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CSI BATTLEBOOK

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THE BATTLE OF NUREMEURG.

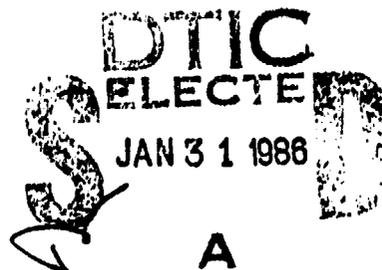
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THE BATTLE OF NUREMBERG.

Combat Studies Institute
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas

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COMMON REFERENCE: Nuremburg (Nurnberg).

TYPE OPERATION: Offensive, Deliberate Attack, MOUT.

OPPOSING FORCES: U.S.:

7th Army	XXI Corps
XV Corps	42d Inf Div
3d Inf Div	222d Inf Regt
7th Inf Regt	232d Inf Regt
15th Inf Regt	242d Inf Regt
30th Inf Regt	14th Armd Div
45th Inf Div	106th Cav Gp
157th Inf Regt	158th FA BN
179th Inf Regt	160th FA BN
180th Inf Regt	171st FA BN
191st TK BN	189th FA BN
645th TD BN	283d FA BN
	250th FA BN

German:

Army Group C
1st Army
LXXXII Corps
17th SS Pz Gren Div "Gotz von
Berlichingen"
2d Mtn Div (Remnants)
BG 36th Volksgrenadier Div
BG 256th Volksgrenadier Div
BG 719th Volksgrenadier Div
Nuremburg Combat Command (includes
Remnants of 31 misc units, armed
civilians and approximately 100-99-
mm flak guns controlled by the
commander and staff of the 9th
Volksgrenadier Div.

SYNOPSIS: U.S. Seventh Army conducted a double envelopment, during the period 16-20 April 45, using the XV and XXI Corps, to isolate and eventually reduce the key political and communications center of Nuremburg. The German intent was to prevent the city's capture using all readily available manpower, to include armed civilians. Heavy anti-tank fires from approximately one hundred 88-mm flak guns, strengthened the German positions. Seizure of the city by U.S. forces required extensive house to house fighting against a well entrenched and politically motivated enemy. Heavy use of artillery, armor, and tactical airpower, coupled with almost constant building to building engagements by infantry forces makes this an excellent example of military operations in urban terrain. (a) (b)

P651 - BATTLE ANALYSIS
THE BATTLE OF NUREMBURG
15 - 20 April 1945

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I. Introduction to the Battle of Nuremburg

In the four weeks which followed its crossing of the Rhine (26 March 1945), the U.S. Seventh Army drove rapidly and deeply into southern Germany. As part of Lieutenant General Jacob Devers' Sixth Army Group, the Seventh Army had the mission of



Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe*, page 393.

protecting the right flank of Bradley's Twelfth Army Group and of clearing southern Germany of enemy forces.

By mid-April, the First German Army of Army Group G had managed to maintain coordination among the fragmentary units and battle groups that stretched from the Lowenstein Hills near Stuttgart to Nuremburg. Although there was no firm evidence that the Germans were withdrawing to the National Redoubt in the Alpine region of Bavaria, Seventh Army had the mission of piercing the German line and securing Nuremburg.

Beginning in late March, the U.S. Seventh Army under command of Lieutenant General Alexander Patch struck a series of hammer-like blows, one of which was aimed at Nuremburg. The forces in Nuremburg received orders from Hitler to hold to the last man. During the period 16-20 April, the Seventh Army conducted a classic double envelopment, using XV and XXI Corps, to isolate and eventually secure the important German political and communications center.

In the strategic, operational, and tactical analysis of the battle, several important factors emerge. On the strategic level, the loss of Nuremburg led to the collapse of the right wing of the German First Army. General George S. Patton's Third U.S. Army also benefitted from the capture of Nuremburg as Bradley re-directed the Third Army to advance into the gap which now existed between the German First and Seventh Armies. The Third Army was ready to exploit the gap with full force on 23 April, though Patton's drive actually began as early as the 19th. On the operational level, the double envelopment conducted by Major General Wade Haislip's XV Corps and Major General Frank W. Milburn's XXI Corps was a masterpiece of military execution. Although Nuremburg could only be reduced by close combat in an urban environment, the positioning of Seventh Army's units prohibited any German escape.

Tactically, the dedication of the individual soldier demonstrated that ground forces were still the dominant force in warfare. Intense street-to-street fighting proved a severe test for the individual soldier, American and German alike. In the final analysis, small units of fire team and squad size, supplemented by heavy artillery and concentration, were successful in reducing the city.

The battle of Nuremburg is not a well documented subject. Several secondary sources are available. The most recent publication is Russell Weigley's Eisenhower's Lieutenants which places the battle within the overall framework of Allied strategy. Charles MacDonald provides an excellent analysis of the battle in The Last Offensive and Mary H. Williams has compiled a chronology of the war's engagements in Chronology 1941-1945. Both MacDonald's and Williams' works are volumes in the series United States Army in World War II. On the Allied side, Eisenhower and Bradley provide sketchy references to the

fighting around Nuremburg. Unfortunately, no definitive biography of Jacob Devers, the Sixth Army Group Commander, exists although Brigadier General Thomas E. Griess (Ret.) is currently examining the career of Devers. The best source on General Patch, the commander of Seventh Army, is Charles F. Romanus' Biographical Summary on General Alexander M. Patch, prepared in 1970 and on file in the U.S. Army's Center of Military History. No detailed biographies of the German participants are readily available.

On the operational and tactical levels, there are a number of available sources based on the unit histories of the combat forces involved in the battle of Nuremburg. The Seventh United States Army-Report of Operations, published in three volumes, is a good beginning. Volume III examines the Army's combat in Germany during the latter months of the war. In addition, the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL) at Fort Leavenworth carries the divisional and corps histories of the American units involved in the operation. Since XV Corps of the Seventh Army had the actual responsibility for the reduction of Nuremburg, a researcher should consult the Report After Combat, XV Corps, which is an after-action report of the XV Corps for the entire war. This report gives a detailed monthly account of the corps activities. Unfortunately, these after-action reports are not accompanied by maps, but divisional operations are discussed in sufficient detail for the reader to have a clear picture of the operation. CARL also has the 45th Infantry Division's, 14 Armored Division's, and the 3rd Infantry Division's after-action reports on file. All of these reports include all operations orders, corps directives, and narratives of the fighting in Nuremburg. The 30th Infantry Regiment's operations report is also on file at CARL. Finally, the 3rd Infantry Division's report is on microfilm. A subordinate unit of the 3rd Infantry Division, the 30th Infantry Regiment played an important role in the urban combat for Nuremburg. This report was written by the unit's commander, Colonel Lionel C. McGarr, and offers the best description of the fighting from the perspective of the individual soldier. Included in the operations reports are journals from the various regimental staff sections. Other primary sources concerning the American forces are available. CARL also maintains G-2 estimates by the Sixth Army Group, as well as copies of the Seventh Army's field orders. All the reports outlining the activities of the American units were compiled during or shortly after the surrender of Nuremburg on 20 April. In addition, the U.S. Army Military Institute at Carlisle, Pennsylvania maintains copies of documents related to the battle for U.S. divisions and regiments that participated in the battle. Copies of the History of the Third Infantry Division and From Eedala to Berchtesgaden. A History of the Seventh United States Infantry in World War II were obtained from Colonel Joseph E. Martin (Ret.), a company commander in the Seventh Infantry during the Battle of Nuremburg. These histories provide a great deal of insight into the tactical operations in and around the city.

Although the German reports are not as numerous, there are a number of after-action reports and interrogations of the principal German commanders. From these the researcher can gain a flavor of the enemy operations in the vicinity of Nuremburg. However, one must remember that most of the official German records were destroyed at the end of the war, and the comments of the German generals were based on pure memory. Researching the German reports is slow, and accuracy is further hindered because many have never been translated into English. The German generals who did speak did not have their own campaign maps; therefore exact locations may be slightly erroneous. In addition, the reader must realize that the Battle of Nuremburg occurred near the end of the war. German forces were surrendering in record numbers and the remnants of the surviving corps and divisions were often intermingled. In many cases, German commanders were often confused as to the actual composition of the forces under their command. Nuremburg is a strong case in point, since the fighting was conducted by an odd mixture of civilian and military personnel.

When actual warfare was carried into the Reich territories, OKW (Supreme Headquarters of the Wehrmacht) appointed special Combat Commanders for such localities, towns, and areas which appeared to be strategically important. Due to its importance as a communications center and as a shrine of National Socialism, Nuremburg received special attention by Hitler, who directed it be defended to the last man. Early in his rule, Hitler selected Nuremburg as the shrine of the Nazi Party. Nuremburg became the distribution center for Nazi laws and propoganda, and numerous party organization meetings and rallies occurred in the city. In many respects, Nuremburg became the capitol of the Third Reich. The 13th SS Corps had overall responsibility for the defense of the city. CARL maintains files on the 13th SS Corps, as well as the divisions and battle groups which participated in the fighting. As previously stated, these records are based on the interrogations of the commanders immediately following the war and may be subject to error.

Two of the more illuminating reports of the contest for Nuremburg and the surrounding vicinity, are reports compiled from the interrogation of Ludwig Graf Von Ingelhern, the Chief of Staff of the LXXXII Corps. Colonel Von Ingelhern discusses the operations of the German corps in the vicinity of Nuremburg, but does not examine the actual contest for the city. General Herman Foertsch, the commander of First Army, who had overall responsibility for the defense of the Nuremburg sector, presents an excellent portrayal of the deplorable state of German forces in April, 1945. His report is a necessity for understanding the condition of the Wehrmacht and the difficulty encountered by German commanders who were attempting to stem the tide of the American advance. There are three divisional reports, all by the divisional commanders, outlining the activities of the 256 Volksgrenadier, 36th Volksgrenadier, and 2d Mountain Divisions. These reports, however, discuss the respective unit's operations in the vicinity of Nuremburg and say very little about the city

itself.

CARL also maintains interrogation reports, many of which are in German, by the commander of Army Group G and the 13 SS Corps. General Freidrich Schultze, Army Group G Commander, describes the condition of his three armies, and comes to the conclusion that it is folly to continue resistance in a hopeless situation. General Simon, the 13th SS Corps Commander, describes the actual fighting in Nuremburg. However, as is the case with most of the other interrogation reports, the contest for Nuremburg did not seem to be as important to the German commanders as it was to their American counterparts. To the German Army, Nuremburg was only one section of the rapidly constructed defensive line. Politically, it was chosen by the Nazi Party to become a defensive stronghold. Neither Army Group G nor 1st Army attached special significance to the defense of the city. But it was hoped that a strong defense would stall the American advance.

In summary, CARL is an excellent repository for unit histories and after-action reports by the major commands that participated in the Nuremburg battle. As previously mentioned, some German histories and reports need to be accurately translated to insure future research is enhanced. Many sketch maps referenced in the reports should be located and placed in appropriate files to further document the battle. Secondary sources are limited, and no study has, as yet, attempted to analyze the battle from the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of warfare.

