 1 E. Lan R. to the east through 71 Bde. These two battalions quickly covered the distance to the entrenchments east of the Hekkens road, where 4 Welch pressed on to reach the western side of the objective facing Wolfspberg (8454). Close on the heels of 4 Welch came 2 Mon to consolidate the Stoppelberg objective itself, while on the right, and to the south, 158 Bde moved up,

pushing 1/5 Welch on to exploit the position already held by 1 E. Lan R; at about the same time 7 R.W.F. of 158 Bde relieved 6 R.W.F. on the left, to allow the latter unit to push forward to the east beyond Stoppelberg. This objective (8653-8654) was achieved by 1900 hours, and consolidated, while 158 Bde, now complete on the right flank, pressed on. (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 36, Army Ops Log, 9 Feb, Serials 1, 13, 22, 24, 29, 46, 47, 52 59, 72 75).

88. The advance of 15 (S.) Div had been spectacular. 44 (L.) Bde went through 227 and 46 (S.) Bdes during the night of 8/9 Feb, but road conditions delayed their attack until 0400 hours, (First Cdn Army Ops Log, 9 Feb 45, Serials 13, 26) and it was not actually until about 0900 hours that the start line was crossed by 6 K.O.S.B. and 2 Gordons, who moved forward in the wake of the flails. Within an hour, 2 Gordons were on the outskirts of Nutterden and 6 K.O.S.B. had seized the Hingstberg (8455) and Wolfsberg features. Meanwhile 6 R.S.F. and 8 R.S. were waiting in reserve south of Tuthees, ready to follow up. At 1100 hours there was a slight change of plan, which called for 6 R.S.F. and 8 R.S. to capture the Materborn feature and 227 (H.) Bde with 2 Gordons back under command, to occupy Wolfsberg, Hingstberg, and Nutterden (Ibid, Serials 28, 34, 47). While Nutterden was being attacked, 8 R.S. pushed past 6 K.O.S.B. at 1340 hours, and elements of the latter unit rose from their positions to follow. 8 R.S. having gained about 1500 yards by 1500 hours paused to allow 6 K.O.S.B. to pass them, and they in turn followed. The next three hours saw the two battalions moving freely towards Cleve and the Materborn feature, which was finally reached and consolidated, with 6 K.O.S.B. on the high ground south of Zu Donsbruggen (8656), and 8 R.S. some 500 yards

west of the Cleverberg look-out tower (8855). (Ibid, Serials 54, 58, 63, 65, 75). At this time Divisional Headquarters declared that 227 (S.) Bde would not take over the Nutterden feature, but would pass through 44 (L) Bde to attack Cleve (Ibid, Serial 41). However, while 44 (L.) Bde waited for its sister formation to pass on, 15 (S.) Div Recce Regt moved up and patrolled forward to the south in the direction of Materborn village. (Ibid, Serials 34, 54, 63, 84; and Appx 39, folios 28 and 35, Sitreps to 282400 Feb 45).

89. While the day's ground operations had gone well, weather had curtailed most of the expected air support. Good use was made of the hours available, however, and several successful sorties were flown against the enemy's communications north and east of the Rhine. The Headquarters of 1 Para Army (A1363) was amongst the targets successfully engaged. Closer to the front the villages of Till, (E9752) Calcar (A0099) and Moyland (E9652), were attacked through heavy cloud which prevented the observation of results. The enemy's re-action in the air was indeed minute; only three enemy aircraft were sighted throughout the day's operation. (First Cdn Army Int Summary, 9 Feb 45).

90. As the hours passed, the enemy's predicament became still unhappier, and by midnight 9/10 Feb all but one of the battalions of 84 Div group were either decimated or fully committed to action. As expected, some elements of 7 para Div began to appear during the day, while earlier reconnaissance indicated that further reserves were being brought up from the south and west. In appreciating the enemy's probable intention the First Cdn Army Intelligence Staff considered:

With the west wall following the Maginot Line into history, the way left to stop us is to hold Cleve and Goch, which are vital to our communications. Cleve he has all but lost, but Goch is still under his control. If he has forces available either from the Hochwald or from across the Rhine, he will be tempted to try to regain Cleve or at least to seal it off. If he cannot do so then he must hold Goch, and also cover the nearest crossings of the Rhine. These designs failing, he must rely on the Gochwald lay-back position...

(First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 224, 9 Feb 45)

91. Although naturally at the moment the enemy's plans were not known, it was appreciated on the higher levels that there must be considerable confusion in the minds of the German High Command. This belief, instigated by the existing facts, was borne out at a later date by General Alfred Schlemm, who on his capture some months hence, disclosed his position on and about 9 Feb.

Once the battle was joined, it became obvious that the control of First Para Army no longer rested solely with Schlemm. Berlin had taken an interest in the matter, and Schlemm merely became a receptacle for the passing of orders. The Reichswald battle from that time on was to become for Schlemm a nightmare of excuses, entreaties and explanations. His first indication that he did not have a free hand came with the order that under no circumstances was any land between the Maas and the Rhine to be given up without the permission of Rundstedt, who would first ask Hitler. This prohibition on his freedom of movement considerably

restricted Schlemm's plans. He realized that if the Allies once captured the west bank of the Rhine, his complete army would be trapped. His own plan was to build a series of lines facing north, between the Maas and the Rhine, and retire slowly from position to position exacting as heavy a price as possible for every loss of ground. These tactics were not permitted, however, and 86 Corps was ordered to stand where it was and not yield an inch. As a result the British troops broke through vital positions time after time, forcing Schlemm to make a hasty adjustment to the new situation. In addition a detailed explanation for each withdrawal had to be sent back.

(Special Interrogation Report: Gen Alfred Schlemm)

92. During the night 9/10 Feb, 43 (W.) Inf Div started to move forward along the Kranenberg - Nutterden road; 129 Inf Bde, in the lead, reached Nutterden at 2330 hours, and from here the brigade made its way forward to the line at present held by 6 K.O.S.B. and 8 R.S., with the object of passing 4 Wilts and 4 Som L.I. through into Cleve (W.D., "G" Ips, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 41, Ops Log Main H.Q., 10 Feb 45, Serials 8 and 20). All over the battle field, the already futile condition of the ground was being aggravated by more rain and strong winds; this was especially the case on the northern flank, where 3 Cdn Inf Div was experiencing all sorts of difficulties caused by the rising floods. The brigades which had reached their objectives were virtually cut off and, for the greater part, only able to exist by keeping on the dykes. There was little reaction from the enemy in this section, and the only fighting experienced during the hours of darkness was by "C" Coy

R. Ppg Rif, who in moving on to their objective north of Muhlenbergshof (8760), encountered fairly stiff opposition, but went through, and quickly collected 65 prisoners. Of the remaining battalions, all were ordered to remain on their present positions except R. de Chaud, who, because of extensive flooding, were forced to evacuate their positions at Leuth and return to Erlekom. Westwards of Mehr Regina Rif were patrolling constantly in order to keep a start line clear for the projected attack by 9 Cdn Inf Bde on the morning of 10 Feb. (W.D., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, February 1945; Appx 4, Ops Log, 10 Feb 45, Serials 1, 2, 3, 4, 10, 13).

93. The operation so far had gone according to plan, but far to the south an event had taken place which was to have important bearing on the battle. The Germans, resolved to stem the advance of First U.S. Army, which was directly threatening the Roer Dams, destroyed the valves of the Schwammanuel Dam. This act released a volume of water which caused the River Roer to overflow its banks along the entire front of Ninth U.S. Army, with the result that the American Operation "GRENADE", slated for 10 Feb, had to be postponed. (Montgomery, Normandy to the Baltic, p. 238). The news of this cancellation, however, did not discourage General Horrocks, or his divisions, in their determination to press on and complete the task on hand. On 10 Feb from north to south the advance continued.

94. The morning of 10 Feb found the attacking battalions, S.D. & G. Highrs and H.L.I. of C., busy preparing for their move forward. Transportation problems and other difficulties presented themselves hourly. The flood waters prevented the artillery from moving into its selected position. Since,

however, Regina Rif had reported the start line clear, it was decided not to fire the pre-arranged barrage at all, but to proceed with the attack supported by concentrations and stonks. While these new arrangements were being made, the battle to the south had begun, in some cases to slow down in the face of heavier opposition. (W.Ds., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, S.D. & G. Highrs, H.L.I. of C., 10 Feb 45; AEF: 45/9 Cdn Inf Bde, S.D. & G. Highrs, H.L.I. of C., 10 Feb 45; AEF 45/9 Cdn Inf BDE/C/D, Docket I: Special Report No. 5, Op "VERITABLE").

95. Yet despite the terrible condition of the ground some gains were made. By 1200 hours, 10 Feb, on the far right, I Gordons of 153 Bde had entered Heikant (7449) and were mopping up in that area against slight opposition. 5/7 Gordons, having passed through 5 B.W. in the region of Kanonskamp had reached Drie Kronen (7747), while east of the gennop road the reconnaissance elements of 2 Derby Yeo probed towards Aaldonk (7947) and Selderheide (8147). 152 Bde was still advancing slowly along the southern fringe of the forest in the direction of Hekkens. In this region, however, the enemy was unwilling to give any ground, and 3 Seaforth were held up. 5 Camerons were promptly pushed through them to continue the advance. 5 Seaforth maintained their hold on that portion of the Frasselt - Hekkens road, with their left positions of the interdivisional boundary (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 41, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 10 Feb 45, Serials 12, 17, 18, 20 and 26). On the left of 51 (H.) Div, 53 (W.) Div slowly improved its positions, mopping up within the divisional boundaries. On the right 1 E. Lan R. of 158 Bde pushed south to link up with 5 Seaforth of 51 (H.) Div, 15 Welch exploited towards Geldenberg (8351) and 7 R.W.F. pressed on to the high ground above Mann U Frau

(8451). 160 Bde apart from extensive patrolling remained consolidated on the Stoppelberg feature. (Ibid, Serial 17; W.D., H.Q. 3 Cdn Inf Div, February 1945: Appx 4, Ops Log, 10 Feb 45, Serials 39 and 61).

96. To the north of 53 (W.) Div, on the narrow front immediately west of Cleve, both 15 (S.) Div and 43 (W.) Div, who had passed through them, were manoeuvring their troops for the assault on Cleve, and while the 15 (S.) Div Recce Regt was attempting to force the main crossroads north-west of Hau (9152), some 1500 yards ahead of the infantry, 214 Bde of 43 Div had reached Saalhof (8754) with 5 D.C.L.I. and were now waiting for the rest of the brigade to catch up. On the western outskirts of Cleve 129 Bde was exerting pressure and mopping up the south-western outskirts of the town from the area of the slaughter house (8855) to Materborn village (8853). Behind 129 Bde and to the north, 44 (L.) Bde of 15 (S.) Div was preparing to pass into the town; the plan was for 6 K.O.S.B. (at present on the main road west of the still enemy-held look-out tower (8855)) and 8 R.S. (now north of Bresserberg (8755)) to enter Cleve from the west, while 6 R.S.F. moved in rear and north of 6 K.O.S.B. to clear the Sternberg sector (8856) (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945: Appx 16, Ops Log, 10 Feb 45, Serial 39 and 41). Between the main Nutterden - Cleve road and the railway 227 (H.) Bde was now ready to begin clearing the wooded area in the direction of Donsbruggen (8757) with 2 Gordons, while 2 A. & S.H., who had relieved 8 R.S. and 6 K.O.S.B. earlier, established themselves on the high ground astride the main road west of the troublesome look-out tower (Ibid). As can well be imagined, the congestion in this area, caused by the appalling condition of the roads and by the fact that

two divisions were attempting to manoeuvre there, was indescribable (AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/C/F, Docket III: Op "VERITABLE", para 73).

97. On the watery left flank, where the flood was still rising, 9 Cdn Inf Bde's forward battalions were moving up in Buffaloes. Their operation was to be carried out in two phases. At H Hour S.D. & G. Highrs would attack with "C" Coy right and "A" Coy left in an attempt to breach the Siegfried defences north of Donsbruggen and exploit towards the Rindern (8858) - Cleve road. After this "A" Coy would push on to seize the village of Rindern, with "D" Coy moving up on the right, passing through "C" Coy to secure that portion of the Spoy Canal directly north of Cleve; simultaneously "A" Coy was to press on to line the canal east of Rindr (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army//I, Docket III(c): Op "VERITABLE", S.D. & G. Highrs Op Order No. 3, Op "VERITABLE"). At the same time to the north, H.L.I. of C. would attack towards Duffelward was in Canadian hands, "D" Coy would break off to the right, join "C" Coy, which would move up from reserve, and turn east in the direction of Wardhausan (8959), and also line the Spoy Canal from its junction with the Oude Rijn southward to the left flank of S.D & D. Highrs (Ibid: H.L.I. of C. Op Order No. Op "VERITABLE"). The start line was crossed at 1630 hours (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 10 Feb 45). On the right S.D. & G. Highrs made good progress at first, meeting only light opposition, but on the left H.L.I. of C. ran into pill boxes and fortified houses on the southern approaches to Duffelward (AEF: 45/4 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket II: folio 4, Operational Narrative, Op "VERITABLE"). By 1745 hours S.D. & G. Highrs had entered Donsburggen and had established contact with 15 (S.) Div (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945: Appx 4, Ops Log, 10 Feb 45, Serials 54 and 58). For the next three hours

progress was slow on both flanks; on the left the enemy had the only line of advance into Duffelward well covered by machine gun fire, and as a result "B" Coy H.L.I. of C. suffered severe casualties and were unable to reach their objective. Nevertheless, under cover of darkness "A" Coy worked its way up on the right of Duffelward to contain the village until a further attack could be organized with fresh troops. (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 10 Feb 45). The advance by S.D. & G. Highrs, although opposed to some extent, was producing more favourable results, and by 2400 hours both Donsbruggen and Rindern had been occupied, although fighting was still going on in the latter place (W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945: Appx 4, Ops Log, 10 Feb 45, Serials 59, 65, 66, 69, 70 and 78; 11 Feb 45, Serials 4 and 4).

98. In the meantime, while 9 Cdn Inf Bde was thus employed, several changes and some improvements had occurred in the sectors held by the British divisions, but more especially on the far right in the sector held by 51 (H.) Div. Along the Maas river 1 Gordons of 153 Bde had cleared Middlaar and the area between the north bank of the river and the Gennep road; 5 B.W. crossed the Niers River south of Drie Kronen at 7747, and 5/7 Gordons having consolidated at Ottersum were thrusting east towards Zelderheide (8147), which 2 Derby Beo now held as well as Aaldonk. (7947) (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 41, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 10 Feb 45, Serials 44 and 47; and Appx 42, 11 Feb 45, folio 9, Sitrep No. 0/437). Along the southern edge of the forest 5 Camerons had reached the high ground about a half mile north of Hekkens, while 2 and 5 Seaforth brought up the rear to secure positions on the Frasselt - Hekkens road. Further to the left in 53 (W.) Div's sector 158 Bde were firm with 1 E. Lan R. along the divisional boundary;

1/5 Welch just west of Geldenberg and 7 R.W.F. in the region of Point 86 (8452). 160 Bde had exploited its hold on the Stoppelberg feature with 4 Welch and 2 Mon, who had begun to patrol south-eastwards the Hekkens - Cleve road; 6 R.W.F. had stuck out from its positions on the eastern fringe to engage in bitter fighting near Waldhorst (8653) (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 42, folio 19, Sitrep No. 0/437). The situation west of Cleve was still bogged down as 44 (L.) Bde had not yet begun to pass through 129 Bde of 43 (W.) Div. 6 R.S.F., however, had already captured the woods north-west of Cleve, and 2 Gordons had elements in the northern part of Staats Tiergarten (8856). South of Cleve, 15 (S.) Div Recce Regt was still held up, and the remainder of 214 Bde had so far not moved beyond Saalhof (Ibid).

99. Advantage was taken of a short spell of fine weather to continue the air effort against enemy targets immediately behind the front line, while on the other side of the Rhine numerous attacks were made on enemy communications. The German air force still seemed reluctant or unable to show its hand; only three enemy aircraft were seen in the army area during the day. (First Cdn Army, Int Summary, 10 Feb 45).

#### THE ATTACK SLOWS DOWN, 11 - 14 FEB

100. The next four days (11 - 14 Feb) was to see the attack slow down somewhat, but despite continuing bad weather the first phase of the operation was almost completed. During the night 10/11 Feb both S.D. & G. Highrs and H.L.I. of C. made little progress, and by 0700 hours, 11 Feb, S.D. & G. Highrs

were still clearing Rindern. Around Duffelward, H.L.I. of C. was having a great deal of trouble in getting forward; and "D" Coy was ordered up from reserve to assault the town. The attack went in after some delay, and by 1245 hours, the situation for both battalions had improved. Rindern had been mopped up and Duffelward was not being consolidated. At this stage "B" Coy, H.L.I. of C. swung right across the line of advance and thrust out for Wardhausen, while to the south "A" Coy, S.D. & G. Highrs had been joined by "D" Coy on their right and were pushing on towards the Spoy Canal. (W.Ds. S.D. & G. Highrs, H.L.I. of C., 11 Feb 45; W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945: Appx 5, Ops Log, 11 Feb 45, Serials 16, 32 and 40).

101. S.D. & G. Highrs fought their way to the canal, and at approximately 1400 hours, Headquarters 9 Cdn Inf Bde received the report that three companies were on their objectives along the bank and that "C" Coy was moving up to join them. Once in position "A" Coy attempted to push north towards H.L.I. of C., but after moving some 1000 yards into the other unit's area, found that there was not sufficient manpower to hold the extra ground, and withdrew accordingly. The S.D. & G. Highrs advance had captured 60 prisoners and three 75-mm guns besides killing 30 of the enemy. (W.D., S.D. & G. Highrs, 11 Feb 45; W.D., H.Q. 8 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945; Appx 4, Ops Log, 11 Feb 45, Serial 34). Patrols were immediately despatched forward to the canal and off to the right, where contact was established with elements of 15 (S.) Div. The enemy was definitely beaten in this sector, and the only half-hearted counter-attack he put in was so small that it was driven back without trouble (Ibid, Serial 36).

102. By this time H.L.I. of C.'s attack had made some headway. Duffleward was cleared by 1425 hours, and "B" Coy passed on to reach Wardhausen in the early evening. From here another company was ordered to press on to Griethausen (9159) with all speed. (First Cdn Army Ops Log, 11 Feb 45, Serials 98 and 101). Both H.L.I. of C. and S.D. & G. Highrs were solidly on the line of the canal by 2400 hours, and had patrols over to the east bank (Ibid, Serial 118). Meanwhile Nth N.S. Highrs had received their marching orders and were moving up towards Rindern, from where it was proposed to launch the battalion against the area of Kellen (9257) (Ibid, Serial 101; and W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945: Appx 5, Ops Log, 11 Feb 45, Serials 37, 39, 46 and 58). To the rear of 9 Cdn Inf Bde the past hours had brought added worry as the flood waters reached a new high level, forcing 7 Cdn Inf Bde to be withdrawn from their positions. Ordered back earlier in the day the brigade was now concentrated at Beek, but under orders to relieve 46 (L.) Bde at 0300 hours, 12 Feb. The withdrawal necessitated a change in the dispositions of 8 Cdn Inf Bde, and Q.O.R. of C. were instructed to extend their southern flank in the direction Duffelward. (W.Ds., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 10, 11 and 12 Feb 45; W.O.R. of C., and R. Wpg Rif, 10 - 11 Feb 45).

103. In contrast to the conditions on the left flank of the operation, the comparatively "dry" ground operations by the British divisions progressed steadily. On the morning of 11 Feb on the southern flank, 153 Bde of 51 (H.) Div assaulted Gennep with 5 B.W. In the area of Ottersum 5/7 Gordons patrolled south and east, while north of Hekkens, 5 Seaforth, relieved from their positions inside the forest by 7 A. & S.H., attacked Hekkens itself. Once this town fell 2 Seaforth would pass on to take the Kessel (8546) Bridge

(First Cdn Army, Ops Log, 11 Feb 45, Serial 6). The battle for Gennep continued throughout the morning. Meanwhile, before Hekkens, 1 and B.W. of 154 Bde were moving up to relieve 152 Bde (Ibid, Serial 23). The end of the day saw 5 B.W. firm in Gennep with 1 Gordons holding the railway bridge to the south. Hekkens had also fallen to 7 and 1 B.W., who had killed many enemy in the process. Thereafter, 1 B.W. exploited to Nagana (8347), consolidated there and despatched strong patrols to the bridge at Kessel (8546). In the rear of the Highland advance the Niers River was being bridged. In the forest itself, 7 A & S.H. had made substantial gains against light opposition to reach the clearing the Reichswald, 1500 yards north of Kessel (8546) (Ibid, Serials 48 and 49).

104. In the northern half of the forest, 53 (W.) Div resumed its clearing operations, and by 1200 hours elements of 160 Bde and 158 Bde with under command 1 Oxf Bucks (of 71 Bde) were all well across the main Hekkens - Cleve road and moving fast in a south-easterly direction. A pause in the advance occurred early in the afternoon, while on the right, 7 R.W.F. of 158 Bde assaulted the northern end of the trench system two miles west of Klosterhufe (8948) whereupon once again the line to the north went forward. 1 E. Lan R. on the left of 7 R.W.F. reached the Klosterhufe clearing flanked to the north by 1/5 Welch, 6 R.W.F., 4 Welch and 2 Mon about Beyershof (8852) in that order (Ibid, Serials 16, 17, 27, 29, 37, 40, 43, 47 and 49).

105. The attack on Cleve and its environments had also gone well. South-west of the town, 214 Bde was in action, and after Sallhof fell to 5 D.C.L.I., that battalion thrust on through Materborn village to save the crossroads 1000 to

the west. At this point a two-battalion attack was launched with on the left 1 Morc R. directed on to the woods north of Hau (9152), and on the right 7 Som L.I. advancing on the latter village. Opposition varied, but the men of the Wessex Division would not be discouraged, and by midnight, 11/12 Feb, though 1 Worc R. were still heavily engaged in attempting to reach their objective, 7 Som L.I. were on the outskirts of Hau. 129 Bde had spent the major part of the day in reserve, but were under orders to go in again the following day through 214 Bde. 130 Bde was still far back at Nijmegen. (Ibid, Main H.Q. Ops Log, Serials 15, 30, 54, 59, 86, 97 and 119; AEF 45/30 Brit Corps/C/H, Docket III: folio 153, Sitrep 0/463 as at 2400 hours 11 Feb 45).

106. Inside the town of Cleve fierce fighting had been going on all day. 44 (L.) and 227 (H.) Bdes had entered the town proper in the late morning, 6 K.O.S.B. and 8 R.S. driving in from the west between the barracks (8855) and the prison (8954). 10 H.L.I. of 227 Bde, jointed a little later by 2 Gordons, who had already contacted 9 Cdn Inf Bde on the left, closed in from the region of Sternberg. (AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III, Sitrep, 11 Feb 45, 0/463, Sitrep as at 112400). 46 (H.) Bde also moved into the direct battle area to relieve 214 Bde on the Materborn feature (Ibid, 0/454, Sitrep as at 112400). By 1100 hours as both battalions of 44 (L.) Bde were in action on the south and western edges of the town, 2 Gordons of 227 Bde had completed clearing the woods north of Cleve, and 10 H.L.I. was moving up to join them for a new attack (First Cdn Army Ops Log, 11 Feb 45, Serial 37). The attack got away to a good start, and by 2000 hours, 2 Gordons had extended its forward line to the junction of the canal and the railway (9056) with 10 H.L.I. slightly to the south inside the town of Cleve (Ibid, Serial 43). Some four hours later

10 H.L.I. was also on the line of the canal which 2 Gordons had crossed further to the north and where they were now consolidating a small bridgehead (Ibid, Serial 47). At about the same time in between these two units 15 (S') Recce Regt, having captured a bridge intact, were now holding it under very heavy fire (Ibid), while one squadron crossed to the east bank. Here, Engineers were immediately ordered to build a heavier bridge by first light, and 7 Seaforth of 46 (H.) Bde with not squadron of 4 Armd Coldm Gds were ordered to pass on through as soon as the bridge was ready. The remainder of 46 (H.) Bde was by this time concentrated and ready on the Materborn feature (Ibid, and Serial 49).

107. Despite the broken weather, the Tactical Air Force kept up its support with vigour and variety. The German Air force again appeared, but only in diminutive numbers and then only to reconnoitre (First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 226, 11 Feb 45). Though the Canadian Army's effort had slowed in pace, the many credits acquired so far were obvious. Cleve was almost clear and the Spoy Canal had been crossed. The main points of resistance had been around Hau and Hekkens, which was now in Scottish hands, yet between these two points progress had been steady in the face of extremely difficult conditions, and sporadic but sometimes fierce opposition. In addition, in the far south, the Niers was being bridged, and our troops were up to the line of the Gennepe railway in some strength (Ibid).

108. During the night 11/12 Feb, the situation on the left flank was exploited to its fullest extent, as Brigadier J.M. Rockingham's 9 Cdn Inf Bde launched its reserve battalion, the Nth N.S. Highrs, across the Spoy Canal to

Seize Kellen. At 0245 hours "B" Coy was ferried over the water obstacle and advanced to firm up on the crossroads west of the brick works (906570). shortly afterwards "C" Coy passed through to the crossroads at Kellen (917572). Both objectives were reached without opposition. The two companies remained at these points until about 1000 hours on the 12th, at which time "A" Coy was pushed on to hold the east side of Kellen. "D" Coy, which arrived a few minutes later, swung in a northerly direction to the so far unflooded patch of ground on the right of the railway about 1000 yards south of Griethausen (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 12 Feb 45). The village of Griethausen was already in Canadian hands, "C" Coy of H.L.I. of C. having entered it unopposed early that morning. Brionen to the west was also held by "B" Coy of the same unit (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 12 Feb 45). S.D. & G. Highrs passed a fairly quiet day patrolling to feel out the northern approaches to Cleve and to Warbeyen (9457), where the enemy was found in some strength near the creamery (9480) W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 12 Feb 45).

