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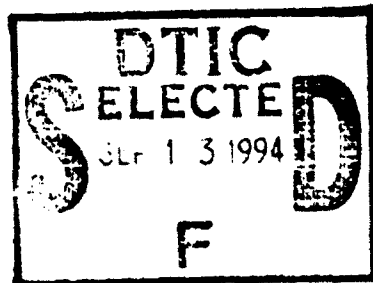


ANTI-ARMOR DEFENSE DATA STUDY
(A2D2)
PHASE I

DRAFT FINAL REPORT
VOLUME III -- US ANTI-TANK DEFENSE AT
DOM BUTGENBACH, BELGIUM (DECEMBER, 1944)



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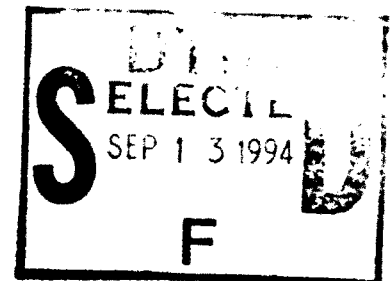
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VOLUME III -- US ANTI-TANK DEFENSE AT
DOM BUTGENBACH, BELGIUM (DECEMBER, 1944)

SEPTEMBER 10, 1990

Charles M. Baily
Joyce B. Boykin
Lloyd J. Karamales
Victoria I. Young



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INTRODUCTION

The information gathered and compiled in this Volume was part of an effort performed for the US Army Concepts Analysis Agency under Contract MDA903-88-D-1000, Delivery Order Number 40. The objective of the effort was to collect detailed historical data on at least five combat actions where US forces were defending against enemy armor attacks. The data set will be used in a joint US/UK analysis of the degradation in anti-armor defense effectiveness under combat conditions. The resulting degradation factors will allow projections of the combat performance of future anti-armor defenses to be based upon a balanced combination of historical and instrumented field test data.

A complete description of the work performed by SAIC is found in Volume I, Technical Report, dated 30 March 1990. Volume II describes the anti-tank combat actions that took place at Mortain, France in August, 1944. This Volume describes the result of the detailed data collection on the engagement at Dom Bütgenbach, Belgium, in December, 1944.

Copies of the actual WWII maps (1:25,000) of Dom Bütgenbach and overlays were delivered to the US Army Concepts Analysis Agency as part of this project. Maps within this Volume were created from the original maps.

CHAPTER 1

THE ARDENNES: THE BATTLE FOR THE NORTHERN SHOULDER

BACKGROUND

Following the Allied breakout at St. Lo in July 1944, the near encirclement of the German forces near Falaise wrecked the German Army in the West.¹ Even though the Allies never completely closed the pocket and many units escaped, the Germans left most of their equipment and thousands of casualties behind.² Allied armies chased the shattered remnants towards the German border, but their logistics could not sustain this sudden, swift advance. By fall, supply difficulties and stiffening German resistance, from units which the Germans had managed to rebuild with prodigious effort, combined to slow the Allied advance. As the Allies ran into the defenses along the German border, they became locked into a grinding battle of attrition in terrain where even second-rate German units could defend effectively. By mid-December 1944, American units were moving forward slowly. The main objective of General Omar Bradley's 12th Army Group was the capture of the Roer River dams which, if opened, could flood the river and prevent its crossing. Since the Roer blocked the approach to the Rhine, it had to be crossed before Germany could be invaded and defeated.

THE GERMAN PLAN

Even as Allied units raced toward Germany in September, Hitler was already planning a counteroffensive. On 16 September, gesturing at a map, he announced to his astonished generals that he would attack, "...here, out of the Ardennes, with the objective -- Antwerp."³ Hitler was determined to make an attack in the West. The vastness of the Eastern front and the fact that the Soviets had over 500 division-sized units meant that there was little likelihood for a decisive

¹The background for the Ardennes offensive is drawn mainly from Hugh M. Cole, The Ardennes: Battle of the Bulge (Wash. D.C.: OCMH, 1965).

²According to Martin Blumenson, Breakout and Pursuit, (Washington, DC: OCMH, 1961), pg. 555 and Map II, only 20,000-40,000 Germans escaped, of 19 Divisions in the pocket on August 6.

³Cole, Ardennes, pg.2.

victory there. But in the West, a hard blow against the forces of what Hitler always considered decadent democracies seemed to offer some chance of success. During the months of planning that followed, Hitler's generals tried to persuade him to adopt a less ambitious plan. An offensive to Antwerp, in their view, exceeded the combat power and logistics reach of the forces they were able to rebuild during the fall of 1944. But in the end, the plan was very much the one that Hitler dictated.

With elaborate secrecy, the Germans assembled forces for their offensive. For the assault, the Germans were able to gather thirteen infantry and seven armored divisions. Another five divisions were in reserve. The assault units had over a thousand tanks or armored assault guns and some 1,900 supporting artillery pieces. The German plan, shown in Figure 1, was to attack west to the Meuse River and cross that obstacle in the vicinity of Liege. Then, the Germans would swing north and capture Antwerp, separating the British from the Americans and, Hitler hoped, create another Dunkirk. The main attack would be carried out by Sixth Panzer Army with Fifth Panzer Army attacking to cover the southern flank. On both sides of the penetration, infantry divisions would attack to secure the shoulders and defend against allied counterattacks.

Figure 1 also shows the actual German penetration compared to the German plan. Clearly, the main attack made almost no progress. After the failure of the main attack to break through, the Germans tried to shift their main effort to the south. But they lacked sufficient fuel for this more lengthy advance and, more importantly, had lost the time they needed to overcome a surprised but swiftly reacting American army. Clearly, the American defenders who held the northern shoulder were instrumental in defeating the German Army's last major offensive during World War II.

SIXTH PANZER ARMY PLAN

Responsibility for conducting the main attack of the German offensive belonged to Sixth Panzer Army. Commanded by SS-General Josef "Sepp" Dietrich, a former butcher by trade and a fanatical Nazi, the Sixth Panzer Army was the

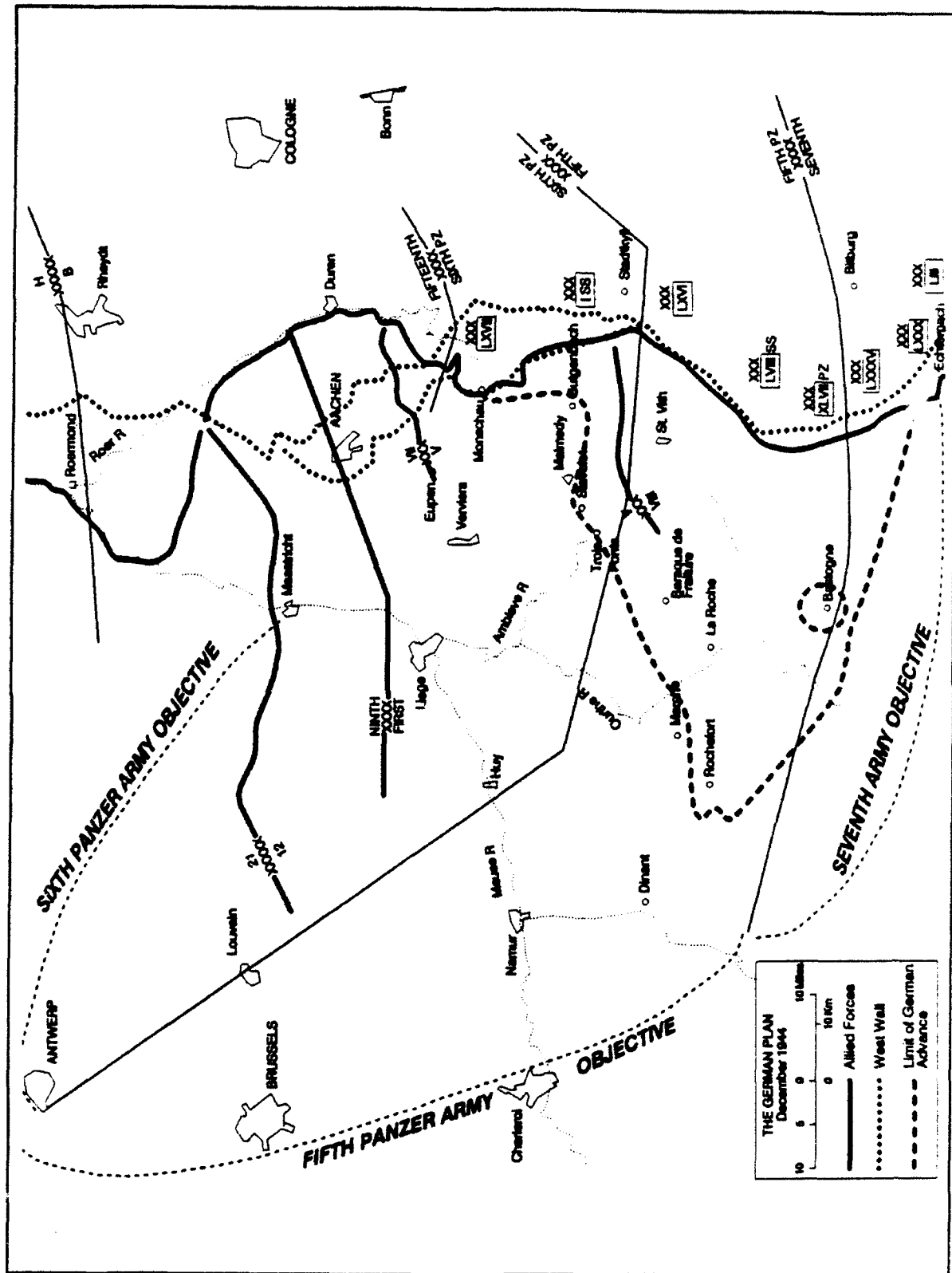


FIGURE 1. THE GERMAN PLAN AND ACTUAL PENETRATION

strongest of the three armies participating in the offensive. It included nine divisions in three corps: LXVII Armeekorps (AK), 326th and 246th Volks Grenadier Divisions (VGD); I SS Panzerkorps (PzK), 1st and 12th SS Panzer divisions, 12th and 277th VGD, and 3rd Parachute Division; and II SS PzK with 2d and 9th SS Panzer Divisions. For its main effort, Sixth Army planned that I SS PzK would break through along Rollbahns (Routes) C and D. North of the main attack, at Monschau, LXVII AK's mission was to break through American lines and block any thrust from the north (its bloody failure is not described in this narrative). To exploit I SS PzK's breakthrough, Dietrich held II SS PzK in reserve.

To conduct its main attack, Sixth Panzer Army planned to use I SS PzK's infantry to break through the defending Americans and open the way for its armored divisions to exploit towards the West. In the north, 277th Volks Grenadier Division (VGD) was to seize the twin village Rocherath-Krinkelt to give 12th SS-PzD access to Route C. To the south, the 3rd Parachute and 12th Volks Grenadier Divisions were to open Route D for 1st SS-PzD. Seizing these roads was critical to German success. The hilly, forested terrain in the Ardennes made cross country movement, particularly in the winter, difficult or impossible. The German attack depended on quickly opening the roads to have any chance of success. Sixth Army's timetable allowed one day to break through, another to clear the Hohes Venn high ground, reaching the Meuse on the third day, and crossing on the fourth.

AMERICAN POSITIONS

Standing in the way of the German attack was the American 99th Infantry Division, a new unit being seasoned in what was considered to be a quiet sector of the front. Inserted in the 99th's sector, the veteran 2nd Infantry Division was attacking toward the Roer dams. The 99th was stretched over a broad front with no reserves. From north to south, its 395th, 393rd, and 394th regiments defended the front. Because it was astride both routes needed by the Germans, the 394th would be hardest hit.

The 99th "Checkerboard" Division was a green unit, having been in Europe only since 3 November. Being a new unit, the 99th had not had time to accumulate the extra weapons, vehicles, and equipment commonly found in other units that had been in action for a while. In addition, its attached tank destroyer battalion had towed guns, and their lack of mobility was an especially severe problem in the Ardennes. The Division was occupying a quiet sector of the northern Ardennes to gain some experience before being committed to offensive operations. The 99th Division's front stretched 19 miles, from Buchholz Station in the south to Monschau in the north.

In contrast to the 99th, the 2d Infantry Division was a very seasoned unit. After the St. Lo breakout in late July, the 2d Division advanced into Brittany with the VIII Corps. The division came to the Ardennes in the autumn of 1944 to rest and absorb replacements. Following this respite, V Corps gave it the mission of capturing the Roer River dams. The 2d Division launched this attack on 13 December, meeting stiff resistance. By the beginning of the German offensive three days later, the 2d Division had already suffered 1,200 casualties.

Despite its losses, the 2d was still a formidable force, having collected many extra automatic weapons and vehicles in earlier actions, as well as having three self-propelled TD battalions attached to it rather than one, the normal practice in the theater. One of its chief assets was the experienced 741st Tank Battalion, which on 16 December had 47 Sherman tanks. The division was also fortunate in having as its commander General Walter M. Robertson, a bold and skillful commander who was largely responsible for the success of the American defense around the Elsenborn Ridge. The presence of this seasoned unit in the Rocherath area came as a complete surprise to the Germans.

In reserve in Belgium, the 1st Infantry Division joined V Corps at 2400 on 16 December to help plug the holes the Germans had torn in the US lines. The 1st was arguably the most veteran unit in the US Army, having seen battle in North Africa, Sicily, and Normandy. After fighting across France in July and August 1944, the division suffered heavy casualties in the battle to take Aachen during September and October, and in the bloody fighting in the Hürtgen Forest in

November. Like the 2d Division, the 1st was sent to the Ardennes to recuperate in early December, being short more than 3,300 men, most of them from the front-line combat elements.

THE FIGHTING PRIOR TO DOM BÜTGENRACH

December 16, 1944

At 0530, the German attack opened with a heavy artillery barrage which lasted until about 0700 (*Figure 2*). German searchlights created artificial moonlight to aid their advance. At about 0730, the 277th VGD struck hard at the 393rd, which had one battalion detached to the 395th. The Germans pushed back the third battalion in the north and 1st in the south, inflicting heavy losses, and German infantry infiltrated through a gap created between the two battalions. To backstop the heavily pressed regiment, the 99th Division asked for and received the 2nd Infantry's reserve, the 23rd Infantry Regiment. One battalion, the 3/23, moved into a position east of Rocherath behind the 393rd.

German attackers also struck the 394th. Its northern-most battalion, the 2nd, repulsed assaults starting about 0800 and by mid afternoon had stabilized its front. After completing a tortuous approach march, the 12 VGD did not strike the 1st battalion at Losheimergraben until noon. The battalion held but was badly hurt; regiment pulled four platoons from the 3rd battalion, southwest of the town, to reinforce the depleted unit. Division ordered another of 2nd Infantry's reserve battalions, the 1/23, to move into positions south of Hünningen; a move completed by nightfall. South of the 99th's sector, the Germans had broken through and could be seen moving west. But at the end of the day, the 99th still held its line.

During the night, *Kampfgruppe Peiper* of 1st SS-Panzer Division overran the defenders of Buchholz, which had been stripped of troops to reinforce 1st Battalion. By 0500 on the 17th, Peiper began to advance on Honsfeld.

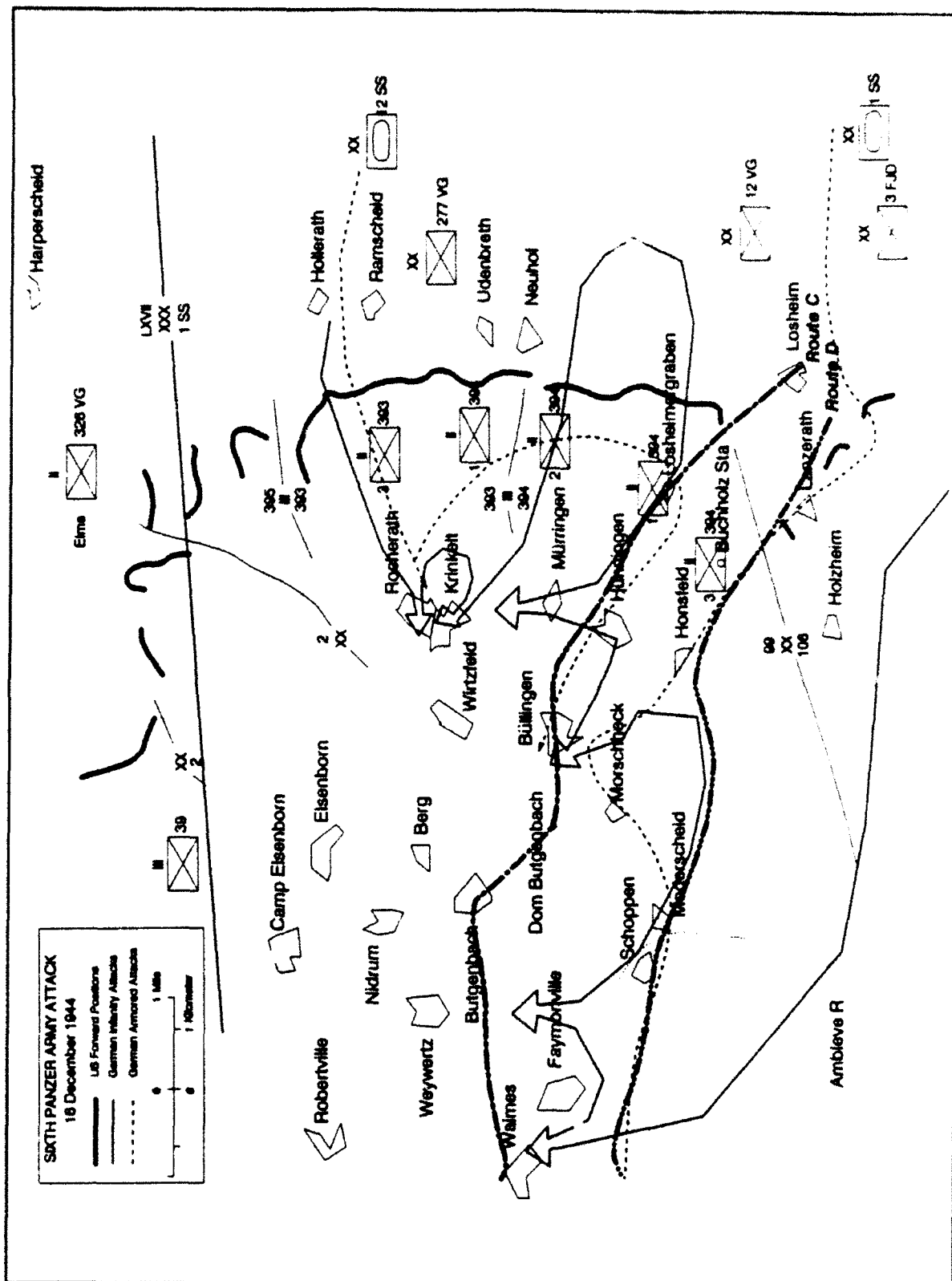


FIGURE 2

December 17, 1944

Early on the 17th, the tired 3/393 counterattacked to regain the positions lost the previous day (*Figure 3*). About 1000, they collided with an attacking German battalion, reinforced by tanks parceled out from 12th SS. The tank-infantry attack forced the Americans to retreat through the 1/23. To avoid creating a gap in the front, the 1/393 fell back to a position abreast of the 1/23 by 1400. The 3/393 had barely passed through American lines when the Germans struck hard at the 1/23. Tanks and infantry overran two rifle companies after a bitter fight, and what remained of the battalion had to retreat to Krinkel. This action isolated the 1/393 to the south, which withdrew cross country to Wirtzfeld the following day. Wearily, the 3/393 moved forward again to defend Rocherath, and, joined by the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry, still held its position in front of Rocherath at nightfall.