II. The Strategic Setting

BACKGROUND

The American armies that crossed the Rhine in March, 1945 were the most powerful and professional that the United States ever fielded. As part of the last great offensive in the western European theater, the U.S. Seventh Army under LTG Alexander Patch played an important role in the final reduction of Hitler's Germany. In mid-April 1945, Seventh Army swept into southern Germany and approached the city of Nuremburg. The struggle for Nuremburg became a classic illustration of the problems involved in conducting combat operations in urban areas.

BASIS FOR OPERATIONS

March, 1945 witnessed the Allied crossing of the Rhine, the last natural barrier protecting the western German heartland. The failure of the Wehrmacht to successfully defend this obstacle seemed to symbolize the total inability of the German nation to continue waging war. Crossing in three army groups: Montgomery's 21st Army Group in the north, Bradley's 12th Army Group in the center, and Devers' 6th Army Group in the south, the forces under Eisenhower were seeking the immediate destruction of the German armed forces and the rapid termination of a war already nearing its sixth summer.



Bradley, A Soldier's Story , page 532.

According to SHAEF directives, the role assigned to 6th Army Group was to protect the right flank of Bradley's 12th Army Group, the main Allied thrust. Implicit in this assignment was the responsibility for eventually clearing southern Germany and prohibiting the remnants of the German forces from withdrawing to the alleged National Redoubt in the Alpine region of southern Germany and western Austria. Consequently, on 10 March, the SHAEF Joint Intelligence Committee attempted a balanced assessment of German defensive capabilities in southern Germany and decided:

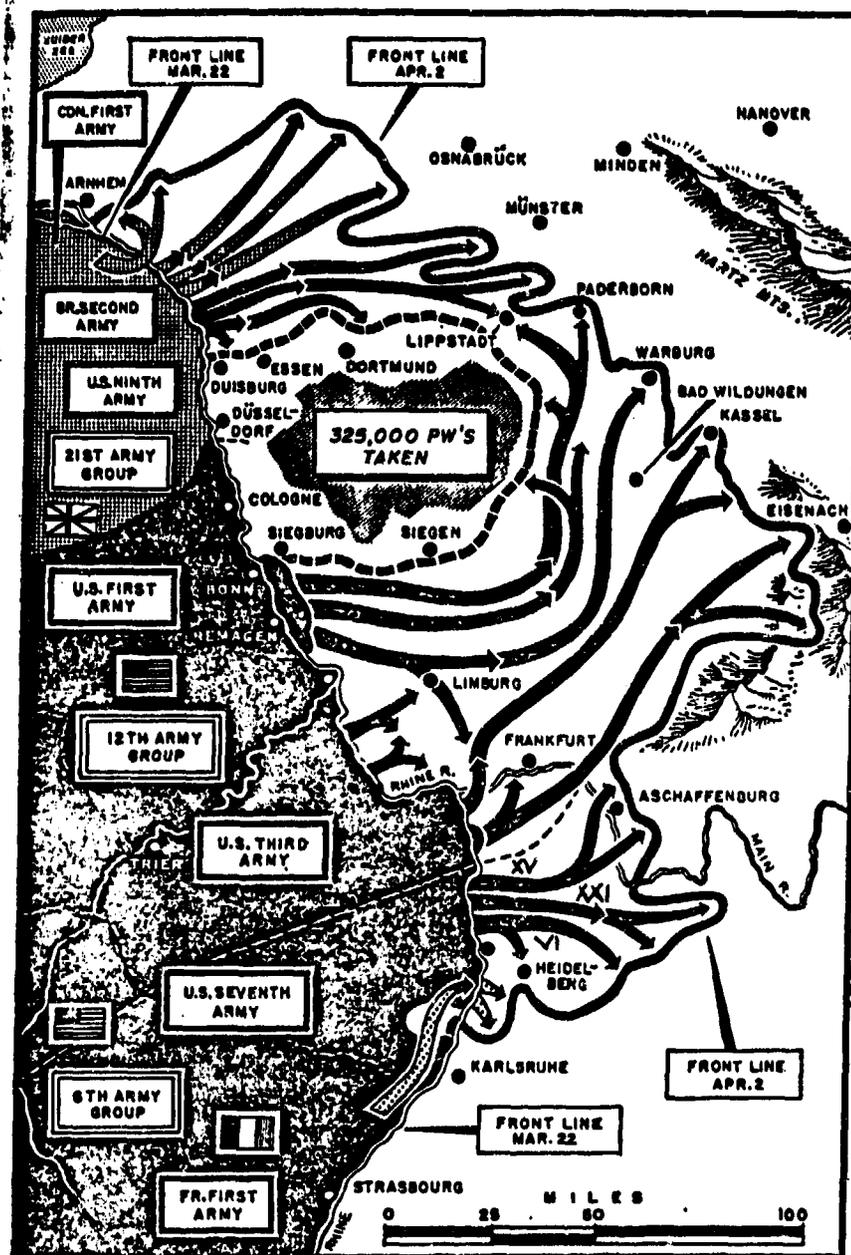
8. There have been numerous reports that Hitler and the Nazi leaders, supported by SS units, young Nazi fanatics and Quislings, are planning to make a last stand in the so-called Redoubt in western Austria... it is unlikely that large-scale preparations for organized military resistance are being made.

9. We should therefore be prepared to undertake operations in southern Germany in order to overcome rapidly any organized resistance by the German armed forces or by guerrilla movements which may have retreated to the inner zone and to this Redoubt... [1]

Later in the month, General Patch's G-2 section issued a "Study of the German National Redoubt" that indicated that there was some evidence that Hitler was planning a final stand in the Alpine area.

When Seventh Army stood on the Rhine, it consisted of three corps, containing ten infantry divisions, three armored divisions, and two cavalry groups. Two of the divisions were to be used west of the Rhine for occupational duty. On 26 March, the Seventh Army began the river crossing in the vicinity of Worms. German resistance was light, and Patch's forces expanded the bridgehead rapidly. Opposing the Seventh Army was German Army Group G, commanded by General Oberst Paul Hauser. Army Group G consisted of the Seventh, First, and Nineteenth Armies, all of which had been severely mauled in the fighting west of the Rhine. Moreover, a huge gap now existed between Army Group G in the south and the northern armies attempting to prevent the encirclement of the Ruhr.

Patch's army had already begun to consolidate his bridgehead when SHAEF decreed it must direct its offensive eastward in the direction of Nuremberg. Consequently, Seventh Army advanced with three corps abreast.



Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, page 525.

Note U.S. Seventh Army's sector, bottom center of map.

By 28 March, XV Corps with the 3rd, 44th, and 45th Infantry Divisions, the 12th Armored Division, and the 106th Cavalry Group, was advancing into the Odenwald beyond the bridgehead lines. The XXI Corps, with the 4th, 42nd, and the 63rd Infantry Divisions, the 10th Armored Division, and the 101st Cavalry Group, had started its movement across the Rhine prepared to

advance on the right flank of XV Corps. The VI Corps, with the 36th, 71st, 100th, and the 103rd Infantry Divisions and the 14th Armored Division, held the west bank of the Rhine and prepared to cross the river to its position on the extreme army right flank. [2] Haislip's XV Corps was the army's main effort.

As the American advance began in late March, German resistance seemed to disintegrate. Hauser's Army Group G seemed incapable of stemming the flow of the Allied advance, and there was no hope for massive reinforcement since German attention was directed toward the Ruhr, where Army Group B was in danger of total annihilation. German forces, now fighting on their homeland, seemed dispirited and totally disorganized. Divisional reports indicated that most soldiers were equipped with insufficient weapons and lacked trained replacements. [3] Any attempt at a coherent defense dissolved as Allied forces quickly overran hastily-prepared defensive positions. In short, German combat forces were either unable or lacked the resources to resist.

As the Seventh Army's main effort, Major General Wade Haislip initiated XV Corps attack on 28 March and made rapid progress. The first serious obstacle he encountered was the city of Aschaffenburg, where German civilians rallied to the defense of their city. For six days, XV Corps troops assaulted the garrison until the city surrendered on 3 April. By 10 April, Haislip completed his mission. In two weeks his corps advanced 120 miles, clearing the Hohe Rhoen hill mass except for the northeastern tip in the Third Army's zone. XV Corps now prepared to drive to the southeast and assault Nuremburg.

At the same time that Haislip was advancing eastward, Milburn's XXI Corps was attacking on its right flank. The first contested enemy strongpoint was the city of Wuerzburg, a large, densely-populated urban area. Again, civilians joined in the defense of their city, and it was 5 April before the last resistance ended.

From the German perspective, the only hope of establishing a cohesive defense lay in Army Group G relinquishing control of the area north of the Main River to direct control of the Commander-in-Chief West, with whom Hauser had lost communications. Army Group G, with the First and Nineteenth Armies, might then withdraw into southern Germany. For his suggestion, Hauser paid with his job. On 2 April, the Fuhrer replaced him for failing to contain the Allied bridgeheads in his sector. Hauser's replacement was General der Infanterie Heinrich Schulz, a veteran of the Eastern Front. Schulz hoped to delay the American advance with a stout defense of Nuremburg and by closing the gap on his right flank between the First and Seventh Armies. Schulz's directive from Hitler was clear, "hold for another three to four weeks so new jet-propelled aircraft would create "equilibrium, if not superiority" in the air." "This would at the same time entirely change the situation on the ground as well." [4] In order to defend Nuremburg and the

immediate vicinity, Schulz ordered the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division and the 2nd Mountain Division into the gap between his First and Seventh Armies, but American forces struck Nuremburg before they arrived.

On 15 April, with the U.S. Ninth Army safely on the Elbe and Bradley's offensive assured of all the success that the Supreme Commander intended, SHAEF issued a new strategic directive designed to make Patch's Nuremburg attack the basis for a major drive southeast. The immediate consequence of this decision was to bring the 7th Army into the teeth of the Nuremburg defenses. Having anticipated the directive, Patch had placed his forces in positions that would facilitate their drive against the German stronghold. The main thrust in the direction of the shrine to National Socialism, was conducted by Haislip's XV Corps, which had captured Bamberg at the meeting of the Main and Pegnitz Rivers on 13 April.

As Haislip advanced, German resistance collapsed. What remained of LXXXII Corps, was retreating rapidly to avoid engagement. Actually, the German situation was hopeless. Since the forces on his left could withdraw without dire consequences, Schulz attempted to bolster the Nuremburg defenses by transferring forces from his left to his right (Nuremburg). Although Schulz lacked sufficient reserves to halt Haislip, he threw in the remnants of several divisions, most of which were below one-third strength.

When actual warfare was carried into the Reich territories, OKW had appointed special combat commanders (Kampfkommandanten) for such localities, towns, and areas which appeared to be strategically important. Among other duties, these commanders were to carry out the field fortification of their respective strongholds, using the civilian population, the Volksturm, and local replacement units (recruits with no combat experience) to make preparations for combat.

Generally speaking, the commanders of the replacement units in the respective towns were appointed Commandant and Reichs Defense Commissars and the local Kreisleiter (County Administrator) were assigned to them. It was only in particularly important posts, that the OKW appointed battle-hardened front line commanders as combat commanders. [5] Due to its strategic importance, Nuremburg received special attention by Hitler.