109. To the north 8 Cdn Inf Bde was still "bound in" by the flood waters, and since the evacuation of 7 Cdn Inf Bde, the brigade had been forced to string its positions out from Diffelward, where Q.O.R. of C. had relieved H.L.I. of C. westwards to the newly blown gap in the Winter dyke just east of Nijmegen. This gap was made on 12 Feb by the Engineers to relieve the pressure of the flooding (AEF: 45/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket II, Operation "VERITABLE", Battle Narrative, Report No. 1, p. 5). The question of maintenance in this section was becoming increasingly difficult, and such troops as remained in the line could only be supplied by Buffaloes (Ibid). 7 Cdn Inf Bde was ow in cleve; all three battalions had moved out of their concentration areas about 1100

hours that morning, and entered Cleve to relieve 227 (H.) Bde of 15 (S.) Div by 1700 hours (W.Ds., R. Wpg Rif, 12 Feb 45; H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 12 Feb 45). Once in the town the troops began an extensive mopping up programme to clear all the basements and possible places of refuge which might contain an enemy, and when this task was completed the brigade settled down for the night, Regina Rif faced north-east with its companies extended from the area of the water tower (9055) to Cloister (8956); 1 C. Scot R. filled in the centre from the barracks (8955) to the main portion of the town (8955), and R. Wpg Rif held the southern part about the prison (896544) and the factory (892547). (W.Ds. H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 12 Feb 45; H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945: Appx 16, Ops Log, 12 Feb 45, Serials 31, 32, 33, 13 Feb 45, Serial 3; First Cdn Army Ops Log, Serial 26, Appx 48, folio 23, Sitrep as at 130900).

110. Now that Cleve was clear, the area about the town was becoming free of the congestion which had existed for the past two days as the numerous brigades attempted to break out to the south and east. The morning of 12 Feb had seen several marked changes both in dispositions as the line moved forward, and particularly in the enemy's reaction against the advance of 53 (W.) Div, who experienced some extremely heavy artillery fire (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 45, Sitrep No. 406, 12 Feb 45). By 1200 hours, on the far right, the road from Hekkens to Ottersum was open, and the craters were being filled to make it passable to heavy traffic. This road, however, was under observation, and the Engineers found that movement on it drew volumes of mortar fire. A similar situation existed around the bridge site (779465) at Gennep which the sappers of 153 Bde were working hard to complete so that the high ground to the south could be attacked (Ibid,

Appx 47, Serial 24). This attack began at 1420 hours, and went in with on the left 5/7 Gordons and on the right 1 Gordons (Ibid, Serial 38). By 1720 hours, 1 Gordons had taken their first objective in the region of Genneperheide (7944), with 5/7 Gordons 1000 yards on their left south of the railway (Ibid, Serials 42 and 43). Both battalions then pressed on, and by 2300 hours 153 Bde was on its objective at Heyen (7843) and on the high ground to the east. 5/7 Gordons was also firm on the bare hills west of Zand Kulen (8044). Meanwhile, 154 Bde's patrols had reached Kessel (8546), and an attack was arranged to take place during the night of 12/13 Feb, with the object of seizing the high ground south of the village (Ibid, Serials 36 and 49). Inside the forest 7 A. & S.H. of 154 Bde had made good progress, and were by this time firm on the wooded hill orth of the Niers River some 1500 yards east of Kessel, in contact with 158 Bde on the left (Ibid, Serials 43, 32 and Main H.Q. Ops Log, Serial 63).

111. The operations of 53 (W.) Div had also met with considerable success, despite the strong opposition encountered in many places. Midday saw 7 R.W.F. and 1/5 Welch both held up, the former among the defence works just north of the divisional right boundary, the latter along the boundary some 2000 yards west of the edge of the forest. This delay, however, was not of much duration, as 71 Bde was moving up to assist in the advance (Ibid, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 12 Feb 45, Serial 24 and 27). On the northern fringe of the Reichswald, 2 Mon, 4 Welch and 6 R.W.F., all of 160 Bde, were driving south-east, and by 2400 hours, 12 Feb, had reached the area of Horstmannshof (9051) with 2 Mon on the eastern edge of the forest opposite Staatsforst Cleve (9150) with 4 Welch; 6 R.W.F. were still in the vicinity of the Asperden - Cleve road behind the

two forward battalions (Ibid, Main H.Q., Ops Log, 12 Feb 45, Serials 75, 84, 95 and 103). By this time 71 Bde had joined in the fight and advanced past 158 Bde, who had been counter-attacked on their right but were holding firm. These attacks were all beaten back, yet not without difficulty, as the supporting British armour found the going in the forest heavy (Ibid, Serial 72). Eventually, after a determined effort by both infantry and tanks, 158 Bde was firmly astride the Asperden - Cleve road, west of Klosterhufe (8948) and some 2000 yards to the north (Ibid, Appx 48, folio 12, 0/473 Sitrep). It had been a hard day's fighting, but both 158 and 160 Bdes had inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy.

112. South of Cleve, 43 (W.) Div's attack had made excellent gains. On the right, 214 Bde attacked with 1 Worc R. and 7 Som L.I. and at 1230 hours both units reported their respective objectives taken. While 1 Worc r. consolidated near Dahlhof (9153) and 7 Som L.I. improved its positions south of Hau (9152), 129 Bde commenced its move up to pass through (Ibid, Appx 47, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 12 Feb, Serials 26, 31 and 32). Around Hau the enemy reacted with some vigour, and counter-attacked 7 Som L.I. with infantry and tanks. However, these achieved no success, and 129 Bde pushed past 214 Bde to resume the advance, with 4 Som L.I. directed on to the wooded Bedburg feature. While 129 Bde advanced, 15 (S.) Div had broken out of the Cleve sector by way of the newly built bridge in the town. A mobile group composed of 7 Seaforth and 4 Armd Coldm Gds struck out south along the Cleve - Calcar road, and by 1800 hours had reached the high ground (9352) east of Bedburg after a stiff fight. This advance protected the left of 4 Som L.I., who by 2400 hours had reached their objective against considerable opposition. Meanwhile both 4 and

5 Wilts had been steadily edging forward gaining ground to the east preparatory to swinging their efforts in a southerly direction. The tactical positions in this sector provided a fairly satisfying picture, especially as the 15 (S.) Div mobile column on the left had captured Hasselt (9453) and Qualberg (9254), where they were now ordered to consolidate and hold until further notice (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 13 Feb 45, Serial 3). Directly to the east of Cleve, 15 (S.) Div Recce Regt was probing into the east between Qualberg and Kellen, which Nth N.S. Highrs of 9 Cdn Inf Bde now occupied (Ibid, 12 Feb 45, Serials 20 and 23).

113. The intentions for 13 Feb were for 51 (H.) Div on the right, at first light, to position one battalion astride the main Hekkens - Cleve road, to picket the Gennep - Hekkens highway, and to seize a bridgehead over the Niers and take Kessel, with a view to deepening further the area south of the river. 53 W.) Div was to complete the clearance of the Reichswald to the eastern edge and down to the bridge at Asper (8846), while 43 (W.) Div continued its advance to the south-east to capture the high ground east of Staatsforst Cleve and clear the forest itself. 130 Bde would move up into the centre of the Reichswald with the possible role of supporting 53 (W.) Div. On the right, 3 Cdn Inf Div was to maintain its present positions along the Rhine, but with a thinned out line. The Canadians were also to ensure the defence of Cleve against counter-attack. 15 (S.) Div was ordered to remain in concentration, but to be ready to provide a brigade group to operate under command 43 (W.) Div if required. Gds Armd Div was to remain in reserve, though on six hours' notice to move up. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V, February 1945: L.O. Reports 130800A, 13 Feb 45).

114. As First Cdn Army pressed on, it had become apparent that the enemy was committing his reserves with some enthusiasm, yet without any marked success. All counter-attacks had been repulsed and all gains held; prisoners, who totalled over 4500 for the operation so far, had been generally willing to disclose for the operation so far, had been generally willing to disclose what information was required. Hence it was possible to plot the enemy's order of battle. Here is the way it appeared to Army Intelligence on 12 Feb:

Between FORST CLEVE and the river NIEERS 19 Para Regt is firmly identified, with, surprisingly, 111/2 Para Regt. This battalion was switched across the length of the REICHSWALD since it wriggled out of MIDDELAAR E7448. One of its brothers, 11/2 Para Regt, was fighting at HEKKENS cross-roads E8347 yesterday and probably withdrew across the NIEERS with 20 Para Regt, and the other, 1 Bn, with scanty help from the remnants of 2/1222 GR and Bn RIEGELS, has offered little resistance to an advance from GENNEP to HEIJEN E7843. Although 180 Division's front on the MAAS is shrinking, it is still wide to be held by 1221 GR and 11/1223 GR.

Evidence of two more divisions which may put in an appearance in this battle was received from other parts of the front. The first is 6 Para Div. 1 and 11/16 Para Regt are already in at CLEVE, having left the LAND VAN ALTENA from 2 February on. Today a prisoner was taken at E3453 in the BOMMELERWAARD, who proved to be the interrogator's dream. As a former battalion runner of Bn KOCH, he had picked up all the news, and his account of known facts lend weight to the reliability of the rest.

6 Para Div, he says, it was already on 4 February beginning to disengage, in anticipation of an attack in the NIJMEGEN area in which it would be used to counter attack. It was, however, to be a gradual process, with time for refitting. 1 and 11/16 Para Regt had been withdrawn and already sent EAST; followed by a battalion of 18 Para Regt, which has not yet in fact been identified. Regt MUCH?, with 111/16 Para Regt, Bn KOCH and 1409 Fortress Bn? was to remain in the BOMMELERWAARD, and 17 Para Regt from the BIESBOSCH to HEUSDEN E25 with all battalions up. 111/16 Para Regt would be later, and its replacement would probably be Volkssturm, as a Volkssturm battalion had already arrived in UTRECHT; this is interesting, as there has been not previous indication that the Volkssturm would guard any but their own homes. Finally, this most valuable talker said that most of 6 Para Div artillery had left on the night 9/10 February. The whole division may, inf fact, be expected to appear in the REICHSWALD sector, but its arrival will probably be spread over a period. It will also be some time before the divisional HQ can take control.

(First Cdn Army Int Summary, No. 227, 12 Feb 45)

115. Thus, from the various prisoner of war sources the following formations appeared to be in contact, 19, 20 and 21 Para Regts of 7 Para Div, 16 and 18 Para Regts of 6 Para Div, all three battalions of 7 Para Regt, artillery from 2, 6 and 7 Para Divs, 6 Pz Fr battalions of 50 Pz Gr Div and four of 116 Pz Div. Since many of these formations, however, did not so far appear to be complete, it must be assumed that they were being committed to battle

immediately on arrival. If and when these forces were complete they would undoubtedly represent considerable strength, probably some 10 to 12,000 troops of good quality, possibly supported by 120 to 150 tanks and tracked guns. Further reserves still available, apart from the balance of the formations already listed, might well be elements of 346 Inf Div and odd assault gun, werfer brigades, or anti-aircraft guns, in ground roles. These were shortly expected to arrive at the scene of battle from Holland or from the south. The organization of these enemy forces was not yet clear. First Para Army was doubtlessly in charge of the battle and 86 Corps was probably the local headquarters, although a Panzer Corps Headquarters might be controlling 15 and 116 Divs at present. (Ibid).

116. 13 Feb was another dull day for 3 Cdn Inf Div. The main object of discomfort, both physically and from the operational point of view, was the rising water, which on 9 Cdn Inf Bde's front had become so serious that the various headquarters had to move several times (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 13 Feb 45). These adverse conditions did not, however, totally prevent offensive action on our part. Early that morning S.D. & G. Highrs had "D" Coy in Warbeyen (9457), where a short fight took place and thirteen prisoners were taken before withdrawal again to Kellen (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945: Appx 5. Ops Log, 13 Feb 45). Later during the day, H.L.I. of C. readjusted its company perimeters; "C" Coy occupied Spyck (9260), "B" Coy established itself in Griethausen and "A" Coy dug along the east to west dyke between Griethausen and Brienen, which "D" Coy firmly held (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 13 Feb 45). Nth N.S. Highrs spent an inactive day, although one patrol which penetrated as far as the crossroads south-east of Warbeyen ran into some

opposition and suffered one fatal casualty (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 13 Feb 45). Of 8 Cdn Inf Bde, which was still holding the river line on the left, N. Shore R. received orders holding the river line on the left, N. Shore R. received orders to begin moving back into the rear areas, leaving Q.O.R. of C. with under command "B" Coy C.H. of O. to maintain the watch on the water barrier (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 13 Feb 45). "A" and "B" Coys N. Shore R. completed the move to Nijmegen by 1800 hours, "C" and "D" Coys were due to withdraw the following day (W.D., N. Shore R., 13 Feb 45). 7 Cdn Inf Bde did not move out of Cleve (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 13 Feb 45).

117. Meanwhile, the battle east and south of Cleve had not been easy, for the enemy was hitting back harder, especially on 51 (H.) Div's sector, where on the morning of 13 Feb, 1 Gordons began to move south from Heyen (7843) and 5/7 Gordons east towards Hommershum (8244) (W.D., "G" Ops H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 49, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 13 Feb 45, Serial 31). At about the same time on the left, 5 Seaforth were sent to take up positions on the Hekkens - Cleve road some 2000 yards north-east of Hekkens, which they reached at 1530 hours (Ibid, Serial 54). The advance of 1 and 5/7 Gordons had allowed up against stiff resistance, and at 1700 hours the report came in that both these units were being heavily counter-attacked (Ibid, Serial 60). While these enemy efforts were being dealt with, 154 Bde announced the plan of attack which was to take them south of the Niers. 7 B.W. was to cross the river 500 yards east of Zelderheide (8147), and drive eastwards to capture the high ground south of Viller (8346). 1 B.W. would then pass through to seize the hill (8445) above the station (8444), clearing the road Viller - Kessel and Viller Station (8444). 5 Camerons would then come under command 154 Bde,

remaining on the Hekkens - Cleve road, and one battalion of 152 Bde would relieve 7 A. & S.H. the following night at 2015 hours (Ibid, Serial 80). The plan worked well. By 2200 hours 7 B.W. were all across the river, and moving east against slight opposition, while by midnight 13/14 Feb, they had captured the first objective south of Viller and the three companies of 1 B.W., already south of the river, were moving eastwards to pass through (Ibid, Serial 86).

118. 53 (W.) Div's progress during the day took them to the eastern edge of the forest, which was by last light securely held from the north opposite Beyershof (8853) and Niederdamm (9151) with 4 Welch and 2 Mon; down past Wilhelminenhof (9149) with 6 R.W.F. to the area east of Klosterhufe, which was firmly in the hands of 1 H.L.I; and 4 R.W.F. from Am Klosterhufe (9048) to Schotzenhof (9047), with 1 Oxf Bucks in reserve to the rear. South-west of here 7 R.W.F. was on the fringe of the forest facing the Asper Bridge (8846) with 1 E Lan R. on their right north of the river opposite Granfenthal (8746), linking up with 7 A. & S.H. on the river line east of Kessel (Ibid, Serials 42, 43, 44, 53, 55, 74 and 82). 1/5 Welch was at the moment in reserve for 158 Bde near the clearing at Klosterhufe (8948) (Ibid, Serial 82).

119. The breakout by 43 (W.) Div from Cleve to the east and south had proved equally successful. By 1400 hours 5 D.C.L.I. of 214 Bde had passed through 7 Som L.I. and taken the northern part of Niederdamm (9151) and 5 Wilts of 129 Bde, having gone past the area of Bedburg Asylum (9252) (which was already held by 4 Som L.I.), swung south and reached Roland (9351). A little later 4 Wilts attacked south again towards Neuenhaus (9350), and had two companies on this objective by 1630 hours (Ibid, Serials 51, 55 and 56). On the left the

15 (S.) Div column composed of 7 Seaforth and 4 Armd Coldm Gds were patrolling out in all directions from Hasselt (9353), while 44 (L.) Bde had passed to command 53 (W.) Div (Ibid, Serial 63). The evening of 13 Feb brought several changes in plan and dispositions for the units in this sector. 130 Bde moved up to relieve 129 Bde, 5 Dorset began taking over from 4 Som L.I., on whose left 12 K.R.R.C. of 8 Armd Bde had begun to operate, clearing the woods immediately east of Bedburg. 4 Dorset and 7 Hamps were now concentrated north-west of Hau prior to assuming their new relief roles (Ibid, Serial 72). On 214 Bde's front 5 D.C.L.I. had been pulled out from Niederdamm, leaving an observation post under control of 7 Som L.I. (Ibid, Serial 70). The wood of Staatsforst Cleve had received a severe pounding from the air (Ibid, Serial 74).

120. During the night of 13/14 Feb, the offensive continued. On the right, 154 Bde of 51 (H.) Div attacked successfully across the Niers River, with 7 B.W. in the lead. 1 B.W. then passed through them, and by 0600 hours were firmly established just east of the wood east of Viller, having taken about 100 prisoners (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: 53, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 12). In the centre 53 (W.) Div, who had completed the clearing of the Reichswald, spent a quiet night, as did the units of 43 (W.) Div, who were conducting routine patrols (Ibid). The going on the battlefield was now very difficult in some places and many of the troops were tired. Two fresh formations, however, were on the way to join the fight; 52 (L.) Div and 32 Gds Bde were already on the move (Ibid; and Main H.Q. Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 7).

121. But the enemy now began to retaliate, and at about 0930 hours, 129 Bde reported a counter-attack against the positions being held by 4 Wilts north-east of Staatsforst Cleve (First Cdn Army Main H.Q. Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 24). This was followed by similar reports from 154 Bde to the west of Kessel (Ibid, Serial 29), but 153 Bde who had also experienced some fierce opposition during the night, reported an easing situation on its front (Ibid, Tac H.Q., Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 23). By midday the enemy's efforts had all been turned back, and new orders were issued to the battling units. South-east of Cleve in 43 (W.) Div's area, 4 Wilts of 129 Bde were to launch an attack to the south as soon possible to seize the rising ground east of the northern corner of the Staatsforst Cleve. In preparation for this new venture, 130 Bde was moving up to relieve 5 Wilts with 4 Dorset and 4 Wilts with 7 Hamps (Main H.Q. Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 38).

122. By 1200 hours, 14 Feb, while 43 (W.) Div prepared to move forward, 46 (H.) Bde of 15 (S.) Div had gone forward on the left with the object of taking Resendahl (9452) and then of firming up with 2 Glas H. on the ring contour (9651), south-west of Moyland (9751) (Ibid, Serial 40). The village of Rosendahl was in Scottish hands by 1250 hours and 2 Glas H. pushed on towards Moyland (Ibid, Serial 46). Over on 51 (H.) Div's front a reshuffle had taken place. 2 Seaforth of 152 Bde relieved 7 A. & S.H. along the Niers River, and the forward companies of 1 B.W., which had been taking severe punishment for the past hours in the Viller area, were withdrawn to less dispersed positions (AEF: 45/30 Brit Corps/C/H, Docket III: folio 149, 0/484 Sitrep). At this point 32 Gds Bde arrived on the scene, with instructions to capture Hommersum (8244) and link up with 154 Bde, while 5 B.W. of 153 Bde simultaneously

advanced to consolidate in the woods Op den Berg (7942) (W.D., H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 53, Main H.Q., Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 56). Both 154 and 152 Bdes were ordered to remain for the day in their present positions (Ibid, Serial 62).

123. On the left flank 9 Cdn Inf Bde had spent the morning regrouping for a fresh attack to clear the area Warbeyen - Hurendeich (9559), and so dominate the Rhine Ferry (9659) to Emmerich. The attack went in at 1200 hours, and starting from the Nth N.S. Highrs' forward positions east of Keller, the three companies from left to right, "C", "B" and "A" advanced in Buffaloes. "A" Coy first cleared the region of the track junctions (938574) without trouble, then "B" and "C" Coys mopped up Warbeyen. "B" Coy now swung north towards the Creamery (9457), while "C" Coy pushed north-eastwards to Hurendeich. Past this point, resistance increased, and a new assault to clear the river bank had to be put in a 1700 hours, as "B" Coy moved up towards the village of Hurendeich from the west. After some bitter fighting the Nth N.S. Highrs consolidated their gains. "A" Coy remained firm at Warbeyen with "D" Coy on its left. "B" Coy consolidated at the road and dyke junction (965597) and "C" Coy in Hurendeich. The cost of this operation had not been heavy. Nth N.S. Highrs lost three killed and eight wounded, while the enemy prisoners and wounded alone mounted to 25, in addition to those killed attempting to cross the river. The enemy's response to this advance came quickly, in the form of heavy mortar concentrations on "B" and "C" Coys who were fortunately by this time well dug in (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 14 Feb 45). The remaining battalions of 9 Cdn Inf Bde had little to report. S.D. & G. Highrs were still west of Kellen, but preparing to move out. H.L.I. of C. had not moved from their

positions about Spyck, Griethausen and Brienan (W.Ds., S.D. & G. Highrs, H.L.I. of C., 14 Feb 45).

124. That same day, on 8 Bde's front, the programme of moving N. Shore R. Back had been completed. The entire unit was now concentrated near Nijmegen (W.D., N. Shore R., 14 Feb 45). Their old positions were now controlled by Q.O.R. of C., who had "D" Coy in Kekerdom (8164). The battalion's area was quiet, apart from a short but severe shelling of Millingen, which caused some casualties earlier in the day (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 14 Feb 45). 7 Cdn Inf Bde was still billeted in Cleve, where the task of combing out the cellars had been completely successful. Regina Rif did a certain amount of readjusting within its own area, as S.D. & G. Highrs of 9 Cdn Inf Bde were to be withdrawn from their positions north of Cleve. As a result "A" Coy shifted to the waterworks (8956), and "B" Coy to the brick works (9156). R. Wpg Rif too had an uneventful day, the only excitement being provided by a few enemy jet planes which dropped some ill-aimed bombs. (W.Ds., R. Wpg Rif, 1 C. Scot R., 14 Feb 45).

125. By the evening of 14 Feb, the attacks of 51 (H.) Div, 32 Gds Bde and 15 (S.) Div and 43 (W.) Div were well under way; 46 (S.) Bde, having already launched 2 Glas H. towards Moyland, and 9 Cameronians east from Bedburg (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 53, Tac H.Q., Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 43). 9 Cameronians thrusting along the road parallel to 2 Glass H. reached the road junction (950513) some 1200 yards south-east of Honigsberg (9452), and firmed up to establish flank contact with 43 (W.) Div, while 7 Seaforth moved up to push on the following morning (Ibid. Luck had

not been with 43 (W.) Div whose 129 Bde had attempted to push south. The attack by 5 Wilts was stopped cold at the start line by the enemy's intense shelling, which killed among others the Commanding Officer; the effort had to be called off temporarily (Ibid, Serials 41 and 48; AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III: folio 148, Sitrep 0/495). The attack to the west, however, met with better fortune; 32 Gds Bde captured Hommersum and 5 B.W. of 153 Bde reached the high ground south of Heiland (7941) (Ibid). The task of capturing Kessel and bridging the Niers River still had to be accomplished, and this attack was allotted to 7 A. & S.H., who intended to carry it out during the night 14/15 Feb (AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/C/F, Docket III: Operation "VERITABLE", para 91).

126. Although the ground operations had seemed to bog down slightly, the day's fine weather had been a blessing to the air forces; it had been the first fine day of the last six. It was a climax comparable by observers to those great days of the previous year when the Germans were caught in the Trun gap. In an area of not more than 300 square miles, there were over 800 fighter bomber attacks; and between the rivers from Emmerich in the north to Krefeld in the south a continuous stream of aircraft through the hours of daylight left nothing of the enemy safe on the ground (First Cdn Army Int Summary, 14 Feb 45). Besides all this 2 Gp R.A.F. attacked Udem, Weeze, Straelen and Nieuwekerk with 122 aircraft. VIII U.S.A.A.F. dropped 98 tons of high explosives on the Wesel road bridge and destroyed one of the spans, and IX U.S.A.A.F. put 166 planes on Geldern, Kevelaer, Xanten and Goch (AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/C/F, Docket III: Operation "VERITABLE", paras 95 and 96). The excellent flying weather made close support an easy task, and all day targets

had been engaged south-east of Cleve. These included strongpoints, S.P. guns and tanks, O.Ps. and pockets of infantry in houses or trenches. "Cabrank" operated effectively during the day, especially on the front of 51 (H.) Div, where about 32 separate attacks were made, some only 300 yards from the leading troops on the ground. In other sectors various pre-selected targets were taken on. These included the villages of Asperden and Hassum, and an ammunition dump in the Hochwald. Altogether, 84 Gp flew 804 sorties on this memorable day. (Ibid, and First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 229, 14 Feb 45).

127. The first phase of Operation "VERITABLE" was almost completed, and though the enemy had been pushed back on his left and right, there was every indication that he intended to hold the centre. Thus a regrouping was necessary, and the G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army issued his instructions for the second phase of the offensive (General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45). It was to be resumed on a two-corps front, and General Simonds had already been warned that he would take over the left sector within 48 hours (First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 229, 14 Feb 45; and W.D., G.S., H.Q 2 Cdn Corps, 14 Feb 45). Meanwhile the floods in the Roer Valley still prevented the launching of the Ninth U.S. Army's operation "GRENADE", and the enemy was free to reinforce his line against the advance of First Cdn Army. This was obviously the reason why General Crerar's troops were finding it so difficult to gain ground. Nevertheless, Field Marshal Montgomery was ever anxious to lose momentum, and in his own words:

In order to maintain the maximum impetus, I ordered 11 Armoured and 52 Divisions to be transferred to Canadian Army from Second Army forthwith.

An American reserve division relieved 52 Division on the Meuse front near Venlo. The difficulty was to deploy additional strength through the Reichswald Forest in view of the communications, but I wanted to make certain the General Crerar had at his disposal all the resources he could use for the battle.

(Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, Normandy to the Baltic, pp 239 and 240)

128. That General Schlemm's former apprehensions were justified was now painfully apparent to the German high command:

With the increase of pressure from the forces under Canadian Army resulting in the piercing of the Siegfried Line, and the capture of Cleve E 95 and Gennep E 74, it was obvious that further reserves were needed. On the 10 Feb 16 para Regt of 6 Para Div, which apparently had been one of Schelmm's reserves since early February, had been thrown in front of Cleve but had not succeeded in preventing the loss of the town. The realization that all of 30 British Corps was now against them convinced Army Group this was not merely a holding action. As a result Schlemm was given 47 Panzer Corps, with it two armoured divisions, on the 12 Feb 45. This Corps took over from the Niers River to the Rhine and their first task was to recapture Cleve. Schlemm says he gave this order with his tongue in his cheek realizing that von Luttwitz with the forces available would be hardly likely to succeed in pulling this off. Chiefly the attack was designed to provide more time for the building of

defences south of the Reichswald which were soon to be most urgently needed. 86 Corps, responsible for the remainder of the Army front to the Maas, was merely to hold their positions and prevent and encirclement directed south-east. Permission was given to Straube of 86 Corps to fall back from time to time as the circumstances warranted. These withdrawals, of course, could only take place with the consent of higher authority. Schlemm was not happy about Straube whom he described as "langweilig" (a bore). He was anxious to get 2 Para Corps up into the battle, particularly because he valued the ability of its commander, Eugen Meindl, but this was not permitted at this stage.

In addition to 16 Para Div, 15 Panzer Grenadier Division and 116 Panzer Division as reinforcements, Schlemm had also committed 655 Anti-tank Battalion with about 25 equipments of 7.5-cm or 8.8-cm calibre, two of his reserve parachute battalions called Hutz and Krahs, and two battalions of 346 Inf Div. These latter had come from Western Holland, and although Schlemm tried to get the complete division this force was all that was allotted to him. About the 13 Feb, 84 Inf Div which had received an intensive pummelling, was pulled out of the line for four days to be rested and reorganized and given some 700 reinforcements that Schlemm had been send...

(Special Interrogation Report, Gen Alfred Schlemm)

129. During the night 14/15 Feb, 30 Corps Headquarters announced its intentions for the following day. 51 (H.) Div with 32 Gads Bade under command

was to occupy Hassum and Kessel; 53 (W.) Div was to maintain its hold on the Reichswald and to dominate the Goch - Cleve road. The tasks allotted to 43 (W.) Div were the capture of the high ground east and south-east of Staatsforst Cleve as well as the clearing of Staatsforst itself; with subsequent exploitation towards Goch. 15 (S.) Div was to continue to operate in the direction of Calcar and occupy the area of Moyland. The highlight of the directive concerned 3 Cdn Inf Div, which was to pass to command 2 Cdn Corps at 1200 hours on 15 Feb. A Corps reserve was to be maintained in the form of Gds Armd Div less 32 Gds Bde, and it would remain on eight hours' notice to move into the battle. (AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/I, Docket III(b): Intention 0/492, dated 142310).

130. By 0800 hours, 15 Feb, the situation showed that part of the intention had already been carried out, for on the right, 153 Bde of 51 (H.) Div had 5 B.W. some 500 yards south of Heyen (7843). 32 Gds Bde firm in Hommersum (8244) and 7 A. & S.H. in Kessel, which had been entered against moderate opposition (W.D., "G" Ops H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945, Appx 56, Main H>Q>, Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serials 16 and 21). 129 Bde of 43 Div had also resumed its advance; 5 Wilts passed through 4 Wilts, and despite heavy resistance were on their objective north of Berkhofel (9449), while 214 Bde, having cleared the northern exists of Staatsforst Cleve, returned to their former positions, but left elements of 43 (W.) Div Recce Regt's standing patrols (Ibid, Serial 16 and AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III: Sitrep 0/495, folio 148). The divisional intention was for 130 Bde to pass through 129 Bde and seize the high ground (9548) south-east of Bremenkamp (9448) (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945, Appx 56, Tac H.Q., Ops Log,

15 Feb 45, Serial 4). This attack got under way generally at about 1100 hours with on the right 7 Hamps on the left 4 Dorset (Ibid, Serial 21). By this time on either flank, 51 (H.) and 15 (S.) Divs were exploiting their gains. On the right the armoured cars of Derby Yeo had reached Heiland (7941) without opposition, and were pressing on to the east, while on the left in 15 (S.) Div's sector, 9 Cameronians were almost up to the ring contour south-west of Moyland. On their northern flank 7 Seaforth, pushing on towards Moyland, were at present being held up by mines some 1000 yards from the town. (Ibid, Serial 23).

#### THE ENTRY OF 2 CDN CORPS INTO THE OFFENSIVE - 15 FEB

131. Now that General Crerar's forces were standing well ahead of the first phase line on the left and right, the time had come to bring 2 Cdn Corps into the battle. In the view of Lt-Gen taking severe punishment for the past hours in the Viller area, were withdrawn to less dispersed positions (AEF: 45/30 Brit Corps/C/H, Docket III: folio 149, 0/484 Sitrep). At this point 32 Gds Bde arrived on the scene, with instructions to capture Hommersum (8244) and link up with 154 Bde, while 5 B.W. of 153 Bde simultaneously advanced to consolidate in the woods Op den Berg (7942) (W.D., H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 53, Main H.Q., Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 56). Both 154 and 152 Bdes were ordered to remain for the day in their present positions (Ibid, Serial 62).

123. On the left flank 9 Cdn Inf Bde had spent the morning regrouping for a fresh attack to clear the area Warbeyen - Hurendeich (9559), and so dominate

the Rhine Ferry (9659) to Emmerich. The attack went in at 1200 hours, and starting from the Nth N.S. Highrs' forward positions east of Keller, the three companies from left to right, "A" Coy first cleared the region of the track junctions (938574) without trouble, then "B" and "C" Coys mopped up Warbeyen. "B" Coy now swung north towards the Creamery (9457), while "C" pushed north-eastwards to Hurendeich. Past this point, resistance increased, and a new assault to clear the river bank had to be put in at 1700 hours, as "B" Coy moved up towards the village of Hurendeich from the west. After some bitter fighting the Nth N.S. Highrs consolidated their gains. "A" Coy remained firm at Warbeyen with "D" Coy on its left. "B" Coy consolidated at the road and dyke junction (965597) and "C" Coy in Hurendeich. The cost of this operation had not been heavy. Nth N.S. Highrs lost three killed and eight wounded, while the enemy prisoners and wounded alone mounted to 25, in addition to those killed attempting to cross the river. The enemy's response to this advance came quickly, in the form of heavy mortar concentrations on "B" and "C" Coys who were fortunately by this time well dug in (W.D. Nth N.S. Highrs, 14 Feb 45). The remaining battalions of 9 Cdn Inf Bde had little to report. S.D. & G. Highrs were still west of Kellen, but preparing to move out. H.L.I. of C. had not moved from their positions about Spyck, Griethausen and Brienan (W.D, S.D. & G. Highrs, H.L.I. of C., 14 Feb 45).

124. That same day, on 8 Bde's front, the programme of moving N. Shore R. Back had been completed. The entire unit was now concentrated near Nijmegen (W.D., N. Shore R., 14 Feb 45). Their old positions were now controlled by Q.O.R. of C., who had "D" Coy in Kekerdom (8164). The battalion's area was quiet, apart from a short but severe shelling of Millingen, which caused some

casualties earlier in the day (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 14 Feb 45). 7 Cdn Inf Bde was still billeted in Cleve, where the task of combing out the cellars had been completely successful. Regina Rif did a certain amount of readjusting within its own area, as S.D. & G. Highrs of Cdn Inf Bde were to be withdrawn from their positions north of Cleve. As a result "A" Coy shifted to the waterworks (8956), and "B" Coy to the brick works (9156). R. Wpg Rif too had an uneventful day, the only excitement being provided by a few enemy jet planes which dropped some ill-aimed bombs. (W.Ds., R. Wpg Rif, 1 C. Scot R. 14 Feb 45)

125. By the evening of 14 Feb, the attacks of 51 (H.) Div 32 Gds Bde and 15 (S.) Div and 43 (W.) Div were well under way; 46 (S.) Bde, having already launched 2 Glas H. towards Moyland, and 9 Cameronians east from Bedburg (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 53, Tac H.Q., Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 43). 9 Cameronians thrusting along the road parallel to 2 Glas H. reached the road junction (950513) some 1200 yards south-east of Honigsberg (9452), and firmed up to establish flank contact with 43 (W.) Div, while 7 Seaforth moved up to push on the following morning (Ibid). Luck had not been with 43 (W.) Div whose 129 Bde had attempted to push south. The attack by 5 Wilts was stopped cold at the start line by the enemy's intense shelling, which killed among others the Commanding Officer; the effort had to be called off temporarily (Ibid, Serials 41 and 48; AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III: folio 148, Sitrep 0/495). The attack to the west, however, met with better fortune; 32 Gds Bde captured Hommersum and 5 B.W. of 153 Bde reached the high ground south of Heiland (7941) (Ibid). The task of capturing Kessel and bridging the Niers River still had to be accomplished, and this

attack was allotted to 7 A. & S.H., who intended to carry it out during the night 14/15 Feb (AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/C/F, Docket III: Operation "VERITABLE", para 91).

126. Although the ground operations had seemed to bog down slightly, the day's fine weather had been a blessing to the air forces; it had been the first fine day of the last six. It was a climax comparable by observers to those great days of the previous year when the Germans were caught in the Trun gap. In an area of not more than 300 square miles, there were over 800 fighter bomber attacks; and between the rivers from Emmerich in the north to Krefeld in the south a continuous stream of aircraft through the hours of daylight left nothing of the enemy safe on the ground (First Cdn Army Int Summary, 14 Feb 45). Besides all this 2 Gp R.A.F. attacked Udem, Weeze, Straelen and Nieukerk with 122 aircraft. VIII U.S.A.A.F. dropped 98 tons of high explosives on the Wesel road bridge and destroyed one of the spans, and IX U.S.A.A.F. put 166 planes on Geldern, Kevelaer, Xanten and Goch (AEF;; 45/21 Army Gp/C/F, Docket III: Operation "VERITABLE", paras 95 and 96). The excellent flying weather made close support an easy task, and all day targets had been engaged south-east of Cleve. These included strongpoints, S.P. guns and tanks, O.Ps. and pockets of infantry in houses or trenches. "Cabrank" operated effectively during the day, especially on the front of 51 (H.) Div, where about 32 separate attacks were made, some only 300 yards from the leading troops on the ground. In other sectors various pre-selected targets were taken on. These included the villages of Asperden and Hassum, and an ammunition dump in the Hochwald. Altogether, 84 Gp flew 804 sorties on this memorable day. (Ibid, and First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 229, 14 Feb 45).

127. The first phase of Operation "VERITABLE" was almost completed, and though the enemy had been pushed back on his left and right, there was every indication that he intended to hold the centre. Thus a regrouping was necessary, and the G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army issued his instructions for the second phase of the offensive (General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45). It was to be resumed on a two-corps front, and General Simonds had already been warned that he would take over the left sector within 48 hours (First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 229, 14 Feb 45; and W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 14 Feb 45). Meanwhile the floods in the Roer Valley still prevented the launching of the Ninth U.S. Army's operation "GRENADE", and the enemy was free to reinforce his line against the advance of First Cdn Army. This was obviously the reason why General Crerar's troops were finding it so difficult to gain ground. Nevertheless, Field Marshal Montgomery was ever anxious not to lose momentum, and in his own words:

In order to maintain the maximum impetus, I ordered 11 Armoured and 52 Divisions to be transferred to Canadian Army from Second Army forthwith. An American reserve division relieved 52 Division on the Meuse front near Venlo. The difficulty was to deploy additional strength through the Reichswald Forest in view of the communications, but I wanted to make certain that General Crerar had at his disposal all the resources he could use for the battle.

(Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, Normandy to the Baltic, pp 239 and 240)

128. That General Schlemm's former apprehensions were justified was now painfully apparent to the German high command:

With the increase of pressure from the forces under Canadian Army resulting in the piercing of the Siegfried Line, and the capture of Cleve E 95 and Gennepe E 74, it was obvious that further reserves were needed. On the 10 Feb 16 Para Regt of 6 Para Div, which apparently had been one of Schlemm's reserves since early February, had been thrown in front of Cleve but had not succeeded in preventing the loss of the town. The realization that all of 30 British Corps was now against them convinced Army Group this was not merely a holding action. As a result Schlemm was given 47 Panzer Corps, with its two armoured divisions, on the 12 Feb 45. This Corps took over from the Niers River to the Rhine and their first task was to recapture Cleve. Schlemm says he gave this order with his tongue in his cheek realizing that von Luttwitz with the forces available would be hardly likely to succeed in pulling this off. Chiefly the attack was designed to provide more time for the building of defences south of the Reichswald which were soon to be most urgently needed. 86 Corps, responsible for the remainder of the Army front to the Maas, was merely to hold their positions and prevent an encirclement directed south-east. Permission was given to Straube of 86 Corps to fall back from time to time as the circumstances warranted. These withdrawals, of course, could only take place with the consent of higher authority. Schlemm was not happy about Straube whom he described as "langweilig" (a bore). He was anxious to get 2 Para Corps up into the

battle, particularly because he valued the ability of its commander, Eugen Meindl, but this was not permitted at this stage.

In addition to 16 Para Regt, 7 Para Div, 15 Panzer Grenadier Division and 116 Panzer Division as reinforcements, Schlemm had also committed 655 Anti-tank Battalion with about 25 equipments of 7.5-cm or 8.8-cm calibre, two of his reserve parachute battalions called Hutz and Krahs, and two battalions of 346 Inf Div. These latter had come from Western Holland, and although Schlemm tried to get the complete division this force was all that was allotted to him. About the 13 Feb, 84 Inf Div which had received an intensive pummelling, was pulled out of the line for four days to be rested and reorganized and given some 700 reinforcements that Schlemm had been sent...

(Special Interrogation Report, Gen Alfred Schlemm)

129. During the night 14/15 Feb, 30 Corps Headquarters announced its intentions for the following day. 51 (H.) Div with 32 Gds Bde under command was to occupy Hassum and Kessel; 53 (W.) Div was to maintain its hold on the Reihswald and to dominate the Goch - Cleve road. The tasks allotted to 43 (W.) Div were the capture of the high ground east and south-east of Staatsforst Cleve as well as the clearing of the Staatsforst itself; with subsequent exploitation towards Goch. 15 (S.) Div was to continue to operate in the direction of Calcar and occupy the area of Moyland. The highlight of the directive concerned 3 Cdn Inf Div, which was to pass to command 2 Cdn Corps at 1200 hours on 15 Feb. A Corps reserve was to be maintained in the

form of Gds Armd Div less 32 Gds Bde, and it would remain on eight hours' notice to move into the battle. (AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/I, Docket III(b): Intention 0/492, dated 142310).

130. By 0800 hours, 15 Feb, the situation showed that part of the intention had already been carried out, for on the right, 153 Bde of 51 (H.) Div had 5 B.W. some 500 yards south of Heyen (7843). 32 Gds Bde firm in Hommersum (8244) and 7 A. & S.H. in Kessel, which had been entered against moderate opposition (W.D., "G" Ops H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945, Appx 56, Main H.Q., Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serials 16 and 21). 129 Bde of 43 Div had also resumed its advance; 5 Wilts passed through 4 Wilts, and despite heavy resistance were now on their objective north of Berkhofel (9449), while 214 Bde, having cleared the northern exists of Staatsforst Cleve, returned to their former positions, but left elements of 43 (W.) Div Recce Regt's standing patrols (Ibid, Serial 16 and AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III: Sitrep 0/495, folio 148). The divisional intention was for 130 Bde to pass through 129 Bde and seize the high ground (9548) south-east of Bremenkamp (9448) (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945, Appx 56, Tac H.Q., Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 4). This attack got under way generally at about 1100 hours with on the right 7 Hamps on the left 4 Dorset (Ibid, Serial 21). By this time on either flank, 51 (H.) and 15 (S.) Divs were exploiting their gains. On the right the armoured cars of Derby Yeo had reached Heiland (7941) without opposition, and were pressing on to the east, while on the left in 15 (S.) Div's sector, 9 Cameronians were almost up to the ring contour south-west of Moyland. In their northern flank 7 Seaforth, pushing on towards Moyland, were

at present being held up by mines some 1000 yards from the town. (Ibid, Serial 23).

THE ENTRY OF 2 CDN CORPS INTO THE OFFENSIVE - 15 FEB

131. Now that General Crerar's forces were standing well ahead of the first phase line on the left and right, the time had come to bring 2 Cdn Corps into the battle. In the view of Lt-Gen Simonds the best possibility for its employment would have been in a surprise crossing of the Rhine west of Arnhem, where the Germans were now very weak. Following an amphibious crossing of the river the Corps would then work up the right bank parallel to 30 Corps. But the Army Commander ruled out the plan, indicating that the main effort of the Army Group must be to clear the country between the rivers south of Cleve (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Corps/C/I: Appreciation of Corps Commander, 14 Feb 45: W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 13 Feb 45). It had been necessary to hold the Corps in reserve in the early stages owing to the congested approaches, and the difficulty of anticipating the pace of our advance. It had not been thought possible to fight both Corps until Goch had been cleared, and the route from Gennep opened for the use of 30 Corps. The advance had progressed more slowly than had been hoped; 9 Feb had been forecast as the best possible date for the completion of Phase I, but Goch still lay in enemy hands. General Simonds now assumed responsibility with 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs, and it was intended that he should project his operations from Cleve towards Udem and Calcar, but owing to the flooded condition of the roads in the northern sector, 30 Corps' supply routes had to be used jointly by both Corps, and delay resulted (W.D., "G" Ops, First Cdn Army, February 1945, Appx 93: Appreciation of Take-over by 2

Cdn Corps 1 Feb 45; W.D., G.S. H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 15 Feb 45; and General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45). The road originally opened by 2 Cdn Inf Div from Nijmegen to Cleve now being impassable because of the flooding between Wyler and Kranenburg, a ferry service with nine ferries was organized to carry priority traffic across water sometimes between eight and ten feet in depth. Great care had to be taken in navigation to avoid hedges, fence posts and other underwater obstructions. (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/RCE/C/D: C.R.E. Account, 8 Feb to 12 Mar).

132. As part of the general regrouping 52 (L.) Div - which now came under command of 30 Corps from Second British Army - took over 51 (H.) Div's front on the right, and was directed towards Weeze; the Highland Division, following the capture of Asperden (16 Feb), was to attack Goch, if required, from the north-west. On their left, 53 (W.) Div was ordered into reserve, and 43 Div was to capture the high ground dominating Goch from the north. 15 (S.) Div, which was fighting its way ahead towards Moyland and had reached a point (9651) more than half way from Cleve to Calcar, was ordered to form a firm base for the operations of 2 Cdn Corps. The division was then to advance south through 43 (W.) Div and capture Goch. 3 Cdn Inf Div was to initiate these operations on 16 Feb, but on the following day it was to side-step on the Cleve-Udem axis, while 2 Cdn Inf Div was to initiate these operations on 16 Feb, but on the following day it was to side-step on the Cleve-Udem axis, while 2 Cdn Inf Div was to carry on the attack towards Calcar. (AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/I: Draft of 30 Corps Op Instr 48, 15 Feb 45).

133. 2 Cdn Corps now consisted of 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs and 2 Cdn Armd Bde. Of these formations 2 Cdn Inf Div and 2 Cdn Armd Bde were more or less concentrated. 4, 5 and 6 Cdn Inf Bdes were all in Nijmegen but under orders to move. 4 Bde on 16 Feb, to be followed by 6 Bde on the 17th; 5 Bde was to bring up the rear later. (W.Ds, H.Q. 4, 6, 5 Cdn Inf Bdes, 15 - 17 Feb 45) 2 Cdn Armd Bde also received its marching orders when 10 Cdn Armd Regt was placed under command 2 Cdn Inf Div. The rest of the brigade was to follow in due course (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 15 Feb 45). 3 Cdn Inf Div, however, was at that time more widely dispersed. The bulk of 8 Bde was still guarding the Rhenish flank, 9 Bde had H.L.I. of C. in the region of Griethausen, S.D. & G. Highrs around Kellen, and Nth N.S. Highrs to the east between Warbeyen and Hurendeich (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde and Units, 14 - 15 Feb 45). The three regiments of 7 Bde were comfortably established in Cleve, with Regina Rif in the north, 1 C. Scot R. in the centre and R. Wpg Rif in the south of the town (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde and Units, 14 - 15 Feb 45). In addition, 46 (H.) Bde came under command of 2 Cdn Inf Div that day and was to be committed to action augmented by 10 H.L.I. of 227 Bde (First Cdn Army, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 48). 7 Cdn Recce Regt was at about this time moving up to operate on the left flank (W.D., 7 Cdn Recce Regt, 15 Feb 45).

134. The general Canadian Corps plan was for 46 (H.) Bde to continue the task allotted to it by 15 (S.) Div and supported by 3 Armd S.G. to capture the high ground (9649) above the main crossroads (9648) in the region of Louisendorf (9549 - 9949) (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serials 42, 49 and 76). Once this was achieved 7 Cdn Inf Bde would pass through riding in Kangaroos, supported by a regiment of 6 Gds Armd Div (AEF: 45/First Cdn

Army/C/H, Docket V: February 1945, L.Os. Reports 151730). In the afternoon of 15 Feb definite instructions for the attack were given to the battalions involved. The attack was to be made, with, on the right, R. Wpg Rif, supported by two squadrons of armour; their task was to seize the hilly ground about Louisendorf (9648), 9748), while on the left Regina Rif with one squadron of tanks under command cleared the woods (9650 - 9750) south of Moyland. This was a narrow strip of forestland, covering an escarpment which ran for several miles parallel to the Cleve - Calcar road, and about halfway between the tow towns (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 15 Feb 45). The operation was to be carried out in two phases. First "B" and "D" Coys Regina Rif with one squadron of tanks, would consolidate in the road which ran north-east through squares 9450, 9552. At this point R. Wpg Rif were to go through to their objective. In the second phase, "A" and "C" Coys, Regina Rif, accompanied by the armour would push on to the area of Rosskamp (9749). 1 C. Scot R. would follow up the attacking units. H Hour was tentatively set at 1000 hours, 16 Feb, (W.Ds., Regina Rif, R. Wpg Rif and 1 C. Scot R., 15 Feb 45).

135. Meanwhile, as the Canadian troops girded themselves for the coming battle, the issue west of Moyland was being forced by 15 (S.) and 43 (W.) Divs. On the axis of the Cleve - Moyland road, the proposed plan of committing 227 (H.) Bde was cancelled; instead 10 H.L.I. had been put under command 46 (S.) Bde, which by 1800 hours was still trying to extend its positions towards Moyland, Rozkank and Kouisendorf against strong opposition coupled with very heavy shelling. Later reports from this brigade stated that the task would not be completed by first light, 16 Feb (First Cdn Army, Tac

H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 48, and Main H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 76). As darkness descended upon the battlefield, 46 Bde was persisting in its all-out effort to gain ground. 7 Seaforth on the left were held up on the road north-west of Moyland near Tillermannskath (954522). 9 Cameronians had not yet reached the ring contour at 962514, and 10 H.L.I. were heavily involved in their drive to the south-east. 1 Glas H. were moving up gradually behind 7 Seaforth. (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serials 1 and 4). Success, however, was imminent, and at 0600 hours, 10 Feb, 10 H.L.I. declared that they were making good headway. 7 Seaforth had also tired out the opposition and were approaching the 9 Cameronians' objective - the ring contour (9651) - from the north-west with 1 Glas H. following up in spite of their having been counter-attacked during the night (Ibid, Serials 3 and 4).

136. By the morning of 16 Feb, 43 (W.) Div was able to report success. The attack by 130 Bde through 129 Bde had, after a bad start due to enemy shelling, progressed favourably. 4 Dorset had gained their intermediate objective by 1800 hours, 15 Feb, whereupon 7 Hamps passed through, with the understanding that if they were successful, 5 Dorset would push on past them, 129 Bde had withdrawn into divisional reserve (First Cdn Army, Main H>Q> Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 52). But a dense fog which set in early that morning slowed the advance down, and a new plan was evolved whereby 214 Bde would resume the attack as soon as 130 Bde consolidated (First Cdn Army Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serials 10 and 12). By comparison, the situation to the south-west was quiet. 53 (W.) Div merely readjusted some of its positions in 71 Bde's sector, where 1 H.L.I. and 1 Oxf Bucks inter-changed localities. 160 and 158 Bdes, resting after their struggles in the Reichswald, had nothing to

report (Ibid, Serial 10 and Ibid, 15 Feb 45, Serial 40). The Highland Division, which had spent most of the day reorganizing, had also improved some of its positions in following up the reconnaissance by 2 Derby Yeo, and the morning of 16 Feb saw 153 Bde with 5 B.W. near Heiland (7941), 1 Gordons in the vicinity of Zwarte Heide (8041) and 5/7 Gordons in reserve just south of Gennep (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H. Docket V, February 1945, L.Os. Report, 160800).

137. Neither 154 nor 152 Bdes nor 32 Gds Bde had made any moves. 154 Bde was still trying desperately to bridge the river at Kessel, which 7 A. & S.H. held in spite of two counter-attacks launched against them. 32 Gds Bde also experienced some violent reaction from the enemy, but all efforts made to dislodge the guards failed (AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III: folio 146, Sitrep 0/500). As a result of "tidying up" the battle-field in this area, it had not been possible to attack Hassum as previously planned. However, the capture of that place was included in the intention of 16 Feb, which called for 32 Gds Bde to seize the high ground about Mull (8243) beginning at 1330 hours, and to follow this with the capture of Hassum before first light on 17 Feb. 154 Bde would be committed to clear the area about the station (8444), after which 152 Bde was to pass on to take Asperden, Hervorst (8945) and the Asper bridge (888466) (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 77).

138. The weather during the last twenty-four hours had closed again and no flying had been possible, yet in spite of this advantage the enemy made little response to our advances. It is possible that the absence of any real counter

effort was due to the fact that he was building up, and waiting for the newly arrived formations to pick up their strength. It was well known that 84, 6 Para, 346, 116 Pz Gr, 7 Paras, 1 Para and possibly 8 Para and 160 Divs had formed the opposition this past day, but it was difficult to define just what proportion of each formation was present in the battle area. It seemed clear that General Student had been left to his own resources and that he was drawing on every division but 190 and 231 for this battle, and it was unlikely that new troops would appear in action until these resources were used up.