To the south, the day began ominously when Peiper's battlegroup struck Honsfeld just before dawn. Occupied by 99th Division rear echelon troops and a variety of units moving to reinforce the front, the attack surprised the Americans and quickly overran them. Peiper then detoured from Rollbahn D to Büllingen in order to avoid the poor secondary road leading to Möderscheid. The Americans at Büllingen, expecting the enemy to move north to capture major supply dumps, were surprised when the Germans turned south from Büllingen back toward Rollbahn D. A small reconnaissance unit sent by Peiper to Bütgenbach was stopped by an American roadblock.

In its sector, the 394th near Losheimergraben suffered a strong German attack just after dawn. By noon, the town had fallen, and during the afternoon the survivors of the regiment began withdrawing toward Mürringen. Later that afternoon, the Germans finally turned their attention to the 1/23 south of Hünningen, striking that unit at 1600. The Americans repulsed a series of assaults before withdrawing to Wirtzfeld during the night.

Most importantly, the American commanders, now fully recognizing the seriousness of the German offensive, began to shift reinforcements into the battle. Second Infantry Division canceled its attack toward Wahlerscheid early

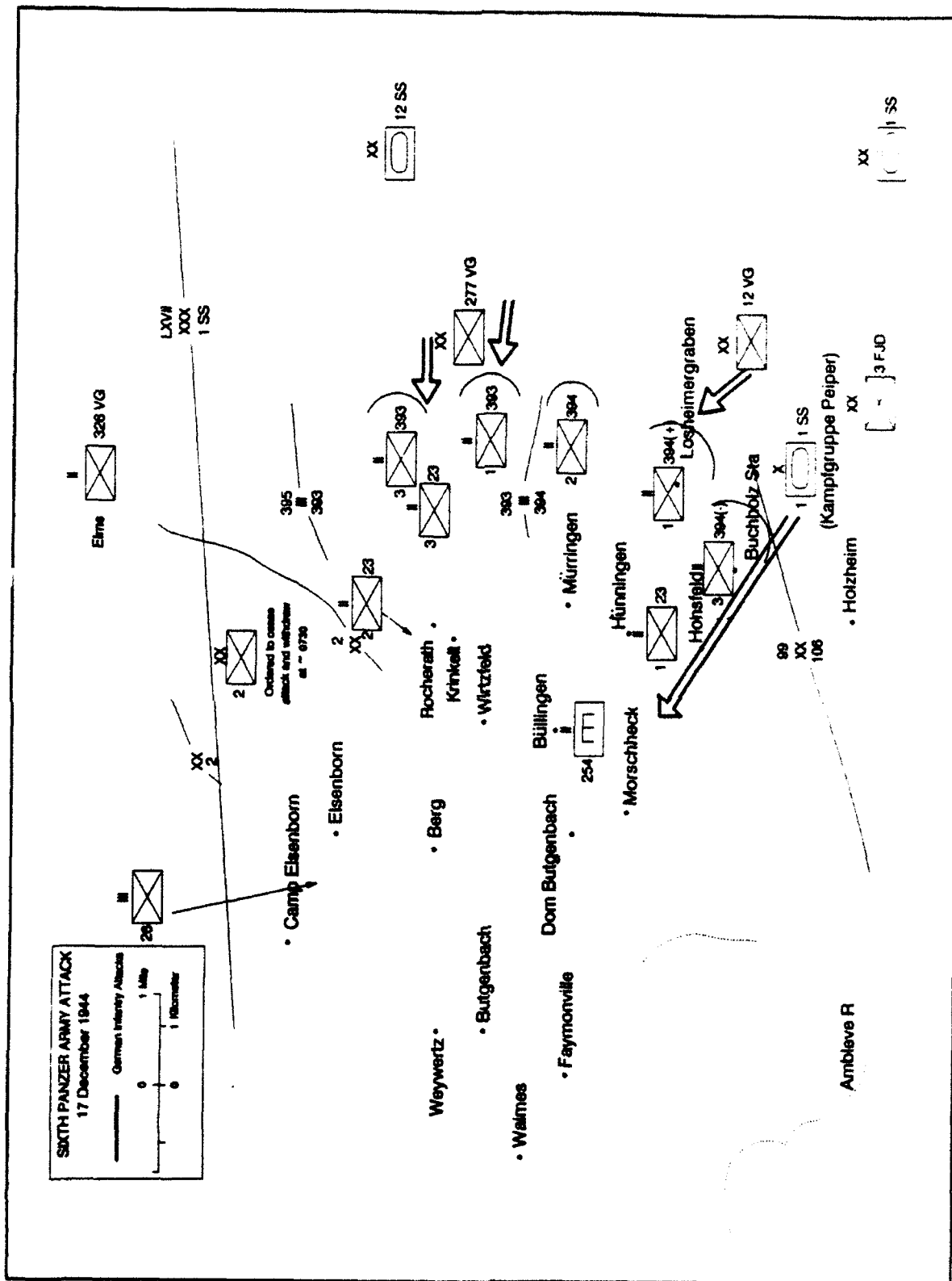


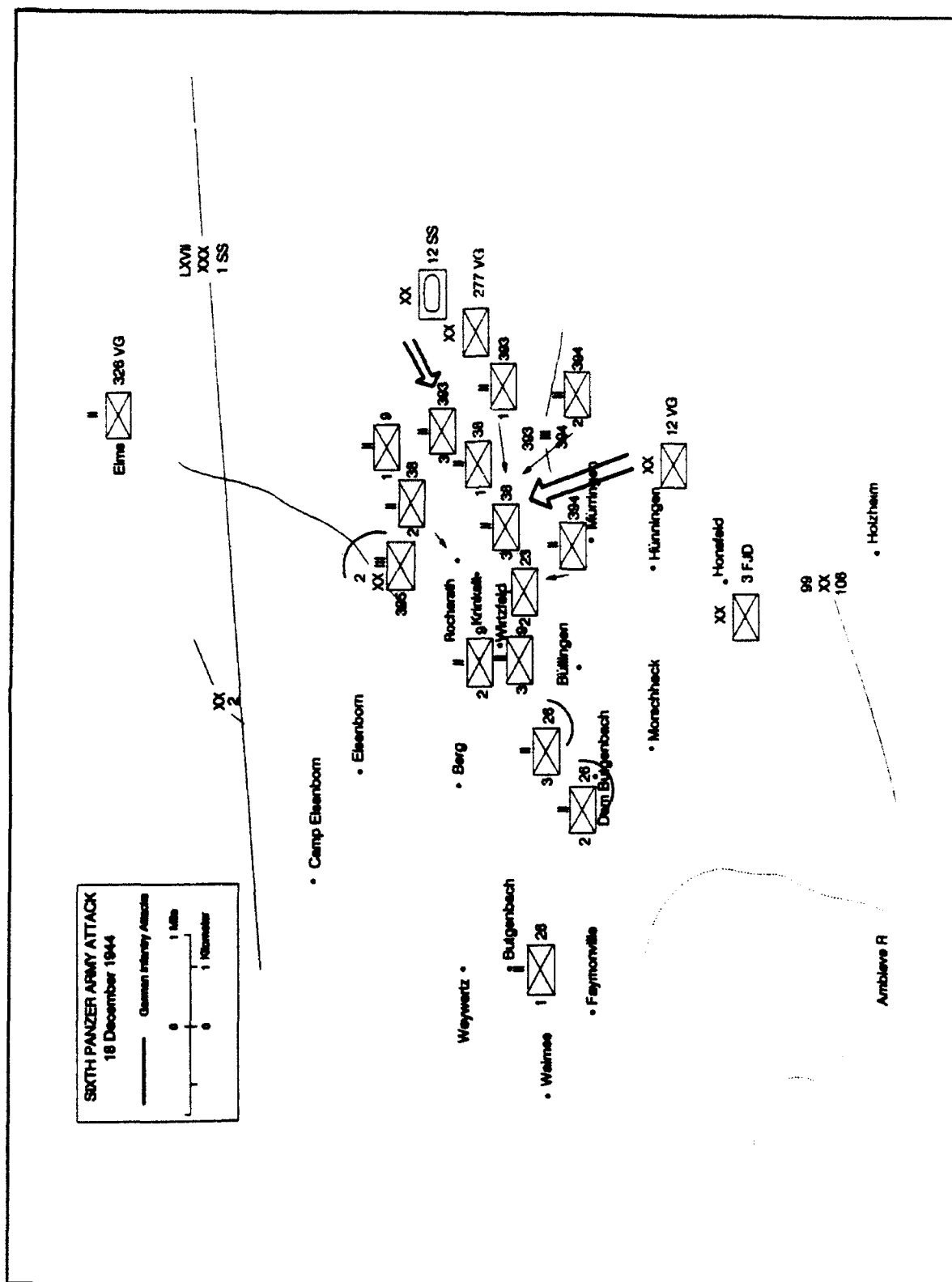
FIGURE 3

on the morning of the 17th and began moving forces to Rocherath-Krinkel with the mission of holding the villages and vital road long enough to permit withdrawal of the 99th and 2nd divisions to Elsenborn Ridge. In addition, 1st Infantry Division, in reserve to the north, began moving to help. Its 26th Regiment had been alerted the day before, and by dusk the 2/26 was digging in at Dom Bütgenbach. The battalions of the 2nd Infantry Division thickened the defenses of the twin villages during the day. Three battalions, 2/9, 2/23, and 3/9, established a position south of Wirtzfeld, to guard against further advance from Büllingen, while one of the 3/9th's companies moved on to Rocherath to reinforce the battered 3/393. By dusk, the 1/9 was in position in front of Rocherath, and the 1/38 established a defense east of Krinkel. Tanks and tank destroyers reinforced both of these battalions. During the night, German armor and infantry launched a heavy but poorly coordinated attack against the villages. Penetrating the infantry's defenses, the Germans were able to get men and tanks into the towns. But after wild fighting during the night, the American defenders managed to hunt down and eliminate the Germans.

December 18, 1944

The hours before dawn at Rocherath-Krinkel were ominously quiet as the Americans sought to reorganize after the confused fighting during the night. Just before light, the Germans began coordinated tank-infantry assaults against the U.S. positions (*Figure 4*). The 1/9 withstood the German attack against Rocherath for nearly six hours, enough time for the 2/38 to move into position and permit the battered 9th infantrymen to withdraw. During the day, the Germans again managed to penetrate into the villages with tanks and infantry, but the Americans eliminated them in close combat. After fighting all afternoon, the 2/38 still held Rocherath.

At Krinkel, German assaults also began just before dawn. Though repulsing the main attacks, the Americans, reinforced by two rifle companies of 1/23, could not prevent German tanks from penetrating as far as the 1/38's command post in Krinkel. But the end of the day found the German armor smoking and destroyed. During the night, German infiltrators continued to infiltrate tanks and infantry



into both villages, and the Americans had to fight all night to mop them up.

Failure to capture the twin villages after two days of heavy fighting convinced the Germans that 12th SS-Panzer Division would have to find another way to Rollbahn C. The division began shifting to the south and finally assembled at Büllingen, days behind schedule, to begin its advance toward Bütgenbach. There it would find the 1st Infantry Division in position.

For their part, the American mission of protecting the withdrawal of the 99th Infantry was fulfilled during the night of 18-19 December as the last units of that division withdrew through the 2nd (*Figure 5*). After repulsing another assault on December 19th, the 2nd Division units withdrew at night to establish positions on the Elsenborn Ridge (*Figure 6*).

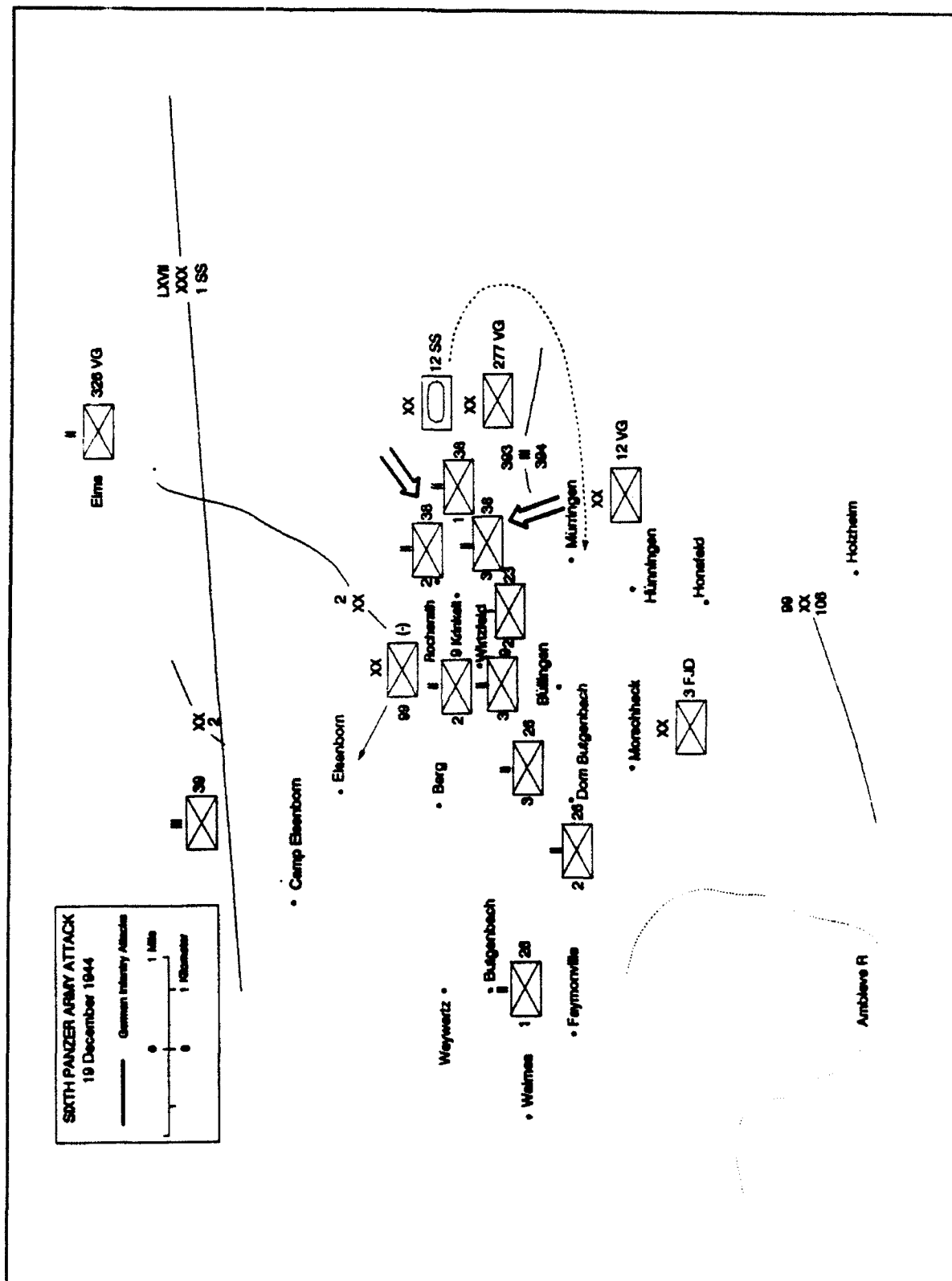
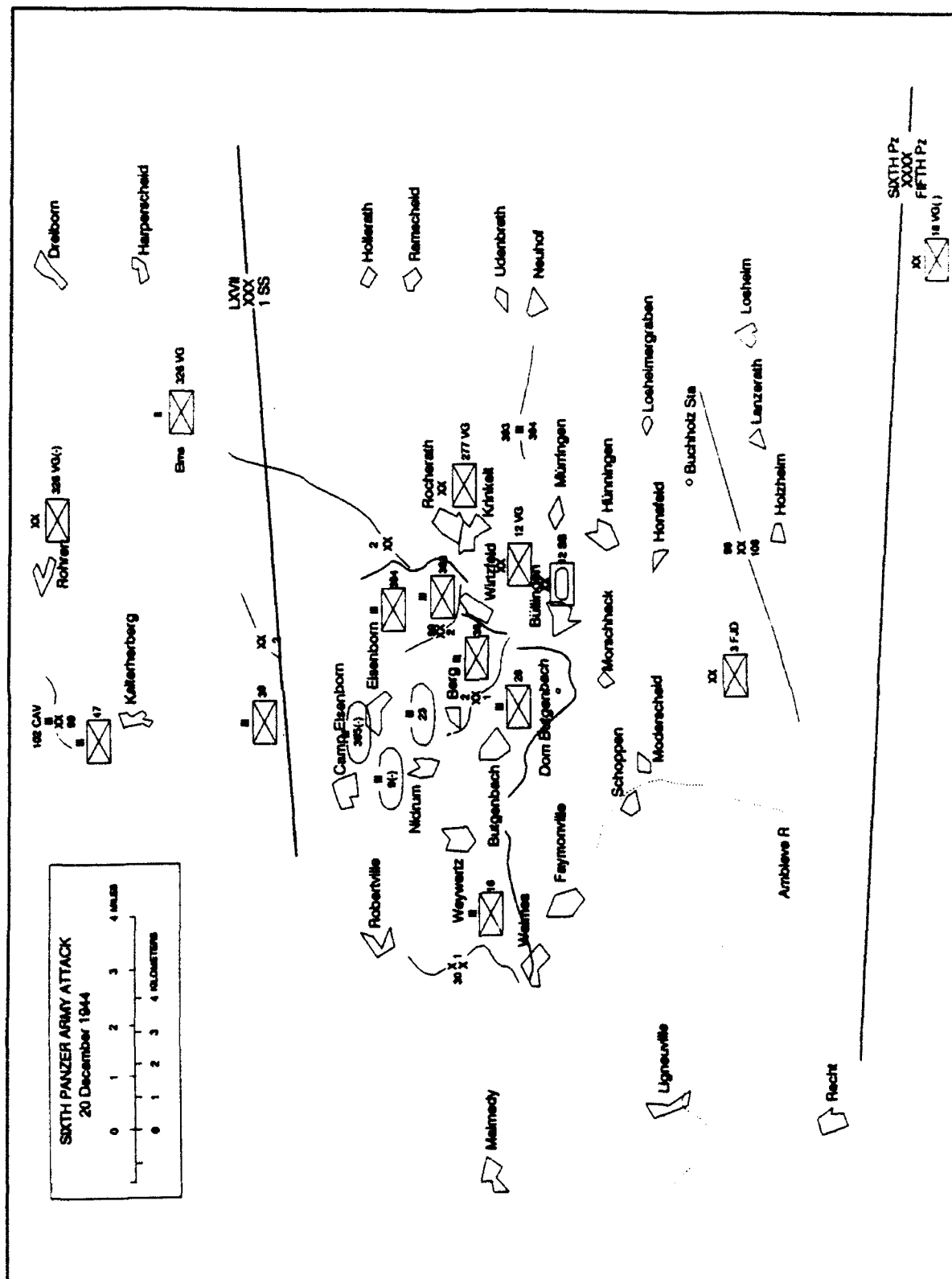


FIGURE 5



CHAPTER 2

THE ENGAGEMENT AT DOM BÜTGENBACH

THE GERMAN FORCES AT DOM BÜTGENBACH

After two frustrating days of fighting to open its route of advance, the 12th SS-Panzer Division "Hitlerjugend" began a difficult shift toward Dom Bütgenbach over muddy roads and trails. Rebuilt after the German debacle at Falaise, the division still hoped to achieve its attack objectives.⁴ Fighting with the British and Canadians at Caen, prior to Falaise, had nearly destroyed the division. Only 300 riflemen and 10 tanks remained when it reached the safety of the Westwall in August 1944.⁵ Over the next three months, the division had a high priority for receiving replacements, and by 16 December it was back to full strength with 23,346 men. However, the cadre of experienced officers and NCOs in the division was very small, and most of the staff officers were green. These defects were most apparent in the panzergrenadier regiments, which were not considered ready for defensive duty, much less for a major attack. The divisional armored reconnaissance battalion had, in actual strength, only one light armored rifle company.