According to U.S. intelligence, the first German Army was able to assemble 15,000 men, twenty artillery battalions, and 200 tanks and assault guns. In addition, 100 anti-aircraft guns were available for the defense of the XIII SS Corps sector, which included Nuremburg. [6] German reports for the 14th of April show about 3000-3500 men without substantial heavy weapons or artillery on the 100+ kilometer front. [7] Considering the conditions of the German Army and the speed with which the Americans were advancing, there is little doubt that such

discrepancies could exist in opposing reports.

The defense of the city of Nuremburg was assigned to XIII SS Corps on 16 April. The staff of deactivated 9th Volksgrenadier Division (the 9th VGD and the 212th Infantry Division merged on 14 April and the staff of the 9th VGD was sent to Nuremburg) was assigned to coordinate the defense for the Corps Commander. The Gauleiter of Nuremburg, Karl Holz, requested that the city be declared a "Festen Platz", or stronghold. The army knew that time for effective defensive preparations was not available, and reluctantly undertook the mission. The only forces available for the Corps Commander for defense of the city, were several Luftwaffe air defense battalions with fixed anti-aircraft artillery, Volksturm troops, and a regiment from Wehrkreis XIII. Additionally, the civilian population was mobilized. On the 17th, the OKW gave the order to defend Nuremburg "to the last round" and declared the city a "Festen Platz". The same day, the Corps Commander requested the order be revoked so that he could begin a withdrawal on the Nuremburg-Schwabach road, the only route he had been able to keep open. On the 18th, American forces completed the encirclement of the city, and three U.S. Divisions moved toward the city center. These advancing units met fierce resistance from small arms, rifle grenades, bazooka, Panzerfaust, and 88mm anti-aircraft guns. On the 20th, Gauleiter Holz sent Hitler a message for his 56th birthday:

"My fuhrer: The final struggle for the town of the party has begun. The soldiers are fighting bravely, and the population is proud and strong. I shall remain in this most German of all towns to fight and to die. In these hours my heart beats more than ever in love and faith for the wonderful German Reich and its people. The National Socialist idea shall win and conquer all diabolic schemes. Greetings from the National Socialists of the Gau Franconia who are faithful to Germany.

Karl Holz [8]

The same day, after reports of high casualties and ammunition expenditures, the last contact between the defenders of Nuremburg and XIII SS Corps was an incomplete message which started:

"We are fighting advancing tanks at our headquarters ..." [9]

The Americans had completed the capture of Nuremburg.

From the perspective of the American commanders, the penetration of the Nuremburg defenses meant the unimpeded advance into western Austria. By this time, few members of SHAEF expected Hitler would be able to withdraw a significant number of forces into southern Bavaria. German troops were surrendering in record numbers. On Seventh Army's front alone, over 120,000

prisoners were taken since Seventh Army crossed the Rhine on 26 March. Nuremberg had been an important strategic objective for both tactical and political reasons. It stood as the eastern anchor of the German First Army's line opposing Patch's advance; it was a communications center through which north-south railways passed, in addition to autobahn and principal highways from Berlin to Munich; and it was an important shrine to the Nazi Party.

ENDNOTES

- [1] Russel Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981) p. 701.
- [2] *The Seventh United States Army Report of Operations* vol. III, p. 758.
- [3] See "Report on the Operations of the 256 VG Division, mid-November 44 thru 8 April 45" by Gerhard Franz and "Actions of the 2nd Mountain Division in the Rhineland, 27 January thru 23 March" by Willy Utz. Both reports are on file in CARL.
- [4] Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1973) p. 412.
- [5] See "Interrogation-LXXXII A.K." by Graf Von Ingelheim, copy of which is on file in CARL.
- [6] Weigley, *Eisenhower's Lieutenants* , pp. 707-708.
- [7] XIII SS Corps Report N-17500.670 p. 35.
- [8] 7th U.S. Army Report of Operations , Vol. III, p. 796.
- [9] XIII SS Corps Report N-17500.670 p. 40.

III. THE TACTICAL SITUATION

TERRAIN AND WEATHER IN THE AREA OF OPERATIONS

CLIMATE AND WEATHER

Daily Weather

15 April - Ceilings of broken cloud layers with scattered showers. Visibility of 6 miles reduced to 1 mile during rain showers. Wind was out of the west at 10 miles per hour (MPH). The temperature low was 44 degrees Fahrenheit (F).

16 April - Haze with 2 to 3 miles of visibility during the early morning. Visibility improved to 5 to 7 miles after 0930 hours. High scattered clouds were present throughout the rest of the day with visibility ranging from 6 to 8 miles. Ceilings were reduced as a result of rain that commenced at 1700 hours. Winds were out of the southeast at a speed of 2 to 4 MPH during the morning. By mid afternoon, winds were out of the southwest at 10 to 12 MPH. The temperature low was 45 to 47 degrees F.

17 April - Haze and broken ceilings resulted in a visibility range of 1 to 3 miles. By 1030 hours, visibility improved to 6 to 10 miles. Winds were out of the south at a speed of 5 to 10 MPH for most of the day. The temperature low was 48 degrees F.

18 April - Visibility was 1 to 3 miles due to a light rain which produced early morning fog and haze. By 1030 hours, rain had ceased and visibility improved to 6 miles. Winds were out of the southeast at 5 to 10 MPH and the temperature low was 50 degrees F.

19 April - Clouds were scattered. There was no rain, but an early morning haze reduced visibility to 1 to 3 miles. Visibility improved to 3 to 5 miles by 1100 hours. Winds were out of the west at 5 to 8 MPH. Temperature low was 42 degrees F.

20 April - Again there was no rain; however, the sky was partially overcast during the day. The sky cleared at night. Early morning visibility was 3 to 5 miles and increased to 6 to 8 miles by 1100 hours. Winds were out of the west at 7 to 9 MPH. Temperature low was 50 degrees F.

The weather throughout the period was mild with limited early morning visibility. Cumulus cloud buildups during the day resulted in isolated rain showers that may have limited observed fires and tactical air use. However, these periods were brief. Early morning fog and haze was a mixed blessing. It provided

concealed, but also limited longrange observation. Rain showers reduced cross country mobility for short periods of time; however, southwesterly winds dried the countryside quickly after a storm.

The weather had little effect on the natural terrain features. Frequent rain showers had an impact on the flow of the Pegnitz and Main-Donau rivers; however, the impact was minimal. Equipment movement and supply flow should not have been adversely effected by the weather. Damp equipment and supplies dried rapidly in the wind. The weather should not have impacted on improved roads which served as lines of communication.

The influence of the weather on tactical operations was varied but was not a critical concern for the tactical commanders in the battle. Early morning visibility was limited due to haze and fog. Further reductions in visibility were experienced during rain showers. In addition to the reduction in long range observation, use of photographic equipment was limited during these periods. Midday conditions were optimum for observation. Degradation of radio communications could be expected in the vicinity of rain showers. Use of visual signals was also limited at times. Skies cleared at night, and temperatures were comfortable. Starlight/moonlight provided optimum conditions for night operations. The winds during the period were light and varied in direction. Limited visibility in the early morning effected the use of tactical air, but by 1000 hours daily, visibility was sufficient for the use of air power. The buildup of cumulus clouds in the afternoon resulted in turbulent flying conditions and reduced lateral visibility. The clouds could have been beneficial in screening friendly air from observation by enemy air and in limiting enemy ground to air observation.

In summary, reduction in visibility, particularly in the early morning hours prior to 1000 hours, was the principal impact of weather on combat operations. The use of smoke and other battlefield obscurants had to be carefully considered. South to southwesterly winds would blow smoke into the attacking allied forces. This would favor the use of a haze to cover allied movements; however, was not favorable for the use of screens. In any event, the wind would quickly dissipate any battlefield obscurant. The steady improvement of weather associated with the coming of Spring would have had a positive effect on troop morale.

TERRAIN IN THE GENERAL AREA (OCOKA).

Observation and fire. The German forces were able to observe the allied advance on Nuremburg from the North and Northwest. The rolling terrain afforded use of weapons at their maximum ranges. The approaches to Nuremburg used by the allies included the autobahn and other major highways. Observation along these routes was excellent except in built-up areas.

Cover and concealment. Small farm complexes, small valleys, and built-up areas were used to conceal forces. In addition, large valleys were used to hide large-scale troop movements. Forces sought cover in built-up areas and small wooded areas.

Obstacles. Ansbach, Bamberg, Neustat, and Erlangen were major obstacles enroute to the objective. Nuremberg itself must be considered a significant obstacle to movement. The Main-Donau and Pegnitz rivers are the significant natural obstacles in the general area. The towns and rivers were an integral part of the enemy's delay/defensive plan and afforded a significant advantage.

Key Terrain. The key terrain from the German viewpoint was the Nuremberg complex. U.S. forces also considered this town to be critical to their success. At this point in the war, the German ability to move was limited to a general retreat to the south-southeast toward Munchen. U.S. forces could not bypass the town because of its strategic importance. The Germans used the inherent advantage of occupying a built-up area to tie up a considerable U.S. force. Remnants of German forces were put to this task while other German forces continued to retreat to the south.

Avenues of approach. U.S. forces moved south from Bamberg, and east from Hochstadt and Ansbach using the autobahn and major highways. These approaches were well suited to rapid advance. Good offroad mobility allowed U.S. forces to easily bypass enemy obstacles. Major German force concentrations were located in the built-up areas through which the avenues passed; neutralization of these forces was critical to U.S. success. In general, the avenues accommodated U.S. force movement adequately.

TERRAIN IN NUREMBURG (OCOKA)

Observation and fire. Due to the range of observation permitted, occupation of the buildings within Nuremberg afforded the occupant a significant advantage. Narrow streets and building rubble reduced street level observation to a maximum of 100 meters. Artillery was used by the advancing forces to destroy occupied buildings and to engage targets of opportunity on the outskirts of the built-up areas. German forces fought from house to house until they were destroyed or forced to submit.

Cover and concealment. The town of Nuremberg provided excellent cover and concealment from ground and air fire and observation. This factor delayed the U.S. advance and forced the attacker to use maximum force to route German forces from strong defensive positions.

Obstacles. Crossing sites were numerous on the Main River in the north; however, only a few well placed snipers were required to stop the advance across the river. The attacker was also

required to secure crossing sites across the Pegnitz river. In the southern sector of town, a railway passenger terminal, railyards, large industrial complexes, and railroad marshalling yards were obstacles to the attacker. The most significant obstacle was the inner walled city within Nuremburg. The walls of this inner city were 10 to 15 feet high and 20 feet thick, and were used as a fortress by the Germans. The final German stand was made in the inner city. Debris from artillery fire and tactical air created local obstacles that hampered movement within the city.

Key terrain. The key terrain within the city of Nuremburg was considered to be the inner walled city. The objective of the U.S. force was to seize the city as rapidly as possible. The city was the major obstacle in achieving this objective due to the tremendous advantage it afforded the defender. The mission assigned to the forces within the city was to defend to the last man. The magnitude of the U.S. advance assured the defeat of these forces; however, the time required favored the German objective of delaying the advance. Once inside the walled city, 24 to 30 hours were required to eliminate resistance.

Avenues of approach. The avenues of approach within the city consisted of streets along the axis of advance, as well as parks and bridges that were astride the axis. The requirement to eliminate resistance within the city required that each pocket of resistance be eliminated along the way. Tactical air was used by U.S. forces to interdict German forces exiting to the south of Nuremburg. Indirect fire was of limited use in this engagement. Within the city, direct fire weapons were employed. The Germans used their artillery in this manner. Maneuver space was limited in town, it was not a critical factor in the outcome of the battle.