Instead a mobile reserve must be built up against the American Armies. In this project the enemy's chief embarrassment is finding infantry to hold lines for mobile reserves to lie behind. Even before the ARDENNES battle he was losing prisoners from his infantry to the americans at an alarming rate. That is continuing and although there are infantry divisions which seem to be possible, they promise very little real strength. The best are, of course, the battle-shattered 3 and 5 para Divisions which are still engaged but might come to our battle. A survey of divisions, some of which may be available is included in Part II under Reserves. Of these, those in XIX Army namely 2 Mountain, 16 Volksgrenadier, 30 SS, 159, 189, 198, 338, 708 and 716 were engaged in the COLMAR pocket until 3 February and should NOT all be required in defence of the right bank of the RHINE. He may therefore be able to maintain a faded and worn facade of infantry divisions in front of the RHINE.

(First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 230, 15 Feb 45).

THE ATTACK ON MOYLAND WOOD - 16 FEB

139. 2 Cdn Corps made little headway during the morning of 16 Feb. 46 (S.) Bde were still encountering severe opposition, and an enemy counter-attack shortly after 10 H.L.I. reported the objective north of Louisendorf forced them to withdraw slightly. 9 Cameronians, though experiencing fierce resistance, repelled the German effort, holding on to their ground until 7 Bde crossed the start line at 1330 hours (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serials 50 and 55). A heavy stonk on all known enemy positions and objectives by field and medium artillery preceded the attack, which showed every sign of becoming muddled as 46 (S.) Bde were still fighting in the region of the Regina's forming up place (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 Feb 45). The R. Wpg Rif supported by two squadrons of S.G. (Scots Guards), however, who were to carry out phase one, got well away. "A" and "C" Coys crossed the start line in Kangaroos together and at about 1400 hours "C" Coy, who had covered some 1500 yards, were on their objective (960497), with "A" Coy followed by "D" Coy passing through. The three companies pressed on to within fifty yards of their final objectives and then debussed to assault on foot. By 1700 hours the battalion had secured its objectives in the neighbourhood of the Louisendorf crossroads (9648) and consolidated about the farm (9649) 500 yards to the north-east of the intersection. Though the advance had been subjected to heavy shelling and rocketing, casualties had been remarkably light: only in the direct assault was a heavier price paid in men, though the tanks suffered no losses (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 16 Feb 45). 240 prisoners were taken (Ibid).

140. The success of R. Wpg Rif was not matched by Regina Rif on the left, for the Reginas experienced trouble as soon as they crossed the start line. The opposition came from the rectangular wood (9551) opposite Trippenberg (9450), and it became necessary to clear this wood before any further attack could be made: "B" Coy was promptly despatched to carry out this task. "A" Coy then passed through them and secured the spot height 962514, and "C" Coy began to clear eastwards along the southern edge of the wood. It was "C" Coy who made most headway; they reached the south-eastern fringe and, not knowing just where "A" Coy was, its commander consolidated with a platoon in the woods north-west of Rosenboom and the rest of his company in the buildings of the settlement (973503). But actually the enemy had not been caught off balance, and very cleverly, as "C" Coy came forward, the Germans merely retired from the low ground in front of the advancing Canadians to the higher land on the left. When our troops had passed, the enemy closed in behind them, and in a fierce counter-attack, overran the Regina platoon in the wood. "B" Coy by this time was following up, but on reaching the open ground north of the wood they met with such volumes of fire from the front, left and right that further advance was out of the question. The men were pinned down, and eventually withdrew under cover of darkness. It was then decided to abandon the attack until the next morning. (AEF: 45/7 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I, Memo of Interview No. 5, "The Clearing of Moyland Wood by 7 Cdn Inf Bde", pp 1 and 2). In the late afternoon 1 C. Scot R., the reserve battalion, had moved up behind R. Wpg Rif, and was now dug in on the high ground to the west of R. Wpg Rif (9549) (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 16 Feb 45).

141. In the meantime, 4 Cdn Inf Bde with 10 Cdn Armd Regt advanced to the Cleve area. Large scale movement was impossible along the northern route, and it had been necessary to guide the fresh troops in by way of Mook - Gennepe - Hekkens, and through the Reichswald, in order to reach the assembly area south and east of Cleve. That this meant crossing the supply lines of 30 Corps at a time when most of its formations were engaged in heavy fighting, is indicative of the difficulties involved. (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F: Weekly Summary of Ops, 11-17 and 18-24 Feb 45; W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 16 Feb 45).

142. After a somewhat inactive day of 15 Feb, 30 Corps had started to move forward again on the morning of the 16th. On the far right, 52 (L) Div, which had just come into the battlefield, began to pass through 51 (H.) Div with 157 Bde leading, leaving 156 Bde concentrated at Gennepe (First Cdn Army, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serial 10). In 51 (H.) Div's area, the bridging of the river at Kessel was not completed until 1120 hours, at which time 154 Bde was ordered to prepare itself to clear the northern approaches to Hassum (Ibid, Serial 27). By this time, the infantry and tank attack on Mull (8243) by 5 Coldm Gds of 32 Gds Bde had begun, and by 1410 hours forward elements of this battalion were at the gates of the village. It was then decided to attack Hassum with 1 W.G. that night, after which 152 Bde was to pass on towards Asperden and Hervorst (Ibid, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serial 38). Mull was captured by 1550 hours, and the enemy counter-attacked, but were driven back under a hail of well directed artillery fire (Ibid, 79 and 83). The afternoon was half spent when 157 (L.) Bde advanced with right 5 K.O.S.B., left 5 H.L.I., but good progress was made against moderate resistance, and at

1919 hours, 5 K.O.S.B. were established on the south-eastern edge of the large wood, 500 yards north of Papenheugel (8139) with 5 H.L.I. on their left, fast approaching the clearing at Broedersbosch (8240). 1 Glas H. then commenced its task of mopping up between its two sister battalions and pushing past them to the south (Ibid, Serials 84 and 88).

143. Late in the evening of 16 Feb, both 154 and 152 Bdes of 51 (H.) Div resumed their advance, and by midnight 1 B.W. of 154 Bde had reached a point about 1500 yards north of Hassum (8543), while 2 Seaforth of 152 Bde had seized Asperden (8845) and were waiting for 5 Cameronians, now at Grafenthal (to the north), to drive on eastwards. (Ibid, Serial 82; 2 Cdn Corps, 16 Feb 45, Serial 8). In the area between the forward elements of 152 Bde at Asperden and 7 Cdn Inf Bde at Louisendorf, 53 (W.) and 43 (W.) Divs had been far from idle. 1 Oxf Bucks of 71 Bde seized and consolidated the road (8947) east of Asperberg (895473), 7 R.W.F. leaped forward to the woods (892476) north-east of the Asper Bridge (8846), while 160 Bde patrolled constantly to the western edge of Staatsforst Cleve to report finally no presence of the enemy (Ibid). East of here 130 and 214 Bdes of 43 (W.) Div had overcome earlier difficulties and also gained some ground, and they now presented a formidable salient into the enemy's line. 130 Bde reached its objective south of Bremenkamp (9448) at 1500 hours with 5 Dorset forward on the left, and 7 Hamps to the right and rear, thus making a firm base as 214 Bde sprang southwards. (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serial 65). The attack went very well; at 2000 hours both 7 Som L.I. and 1 Worc R. were on their objectives on the high ground (9346 - 9446), some 2000 yards east of Pfalzdorf (9146), and 5 D.C.L.I. went through them to a new objective (945449)

overlooking Heldhausen (9444) (Ibid, Serial 87). At this point the intentions for the morrow were given out; 4 Som L.I., would follow up 5 D.C.L.I., and 129 Bde was to relieve 7 Som L.I. and 1 Worc R. at first light, 17 Feb. 4 Dorset of 130 Bde was to clear the north-east corner of Staatsforst Cleve and link up with 53 (W.) Div, while 43 Recce was to screen the north of the woods. (Ibid, Serial 97).

144. The situation of 3 Cdn Inf Div with 46 (H.) Bde under command, had not changed by 0800 hours, 17 Feb. It was now intended to launch 46 (H.) Bde against Moyland, and to pass 4 Cdn Inf Bde through 7 Bde with the object of crossing the Goch - Calcar road in the region of Verkelt (9646) on the afternoon of 17 Feb. At last the Canadian brigades, which had for so long been cooling their heels, were to enter the battle zone. The order was issued for 6 Cdn Inf Bde to move off on 17 Feb, with under command 27 Cdn Armd Regt (who were eventually to be employed by 3 Cdn Inf Div). 5 Cdn Inf Bde was to follow on 18 Feb, 8 Bde on 19 Feb, and 9 Bde on the 20th (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V: February 1945, L.Os. Report 162000A). 52 (L.) Div would continue to operate on the right with 157 Bde directed on Afferden and on Groote Horst (8639). 51 (H.) Div would, after the capture of Hassum, prepare to operate against Goch from the north-west. In the centre 53 (W.) Div was to isolate Staatsforst Cleve from the west and south and link up with 43 (W.) Div, while the latter dominated the forest from the north and cleared it from the east. 15 (S.) Div and 6 Gds Armd Div were to rest in reserve. (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 61, folio B, Intentions 17 Feb 45).

145. The first 24 hours had seen the enemy launch several determined but unskilled counter-attacks. Similarly it had seen our troops win back the lost ground, regain the momentum and thrust aside the enemy, whose order of battle was obviously now a complete shambles, with each passing hour giving promise of further headaches to the German High Command. According to recent identifications the enemy appeared to have run short of tactical reserves, for he was throwing in parachute oddments at an alarming rate to bolster the rapidly failing ability of 116 Pz Div (First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 231, 16 Feb 45).

Of the forces presumed to be available to him, only 19 Para Regt, the Infantry of 346 Div and 11/21 Para Regt are not firmly located. As such they constitute his reserve, but the presence of 346 Div is conjectural; it must be delayed or diverted, since it has not been flung piecemeal into the battle, as is the enemy's apparently unavoidable habit. The question of the identity of the troops with which the enemy now must man the RHINE from PANNERDEN E8368 to EMMERICH E96 is still to be solved.

(Ibid)

146. The air effort had been blessed with good luck, for the day having started overcast and dull, transformed itself into brilliant sunshine, and was put to good use. 84 Gp were quick to resume the onslaught which had suffered a previous day's interruption.

The activity was entirely in the battle area, SOUTH and SOUTHEAST of the REICHSWALD, and directed mainly at ASPERDEN E84 and HASSUM E84, two points of major importance in the line of the Army advance. Both were heavily bombed and strafed and there is little doubt that life there this afternoon was not only uncomfortable, but also very uncertain. The usual type of targets elsewhere in the battle area were attacked - strongpoints, gun positions, blockhouses and the like, and troops - in one instance a group of 50. Later in the day leaflets were dropped.

(First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 231, 16 Feb 45)

147. The attack of 7 Cdn Inf Bde was resumed at 1000 hours, 17 Feb, when "B" and "B" Coys of Regina Rif, heavily supported by artillery, attempted to clear the offending woods. This attack, however, became disorganized and Regina Rif were forced to make a slight withdrawal and re-position the companies. The Reginas were then ordered to maintain their present area and wait for 2 Cdn Inf Div's 4 Bde to pass through on the right later (W.D., Regina Rif, 17 Feb 45). As the battalion dug in facing the road which runs south-west from Moyland, R. Wpg Rif seized an opportunity to push "C" Coy out to occupy the buildings at Point 40 (969487), which the scout platoon had reconnoitred and found clear, and later the carrier platoon to the left of "C" Coy on the north-east - south-west track which ran across "C" Coy's area. In addition a single platoon from "D" Coy was ordered to the crossroads 500 yards south-east of the main battalion position (crossroads 961489) )W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 17 Feb 45). Slightly to the north-east, 1 C. Scot R. went over to the attack at 1500 hours, when "A" and "D" Coys moved forward through "B" Coy to capture

the high ground overlooking Heseler Feld (9749). The two companies moved across the open fields to approach the objective from the west and encountered heavy fire from the left flank. Nevertheless both companies reached their respective targets by 1700 hours, and Lt-Col L.S. Henderson, D.S.O, ordered his anti-tank guns up and directed "B" Coy to the area of the farm (969497), directly west of the objective. The attack had not been Cheap, six killed and 26 wounded being the cost (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 17 Feb 45). Throughout the night all three battalions of 7 Cdn Inf Bde underwent severe shelling, mortaring and rocketing, and the enemy kept up a constant stream of sniper fire. Nevertheless, patrols operated forward and to the flanks to prevent infiltration and to contact friendly troops (W.Ds., 1 C. Scot R., R. Wpg Rif, Regina Rif, 17 Feb 45). Since 7 Bde had had such a rough time in getting ahead, it had not been possible to launch 4 Cdn Inf Bde with 10 Cdn Armd Regt until the situation of 7 Bde was firm. The 4 Bde attack was therefore postponed (W.D., H.Q. 11 Cdn Inf Bde, 17 Feb 45). On this day (17 Feb) 6 Bde arrived from Nijmegen and concentrated east of Hau around the Bedburg institutions (9252) (W.D., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, 17 Feb 45).

148. The intention for the 18 Feb was for 7 Bde to seal off the eastern end of the Moyland woods south of Hufche (9750), and then clear them in a north-westerly direction towards the Regina Rif present forward line. Once this was done 46 (S.) Bde would assault Moyland. 4 Cdn Inf Bde would pass through 7 Bde on the morning of 18 Feb as soon as sufficient artillery support could be diverted from the attack on Moyland, and advance south-east. 6 Cdn Inf Bde would relieve 46 (S.) Bde for its task at Moyland, but should be Scottish Bde be unable to succeed, then the capture of the town would pass on to 6 Bde on

19 Feb. Amongst other contemplated changes was the relief of 9 Cdn Inf Bde by two battalions of 8 Cdn Inf Bde, so that the former could move to Cleve. From here it was intended to relieve 130 Bde of 43 (W.) Div and continue the attack towards Udem with 9 Bde. On its relief 130 Bde would change places with 8 Cdn Inf Bde, who would become the reserve brigade for 3 Cdn Inf Div (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H. Docket V: February 1945, L.O. Report 162000 hours).

149. While 7 Cdn Inf Bde had been striving to push on south-east of Moyland, 30 Corps' effort had met with great success by all divisions. On the right by midday 1 Glas H. of 52 (L.) Div had captured Afferden and 32 Gds Bde had cleared Hassum (2 Cdn Corps, Ops Log, 17 Feb 45, Serial 18). In the centre position, east of Kessel, 152 Bde was firm in the region of Asperden and Granfenthal (8740), with 5 Cameronians at Hervorst; while 7 A. & S.H. of 154 Bde had cut in behind Grafenthal, pushed on to the edge of the forest, and taken 100 prisoners. Directly east of the Reichswald, 53(W.) Div was now in full possession of Asperberg (8947) after a heavy fight in which the enemy lost some forty dead (Ibid). All the forward positions in this sector had been improved, with 7 R.W.F. of 158 Bde just east of Asperberg, 1 Oxf Bucks of 7 Bde slightly to the north-east, and 1 H.L.I. now in reserve. On the left of 71 Bde, 160 Bde, 160 Bde had made a big lunge forward from the area between the Reichswald and Staatsforst Cleve, through the latter feature to line the eastern edge with 2 Mon (Ibid). 43 (W.) Div was by this time heavily involved in the northern approaches to Goch, where 4 Som L.I. (under command 214 Bde) had made sufficient ground in the vicinity of Imigshof (9345) to enable to further attack by 1 Worc R. and 7 Som L.I. to pass south to the escarpment (9145 - 9244) north of Goch (Ibid). This objective was subsequently reached

by 7 Som L.I. on the right flank of the attack, and at 1930 hours consolidation was almost complete. On the left, however, 1 Worc R. moving south-east across the Goch - Calcar road were meeting heavier opposition, and 5 D.C.L.I., who had continued to advance towards Buchholt (9543) during the afternoon, were pressing on despite fierce counter-attacks, their open flank being protected by 43 Recce Regt, who had already cleared up to the crossroads at Point 34 (9547). The area between 43 (W.) Div and 53 (W.) Div was by nightfall almost cleared, due to the efforts of 7 Hamps of 130 Bde, who were working south to the right of 7 Som L.I. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V, February 1945: L.Os. Report 171930A). To the west 53 (W.) Div had moved forward with 71 Bde in the direction of Pfalzdorf (9146); by midnight they lined the wooded track north of Hervorst from the bend in the Niers River (894466) to Ruppenthal with 1 Oxf Bucks, and east of this point for another 1000 yards with 1 H.L.I.; 4 R.W.F. was to the north astride the main road near Sandkuhlshof (9147). (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 18 Feb 45, Serial 6; First Cdn Army Main H.Q. Ops Log, 17 Feb 45, Serials 71 and 93).

150. The right flank was also developing well. 155 Bde of 52 (L.) Div went into action early in the afternoon of 17 Feb, and by last light 7/9 R.S. had reached the left part of their objective at the anti-tank ditch (841395) north-east of Kasteel Blijenbeek (9338) without interference. At the same time, the woods east of Broedersbosch (8240) were cleared by 5 H.L.I. of 157 Bde, and a squadron of 52 Recce Regt which had passed into Rempeld (8238) was firm in that place, but unable to proceed further owing to heavy fire from the south. (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 17 Feb 45, Serial 95). The general situation was satisfactory, for 5 K.O.S.B. had one company in the

woods east of Rempeld, with the rest of the battalion moving up quickly (Ibid, Serial 96). General Horrocks' intention was now for 43 (W.) Div to advance on Goch, enter the town, then move on Goch from the north-west. However, if the enemy opposition was too strong the plan would be changed, 15 (S.) Div was to be brought in between 53 (W.) and 43 (W.) Divs and attack from the north, while the western assault by 51 (H.) Div would be launched on the night of 18 Feb. To the south and right 52 (L.) Div having considerable trouble, had been redirected to consolidate the south-east corner of the woods above Molenhuis (8339), Groote Horst and as far south as the north-east corner of the large wooded area (8537) east of Heukelom (8237). On gaining these objectives 52 (L.) Div was to stand firm during the assault on Goch (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H. Docket V, February 1945: L.Os. Report "Intentions", 172000A).

151. While 30 Corps made preparations for its thrust on Goch, the Canadians were being subjected to serve shelling on the southern and western approaches to Moyland, against which no movement was undertaken until 1230 hours, 18 Feb. At that time Regina Rif on 7 Cdn Inf Bde again went forward to the attack, moving on to the woods from the south-west, with "A". "B" and "D" Coys (W.D., Regina Rif, 18 Feb 45). From the very beginning, the going was heavy against numerous machine guns well sited in the brush, and a devastating artillery bombardment which was evidently being provided by German guns from across the Rhine. "B" Coy on the right of the assault progressed slowly with the aid of Wasp flame throwers, despite the counter-attacks which kept coming in from the east. "D" Coy on the left was also having difficulty getting ahead. After several hours of hard fighting, however, the situation was well enough organized for "A" Coy to push past "B" and "D" coys and consolidate slightly

to the north. At this point it had been intended to pass "C" Coy through to the final objective (965513), but the state of the troops was such that further advance was considered inadvisable; instead one platoon of the already depleted "C" Coy was sent up to reinforce the positions of the three companies. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 18 Feb 45, Regina Rif, 18 Feb 45).

152. In the meantime, 1 C. Scot R. was attempting to exploit to the south-east. At 1400 hours, "B" Coy commenced an attack on the crossroads at Rosskamp with the object of pushing along the road running to the south-east. Here again the enemy's machine guns pinned the troops down, and although every effort was made to get ahead, movement was impossible. At 1700 hours the company was pulled back to dig in just north-east of "A" Coy's location at Heselen Feld. It had been a day of bloody fighting and heavy casualties for both Regina Rif and 1 C. Scot R., and while R. Wpg Rif had not actually made any definite assault, they too had come in for a good part of the enemy's violent retaliation with mortar, guns, and rockets (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, R. Wpg Rif, 18 Feb 45). Darkness found each of the battalions tired but well dug in and ready to meet any move that the enemy might make. Furthermore a squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt had arrived on the scene to act in a counter-attack role. This task had originally been assigned to 27 Cdn Armd Regt, who were intended to relieve the Guards battalion which had so far been assisting 7 Cdn Inf Bde. 27 Cdn Armd Regt, however, had not yet arrived in this sector. (W.Ds., R. Wpg Rif, 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 18 Feb 45).

153. The hard crust of the enemy defences had shown little sign of cracking; he was well dug in, his positions were well sited, and he seemed to have ample

mortar and gun support. In addition his troops had shown an aptitude for local tactical manoeuvre which had cost the Canadians severe losses. The value which the Germans place on this high ground above Moyland was genuine, for once this feature fell, surely Moyland would follow and the road to Calcar would be open to the attacker from the north. New plans were forthcoming to keep the pressure up, and 7 Cdn Inf Bde was ordered to attack again on the morning of 19 Feb (W.D.), 1 C Scot R., 18 Feb 45). This order was but a minor part of the general plan for which a large regrouping was in progress (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket II: Operation "VERITABLE" Battle Narrative; AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket II: Operation "VERITABLE" Battle Narrative; AEF: 45/7 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I, Memo of Interview No. 5, The Clearing of the Moyland Wood by 7 Cdn Inf Bde). General Crerar had no intention of allowing his effort to lag, for as he remarked later:

As long as we continued to hold the initiative, it was clear that the Germans would be quite unable to sort out their forces and re-establish normal channels of command.

(General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45)

154. The reliefs which were a prelude to the regrouping were completed by the morning of 17 Feb. 9 Cdn Inf Bde took over from 130 Bde of 43 (W.) Div, the change over being carried out without trouble by S.D. & G. Highrs who relieved 4 Dorset; and H.L.I. of C., who occupied the position vacated by 7 Hamps; Nth N.S. Highrs, however, who were due to take over the area held by 5 Dorset, had considerable trouble, as only two of their companies arrived at the latter's

lines (First Cdn Army, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 18 Feb 45, Serial 59). The remaining companies in leaving Warbeyen ran into hidden mines, and two Buffaloes were blown up, causing some 28 Casualties (W.Ds, H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, Nth N.S. Highrs, 19 Feb 45). The area recently held by 9 Bde was thus turned over to 8 Cdn Inf Bde. N Shore R. had moved from Nijmegen to relieve H.L.I. of C. at Griethausen, Wardhausen (8959) and Spyck (9260). R. de Chaud changed places with Nth N.S. Highrs, while Q.O.R. of C. remained in its extended lines along the Rhine bank (W.Ds., R. de Chaud, N. Shore R., Q.O.R. of C., 18, 19 Feb 45).

155. Thus 19 Feb saw a three way shuffle begin. 2 Cdn Inf Div directed 4 Cdn Inf Bde to pass through 7 Bde, which was still fighting in a north-easterly direction towards Moyland, and to attack the Goch - Calcar road. To the north-west 5 Cdn Inf Bde began to relieve 46 (S.) Bde in the upper part of the Moyland wood. 6 Cdn Inf Bde remained in reserve near Bedburg (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Weekly Summaries of Ops, 11 - 17, 18 - 24 Feb 45). Now that 7 Bde had 5 Bde on its left, 9 Bde on its right and 4 Cdn Inf Bde about to push through, a complicated interlocking of formations had been effected which would require careful handling if administrative and supply problems were to proceed without trouble. Furthermore 130 Bde was to cross over to the water-logged left flank between 20-22 Feb, in order to allow 8 Cdn Inf Bde to replace 6 Bde at Bedburg when that formation of 2 Cdn Inf Div was committed. (Ibid). Consequently the inter-corps boundary was changed to run along the northern edge of the Reichswald, through Materborn, across the Cleve - Goch road near Haw, and then south-east, leaving the Cleve - Bedburg - Udem road entirely to 2 Cdn Corps (Ibid, Army Trace, 19 Feb 45).

THE THRUST TO THE SOUTH-EAST BY 4 CDN INF BDE, 19 - 23 FEB

156. By 0800 hours, 19 Feb, most of the reliefs had been completed. 5 Cdn Inf Bde took over from 46 (H.) Bde west of Moyland (9751), and 46 (H.) Bde returned under command 15 (S.) Div 2 Cdn Corps, February 1945, Appx 3, Ops Log, 19 Feb 45, Serial 9). 9 Cdn Inf Bde were almost complete in the old positions of 130 Bde west of Staatsforst Cleve, and 4 Cdn Inf Bde was making final preparations just rear of 7 Bde's southern lines for its attack to the south (W.D., H.Q. 9, 7 and 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 19 Feb 45; First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 19 Feb 45, Serials 13 and 18). The first move was made by 1 C. Scot R., who attacked with three companies from their positions around Rosskamp at approximately 0800 hours. The plan was for "C" coy to clear out the area of Bramerskath (9750) to the north, "D" Coy to advance into the low ground east of Rosskamp, with "A" Coy moving south to take out a strongpoint at the crossroads (977494) south of Heseler Feld. The attack moved off, meeting terrific opposition, and very soon it was clear that the enemy here was much too strong. "D" Coy could not get past "B" Coy, and "C" Coy attacking to the north were cut off, gradually encircled and finally almost wiped out, only six men escaping from the holocaust into which these troops had plunged. "A" Coy, however, did manage to reach their objective (W.Ds, 1 C. Scot R., 19 Feb 45), and such gains as had been possible were consolidated to await the inevitable counter-attacks (Ibid). The left flank, now open after the disaster which had befallen "C" Coy, was quickly sealed by the regimental carriers and a troop of tanks from 10 Cdn Armd Regt (Ibid).

157. Meanwhile, 4 Cdn Inf Bde had also gone over to the offensive, which by measure of the ferocity of this fight for the Goch - Calcar road was one of the most intense local actions of the whole operation. Originally, the intention had been to secure the prominent feature south of Calcar, but during the 24-hour period immediately preceding the attack, there were several changes in plan. These changes were essential because of the present threat to the left flank from the enemy's positions in the woods which 7 Cdn Inf Bde was trying to clean out. Until these woods were in Canadian hands no road existed in that area which might be used as a maintenance route (AEF: 45/4 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I: Memo of Interview No. 2 CD/4, The Struggle for the Goch - Calcar Road, Role of 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 19-20 Feb 45). The first alteration in plan occurred when it was decided to seize the ridge south-west of Calcar; this was then changed to be the area directly south-east of 1 C. Scot R.'s position. The final decision came when General Simonds directed that 4 Cdn Inf Bde would capture the sector bound in on the north-east by Schroanenhof (986472) and the road junction 500 yards due west, and in the south-west by Brunshof (968460) and Kramerbergshof (964466) (Ibid).