The real backbone of the division, the 12th SS-Panzer Regiment, was down to one battalion, although this battalion was fortunate in being well-manned with seasoned veterans of all ranks. To help correct the deficiency of tanks, the 560th Heavy Panzerjäger Battalion was attached to the regiment in mid-December to act as its second battalion. The 560th was a regular Wehrmacht unit, not part of the Waffen-SS. The battalion was composed of heavily armored Mk IV Jagdpanzer and Mk V Jagdpanther self-propelled tank destroyers. But the mix of four types of vehicles in the panzer regiment was a logistical nightmare for the division's already overloaded support units. The panzer regiment was at 90% full strength in personnel and 80% strength in vehicles, with 39 Mk IV tanks and 41 of the

⁴Information on 12th SS-PzDiv composition and state of readiness was taken from the following sources: Bundesarchiv Records RH 10/321 (12th SS-PzD), 19 Dec 1944, ETHINT 21, MS #B-522, MS # A-924, "Commitment of the 6th Pz Army in the Ardennes (Krämer)", ETHINT 15, and Pallud, The Battle of the Bulge: Then and Now.

⁵Blumenson, Breakout and Pursuit, p. 577.

formidable Mk V Panthers in the 1st Bn, and 14 Mk V Jagdpanthers and 21 Mk IV Jagdpanzers in the 2d Bn. Of the division's 118 armored half-tracks, the 26th Panzergrenadier Regiment had 63. The 12th SS-PzJg Bn, a battalion of SP TDs organic to the division, also had 22 PzJg IV/48 Jagdpanzers at the start of the campaign.⁶ The 12th SS-Artillery Regiment, the "HJ" Division's organic artillery support, was comprised only of towed artillery pieces (105 and 150mm), plus a towed rocket-launcher (*nebelwerfer*) battalion. However, the artillery officers and staff were all veterans.

The 25th SS-Panzergrenadier Regiment, which was officially motorized, had almost no motor transport and was relegated largely to marching on foot. The chief handicap to the division's mobility at the start of the Ardennes Campaign was its lack of motorized transport. Fully 25% of its trucks had not been replaced after Normandy. The division's trains could carry no more than 300 tons, about 50% of their authorized capacity.

Of course, the intense fighting to capture Rocherath-Krinkelt had already reduced the division. Further, combat and a difficult move to the south over muddy trails meant that the troops were no longer "fresh".

THE AMERICAN FORCES AT KRINKELT-ROCHERATH AND DOM BÜTGENBACH

The 2d Battalion of the 26th Infantry Regiment, which was to defend so tenaciously at Dom Bütgenbach, was among the 1st Infantry Division units that had suffered heavily in the Hürtgen Forest.⁷ E and F Companies, with two heavy machine gun platoons of H Co (the heavy weapons company) attached, had been surrounded and destroyed in the town of Merode from 30 November to 3 December. G Co was also hit hard. Two days after the division pulled out of the forest and moved to Aubel, Belgium, to rest on 7 December, it received a batch of new replacements. When the battalion moved to Dom Bütgenbach on 17-18 December, E

⁶From Bundesarchiv Records RH 10/321 (12th SS-Panzer Division), 19 Dec 1944.

⁷Information on the 1st ID, and specifically the 26th Inf Regt, was drawn from : Gendron, Operations of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes; and US Army ETO Combat Interviews - 1st Infantry Division.

and F Cos were only up to 60% strength, with about 100 men each, and these men were 90% green replacements and 10% hospital returnees. G Co was especially weak, with only about 50 men, although only 10 to 15 percent of these were replacements. The two heavy machine gun platoons of H Co had to be completely rebuilt, and between them they could count only eight veterans. In the entire 2d Bn, there were only seven officers remaining who had been with the unit on D-Day: four in the battalion HQ, the rest in the line. Although not acute, the battalion was also suffering from some equipment shortages. The companies had only four Browning Automatic Rifles (BARs) apiece, and there was a scarcity of rifle grenade launchers. All the other heavy weapons in the battalion (machine guns, mortars, bazookas, etc.) were at full strength or above. The battalion had nearly all its authorized vehicles, being short by two jeeps. In total, the 26th Infantry Regiment had about 2500 men, about 500 less than its authorized strength.

THE FIGHTING AT DOM BÜTGENBACH

The fighting leading up to the engagement at Dom Bütgenbach started on December 16, when the 254th Engineer Combat Battalion was ordered to take up a defensive line south and east of Büllingen to protect the roadblocks into Büllingen.⁸ After capturing Honsfeld on 17 December, the Germans attacked the 254th three times in rapid succession. The engineers drove back the first attack at 0600 from *Kampfgruppe Peiper* of 1st SS-PzD. Charging again at 0630 with tanks firing in support, the Germans were again repulsed with heavy losses by the defensive fire. In their third attack, at 0645, with panzers leading the assault, the tanks overran the American foxholes. However, the defenders repulsed the following grenadiers with heavy fire.

Given time to catch its breath, the 254th Eng Cbt Bn began digging more permanent positions at the east end of the Dom Bütgenbach crossroads. An ad hoc infantry force, composed of men from the 99th Division Headquarters, nearby anti-aircraft artillery units, and four towed 3-inch guns of the 612th TD Bn.

⁸254th Eng Cbt Bn History, 1944 and 254th Eng Cbt Bn Journal, Dec 1944.

augmented the engineers. Capt John J. Kennedy, commander of the tank destroyer unit, took command of the roadblock group. A skeleton force of engineers stayed on the ridgetop overlooking Büllingen.

Around 1000, five Mk IV tanks from KG Peiper tried to reconnoiter the road from Büllingen to Dom Bütgenbach, but Kennedy's TD guns opened fire and knocked out three of the five. The surviving two hurriedly returned to Büllingen.⁹

While the engineers were fighting to block the Büllingen-Bütgenbach highway, the 26th Infantry Regiment set out for Camp Elsenborn and commitment on V Corps' western flank, which was now wide open.¹⁰ The first units of the 26th reached Camp Elsenborn by 0700 on the 17th, and the remainder of the regiment arrived by 0900. The Americans were told that the Germans had captured the town of Büllingen at 0700 that morning, and with it a large fuel dump that 1st Army had built there. Fearing that the Germans might secure the vital highway running from Büllingen through Bütgenbach to Malmedy and Liege, the 26th quickly moved to guard the important road junction at Domäne Bütgenbach, 2 km southeast of Bütgenbach.¹¹

The 2d Battalion of the 26th, commanded by LtCol Derrill M. Daniel, drove onto the grounds of the manor house at 1300 hours on 17 December. By that time, B Co of the 254th Eng Cbt Bn had worked its way out of Büllingen. Some of the men infiltrated into Hünningen where the 1/23 was establishing defenses; the remainder joined the rest of the engineers at Dom Bütgenbach, just as a German artillery barrage drove the American pickets off the ridge. The men of the 26th Regt relieved the battered engineers, who began moving back to Bütgenbach about 1500.

⁹US Army Combat Interviews - 1st Infantry Division; Cole, The Ardennes: The Battle of the Bulge, pp. 112-113; Interview with William Spray, 4 August 1990.

¹⁰26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 1944; 26th Inf Regt Unit Journal, Dec 1944.

¹¹26th Inf Regt AAR; US Army ETO Combat Interviews - 1st Infantry Division. "Domäne" is a German word meaning a manor held by a lord, and it was just such an estate that overlooked the vital area. Most American accounts abbreviate the word to Dom because that is the way it appeared on maps.

The large stone manor house at Dom Bütgenbach, with its flanking stone-foundation wooden barns and nearby gardens, was situated in a narrow valley between two hills, one to the north (Hill 598) and one to the south (Hill 613). These hills were mostly devoid of cover except for some straight rows of tall, widely spaced spruce trees on either side of the trails that criss-crossed the estate. At the top of Hill 613, almost a kilometer south of the manor, lay the edge of the Bütgenbacher Heck, a dense strip of coniferous forest. A kilometer beyond that, out of sight over the hill's crest, was the village of Morschheck, which was occupied at that time by the paratroopers of the 3d Fallschirmjäger Division. The main east-west highway (Route C) that the Germans wanted so desperately ran southeast past the manor, dipping into another small valley about 500m to the east. Through this valley flowed the Schwarzenbach, or Black Creek, north toward Lac de Bütgenbach. The road rose again on the other side of the stream bed and split into two roads, both of which led into Büllingen, 2km from the Domäne. Another main road led due north out of Morschheck, over the top of Hill 613, and down the steep hillside to a junction with the Büllingen-Bütgenbach highway about 100m east of the manor house.

After analyzing the terrain and its advantages and disadvantages for his defensive mission, LtCol Daniel immediately set about positioning his troops.¹² G Co went east toward Büllingen and dug in behind a row of trees running along the top of a hill on the east side of the Schwarzenbach. E Co took up positions behind similar treelines south of the manor, about halfway up the hill which led to the Bütgenbacher Heck and Morschheck. F Co moved southwest to cover the area between the other two companies, digging its foxholes on the reverse slope of a ridge scarcely half a kilometer from Morschheck. This was the same area occupied by the engineers earlier that morning. LtCol Daniel parceled out the machine guns and bazooka teams of H Co among the line companies to stiffen the defense, and he placed their six 81mm mortars behind Hill 598, from where they could support the whole perimeter. He held one platoon of G Co in reserve behind the manor house, all he could afford because of the limited manpower of his battalion.

¹²Details of 26th Inf Regt's deployment were drawn from : Gendron, Operations of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes, p. 12; Rivette, Operations of the 2/26th Inf at Dom Bütgenbach, pp.11-12; and letter, Daniel to Rivette, 19 Oct 1948.

The nature of the terrain and the fog which blanketed the area compelled LtCol Daniel to place his anti-tank assets well forward, in order to have sufficient visibility to support the foxhole lines. He set up three 57mm anti-tank guns covering the road running east to Büllingen, and supported them with three M-10 self-propelled tank destroyers mounting 3-inch guns. He sent three more AT guns to bolster the main line of resistance, or MLR, in the E and F Co areas. Each of the 57mm guns had, as part of its ammunition supply, seven to ten rounds of British discarding sabot (DS) ammunition, which the British had given to the regiment before D-Day.¹³ These rounds used a disposable sleeve, or sabot, around the penetrator for the British 2-pounder gun. The result was a lighter projectile with increased velocity, about 4200 ft/sec vice 2900 ft/sec for the normal 57mm round. With this velocity, a DS round could penetrate approximately six inches (154mm) of armor at a 30° slope.¹⁴ This made the obsolescent 57mm gun more effective, particularly against the heavy Panther tank and Jagdpanther tank destroyer.

LtCol Daniel kept four M-4 Sherman tanks around his CP as a mobile reserve and counterattack force. He set up his command post in one wing of the stone manor house. The battalion's medics set up their aid station in the house also. E and H Cos established their company command posts in the barns to the west and east of the manor house, respectively, while F and G Cos collocated their CPs in a hut alongside the Büllingen road just behind their MLR. The third floor of the manor house provided good observation of the entire battalion sector, so the battalion OP was located there.

LtCol Daniel was not very happy with his battalion's defensive positions, although they were the best that could be done under the circumstances. After the war, in a letter to the commander of his AT company, Donald Rivette, he wrote:

"The reverse slope defense on the right flank [E Co] was just necessary. We couldn't go very far south to get on the crest of the hill because that would add several hundred yards to the MLR [main line of resistance] and I just didn't have enough men for that. Besides, if we did go to the hill we would have to curve over into the woods with the MLR and that would take even more men. So we went where I thought we had

¹³Rivette Certificate, 1 Dec 1986.

¹⁴Rivette, Operations of the 2/26th Inf at Dom Bütgenbach, p. 11.

a reasonable chance. The hedgerow was bad, I admit it was a perfect target. But either side (north or south) of the hedgerow was even worse. If to the south there was no concealment and each foxhole could be definitely spotted. If to the north we would have concealment from ground observation afforded by the hedgerow, but also the hedgerow would limit our observation to a marked degree. Besides, if the line was moved far enough north to get away from fire directed at the hedgerow, the line would be too close to the CP. So we took the hedgerow, which made a reverse slope defense--no help for it."¹⁵

To provide as much protection as possible for his men from the German artillery, which was expected to be intense, LtCol Daniel ordered that all front-line positions, including crew-served weapons, be improved with overhead cover, usually in the form of wooden planks and sandbags laid over the top of the foxholes. To help his men, LtCol Daniel arranged for a load of lumber to be trucked to the battalion from Bütgenbach. The GIs also camouflaged their positions as well as they could with whatever materials were to hand, and they piled sandbags around the fighting pits.

The 2d Bn completed its positions around Dom Bütgenbach by 1700 on 17 December. The 3d Bn, meanwhile, had moved to occupy the hilltop sector between G Co and the railroad embankment which paralleled the Warche River, its flank firmly anchored on the lake. Its positions were as exposed as those of the 2d Bn except for a sparsely wooded patch on top of Hill 503 known as the Schwarzenbüchel, or "Black Beech Forest." 1st Bn stayed in reserve in Bütgenbach itself. This left 2d Bn's right flank hanging on air, and its rear vulnerable to attack from the west or southwest.

As darkness fell about 1830, LtCol Daniel ordered each of his companies to prepare one 60mm mortar to fire illumination rounds during the hours of darkness. Telephoning the regimental HQ in Bütgenbach, he also requested that the supporting artillery battalions have one howitzer each laid to fire illuminating shells every night. Regiment agreed, and informed Daniel that since 1800, the 7th and 32d Field Artillery Battalions had established new positions from which to support the 26th. The Regiment's normal supporting artillery battalion, the 33d FA Bn, had been in place since 1430.¹⁶ At dusk, LtCol Daniel met with the commanders of his line companies in his CP at the manor house. They had all

¹⁵Letter, Daniel to Rivette, 19 Oct 1948.

¹⁶US Army ETO Combat Interview - 1st Inf Div; 1st ID G-3 Operations Report, Dec 1944.

heard rumors over the past two days of American soldiers giving up to the Germans or fleeing to the rear. He was determined that the 2/26th would acquit itself better than that. Although the regimental combat team was effectively isolated from the rest of the division, it had fought under those conditions at Kasserine in Africa and at Barrafranca in Sicily. Daniel therefore adopted a slogan for the battalion, which he wanted passed on to every man in the outfit: "We fight and die here."¹⁷

After dark, even though his men were tired from their long move and hours of digging foxholes in the cold, LtCol Daniel sent patrols out to reconnoiter to his front. A patrol to Büllingen soon came back to the crossroads position, reporting about 100 American prisoners in the town and over a thousand German infantrymen.¹⁸ Another patrol crept up the hill to the south to establish a listening post at the edge of the Bütgenbacher Heck. Still another patrol reported a brief skirmish with Germans to the southwest of Dom Bütgenbach, leading to unfounded fears that the town of Weywertz, to the west of 2d Bn, might be occupied by Germans. Having confirmed the presence of German troops, the American soldiers waited anxiously through the long winter night.

SUMMARY OF DOM BÜTGENBACH FIGHTING

The anti-tank combat actions that are described next come from the fighting that occurred during the 18th through the 21st of December. Around noon on the 18th, elements of the 12th SS-PzD's reconnaissance battalion probed towards Dom Bütgenbach from Morschheck to test the state of the American defenses. The American AT guns guarding the Morschheck-Dom Bütgenbach road quickly dispatched

¹⁷Gendron, The Operations of the 2/26th Inf at Dom Bütgenbach.

¹⁸What they had seen was the 12th SS-PzD's Kampfgruppe Krause, with most of the 26th SS-PzGren Regt (except III Bn), two battalions of artillery, and a battalion each of engineers and flak vehicles. This Kampfgruppe had not yet seen action in the Offensive and had moved forward from its assembly area through Hallischlag and Losheimergraben to open the division's drive on Bütgenbach. Source: 1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt; Pallud, pp. 95-96.

the probing force consisting of an armored car and a jeep with no infantry support (*Action 1*). The Germans had not expected the crossroads to be defended in strength, so there was a delay of about 15 hours before enough of 12th SS-PzD's combat elements had gathered in Büllingen and Morschheck to mount a real attack.

Early on the 19th, about 0230, the Germans struck the 2/26 with a dozen Jagdpanthers and twenty truckloads of infantry only to be driven off by American artillery and infantry fire¹⁹ (*Actions 2,3*). Later in the morning, the Germans launched a series of company strength attacks which the American infantry also repulsed. Following this reverse, the Germans ceased their attacks until more forces could be assembled in Büllingen.

On December 20th, German attacks began in the early morning, around 0330, when about twenty German tanks and tank destroyers rolled out of thick fog to hit the 2/26's positions. Heavy fire stopped the attack, but some of the tanks penetrated as far as the battalion's command post (*Action 4*). Just before dawn, the Germans began a series of assaults but were repulsed by a combination of artillery, Anti-tank guns, and small arms fire (*Actions 5-8*). With their infantry scattered by shellfire, the Germans ceased attacking, although they probed the perimeter at dusk with patrols. To replace losses and strengthen the American battalion's right flank, the regiment's Anti-tank company moved two additional platoons of 57-mm guns into the 2/26's positions.

On the 21st, the Germans delivered their hardest blows against the Dom Bütgenbach defenses. Beginning about three hours before dawn, a heavy artillery preparation crashed down on the Americans, inflicting heavy damage and ripping gaps in the defenses. At first light, the artillery fire ceased and the Germans advanced -- only to be met by massive American shellfire from as many as twelve battalions. On the right flank of the 2/26, German tanks emerged from the woods where the regimental anti-tank guns engaged them (*Actions 9-13*). After losing at least five tanks and self-propelled guns, the Panzers managed to destroy the

¹⁹ American sources report that tanks were in the attack, but a German source, Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12.SS Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend" II, is very positive that these were Jagdpanthers.

guns and penetrate into Dom Bütgenbach, where they were gradually destroyed or driven away during the day. Though battered, the 2/26 still held its positions when night and reinforcements arrived.

On December 22, fresh German troops, the infantry reserve of 12th SS Panzer, attacked again at about 1000. Deciding to avoid the unsuccessful, headlong assaults against the 2/26 of the previous two days, the Germans moved around the right flank of the battalion. There they ran into 3/26. With the help of artillery and tank destroyers, the third battalion defeated the attack. By the end of the day, the American defenders had the situation well in hand. Abandoning its effort to open Route C, the 12th SS headed south to follow in the wake of the more successful Fifth Panzer Army, ending German efforts to open the northern shoulder.

AFTERMATH

As the grenadiers and panzers withdrew into Morschheck and Büllingen on the afternoon of 21 December, the weary US 2/26th began rebuilding its defenses and preparing for the next German attack. Engineers laid a belt of 2,400 mines in front of the MLR, built two strong roadblocks to block the approaches from east and south, and erected three rows of concertina wire across the battalion's entire front.²⁰

However, these new defenses would not be tested. After the failed attack of 22 December, the Germans abandoned their effort to open Rollbahn C and reach Liege. The 12th SS-PzD was withdrawn from the fighting and sent west, eventually to fight around Bastogne. The Volksgrenadier units were too weak to attack and assumed the mission of defending Büllingen and Morschheck against any American counterattack.