EFFECT OF TERRAIN AND WEATHER ON COMMAND AND CONTROL

The arrangement of buildings and streets in Nuremburg limited combat actions to squad and platoon level. Coordination between units was extremely difficult due to the limited visibility at street level. Intense combat and a shortage of radio and wire assets further complicated command and control.

MILITARY OPERATIONS ON URBANIZED TERRAIN (MOUT)

Nuremburg was a major industrial complex situated on a critical line of communication. The inner city was constructed with narrow winding streets that radiated, in an irregular pattern, from the center of the city. Buildings were close together along the streets. Industrial buildings were located in the southern portion of the city and residential buildings were in the north and east. Streets in the residential area were wider; however, buildings often formed a continuous front along each city block. Inner courts within each rectangular block of

houses were common. In the eastern part of the city, residential dwellings were characterized by single dwellings or row houses. Dwellings were often separated from the roadway by low walls. Yards within these walls contained trees and gardens. Parks were present along the Pegnitz and Main rivers.

The hub of Nuremburg was in the inner city. Furth was a major suburb of Nuremburg, but other smaller towns were located to the north and east. The German defense consisted of mutually supporting battle positions; however, the defenders did not exercise the control and coordination necessary to establish an effective defense. The radial pattern of streets within the city afforded the assignment of concise boundaries for U.S. forces. The city was divided into "pie" slices assigned to units of the attacking force. Corps control of the battle was effected by monitoring the general progress within each slice. Due to the nature of the urbanized terrain, the battle consisted of a series of uncoordinated small unit actions ultimately focused on attainment of the strategic and political objectives of the attacker.

Buildings in Nuremburg were of masonry construction and were often surrounded by walls made of brick or stone and mortar. The buildings were 2 to 4 stories, had raftered ceilings, and tile roofs. The absence of timber construction added to the defender's advantage because of the reduced fire hazard associated with masonry construction as compared to timber. Interior lines of communication for the defender were excellent. Extensive demolition effort was required to breach walls used by the defender.

In summary, the town of Nuremburg presented a unique challenge to the attacker and defender, and is a classical study in the problems of MOUT operations.

IV. The Forces

STRENGTH AND COMPOSITION

Elements of the U.S. Seventh Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Patch, participated in the Battle of Nuremburg. Although the 42d Infantry Division was part of the XXI Corps when the Battle of Nuremburg started, it had been transferred to the XV Corps on 19 April 1945. The XV Corps had total responsibility for the battle in the city. For this reason, the XXI Corps is not listed in the Allied order of battle.

Full TOE strength of a U.S. infantry division was 14,243. On 16 April 1945 the 42d Infantry Division had a strength of 13,707. Strength figures could not be located for the 3rd and 45th Infantry Divisions, but there is some evidence to suggest that their strength was slightly below that of the 42d Infantry Division. The 30th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division had a total strength of 2,594 on 1 April 1945. Average strength of regiments of the 42d Infantry Division was 3,077. Based on the evidence presented, a reasonable estimate of the strength of the three Allied infantry divisions at Nuremburg is 35,000 to 40,000 soldiers. This does not include the field artillery battalion attached to the XV Corps nor the strength of the 106th Cavalry Group and the 14th Armored Division. These units were involved in sealing escape routes from the city, but they were never directly involved in the fight for the city.

In a XIII SS Corps report the strength is placed between 3500 and 3900 men. Further, this force had limited artillery support and few heavy weapons. [1] However, based on the broad frontage for which the Corps was responsible, these figures are extremely low and difficult to believe. Few of the XIII SS Corps units were directly involved in the battle. The staffs of the 9th VGD and the 212th Infantry Division were combined and moved into Nuremburg to form the staff of the Nuremburg Combat Command (NCC). The XIII SS Corps was responsible for the line stretching from Nuremburg north to elements of the German 7th Army. The LXXXII Corps was greater in strength than the XIII SS Corps, but its sector, extending from the boundary with the XIII SS Corps and extending to the south, was smaller than that of the XIII SS Corps. Both the LXXXII Corps and the XIII SS Corps were involved in the fighting to the north, east and west of Nuremburg. Their lines were moved to the south as the Allied XV and XXI Corps advanced. The XIII SS Corps moved one regiment of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division into Nuremburg and made it subordinate to the NCC. The size and composition of the battle groups listed under the NCC is unknown, but battle groups were normally of battalion size. Perhaps the best way of estimating the number of German troops in Nuremburg, is to relate it to the number of German Prisoners taken in Nuremburg. From the 16th to

the 20th of April, the XV Corps captured 25,855 prisoners. [2] During the period of actual fighting within the city (from the 17th to the 20th of April), the 3rd, 42d, and 45th Infantry Divisions captured a total of 18,410 Germans. [3] This would indicate the presence of a German force in Nuremburg that was much smaller than the attacking XV Corps.

Division artillery in XV Corps was augmented with six attached artillery battalions. The XII Tactical Air Force flew 216 sorties during the period 17 to 20 April 1945 in direct support of XV Corps. In contrast, the NCC had few tanks and very little artillery. Generalleutnant Julius Braun, Special Staff Artillery Officer for the 1st Army during this period, summarized the German artillery status in the quote below.

"Insufficient ammunition, apart from the general lack of guns, prime movers, fuel and compact units. Some of the few ammunition carriers assigned to the units in and around Nuremburg were dependent upon the ammo dump "Feucht", which was practically drained empty or else equipped with ammo of non-suitable caliber, others drew their ammo from dumps on the Danube; one fully mobile 17 cm gun battery of 82d Army Corps with 3 guns and prime movers, depended for its ammo on the allegedly one and only remaining dump near Hof stocking this type of ammo. ..." [4]

The NCC depended upon 100 88mm anti-aircraft guns that were scattered throughout the city as the primary direct fire support weapon. However, most of these guns were captured or destroyed between 17-18 April 1945. German air support consisted of approximately 35 raids (66 sorties) during 17-20 April 1945. [5] This evidence substantiates the overwhelming superiority of the Allied force that advanced on Nuremburg.

U.S. ORDER OF BATTLE

7th Army

XV Corps

3rd Infantry Division

7th Infantry Regiment

15th Infantry Regiment

30th Infantry Regiment

42d Infantry Division

222nd Infantry Regiment

232nd Infantry Regiment

242nd Infantry Regiment

45th Infantry Division

157th Infantry Regiment

179th Infantry Regiment

180th Infantry Regiment

191st Tank Battalion

645th Tank Destroyer Battalion

14th Armored Division

106th Cavalry Group

158th Field Artillery Battalion

160th Field Artillery Battalion

171st Field Artillery Battalion

189th Field Artillery Battalion

283rd Field Artillery Battalion

250th Field Artillery Battalion

GERMAN ORDER OF BATTLE

Army Group B

1st Army

XIII SS Corps

2nd Mountain Division

9th Volksgrenadier Division

79th Volksgrenadier Division

212th Infantry Division

356th Volksgrenadier Division

Panzer Kampfgruppe Von Hobe

LXXXII Corps

17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division (-)

36th Volksgrenadier Division

416th Infantry Division

Nuremberg Combat Command

One Regiment, 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division

Volkssturm Battalions

Battle Group Reinow

Battle Group Stuebel

Battle Group Reinch

TECHNOLOGY

In some respects, German produced equipment was technically superior, to American equipment. The German Panzer tanks had larger, higher velocity main guns and better off-road movement capability. But, the mechanical turret crank on the American Sherman tank gave the Americans a decided advantage over the hand crank on the German Panther tank. [6] The 88mm Anti-aircraft gun had proved throughout the war that it could also serve as a tank killer and demanded cautious respect. This was somewhat offset by the general lack of mobility in some of the German equipment. There were few self-propelled 88mm guns; the majority were in fixed positions around the city. The Germans did have a few tanks in the city; however, these proved to be of little value in an urban environment. The house-to-house fighting within Nuremburg depended upon motivation and training. In general, technology had little impact on the outcome of the battle.

COMMAND, CONTROL, AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

Good command and control is essential to any military operation. On the American side, the XV Corps was well structured and the units of the Corps had been working together for some time. The division staffs of the 42nd, 3rd, and 45th Infantry Divisions were well organized and trained. There are no indications of personality problems between commanders and all indications are that Haislip's Corps functioned very efficiently. Communications appear to have been excellent during the period. Reports indicate that the 3rd Infantry Division was in near constant radio and wire contact with subordinate units. In addition, near constant radio contact was maintained with senior and parallel headquarters. [7] The Germans had little impact on the command and control system of XV Corps. Enemy counterattacks were quickly repulsed, and the enemy was rarely effective in the Corps rear area.

The command and control exercised by the Germans was not as effective. There were few regular units involved in the defense of Nuremburg. The G-2 summary of enemy activity on XXI Corps front for the period 28 February thru 6 May indicates the presence of a loose organizational structure for the units in Nuremburg.

"When the decision was made to defend a town threatened by us, the Defense Commander sent his "Defense Staff" into the surrounding areas to pick up stragglers and organize them into alarm units. Remnants of tactical units retreating through the area were supposed to report to the Defense Commander and participate in the defense either as individual units or merged with alarm units under the "Defense Staff". In some cases, as in Nuremburg, all men between the ages of 15 and 65 were called into the Volkssturm. Means of transportation and food supplies for these improvised formations were frequently confiscated from the local population."

"Organization of the Defense Command itself was at times obscure. It appears that the Wehrkreis command was supposed to be in charge of supplies and of defense preparations, while the Corps in the field took over when a town came within a battle area. Communications were so poor however that frequently no one knew just what the channels of command were. Consequently the effectiveness of measures taken usually depended upon the energy and determination of the Defense Commander on the scene." [8]

About 10 April, the Defense Commander of Nuremburg was Major General Mueller. He was relieved for recommending that the city not be defended and was replaced by Generalleutnant Dippold who held the command from 12 thru 15 April 1945. During this time it was the responsibility of the Defense Commander to make the City of Nuremburg into a fortified position. [9]

It is not clear who had the overall responsibility for the defense of the City. One report indicates that Gauleiter Karl Holz was appointed Defense Commander by Himmler and put in absolute control of all organizations, both civil and military, in the district. [10] However, other reports indicate that the XIII SS Corps, responsible for the defense of Nuremburg in the XIII SS Corps sector, ordered the 9th VGD to take control of forces controlled by the Gauleiter. The date associated with the issue of this directive is 16 April. [11] The staff of the 9th VGD and the staff of the 212th Infantry Division were combined on or about 13 April and established itself as the Nuremburg Combat Command about 14 April. [12] The signal facilities available to the Germans within Nuremburg were limited in availability and those facilities that were available were unreliable. It is likely that the public telephone system was the primary means of communications for the Germans. [13] Allied bombing of the city reduced much of the city to rubble which would have a disruptive effect on wire communications.

The amalgamation of German units in Nuremburg would defy efficient command and control even with good communications equipment and a well trained staff. In view of the command structure and the state of available communications means, it is not surprising that the Germans had difficulty in maintaining the continuity of their defense.