158. The attack was to be made on a two battalion front, with Essex Scot on the right, R.H.L.I. on the left, each unit having two companies up and two in reserve. The forward objectives of Essex Scot were the areas of Brunshof and Gottern (9746), while the follow-up companies were to establish themselves on the Goch - Calcar road immediately to the west. The objectives given to the forward elements of R.H.L.I. centred on Schroanenhof and the scattered farmhouses just north-east of Ebben (9846). The reserve companies were to consolidate in the area of Molk and 700 yards along the Goch - Calcar road to

the north-east and south-west. The reserve battalion, R. Regt of C., was to occupy the four main road junctions directly to the north-west of the forward battalions (AEF: 45/4 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I: Memo of Interview No. 2 CD/4). The attack was to be made over open country with Kangaroos of 1 Cdn Carrier Regt to lift the two forward companies of each battalion. For support, 4 Cdn Inf Bde had 10 Cdn Armd Regt less one squadron, Tor Scot R. (M.G.), fourteen field and seven medium regiments, as well as two batteries of heavy artillery. The Kangaroo force was divided into two columns, directly supported by a squadron of armour. This meant that the leading troops would proceed straight to their objectives at tank speed, while the reserve companies moved forward on foot as speedily as possible, leaving R. Regt C. to mop up in the rear of the assault. (Ibid, and W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 18 Feb 45, R.H.L.I., 17 Feb 45).

159. The plan of artillery support included a rolling barrage supplied by the guns of ten of the field and six of the medium regiments, lifting at tank pace (i.e., 100 yards every two minutes). The rest of the guns would thus be free to take on all known enemy targets on the high ground to the east, and in front of the advancing infantry. The task assigned to Tor Scot R. (M.G.) was to engage the enemy in the areas of Brunshof and Gottern with medium machine gun fire and 4.2-in mortars. The success of the operation depended on whether the armoured vehicles could negotiate the boggy ground on the way to the objective. (An alternative plan was conceived should the armour be unable to advance, but since the tank and Kangaroo commanders were confident that they would have no trouble, the attack was scheduled to go in as first planned.)

Between 1030 and 1130 hours on 19 Feb the assaulting regiments moved up to the

forming up places. (AEF: 45/4 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I: Memo of Interview No. 2 CD/4).

160. The troops had little trouble in forming up, and at 1200 hours they crossed the start line - the road running north-east to south-west through the Louisendorf crossroads. The artillery poured its shells into the enemy positions as our men advanced over the boggy ground across which the movement of the heavier tanks and Kangaroos became increasingly difficult. Soon after the waves of infantry left the starting point, several armoured vehicles bogged down, but the remainder pressed on (Ibid). It became clear as time passed that though the enemy had been taken by surprise, he had a strong anti-tank screen in this sector which included many 88-guns in well-sited positions and ably protected by infantry of 12 Para Recce Regt (Ibid). On the left, in R.H.L.I.'s sector, both guns and mines extracted their toll of Canadian armour, and while for the most part the Kangaroos were able to debuss their infantry near to the objectives, they were not able to progress further because of the tremendous volume of anti-tank fire coming from the enemy guns (Ibid).

161. As the battle progressed, communications became interrupted, especially with Essex Scot whose two forward wireless sets were knocked out, and who, until a third set was brought up, were only able to communicate to Bde H.Q. through the artillery's network. Before 1415 hours, however, both battalions were part way on their allotted objectives after a stiff fight. The enemy was not long in retaliating; the first counter-attack came in frontally and from the south, by a considerable force of infantry supported by tanks. Heavy

fighting continued, and at 1530 hours R.H.L.I. were still some 200 yards short of the objective, while on the right, Essex Scot were within a short distance of Gottern. The struggle reached a peak of fury as the forward battalions attempted to mop up their respective areas, amid a hail of fire from the enemy's mortars. By 1800 hours the situation appeared well in hand for R.H.L.I., Essex Scot, and r. Regt C., who were now complete on their own positions in reserve; but as the evening wore on more counter-attacks began to come in against the Canadians, and all supported by heavy artillery and mortar fire, which caused many casualties. At least seven of these attacks were thrown in against our troops, each with renewed vigour, and at about 2300 hours Lt-Col Pangman of Essex Scot reported that the situation about him was becoming critical; his forward area had been overrun and enemy tanks were firing on his headquarters. At about the same time R.H.L.I. was fighting fiercely to beat off two counter-attacks against its left flank which had penetrated the forward defences and were slowly overrunning "C" Coy. Lt-Col W.D. Whittaker immediately sent out his counter-attack force to restore the situation.

162. At this most anxious moment, Brigadier Cabeldu conferred with Maj-Gen Matthews, G.O.C. 2 Cdn Inf Div, who at once put Camerons of C. of 6 Cdn Inf Bde at the disposal of 4 Cdn Inf Bde to take over the R. Regt C.'s firm base should the latter be needed to assist in maintaining the forward line.

Shortly after midnight the Brigadier ordered "D" Coy R. Regt C. up to help the Essex Scot, who by now were out of contact, due to the terrific amount of fire which enveloped the battalion headquarters area. R.H.L.I. were in almost as bad a state, for some enemy tanks had cut in to outflank Lt-Col Whittaker's

positions on the left, and were exerting a good deal of pressure on 1 C. Scot R. on 3 Cdn Inf Div's front to the north. The silence of Essex Scot was finally broken at 0315 hours, when "D" Coy sent a message through R. Regt C. to say that only thirteen men remained in the company; all contact with the other companies and battalion headquarters had been lost and that they must withdraw. This bad news was offset in part by a message from R.H.L.I. at 0400 hours saying that their counter effort had been successful and the situation of "C" Coy had been put right. R.H.L.I. was now positioned with "A" Coy at 400 yards north of Ebben (9746), "B" Coy at Schroanenhof, "C" Coy at the road junction 600 yards west of Schroanenhof and "D" Coy consolidating at Whs (9847) (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, R.H.L.I., 1 C. Scot R., 20 Feb 45' History of Essex Scot R.). Meanwhile Camerons of c. had been put under command 4 Cdn Inf Bde, and were standing by for a counter-attack role (W.D., Camerons of C., 19 Feb 45). "B" Coy had already gone forward to relieve "D" Coy, R. Regt C., when the latter advanced to aid the hard pressed Essex Scot (Ibid, 20 Feb 45). A second company, "A", was despatched to the Royals' positions early on 20 Feb, but did not remain there; it was sent on to reinforce R.H.L.I. (Ibid, 20 Feb 45). In view of the heavy commitment of 4 Cdn Inf Bde, H.L.I. of C. was also placed under command 4 Bde at 1200 hours, 20 Feb 45 (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Feb 45).

163. Brigadier Cabeldu now arranged a counter-attack by R. Regt C. on to the Essex positions in the hope that quick action might recover a good many of the Essex Scotsmen who were pinned down in the area. After some discussion, a deliberate attack was planned to begin at 0900 hours supported by a new fire plan. While final preparations were being made for the attack by R. Regt C.,

the enemy again threw in a large force of infantry and tanks against R.H.L.I. A troop of tanks from 10 Cdn Armd Regt was immediately sent to bolster the infantrymen, and the enemy was driven back with huge losses. R. Regt C. went over to the attack at 0930 hours, the objectives being the near objectives of Essex Scots' thrust of the previous day. Soon after 1030 hours, Lt-Col R.M. Lendrum of R. Regt C. reported that some of this troops had reached this area, and that the commanding Officer of Essex Scot had been contacted. Unfortunately the men of R. Regt C. were unable to hold on to this ground and clear it sufficiently to allow the Essex Scot headquarters to be evacuated. This headquarters had been experiencing tense moments, some 18 all tanks having spent the night of 19/20 Feb and the following morning in a small cellar into which the enemy had poured A. Tk shells at close range. This fire, together with the many artillery concentrations which had fallen in the locality, had made it a veritable hell out of which no man was able to escape until noon, 20 Feb, when an L.O. managed to reach 4 Bde Headquarters with a story of terrible hardship and extreme heroism (History of Essex Scot R.).

164. Since the first attack by R. Regt C. had met with so little success, the Commander 4 Cdn Inf Bde arranged a second effort to evacuate the remainder of Essex Scot. By 1400 hours the spot had been reached by carriers of R. Regt C.; the wounded were taken out and the weary Essex Scot headquarters staff were relieved. During the afternoon stragglers from Essex Scot who trickled back were reorganized. From a total of 25 officers and 540 other ranks who took part in the initial assault, only 17 officers and 395 other ranks were accounted for. The enemy continued to plaster the ground with shell and mortar fire, and at 1715 hours he launched a fresh attack from the north and

north-east on R.H.L.I. Brigadier Cabeldu's reaction was to send forward the reserve squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt and elements of Camerons of c., and by 2000 hours after several fanatical attempts to push R.H.L.I. off this position, the German troops pulled back, their adour dampened by the stoic resistance. As Camerons of C. went in to aid R.J.L.I., H.L.I. of C. took over their ground, the reserve positions previously intended for R. Regt C. into which Camerons of c. had settled the full battalion earlier in the day (W.Ds., Camerons of C., H.L.I. of C., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Feb 45). H.L.I. of c. then took over all Camerons of C. tasks, and the latter unit reverted to command of 6 Cdn Inf Bde (W.Ds, H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, Camerons of C., 20 Feb 45). No more attacks were forthcoming, however, and so ended two days of ferocious fighting. 4 Cdn Inf Bde had attacked, been counter-attacked many times and partially overrun, but it had, in the words of its own War Diary:

Counter attacked and returned, proud holders of the ground won, ground strewn with the enemy's dead and equipment.

(W.D. , H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Feb 45)

The infantry battalions, and especially R.H.L.I., had been an outstanding example of ably led, well trained troops, who by sheer guts and perseverance had taken and held an objective against the best the enemy could put against them (W.Ds, H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, R.H.L.I., Essex Scot, R. Regt C., 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 19-20 Feb 45).

165. The success of 4 Cdn Inf Bde in crossing the Goch - Calcar road greatly improved the position of 7 Cdn Inf Bde, which was still battling for the Moyland wood. In this sector, S.D. & G. Highrs had arrived to take over from R. Wpg Rif on the evening of 19 Feb. A change in command took place when Brigadier J.G. Spragge, D.S.O., left for England, and Lt-Col A.S. Gregory, O.C. Regina Rif, assumed temporary command of 7 Cdn Inf Bde. Apart from shelling and mortaring, Regina Rif had not experienced any tactical change (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 19-20 Feb 45). Most of the day's action had been in front of 1 C. Scot r., who were counter-attacked in considerable force in the early hours of 20 Feb. This attack having been dealt with, the enemy soon mounted another which was stopped within 70 yards of "B" Coy's forward troops, where the enemy proceeded to taken over in dead ground, but from which even the heaviest artillery concentrations could not budge him. Finally, Wasp flame throwers were called forward, yet they too found the ground much too boggy and were unable to operate (W.Ds., 1 C. Scot R., 19-20 Feb 45; H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Feb 45). A new plan was now formed for R. Wpg Rif to pass through and clear the woods on 21 Feb, using as a start line the road below the Moyland Woods south-west of Langenhorst (9650); "B" and "D" Coys were to attack and capture the high ground astride the road leading south-west from Moyland, "A" and "D" Coy south of Langenhorst and "D" Coy on the wooded hill at Point 30 (970504). From here "D" Coy would take up the advance again to seize the neck of the woods to the east at Bramerkath (975504), and "B" Coy, having handed over to "A" Coy Regina Rif, was to situate itself on the forward northern slope of the feature west of Langenhorst. The artillery, M.M.G. and mortars were to act on a timed programme while the anti-tank guns and tanks

were instructed to provide close support over open sights. H Hour was set at 1000 hours, 21 Feb 45 (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 20 Feb 45).

166. The night of 20/21 Feb passed quietly, a welcome change to what had gone before. The morning of the 21st saw final arrangements for the attack completed, and at 1915 hours R. Wpg Rif went forward (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 20/21 Feb 45). The first step was by "B" and "D" Coys, who worked their way through Regina Rif and advanced north to within 600 yards of Moyland. "A" and "C" Coys then began clearing the main wood parallel to the start line, and "A" Coy Regina Rif moved up to relieve "B" Coy of the Winnipegs as planned. Resistance was fierce at all points and prisoners were few. Nevertheless "A" Coy managed to reach the high ground north-west of Rosenboom (9750), while "C" Coy cleared the buildings in this hamlet. One of the hottest fights took place when the depleted "C" Coy under Major C.S. Platts assaulted an enemy strongpoint with the aid of flame throwers. 200 paratroops had been reported here, but after the fierce engagement only five were taken out alive (W.D., R. Wpg Rif., 21 Feb 45). But by now the troops had suffered such heavy casualties that it was necessary for "B" Coy Regina Rif to take over from "D" Coy R. Wpg Rif, allowing the latter to proceed to settle in Rosenboom, while "C" Coy Regina Rif withdrew slightly to the west (969503). The night brought with it the usual counter-attacks from the enemy, who tried hard, though unsuccessfully, to push "D" Coy out of its position (W.Ds., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, R. Wpg Rif, 21 Feb 45). The gains of the day had been held and the way to Calcar, which had taken so long to reach and had cost so many lives, was open, for now the Moyland - Calcar road was effectively dominated by 7 Cdn Inf Bde (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 21 Feb 45).

167. By this time the remainder of 2 Cdn Corps was in the process of readjusting itself completely. It had been announced on 20 Feb that after the attack by R. Wpg Rif, 7 Cdn Inf Bde would be relieved by 4 Cdn Inf Bde and would concentrate as divisional reserve. Further to this, R. de Chaud and N. Shore R. would be relieved by 130 Bde of 43 (W.) Div on the night of 20/21 Feb, and Q.O.R. of C. 24 hours later. 8 Cdn Inf Bde was then to be ready to pass through 9 Cdn Inf Bde to attack on the axis Cleve - Keppeln - Udem. A change was also slated for the battalions of 9 Cdn Inf Bde. H.L.I. of c. was to take over from R. Regt C. on the night of 20 Feb; the next day S.D. & G. Highrs would be relieved by Essex Scot, and lastly Nth N.S. Highrs was to assume responsibility of the positions on the right of R.H.L.I. Thus 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs would each be on a cone-brigade front. A certain amount of switching was also to be done by 7 Cdn Recce Regt, whose squadron at Huisberden (9655) was to be relieved in part by 8 Cdn Recce Regt and by the Netherlands Companies. On completion of these changes, 7 Cdn Recce Regt was to concentrate in reserve for 3 Cdn Inf Div. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V; February 1945, L.Os. Reports 201100A, 211130A). The armoured forces were to be added to by the arrival in the battle zone of 6 Cdn Armd Regt, whose present task was to be handed over to 18 Cdn Armd c. Regt (Ibid).

168. A portion of the regrouping was completed by the morning of 22 Feb, and 4 Cdn Armd Div, having relinquished its positions along the Maas River to 1 Pol Armd Div, passed from under command 1 Brit Corps to 2 Cdn Corps (Ibid, L.Os. Reports 210900A, 220900A). The changes between 8 Cdn Inf Bde and 130 Bde along the river, and by 7 and 8 Cdn Recce Regts at Huisberden were both completed by 2200 hours, 21 Feb (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 21 Feb 45,

Serials 41, 61 and 85). Forward on the left flank 5 Cdn Inf Bde had R. de Mais and Calg Highrs, who had earlier eased into a position south of R. de Mais to conform with R. Wpg Rif's attack. Both these units patrolled vigorously to the east, and finding Moyland clear the former battalion sent in two companies to occupy it during the night 21/22 Feb. By midnight 21/22 Feb, Nth N.S. Highrs relieved R. Regt C. to the right of R.H.L.I., and R. Regt C. occupied a new position between 1 C. Scot R. and R.H.L.I. (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 22 Feb 45, Serial 3). It was now the task of Nth N.S. Highrs to recapture the ground lost earlier by Essex Scot and during the morning a plan was formed to achieve this (W.Ds., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, Nth N.S. Highrs, 22 Feb 45).

169. For this assault Nth N.S. Highrs had under command "C" Coy S.D. & G. Highrs "D" Coy H.L.I. of C., and in support "C" Coy C.H. of O. (M.G.), two troops of "A" Sqn 1st Hussars, and one S.P. troop of A.Tk guns. The plan was for "C" Coy Nth N.S. Highrs to capture and hold the crossroads at Kranenbergshof (965466) ad the built-up region of Brunshof, while on the left "A" Coy was to secure the ground between Faubenhof (9746) and Hofmannshof (9746) (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 22 Feb 45). H Hour was set for 1100 hours, and air support was promised in addition to aid supplied by artillery and mortars. The operation was delayed some 30 minutes waiting for the Typhoons, which eventually arrived at 1129 hours (Ibid). One minute later the two companies of Highlanders crossed the start line behind a heavy artillery barrage, with the Typhoons in close attendance. Both companies reached the objective without trouble, in spite of a heavy enemy artillery and mortar barrage which enveloped the infantry, but which did not deter them from holding on to the

newly gained ground (Ibid). The enemy guns continued to pound the Canadian position throughout the day, yet not counter attack was launched; the absence of the latter no doubt being due to the presence of the Typhoons which dived repeatedly to discourage with machine gun, cannon and rocket any movement on the enemy's part. Our casualties for the attack were nine killed and 31 wounded, but against this must be credited the finding by "A" Coy of seven men of the Essex Scot who had been cut off by the enemy counter attack two days before (Ibid).

170. By first light 23 Feb, 2 Cdn Corps was completely regrouped. During the previous day 5 Cdn Inf Bde had moved fully into the line, with Calg Highrs relieving Regina Rif and R.H.C. taking over from R. Wpg Rif (W.Ds., H.Q. 5 and 7 Cdn Inf Bde and Units, 21-23 Feb 45). To the right of 5 Bde, 4 Cdn Inf Bde had redispersed R. Regt C., who took over from 1 C. Scot R., while Essex Scot moved up into the area previously occupied by S.D. & G. Highrs, and was now reserve battalion situated between R. Regt C. and R.H.L.I. but slightly to the rear (W.Ds., S.D. & G. Highrs, R. Regt C., R.H.L.I., Essex Scot, 22-23 Feb 45). Upon its relief 7 Cdn Inf Bde assumed a reserve role and concentrated just east of Bedburg. Some of these changes were only temporary; 5 Cdn Inf Bde was due soon to be relieved by 129 Bde of 43 (W.) Div; they were then to concentrate in the vicinity of Bedburg, where 6 Cdn Inf Bde had been held for some days past in readiness for a new operation.

This operation - to be known as "BLOCKBUSTER" - was already in advanced stages of planning at 2 Cdn Corps Headquarters; the date for it to commence was set for 26 Feb (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 21-22 Feb 45). Hence there was

little rest for either 5, 6 or 8 Cdn Inf Bdes, who were to carry out the initial attack (W.Ds., H.Q. 5, 6 and Cdn Inf Bdes, 22-23 Feb 45).

171. Behind the line now held by 4, 5 and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes the approaches to the battle area were choked with traffic, empty fields over which the recent battle had passed were quickly being occupied by the fresh units who were to take part in the forthcoming effort. 4 Cdn Armd Div was now on German soil for the first time. 10 Cdn Inf Bde was concentrated at Hau; 4 Cdn Armd Bde was due to arrive in the Staatsforst Cleve that night. A further addition in armour, 11 Brit Armd Div (159 Inf Bde and 4 Brit Armd Bde) was also due east of the Reichswald, where it would take over the present area of 4 Cdn Armd Div once the Canadian formation moved forward for the new attack (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V, February 1945: L.Os. Report 230915A). Although Operation "VERITABLE" was now virtually concluded on 2 Cdn Corps' front, the final objective had not yet been reached, and the separate operation which was about to be launched would coincide with the third phase of the original plan. (See Historical Section [Report No. 189](#)).

#### THE CAPTURE OF GOCH, 18 - 20 FEB

172. While 2 Cdn Corps had been fighting towards Calcar, 30 Brit Corps was fully engaged in the battle for Goch. This corner stone of the German defence system was heavily defended with elements of three divisions in addition to the normal garrison, and was protected by two anti-tank ditches, which the town, 30 Corps attacked with almost two full divisions supported by two more (21 Army Gp Report, para 98).

173. During the night of 17/18 Feb, 214 Bde of 43 (W.) Div probed southward and succeeded in forcing six gap in the anti-tank ditch north-east of Goch, and in crossing the Goch - Calcar road in the direction of Buchholdt (9543). Thus by 0800 hours, the brigade held the escarpment overlooking Goch, at the same time presenting a strong left flank towards Schl Calbeck (9443),, Buichholt (9543) and Halvenboom (9645). 12 K.R.R.C. of 8 Armd Bde still under command, was to the rear, in the Pfalzdorf area just west of the Bedburg - Halvenboom road between 129 Bde and 2 Cdn Corps (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 18 Feb 45, Serials 24, 36 and 37). At about the same hour, 44 (S.) Bde were ordered to move to the south, pass through 214 Bde, and assault the northern portion of the town (Ibid, Serial 24). On the afternoon of 18 Feb, 44 Bde's leading battalions, 8 R.S. and 6 K.O.S.B., moved up abreast of 43 Div, reached the anti-tank obstacle and patrolled towards Goch (Ibid, Serial 34). The attack proper started at 1515 hours and by 1700 hours, the forward elements of both battalions were across the obstacle and moving into the northern section of the town (Ibid, Serials 43 and 63).

174. The effort by 52 (H.) Div against the western side of Goch began at 1900 hours, when 152 Bde hurled 2 Seaforth against the western defences of the town in the region of Ziegel Bruch (8944). This attack made fair progress against heavy enemy fire, and by 2200 hours the Highlanders had crossed the Gennepe - Goch railway and were pushing on south-eastwards to the bridge (904431) across the Niers river, some 500 yards west of the built-up section of the town (Ibid, Serials 29, 65, 72 and 76). The intention of the G.O.C. 51 (H.) Div was to pass 5 B.W. of 153 Bde through 2 Seaforth, and later, 5/7 Gordons would leap frog through to clear the houses up to the river, with 1 Gordons

following to exploit on the axis Goch - Siebengewald (8741), and to block all approaches to Goch from the south and south-west (Ibid, Serial 59).

175. The most recent instructions issued to 15 (S.) Div were for 44 (S.) Bde to continue their drive deeper into Goch and to exploit towards Weeze if possible. 46 Bde with under command 10 H.L.I. would, on relief by 2 Cdn Inf Div, return to concentrate in Cleve, while 227 Bde (less 10 H.L.I., with 2 Glas H. under command and 4 Armd Coldm Gds in support, were to assemble south of Staatsforst Cleve, prepared either to assist 44 Bde in Goch, or to attack across the Goch - Calcar road to the high wooded ground between Buchholt and the east bank of the Niers river (Ibid, Serial 74).

176. By midnight, 18/19 Feb, the general situation had begun to shape up favourably west of Goch. 2 Seaforth had crossed the obstacle east of Ziegel Bruch and had built a bridge over it. At the same time 44 Bde was around the station clearing as it advanced, and had already constructed a bridge over the inner ditch north of the town (AEF: 30 Corps/C/H, Docket III: Sitreps II 0/534). On the far right, 52 (L.) Div were bogged down, having reached a formidable form of obstruction, the flooded anti-tank ditch (8338), south of Blijenbeek, and every effort was directed to trying to cross it in the face of heavy opposition (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 18 Feb 45, Serials 31 and 43).

177. Early on the morning of 19 Feb, 5 B.W. of 153 Bde went in to the attack, and by midday were in the north-western section of Goch, having captured a bridge intact over the River Niers. At 1230 hours 5/7 Gordons passed by them

to clear the remainder of the area. To the east, in the 15 (S.) Div sector, 44 (S.) Bde's attack was gaining ground slowly, as many enemy strongpoints by-passed during the night had to be mopped up. By 1430 hours, however, 6 K.O.S.B. and 8 R.S. were well into the built-up area, and 6 R.S.F. were directed to press on through to the river (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V, February: L.Os. Report 191430A). Heavy fighting continued throughout the afternoon, and by midnight 19/20 Feb, all three battalions of 44 (S.) Bde had cleared southward to the line of the river and made contact with elements of 15 (S.) Div in the northern sector, although on the western flank the enemy was putting up a stiff fight (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 19 Feb 45, Serial 95 and 97). 1 Gordons had been committed, and were battling their way into the southern parts of the town (Ibid, Serial 99). To the west of Goch, 152 Bde had completed the very necessary task of clearing the Goch - Asperden road (Ibid, Serial 89). There had been no further changes on the Maas sector, where 52 (L.) Div was still unable to move in the face of severe mortaring and shelling (L.Os. Reports, 201000A).

178. The fight for Goch continued, and each of the formations involved received additional instructions which undoubtedly heralded the fall of goch and its environments. 51 (H.) Div was ordered to complete mopping up its sector of the town and to open the axis Goch - Siebengewald - Groote - Horst. 153 Bde's task after clearing Goch, was to block all roads to the south and south-east, and reconnoitre to the south-east with a view to establishing one battalion in Boyenhof while 152 Bde continued clearing to the line Hassum - Goch. 154 Bde was to rest in reserve (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 20 Feb 45, Serial 2). Both 552 (L.) Div and 15 (S.) Div also had formed new

plans. The former's intention was first to breach the obstacle and other offending defence positions between Afferden and Kasteel Blijenbeek, and then to seize the high ground north-east of Langstraat (Ibid, Serial 20). The date for this operation was, however, uncertain. 15 (S.) div's plan was to launch 227 (S.) Bde to take the high feature about half a mile south-west of Euchholt. This attack would be carried out by right 2 Glas H., left 2 A. & S.H., with 2 Gordons in reserve prepared to pass through to secure the wooded hill (943425) overlooking the Goch - Udem railway north of Schl Kalbeck (9342). This operation was to commence at 110 hours (Ibid, Serial 21).

179. While final preparations were being made for this attack, 214 Bde of 43 Div was also planning a smaller effort by 4 Som L.I. in the area of Meusenhof (9544) to conform with that of 227 (S.) Bde on the right and 4 Cdn Inf Bde on the left (Ibid, Serial 34). The attack by 227 Bde went in on the morning of 20 Feb, and by 1230 hours, 2 Glas H. had reached their objective, and 2 A. & S.H. were in Buchholt. 2 Gordons were already moving up to continue the advance (Ibid, Serial 47). 51 (H.) Div was still fighting furiously to the south and west of Goch (Ibid, Serial 46). Within two hours, 2 Gordons on the left reported success in the region of Schl Calbeck (9443); while on the right 7 B.W., now under command 153 Bde, was moving up to join 5 B.W. in an attempt to seize the open area between Goch and Hulm (9040) (Ibid, Serial 58 and 62).