After four days of fighting, the 12th SS-Panzer Division "Hitlerjugend" had suffered at least 782 dead, and a total of at least 1,200 casualties. Including

²⁰1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt, Dec 44.

losses incurred at Krinkelt-Rocherath, in its first week of commitment in Wacht Am Rhein the division lost 47 panzers, panzerjägers, and self-propelled guns, 15 armored half-tracks, one armored car, one jeep, two rocket launcher batteries (due to counterbattery artillery fire) and an unknown number of unarmored trucks.²¹ US patrols sent out to the Bütgenbacher Heck on 23 December reported German dead "as common as grass" on the hillside above E Co's MLR and found over 300 dead inside the edge of the forest.²² The commander of M Co, 3d Bn's heavy weapons company, told Captain Rivette of the AT Co that the bodies of dead panzergrenadiers were piled so high in front of 3d Bn's positions that special patrols had to be sent out to clear them from the final protective line.²³

The American casualties were proportionally no less severe. The 26th Infantry Regiment lost 6 bazookas, 5 57mm AT guns, 6 BARs, 2 .30cal machine guns, 3 M-10 self-propelled tank destroyers, and 3 M-4 Sherman tanks defending Dom Bütgenbach.²⁴ Worse, the regiment suffered 500 men killed, wounded, or captured: 13 officers and 487 men. Since 1st Division as a whole lost 15 officers and 948 men between 16 and 24 December, that meant that 51% of the enlisted losses and 87% of the officer casualties came from the 26th Regiment.²⁵ After the German attack subsided on the afternoon of 21 December, 2/26th had elements of six companies holding the line -- its own E, F, and G Cos leavened by heavy weapons from H Co, plus C Co from 1st Bn and parts of E Co of the 18th Regiment. A head count taken that night of men available for duty in the foxholes revealed that E Co had 75 men left, F Co had 75, G Co had 55, and H Co had 80. Company C, 1st Bn had 75 men, and even the "fresh" E/18 only had 125.²⁶

Credit for the defense must be shared with the various supporting battalions of American artillery. These units were no less heroic than the

²¹Information from Unit Citation Documentation, gathered by Rivette; US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div.

²²Gendron, Opns of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes, p. 33.

²³Rivette Certificate, 1 Dec 1986.

²⁴US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div; 26th Inf Regt Unit Jnl, Dec 44; 1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt, Dec 44.

²⁵US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div.

²⁶26th Inf Regt Unit Jnl, Dec 44; Gendron, Opns of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes, p. 32.

infantry in stopping the German attacks. On 18 December, the battalions supporting the 1st Division fired 26 missions; on 19 December, 102 missions; on the 20th, 169; on the 21st, 291; and on 22 December, they fired 334 fire missions. Often they fired until they ran out of ammunition or until the guns were too hot to fire. In one eight-hour period on the 21st, when artillery explosions were all that kept the German infantry from overrunning LtCol Daniel's CP, 10,000 rounds were fired to support his position. The same day, the mortar sections at Dom Bütgenbach fired 750 rounds, while the 955th FA Bn fired 555 rounds in a single interdiction and harassing mission and a total of 2,054 rounds for the day, the battalion's largest one-day ammunition expenditure of the war.²⁷

The engagement at Dom Bütgenbach proved to be the last act in the German's effort to break through the northern shoulder. When the Germans shifted forces to the south, they had, in effect, abandoned their main attack. The stout American defense of the northern shoulder prevented Hitler's plan from being completed and the valiant defenders of Dom Bütgenbach provided a fitting finale.

²⁷US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID; Rivette, "Hot Corner at Dom Bütgenbach".

ACTIONS FROM THE DOM BÜTGENBACH ENGAGEMENT

The combat actions described in this volume come from the German attempts to capture Dom Bütgenbach, defended by the 2/26 Infantry Battalion. Historical records contain sufficient information to isolate, in detail, 13 distinct actions. Each of these actions involved a US weapon or weapons system defending against German armor. Each action occurred within a distinct time period, and within a distinct geographical location.

Table 1 summarizes these actions.

NUMBER	TITLE
1	Destruction of "Hitlerjugend's" Probe
2	The First Attack: Attack from the South
3	The First Attack: Attack from the East
4	Kampfgruppe Kühlmann Attacks
5	Warner's First Tank
6	Warner's Second Tank
7	Warner's Third Tank
8	The Shooting Gallery
9	Schwartz and Rose's First Kill
10	Schwartz and Rose's Second Kill
11	Kolar's Gun
12	Harris' Gun
13	Warner's Last Tank

ACTION 1

Name: Destruction of "Hitlerjugend's" Probe

Location: North End of the Morschheck-Domäne Bütgenbach Road, Belgium

Time: 1210 Hours, 18 December 1944

Around 1000 hours on 18 December, after a fitful night of rest, the 2d Bn, 26th US Infantry Regiment guarding the road junction at Dom Bütgenbach began to expand its lines to the west, trying to give more coverage to its open right flank²⁸ (Figure 7). This was done without German interference, but it thinned E Co's line even further. The 2/26 was now covering a front that stretched 1,800 to 2,100 yards, depending on how it was measured, and its right flank and rear were still exposed. At 1040, the listening post at the edge of the Bütgenbacher Heck reported hearing at least six German tanks prowling around on trails inside the forest. LtCol Daniel thought about calling down artillery fire on the woods, but the scouts couldn't pinpoint the location of the tanks and soon they drove out of earshot.

What the listening post had probably heard was the vehicles of the 12th SS-Reconnaissance Battalion, which reached Büllingen and Morschheck shortly before noon that day. The rest of the "Hitlerjugend" Division was either engaged at the twin villages of Krinkelt-Rocherath, or slowly moving toward the battle area on the clogged roads leading west. Soon after its arrival, elements of the recon battalion set out to investigate the state of the American defenses at Bütgenbach. This was to be the first contact between the German 12th SS and the American 1st Infantry.

At 1210, a small SS reconnaissance force consisting of a single eight-wheeled armored car²⁹ followed by a Kübelwagen (the German jeep) crested Hill 613 on the highway from Morschheck and began a slow descent towards the road

²⁸US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div.

²⁹Judging by eyewitness accounts, this was probably an Sd Kfz 234/1 or 234/3 armored car; see von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks of World War II, p. 154 and Hoffschmidt and Tatum, German Tank and Antitank of World War II, pp. 212-213. It may also have been an Sd Kfz 231 or 233, but these last two were not as commonly used as the 234 in SS divisions.

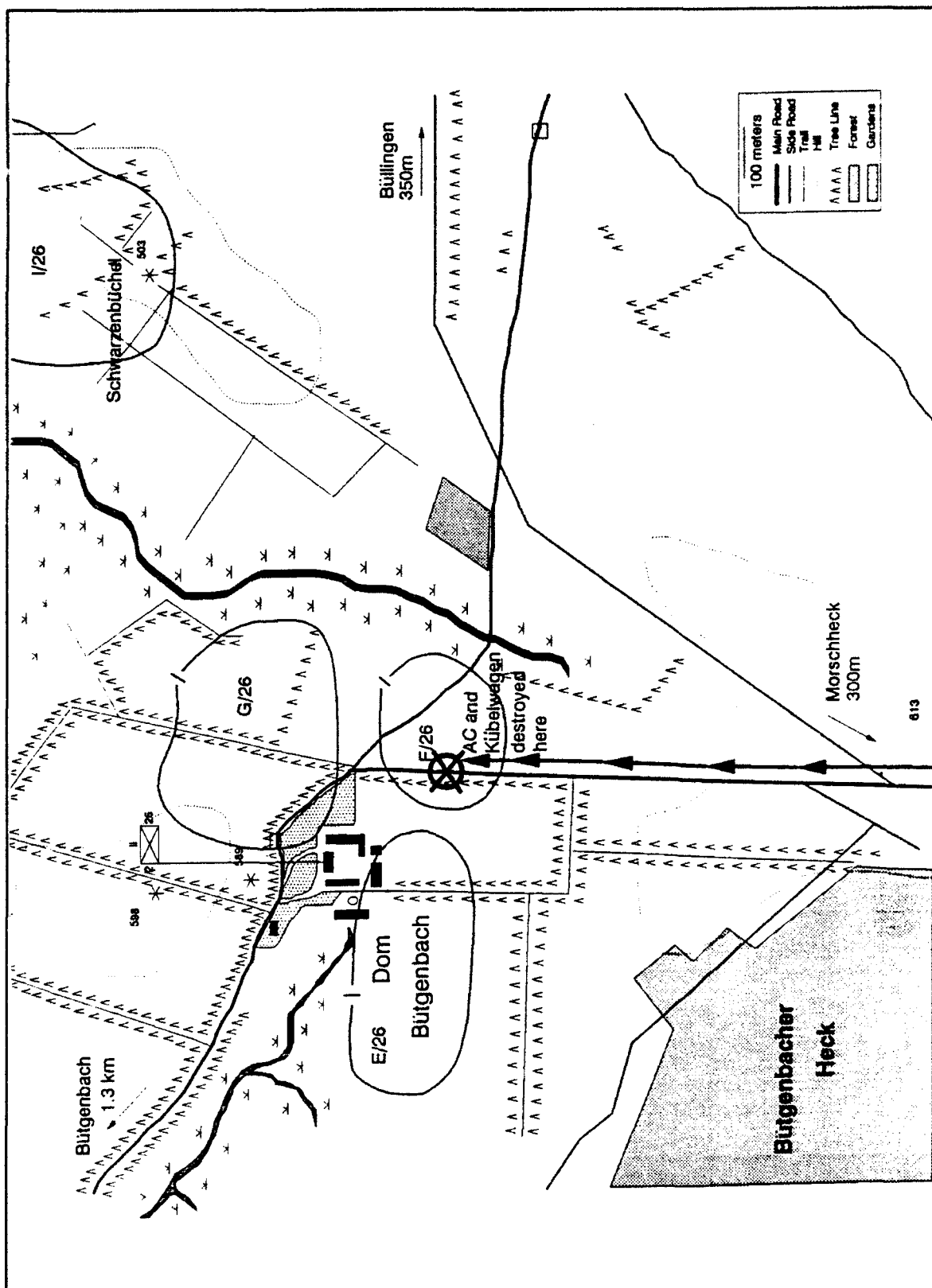


FIGURE 7. 1210 HOURS, 18 DECEMBER 1944

junction near the Domäne. Because of the lingering fog, the men of E Co could not identify the vehicles as American or German until they were only 200 yards south of the intersection, at which point one of the 57mm AT guns opened fire, quickly destroying the thin-skinned armored car and unarmored Kübelwagen. (Action 1) The four soldiers riding in the jeep were killed instantly, as were three of the armored car crewmen. The American soldiers nearby extricated the fourth German from the wreckage and carried him to the command post, where he was interrogated. He gave his unit affiliation³⁰ and said that the Germans had thought the Dom Bütgenbach area to be lightly defended.

Five minutes after this skirmish, American observers reported that two truckloads of German infantry (about 20-30 men) had just unloaded at the edge of Morschheck and dashed into the woods northeast of the town. Immediately, American artillery and 81mm mortar fire began raining down on the forest. When the barrage lifted, an American patrol infiltrated the woods to assess the damage of the shelling. They found about twenty dead SS-panzergrenadiers, and ten more Germans moving back toward Morschheck carrying wounded comrades. The first meeting was over.³¹

³⁰ Some sources, notably the 26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 44, and the 26th Inf Regt Jnl, Dec 44, say he claimed to be from the 1st SS-PzD. While it is possible that the vehicles were stragglers from KG Peiper's column, it is unlikely since that unit was already some miles away to the west by this time. It is more likely that the officers interrogating him misunderstood him and confused the 12th SS-PzD with the 1st SS-PzD.

³¹ Accounts of this action were gleaned from: Gendron, Ops of the 2/26th in the Ardennes, p. 16; 26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 44; and 26th Inf Regt Unit Jnl, Dec 44.

**Action #1: Destruction of "Hitlerjugend's" Probe
1210 Hours, 18 December 1944**

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Deployed S of Dom Bütgenbach-Büllingen road facing S toward Morschheck	Map Overlay File
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Co, 2/26th Inf Regt with attached 57mm AT guns from Regimental AT Company; about 130 men	US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID (#163)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None	---	Gendron, <u>Opns of 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes</u> p.6 (#6)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. At least one, possibly three d. None	Gendron, <u>op cit</u> , p.6 (#6)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	1 8-wheeled armored car (Sd Kfz 231, 233, or 234)	---	von Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks of WWII</u> ; Hoffschmidt and Tatum, <u>German Tank and Antitank</u>

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	8 men killed, one captured	None	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> , p.16 (#6)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	1 8-wheeled armored car destroyed, 1 Kübelwagen (unarmored jeep) destroyed	---	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> , p.16 (#6)
9. Artillery	None	None	
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Cool with high clouds	Cool with high clouds	745th Tk Bn AAR, Dec 1944 (#188)
12. Time of Day	1210	1210	Gendron, <i>op cit</i>
13. Light and Visibility	Thick fog	Thick fog	Gendron, <i>op cit</i>
14. Terrain	Open, rolling. Tree-lined roads	Open, rolling. Tree-lined roads	GS GS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	200 yards	200 yards	Gendron, <i>op cit</i>
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	At least two rounds AP (one per German vehicle)	Gendron, <i>op cit</i>
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal approach down highway	---	Gendron, <i>op cit</i>

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Prepared positions; infantry in covered foxholes, guns camouflaged. Artillery plotted for defensive fires.	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> , p.14
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise; gun crews could hear the vehicles approaching but could not see them until they were 200 yards away.	Gendron, <i>op cit</i>
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	None	
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55-280 rounds, depending on armored car type	57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 rounds to be present as ready rounds: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several rounds of British 2-lb DS may also have been available.	v. Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks of World War II</u> ; Hoffschmidt and Tantum, <u>German Tank and Anti-Tank</u> ; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 44

ACTIONS 2, 3

Name: The Attack Toward Bütgenbach

Location: South and East of Dom Bütgenbach, Belgium

Time: 1010 Hours, 19 December 1944

Realizing that the Americans were defending the Dom Bütgenbach cross-roads in force, the commander of the 12th SS-PzD, SS-Col Kraas, spent the rest of 18 December withdrawing his forces from Krinkeit-Rocherath and marshalling them at Büllingen for an attack in force toward Bütgenbach (*Figure 8*). This attack was commanded by the division's executive officer from the forward command post, since Kraas was still preoccupied with the battle at the twin villages. The troops of 3d Bn, 26th SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment (26th SS-Pz Gren Regt) relieved the elements of 12th VGD holding Büllingen, and at 0225 on 19 December they attacked westward with about 12 panzerjägers³² and 20 half-tracks and trucks carrying 200-300 infantrymen. The heavy American defensive fire, including prearranged defensive artillery concentrations, stopped most of the attackers before they could reach the American MLR, but three of the panzerjägers succeeded in breaking through E Co's line and onto the road from Morschheck to the Domäne. They began firing their main guns at the manor house, wounding five or six GIs, but a barrage of 155mm artillery shells drove them off. As they passed through the American foxhole line on their way back to Büllingen, two of the three panzerjägers were disabled either by artillery, tank destroyer, antitank gun, or bazooka fire. This attack cost the Germans over 100 dead and at least three tank destroyers and four trucks destroyed.

Following the hour-long German attack in the pre-dawn darkness, Col John F.R. Seitz, commander of the US 26th Infantry Regiment, began moving elements of his 1st Bn out of reserve positions in Bütgenbach. Company B dug in along the north side of the Büllingen-Bütgenbach road between the town and the Domäne. Soon after, A Co moved to new positions 1000 yards south of

³²In this text, the word "panzerjäger" is used to refer to the German self-propelled, turretless, tank destroyers. "Panzer" is used to refer to a turreted German tank. The two types of panzerjägers that will be referred to are the PzJg IV/48 Jagdpanzer and PzJg V Jagdpanther.

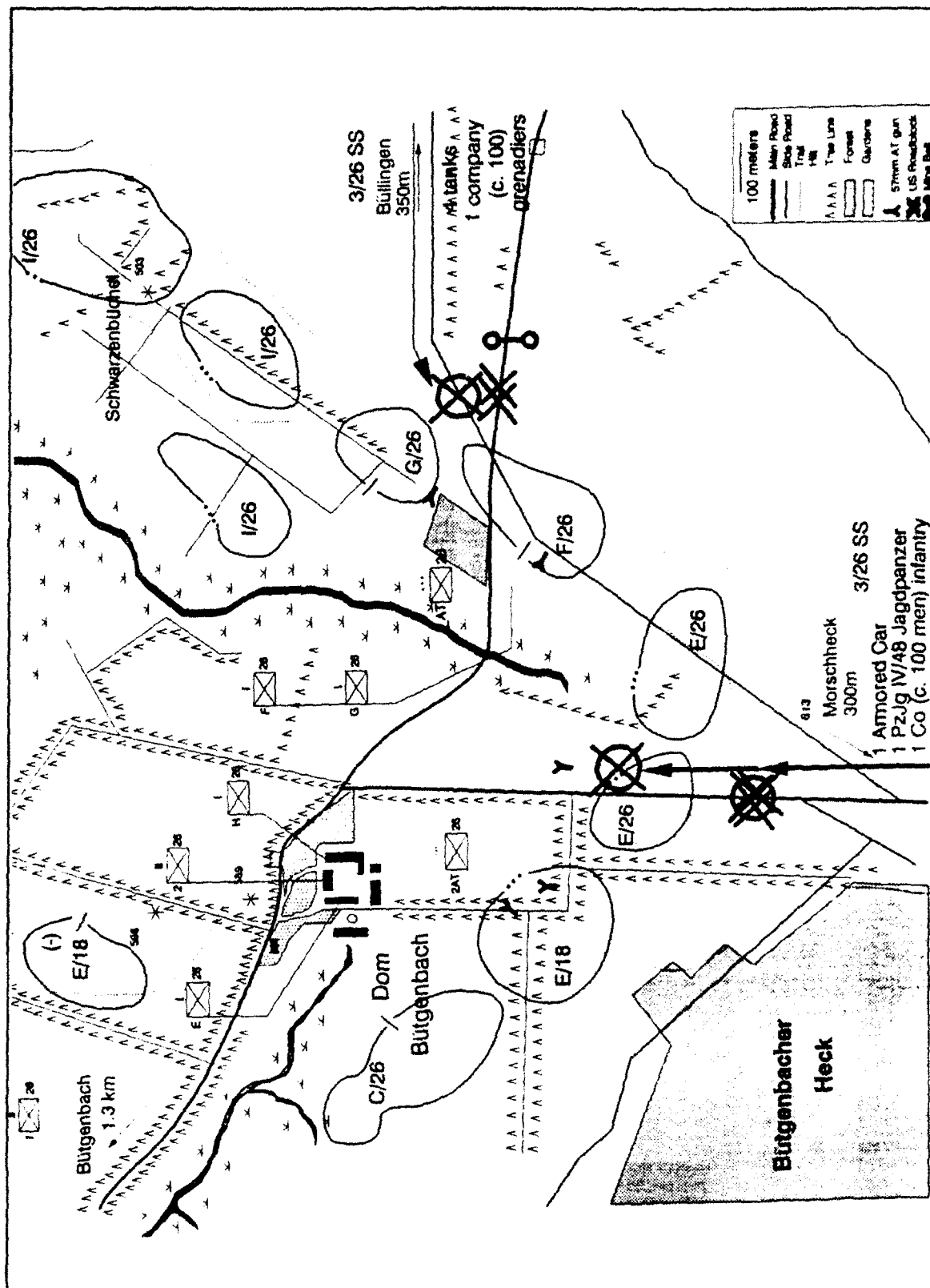


FIGURE 8. 1010 HOURS, 19 DECEMBER 1944

Bütgenbach to tie in with B Co. This had the added benefit of guarding 2d Bn's open right flank, and by 0500 the gap between the two battalions was reduced to 600 yards. B Co would cover this gap by fire during the daytime and establish outposts there at night.

About 0630, shortly after daylight, the Germans began shelling 2d Bn's positions with artillery and mortar fire. Not heavy at first, the barrage gradually increased in intensity throughout the morning, reaching its maximum strength by 1000. At 1010, the second German attack of the day hit the American positions from south and east.