BATTLEFIELD CONDITIONS AND TROOP MORALE

The American forces had crossed the Rhine in late March and were relentless in their advance. The Germans had been unable to hold a defensive front and American superiority was clearly evident to all American soldiers. It was just a matter of time before Germany surrendered. Casualties were low and replacements continued to arrive. For example, despite heavy fighting for the whole month of April, the 3rd Infantry Division had only 127 men killed in action and 616 wounded in action. [14]

For the Germans, the situation was entirely different. They had been retreating rapidly and morale was low. The Volkssturm, created in September 1944, proved ineffective. General Kessel gives a good indication of the feelings of the people when discussing the popular reaction to the Volkssturm:

"The people, on the other hand, were predominantly of the opinion that if the Wehrmacht was unable to cope with the situation, then the Volkssturm would not be able to do so either." [15]

Further, in almost every instance, the people were opposed to the defense of a city because they knew that it would be destroyed by the attacking forces. However, a strong defense commander could overcome these objections and such was the case in Nuremberg. Because of the inherent advantage of urban terrain that is enjoyed by the defender, German soldiers were able to put up fierce resistance in Nuremberg. Although the Gauleiter had declared the intent to defend the city to the "last round", the number of German prisoners (25,855) taken in Nuremberg indicates that the soldiers felt otherwise. Had the soldiers in Nuremberg been more resolute, the battle for the city may have been much tougher for U.S. forces.

LEADERSHIP

In military operations in urban terrain, small unit leadership is key to the outcome of the battle. The young officers and Non-commissioned officers in the XV Corps had been fighting in Europe for months and had extensive combat experience. Lieutenant General Haislip was characterized by Weigley as a cool fighter. [16] Based on the past few months of action, the Americans had a significant advantage in morale and general troop welfare as mentioned above. Lieutenant General Haislip, in a speech to elements of all XV Corps units on 21 April in Nuremberg commented:

"I have never seen better divisions than the 3rd and 45th and I don't believe there are any finer divisions than these two. Supporting them were veteran XV Corps units of cavalry, artillery, engineers, tank destroyers, and anti-aircraft artillery, forming a magnificent fighting team." [17]

On the German side, things were far different. Although the German soldier had proven himself time and time again, his general morale and welfare was low. Constant retreat had an extremely negative effect. Most of the soldiers in Nuremberg were not regular army soldiers but civilians making up the Volkssturm. These units had almost no training, were poorly equipped, and were not motivated to fight. There were, however, regular units (SS, Luftwaffe, and Panzer Grenadiers) in Nuremberg, and these were led by highly motivated soldiers with

excellent training. At the senior leadership level, Gaultier Holz was extremely dedicated to the fight as the quote alone would indicate.

In summary, the Americans enjoyed a significant leadership advantage over the Germans, not only because of past performance, but also because of the training of the typical XV Corps soldier. The senior leadership, normally critical to the outcome of a battle, was not as important in the Battle of Nuremberg because of the nature of the fight.

ENDNOTES

- [1] XIII SS Corps Report N-17500.670.
- [2] Headquarters, XV Corps United States Army, Action Against Enemy, Reports After, dated 1 June 1945.
- [3] IBID.
- [4] Report on the Activities in Central Germany of the Special Staff Artillery Officer 318 to the 1st Army between 23 March and 8 May 1945. N-17500.514.
- [5] See #2 above.
- [6] Richard H. Barnes, "Arracourt-- September 1944", (MMAS Thesis, US Army Command and General Staff College: Leavenworth, Ks. 1982), pg..
- [7] 3rd Infantry Division After Action Report, Report of Operations, ETO. Jan, Apr, May 1945 (M-N 1020.1).
- [8] G-2 Summary of Enemy Activity on XXI Corps Front 28 February thru 6 May.
- [9] Preparations for the Defense of Nuremburg during the period from 12-16 April 45 by Generalleutnant Benignies Dippold (MS #B-145).
- [10] Same as 8 above.
- [11] Same as 1 above.
- [12] 1st Army, Report by Major General Hauser, N17500.412A.
- [13] Same as 9 above.
- [14] Same as 7 above.
- [15] "The German Volkssturm" by Generalmajor Hans Kessil, 23 June 1947, N-17500.610.
- [16] The Papers of Dwight David Eisenhower, Vol 4, pg. 2246, edited by Alfred D. Chandler Jr..
- [17] Same as 2 above.

LOGISTIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS

Unit after-action reports, summaries, and other records of logistical data pertaining to the fight at Nuremburg are not generally found in either the archival or primary sources available. Based on the available material, however, some generalized observations and explanatory statements can be made.

The most fundamental and telling difference between the opposing forces at Nuremburg was that U.S. forces had already won the war and that German resistance was generated out of desperation. The logistical picture mirrors this circumstance. Where American shortages did exist, they were transitory and normally the result of a lapse in the transportation system supporting the Americans. The German forces, on the other hand, essentially had no functional logistical system by the time Nuremburg was contested. They were forced to survive by scavenging and use of prepositioned stocks. The German 1st Army Commander, General Foetsch, in a statement made while a POW, commented on the Nazi logistical situation at the time stating:

"there could be no comparison of the 1st Army's lack of supply of weapons, ammunition and fuel during the engagements with the American forces."
[1]

The extensive use of anti-aircraft guns (88s) by the Germans during their defense of Nuremburg was due to their severe lack of artillery ammunition, anti-tank guns and medium-sized infantry guns. Additionally, they lacked virtually all other categories of essential supplies, including medical materials and repair parts. Recovery operations were not performed and maintenance facilities were not available. [2] A German officer stated that:

".. distribution problems were severe as the situation worsened. Gasoline, equipment, and ammunition stores were in existence, especially on airfields and in motor pools. These supplies never reached the front. The supplies were being wasted, and worse still, were being pillaged by the local civilian population." [3]

U.S. air superiority, long established and virtually unchallenged, forced whatever German logistical operations that could be mounted to move during hours of darkness or weather that precluded air operations.

"In addition to the shortages of troops and transport, so numerous and persistent were American planes that no German unit could move with impunity during daylight." [4]

A final ironic comment on the simultaneously hopeless yet fanatical situation that German forces faced during the battle

for Nuremburg is made by MacDonald. He notes that:

"The Germans were, even in April 45, conserving aviation gasoline - gas desperately short - for use by newly developed jet fighters in a strategic move to save the crumbling 3rd Reich." [5]

In marked contrast to their opponents:

"...U.S. forces experienced some shortages of selected items such as light shell ammunition, however, supplies were available to the rear. The problem in logistics became one of transportation." [6]

On the operational level, the U.S. 7th Army plans had envisioned a continued eastern thrust. When these plans were altered to turn and drive south, engineer and transportation plans could not adjust to the change because of a lack of knowledge of the transportation network in the new operational area. [7] Railway movement of supplies ended at the Rhine River because of bridge destruction. Rail movement across the Rhine did not resume until late April 45. Before this trans-Rhine service was initiated, trucks hauled all supplies from west of the river to forward areas. [8] Aerial drop was rarely used to resupply and did not impact on operations in Nuremburg. Seventh Army records indicate that during the period 15-21 April 45, 8 rations were not readily available. Supply dropped to .5 days. The report attributes some of the problem to the requirement to feed liberated personnel and POWs. [9]

The requirement to conduct continuous long-haul movement of hi-usage, hi-tonnage ammunition (105 and 155 mm) along lengthening supply lines accentuated the sporadic fuel shortages that lead units experienced. The rapidity of the general advance, large numbers of POWs, and blown bridges further complicated the situation. The American circumstances were, at least partially, self-imposed.

"When the change in direction of the 7th Army attack was made, it was necessary to consolidate stocks in one army supply point from which the three supported corps had to draw. Shortages in units were usually restricted to lighter types of shell and did not indicate an army shortage, but merely non-availability at forward supply points. Expenditure of 75 and 76 mm tank ammunition was heavy since tanks were often used as artillery support for infantry troops." [10]

In summary, the logistical requirements for each side were not vital to the outcome at Nuremburg. At best, the German defense could have been better supported; however, it is doubtful that logistics had a major impact on the German course of action in Nuremburg. Where U.S. forces received supplies on a push

basis based on a variety of usage factors, the Germans existed and fought without a centralized supply system. U.S. forces experienced transportation and distribution breakdowns that posed some short duration problems. The German army fought without battlefield evacuation or salvage and a severely constrained maintenance system. The MOUT operation of Nuremburg was impacted by shortages of equipment and supplies but not determined by those shortages.

ENDNOTES

- [1] General Hermann Foertsch, *My Opinions to the Reports 1 and 2 by General Major Hauser*, 24 February 1947, MS# B-349, pg. 1.
- [2] Oberst A.D. Cord Von Hobe, *Panzer Kampfgruppe XIII (6 April - 5 May 1945)*, Historical Division, HQ, U.S. Army, Europe, MS# B-772: Muehlenkoppel, Germany, 5 April 1948, pgs. 3 & 4.
- [3] *Ibid* ., pg. 21.
- [4] MacDonald, Charles B., *The Last Offensive*, OCMH, 1973, pg. 413.
- [5] *Ibid* ., pg 423.
- [6] Final Report of the G-3 Section, HQ, 6th Army Group, 1 July 1945, R-10308, pg. 58.
- [7] Seventh Army History, Phase IV, Part 2, chapter XXVII thru XXXI, R-13215-E, pg. 1221.
- [8] *Ibid* ., pg 1223.
- [9] *Ibid* ., pg 1223.
- [10] *Ibid* ., pg 1228.

PERSONNEL ASPECTS

Overview

In designating the missions of 7th Army and the 1st French Army, the tactical operations, strength, equipment of forces, and supply lines were considered. Seventh Army was assigned the mission of making a deep thrust into the Nuremburg and Munich areas while the 1st French Army protected its south flank and lines of communication by a blocking action along the east bank of the Rhine River, in the Black Forest, and east in the Stuttgart area. [1] The rapid advance of Allied forces against the collapsing Nazi armies would extend allied lines of communication and pose some logistical problems for the command in terms of personnel service support.

"On the other hand, the German high command was faced with not only giving ground to the allied advance, but also low civilian morale. This was particularly evident in the Nuremburg and Munich areas. In almost every instance, local opinion was violently opposed to defense of the cities. Therefore, it required a strong commander to override the opposition and to organize both German forces and civilian occupants of the city into a defensive force. In Nuremburg opposition to defense of the city came not only from the population through the burgermeister but also from representatives of the army itself. About 10 April the Defense Commander of the forces in Nuremburg, Brigadier General Mueller and Major General Weissenberger, Commanding General of Wehrkreis XIII, both decided that a defense of Nuremburg was senseless and refused to hold the city. The Party, however, proved stronger. The two generals were relieved of command and Gauleiter Karl Holz was appointed Defense Commander by Himmler. Holz was in absolute control of all organizations, both civil and military. Death by public hanging was proclaimed the penalty for protesting against or refusal to participate in the total defense of the city." [2]

Replacement Operations

Both sides experienced unique problems replacing combat forces. The Wehrmacht replacement system suffered a complete breakdown in the wake of the Allied onslaught. As a result, reserve and training units were used to replace front-line units. This "unit replacement system" was a radical departure from past replacement methods. In the past each German unit had a responsible unit which provided dedicated replacement support. However, this system staggered under the weight of allied advances across the Rhine. After the Rhine was crossed, there was no longer an organized attempt to provide replacements for specific units. Wehrkreis made some attempts to function but their efforts were fruitless because of the speed of the advance and disruption of communications. "Finally, replacement battalion cadres together with whatever attached personnel were

supposed to train were called up as alarm companies or were thrust hurriedly into any larger formation." [3]

Allied, specifically U.S. forces, faced the prospect of conducting replacement operations within a very fluid environment. Support of rapidly advancing units proved difficult. Specific details of replacement operations that supported XV and XXI corps are lacking. However, it appears that three replacement battalions were in place in the theater to provide replacements for all units on the continent. These battalions are listed below.