180. The minor operation by 214 Bde was successful; 4 Som L.I. captured their objectives by 1600 hours, netting some 60 prisoners (Ibid, Serial 65). Later that evening 46 and 227 (S.) Bdes were ordered to stand fast until 44 Bde came forward, ready to pass through on 22 Feb to take the ridge which extended from

Hovestaat (9341) to the south of Heishof (9339) along the east bank of the Niers (Ibid, Serial 88). At about the same time the G.O.C. 51 (H.) Div, fully aware of the heavy cost in manpower to 5/7 Gordons, who were struggling among the houses in the southern part of Goch, instructed them to cease fighting temporarily, as a fresh plan were being arranged (Ibid, Serial 92). A two-battalion pincer movement towards Slavanien (9141) began at 2130 hours with 5 B.W. on the right and 7 B.W. on the left (Ibid, Appx 74, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 21 Feb 45, Serial 10).

181. Meanwhile 5 Seaforth of 152 Bde had been busy clearing the region between Goch and Asperden, with the object of opening the road from Goch to Hassum (8543) (Ibid, Serial 17). There was some readjustment in the intention of 51 (H.) Div at 1100 hours on the 21st, when it was announced that while 153 Bde (whose 7 B.W. and 5 B.W. were still heavily involved south of Goch) would continue its task, 152 Bde would pass into reserve and be ready to occupy Boeckelt (8842), and 154 Bde would strike south along the axis Gaesdonk (8840) - Groote Horst (8639). 32 Gds Bde would in turn clear the areas of Vrij (8541) and Plaeshof (8641), and would open the road from Hassum to Siebengewald (Ibid, Serial 24). This intention was quickly put into practice. 32 Gds Bde attacked with 3 I.G. at 1300 hours towards Vrij, were confused fighting continued all afternoon against opposition so tough that an additional company of 5 W.G. was placed under command (Ibid, Serial 69). 154 Bde went into action that evening. Goch was by now clear of the enemy except for odd snipers, and this enabled 7 A. & S.H. of 154 Bde to pass through southwards (Ibid, Serial 69). The operations by 153 Bde had been completely successful (Ibid, Serial 52). By midnight, 21/22 Feb, the

situation of the Highland Brigade to the south of Goch was most favourable, although the enemy still held Boeckelt. To the west, however, the effort by 32 Gds Bde had bogged down, and 3 I.G. had been withdrawn owing to the heavy casualties already sustained. 2 S.G. now came under command 32 Gds Bde to bolster the infantry component (Ibid, Serials 89 and 90).

182. To the east of Goch 43 (W.) Div, less 214 Bde, went under command 2 Cdn Corps as of 2100 hours 21 Feb (Ibid, Serial 78), while 214 Bde remained under control of 15 (S.) Div, one of whose units (6 R.S.F.) had launched an attack across the Goch - Udem railway, and was now well established in the wood east of Hoverstaat (2 Cdn Corps, Ops Log, 22 Feb 45, Serial 8). Now that this bridgehead had been established across the railway 46 (S.) Bde was under orders to attack the following day. 7 Seaforth were to pass through 6 R.S.F. and strike eastwards to capture the ring contour (949417) directly south of Pleesenhof (9542). 9 Cameronians would then move south parallel to the river and seize the required objectives on the high ground east of Rottum in the area of Fasanenkath (9341), Heishof (9340) and Vasenhof (9339). Simultaneously 7 Seaforth would clear the large wood east of Heishof and consolidate about Geurtshof (949399). The third phase would then be put into operation, with 2 Glass H. passing through to capture the high ground overlooking Muhlen Fleugh in the area south of Bussenhof (9439), exploiting if possible towards Weeze. This operation was due to start at 1130 hours, 22 Feb.

183. During the hours of darkness the advance east of Goch by 15 (S.) Div continued, and by 0700 hours, 6 R.S.F. of 44 (S.) Bde were experiencing such

fierce fighting near Hovestaat (9341) that armoured support was requested to help in overcoming the enemy's stubborn resistance (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, Appx 77, 22 Feb 45, Serial 8). By 0900 hours, 6 R.S.F. was being hard pressed on their right, and a company of 2 Gordons was despatched to aid them. The remainder of 30 Corps' sector had provided little of interest in the way of action; but on the Maas flank the situation of 52(L.) Div had not changed, and their proposed attack was definitely postponed until 25 Feb (Ibid, Serials 16 and 17). Most of the action for the morning centred around 15 (S.) Div's sector where finally 6 R.S.F. were forced to withdraw slightly in the face of heavy opposition. After this setback, there was a slight change of plan, and 2 Gordons of 227 (S.) Bde were directed to neutralize the enemy's positions around Pleesenhof and thus protect the left flank of 46 (S.) Bde. (Ibid, Serial 40). By midnight, 22/23 Feb, 46 Bde's attack which had started at 1400 hours, had made good progress. While 2 Glas H. relieved 6 R.S.F. on their firm base at Hovestaat, 2 Gordons had completed their task at Pleesenhof. 9 Cameronians, detailed to clear the woods south-west of Schroershof (947417), had exploited their success to within a few hundred yards north of Saarbrockshof (9441), and 7 Seaforth had pressed on over the crest of their objective towards Krusbeckshof (957417 (Ibid, Serials 63, 79 and 80).

184. The early hours of 23 Feb were quiet all across the front, but at 1000 hours 44 (S.) Bde attacked south through 46 (S,) Bde with 6 K.O.S.B. on the right attacking the wood about Fasanenkath (940412), and on the left 8 R.S. directed on the area of Saarbrochshof (946411). Once these objectives were in Scottish hands the Borderers were to push on into the wooded area west of

Geishof (9340), while 8 R.S. cleared that part of the wood which lay east of the road (Ibid, 23 Feb 45, Serial 23). By midday (23 Feb) the first phase of this attack was completed, and both battalions were pressing on against heavy resistance (Ibid, Serial 40) By 1500 hours, Phase Two had been carried out with complete success; the opposition had dwindled to almost nothing (Ibid, Serial 53). 44 (S.) Bde was now ordered to exploit to the south (Ibid, Serial 54). By midnight, 23/24 Feb, the success of 15 (S.) Div's operation had been measured. All objectives had been secured; 150 prisoners had been taken and eight S.P. guns knocked out, mostly by the supporting tanks of 6 Gds Tk Bde. Elsewhere the front was holding firm, and the usual changeover of brigades was taking place. On the far right, 155 (L.) Bde was relieved by 157 (L.) Bde, and the relief of 214 Bde by Gds Armd Div was in progress (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 24 Feb 45, Serial 6). A new overall plan was now announced. 53 (W.) Div, 15 (S.) Div and Gds Armd Div were instructed to hold their present positions, and 3 Brit Inf Div was ordered to move forward to relieve a portion of 15 (S.) Div. (AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/I, Docket III(b): Q/582, 30 Corps Tasks for 24 Feb 45).

185. 53 (W.) Div moved on Weeze at 0530 hours on 24 Feb. 2 Mon and 6 R.W.F. of 160 Bde led the attack, which was supported by elements of 8 Armd Bde. Progress was slow against stern ground resistance and heavy shelling, but by 1500 hours Houenhof (9241) had fallen and 6 R.W.F. had gained a foothold in Host. Later in the afternoon 4 Welch passed through 2 Mon on the right, and began to clear the woods around Stevershof (9140), so that the Monmouthshires might eventually take over the area and form a protective flank facing west (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V: February 1945, L.Os. Reports 241150A

and 241530A). In view of the fierce opposition, the original plan by which 71 Bde would pass through 6 R.W.F. to take Rottum (9939) was changed; 71 Bde was instead instructed to assault on a wider front with three objectives; Rottum, the woods to the south-west on the other side of the railway, and the high ground (9139) between the wood and Ober Gelsum (9039). These objectives would form a good jumping off point from which the anti-tank ditch north of the town might be breached. 158 (W.) Bde was ordered to stand by for a direct assault on Weeze (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, Serials 47, 58, 66 and 73).

186. The attack by 71 Bde was put in at about 1800 hours by 1 H.L.I., who took over the task of clearing the remainder of Host (Ibid, Serial 81). From here the Highlanders pressed on to Rottum leaving elements in Host to rout out the last defenders there (Ibid, Serial 95). From here the Highlanders pressed on to Rottum leaving elements in Host to rout out the last defenders there (Ibid, Serial 95). West of the railroad in this same area 1 Oxf Bucks were pushing on to the central objective (the woods at 9239), which they reached by first light. By this time 1 H.L.I. were consolidating Rottum, and had troops some 500 yards to the south just above the anti-tank ditch. The operation so far was marked by the ferocity of the enemy's resistance and the heavy shelling and mortaring all across the divisional front (First Cdn Army, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 25 Feb 45, Serial 4).

187. Throughout 25 Feb a number of changes took place in the forward areas. On the left of the 30 Corps front, Gds Armd Div - who had assumed command in this area at 2400 hours, 23 Feb - completed the relief of 214 Bde, who reverted to command 43 Div. (AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III, 0/589, Sitrep

as at 241200A, 0/595, Sitrep as at 242400A). To the right and south of Gds Armd Div, 3 Brit Div now moved into the line, although command of the sector did not pass to that headquarters until 0100 hours, 26 Feb. 8 Brit Inf Bde relieved 44 and 46 (S.) Bdes after dark, while 9 Brit Inf Bde had already taken over from 227 (H.) Bde (Ibid, Appx 87, folio 35, Sitrep). Although the right flank had not undergone any change in dispositions, 51 (H.) Div received orders to resume their attack; they went in at 2200 hours to take Boeckelt, Angstforth (8941) and Hulm (9040) with three brigades up, right 152 Inf Bde, centre 153 Bde and left 154 Bde. This attack was carried out with the object of consolidating a good starting point for the intended assault on Siebengewald the following night by 152 and 154 (H.) Inf Bdes (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 25 Feb 45, Serial 40). Furthermore, his strong local movement was designed to straighten the line between 53 (W.) Div and 52 (L.) Div, and thus strengthen the flanks of both these formations during their forthcoming thrust on Weeze, and to the south of Afferden. All eyes were now turned northward to 2 Cdn Corps, on whose front Operation "BLOCKBUSTER" was due to commence at 0430 hours on 26 Feb. (Ibid, Serial 16).

#### THE OFFENSIVE OF NINTH U.S. ARMY

188. The most exciting news between the fall of Goch and the opening of our attack on the Hochwald came from Ninth U.S. Army, which on 23 Feb began the long-deferred converging offensive north-eastwards across the Roer between Roermond and Julich. As the enemy had been forced to denude this front to meet the menace in the Reichswald, there was little opposition to the establishment of the bridgehead, which was prepared by an artillery

bombardment lasting only 45 minutes. This great event, which had so powerful a bearing on our fortunes in the hard battles between the rivers, was the occasion of the following personal message from the Commander of 30 Brit Corps to all the troops under his command:

You have now successfully completed the first part of your task. You have taken approximately 12,000 prisoners of war and killed large numbers of Germans. You have broken through the siegfried Line and drawn on to yourselves the bulk of the German reserves in the West. A strong U.S. offensive was launched over the roer at 0330 hours this morning (23 Feb) against positions which, thanks to our efforts, are lightly held by the Germans. Our offensive had made the situation most favourable for our Allies and greatly increased their prospects of success. Thank you for what you have done so well. If we continue our efforts for a few more days the German front is bound to crack.

(1 Army Group Report on Operation "VERITABLE", para III; Personal Diary, Maj W.E.C. Harrison, 23 Feb 45)

#### THE ENEMY SITUATION; 20 - 25 FEB

189. With the fall of Goch the enemy chose to retire rather than to counter-attack. Yet on the evening of 19 Feb it appeared that at last the German commanders had actually chosen a battlefield on which to carry out a planned operation, for the present battle area was dominated by the vital ground north-east of Goch, to which he was clinging with such determination.

Obviously the flanks at Calcar and south of Afferden were being held to some purpose. It could be assumed then that he was expecting a strong armoured thrust towards Udem, for here reconnaissance photographs revealed much heavy A.A. equipment deployed in front of the town, making a formidable addition to the armour already known to be in that sector (First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 234, 19 Feb 45). During the ensuing 24 hours the gravity of the enemy's predicament could be measured by the arrival of units of Pz Lehr Div; this gave a strong hint as to the value he attached to the high ground between Udem and Calcar (Ibid, 235, 20 Feb 45). The unhappy plight of the enemy was thus appreciated by our Intelligence:

... Surprised by the timing and weight and success of our initial attack, the enemy has been bringing up literally every formation he could seize on. These have been flung into battle on arrival. Many of them have quickly wasted away. His assets have been the number of battalions he has felt free to commit, the desperate determination of many of his troops, his tenacity in maintaining a line and plugging any holes in it, his gradual increase in heavy weapons, the bad flying weather and his apparently satisfactory local administrative picture. His liabilities have been the lack of training of many of his troops and formations, the disorder of his channels of command, the wasting away of his battalions in vain or costly counter attacks, and his delay in delivering new formations to the front.

But the greatest adverse feature of his position is the weakness he is creating to the South. Cologne and Dusseldorf are greater prizes than

Calcar and Udem, and the Ruhr of more value than the Gochwald. Opposite the Cologne plain, too, our potential force far exceeds what can be maintained by the waterways of the Reichswald.

(First Cdn Army Int Summary, 20 Feb 45)

190. Even the constant pressure which was gradually whittling away his resources did not seem to make it clear to the bent on holding up the Canadian advance at every point, their purpose apparently to inflict as many casualties as possible. Yet what aim lay behind the enemy policy was not difficult to detect; he was resolved to hold, whatever the cost, in order to maintain a flank facing north-west - a flank on which the entire position west of the Rhine rested. His preparations in the Hochwald were centred in the north; so that even as late as 23 Feb it seemed unlikely that he would abandon the Maas flank until forced to do so (Ibid, 236 and 237, 21/22 Feb 45).

191. In the words of First Cdn Army Intelligence, "the greatest mirror of his intentions were air photographs", and by the evening of the 23rd the build-up by heavy flak units in a ground defence role west of the Hochwald was being carefully studied.

... Thus it appears that he has appreciated the need for anti-tank defence in the HOCHWALD and in the vital centres of communication. He has also tried to block off the axes KERVENDEIM E 9938 - SONSBECK and KERVENHEIM - WINNEKENDONK and to set up a mobile gun line in advance of the HOCHWALD position.

The question remains: Has he troops to cover these gun lines? He still seems stretched on his present line and the available reserves of infantry can only come from HOLLAND. Over 40 light flak were put in night 22/23 Feb on two of the main roads to the ferries at REES E 0852. What is still to come is discussed under Canadian Army Front.

With the start of operations between DUREN and ROERMOND the question of other reserves from the SOUTH disappears. Indeed the question will shortly become not what will he put in to our front but will he pull out.

At not time has he been faced with a more clear cut unhappy decision. He is fighting for his life on two fronts, and within the fronts the Allies retain the power to choose when and where they will attack. As far as we know, he simply has NOT the reserves to continue to plug the line, much less restore the situation. In these circumstances he must decide when he will pull back to his bridgeheads on the WEST of the RHINE. The longer he delays the more likely does victory in the WEST become.

(First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 238)

192. Thus by the night of the 25th the enemy's anxiety must indeed have been great; more especially so, as the American advance in Operation "GRENADE" was gaining ground quickly. It was perfectly clear that unless the broad sweep of the American thrust could be stopped, the German armies west of the Rhine

faced the threat of being broken in two. The fierce resistance to 30 Corps' attacks on Weeze, the continued absence of the remainder of the 116 Pz Div and Pz Lehr Div (see paras 115 and 189), and the increase and activity in gun strength about the Hochwald hinted that the enemy had collected a force to hold the Hochwald hinge.

... His reactions to our progress at WEEZE continue to offer the best opportunity to attacks between CALCAR and UDEM. If he counter attacks or reinforces WEEZE from the EAST, he will expose the right flank of his counter attacking or relieving forces to any thrust SOUTH from UDEM. If he does NOT reinforce or counter attack he risks our exploiting the capture of WEEZE E9337 SOUTHEAST to KEVELAER E93.

IF WEEZE falls his positions from BOEKELT E8842 to AFFERDEN E8039 become precarious. Behind them we have detected NO build up since 16 February there was a marked increase in cratering and tree felling near BERGEN E8135 and ELSTEREN E8529. At the same time there was a slight defence activity along the line KEVELAER - TWISTEDEN E9429 - 00IJEN E9124. Thus although there is NO direct evidence, if he must withdraw on his left, he would appear ready to pivot back on to KEVELAER.

Activity in HOLLAND continues, but has NOT resulted in solving the riddle of 346 Division.

Time is growing very short for the enemy WEST of the RHINE, but the Master Race seem determined NOT to withdraw unless they are pushed, and then it may be too late.

(First Cdn Army, Int Summary, Nos. 239, 240, 24 and 25 Feb 45).

#### THE AIR EFFORTS, 16 - 23 FEB

193. Although from 16 to 22 Feb air support was restricted by bad weather, the most was made of the occasional break in the clouds. Medium and heavy bombers, operating chiefly by instruments, carried out several attacks. On 18 Feb, 155 Lancasters of Bomber Command dropped 691 tons of high explosives on the area of Wesel; while on the 19th 166 heavies repeated the operation, dropping 716 tons. On the same day 68 aircraft of Eighth U.S.A.A.F. dropped 164 tons of destruction upon the Wesel railway bridge. 20 Feb was a blank day, but on the 21st a few hours of clear sky produced a small effort. Thirty aircraft from 2 Group, R.A.F., attacked Udem and Weeze, and 9 U.S.A.A.F. flew 73 aircraft against Xanten and 58 against Gelden. The Allied air effort for 22 Feb was again blessed with good weather, but the medium and heavy aircraft were mostly used for attacks deep into Germany.

194. Although close support during this period was restricted, there were times when it was decidedly effective. On 21 Feb 84 Group R.A.F. flew 542 sorties; 24 fighter bombers put on a spectacular attack against the solid stone defences of the castle at Kasteel Blijenbeek, close in front of the forward troops of 52 (L.) Inf Div; other attacks on this day included

pre-arranged sorties against Calcar and 17 attacks by 135 Typhoons against the enemy's communications at Labbeck, Millingen and Kamp. On the following day further targets were engaged. Kasteel Blijenbeek was attacked again and properly reduced, and close support was rendered to 15 (S.), 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs. (AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/C/F, Docket III: Operation "VERITABLE", p. 34, paras 103 and 104).

195. No flying was possible on 23 Feb, but on 24 Feb 43 medium and heavy bombers of 2 Group R.A.F. visited Rheinberg and 45 aircraft attacked Rees. A further attempt to destroy the Wesel railway bridge by 70 aircraft of Eighth U.S.A.A.F. was unsuccessful. Close support for 24 Feb was minute, although on 25 Feb a few aircraft were able to operate up to midday, when the weather closed down to curtail operations almost completely. (Ibid, p. 37, paras 113 and 114).

#### CONCLUSION

196. Although "VERITABLE" was not completed as quickly as had been hoped, it was a successful operation as far as it went. The infantry divisions engaged, after more than a fortnight's hard and prolonged fighting, had performed by far the most important of their peculiar function in battle, having attacked, penetrated and broken through an area of the enemy's main defence. The variables turned against the attackers from the start, the superiority of our resources, including our armour, being thereby reduced and the bonus of our air support curtailed; the enemy made good use of the consequent slowing up of the offensive. This had entailed much hard fighting and made great demands

upon the stamina, fortitude and endurance of all ranks and of all arms. Losses were not light. Momentum was kept up, however, practically to the second phase-line of the original plan through Weeze, Udem, Calcar and Emmerich. But before this was reached, it had become obvious that a pause was necessary to mount a deliberate operation against the very strong rearward defences which blocked our way to the crossings over the Rhine. ([Report No. 155](#), p. 41).

197. The object of First Cdn Army before launching "VERITABLE" had been established as:

To destroy all enemy forces between the RHINE and the MEUSE from the NIJMEGEN bridgehead as far south as the general line JULICH - DUSSELDORF.

(Field Marshal the Viscount Montgomery of alamein, [Normandy to the Baltic](#), p. 229)

This object had been only partly achieved. Although the attack through the Reichswald had come as a surprise to the enemy high command (who had expected it to be launched further south), General Alfred Schlemm, Commander First Parachute Army and therefore responsible for this front, is reported to have fully anticipated the attack to come as it did (Special Interrogation Report, General Alfred Schlemm). The battle commenced with an enemy strength of about 45,000 spread from Vanlo to the Rhine in 86 Corps' sector. Unfortunately for the enemy, 84 Inf Div was responsible for the vital area through which the

attack came, and this weak division manning the overrated defences quickly collapsed. The German artillery at the commencement of the operation consisted of about 200 divisional weapons and probably 300 static barrels. These latter, however, suffered from such a maladjustment of ammunition as to render them largely ineffective. Although, by 24 Feb, the enemy had been severely mauled, his forces were not completely destroyed. He had, however, been forced to draw his reserves into the fray to block his many weak spots, and he had moved forces northward from the American sector's front, thereby weakening his ability to resist the attack launched on 23 Feb by Ninth U.S. Army (Ibid).

198. Thus the enemy had by now a total strength of nine divisions engaged on the Canadian Army front, ready to meet the continued Allied offensive. On the left, 86 Corps, with 180 and 190 Inf Divs under command, was responsible from the Maas to the Goch - Gelderen road, 2 Para Corps held the centre, from the Goch - Gelderen road to Udem (both inclusive), with 84, 7 and 8 Para Divs under command; 47 Pz Corps was on the right from Udem to the Rhine with Panzer Lehr and 6 Para Divs under command, the latter formation including the elements of 346 Inf Div recently sent from Holland. In reserve in the Hochwald forest were 116 Pz and 15 Pz Grenadier Divs preparing for the further attacks known to be coming. Of course these divisions were but skeletons of their real strength, although they had been supplemented by independent battalions and battle groups. Furthermore, in order to provide anti-tank defences, many 88-mm P.A.K., previously located in the static defences of the Westwall between Gelderen and Roermond, had been moved to the Gochwald. These

fortunately were to be rendered largely ineffective because of the poor; quality of the troops manning them. (Ibid).

199. In general it must be considered that the enemy troops in this sector were of a higher standard than was normally encountered along the Allied front. This was no doubt due to the relatively higher qualities and training of the parachute divisions, who had up until this time suffered less from humiliating defeats and gruelling retreats of the previous months. Another factor was that these divisions had been watered down less than others by the addition of inferior classes of reinforcements (First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 239, 24 Feb 45). The infantry divisions, however, did not measure up to the quality of the paratroopers; and they were but skeletons of their paper strength. 84 Inf Div in particular had not fought well (Special Interrogation Report, General Alfred Schlemm). It was also apparent that the troops manning the various artillery weapons were not competent and were all too ready to relinquish their positions (Ibid). (Because of the very thin screen in front of the Hochwald gun sites, it is not surprising that these held out but a short while (First Cdn Army Int Summary No. 239). Losses had been severe but in spite of combing every available source for manpower, there was still no effective available reserve, and the policy of feeding battalions into the fray piecemeal to plug individual danger points persisted. (2 Cdn Corps Int Summary No. 132, 23 Feb 45, Appx "A", para 5). In general the German morale was still good, and although this may have been accounted for to some extent by the presence of the parachute and S.S. troops, it also lay in the fact that supplies of good and adequate food and personal equipment had continued available (2 Cdn Corps Int Summary No. 131, 21 Feb 45, Appx "B").

200. Among our own troops morale remained high, as letters home bore ample evidence.

A strong note of resolute effort was apparent throughout the mail and writers expressed satisfaction at being participants in "total and final war" against Nazi Germany. The spirit of troops was evident in the frequently-quoted slogan: "Conquerors not liberators"/

Complete confidence was shown in the present offensive. The going was tough and conditions were sometimes said to be "almost impossible"/ Writers stated, however, that morale could not be higher. Signs of war strain were occasionally seen. Even here, troops were grimly determined to "see it through", and were grimly determined to "see it through", and were convinced that they were dealing the "final K.O."

Writers occasionally stated that they were encountering good quality troops; for the most part enemy forces were felt to be much inferior to those met in Normandy. Several units referred to the capture of women in sniper's uniform. The unsoldierly appearance of the volkssturm was often mentioned. Little pity was expressed for German civilians. Many houses were said to be equipped with bomb-proof cellars and well stocked with food.

(21 Army Group Censorship Reports 16 - 28 Feb 45)

201. Not the least of the factors contributing to the successful prosecution of "VERITABLE" was the efficiency with which such a large number of diverse formations and units had operated under one command. The disposition of so considerable a force under the command of first Cdn Army was a striking example of the flexibility inherent in the organization of 21 Army Group and the Allied Expeditionary Force as a whole.

As on previous occasions throughout the campaign, a vast scheme of regrouping was carried out and formations committed according to the tactical and strategic requirements of the situation, and with the maximum of efficiency, loyalty, and good will among all concerned.

(General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr)

202. In itself this was a co-operative achievement of great historical importance.

With the exception of the minimum numbers of divisions required to hold the West bank of the River Meuse from Mook to the inter-army boundary with Ninth U.S. Army near Roermond, all the fighting strength of the British Empire in North West Europe was under General Crerar's command. In addition, there were the Poles and other Allied contingents. In all, the total strength exceeded 470,000.

The flexibility, cohesion, and unity of the forces of the Empire was well and truly demonstrated in these arrangements, and speaks volumes

for the advantages which accrue from the policy of uniformity in organization, training and equipment throughout the Empire. That so great a force was placed under General Crerar's command, in circumstances of such vital importance, was a great tribute to him as a commander.

(AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/F, Docket II: Lecture by Brigadier C.C. Mann)

203. General Crerar was fully alive to the implications of the trust imposed upon him, not excluding a fair apportionment of credit for the troops under his command according to the effort and the sacrifice of battle. To this end his remarks to the war correspondents on the eve of the assault were explicit:

... The requirements placed upon Army Headquarters and on its thousands of Army Troops had been heavy and the General believed that the results would indicate that the tasks allotted had been carried out with ability, and that the formations would fight with every conceivable circumstances in their favour and with every requisite of a sound plan completed in good time. If, by their own observations, the correspondents were to find this to be true, he trusted that they would give credit to the Canadian Army staff, services and troops, who individually and collectively had worked so hard, intelligently and effectively.