The first force (*Action 2*) came out of Morschheck, over the crest of Hill 613 and down the road to the Domäne. Leading the attack was a German eight-wheeled armored car with a large gun in a rotating turret.³³ Following closely behind was a large armored vehicle.³⁴ Together, these two vehicles protected the advance of a company of SS infantry, who were probably from 3/26th SS-PzGren Regt. Because of the heavy fog blanketing the area, the American gun crews let the Germans approach to within 100 yards of their positions in order to increase the chances of a hit on the vehicles, and to confirm their identity as enemy. The gun crew of 2d Gun Squad, 2d Platoon of the Regimental Anti-Tank Co had just finished setting up their 57mm AT gun on the MLR a few minutes before the attack, and now they drew a bead on the approaching vehicles. On command, they began firing the gun as quickly as they could reload it, hammering out three armor-piercing (or possibly discarding sabot) rounds in a few seconds. The first two shells were aimed at the Jagdpanzer which, being the most heavily armed and armored of the two vehicles, was the most important target. Both rounds struck the panzerjäger,

³³ Contemporary American accounts say the armored car had a 50mm anti-tank gun in its turret; that would indicate that it was an Sd Kfz 234/2 "Puma." However, the German gliederung (Table of Organization) for the 12th SS-PzD for 19 Dec 1944 shows no such vehicles in the division's inventory. The gliederung does indicate that the 12th SS-Recon Bn contained seventeen Sd Kfz 234/1 cars with 20mm guns, and six Sd Kfz 234/3 cars with 75mm guns. It would have almost certainly been one of these that was destroyed in this action. See von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks of World War II, p. 154-156; Hoffschmidt and Tatum, German Tank and Antitank of World War II, pp. 212-213.

³⁴ Contemporary American accounts claim this second vehicle was a Mk V Panther tank, but the only Panthers in the 12th SS-PzD were in the 1st Bn of the 12th SS PzRegt, which at this time was still on its way to Büllingen from Krinkelt-Rocherath. This vehicle was probably from the 12th SS-PzJg Bn of KG Müller, which would mean it was almost certainly a PzJg IV/48 Jagdpanzer.

and although it is not known where on the vehicle they hit, they damaged it enough that it was forced to limp back to its own lines. But the AT gun's muzzle flashes had given away its location, and the armored car swung its turret to fire at the gun. Armored car and AT gun fired simultaneously. The American 57mm shell struck the armored car and instantly destroyed it. However, the German 50mm shell also found its mark, destroying the AT gun and killing two members of the gun crew, Cpl Hale Williams and PFC Richard Wollenberg. An additional crewman was blinded by the blast, and another had to be evacuated because of battle fatigue. The German advance from Morschheck now ground to a halt because the grenadiers could not advance against the deadly American artillery and small arms fire without tank support. The commanding officer of E Co, Capt Pierre Stepanian, called in artillery and 81mm mortar fire on the exposed Germans, and almost the entire company was slaughtered in front of the American foxholes. Some of the artillery rounds fell within 50 yards of the American positions. Those few SS who were able to stumble back into the Bütgenbacher Heck were ambushed and killed by the men of the American listening post still hiding just inside the forest's edge.

Twenty minutes after the start of the southern attack, the Germans launched another assault westward out of Büllingen (*Action 3*). This time they employed between four and eight of the huge panzerjägers and an infantry force reckoned to be at least a company and possibly a battalion, probably the remainder of 3/26th SS-PzGren Regt. This force advanced along the secondary road that ran parallel to and north of the main Büllingen-Bütgenbach road. Again, because of the fog, the Americans allowed the SS troops to approach close to their positions. The GIs could catch glimpses of the grenadiers through the fog, seeing them deployed perfectly in attack formation behind the panzerjägers. When the Germans reached a point about 100 yards from the American line, the leading SS officer called out in English for the Americans to surrender. The Americans answered him with a hail of fire. All the small arms of F and G Cos opened up, as well as bazookas, tank destroyers, and the two AT guns covering the east-west road. These latter destroyed the two leading panzerjägers and again the German advance halted.

The Germans' morning barrage had cut F Co's communication lines to the

battalion CP and disabled both the company's radio and the radio used by the artillery forward observer stationed with the company, so they had to rely on the company's organic 60mm mortars to help drive off the Germans.

The grenadiers began to fall back after an hour, unable to penetrate the American perimeter on either side. At about 1100, they again withdrew into Büllingen. Further attacks would have to wait for the arrival of more of the panzergrenadiers. Also, the Germans were running short on ammunition because the muddy roads were delaying the supply units. Under increasing time pressure to break through the US defense and open the highway to Malmedy, the "Hitlerjugend" Division had to content itself with artillery harassment of Dom Bütgenbach for the rest of the 19th of December.³⁶

³⁶Details of the fighting were taken from: Rivette, "Hot Corner at Dom Bütgenbach;" Rivette, Opns of the 2/26th at Dom Bütgenbach, pp. 12-13; Letter, Daniel to Rivette, 19 Oct 1948; Gendron, Opns of the 2/26th in the Ardennes, pp. 18-19; 26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 44; 26th Inf Regt Jnl, Dec 44; US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div; Gendron Certificate, 14 Mar 1986; Rivette Certificate, 1 Dec 1986; Cole, The Ardennes, p. 130; and MacDonald, A Time For Trumpets, pp. 404-405.

Action #2: The Attack From the South
1010 Hours, 19 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Deployed E, SE, and S of Dom Bütgenbach, covering the approaches from Büllingen and Morschheck	26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 1944 Overlay (#167)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Company, 26th Inf Regt plus supporting AT assets (about 120 men)	26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 1944 (#167);
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	One company of SS-panzergrenadiers (about 100 men)	---	Gendron, <u>Opns of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes</u> , p. 18-19 (#6); USA ETO Cbt Int (#163); Rivette, <u>Opns of the 2/26th at Dom Bütgenbach</u> , p. 12-13 (#5)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. One, possibly up to three d. Unknown	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; Rivette, <i>op cit</i> ; Cbt Int, <i>op cit</i>

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One eight-wheeled armored car: either Sd Kfz 234/1 with a 20mm gun or Sd Kfz 234/3 with 75mm gun; one self-propelled panzerjäger, probably a Mk IV Jagdpanzer	: ---	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; Rivette, <i>op cit</i> ; Cbt Int, <i>op cit</i> ; Hoffschmidt & Tantum, <u>German Tank and Anti-Tank</u> ; v. Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks of World War II</u>
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	Armored car crew presumably killed (four men)	Two gun crew members killed, one blinded, one evac battle fatigue	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; 26th Inf Regt AAR (#167); Cbt Int, <i>op cit</i> ; 26th Inf Regt Journal (#169)
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or Hits	Armored car destroyed by one round 57mm AP; panzerjäger crippled by two rounds 57mm AP but escaped to own lines. Over 100 supporting infantry killed	Four or five nearby infantry wounded by tank fire	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; 26th Inf Regt AAR (#167); 26th Inf Regt Journal (#169)
9. Artillery	Provided by 12th SS-Artillery Regiment	Four US Field Artillery battalions firing in support	Cole, <u>The Ardennes</u> , p. 130; Meyer, <u>Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-PzD</u>
10. Obstacles	None	None	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
11. Meteorological Data	Cool, cloudy, and hazy	Cool, cloudy, and hazy	745th Tk Bn AAR, Dec 44 (#188)
12. Time of Day	1010	1010	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; 26th Inf Regt AAR (#167); 26th Inf Regt Journal (#169)
13. Light and Visibility	Heavy fog; visibility poor	Heavy fog; visibility poor	745th Tk Bn AAR (#188); Rivette, <i>op cit</i>
14. Terrain	Rolling, open. Muddy except for paved roads	Rolling, open. Muddy except for paved roads	GSGS 4414; Meyer, <u>Kriegsgeschichte</u> <u>der 12.SS-PzD</u> p.438 (#197)
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	100-200 yards	100-200 yards	Rivette, <i>op cit</i>
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	1 round, 50mm HE	3 rounds, 57mm AP	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; Rivette, <i>op cit</i>
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal approach, tanks screening infantry advance	---	
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Fair; gun and infantry dug in but terrain is open and there is little natural cover	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Fog masked the sight of the enemy vehicles, but they could be heard moving on the road. Preparatory barrage also alerted defenders.	Gendron, <i>op cit</i>
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	Preparatory barrage had minimal effects on US defenders	Four battalions of artillery and all attached mortars fired on the enemy attacks. Damage to the tanks was minimal, but the grenadiers were slaughtered by the barrage	Cbt Int, <i>op cit</i> ; Gendron, <i>op cit</i>
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None recorded. Fog would preclude overwatch	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV; 55 rounds for armored car	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HF and 70% APC. Several British 2-lb DS rounds may also have been available	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; Hoffschmidt & Tatum, German Tank and Anti-Tank; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

**Action #3: The Attack From the East
1010 Hours, 19 December 1944**

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Deployed E, SE, and S of Dom Bütgenbach covering the approaches from Büllingen and Morschheck	26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 1944 Overlay (#167)
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	2 companies of infantry (F and G Cos, 26th Inf Regt) plus supporting AT assets, about 150-170 men	26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 1944 (#167)
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	One or two companies of SS-panzergrenadiers (100-300 men)	---	Gendron, <u>Opns of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes</u> p.18-19 (#6); USA ETO Cbt Int (#163); Rivette, <u>Opns of 2/26th Inf at Dom Bütgenbach</u> , p.12-13 (#5)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. Two c. Two or three d. Unknown	Gendron, <u>op cit</u> ; Rivette, <u>op cit</u> ; US Army ETO Cbt Int

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Four to eight panzerjägers, either Mk IV Jagdpanzers or Mk V Jagdpanthers	---	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> , p.18-19; Meyer, <u>Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-PzD</u>
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	Almost 100 killed	None reported	Rivette, <i>op cit</i> , p.12-13
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Two leading panzerjägers knocked out by 57mm AT gun fire. Two others probably destroyed by artillery.	---	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; Rivette, <i>op cit</i> ; Cole, <u>The Ardennes</u> , p.130
9. Artillery	Provided by 12th-SS Artillery Regiment	Provided by F Co's organic 60mm mortars	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> , p.18-19
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Cool, cloudy, and hazy	Cool, cloudy, and hazy	745th Tk Bn AAR, Dec 1944 (#188)
12. Time of Day	1030	1030	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; 26th Inf Regt AAR (#167)
13. Light and Visibility	Heavy fog; visibility poor.	Heavy fog; visibility poor	745th Tk Bn AAR, Dec 1944 (#188); Rivette, <i>op cit</i> , p. 12-13
14. Terrain	Rolling, open. Muddy except for paved roads	Rolling, open. Muddy except for paved roads	GSGS 4414; Meyer, <u>Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-PzD</u> p.438 (#197)

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	< 100 yards	< 100 yards	Rivette, <i>op cit</i> , p. 12-13
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	Unknown	Unknown	
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal Approach	---	
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Fair. Guns and infantry dug in but terrain is open and there is little natural cover.	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. Defenders alerted by preparatory barrage and by sound of tanks and shouts of German infantry in the fog	Rivette, <i>op cit</i> , p.12-13
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	Preparatory barrage cuts US phone lines and knocks out radios by concussion. Effectiveness on US personnel marginal	With communications lines cut, only organic 60mm mortars available for support. They are possibly responsible for knocking out two panzer-jägers and helping drive off the supporting infantry	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> , p.18-19; USA ETO Cbt Int (#163)
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None reported. Fog would preclude overwatch.	---	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV; 60 rounds for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun doctrine called for at least 100 rounds to be present as ready rounds: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several British 2-lb DS rounds may also have been available.	Gendron, <i>op cit</i> ; Hoffschmidt, <u>German Tank and Anti-Tank</u> ; v. Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks of World War II</u> ; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTION 4

Name: *Kampfgruppe Kühlmann* Attacks

Location: East of Dom Bütgenbach, Belgium

Time: 0330 Hours, 20 December 1944

Throughout the 19th of December, elements of the 12th SS-PzD dribbled into Büllingen, hampered by the muddy, clogged roads and tired from two days of hard fighting at Krinkelt-Rocherath³⁶ (Figure 9). At some point during the afternoon the rocket-launcher (*nebelwerfer*) battalion of the 12th SS-Artillery Regt arrived and fired at least one barrage of rockets at the 2/26th positions at Dom Bütgenbach; the other three artillery battalions kept up a light but steady rain of shells throughout the day.

Under pressure to attack quickly to seize Bütgenbach and open Rollbahn C, SS-Col Kraas reorganized *Kampfgruppe Kühlmann* to include the tanks of 1st Bn/12th SS-PzRegt; the 1st and 3d Bns of the 26th SS-PzGren Regt; the panzerjägers of the 560th Hvy PzJg Bn; and the 2/12th Artillery Regt of towed 105mm howitzers.³⁷ This force assembled and set out at 2310 on 19 December, under cover of darkness, to mount a concentrated attack on the US positions east of Dom Bütgenbach. The 3/26 SS secured the assembly area in the west section of Büllingen and pushed a screen of scouts forward while the 1/26 SS and the panzerjägers of the 560th Hvy PzJg Bn moved down both sides of the Büllingen-Bütgenbach highway. The force took a wrong turn, however, and got lost in the darkness. It ended up south of the Domäne near Morschheck at about 0150, and Capt. Stepanian of E Co, 2/26 called upon the US 1st Division's supporting artillery to blast the German column. The 5th, 33d, and 955th FA Bns, as well as one 90mm battery from the 414th AAA Bn and a battery of 8-inch guns, answered the call and the resulting 10-minute barrage knocked out two of the 560th's Jagdpanzer IV/48s.³⁸ It was some time before the

³⁶Krämer, MS ETHINT 21

³⁷Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend" p.440

³⁸Gendron, One of the 2/26th Inf Regt in the Ardennes, p. 21

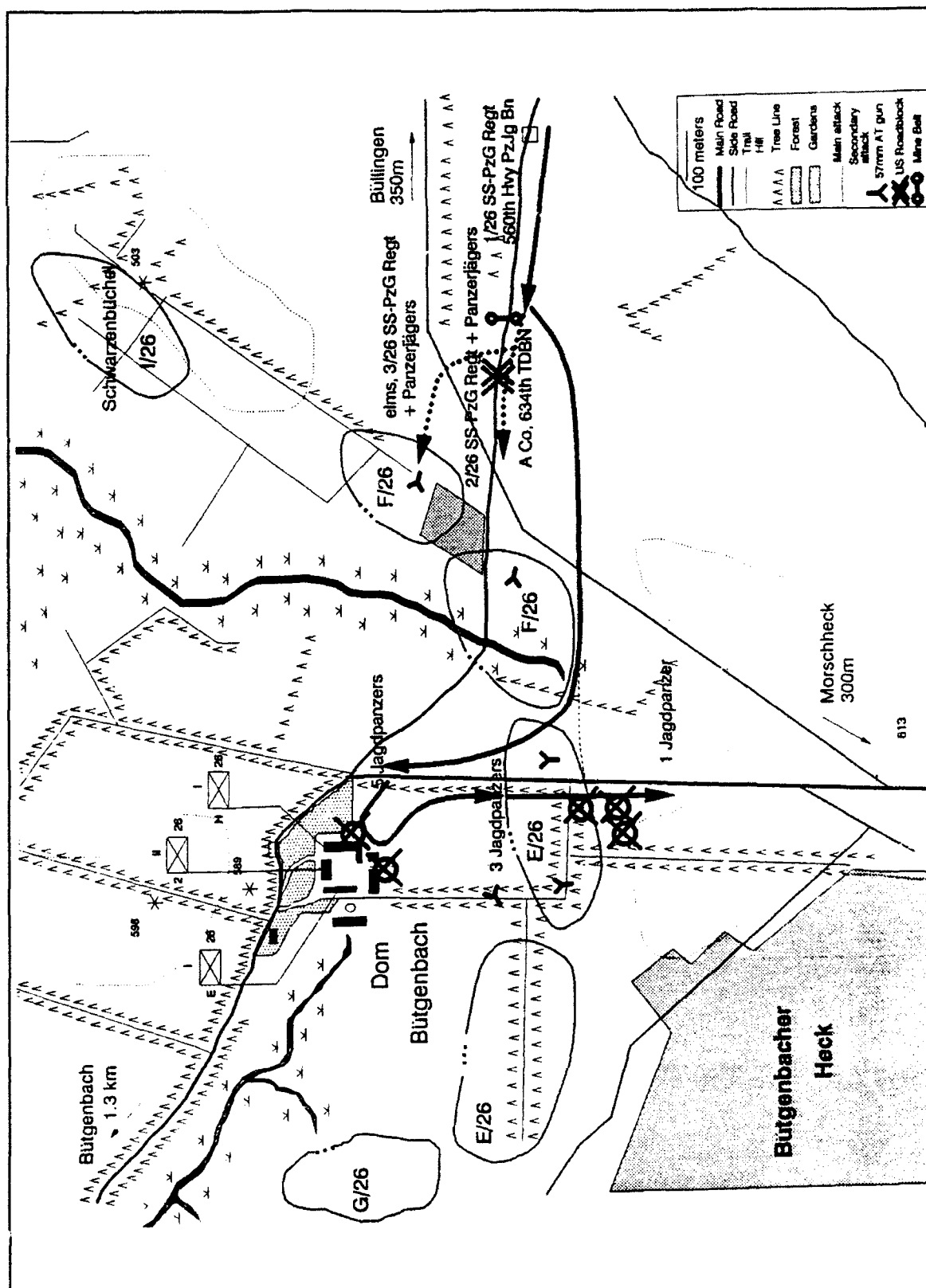


FIGURE 9. 0330 HOURS, 20 DECEMBER 1944

kampfgruppe could turn around and reassemble back in its proper starting area. Finally, at 0330 on the 20th, the Germans neared the Americans' eastern perimeter.

Just before reaching the American lines, the *kampfgruppe* split into three columns. The northernmost force, a company of panzerjägers and some infantry of 3/26 SS-PzGren Regt, had the task of clearing the troops of the US 3/26th from the Schwarzenbüchel on Hill 503 in order to protect the attack's flank; it succeeded in occupying the southern part of the hill, but the attack stalled and the grenadiers there were locked in combat for hours with the American infantry along the treeline.

The center group rolled due west down the highway for a clash with F Co, which had been alerted by the sounds of battle on Hill 503. The commander of the lead Jagdpanther was struck in the head and killed by an American bullet before his vehicle reached the foxhole line. His driver, panicking, quickly threw the vehicle in reverse before it could be hit by anti-tank fire and rammed into the following Jagdpanther.³⁹ Despite the snarl this caused, the attackers pressed on, and heavy combat ensued between the Americans of F Co and the Germans of 2/26 SS-PzGren Regt. One of the M-10 self-propelled tank destroyers of the 634th TD Bn was in this area, near the F Co CP, and could have been of great value in supporting against the German thrust, but the crew disabled their vehicle, thinking themselves surrounded, and fled toward the battalion CP at the Domäne.⁴⁰

The leftmost German force enjoyed the most success. Some tanks and a company of PzJg IV/48s accompanied by infantry from the 1/26 SS encountered a belt of American mines across the road a hundred yards or so in front of the MLR, so they swung southwest off the main road and headed for the seam between E and F Companies using unpaved trails along the hillsides. The Germans skirted just south of the head of the Schwarzenbach Creek, but several of the 45-ton Jagdpanzers became mired in the soft mud, some up to their rear decks.

³⁹Meyer, op cit

⁴⁰Letter, Daniel to Rivette, 19 Oct 1948

Five of the panzerjägers from 1st Kompanie managed to make it up the hill and through the American foxhole line, but the grenadiers were checked by the heavy American small arms and artillery fire. Once through the MLR, the Jagdpanzers turned around briefly to spray the American positions from the rear with machine gun and HE fire. This fire knocked out some of the 57mm AT guns and caused casualties among the infantry, including destroying three bazooka teams and a machine gun section of four or five men from H Co, but it also aided in further pinning the German infantry on the other side of the MLR. After a few minutes the Jagdpanzers turned northwest to continue their mission of breaking through to the Domäne, leaving the grenadiers and GIs to fight it out in the heaviest combat the US regiment had ever seen. The smoke of battle added to the fog in obscuring visibility, and several German panzerfaust teams were able to get close enough to fire at the US AT guns. German artillery and mortar fire continued to crash down on the Americans positions all through the battle. The Germans captured several American soldiers in the fighting, and when they were interrogated later the Germans learned for the first time that they were facing the 26th Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division.⁴¹

The five Jagdpanzers pushed on alone, driving through the American rear area to within 100 yards of the manor house, where they began firing their 75mm guns directly into the building. However, without their supporting infantry they were vulnerable to close combat tactics. American bazooka teams set out to hunt the Jagdpanzers among the buildings of the Domäne and knocked out two of them. The other three vehicles chose to withdraw and headed for the road to Morschheck. After they passed through the MLR, however, the crews of the American AT guns were able to spot the vehicles' exhaust flashes through the smoke and fog, and destroyed two more panzerjägers in short order (*Action 4*).