41 Replacement Battalion
86 Replacement Battalion
92 Replacement Battalion

The report of the Replacement Board (commissioned in 1947) resulted in the review of the U.S. replacement system world-wide. In the foreword to the report, the board cited universal dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of the replacement system. The Board was most impressed by the apparent lack of importance attached to personnel matters by commanders and their staffs in virtually every echelon of the Army. Many of the shortcomings associated with the replacement system can be directly attributed to this general lack of concern for personnel matters. [4] It may be concluded that replacement operations in the European theater during World War II presented personnel planners with the same problems confronting their present day counterparts. The Board's report cited the lack of physical training of the individual replacements destined for the theater. The packaging of replacements, individual/unit/crew, also posed another dilemma in that the system did not arrive at a good method for replenishing front line units. Use of hospital returnees presented another problem. Systems for the return of wounded soldiers to their units, and reclassification of soldiers with wounds that prevented return to duty in the original MOS were not clearly defined.

The movement of replacements from the rear areas to forward locations is an interesting study. No specific mention is made of the methods used by the XV Corps to move replacements forward as the Corps drove towards Nuremburg. Reports from several units participating in the operation indicate that congested highways hampered the flow of replacements forward. The Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 42nd Division Artillery's report for the month of April 1945 spoke of traffic interference caused by the increasing numbers of allied prisoners of war that were released by the Germans, and the flow of displaced civilians. [5] Similarly, the 14th Armored Division's after action report for the month of April 1945 indicates that prisoners of war were being taken by the hundreds and the Division was having problems with the movement of these prisoners to the rear. [6] Both accounts point to growing congestion of the main supply routes to and from the forward areas. There is little doubt that this situation had a significant impact on replacement operations.

Strength Accounting

How the respective AG/G-1 representatives managed their strength accounting procedures is difficult to determine. There is evidence that units reported casualty/strength data in the G-1 Periodic Report, perhaps the forerunner of the present day personnel status report. The G-1 periodic report contains the following information:

- Location of administrative installations for replacements, POWs, stragglers, and refugees at the close of the reporting period, as well as changes for the report period
- Strength of Command
- Casualties by organization including:
 - killed
 - sick and wounded subdivided by
 - evacuees vs. nonevacuees
 - captured
 - missing
- Graves registration (status of burials and cemeteries)
- Replacements
- Prisoners of War (captured and evacuated)
- Stragglers by organization
- Morale
- Civilian population (status of evacuation, unusual events incident to control and administration)

Battle casualties were reported on a 24 hour basis, through unit, division, corp, and higher. Indications are that strength accounting was also reported through command channels. The conclusion of the Board is that G-1 functions cannot be satisfactorily provided thru the use of the adjutant general channels. The adjutant general's reports, although possibly more accurate, lose their practical value because of the delay involved. In order to carry out the assigned mission, G-1 reports must be received and compiled by the most expeditious means available. All information of an administrative or historical nature should be procured through adjutant general reporting channels. All requirements for G-1 reporting should be soley on an operational basis. [7] This conclusion is still valid

in light of the present day approach to strength accounting. Aggregate strength is reported through operational channels, while the more detailed (although slower) casualty data is reported through the Adjutant General channels.

While specific information concerning the strengths of the combatants is very limited, the 3rd Infantry Division's after action report does contain a cumulative casualty report which reflects total casualties suffered during the month of April 1945.

CUMULATIVE CASUALTY REPORT (3rd Infantry Division)
(8)

Battle Casualties (BC)

UNIT	KIA	WIA	MIA	IA	TOTAL BC
7th Inf	45	192	-	21	258
15th Inf	48	208	2	31	289
30th Inf	28	122	4	11	165
Div Arty	-	-	-	-	-
9th FA Bn	1	5	-	-	6
10th FA Bn	-	3	-	-	3
39th FA Bn	2	5	-	-	7
41st FA Bn	-	1	-	-	1
10th Engr Bn	2	8	-	2	12
3rd Med Bn	-	1	-	-	1
Div HQ	-	-	-	-	-
3rd Recon Trp	1	6	-	2	9
HQ Sppt Trp	-	-	-	-	-
HQ Co.	-	-	-	-	-
LP Plt	-	-	-	-	-
3rd Sig Co.	-	2	1	-	3
3rd J Co.	-	-	-	-	-
703rd Ord Co.	-	-	-	-	-
Div Band	-	-	-	-	-
<hr/>					
Totals	127	553	7	67	754
Attached Units					
441st AAA Bn	1	4	-	-	5
601st TD Bn	12	22	-	1	35
756th TK Bn	7	22	-	2	31

Non-Battle Casualties (NBC) [9]

UNIT	DEATHS	DISEASE	EXH	INJ	TOTAL NBC	GRAND TOTAL
7th Inf Bn	-	181	7	81	269	527
15th Inf Bn	-	161	4	55	220	509
30th Inf Bn	-	167	6	51	224	389
Div Arty	-	4	-	1	5	5
9th FA Bn	-	30	-	3	33	9
10th FA Bn	-	19	-	5	24	27
39th FA Bn	-	28	-	2	30	37
41st FA Bn	-	10	-	1	11	12
10th Engr Bn	-	61	1	8	70	82
3rd Med Bn	-	8	-	1	9	10
Div HQ	-	6	-	-	6	6
3rd Recon Trp	-	23	-	2	25	34
HQ Sppt Trp	-	-	-	-	-	-
HQ Co.	1	5	-	1	7	7
LP Plt.	-	3	-	-	3	3
3rd Sig Co.	-	12	-	3	15	18
3rd J Co.	-	13	-	3	16	16
703rd Ord Co.	-	4	-	2	6	6
Div Band	-	-	-	1	1	1
<hr/>						
Totals	1	735	18	220	974	1728
Attached Units						
441st AAA Bn	-	52	2	3	57	62
601st TD Bn	-	24	1	11	36	71
756th TK Bn	-	33	2	7	42	73

In addition, Colonel McGarr, Commander of the 30th Infantry Regiment gives some insight into the status of the 30th Infantry Regiment prior to and after operations in Nuremburg (April 1945), in his journal. [10]

1. Combat Strength at beginning of period:

Officers:	103
Enlisted:	2491
Warrant Officers:	4

2. Casualties:

Type	Officers	Enlisted
KIA	1	24
WIA	7	142
MIA	0	13
MIA to KIA	0	4
POW	1	2
NBC	12	241
Replacmnts.	8	260
Reassigned	17	289

3. Miscellaneous Changes:

MIA to Dty.	0	14
Dty to Trnsf.	2	3
Dty to AWOL	0	18
AWOL to Dty	0	18
Dty to Conf.	0	4
Conf. to Dty	0	2
Conf. to Trnsf.	1	1
Dty to D/S	1	7
D/S to T/D	2	-
Dty to T/D	38	447
T/D to Dty	34	392
T/D to AWOL	0	1
T/D to Hospital	1	1

Warrant officer changes:

Duty to T/D : 2
T/D to Duty : 1

4. Combat Strength at End of Period:

Officers	: 103
Enlisted	: 2590
Warrant Officers:	3

Perhaps no conclusions can be drawn from Colonel McGarr's strength status; however, it is plain that his regiment's aggregate strength did increase by the end of the month, despite the fact that his unit had just participated in sustained operations. It appears he was able to obtain sufficient replacements to maintain his force.

Insights into German strength accounting and the like are limited at best. LTG Haislip, in his after action report for XV Corps actions against the enemy (April 1945), estimates German casualty loss as follows:

"Generally, an estimate of two to three prisoners of war to each other type of casualty is considered a logical basis for determining enemy losses. However, enemy casualties during April could not be figured on this basis. Small and large scale surrenders lowered the percentage of German wounded and killed. Consequently and estimate of 145,000 total enemy casualties was made based on the number of prisoners captured (128,262). During the month of April, the Corps contacted elements of divisions and battle groups totalling approximately 45,000 and miscellaneous units the original strengths of which is impossible to estimate. Of the 45,000 men in definable units, a total of 34,000 were believed to have become casualties." [11]

Medical/Medical Services

No definitive information concerning overall medical support during the operation was available. The 3rd Infantry Division's after action report provides some insight into medical procedures during the operation. The 3rd Infantry Division's medical section reported that it faced some difficulty setting up in the Bavarian towns and cities through which the Division passed. Only three times during the month of April did any medical installation remain in place for more than 24 hours. Clearing stations and other medical support facilities were constantly relocating forward as the Division advanced on Nuremburg. [12]

No definitive or elective surgery was performed during the period. Only that surgery attendant upon evacuation of battle losses was considered. The Division suffered a total of 686 battle casualties during the period. Of these, 616 were wounded, while 70 received minor injuries during the fight. In the minor injury category, 59 mild wounds or injuries were treated with subsequent return to duty.

DISTRIBUTION OF WOUNDED (3rd Infantry Division) [13]

UNIT	WIA	% WIA
Infantry	535	86.8
Artillery	18	3.0
Miscellaneous	63	10.2

Total	616	100.0

Surprisingly, the distribution of battle losses by branch for the 3rd Infantry Division closely approximates Table 5-9 (Distribution of Battle Losses by Branch) in FM 101-10-1, Staff Officers' Field Manual Organization, Technical and Logistic Data (Unclassified Data).

The 3rd Infantry Division goes on to report that evacuation of wounded did not become a problem until the routes from clearing stations to evacuation hospitals became longer due to the rapid advance of the Division. The extremely low rate of casualties during the period and the excellent road network precluded serious problems. [14]

The after action report from Headquarters, Continental Advance Section, ACS-64 (May 1945) indicates that evacuation out of the theater was principally by air. There were three air holding stations in operation: Y-96 (Darmstadt); Y-88 (Wertheim); and Y-90 (Giebelstadt). The station at Darmstadt was closed on 20 April 1945 and moved to Crallsheim on 27 April 1945. (Note: Probably to keep pace with the allied advance in the Nuremburg/Munich Area.) The patient load from Army remained steady and at no time was there a backlog of patients. [15]

Both after action reports depict rapidly advancing units driving on Nuremburg and attempts by medical personnel to keep pace with that advance. In the case of the 3rd Infantry Division, relatively light casualties enabled evacuation of wounded personnel (probably by vehicle) to take place without significant problems.