General Crerar then referred to one of the most interesting and significant features of the Army's history during the campaign so far, and which now had reached a notable climax. While in the past, owing to the absence of 1st Canadian Corps in Italy, the first Canadian Army had usually been only about one-half "Canadian" in its composition, in "VERITABLE", the Canadian proportion taking part in the initial phase would be nearer to one-quarter of the total strength. It followed as a matter of great importance that proper recognition to English, Scottish and Welsh formations, including the ubiquitous and unique 79th Armoured Division, to which we all owed so much, as well as the Canadian component, should be given within the limits imposed by security and censorship.

(Personal Diary, Maj W.E.C. Harrison, 7 Feb).

204. Unfortunately these limits, and those of the Press itself, were too restricted for General Crerar's careful briefing to take effect in the newspapers either in Britain or Canada. As the G.O.C.-in-C. has surmised, it was hardly to be expected that the public would be very well instructed in the technique of grouping formations, the tactical employment of corps and armies, nor in the functions of command. That the facts of the situation were rehearsed in detail twice daily at Canadian Army Headquarters by a senior staff officer for the benefit of war correspondents seated before a large-scale battle-map made no difference. In the United Kingdom there was considerable speculation as to what had happened to Second British Army and some disappointment that its soldiers did not appear to such advantage in the

news as their kinsmen and allies from North America. As the case was expressed in all ill-informed leader in the Daily Telegraph of 6 Mar:

There have been many occasions during the war when the part played by United Kingdom troops in great events has received less than its fair share of publicity, but in the present victorious assault on the Rhineland it is suffering something not far short of a total blackout. From the daily despatches it might be supposed that the only troops engaged in this campaign were Canadians and Americans... but no mention of British troops occurs at all. Admiration is due in full measure for the exploits of the Canadians and Americans, but "First Canadian Army" has become a misleading title. This Army, as our Military Correspondent points out in these columns to-day, is composed as to 80 percent of British and only as to 20 percent of Canadian troops, but no official cognisance has been taken of this fact. To the world at large a phrase like "the Canadian First Army front" naturally conveys the impression that is composed exclusively of Canadians.

(The Daily Telegraph, 7 Feb 45)

205. As the operation was then four weeks old, the information given out to such "military" correspondents by General Crerar on 7 Feb and enlarged upon at the morning and evening press conferences throughout the fighting took an unconscionable time in reaching Fleet Street. That the heroism of the Reichswald was inaccurately reported is lamentable; resultant editorial petulance can be fully understood; but the statement that "no official

cognisance" had been taken is untrue. A month later the situation was simplified for the reporters by the arrival of 1 Cdn Corps from Italy. For the closing phases of the campaign east of the Rhine and west of the Ijssel, First Cdn Army became for the first time predominantly "Canadian". Among the fighting men, however, these matters were better understood.

206. The cost of breaching the Siegfried Line had been fairly heavy, especially among the British formations, where commitments were much heavier than in those of the Canadians until 2 Cdn Corps took over the left flank on 15 Feb. In all, from 0600 hours, 8 Feb, until the first casualties of Operation "BLOCKBUSTER" began to trickle in at 0600 hours, 26 Feb, First Cdn Army lost 490 officers and 8023 other ranks in killed, wounded and missing. Of these figures 111 officers and 1683 other ranks were Canadians, 379 officers and 6325 other ranks were British, and 15 other ranks were from the other Allied formations under command (W.D., H.Q. A 7 Q, First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 7, Consolidated C. & S. States, Nos. 201 - 218 inclusive) (See Appx "F"). Against these figures, the enemy's losses were vastly greater. From the start of Operation "VERITABLE" to 2400 hours, 25 Feb, the German Army lost 11,778 all ranks in prisoners, making a grand total of 130,677 prisoners since the commencement of Canadian operations in Western Europe. The enemy's dead in Operation "VERITABLE" were estimated as at least equal to the number of prisoners taken (AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/L/F, Docket V: Enemy Casualties, Total to 252400, Appx 6 B, Bulletin No. 245, Enemy Casualties to 112400).

207. The offensive was about to continue. The G.O.C.-in-C. had passed his orders for the coming assault to Generals Simonds and Horrocks in his directive of 24 Feb:

As previously stated by me, the weight of Canadian Army effort will be transferred to its left and from 26 Feb 45, until its conclusion, Operation "BLOCKBUSTER", conducted by 2 Canadian Corps, will have priority in available resources.

(G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army, 1-0-7/11, Operational Directives to Comds, 2 Cdn, 30 Brit Corps, 24 Feb 45)

208. The line on which First Cdn Army now stood, though short of the previously chosen objectives, was solid from north to south; it had been reached by the sheer guts and determination of the individual soldier against whom even the ground and weather had sided. Now General Crerar's men looked eastwards to the last Siegfried defence, behind which lay the Rhine. These few days had been a breather, a welcome moment of readjustment for the men, but to the commanders they represented previous hours in which final and detailed preparations must be made for the continuation of the advance. The story of that advance, which smashed through the final German defences west of the Rhine, forms the subject of a subsequent report ([Report No. 186, Operation "BLOCKBUSTER", The Canadian Offensive West of the Rhine, 26 Feb - 23 Mar 45](#)).

209. This report was prepared by Capt. P.A. Mayer, R.C.I.C.

(C.P. Stacey) Colonel

Director Historical Section



30 CORPS OPERATION INSTRUCTION NO.47

"V E R I T A B L E"

INFORMATION

1. Enemy

a. Defences

Overprints at 1/12,500 and 1/25,000 scales collating all information up to 4 Feb approx will be distributed on 7 Feb.

b. Order of Battle and Built Up

See 30 Corps Planning Intelligence Dossiers Nos. 2, 3 and 4.

2. Topography

All available information concerning terrain, flooding and weather has been incorporated in Dossiers 2, 3 and 4.

3. Distribution of Intelligence

All outstanding air photo orders should have been met by 4 Feb.

The series of dossiers will be continued until D day.

4. Own Troops

- a. First Canadian Army is resuming the offensive, on the Northern sector of the Western Front.

Initially, First Canadian Army is attacking on a one corps front with 30 Corps.

Subsequently, 2 Canadian Corps is to take over the LEFT sector from 30 Br Corps and attack will continue on a two corps front. 2 Canadian Corps is continuing to hold NIJMEGEN and the bridgehead across the R WAAL.

- b. Second Army will operate on the RIGHT flank at a later date.

5. Boundaries

RIGHT with 8 Corps - (wef 1000 hrs D minus 1)

All incl 30 Corps - rd and rly crossing 755403 - thence rly to rd and rly crossing 717485 - R MAAS at 722492 - thence excl R MAAS to 765477 - incl R NIERS to 821449 - all incl HOMMERSUM 823441 - rd to HASSUM 8500000437 - cross roads 896428 - cross roads 907417.

NOTE: This boundary will be modified as the battle progresses.

LEFT with 2 Cdn Corps - Operative wef 1000 hrs D minus 1

All incl to 30 Corps - GRAVE Br - incl  
MAPLE LEAF route to rd junc 609609 -  
cross rds 706608 - rd junc 707614 -  
cross rds 715614 - rd junc 719608 -  
734616 - thence along rly junc  
733617 - then to R WAAL 717630 and EAST  
along that river to EMMERICH.

6. Command

- a. 30 Corps is to assume responsibility for sector CUIJK - R WAAL and command of 2 Cdn Div and 3 Cdn Div wef 1000 hrs D minus 1.
- b. 2 Cdn Div and 3 Cdn Div are to revert command 2 Cdn Corps at a later stage in the operation.

INTENTION

7. 30 Corps will destroy the enemy between the R MAAS and R RHINE and break through in a Southerly direction between these two rivers.

METHOD

8. 30 Corps will attack with five divisions up, as under -

From RIGHT TO LEFT -

51 H Div

53 W Div

15 S Div

2 Cdn Div

3 Cdn Div

RESERVE and FOLLOW UP -

Guards Armd Div

43 Div

9. Order of Battle

See Appendix "A" attached. Not included

10. Grouping

	<u>Under Command</u>	<u>In Support</u>
a. <u>Guards Armd Div</u>	Det 4 Svy Regt	64 Med Regt
b. <u>15 S Div</u>	2 HOR	22 Dgns
	6 Gds Armd Bde	141 RAC less 'A' Sqn
	86 Fd Regt SP	6 Asslt Regt RE
	147 Fd Regt	less 82 Sqn
	198/73 A Tk Bty (SP)	1 Cdn APC Regt
	234/73 A Tk Bty (SP)	less one Sqn
	Det 4 Svy Regt	49 APC Regt
	'B' Flt 662 AOP Sqn	84 Med Regt
	Tp 356 SL Bty	
c. <u>43 Div</u>	8 Armd Bde less	121 Med Regt
	One regt plus	
	One sqn 13/18 H	
	73 A Tk Regt less	
	two btys	
	Det 4 Svy Regt	
	'C' Flt 662 AOP Sqn	
d. <u>51 H Div</u>	107 RAC	'B' Sqn 1
	6 Fd Regt	Lothians
	146/63 A Tk Bty (SP)	1 FF Teo less
	Det 4 Svy Regt	'B' and 'C' sqns

	'C' Flt 652 AOP Sqn	42 Asslt Regt RE
	Det 100 Radar Bty	Less 16 & 617
	Tp 356 SL Bty	Sqn
		79 Med Regt
e.	<u>53 W Div</u>	
	34 Armd Bde less	W Dgns less 'A'
	7 RTR, 107 RAC	Sqn
	19 Cdn Fd Regt (SP)	'A' Sqn 141 RAC
	56 Cdn A Tk Bty (SP)	82 Asslt Sqn RE
	Det 4 Svy Regt	72 Med Regt
	'A' Flt 662 AOP Sqn	
	Det 100 Radar Bty	
	Tp 356 SL Bty	
f.	<u>2 Cdn Div</u>	
	one sqn 13/18 H	One tp 'C' Sqn
	'A' Flt 660 AOP Sqn	1 Lothians
		One tp 617 Asslt
		Sqn RE
		4 Cdn Med Regt
g.	<u>3 Cdn Div</u>	
	13/18 H less one sqn	617 Asslt Sqn RE
	'C' Flt 660 AOP Sqn	less one tp
	Tp 557 SL Bty	'C' Sqn 1 Lothians
		less tp
		11 RTR less 'C'
		Sqn )

5 Asslt Regt)If-

26 Sen )required

7 Cdn Med Regt

803 Pnr Smoke

Coy

Two pls 810 Pnr Smoke

Coy

112 Phr Smoke Coy

h. CCRA

3 AGRA

106 AA Bde

4 AGRA

5 AGRA

Under Op Control

9 AGRA

2 Cdn AGRA

27 LAA Regt

4 Svy Regt less dets

356 SL Bty less three tps

557 SL Bty Less one TP

660 AOP Sqn less three flts

662 AOP Sqn less three flts

1 Cdn Rocket Unit

NOTE

- a. i. Following troops do not come under command 43 Div till 1500 hrs  
D day.

4/7 DG )

Notts Yeo) (from 'Pepper Pot')

One sqn 13/18 H (from 2 Cdn Div)

8 Mx Regt (from 'Pepper Pot')

Two btys 73 A Tk Regt (Towed) (from 'Pepper Pot')

ii. 43 Div will take under command 147 Fd Regt during their move forward.

iii. Guards Armd Div will take under command 86 Fd Regt during their move forward.

iv. 2 HCR will come under command 15S Div on arrival in assembly area and revert Gds Armd Div at a later stage.

11. Tasks of Formations

a. 15 S Div will -

i. Capture KRANENBURG and the spur about 814545.

ii. Breach the SIEGFRIED defences NORTH of REICHSWALD and capture the NUTTERDEN feature.

iii. Capture the MATERBORN feature.

- iv. Despatch strong mobile colns to capture, if possible, UDEM and CALCAR and to clear the EMMERICH road up to the west bank of R RHINE EAST of rly.
  - v. Clear and hold CLEVE.
- b. 53 W Div will -
- i. Capture BRANDENBERG features 8053.
  - ii. Advance along, and clear, the high ground which runs through the Northern part of the REICHSWALD.
  - iii. Capture STOPPELBERG features 8553
  - iv. Conc in mobile res for future ops.
- c. 51 H div will -
- i. Capture, clear and hold firmly the area FREUDENBERG 7852 - RIETHORST 7450 - NIJERF COLONIES 7553.
  - ii. Open the route MOOK - GENNEP - HEKKENS - GOCH.
  - iii. Take over from 43 Div the town of GOCH.

- iv. Destroy the enemy between rd MOOK - GENNEP - HEKKENS - GOCH and R MAAS.
  
- d. 2 Cdn Div will -
  - i. Capture DEN heuvel 7756 and WYLER.
  
  - ii. Open the main rd BERGEN - DAL - to excl KRANENBURG.
  
- e. 3 Cdn Div will -
  - i. Protect the left flank of 2 Cdn and 15 S Divs.
  
  - ii. Capture and clear the low ground between main rd WYLER - KRANENBURG - CLEVE and R RHINE up to line of rly CLEVE - GRIETHAUSEN 9159.
  
- f. 43 Div will -
  - i. Be prepared to pass through 15 S Div on capture of materborn feature by that fmn.
  
  - ii. Capture GOCH.

iii. Be prepared to hand over GOCH to 51 H Div and exploit in a SE direction by capturing in succession WEEZE, KEVELAER 9632 and GELDERN.

g. Gds Armd Div will be prepared to -

i. Pass through the MATERBORN area immediately in rear of 43 Div.

ii. Advance on the axis UDEM - HAMMERBRUCH 0736 O WESEL.

iii. Capture and hold firmly the high ground NORTH of SONSBECK 0535.

iv. Push forward a strong mobile coln with the object of capturing the WESEL br if it is still intact.

v. Capture XANTEN 1141.

H. 2 HCR will -

i. Operate initially under comd 15 S Div.

ii. Pass to comd Gds Armd Div when that formation passes through 15 S Div.

iii. Be prepared to operate under comd HQ 30 Corps or 43 Div should the need for such an arrangement arise.

- iv. On being ordered forward by 15 S Div, will deploy on a wide front in protective recce role between rivers MAAS and RHINE and push patrols as far SOUTH as the rd WESTERBROEK 9716 - RHEURDT 1219 - RHEINBERG 2128.

12. Phases

a. Phase I

- i. Capture of the MATERBORN feature and the opening of exits through which 2 HCR can pass.
- ii. Capture of the high ground running through Northern part of REICHSWALD from incl BRANDENBERG 8055 to incl STOPPELBERG 8553.
- iii. Capture of the area FREUDENBERG 7852 - RIETHURST 7451 - NIJERF COLONIES 7553.

b. Phase II

- i. Capture of GOCH, UDEM and CALCAR..
- ii. Opening of rd MOOK - GENNEP - GOCH.

c. Phase III

- i. Capture of WALBECK 9623, GELDERN, ISSUM 0927 and BONNING 1633.
- ii. Capture of WESEL Br if still intact.
- iii. Recce to line WESTERBROEK - RHEURDT - RHEINBERG.

13. Timings

- a. D day - 8 Feb.
  - b. H hour - 1030 hrs for attacks by
    - 51 H Div
    - 53 W Div
    - 15 S Div
    - 2 Cdn Div
- Evening D day for attack by 3 Cdn div

14. Inter-Div Bdys and Junc Pts

See Appendix "B" attached (Not included)

15. Command

- a. 2 Cdn Div and 3 Div will revert to comd 2 Cdn Corps after the capture of GOCH and when HEART route from MOOK to GOCH has been opened.

- b. Inter-corps bdy will then probably run as under -

All excl 30 Corps rd WYLER - KRANENBURG - DONSBRUGGEN 8657 - CLEVE -  
CALCAR.

NOTE: 2 Cdn Corps may still require running rights on the  
secondary route GROESBEEK - GALGANSTEEG 8154 - MATERBORN.

16. RA

- a. The attack will go in under a Corps barrage controlled by CCRA.
- b. Div artys and AGRA will be allotted deployment areas by CCRA.
- c. CCRA will allot arty to fmns in support during various phases of the operation.
- d. CCRA will co-ordinate fire plans of fmns during various phases of the operation.
- e. The following area will be reserved for the deployment of an AGRA -

Squares 7952 - 8052 - 7951 - 8051.

17. Pepper Pots

30 Corps Operation Instruction No. 45 deals with this subject. This Operation Instruction must be read in conjunction with that Instruction.

18. AA

a. General

AA def is being co-ordinated by comd 74 AA Bde. Comd 106 AA Bde is responsible for AA def of area MOOK br and gun areas SOUTH OF R MAAS.

b. Deployment

Resources will be provided for tasks as follows -

i. Div areas and gun areas NORTH of R MAAS

Three LAA tps by each 2 Cdn Div, 3 Cdn Div, 15 S Div, 43 Div,  
53 W Div.

Two LAA tps by Gds Armd Div.

27 LAA Regt.

Existing AA defs of 74 AA Bde in area NIJMEGEN.

ii. Gun Areas of 3 AGRA, 4 AGRA and 9 AGRA

71 LAA Regt

iii. Area MOOK br

109 HAA Regt will be deployed in a primary ground role by day  
and a primary AA role by night.

c. Rules for Engagement

Normal rules for engagement apply.

Guns not connected to AAOR will not engage unseen targets.

19. Air

See Appendix "C" attached. Not Included

20. RE

Policy will be as follows -

a. Formation responsibilities

Formations will be responsible for all tactical breaching operations and for the opening of their own routes forward.

b. Corps responsibilities

CE will be responsible for maintenance and development of all forward routes. Forward limits of this responsibility will be fixed from time to time as the battle develops.

c. Priorities

Priorities for maintenance and development are as follows:

Early stages of battle

i. PEARL RED

CLUB RED

CLUB BLACK

ii. Subsidiary routes

Later stages of battle

HEART

CLUB BLACK

PEARL BLACK

CLUB RED

PEARL RED

d. Tank Tracks

Tank tracks as required by forward divs will be developed. These tracks will be related to the main forward maintenance routes.

e. Minefield Clearance

No initial deliberate clearance of extensive minefields. Efforts will be concentrated on clearing roadways and verges and infantry and tank tracks through defences. Remainder will be marked and left for later deliberate clearance.

ADM

21. Traffic Instruction

See Appendix "D" attached. Not Included

22. Separate adm instruction is being issued.

INTERCOMN

23. Location of HQs

Main HQ 30 Corps	-	HATERT 67983
Probable next locn	-	Goch 9143
Rear HQ 30 Corps	-	GRAVE 615517
Probable next locn	-	GENNEP 7846
Comd's Recce	-	Probably to CLEVE 8955 When situation permits
Gds Armd Div	-	255380
15 S Div	-	714614
Tac 43 Div	-	717622
Main 43 Div	-	NUNEN 4822
51 H Div	-	717523
53 W Div	-	717537
2 Cdn Div	-	693594
3 Cdn Div	-	737604
2 Cdn Corps	-	WIJCHEN 6158

24. Wireless Restrictions

Owing to the large number of wireless stations working in the Corps sector, formations having adequate line comms and those not actively engaged in the operations will minimise their wireless working.

25. Wireless Silence until 0100 hrs D day. Only essential nets will open at this time.

26. Time

Signal time will be taken from BBC transmissions.

Times of transmissions will be distributed through Sigs channels.

27. Liaison Officers

a. LO's from 6 Gds Armd Bde, 8 Armd Bde and 34 Armd Bde will report to HQ 30 Corps D minus 1. They will bring scout cars netted to their own bde fwd control.

b. 2 HCR will send LO's to Gds Armd Div and 43 Div on D minus 1.

26. Passwords

Passwords will be uniform throughout 30 Corps.

List of passwords is given in Appendix "E" attached.

29. ACKNOWLEDGE

METHOD OF ISSUE SDR & LO & ELS

TIME OF SIGNATURE 1000 HRS

SGD ???

Brigadier

General Staff

DISTRIBUTION -

	<u>Copy No.</u>	<u>Copy No.</u>
Guards Armd Div	G(L) 22	
15 (S) Div	2 CCRA 23	
43 Inf Div	3 CE 24	
51 (H) Div	4 CSO 25	
53 (W) Div	5 Phantom 26	
2 Cdn Div 6	DAQMG(T) 27	
3 CDN Div 7	Camp Main 28	
30 Armd Bde	8 DA & QMG 29	
2 HCR 9	AQMG 30	
8 Br Corps	10 DDST 31	
2 Cdn Corps	10 DDMS 32	
First Cdn Army	12-14 DDOS 33	
79 Armd Div	15 DDME 34	
HQ 'R' Force	16 APM 35	
ADC 17	SCAO 36	
BGS 18	War Diary 37-38	
G(SD) 19	Files 39-40	
GSI 20	Spares 41-50	

3CD 1-1

HEADQUARTERS 3 CANADIAN INFANTRY DIVISION

Copy No 40

28 Jan 45

3 Cdn Inf Div 00 No 12

Op VERITABLE

Ref Maps: HOLLAND and GERMANY

Scale 1:12500 Sheet 6 SW/6, 12NW/3, 4102/1,2,3,4  
4202/1,2.

Scale 1:25000 GSGS 4427 Sheets 6SW, 12 NW  
GSGS 4414 Sheets 4102, 4103, 4202, 4203

Scale 1:50000 Sheets GSGS 4507 to be issued later

Scale 1:100000 GSGS 2541 Sheet 5  
GSGS 4416 Sheets P1, Q1.

NOTE: Maps Scale 1:25000 and Def Overprints of the same scale will be the only authorized maps for use within 3 Cdn Inf Div during this op.

INFM

1. Enemy

- a. 3 Cdn Inf Div Int Summary No 63 dated 28 Jan 45 is issued in conjunction with this order.
  
- b. The Second Edition of the Def Overprint Scale 1:25000 has been distributed; limited copies Scale 1:12500 are also being made available. The Third Edition of the Def Overprint Scale 1:25000 will be available before D Day.
  
- c. Complete air ph cover of the div area has been issued incl "blow-ups" of all built-up areas; later cover will be issued as it becomes available.

2. Own Tps

- a. 2 Cdn Corps continues to hold the NIJMEGEN brhead sector with:
  - RIGHT - 2 Cdn Inf Div from RIGHT, R MASS to, LEFT, rd and track junc 769594.
  
  - CENTRE - 3 Cdn Inf Div from, RIGHT, rd and track junc 769594 to, LEFT, R. WAAL.

LEFT - 49 WR Div on the Island NORTH of R WAAL.

- b. 30 Brit Corps will conduct initial stage of this op with under comd:

Guards Armd Div in res

79 Armd Div full resources allotted to other divs

15S Inf Div

43 Inf Div in res

51H Inf Div

53W Inf Div

2 Cdn Inf div limited use only from D minus 1

3 Cdn Inf Div from D minus 1

6 Guards Tk Bde

8 Armd Bde

33 Armd Bde

34 Armd Bde

2 Cdn AGRA

3 AGRA

4 AGRA

5 AGRA

9 AGRA

- c. In later stages of Op VERITABLE, a two corps front will be developed to destroy all enemy WEST of R RHINE NORTH of gen line GELDERN A0225 RHEINBERG A2128.

RIGHT - 30 Brit Corps

LEFT - 2 Cdn Corps

d. Remaining in sp 3 Cdn Inf Div:

One ML sec 2 Cdn Svy Regt

One RADAR sec 1 Cdn RADAR Bty

"C" Flt 660 Air Op Sqn RAF

e. Reverting to under comd 3 Cdn Inf Div on separate instrs:

7 Cdn Recce Regt 17 DYRCH

f. From in sp 3 Cdn Inf Div for def role in NIJMEGEN brhead;

One armd regt 2 Cdn Armd Bde

g. To in sp 3 Cdn Inf Div for Op VERITABLE:

One sqn 1 LOTHIAN Flails

One armd regt less one SQN 8 Armd Bde

One tp of six RAM Wasps 2 Cdn Armd Bde

222 Aslt Sqn RE less one tp AVsRE

Buffaloes 114 - if required

Det Weasels

112 Pnr Coy Smoke

803 Pnr Smoke Coy

Two pls 810 Pnr Smoke Coy

3. Air

- a. Complete resources 2 TAF RAF will be available during the op.
- b. Resources of RAF Bomber Comd and USAAF Bomber Comd are being made available on night D minus 1/D and D day.

INTENTION

4. 3 Cdn Inf Div and att tps will attack and destroy the enemy between, RIGHT, bdy with 2 Cdn Inf Div and 15S Inf Div and, LEFT, R RHINE, up to line of canal running north from CLEVE.

METHOD

5. Gen

- a. The attack will be with two bdes up sp by armour, arty and air and with one bde gp initially in def posn and later to be available for passing through to final objective.
- b. The attack will be carried out in two phases:

i. PHASE I - The attack with two bdes up to clear area to line of A tk ditch running NORTH from DONSBRUGGEN 8657 to SUFFELWARD 8760.

ii. PHASE II - Passing the third bde through to the final objective.

c. The following details apply to both phases unless otherwise stated.

6. Tps

a. RIGHT - 7 Cdn Inf Bde

With under comd

One pl "D" Coy CH of O (MG)

Two pls 6 Cdn Fd Coy

One coy 14 Cdn Fd Amb

One sec 4 Cdn Pro Coy

and with in sp

"A" Coy CH of O (MG)

One sqn of armd regt of 8 Armd Bde

One tp 1 LOTHIANs (Flails)

One sec of three RAM Wasps - 2 Cdn Armd Bde

One tp 222 Aslt Sqn RE (AVsRE)

Buffaloes (approx 57) - if required.

b. LEFT - 8 Cdn Inf Bde

with under comd

One pl "D" Coy CH of O (MG)

Two pls 16 Cdn Fd Coy

One Coy 22 Cdn Fd Amb

One sec 4 Cdn Pro Coy

and with in sp

"B" Coy CH of O (MG)

One tp 1 LOTHIANs (Flails)

One Sec of three RAM Wasps -

2 Cdn Armd Bde

Buffaloes (approx 57) - if required.