Fearing that his infantry line was in danger of collapse from the enormous pressure being exerted by the panzergrenadiers, LtCol Daniel committed his battalion reserve, the platoon from G Co, to counterattack and

⁴¹Meyer, op cit

restore the MLR. He also called the Regimental CP in Bütgenbach and requested a company from 1st Bn, which was too far west to be hit by the German attack. Col. Seitz approved, and sent C Co to the 2d Bn area at once. Daniel forwarded two platoons to reinforce F Co, which was being badly chewed up, and kept two platoons as his new battalion reserve.

Meanwhile, in the center astride the highway, the battle still raged. Three of the giant panzerjägers broke through the foxhole line and engaged the US tanks and SP TDs along the ridgeline on the southern part of Hill 503. The US armor pounded away at the German vehicles until they were either destroyed or they retreated back through the MLR. Two Sherman tanks and an M-10 TD were knocked out in this action. Further north, some German armor also closed with the GIs in the 3d Bn in the Schwarzenbüchel, but the I Co men took out some with their bazookas, tanks, and tank destroyers while 155mm salvos knocked out others. Heavy machine gun fire from L Co helped keep the panzergrenadiers from advancing into the Schwarzenbüchel.

The German attack petered out by 0530. Their artillery fire continued hitting the American lines even as the surviving infantry and armor pulled back into Büllingen. It had been a near run thing to say the least. By the end of the attack, only 17 rounds of bazooka ammunition were left in all of 2d Bn, and the bazooka teams were reduced to scrounging odd rocket rounds from the crews of the AT Co's 57mm guns.⁴² As mentioned earlier, the German artillery had cut wire communications with Regiment early in the morning, and the 2d Bn had lost radio contact as well during the fighting. The MLR was in a shambles, desperately in need of repair, and LtCol Daniel was urgently calling for more mines to help block the German advance routes. He only had the two platoons from C Co for a battalion reserve. Another attack might cause the whole US defense around Dom Bütgenbach to collapse.

The 12th SS-PzD had suffered another bloody nose as well. At least four and possibly as many as twelve tanks and panzerjägers had been destroyed or damaged in the morning's attack, and the panzergrenadier battalions had

⁴²26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 44; 26th Inf Regt Unit Jnl, Dec 44

suffered heavy casualties.⁴³ As the remnants of the attacking force withdrew into Büllingen, SS-Col Kraas immediately regrouped them and sent them out again, hoping the Americans would crack before his men did. This time, the attack from Büllingen would be supported by a simultaneous attack from Morschheck.

⁴³ Accounts of the attack and the losses on both sides were found in: Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision "Hitlerjugend", p. 440; Captured German document quoted in US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div; 1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt, Dec 44; 26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 44; Letter, Daniel to Rivette, 19 Oct 1948; MacDonald, A Time For Trumpets, pp. 21-22; Rivette, Opns of the 2/26th at Dom Bütgenbach, pp. 14-15; Pallud, The Battle of the Bulge: Then and Now, p. 101; Gendron Certificate, 14 March 1986; and 26th Inf Regt Unit Jnl, Dec 44.

**Action #4: Kampfgruppe Kühlmann Attacks: Breakthrough at the CP
0330 Hours, 20 December 1944**

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Deployed in an arc E-SE-S of Dom Bütgenbach with AT weapons in the front lines	Overlays from US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID: 192400 Dec 1944 et al
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	2 companies of infantry with supporting TD and AT elements	
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	26th SS-Panzer Grenadier Regiment	---	Captured German document quoted in US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID (#163)
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. Unknown b. Four? c. At least two d. At least three	US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID (#163)
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	About 20 panzerjägers from the 560th Hvy PzJg Bn	---	US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID (#163); Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-PzD
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	Unknown	Unknown	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Two Jagdpanzers knocked out near 2d Bn CP; two more shot from behind while retreating through US MLR	---	Gendron, Opns of the 2/26th in the Ardennes (#6); #167
9. Artillery	Provided by the 12th SS-Artillery Regiment	All four artillery bns organic to 1st ID plus a battery of 90mm guns, a 155mm corps arty bn, a 4.5" corps arty bn, a bty of 8-inch guns, and a 4.2" mortar bn	MacDonald, A Time For Trumpets pp. 404-405; Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzer-division
10. Obstacles	Mines and roadblock at 937019	None	US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID (#163)
11. Meteorological Data	Scattered clouds; hazy and cold	Scattered clouds; hazy and cold	745th Tk Bn AAR (#188)
12. Time of Day	0330	0330	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark with heavy fog. Area lit by flares from US 60mm mortars	Dark with heavy fog. Area lit by flares from US 60mm mortars	745th Tk Bn AAR (#188), #5, 26th Inf Regt AAR (#167)
14. Terrain	Open, rolling with scattered artificial tree lines	Open, rolling with scattered artificial tree lines	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	< 100 yards	< 100 yards	#163, #167

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	Unknown	Unknown	
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal assault, side slipping points of heavy resistance. Attacked along US company boundaries	---	#163
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; all troops and guns dug in using what little cover available; SP TDs and tanks positioned for reverse slope defense and mobile reserve	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	30 minute preparatory barrage fired by Germans prior to attack	#5
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	US artillery decimates the German infantry and possibly knocks out two Jagdpanzers	Preliminary German arty barrage knocks out telephone lines to HQ	---
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None. Fog and dark preclude overwatch	---	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	55 rounds for PzJg IV/48	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for the presence of 100 ready rounds: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several British 2-lb DS rounds may also have been available	Hoffschmidt and Tantum, German Tank and Antitank of World War II; von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks of World War II; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTIONS 5-8

Name: The Heroism of Cpl. Warner

Place: Dom Bütgenbach, Belgium

Time: 0600, 20 December 1944

Very quickly after the withdrawal of his units into Büllingen after the unsuccessful 0330 attack, SS-Colonel Kraas launched a second attack, sending a force of ten tanks westward out of Büllingen and eight panzerjägers south from Morschheck (*Figure 10*). This time, the two tank destroyers and three AT guns covering F Co were ready, and as the German tanks crested the small ridge about 300 yards in front of F Co, advancing in single file, the concentrated fire from the American pieces knocked out all ten, one by one (*Action 8*). Again, the American artillery and small arms fire pinned down the supporting grenadiers, and the attack on the US 2/26th's left flank accomplished nothing.

At the same time, the panzerjägers of 9th Kompanie⁴⁴ rolled down the hill out of Morschheck, fanning out a bit to cover more of the American line. The platoon of G Co that LtCol Daniel committed earlier was practically annihilated by the German tank fire, but the heavy American defensive artillery fire kept the German infantry from overrunning the survivors and deflected the advance of the panzerjägers. As the armor approached the MLR, a shell from somewhere struck the 9th Kompanie commander's Mk V Jagdpanther, setting it on fire. He managed to turn the tank around and drive it back into Morschheck, where he commandeered the 11th Kompanie's command vehicle and returned to the battle.⁴⁵ During his absence, his panzer force was further whittled by the American defenses. Artillery fire destroyed or immobilized three of the panzerjägers even before they reached the US lines. The commander of the one of the 57mm AT gun crews, Sgt Stanley Oldenski, saw some of the panzerjägers trying to break through the MLR to his right (west), and sent out some members of his gun crew armed with a bazooka to try to secure

⁴⁴Captured German document quoted in US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div

⁴⁵Ibid.

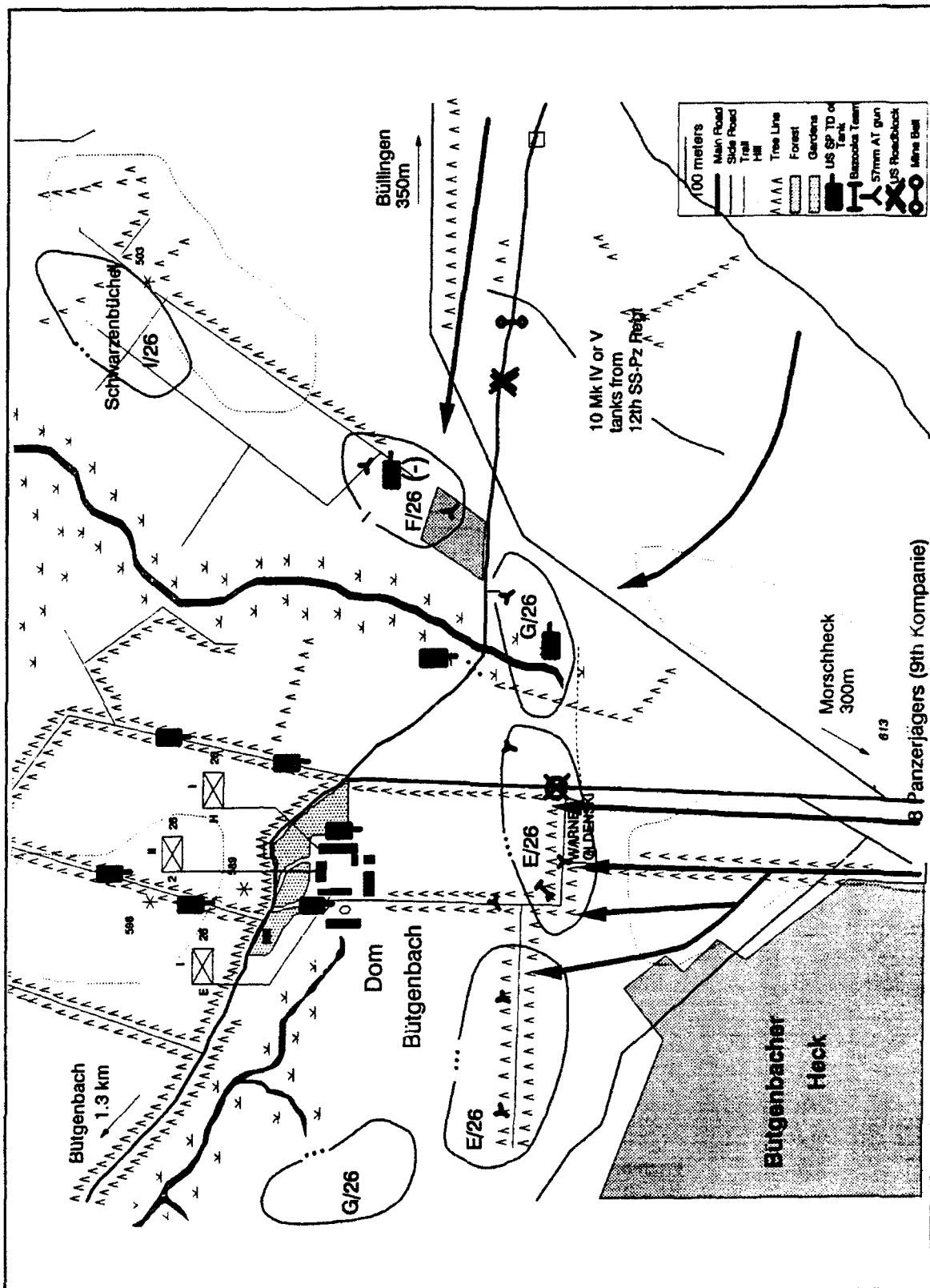


FIGURE 10. 0600 HOURS, 20 DECEMBER 1944

that flank.⁴⁶ He could also see gun flashes from two more of the German tank destroyers about 75 yards to his left. With Oldenski acting as loader, his gunner, Cpl Henry ("Red") Warner, began firing British DS shells at the Germans. He put four rounds into the first panzerjäger, destroying it (*Action 5*). Then, he hit another one with one round, stopping it, but he fired three more rounds into the hulk to make sure it was dead (*Action 6*). On Warner's final shot, however, the AT gun's breech block jammed and the gun would not return to battery. As Warner struggled to fix the weapon, a third panzerjäger appeared out of the mist, approaching straight toward his gun and firing its bow machine gun. The rest of the crew dove into the nearby foxholes for cover, but Warner continued wrestling with the jammed gun. Instead of firing his main gun at the American weapon, the German vehicle commander apparently decided to just run over it. He stood up and poked his head out of the hatch to direct the vehicle's movement. When the panzer was about 10 yards away from the gun, Warner gave up trying to fix it, pulled his .45 caliber pistol and fired at the tank commander. Then he dove into the slit trench dug between the gun trails. As Warner heard the tank gun its engine and move toward him, he expected to be crushed by it. When it was scant feet from the AT gun, however, the panzerjäger stopped, went into reverse, and backed away at full speed. Warner, incredulous, peeked out from his trench and saw the German tank commander slumped half out of the hatch, apparently killed by one of his pistol shots⁴⁷ (*Action 7*).

Soon the Germans were again in retreat, and thanks to the voluminous American artillery fire of four FA Bns, no German infantry had been able to penetrate the MLR. By 0800 the attack was over, and although the Germans would launch smaller infantry attacks every four or five hours until nightfall, these were easily repulsed. For the rest of the day the front-line troops continued to improve their defensive positions and lay protective minefields. LtCol Daniel also strengthened E Co's line by attaching to it one

⁴⁶ These men later claimed to have knocked out one German panzer with their bazooka, but that claim was never verified.

⁴⁷ Details of Warner's action are repeated without variation in several sources. See Footnote 41 at the end of this section.

of the C Co rifle platoons.⁴⁸

Around 1300 on the 20th, Regiment pulled the 3d AT Platoon of the Regimental AT Co out of the line in 3d Bn's sector and sent it, with its three 57mm AT guns, to replace the gun losses suffered by 2d Bn in the morning's attack.⁴⁹ This made a total of eight AT guns in the battalion's MLR. The 3d Plt dug in its guns in the soft earth behind the hedgerow of poplar trees running to the west. They fully expected another German tank attack, knowing how important the highway behind them was to the German commanders. They also knew that the gunshields on their guns, ¾-inch thick steel, would stop bullets but were useless against tank rounds.

In Büllingen and Morschheck, the Germans were apprehensively counting their losses. When the unit reassembled later in the day, the 560th Hvy PzJg Bn found that it had only three battleworthy Jagdpanthers and 10 Jagdpanzer IV/48s left. These were consolidated into a single company for the attack scheduled for 21 December, and the vehicles were sent to Büllingen for repairs, refueling, and replenishment of ammunition. Once there, however, the American shelling of the town was so heavy that the vehicles had to pull back another two kilometers, to the hamlet of Tiefenbach.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ 1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt, Dec 44.

⁴⁹ Certificate of Irwin Schwartz, 31 Mar 1986.

⁵⁰ Rivette, Opns of the 2/26th Inf at Dom Bütgenbach, pp. 15-17; captured German document quoted in US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div. Other sources for this action include: 26th Inf Regt Unit Jnl, Dec 44; Rivette, "Hot Corner at Dom Bütgenbach;" Cole, The Ardennes, pp. 130-131; 1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt, Dec 44; Gendron, Opns of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes, p. 23; Rivette Certificate, 1 Dec 1986; Information from Unit Citation Documentation, gathered by Rivette, p. 5; and MacDonald, A Time For Trumpets, p. 404-405.

ACTION #5: WARNER'S FIRST TANK
0600 Hours, 20 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	AT guns and bazooka teams deployed in the MLR with infantry along tree-lined trails S of Dom Bütgenbach	"Hot Corner"
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Co, 26th Inf Regt - no more than 100 men, not including AT support	#163, #6
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None mentioned	---	Cole, p.33
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. One d. One	"Hot Corner"; Gendron Monograph; Rivette Monograph
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	8 panzerjägers (Mk IV and Mk V)	---	Ibid; also, captured German document quoted in US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One panzerjäger hit in the left side with four 57mm APC rounds, setting it on fire	---	"Hot Corner"
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	All four arty bns organic to 1st ID, plus a bty of 90mm guns, a 155mm corps arty bn, a 4.5" corps arty bn, a bty of 8" guns, and a 4.2" mortar bn	<u>Kriegsgeschichte</u> ; <u>Trumpets</u> pp. 404-405
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Scattered clouds; hazy and cold	Scattered clouds; hazy and cold	745th Tk Bn AAR (#188)
12. Time of Day	0600	0600	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark and foggy. Area lit by 81mm and 60mm star-shells. Visibility: 300 yards	Dark and foggy. Area lit by 81mm and 60mm star-shells. Visibility: 300 yards	"Hot Corner"; Gendron Monograph;
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional artificial tree lines	Open, rolling, with occasional artificial tree lines	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	75 yards	75 yards	Gendron Monograph
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	4 rounds 57mm APC (or possibly DS)	"Hot Corner"; Gendron Monograph; Rivette Monograph

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Bypassing gun to the east, firing HE direct fire at US Bn CP	---	
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in using the little cover available to best possible extent	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition		No surprise. 12th SS-PzD had already been identified by POWs taken in earlier attacks. German objective obvious	
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	German artillery barrage had been falling since the cessation of the first attack at 0445	1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt, Dec 44
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None. Fog and darkness precluded overwatch	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 82 rounds for Mk V Panther, 55 for PzJg IV, 60 for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for at least 100 ready rounds: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several British 2-lb DS rounds may also have been available	von Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks</u> ; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTION #6: WARNER'S SECOND TANK
0600 Hours, 20 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	AT guns and bazooka teams deployed in the MLR with infantry along tree-lined trails S of Dom Bütgenbach	"Hot Corner"
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Company, 26th Inf Regt: no more than 100 men excluding AT support	#163, #6
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None mentioned	---	Cole, p. 33
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. One d. One	"Hot Corner;" Gendron Monograph; Rivette Monograph
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	7 panzerjägers	---	"Hot Corner;" Gendron Monograph; Rivette Monograph; Captured German document quoted in US Army ETO Cbt Int
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One panzerjäger hit with 4 57mm APC rounds and destroyed	---	"Hot Corner"
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	All four arty bns organic to 1st ID, plus a btty of 90mm guns, a 155mm corps arty bn, a 4.5" corps arty bn, a btty of 8" guns, and a 4.2" mortar bn	<u>Trumpets</u> p. 404-5
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Scattered clouds; hazy and cold	Scattered clouds; hazy and cold	745th Tk Bn AAR, Dec 44
12. Time of Day	0600	0600	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark and foggy. Area lit by 81mm and 60mm mortar starshells. Visibility: 300 yards	Dark and foggy. Area lit by 81mm and 60mm mortar starshells. Visibility: 300 yards	"Hot Corner;" Gendron Monograph
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional treelines	Open, rolling, with occasional treelines	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	75 yards	75 yards	Gendron Monograph
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	4 rounds 57mm APC	"Hot Corner;" Gendron Monograph; Rivette Monograph
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal approach towards MLR	---	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in using the little cover available to best extent	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. 12th SS-PzD had already been identified by POWs taken in earlier attacks. German objective obvious	
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	German arty barrage had been falling since the cessation of the first attack at 0445	1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None. Fog and darkness precluded overwatch	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 55 rounds for PzJg IV, 60 for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds: 30% HE and 70% APC. Some British 2-lb DS rounds may have been available	von Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks</u> ; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTION #7: WARNER'S THIRD TANK
0600 Hours, 20 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	AT guns and bazooka teams deployed in the MLR with infantry along tree-lined trails south of Dom Bütgenbach	"Hot Corner"
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Company, 26th Inf Regt: no more than 100 men excluding AT support	#163, #6
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None mentioned	---	Cole, p. 33
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. One d. One	"Hot Corner;" Gendron Monograph Rivette Monograph
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	6 panzerjägers	---	"Hot Corner" Gendron Monograph Rivette Monograph Captured German document quoted in US Army ETO Cbt Int
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	No AT hits on vehicle. Commander shot and apparently killed by gunner's .45 cal sidearm, causing crew to withdraw the vehicle	---	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	All four arty bns organic to 1st ID, plus a bty of 90mm guns, a 155mm corps arty bn, a 4.5" corps arty bn, a bty of 8" guns, and a 4.2" mortar bn	<u>Trumpets</u> , p. 404-5
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Scattered clouds, hazy and cold	Scattered clouds, hazy and cold	745th Tk Bn AAR
12. Time of Day	0600	0600	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark and foggy. Area lit by 60mm and 81mm mortar starshells. Visibility: 300 yards	Dark and foggy. Area lit by 60mm and 81mm starshells. Visibility: 300 yards	"Hot Corner" Gendron Monograph
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	10 feet	10 feet	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	1-6 .45 cal ACP rounds	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Head-on attempt to overrun Warner's AT gun position, firing bow MG at the AT gun	---	"Hot Corner" Gendron Monograph
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in using the little cover available to best extent	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. 12th SS-PzD had already been identified by POWs taken in earlier attacks. German objective obvious	
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	German arty barrage had been falling since the cessation of the first attack at 0445	1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None. Fog and darkness precluded overwatch	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 55 rounds for PzJg IV, 60 rounds for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several rounds of British 2-lb DS may also have been available	von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTION #8: THE SHOOTING GALLERY
0600 Hours, 20 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Infantry with AT gun and TD support dug in in an arc about ½ km E, Se, and S of Dom Bütgenbach	Gendron Monograph Cole, p. 130-131
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	G and F Cos, 26th Inf Regt: no more than 250 men	#163, #6
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	None mentioned	---	
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. Two c. Three d. None	
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	10 Mk IV or Mk V tanks of 1st Bn, 12th SS-Pz Regt	---	<u>Kriegsgeschichte</u>
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry Casualties	None	None	
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Ten tanks knocked out as they approach one at a time over the slight ridge in front of F Co	---	"Hot Corner"