Provost Marshall

Provost Marshall activities during the operation centered around three areas: traffic control, prisoners of war, and law enforcement. Reports from the 3rd Infantry Division spoke of maintaining traffic control during the course of the operation, particularly during the river and canal crossings. In its comments and lessons learned, the 3rd Infantry Division indicates that the establishment of regimental traffic control posts at the rear of each regimental boundary greatly facilitated the control and flow of traffic throughout the forward areas. It especially increased control of traffic priorities during river crossings. [16]

Prisoners of war presented a unique problem for law enforcement authorities. As Allied forces drove deeper into the German Republic, hundreds of Allied prisoners were freed, while German prisoners were taken in droves. The 14th Armored Division reports taking hundreds of enemy prisoners and problems with movement of the prisoners to the rear. [17] XV Corps reports that its rapid advance led to the capture of 116 German hospitals and 28 POW camps resulting in the release of 26,015 Allied personnel. The 3rd Infantry Division alone reports the capture of 21,642 prisoners and 325 civilians during April 1945. Consequently, there was a growing strain on the Provost Marshall's ability to manage the glut of prisoners, both Allied and German. The Continental Advance Section ACS-G4 does report that the following prisoner of war temporary enclosures (PWTE) were in operation:

LOCATION	CAPACITY
Bohl	10,000
Worms	5,000
Lodwigshafen	100,000
Heilbronn	100,000

Note: There was an additional PWTE planned in the Heilbronn area which was to have a capacity of 70,000. [19]

Not much is recorded to indicate Provost Marshall involvement or problems in the area of law enforcement. The 3rd Infantry Division's after action report indicates continued activity in the areas of confinement, investigations, and traffic.

ENDNOTES

- [1] Final Report - G3 Section, Headquarters, 6th Army Group (March 1945), R-10308.
- [2] Collapse of the German Wehrmacht (G-2 Summary of Enemy Activity on XXI Corps Front) 28 February thru 6 May 1945, pg. 9, R-10307.
- [3] Ibid.
- [4] Report of Replacement Board, Department of the Army, 1947, pg. 7.
- [5] History of Operations, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 42d Division Artillery (April 1945).
- [6] History of the 14th Armored Division (1 April 1945 - 9 May 1945), N-12429.
- [7] Theater General Board, USFET pg. 25, R-13008.
- [8] After Action Report, 3rd Infantry Division (1 April 1945 - 24 April 1945), Section III- Personnel.
- [9] Ibid.
- [10] Colonel McGarr's Journal, Headquarters, 30th Infantry (1 April 1945 - 30 April 1945), N-18394.6C.
- [11] XV Corps' Actions Against the Enemy, After Action Report (April 1945), pgs. 74-75.
- [12] After Action Report, 3rd Infantry Division (1 April 1945 - 24 April 1945), Section V - Special Staff.
- [13] Ibid.
- [14] Ibid.
- [15] After Action Report, Headquarters Continental Advance Section, ACS - G4 (May 1945).
- [16] See # 11.
- [17] See # 5.
- [18] See # 10.
- [19] See # 14.

V. Description of the Action

During the period 12-20 April 1945, fragmentary units of the First German Army were stretched from the Lowenstein Hills to the city of Nuremberg. This was Germany's remaining "front line" in the west, and it was defended by an estimated 15,000 infantry troops, 20 artillery battalions, and 100 odd tanks and self-propelled guns. US forces had no firm intelligence; but, it appeared that the Germans were slowly withdrawing to concentrate their remaining forces in southeastern Germany. [1] Nuremberg would prove to be a major obstacle. The city was not only a railway and highway node, but also the lasting shrine to the rise of the Nazi Party. Hitler instructed that the city would be defended "to the last man".

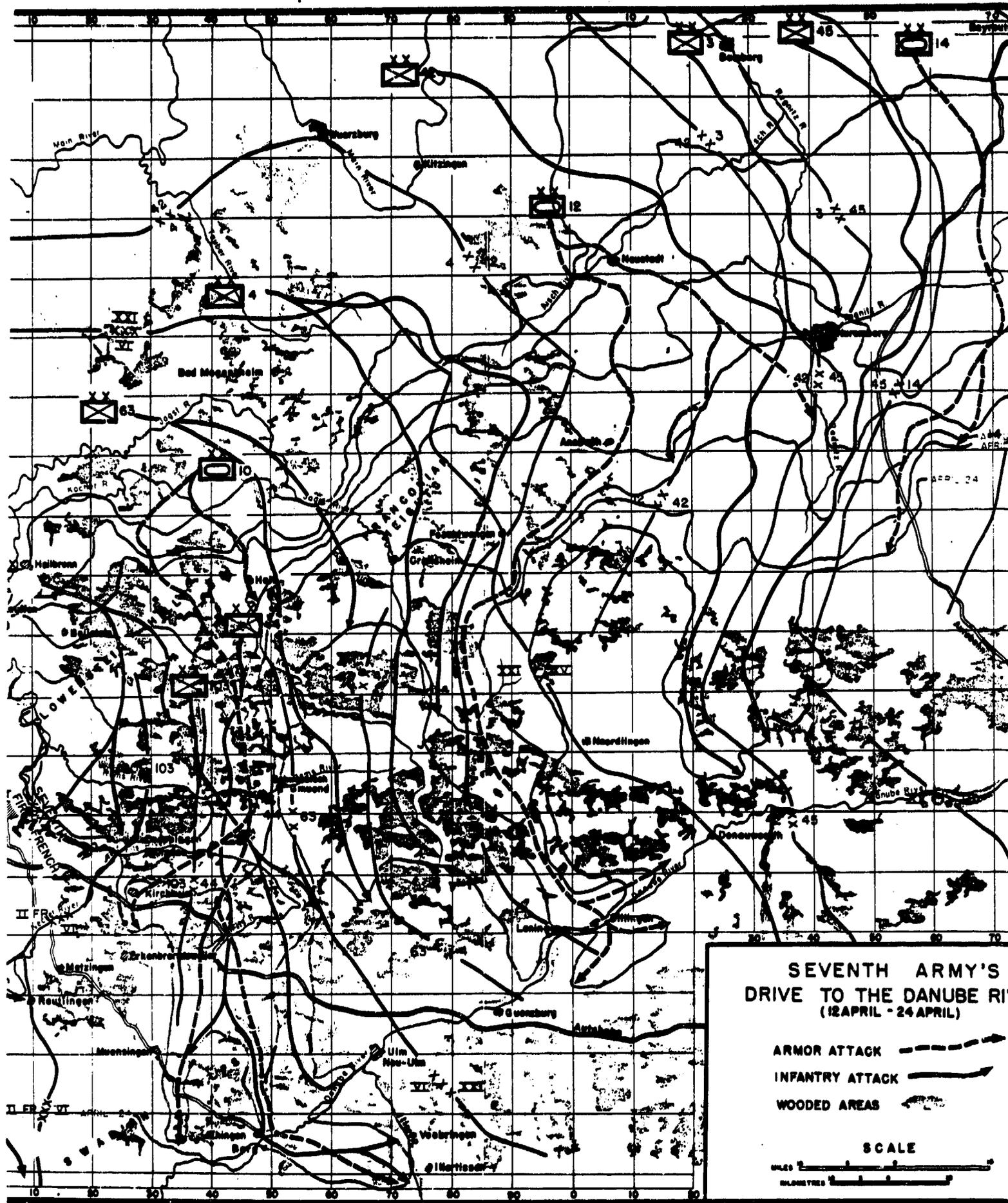
The Seventh Army's mission was to pierce the German defenses and to attrit their forces before they could reach the Austrian Alps. The Seventh Army's rapid and successful drive is depicted in Map 1. The key to the operation was the capture of Nuremberg. The struggle for that city was characterized by intense fighting between 16-20 April 1945, see Map 2. The following is a sequence of the events:

15 April 1945

The operational plan for capturing Nuremberg called for an envelopment by elements of XV Corps. Assistance, as needed, was to be provided by XXI Corps. [2] Within XV Corps, the attacking divisions formed a two-prong attack. The 3rd Infantry Division, on the corps right, would cross the Regnitz River and attack the city from the north. In the center, the 45th Infantry Division would attack from the east. The 14th Armored Division would maintain the corps' left flank and screen south and east of Nuremberg out to about 15 miles. Similarly, the 106th Cavalry Group would complete the screening mission southwest of the city.

While approaching Nuremberg on April 15, the XV Corps met only minor resistance. Elements of the 3rd Infantry Division closed to within five miles of the city. German resistance consisted of defended roadblocks, sniper activity, machine-gun emplacements, and some 27 German bombing and strafing sorties. Nevertheless, XV Corps recorded 4,279 enemy prisoners that day alone. In addition, XII Tactical Air Force supported XV Corps with 120 bombing and strafing sorties on enemy motor transports and troop concentrations. [3]

MAP 1



16 April 1945

The 3rd and 45th Infantry Divisions were poised for the assault and the 14th Armored Division and the 106th Cavalry Group completed the screen line to the east, south, and southwest. The 3rd Infantry Division began its movement across the Regnitz River at 0435 hours with the 30th Infantry Regiment on the right, the 7th Infantry Regiment in the center, and the 15th Infantry Regiment on the left. [4] Within the division's sector, only minor resistance was encountered in the numerous small towns north of Nuremberg. Each town was systematically cleared to preclude the bypassing of enemy troops. The 1st Bn 7th Infantry moved through the town of Erlangen and forced a surrender at 1435 hours. Although enemy resistance was light, forward movement by the division was slowed by the successive clearing operations.

The 3rd Division's regiments continued to advance throughout the day. Their immediate objectives were primarily towns and wooded areas. By 2200 hours, all units began reporting increased small arms, automatic weapons, and mortar fire from prepared positions. The division maintained its position throughout that night and employed aggressive patrolling to maintain contact between friendly units.

The 45th Infantry Division approached Nuremberg from the east. Divisional forces included the 179th Infantry Regiment on the right; the 180th Infantry Regiment in the center; and the southern-most 157th Infantry Regiment on the division's left flank. The 179th Infantry Regiment maintained contact with the 3rd Infantry Division in the north. The 179th was organized with three infantry battalions, the 645th TD Bn(-), and the 160th FA Bn (DS). Further, A Co, 2nd Cml Mort Bn was attached to the regiment, and B Co, 120th Engr Bn provided direct support. Enemy activity was moderate. Both the 2/179th and the 3/179th encountered enemy artillery and small arms fire throughout the day. The action was most intense in 2nd Bn's sector. Many enemy prisoners were reported captured.

The 180th Infantry Regiment was organized with three infantry battalions and the 171st FA Bn (DS). In addition, one platoon of the 2nd Cml Mort Bn was attached to the regiment, and C Co, 120th Engr Bn was provided engineer support. Enemy resistance was strongest in the town of Fishbach (on the highway between Lauf and Nuremberg). There, two battalions of the 180th Inf encountered effective enemy small arms, machine-gun, and artillery fires. Fishbach had to be cleared before advancing to Nuremberg. [5]

Upon reaching the southern outskirts of Nuremberg, the 157th Infantry Regiment swung westerly to make contact with XXI Corps and to complete the encirclement. The 157th Inf was organized with three battalions, the 191st Tank Bn, one company from the 645th TD Bn, and the 158th FA Bn (DS). Company C (-) of the 2nd Cml Mort Bn was attached to the regiment, and A Co, 120th Engr Bn

provided direct support. Also, the 45th Recon Trp of the 106th Cavalry Group maintained friendly contact on the division's left flank. The regiment encountered little organized resistance on 15 April. The action resulted in the capture of several enemy tanks and 88mm guns plus numerous German prisoners.