- |     |                     |                    |                |
|-----|---------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| 7.  | <u>Objectives</u>   | See Trace "P" att. | )              |
|     |                     |                    | )              |
| 8.  | <u>Axis</u>         | See Trace "P" att. | )              |
|     |                     |                    | )              |
| 9.  | <u>Bdys</u>         | See Trace "P" att. | )              |
|     |                     |                    | )              |
| 10. | <u>Report Lines</u> | See Trace "P" att. | ) Not included |



- a. By arrangement with Q 3 Cdn Inf Div all tps to be complete in assembly areas by last 1t 31 Jan.
  - b. Daylight mov in conc area will be restricted to the absolute minimum.
  - c. It is probable that from D minus 3 all vehs of this fmn will be frozen during the hrs of darkness; to be confirmed later.
15. FUPs To be selected by bdes.
16. SLs To be selected by bdes and advised to G3 Cdn Inf Div.
17. Timings
- a. D - Day - given verbally - to be confirmed
  - b. H Hr 3 Cdn Inf Div -
    - i. For 3 Cdn Inf Div and att tps only:
    - ii. This H Hr will be time at which 7 Cdn Inf Bde and 8 Cdn Inf Bde cross their respective SLs.
    - iii. Code word IDIOT will represent 1700A hrs on D-day.

iv. Actual H Hr will be notified by this Codeword meaning 1700A hrs  
or before 1700A hrs.

c. H Hr 30 Brit Corps -

For 30 Brit Corps excl 3 Cdn Inf Div will be 1030 A hrs to be  
confirmed

18. Action on Capture of Objective

a. 3 Cdn Inf Div will face up to line of R RHINE and the canal running  
NORTH from CLEVE and occupy a def posn and eventually come under  
comd 2 Cdn Corps.

b. Future role of the div has NOT yet been est.

19. Res

a. During PHASE I

i. Tps: 9 Cdn Inf Bde

with under comd

"C" Coy CH of O MG

One pl "D" Coy CH of O MG

Two pls 18 Cdn Fd Coy

One Coy 23 Cdn Fd Amb

One sec 4 Cdn Pro Coy

and with in sp

One sqn armd regt 8 Armd Bde

One tp 1 LOTHIANs Flails\*

One tp 222 Aslt Sqn RE AVsRE.

\* Made available from 7 Cdn Inf Bde or direct from 2 Cdn  
Inf Div.

ii. Tasks

- (a) Provide firm base which to launch the attack
- (b) Hold line of R WAAL as directed for WHITE Sector Bde See  
3 Cdn Inf Div OO No. 11 dated 20 Jan 45, NOT to all  
addressees.
- (c) Follow up RIGHT attacking bde on release by sqns 7 Cdn  
Recce Regt to provide div res close at hand and posn  
itself for PHASE II.

b. During PHASE II

- i. Tps: 7 Cdn Inf Bde  
8 Cdn Inf Bde

20. Armour

- a. One sqn of armd regt 8 Armd Bde in sp each of 7 Cdn Inf Bde and 9 Cdn Inf Bde.
- b. One sqn less one tp 1 LOTHIANs Flails in sp 3 Cdn Inf Div third tp will be released by 2 Cdn Inf Div on completion of its task there; one tp in sp each bde.
- c. One sec of tp RAM Wasps 2 Cdn Armd Bde in sp each 7 Cdn Inf Bde and 8 Cdn Inf Bde.
- d. One tp 222 Aslt Sq RE AVsRE in sp each 7 Cdn Inf Bde and 9 Cdn Inf Bde.
- e. 7 Cdn Recce Regt
  - i. On relief by 18 Can Armd C Regt assemble in div area by arrangement with Q 3 Cdn Inf Div.
  - ii. NOT before D minus 3, conduct recces for relief of 9 Cdn Inf Bde.

iii. Relieve 9 Cdn Inf Bde in WHITE Sector on orders from G 3 Cdn  
Inf Div.

21. Arty

a. The broad fire plan in sp the op is timed as follows:

0500 hrs - Arty preparation starts.

0730 hrs - Smoke screen starts 8 Brit Corps conforms on RIGHT.

0740 hrs - Smoke screen ends - complete lull on whole front.

0750 hrs - Arty preparation recommences.

0940 hrs - Forming up smoke screen starts.

0950 hrs - Barrage starts NOT on 3 Cdn Inf Div front and stands  
on opening line until

1030 hrs H hr - when it lifts fwd for first time.

b. 3 Cdn Inf Div op is phased back in time in order to obtain maximum  
arty sp; it is expected that this sp will be available by 1700 A  
hrs.

c. CRA will issue detailed fire plan in sp 3 Cdn Inf Div.

22. A Tk

a. 3 Cdn A Tk Regt remains in div res available to bdes on call.

b. Such guns of 3 Cdn A Tk Regt as can be effectively deployed will be available to "Pepper Pot" See para 26 below.

23. AA

4 Cdn LAA Regt responsible for AA protection of:

i. Div Adm Area

ii. Div gun areas and HQ

iii. Nodal Pts in div area - to be detailed later.

iv. Such guns as can be effectively deployed will be available to "Pepper Pot" See para 26 below.

24. MMGs

a. One coy in sp each bde for use in consolidation.

b. All coys to be available for use in "Pepper Pot" See para 26 below.

25. 4.2 in Mortars

a. One Pl under comd each bde and one pl in div res.

b. Resources of whole coy to be available for use in "Pepper Pot" See para 26 below.

26. "Pepper Pot"

a. Gen: During the period of arty bombardment, i.e., 0500 hrs - 1030 hrs except period of lull 0740 - 0750, all available arms will "hose" the enemy area under the direction of one comd.

b. Comd: Lt-Col RM ROSS

c. Tps: i. CH of O MG

ii. 3 Cdn A Tk Regt

iii. 32 Cdn LAA Bty 4 Cdn LAA Regt

iv. Small arms and A tk guns deployed in 9 Cdn Inf Bde FDLs.

d. Task: Lay down a continuous belt of fire beyond our FDLs against known enemy posns and routes; all firing to be coord in one fire plan to be approved by G 3 Cdn Inf Div in collaboration with 2 Cdn Inf Div.

27. Engrs

- a. Assist bdes in opening and maint of tac routes and bde axis by allotment of two pls fd coys under comd each bde during its adv.
- b. One armd bulldozer to be made available to each fwd bde.
- c. Open lateral routes and maint div axis in accordance with directive to be issued separately.
- d. Plan and prepare for bridging baskets required within the div area.
- e. Make aslt boats and rafts available to 7 Cdn Inf Bde should these be required in the WYLER area.

28. Air

Complete details of the Air Plan are incl at Appx "A" att/ Not included.

29. Smoke

- a. Comd: Maj T HUGILL GSO 2CW HQ First Cdn Army
- b. Tps: HQ Smoke Control  
112 Pnr Coy Smoke  
803 Pnr Smoke Coy

Two pls 810 Pnr Smoke Coy

c. Task: To provide a smoke haze throughout whole div area, as close to FDLs as possible, with intention of denying to the enemy direct observation of our posn and mov during daylight.

d. Method: Details of the Smoke Plan are available at G 3 Cdn Inf Div.

30. Artificial Moonlight

The aslt by 30 Brit Corps will continue day and night and in order to assist mov and observation during darkness, artificial moonlight will be provided by SL btys positioned in the Corps area.

31. Weasels

An allotment of Weasels will be made available to 3 Cdn Inf Div; these will be held in div pool for issue as required.

32. Barrier Policy

Div Barrier Policy will be strictly enforced; signs, sentries and barriers will be posted on all bn and bde axis.

33. Mopping Up

At each stage of their ops, bde comds will detail a composite force  
Preferably inf and tks for use in mopping up in bde area.

ADM

34. Adm orders will be issued separately.

35. TC: APM 3 Cdn Inf Div will prepare traffic circuit trace covering all  
routes in div area; for approval by G 3 Cdn Inf Div and subsequent  
distribution to all concerned.

36. Pers: Normal leaves and 3 Cdn Inf Div School will continue throughout  
the op.

INTERCOMN

37. Main HQ 3 Cdn Inf Div closes present locn 291500A hrs and opens 737605 at  
same time.

38. Tel ASSU, FCP available at 30 Corps - HQ 3 Cdn Inf Div  
demand through HQ 3 Div.

39. Liaison: Fmns and units detailed to pass through other fmns and units  
will deploy reps with those fmns and units.

40. All wireless remains on MINIMIZE until otherwise ordered.

41. Codewords: See Trace "P" att/ Not included

42. Ground to Air Recognition: Detailed instrs will be issued as soon as these become available.

ACK

JL DAMPIER Maj

GS 3 Cdn Inf Div

43. 79 Armd Div rep at Main HQ 3 Cdn Div:

a. Lt Col CJY DALLMEYER DSO TD 1 Lothians

b. Maj RUGGE-PRICE 13/18 4





b. Int Summaries already issued.

c. 1/25,000 def overprint already issued.

2. Own Tps

a. The task of 30 Corps is to destroy the enemy on the REICHSWALD front between R MAAS and R RHINE and break through in a SOUTHERLY direction. Initial attack will be made by five divs:

51 H Div

53 W Div

15 S Div

2 Cdn Inf Div opening phase only

3 Cdn Inf Div

b. Bdys are shown on Trace 'P'. )

)

c. Air sp will be on a very hy scale, see appx 'B' )(Not included

)

d. 2 Cdn Inf Div Order of Battle, see appx 'A' )

INTENTION

3. 2 Cdn Inf Div will:

- a. Continue to hold the div front as presently defined from BOXMEER 7640 to the NORTHERN div bdy 770593.
- b. Destroy the enemy in the area HOCHSTRASZE 7956 DEN HEUVEL 7756 WYLER 7858.
- c. Open the rd HOLDEURN 766586 to HOCHSTRASZE 795567 and the rd from 759602 to 787572.
- d. Assist in every way the debouchment of the fmns passing through the div FDLs.

#### METHOD

#### 4. Def of the Sector

2 Cdn Inf Div remains responsible for the def of the sector from incl BOXMEER 7640 to the inter div bdy at 770593. Def measures will NOT be relaxed once the attack commences until ordered by HQ 1 Cdn Inf Div.

#### 5. PEPPER POT

2 Cdn Inf Div is in comd of the PEPPER POT on the fronts of 53W Div, 15 S Div and 2 Cdn Inf Div. For details see appx 'C' . Not included.

#### 6. Offensive Action

2 Cdn Inf Div will attack with 5 Cdn Inf Bde of which only two bns will be committed.

7. Grouping

5 Cdn Inf Bde with under comd:

C Sqn 13/18 H

18 Cdn Fd Amb

in sp:     one tp C Sqn 1 LOTHIANs  
            one tp 617 Aslt Sqn 42 Aslt Regt RE  
            79 Armd Div Rep Lt-Col CYJ DALLMEYER,  
            DSO TD 1 LOTHIANs  
            three fd regts 2 Cdn Inf Div Arty  
            4 Cdn Med Regt  
            Tor Scot MG less one MMG Coy  
            7 Cdn Fd Coy  
            tcl ASSU

8. a. To destroy the enemy in the area HOCHSTRASZE 7956 DEN HEUVEL 7756 WYLER 7858.

b. To open the following rds:

i. First priority - HOLDEURN 766586 to HOCHSTRASZE 795567.

ii. Second priority - rd junc 759602 to rd junc 787572

9. Junc pts

a. With RIGHT 15S Div track junc 779566 and RIGHTERS GUT 798565.

b. With LEFT 9 Cdn Inf Bde rd junc 781583 rd junc 788571.

10. Assembly Areas

See trace 'Q' (Not included)

11. FUPs

As selected by 5 Cdn Inf Bde Within 2 Cdn Inf Div bdys as shown on Trace  
'P' (Not included).

12. Timings

a. D day - to be notified by msg code word DODGE followed by date.

b. H hr - 1030 hrs. Time when barrage moves from its opening line to  
its first lift.

13. Fire Sp

a. Arty:

i. the outline Corps fire plan is as follows:

0500	-	-	arty preparation starts
0730	-	0740	- smoke screen starts
0740	-	0750	- complete silence incl PEPPER POT
0750	-		arty fire recommences
0915	-		smoke screen NW edge REICHSWALD starts
0920	-		intense CB as a result of infm from smoke screen
0920	-		opening line of barrage (mixed HE and smoke) starts
1000	-		complete barrage starts
1030	-		H hr and first lift

ii. traces of the Corps and Div fire plans will be issued to Bdes and Tor Scot (MG) when available.

b. Gun Areas - see Trace 'Q'. (Not included)

14. Preliminary Moves

a. Adjustment of Posns in Def of the Sector - In order to obtain safety from our own fire NO tps will be deployed beyond the following line after 0400 hrs D day; track junc 745500, track and rd junc 747505, track junc 748508, 747515, 749519, track junc 751524, track junc 761558, track junc 761567, track junc 762573, track junc 762589,

track and rd junc 771592. Outposts will be withdrawn and the main posn adjusted so that all tps are behind this line between 0001 hrs and 0400 hrs D day. Bdes will report completion to HQ 2 Cdn Inf Div.

- b. Mov to FUPs - 5 Cdn Inf Bde - The two leading bdes of 15(S) Div must have freedom of mov over the rds from their assembly areas to their FUPs. To ensure this all vehs of 5 Cdn Inf Bde Gp, being used in the attack, will be in their FUPs within the 2 Cdn Inf Div bdys as shown on Trace 'P' by 0600 hrs D day. Only marching tps will be permitted to move after this confirmed time, with the exception of small vehs as single runners which must be kept to an absolute minimum until H hr. After H hr normal maint tfc will be permitted.

15 Tfc

- a. Tfc routes - See Trace 'R'. (Not included)
- b. Routes -
  - i. 5 Cdn Inf Bde has running rights over PEARL BLACK subject to the restrictions in para 14(b).
  - ii. when opened the route NIJMEGEN to rd junc 787572 becomes 3 Cdn Inf Div maint route and will NOT be used by 2 Cdn Inf Div.

- c. Tfc Control - APM will est. the necessary tfc control as required by  
30 Corps

16 Concealment

- a. The following instrs will be implemented on receipt of this order:
  - i. all new digging to be concealed
  - ii. nets to be used on vehs in non built up areas. In built up areas as far as standings permit vehs will be parked close to buildings.
  - iii. blackout precautions will be carefully carried out. Pet cookers and fire will NOT be lighted in unscreened places. Torches will be dimmed.
  - iv. all parades (incl meals) will wherever possible take place under cover.

17. Distinguishing Mks

In the event of white snow suits being worn, to prevent confusion between own tps and enemy, tps of 30 Corps will wear dark sec patches six inches square on the front and back of snow suits.

ADM

18. Med

CCPs are est in MALDEN 701554 and at 748594.

INTERCOMN

19. Locations

a.	Main HQ 2 Cdn Inf Div	-	694593
	Comd Post	-	756583 opens 080400A
b.	HQ 6 Cdn Inf Bde	-	709538
	HQ 4 Cdn Inf Bde	-	731546
	HQ 5 Cdn Inf Bde	-	748589
	Comd Post 5 Cdn Inf Bde	-	757580

20. Liaison

LO from 15(S) Div at HQ 2 Cdn Inf Div

LO from 2 Cdn Inf Div at HQ 3 Cdn Inf Div

21. Code Names

See Appx 'D' (Not included)

22. Wireless

2 Cdn Inf Div less 5 Cdn Inf Bde Gp and PEPPER POT is on MINIMIZE. Line comms will be used to the maximum.

23. Passwords

- a. Passwords will be uniform throughout 30 Corps
- b. List of passwords is given in Appx 'E' (Not included)

/r (PW Bennett) Lt-Col

SDR/LO GS - 2 Cdn Inf Div

## OPERATION "VERITABLE"

The operation had the full support of:

	<u>Guns</u>
24 Field Regiments	576
20 Medium Regiments	320
3 H.A.A. Regiments	72
19 Hy Btys	76
1 Super Heavy	6
	———
Total:	1050

In addition were:

12 Thirty-two barrel projections of 1 Cdn Rocket Unit,

While in the preliminary Pepperpot the following also took part:

<u>Type</u>	<u>Guns</u>
40 mm Bofors	114
4.2 mortars	80
75 mm Shermans	60
17 Pdr A. Tk guns	24
M.M.G.	188

The total number of shells used in the Corps Preliminary Bombardment was 91.330 (weight - 1596 tons).

The Pepperpot consisted of some 145,000 missiles (weight 520 tons excluding 2,000,000 rounds of M/M/G/)

(AEF: 45/21 Army GP/C/F, Docket III, Operational Research in North-West Europe, p. 183).

INTERESTING STATISTICS - OPERATION "VERITABLE"

(W.D., "G" Ops., First Cdn Army, March  
1945, Appx "KK", folio 48)

Following are a few statistics pertaining to the preparation and launching of Operation "VERITABLE".

1. AIR SUPPORT

Second Tactical Air Force will be supporting with about 1,000 fighters or fighter-bombers in direct support in addition to 100 medium day bombers and 90 medium night bombers, while 1,000 heavy bombers of Bomber Command will attack targets in the immediate battle area. The Operation will also be supported by heavy bombers of Eighth United States Army Air Force.

2. MANPOWER

The total number of troops, including line of communication and rear echelon, is approximately equal to the populations of Halifax, Three Rivers, Kingston, Brandon and Edmonton, or 268,000 men.

If the men assaulting for Phase I were shoulder to shoulder across a 6-mile front, there would be 3.7 men per yard, while Corps reserve would supply 1.1 men per yard. This excludes Artillery, Engineers, Services and Echelons.

3. ARMOUR

Including reserves, 3,401 tanks will be used for the Operation. Ammunition, including first line reserve, for the main armament totals 276,750 rounds, and it would take 7,000 gallons of petrol to move these tanks one mile.

4. ARTILLERY

A total of 938 field, medium, heavy and super heavy guns will be deployed, plus 96 heavy anti-aircraft guns used in a ground role. The enemy's 72 guns of field and medium calibre, which can be brought to bear on our front, will give us a superiority of approximately 14 to 1.

In the pre H hour programme these guns will fire 2,666 tons of shells.

On D day 108 sorties will be flown by artillery reconnaissance and air observation aircraft.

5. SMOKE

1,100 tons of smoke materials, exclusive of artillery, will be used in the ground plan, which will produce what is believed to be the longest smoke screen in the history of this war. At the conclusion of Phase I a 20-mile smoke screen will be in operation.

6. BRIDGING

1,880 tons of bridge equipment is being used for 5 bridges that lead into the forward areas, including MOOK bridge which is believed to be the longest Bailey bridge in the world: 1,280 feet.

7. ROUTES

13th British Army Group Royal Engineers, constructed and widened 50 miles of road, using 18,000 logs, 32,000 pickets, and 19,500 tons of stone, while Royal Canadian Engineers of 2nd Canadian Corps have similarly developed 40 to 50 miles of road.

8. MOVES

To move troops and their fighting equipment and supplies into position prior to D day will involve 35,000 pickets, vehicles travelling an average of 130 miles and using 1,272,000 gallons of petrol, or the equivalent of one vehicle travelling around the world 220 times at the Equator.

In order to ensure that convoys reach their appointed destinations approximately 9,600 route signs were erected, and 1,000 troops will be required for traffic control duties.

446 special freight trains offloaded at 15 different railheads, some as near as 3 miles to the front line, transported a tonnage equal to 89,200 three-ton army lorry loads which, if placed end to tail, would stretch from London to Edinburgh.

9. PHOTOGRAPHS

Demands have entailed the production of 510,000 photographs and 15,000 enlargements.

10. MAPS

It is estimated that 3,304,000 machine impressions were required, and 31 tons of paper used, in the production of 819,000 maps. This covers 4 standard scales, 2 special large-scale issues, and 2 scales of defence overprints.

11. AMMUNITION

If the ammunition, which consists of 350 different types, were stacked side by side and 5 feet high, it would line the road from Toronto to Oshawa.

The total tonnages involved for field, medium and heavy natures from D Day to D plus 3 would be the equivalent of a raid by 25,000 medium bombers.

12. PETROL

The amount of petrol dumped in the forward areas prior to the Operation will be sufficient to provide a normal Canadian civilian 'A' ration for one year for all passenger cars in the City of Winnipeg.

13. CAMOUFLAGE MATERIALS

White calico and garnishings for camouflage purposes would be sufficient to make a dress for every woman in the Province of Ontario between the ages of 20 and 24.

14. SUPPLIES

The build-up of supplies immediately behind the attacking force includes 1,000,000 rations of tea, sugar and milk. Also in this build-up will be included 1,400,000 special hospital rations.

Daily tonnage required to maintain First Canadian Army would feed the City of Ottawa for 4 days.



OPERATION "VERITABLE"  
CASUALTIES

(as compiled from Frist Cdn Army Consolidated C. & S. States, Nos. 201 - 218 inclusive, as shown in W.D., H.Q. A & Q First Cdn Army, February 1045: Appx 7.)

a. ALL PERSONNEL FIRST CDN ARMY

Date	Killed		Wounded		Missing		All Ranks Daily Total
	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	
8 Feb 45	9	72	12	321	1	18	433
9	11	69	26	316	1	35	458
10	2	52	13	229	4	128	428
11	7	67	26	384	1	41	526
12	4	38	11	136	-	42	231
13	7	49	19	262	-	32	369
14	6	66	16	303	-	31	422
15	4	64	24	432	3	71	598
16	5	91	24	389	-	81	590
17	4	78	18	271	-	55	426
18	2	79	14	235	3	97	430
19	4	53	18	272	-	34	381
20	13	112	42	490	5	257	919
21	4	57	26	314	-	65	466
22	8	57	27	373	5	145	615
23	1	37	13	144	1	19	215
24	9	102	18	485	-	34	648
25	5	73	12	202	2	64	358
Total	105	1216	359	5558	26	1249	8513

b. CANADIAN PERSONNEL IN FIRST CDN ARMY

8 Feb 45	2	12	3	85	1	6	109
9	5	8	3	57	1	-	74
10	1	12	3	42	-	1	59
11	-	7	1	25	-	2	35
12	-	6	-	14	-	-	20
13	-	7	1	11	-	5	24
14	1	1	-	2	-	1	5
15	1	1	-	12	1	3	18
16	-	3	2	2	-	-	7
17	-	5	-	18	-	-	23
18	1	19	5	112	1	-	138
19	1	2	2	41	-	-	46
20	7	53	20	129	3	219	561
21	1	16	10	102	-	2	131
22	4	26	9	137	4	82	262
23	-	21	3	73	1	11	109

24	2	34	5	73	-	1	115
25	2	12	4	38	-	2	58
Total	28	245	71	1103	12	335	1794

c. BRITISH PERSONNEL IN FIRST CDN ARMY

Date	Killed		Wounded		Missing		All Ranks Daily Total
	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	
8 Feb 45	7	60	9	234	-	12	322
9	6	61	23	259	-	35	384
10	1	40	10	185	4	127	367
11	7	58	25	356	1	39	486
12	4	32	11	120	-	42	209
13	7	42	18	250	-	27	344
14	5	65	16	300	-	30	416
15	3	63	24	420	2	68	580
16	5	88	22	387	-	81	583
17	4	73	18	253	-	55	403
18	1	60	9	123	2	97	292
19	3	51	16	230	-	34	334
20	6	59	22	231	2	38	358
21	3	41	16	212	-	63	335
22	4	31	18	236	1	63	353
23	1	16	10	71	-	8	106
24	7	68	13	412	-	33	533
25	3	61	8	163	2	62	299
Total	77	969	288	4442	14	914	6704

d. ALLIED TROOPS IN FIRST CDN ARMY  
(1 Pol Armd Div, Belgium Fus Bn, etc.)

8 Feb	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
11	-	2	-	3	-	-	5
12	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
13	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
14	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Total	-	2	-	13	-	-	15

e. 2 CDN INF DIV

Date	Killed		Wounded		Missing		All Ranks Daily Total
	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	
8 Feb 45	2	5	3	75	1	6	92
9	2	2	1	16	-	-	21
10	-	1	-	21	-	1	24
11	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
12	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
13	-	-	-	3	-	1	4
14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16	-	-	2	1	-	-	3
17	-	4	-	5	-	-	9
18	-	3	-	1	-	-	4
19	-	2	1	22	-	-	25
20	5	42	15	173	3	186	424
21	1	12	4	85	-	2	104
22	-	3	-	4	-	1	8
23	-	1	-	17	1	3	22
24	2	18	4	44	-	-	68
25	1	3	2	20	-	1	27
Total	13	96	33	489	5	201	937

f. 3 CDN INF DIV

8 Feb 45	-	2	-	7	-	-	9
9	3	6	2	37	1	-	49
10	1	9	2	19	-	-	31
11	-	4	1	19	-	-	24
12	-	5	-	8	-	-	13
13	-	7	1	6	-	1	15
14	1	1	-	2	-	1	5
15	-	1	-	3	-	-	4
16	-	2	-	-	-	-	2
17	-	1	-	10	-	-	11
18	1	16	4	110	1	-	132
19	1	-	1	18	-	-	20
20	2	10	5	82	-	29	128
21	-	3	2	10	-	-	15
22	4	17	9	112	4	80	226
23	-	19	3	51	-	7	80
24	-	8	1	9	-	-	18
25	-	3	-	5	-	1	9
Total	13	114	31	508	6	119	791

g. 4 CDN ARMD DIV

Date	Killed		Wounded		Missing		All Ranks Daily Total
	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	Offrs	O.Rs.	
8 Feb 45	-	2	-	1	-	-	3
9	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
10	-	2	-	1	-	-	3
11	-	-	-	1	-	2	3
12	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
13	-	-	-	2	-	3	5
14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	-	-	-	9	1	3	13
16	-	1	-	1	-	-	2
17	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
18	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	-	1	-	4	-	4	9
21	-	1	-	2	-	-	3
22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24	-	-	-	3	-	-	3
25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	-	7	-	32	1	12	52

h. 2 CDN ARMD BDE AND CDN ARMY TPS

8 Feb 45	-	3	-	2	-	-	5
9	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
10	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
11	-	3	-	4	-	-	7
12	-	1	-	3	-	-	4
13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
18	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
19	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21	-	-	4	5	-	-	9
22	-	6	-	21	-	-1	28
23	-	1	-	5	-	1	7
24	-	8	-	17	-	1	26
25	1	6	2	13	-	-	22

Total	2	28	7	74	-	3	114
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