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	All four arty bns organic to 1st ID, plus a btty of 90mm guns, a 155mm corps arty btty, a 4.5" corps arty btty, a btty of 8" guns, and a 4.2" mortar bn	<u>Trumpets</u> , p. 404-5
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Scattered clouds, hazy and cold	Scattered clouds, hazy and cold	745th Tk Bn AAR
12. Time of Day	0600	0600	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark, foggy. Area lit by 60mm and 81mm mortar starshells. Visibility: 300 yards	Dark, foggy. Area lit by 60mm and 81mm mortar starshells. Visibility: 300 yards	"Hot Corner" Gendron Monograph
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	GSGS 4414
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	80-100 yards	80-100 yards	GSGS 4414
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	Unknown; at least 10 rounds of 57mm and/or 3-inch AP	Gendron Monograph Cole, p. 130-131
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal drive in wide-spaced single file advance over ridge in front of US guns	---	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in using the little cover available to the best extent	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	No surprise. 12th SS-PzD had already been identified by POWs taken in earlier attacks. German objective obvious	
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	None	German arty barrage had been falling since the cessation of the first attack at 0445	1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None. Fog and darkness precluded overwatch	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 80 rounds for Mk IV, 79-82 rounds for Mk V Panther	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several rounds of British 2-lb DS may also have been available. Assume full load of 40 rounds 3-inch ammo for the tank destroyers	von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTIONS 9-13

Name: High Water Mark

Location: South of Dom Bütgenbach, Belgium

Time: 0630 to 1600 Hours, 21 December 1944

Time was running out for 12th SS-PzD (*Figure 11*). American forces had closed in from behind and surrounded *KG Peiper* thirty kilometers to the west, and American counterattacks were cutting his armored battlegroup to pieces. St. Vith to the south was still being held by a US armored division. After almost a week of heavy fighting, none of the roads assigned to carry "Hitlerjugend" to the Meuse had been opened. Worse yet, the Americans grew stronger daily as they mobilized more reserves, while each day more broken panzers littered the hillsides around Dom Bütgenbach.

Accordingly, SS-Col Kraas prepared for an all-out attack with all three of his available grenadier battalions, to be supported by every operational tank and tank destroyer in his division. He planned to attack with two battalions abreast out of the Bütgenbacher Heck, the 3/25 SS on the left supported by the remaining panzers and panzerjägers of 12th SS-PzRegt, and the 2/26 SS on the right, reinforced by the panzerjägers of the 12th SS-PzJg Bn. The 3/26 SS would be kept in reserve in the forest, to be used to exploit a breakthrough by attacking in conjunction with the armor of the 12th SS-PzRegt to seize Bütgenbach. The axis of the attack was to be as follows: Morschheck--northeast edge of the Bütgenbacher Heck--west edge of Dom Bütgenbach--the trail to Hill 575 (1km west of the gasthaus known as "Zum Grünen Jäger")--the path from Hill 575 to Bütgenbach--west edge of Bütgenbach. Once the town was occupied, blocking forces would push across the railroad embankment north of town to stop any American counterattack from the north. Supporting the attack were all four battalions of the division's organic artillery: 1st Bn (105mm) at Büllingen, 2d Bn (105mm) and 4th Bn (*nebelwerfer*) in Hünningen, and 3d Bn (150mm) south of Honsfeld. In addition, II SS-PzK loaned an entire volks-artillerie korps (VAK) to the division to support this attack, but its guns weren't in a position to fire until the 22nd because of road delays. The

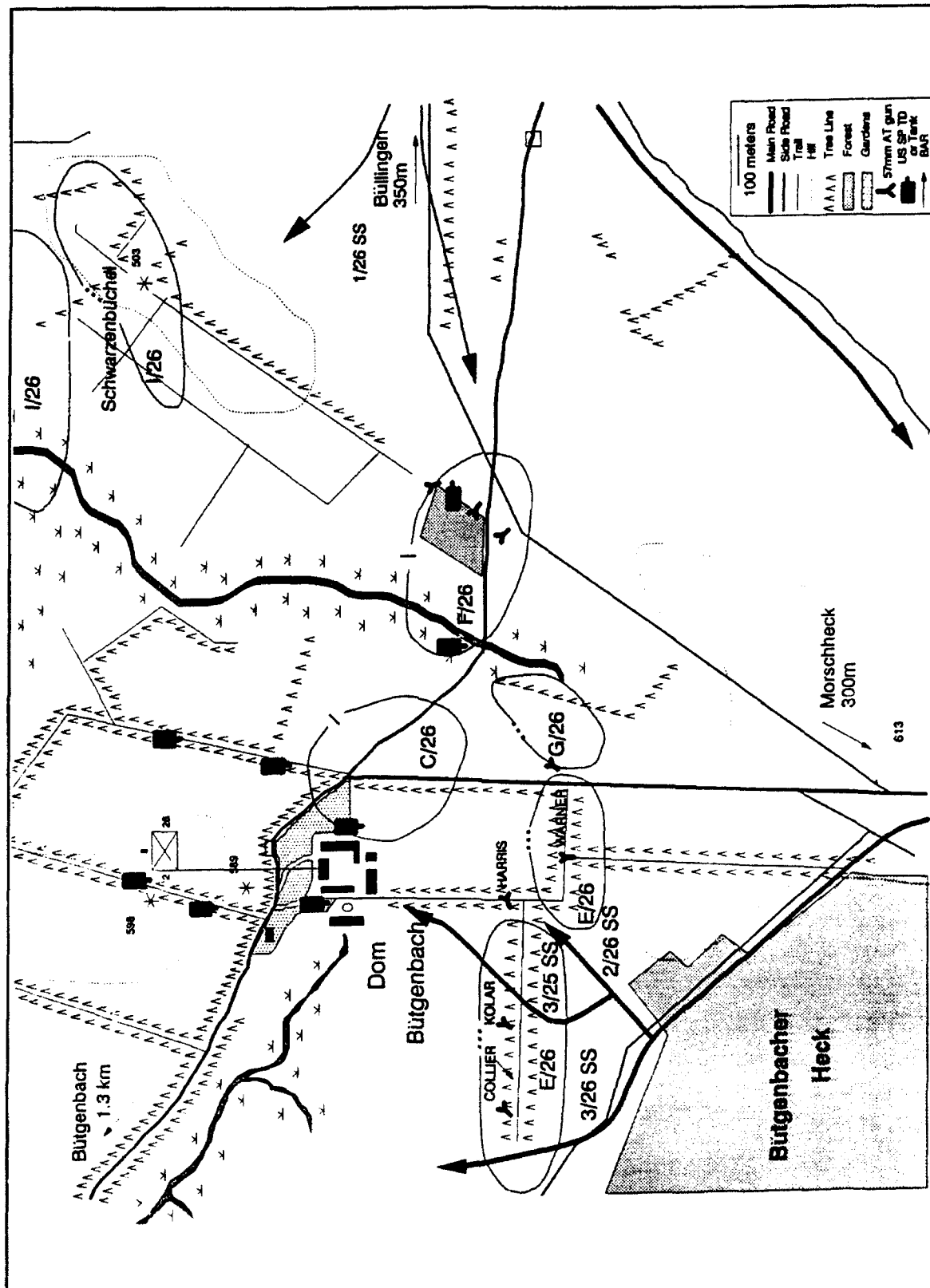


FIGURE 11. 0630 TO 1600 HOURS, 21 DECEMBER 1944

planned starting time for the attack was 0340 hours on 21 December.⁵¹

2/26th SS-PzGren Regt set out from Hünningen to its assembly area in the Riechels-Busch at 2300 hours on 20 December. The sound of its movement was masked by a steady artillery barrage of the American positions around the Domäne.⁵² Most of the other units scheduled to attack reached their assembly areas on time, and at 0300 the four artillery battalions began a massive bombardment of the American positions using all the guns, mortars, and rocket launchers at their disposal. This barrage was by far the worst the defenders at Dom Bütgenbach had experienced in the whole war, and its effects were telling. The front line troops suffered thirty to fifty percent casualties, most of whom were still in their foxholes when the German attack began. Many weapons were destroyed by direct hits. All wire communications between units were cut, and even some of the radios, which so far had been used successfully for backup communications, were damaged by concussion. The shelling disabled the two M-4s north and northwest of the manor house (part of the battalion's mobile reserve) as well as the M-10 tank destroyer near the east barn of the manor. Both the east and west barns were set on fire. The west barn soon burned down to its stone foundation, forcing the H Co CP there to move into the east barn with the E Co CP. The *nebelwerfer* salvos were particularly devastating: 96 rockets landing in one earth-wrenching blast.⁵³ After three hours of this punishment, all that was left of the American MLR were isolated groups of infantry and AT guns separated by wide undefended gaps.⁵⁴

In the manor house, LtCol Daniel knew from the explosions and the sporadic incoming reports that his battalion was being shredded. As yet, however, no German tanks or infantry had appeared, so he had no targets for his artillery. Instead, in addition to pressing for more counterbattery fire in hopes of lessening the German barrage, he called down concentrations on

⁵¹ Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision, p. 443.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Rivette, Opns of the 2/26th Inf at Dom Bütgenbach, p. 18

⁵⁴ Gendron, Opns of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes, p. 27

likely German assembly areas in Büllingen and in the Bütgenbacher Heck. He recalled later that between four and twelve battalions of artillery fired in support of his battalion that day;⁵⁵ actually there were at least 10 battalions involved, including battalions from the 2d and 99th Divisions that were tied into the 1st Division's fire control center. Patrols later found about 200 dead Germans in the woods in front of E Co, testimony to the disruption this must have caused the German attack.

The American artillery was not the only problem the German attack faced that morning. By 0330, ten minutes before the scheduled attack time, all the attacking units were in their designated assembly areas except 2/26 SS, which had set out from Hünningen four and a half hours earlier. The battalion staff tried urgently to establish radio contact with any of the companies, and when that failed the battalion adjutant and ordnance officer set out in a Kübelwagen to find them. Meanwhile SS-Col Kraas, in his division CP in Morschheck, ordered the attack delayed until 0430 so the missing battalion could be found. The artillery barrage against the Americans slackened but did not stop completely.⁵⁶

The "Hitlerjugend" Division had still not located its missing battalion by 0430. Now SS-Col Kraas was worried that the attack might not get started until dawn, at which point his troops would have to undergo flanking fire from the American positions at the Domäne while trying to bypass that position. Therefore, he altered the attack plan, and ordered that after all units had assembled, they would converge on Dom Bütgenbach from east and west, and advance to Bütgenbach only after the estate had been secured.

At 0530, the 6th Kompanie of 2/26 SS was finally located. The battalion had assembled about a kilometer west of its assigned area. It was quickly ushered to its proper position and acquainted with the new attack plan. The renewed German artillery bombardment reached a crescendo while the SS troops moved out of the forest around Morschheck at 0625, almost three hours behind

⁵⁵Letter, Daniel to Rivette, 19 Oct 1948

⁵⁶Meyer, op cit.

schedule.⁵⁷

When the German artillery ceased its barrage, an eerie silence descended over the battlefield. The American AT gun crews, who had been huddling in their trenches for hours listening to shell fragments clang off their gunshields, crawled shakily out of their holes, relieved to find their guns still intact. At the far western end of the American line, S/Sgt Noah Collier, commander of one of the 57s from 3d Plt, AT Co, told his crew, "Load Sabot. Hold your fire until you can get a flank shot at about twenty feet."⁵⁸ Soon, the men heard the clanking of tank treads and shouts in German.

After leaving Morschheck, the panzers and half-tracks of "Hitlerjugend" had no room to spread out and deploy in proper attack formation until they had passed the northeastern corner of the Bütgenbacher Heck, so for a brief interval they had to travel in a direction almost parallel to the American front line. At first they received no fire of any kind from the treeline where they knew the American positions to be, and they suspected that after the previous day's attack, the Americans had little or no anti-tank defense left. To relieve the oppressive silence and possibly to suppress any Americans still left, the tank crews fired a few machine gun bursts into the treeline, 150m to their right. They could barely see that far in the fog and darkness. The lead Panther of the attack column, commanded by SS-SubLt Schnittenhelm, had just reached the protruding square patch of the Bütgenbacher Heck when one of the US 57mm AT guns fired, striking the Panther in the right flank and apparently detonating its ammunition. The tank was flung into the air by the force of the explosion and a huge mushroom cloud of oily black smoke enveloped the tank. Two of the crew clambered out of the wreck, but SS-SubLt Schnittenhelm was not one of them. Capt Hils of the 560th Hvy PzJg Bn, following behind in his Jagdpanther, was now in command, and over his tank's radio he ordered his forces to turn toward the US line and prepare to attack. He examined his map once again to orient himself, and then fired

⁵⁷ Meyer, op cit.

⁵⁸ Schwartz Certificate, 31 Mar 1986

a flare towards the manor house to indicate the final attack direction. The men in the other panzers and panzerjägers awaited the signal to advance, "Marsch! Marsch!" but when no such signal was given after a few moments they turned back to see Hils' Jagdpanther on fire, his crew abandoning the vehicle. Hils himself was nowhere to be seen. Unnerved by the loss of two commanders in such a short space of time, the Germans advanced raggedly, and as soon as the panzers and half-tracks full of infantry came in full view of the MLR, a terrific defensive artillery barrage began plunging into the formation, plowing up the hillside and devastating those grenadiers on foot.⁵⁹

Despite the American bombardment, the SS grenadiers charged the American line, yelling and firing their weapons.⁶⁰ Behind the treeline, Sgt Collier picked up a BAR left by two wounded infantrymen near his gun and began spraying the onrushing Germans. Another member of his gun crew, PFC Donald Rose, fired his M-1 carbine into the attackers as well. As they rushed from the woods, the Germans were in a line almost perpendicular to the American MLR, so Rose and Collier were in an excellent position to fire into the attackers' flank. So intent were they on holding back the grenadiers that they almost didn't notice the Jagdpanther which loomed out of the fog to the left of their AT gun. Rose quickly dropped his carbine to assist the gunner, Cpl Irwin Schwartz, in taking out the behemoth. Schwartz fired the already loaded sabot round, which struck the panzerjäger's left front drive sprocket. This caused the left track to jam and the vehicle's forward motion made it slue around sideways. Rose loaded another Sabot round and Schwartz fired again into the Jagdpanther's exposed right flank. A tongue of yellow flame shot out of the vehicle and it ground to a halt, destroyed (Action 9). The nearby grenadiers were now so close, despite Collier's automatic fire, that Rose and Schwartz picked up their carbines and added their fire to his. After a few minutes, they saw a Mk IV panzer driving along the woodline to their

⁵⁹Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision, p. 444

⁶⁰The chronology of this attack from the American point of view is very well documented in the following sources: Letter, Daniel to Rivette, 19 Oct 1948; Gendron, Opns of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes, pp. 27-29; Rivette, Opns of the 2/26th Inf at Dom Bütgenbach, pp. 18-24; US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st ID; 26th Inf Regt AAR, Dec 44; 26th Inf Regt Unit Jnl, Dec 44; Gendron Certificate, 14 Mar 1986; Rivette Certificate, 1 Dec 1986; Schwartz Certificate, 31 Mar 1986; 1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt, Dec 44; Pallud, The Battle of the Bulge: Then and Now, pp. 101-103; Cole, The Ardennes, pp. 131-132; and MacDonald, A Time For Trumpets, pp. 404-405.

front. They reloaded and fired the 57 three times in rapid succession, and the panzer stopped with smoke pouring from it (*Action 10*).

Once again taking up their carbines, Rose and Schwartz moved about 10 feet down the line to support Sgt Collier and his BAR. As they did so, one of the grenadiers fired a panzerfaust whose rocket struck their gun and knocked it off its pintle. With no gun to man, they remained on the MLR for over an hour, firing and throwing hand grenades, until they ran out of rifle ammunition. During that time, Sgt Collier dashed out in front of the MLR to help a wounded GI even though he himself was wounded in the leg. He disappeared into the fog and was never heard from again.

About 150 meters to the east, another 3d AT Platoon gun crew was also being hard pressed. As the German armor rolled down the hill from the forest, the gun squad leader, Sgt Kolar, roused his men from their foxholes and readied their gun for action. Two panzers appeared together out of the fog, heading straight for their gun. Kolar fired at the nearest of the two. His shell hit (presumably the front armor) and penetrated, and the crew reloaded and fired again to make sure of killing the tank (*Action 11*). Just as this second shot struck the panzer a burst of machine gun fire from the other tank hit the AT gun as it was returning to battery and disabled it. His crew now bereft of anti-tank protection, Kolar snatched up a bazooka and, with one of his crewmen, crawled out into the fog to hunt down the other panzer. Both men were wounded and captured by the Germans.

The third gun of 3d Plt, AT Co, was another 200 meters or so to the east of Kolar's gun, at the intersection of the long east-west hedgerow and a north-south trail leading directly to the Domäne. This gun, commanded by Joseph Harris, pointed southwest rather than south in order to cover the whole western part of E Co's line and fire into the flank of any tanks assaulting it from the Bütgenbacher Heck. Harris, a corporal, was one of only three men of the gun's crew not killed or wounded by the terrible German artillery barrage that morning. No sooner did the shelling stop than Harris, climbing out of his foxhole, dimly saw a tank through the fog to his right, about halfway between his gun and Kolar's. While he and his two remaining crew

members were loading their AT gun, the tank fired, lobbing a huge HE shell down the hill towards the manor house. As the gun's muzzle blast briefly parted the haze, Harris could see that the vehicle was not really a tank at all, but a self-propelled 150mm infantry howitzer on an old Mk II panzer chassis, known as the Sd Kfz 138, or sIG 33.⁶¹ This vehicle's armor was very thin, only 25mm thick at best.⁶² Harris fired the AT gun four times, enough to set the sIG on fire⁶³ (*Action 12*). While so engaged, however, the crew failed to notice a Mk IV tank slowly moving up to their left. The panzer fired an AP round which detonated against the gunshield and sent a stream of molten metal into the AT gun's barrel just above the breech block. The force of the impact also blew the gun off its pintle. Stunned by the explosion, Harris and his two men were overwhelmed and captured by the advancing SS grenadiers a few minutes later.