17 April 1945

Having surrounded Nuremberg on three sides, XV Corps tightened its grip on the city. The attacking divisions (3rd and 45th) continued the assault. Drawing nearer to the city, the attackers met with ever increasing German resistance. The Germans were concentrating in the city, and effective fires, consisting of small arms, automatic weapons, and 88mm flak guns, were directed against the attacking US units.

The 3rd Division continued its attack to the south with three regiments abreast. Under increased pressure, the division cleared the towns on the northern outskirts of Nuremberg and began closing on the city proper. Because the division's sector was narrowing, the 30th Infantry Regiment was shifted from the division's right to the left flank. Divisional artillery and tactical air support were directed at emplaced anti-aircraft batteries. Later in the day, units of the 3rd Division entered the northeastern part of the city and captured the railroad station. [6]

The 14th Armored Division's orders were amended, and its screening mission on the eastern and southern sides of Nuremberg were changed to flank protection east of the city. [7] The division's southern boundary was now the Ludwig's Canal. To the East, the 14th Division was to maintain contact with the neighboring 3rd Army. Throughout the last several days, the 14th Armored Division had only light, sporadic contact with the enemy.

Regiments of the 45th Division continued to close on Nuremberg. Task organization and regimental sectors remained as on the previous day. The 179th Infantry Regiment continued the advance with three infantry battalions in column. Leading the advance, 3rd Bn/179th Inf received most of the small arms and 88mm fires. Overall, enemy resistance was light. In the center of the division's sector, the 180th Inf encountered heavier action. Progress was slowed by enemy machine-gun positions and small arms fire. Leading elements of the regiment destroyed and seized numerous 88mm flak guns, which were concentrating their highly effective fire. The regiment captured numerous enemy prisoners. The 157th Inf Regiment consolidated its position south of the city. The 3rd Bn/157th Inf fought a stiff battle in the town of Feucht before clearing the town and moving along the Ludwig's Canal to take up positions on the division's left flank. The regimental CP was established within the city limits at approximately 1700 hours.

18 April 1945

The 3rd and 45th Divisions pressed into the city. German resistance was tenacious, and the fighting was characterized by house-to-house fighting. Buildings were cleared room by room to preclude bypassing enemy positions and snipers. The Germans fired their highly effective 88mm anti-aircraft guns point blank resulting in heavy US casualties. US units countered with concentrated artillery fire and tactical air support. Damage to the city was extensive. By midnight on the 18th, US forces had cleared and controlled two-thirds of Nuremberg.

The 3rd Division entered the city with the 7th Inf Regt on the right, the 15th Inf Regt in the center, and the 30th Inf Regt on the left. The advance was slow and methodical. There was heavy German resistance from the basements of buildings, foxholes in the city parks, and prepared 88mm gun emplacements. The 7th Regiment encountered heavy small arms, automatic weapons, and bazooka fires. The Germans fought fanatically and had to be rooted out of every house and building. One hundred and fifty local police surrendered only after tank destroyers were brought forward. Similarly, the 15th and 30th Regiments were slowed by stiff enemy resistance. Both regiments reported heavy civilian sniper fire. All three regiments withheld one battalion for rear security and mop-up operations. By midnight, divisional units had reached the Pegnitz River, which flowed through the city.

The 45th Division entered Nuremberg from the east and the south. Again, German resistance was stiff. All three regiments reported house-to-house fighting and heavy machine-gun and sniper fire. Fighting continued throughout the day and past the evening hours. The 180th Infantry Regiment encountered the heaviest action. Units of the 180th successively knocked out machine-gun positions and 88mm gun emplacements during their advance. The 1st Bn/180th Inf destroyed four 50mm mortars and forced enemy withdrawal deep into the city. The 180th Regimental CP was set up within the city by 1700 hours.

19 April 1945

XV Corps continued its assault on Nuremberg. The 42nd Infantry Division was detached from XXI Corps and attached to XV Corps to complete the encirclement of Nuremberg and to place the Battle of Nuremberg fully under XV Corps' command and control. [8] Enemy resistance was still intense. Units reported enemy fire from both civilians and uniformed troops. German artillery fire lessened as more and more of their gun positions were destroyed or overrun.

Despite heavy German resistance, the 3rd Infantry Division was relentless in their assault. The division crossed the Pegnitz River over existing bridges, which were left intact by

the withdrawing German forces. Movement was generally slow; however, by 1100 hours, one company of the 7th Inf Regt entered the Old City, in the heart of Nuremberg. The 15th Inf Regt reached the walls of the Old City by 1200 hours. After a ten minute artillery preparation, the 30th Inf Regt entered the Old City from the east. By 2235 hours, all three regiments of the division had units within the walls of the Old City. They had been able to enter the walls through the existing gates. Although German artillery fire was severely degraded, enemy resistance continued with heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire.

The mission of the 14th Armored Division remained the same. Enemy resistance, though light and sporadic, was reportedly heavier than the previous day. CCA reported an enemy concentration in the town of Neumarket. Intelligence established the presence there of elements of the 17th SS Division.

The 42nd Infantry Division was directed to attack and capture the town of Furth, northwest of Nuremberg. Thereafter, it was to assist the 3rd and the 45th Infantry Divisions in securing Nuremberg. [9] The 42nd Division, with the 222nd Inf Regt in the north, the 242nd Inf Regt in the center, and the 232nd Inf Regt in the south, proceeded to attack Furth. The regiments pressed the attack all day against determined German resistance. Again, combat was house-to-house and movement was slow but methodical. The 42nd Division secured Furth and continued its advance into Nuremberg on the 19th.

As the eastern sector narrowed, much of the 179th Inf Regt of the 45th Division was located behind the advance of the 180th Inf Regt. The 1st Bn/179th Inf Regt conducted a division blocking mission. The 2nd Bn/179th Inf Regt was designated the division reserve. Neither unit encountered significant action.

The 180th Inf Regt was driving deeper into the city with its three battalions on line; the 2nd Bn was on the left, the 1st Bn in the center, and the 3rd Bn on the right. The 1st Bn encountered only light enemy opposition. However, progress by the 2nd Bn was repeatedly slowed by sniper and machine-gun fire. The 2nd Bn captured a railroad station and took 50 German prisoners. Advancing west towards the Old City, 3rd Bn reached the walls of the inner city. There, the advance was slowed by strongly defended German positions and Bazooka and sniper fire.

The 157th Inf Regt cleared the southern portion of Nuremberg and continued northwest towards Furth. Their objective was to secure the highway between Furth and Nuremberg. Their progress was impeded by enemy resistance and time intensive house-to-house fighting. Nevertheless, by the end of the day the regiment established a CP in the city, and forward units were located at the southern edge of the Old City.

20 April 1945

The 3rd Infantry Division started its final assault from the previous day's positions within the walls of the Old City. Movement was slow, but it was evident that German resistance was faltering. German strong points were repeatedly destroyed by overwhelming firepower. Two companies of the 30th Inf Regt reached Adolf Hitler Platz, in the heart of the city, at 1155 hours. The division reached its objective and reported its zone cleared at 1400 hours.

Likewise, the 42nd Division continued its advance and made contact with forward elements of the 3rd and 45th Divisions. The 42nd Division halted its advance and maintained its forward positions. Mop-up and security operations continued in the division's rear area.

The 45th Infantry Division's final assault was conducted by the 180th Inf Regt. The 179th Inf Regt continued its blocking and reserve mission. The 157th Inf Regt was mopping up its sector of Nuremberg and protecting the division's left flank. Only the 180th reported significant action.

The 180th Inf Regt spent much of the day clearing its sector. The 1st Bn eliminated the remaining German resistance and reported its zone secure at 1600 hours. The 3rd Bn fought the entire previous night (19th) to clear enemy positions from the buildings on the east side of the Old City. This operation continued throughout the day on the 20th until the battalion reported its zone cleared and secure at 1600 hours. The 2nd Bn/180th Regt had captured 70 German prisoners by 0600 hours. During the day, the battalion encountered only limited German resistance. At 1900 hours, it was noted that many of the remaining enemy had taken refuge in an elaborate underground passage system. After a brief fight, approximately 200 Germans surrendered and the passages were cleared by 2100 hours. [10] The 45th Infantry Division reported its sector cleared at 2250 hours.

The Outcome

XV Corps reported the city of Nuremberg to be clear and secure at 2250 hours on 20 April 1945. The MOUT operation of Nuremberg was clearly a victory for the US Seventh Army. Success at Nuremberg was not the result of any spectacular tactical event. Rather, victory was a direct result of battle-hardened US veterans refusing to be denied. The fighting involved building-to-building, room-to-room, and at times hand-to-hand combat. Forward movement was slow and methodical to preclude the bypassing of enemy positions. Constant pressure applied by US infantry, tanks, artillery, and tactical air power resulted in many enemy prisoners and deteriorated the German's ability to sustain the battle. Although difficult in urban operations, US

command and control was aided by thorough planning, recognizable boundaries and objectives, and the constant use of patrols and runners to maintain friendly contact.

On 21 and 22 April 1945, parades and ceremonies were held in the city of Nuremberg to celebrate the capture of "the most German of all cities". [11]

In summary, the Germans failed in Nuremberg because they were out-manned, out-gunned, and, in the end, out-fought by a superior US force. The fall of Nuremberg was a crushing blow to the rapidly faltering German Army.

ENDNOTES

- [1] 7th Army History, Phase IV, Part 2, Chapter XXVII thru XXXI, April 1945.
- [2] Ibid., pg. 1077.
- [3] XV Corps, Action Against Enemy Report, R-12440, Jan-Apr 1945, pg. 35.
- [4] 3d Infantry Division After Action Report, April 1945.
- [5] Operations of 45th Infantry Division, R-12166, 1-30 April 1945.
- [6] 3d Infantry Division After Action Report, April 1945.
- [7] 14th Armored Division History N-12429, 1 Apr-9 May 1945.
- [8] 7th Army History, Phase IV, Part 2, Chapter XXVII thru XXXI, April 1945, pg. 1080.
- [9] History of the 42d Infantry Division for the period 1-30 April 1945, pg. 14.
- [10] Operations of 45th Infantry Division, R-12166, 1-30 April 1945.
- [11] History of the Third Infantry Division in World War II.

VI. Conclusion

The Battle of Nuremburg was fought three weeks before Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender on May 7, 1945. Actually, the outcome of the war was no longer in doubt. However, the capture of Nuremburg itself must have been a psychological death blow to the crumbling Third Reich. Hitler gave the order to defend the city "to the last man". But, even though some defenders fought tenaciously to the end, the weight of many thousands of German prisoners signified that the German Army was unwilling to sacrifice further.

The mission of the U.S. Seventh Army was to cut off the German withdrawal to the Austrian Alps. Trapping sizeable enemy forces in Nuremburg and then capturing the city increased the speed of the operation. The double envelopment of the city was planned and conducted brilliantly. The Germans were separated from possible resupply and were steadfastly forced from their defensible positions. Though movement was slow and often characterized by house-to-house combat, the operation methodically cleared the city.

The defenders of Nuremburg succumbed to battle-hardened U.S. forces that were superior in number. Good planning and command and control were key ingredients to success. Continuous U.S. pressure, bolstered by timely combat support and logistics, sealed the fate of the German defenders of Nuremburg.

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