This incident did not go unnoticed by Cpl Red Warner, who had knocked out two panzers and driven a third one off with his pistol the previous day. His gun was still guarding the north-south trail paralleling the main Morschheck-Dom Bütgenbach road, about 50m east of Harris' gun. Since his assistant gunner (and apparently also Sgt Oldenski) had already been wounded, Warner loaded the AT gun himself and fired at the panzer that destroyed Harris' gun. His shell struck the Mk IV just in front of its right rear idler wheel and smoke began to pour from the rear of the tank (*Action 13*). The tank was immobilized but it still had power.⁶⁴ As Warner reached for another shell, the tank traversed its turret around and fired a burst from its coaxial machine gun just as Warner was ramming his second shell into the breech. He was hit and died moments later, still trying to close his gun's breech. For

⁶¹ According to RH 10/321, the gliederung of the 12th SS-PzD, there were six of these vehicles attached to 3d Bn, 26th SS-PzGren Regt on 15 December, but by the time of this attack on 21 December, there were only four left.

⁶² Hoffschmidt and Tatum, German Tank and Anti-Tank of World War II, p. 162

⁶³ The AT Company commander, Captain Rivette, examined these hits two days later and found all four to be within a two-foot circle.

⁶⁴ It is assumed the tank still had power despite the engine compartment hit, because the turret rotated in order to fire at Warner. While the crew could have used the hand crank to rotate the turret, this would have been much slower than the power traverse and would probably have given Warner time to reload and fire the AT gun a second time.

his action in the defense of Dom Bütgenbach, Warner was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Having destroyed or neutralized all the AT guns west of the Morschheck road, the surviving German panzers proceeded to drive up and down the MLR, crushing automatic weapons emplacements and their crews and machine gunning the US soldiers. At one point a panzer drove through a gap in the 500-yard-long hedgerow. The tank commander climbed out of his turret hatch and dropped to the ground, forcing an American soldier out of his foxhole and into the tank at gunpoint. Some of the GIs still manning their foxholes in the eastern portion of E Co's line heard pistol shots, and they assumed that the SS were methodically shooting the American wounded and prisoners (rumors of the massacre of American prisoners at Malmedy by KG Peiper had already filtered down to the men at Dom Bütgenbach).⁶⁵

As soon as they crossed to the north side of the treeline, the attacking panzers were taken under fire by the Sherman tank stationed at the southeast corner of the barnyard and by the two M-4s on the slope of Hill 598 north of the manor house. Around 0800, eight Mk IV panzers from 5th Kompanie, 1/12th SS-Pz Regt⁶⁶ made a dash for the manor house, but one was destroyed and another one damaged by the two Shermans around the CP. Those Shermans in turn were destroyed by the panzers' return fire. Three of the German tanks veered northeast and wound up in 3d Bn's sector, where they were eventually destroyed by that unit's AT guns and bazooka teams. The remaining three panzers moved onto the grounds of the estate, hiding behind the barns to escape further anti-tank fire from Hill 598. Running right behind them were five or six SS-panzergrenadiers, the only German infantry to make it through the American MLR throughout the whole siege. They sought cover in an old hospital tent that had been set up to one side of the manor house but abandoned a few days before when the fighting started. Four senior NCOs of the CP staff, staff officers and radiomen, formed a small strike force and went outside and eliminated the

⁶⁵US Army ETO Cbt Int - 1st Inf Div

⁶⁶Meyer, Kriegsgeschichte der 12. SS-Panzerdivision, p. 444-445

grenadiers after a brief firefight.⁶⁷

Inside the manor house, LtCol Daniel monitored the course of the battle with growing concern. He kept up a steady stream of calls into the regimental CP for more artillery fire, and this unbroken ring of exploding steel in front of the MLR was what prevented the panzergrenadiers from passing through the former American positions. The 300 yard gap between the edge of the Bütgenbacher Heck and the Morschheck road was wide open, and German tanks were roaming freely over that area. Daniel knew that if the German infantry were allowed to exploit this gap, all of the 2d and 3d Battalions could be cut off and destroyed. He was determined not to let that happen.

The three MK IVs near the manor house had maneuvered so that they were still covered by the south barn, but they could fire their 75mm guns directly into the manor house from only 75 yards away. This they did, trying to penetrate the building and force the command staff there to surrender, but the four-foot thick walls of the old house withstood even this direct pounding. Nevertheless, as a precaution, LtCol Daniel ordered all papers in the CP to be burned.⁶⁸

The two platoons of C Co that he had retained as a reserve were still available, stationed around the crossroads just east of the manor house, but Daniel couldn't move them to reinforce the E Co positions because of the tanks roaming around the CP area. By the same token, however, the Mk IVs were cut off from their infantry support and were vulnerable to bazooka teams, and they couldn't withdraw to their own lines (as they had been ordered by radio to do by this point) without exposing themselves to anti-tank fire from the Sherman tanks on Hill 598.⁶⁹

In the 2d Battalion's eastern sector, F Co was holding off periodic

⁶⁷Information from Unit Citation Documentation, gathered by Rivette

⁶⁸Rivette, Ops of the 2/26th Inf Regt at Dom Bütgenbach, pp. 18-24

⁶⁹Meyer, op cit.

attacks from Büllingen while suffering relatively high casualties, and it had also been badly hit by the morning's bombardment. To their left, K Co of 3d Bn around the Schwarzenbüchel was attacked by 10 panzers and a battalion or so of infantry, possibly the 1/26 SS. One of K Co's bazooka teams got one of the panzers, and the AT guns on the battalion's left flank knocked out four more, but this did not deter the steady advance of the grenadiers. At one point they had advanced so far that Germans and Americans were fighting hand-to-hand in the trenches and the K Co commander, Capt Botts, called down final protective artillery fires on his own foxhole (he survived). This prevented the SS from breaking through the line, and although attacks continued throughout the day, the Germans achieved no penetration of the MLR.⁷⁰

Around 0900, the commanding officer of the AT Co, Capt Donald Rivette, left his company CP in Bütgenbach to check on his gun squads around the Domäne. As he, his jeep driver, and his Reconnaissance Sergeant left Bütgenbach they could see three or four tanks burning on top of Hill 613 to their right front. They could not see any infantry along the road all the way to the Domäne, nor could they see any where they knew the MLR to be, about halfway up Hill 613. Rivette concluded that the infantry must be deep down in their foxholes. As they rounded a bend in the road the stone manor house came into view, and Rivette told his driver to slow down while turning into the estate's driveway. Fortuitously, however, the driver's foot hit the gas pedal instead of the brake and the jeep lurched forward just as one of the Mk IV tanks behind the south barn let loose a long machine gun burst at the vehicle. Rivette was wounded slightly in the back, and the sergeant suffered a minor cheek wound. The driver quickly wheeled the jeep to the back of the CP building and the three men dashed inside. There Rivette was informed of the grave crisis facing the 2/26th, and his 2d Platoon leader told him that several of the AT gun crews had been wiped out. The CP staff knew that the number of dead, wounded, and missing was staggeringly high, but they hadn't yet been able to compile a complete count.⁷¹

⁷⁰Certificate of Walter F. Nechey, commander of M Co, 3/26th US Inf Regt, January 1985

⁷¹Rivette Certificate, 1 Dec 1986

The situation around Dom Bütgenbach remained relatively static for the next few hours. That portion of the 2d and 3d Battalions' defenses east of the Morschheck road held against periodic attacks, while only the massed fire of the American artillery battalions prevented the German infantry from exploiting the breakthrough the panzers had made in the west. Every once in a while, one of the panzers hiding behind the south barn at the estate would move out just far enough to fire an HE round at the CP, while the battalion staff inside prayed that the thick stone walls would hold just a little longer.⁷² The panzers also fired at the E and H Co command posts in the east barn a few times, scoring three direct hits. Every time the panzers exposed themselves this way to take a shot, The Shermans on the hill began firing furiously to knock them out, but the Germans were showing too little of themselves too briefly for the M-4s to get a good shot.

About 1000 a renewed infantry-tank attack struck at the remnants of the platoon of G Co between E and F Cos, southeast of the Domäne. As the German tanks silhouetted themselves coming over the ridgeline, however, one of the M-10 tank destroyers from A Co, 634th TD Bn, knocked out seven of them in rapid succession. The other M-10 guarding the road from Büllingen destroyed one panzer at 500 yards, while the 57mm AT guns of the AT platoon were credited with at least one kill, knocking out a Mk IV tank from 50 yards away.⁷³ As usual, the combination of small arms and massive artillery fire stopped the German infantry cold, but not before they put intense pressure on the front line troops.

At 1030 LtCol Daniel urgently requested that Regiment send another rifle company from somewhere to reinforce his position, and specified that they should be equipped with extra bazookas to handle the large number of German tanks being used against him.⁷⁴ Regiment responded quickly, and within an hour E Co of the 18th Inf Regt was on its way to shore up the 2/26th's

⁷²Gendron Certificate, 14 March 1986

⁷³Rivette, "Hot Corner at Dom Bütgenbach"

⁷⁴Gendron, Ops of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes, pp. 29-30

positions. By 1200, with no sizable penetration of the American lines after six hours of heavy combat, the Germans all across the 2d Bn's front began to pull back.⁷⁵ Fighting was still heavy for a while, and the three Mk IVs at the manor house severely curtailed the Americans' freedom of movement in that area, but the pressure on the MLR was noticeably reduced. LtCol Daniel ensured that the curtain of artillery fire south of the manor house was maintained until he could move infantry there to reoccupy the foxhole line, and at 1250 he requested a platoon of self-propelled tank destroyers from Regiment so that he could eliminate the panzers on the manor house grounds and restore his infantry's freedom of movement.⁷⁶ Co E of the 18th arrived shortly afterwards, but since the panzers still threatened any movement in the area, Daniel told them to wait behind Hill 598.

At 1305 the platoon of four M-36 TDs from the 613th TD Bn moved to positions just west of the Domäne by covering their advance from Bütgenbach with smoke grenades. Daniel ordered them to position themselves to fire through the south barn at the panzers. The TD platoon leader placed two TDs at the east end of the manor house to fire at the east end of the barn, and placed the other two by the small roadside building to the west, where they could fire at the west end of the barn.⁷⁷ They began firing their 90mm guns through the flimsy wooden upper walls of the barn, and with each salvo they worked their shots about 10 feet closer toward the center of the barn. This pattern of converging shells so unnerved two of the panzer commanders that they pointed their tanks uphill and raced for the safety of their own lines. The M-36s picked them both off when they were halfway up the hill. The third tank, however, held its ground. Daniel called down a barrage of mortar fire on the south barn to flush it out (he thought about using 155mm artillery, since this was the only shell big enough to actually damage the tank, but its proximity to the CP convinced him not to), but even this was to no avail. Finally, under cover of the thickening fog about 1600 hours, the last panzer

⁷⁵ 1st ID G-3 Opns Rpt, Dec 44

⁷⁶ Gendron, Opns of the 2/26th Inf in the Ardennes, pp. 30-31

⁷⁷ Ibid.

took a parting shot at the CP, then turned and fled up the hill toward Morschheck. Ironically, its last shot finally penetrated the manor house wall and wounded nine men inside.⁷⁸

For all intents and purposes, the last German attack on Domäne Bütgenbach was over. the 12th SS-Panzer Division tried one last time, on 22 December, to seize Bütgenbach, but that attack primarily involved the 1st Bn of the 26th Inf Regt. The defense that "stuck out like a sore thumb" at the manor house had held.

⁷⁸ Rivette, Ops of the 2/26th Inf at Dom Bütgenbach, p. 25

ACTION #9: SCHWARTZ AND ROSE'S FIRST KILL
0630 Hours, 21 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Along tree lines S of Dom Bütgenbach	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Co, 26th Inf Regt: about 100 men	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Three battalions: 2/26 SS, 3/26 SS, and 3/25 SS	---	<u>Kriegsgeschichte</u>
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. Four d. Unknown	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Approx. 20 tanks, tanks destroyers, and SP guns	---	Rivette Monograph
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	None	None	Gendron Monograph Rivette Monograph ETO Cbt Int

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	1 Mk V Jagdpanther struck by a 57mm DS round where the front drive sprocket joins the chassis. Attempting to back up, the tank swings to the right, exposing the thinner side armor. A second round sets it on fire.	---	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	10 artillery battalions	<u>Kriegsgeschichte</u> Gendron Monograph
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	745th Tk Bn AAR
12. Time of Day	0630	0630	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	745th Tk Bn AAR
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	GSGS 4414 "Hot Corner"
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	< 100 yards	< 100 yards	Gendron Monograph
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	2 rounds, 57mm DS	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal approach	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in under as much cover as local conditions allow	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	Not surprised	
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	US arty breaks up German tank-infantry teams and slows their advance while inflicting heavy casualties on the grenadiers. Several panzers believed disabled by arty fire	German preparatory barrage causes up to 50% casualties in the US front line troops, and cuts all communications with Bn HQ except by radio	ETO Cbt Int Gendron Monograph
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None; fog and darkness preclude overwatch	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 79-82 rounds for Mk V panzer, 80 rounds for Mk IV, 55 rounds for PzJg IV, and 60 rounds for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several (7-10) rounds of British 2-lb DS were also available	von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTION #10: SCHWARTZ AND ROSE'S SECOND KILL
0630 Hours, 21 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Along tree lines S of Dom Bütgenbach	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Co, 26th Inf Regt: about 100 men	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Three battalions: 2/26 SS, 3/26 SS, and 3/25 SS	---	<u>Kriegsgeschichte</u>
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. Four d. Unknown	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Approx. 20 tanks, tanks destroyers, and SP guns	---	Rivette Monograph
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	None	None	Gendron Monograph Rivette Monograph ETO Cbt Int
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	1 Mk IV panzer knocked out by 3 rounds of 57mm AT to its right side	---	Rivette Monograph

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	10 artillery battalions	Kriegsgeschichte Gendron Monograph
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	745th Tk Bn AAR
12. Time of Day	0630	0630	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	745th Tk Bn AAR
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	GSGS 4414 "Hot Corner"
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	< 100 yards	< 100 yards	Gendron Monograph
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	3 rounds, 57mm APC	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Attempting to drive past US AT gun, less than 100 yards away	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in under as much cover as local conditions allowed	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	Not surprised	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	US arty breaks up German tank-infantry teams and slows their advance while inflicting heavy casualties on the grenadiers. Several panzers believed disabled by arty fire	German preparatory barrage causes up to 50% casualties in the US front line troops, and cuts all communications with 8n HQ except by radio	ETO Cbt Int Gendron Monograph
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None; fog and darkness preclude overwatch	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 79-82 rounds for Mk V panzer, 80 rounds for Mk IV, 55 rounds for PzJg IV, and 60 rounds for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several (7-10) rounds of British 2-lb DS were also available	von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTION #11: KOLAR'S GUN
0630 Hours, 21 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Along tree lines S of Dom Bütgenbach	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Co, 26th Inf Regt: about 100 men	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Three battalions: 2/26 SS, 3/26 SS, and 3/25 SS	---	Kriegsgeschichte
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. Three d. Unknown	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	Two tanks, type unknown (either Mk IV or Mk V)	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	None	None	Gendron Monograph Rivette Monograph ETO Cbt Int
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	One tank hit and apparently disabled or destroyed	---	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	10 artillery battalions	Kriegsgeschichte Gendron Monograph
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	745th Tk Bn AAR
12. Time of Day	0630	0630	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	745th Tk Bn AAR
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	GSGS 4414 "Hot Corner"
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	< 100 yards	< 100 yards	Gendron Monograph
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	No main gun rounds fired, but a burst of MG fire knocked out the AT gun	2 rounds, 57mm APC	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Frontal approach	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in under as much cover as local conditions allowed	
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	Not surprised	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	US arty breaks up German tank-infantry teams and slows their advance while inflicting heavy casualties on the grenadiers. Several panzers believed disabled by arty fire	German preparatory barrage causes up to 50% casualties in the US front line troops, and cuts all communications with Bn HQ except by radio	ETO Cbt Int Gendron Monograph
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None; fog and darkness preclude overwatch	---	
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 79-82 rounds for Mk V panzer, 80 rounds for Mk IV, 55 rounds for PzJg IV, and 60 rounds for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several (7-10) rounds of British 2-lb DS were also available	von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTION #12: HARRIS' GUN
0630 Hours, 21 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Along tree lines S of Dom Bütgenbach	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Co, 26th Inf Regt: about 100 men	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Three battalions: 2/26 SS, 3/26 SS, and 3/25 SS	---	<u>Kriegsgeschichte</u>
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. Two d. Unknown	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One sIG 33 150mm SP gun and one Mk IV panzer	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	None	AT gun knocked out after destroying the sIG; crew captured shortly thereafter	Gendron Monograph Rivette Monograph ETO Cbt Int

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Four rounds 57mm APC fired at the SIG, setting it aflame. All four rounds strike within a two-foot radius	---	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	10 artillery battalions	Kriegsgeschichte Gendron Monograph
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	745th Tk Bn AAR
12. Time of Day	0630	0630	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	745th Tk Bn AAR
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	GSGS 4414 "Hot Corner"
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	< 100 yards	< 100 yards	Gendron Monograph
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	None	4 rounds, 57mm APC	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Attempting to drive between two US AT guns on the MLR	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in under as much cover as local conditions allowed	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	Not surprised	
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	US arty breaks up German tank-infantry teams and slows their advance while inflicting heavy casualties on the grenadiers. Several panzers believed disabled by arty fire	German preparatory barrage left only three unwounded men to work the gun	ETO Cbt Int Gendron Monograph Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	One Mk IV, overwatching for sig 33, destroys the US AT gun	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 79-82 rounds for Mk V panzer, 80 rounds for Mk IV, 55 rounds for PzJg IV, and 60 rounds for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several (7-10) rounds of British 2-lb DS were also available	von Senger und Etterlin, German Tanks; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

ACTION #13: WARNER'S LAST TANK
0630 Hours, 21 December 1944

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
1. Disposition of Defense Weapons and Location Relative to Attack	---	Along tree lines S of Dom Bütgenbach	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
2. Strength of Defending Infantry	---	E Co, 26th Inf Regt: about 100 men	Rivette Monograph Gendron Monograph ETO Cbt Int
3. Size and Activity of Infantry Accompanying Attack	Three battalions: 2/26 SS, 3/26 SS, and 3/25 SS	---	<u>Kriegsgeschichte</u>
4. No. and Type of Anti-tank Weapons in Visual Contact with Enemy a. 3" TD Guns (towed) b. 3" TD Guns (SP) c. 57mm AT Guns d. Bazookas	---	a. None b. None c. One d. Unknown	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
5. No. of Enemy Tanks and SP Guns (including those in fire support)	One Mk IV tank	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
6. US Tanks Present	---	None	
7. Infantry/Crew Casualties	None	The gunner, Cpl Warner, killed by a burst of MG fire from the tank he just disabled	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
8. Number and Type of Vehicle Casualties and/or hits (enemy)	Mk IV tank penetrated just in front of the right rear idler and immobilized, although still capable of firing its weapons	---	"Hot Corner" Rivette Monograph
9. Artillery	12th SS-Artillery Regt	10 artillery battalions	Kriegsgeschichte Gendron Monograph
10. Obstacles	None	None	
11. Meteorological Data	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	Cold, cloudy, and foggy	745th Tk Bn AAR
12. Time of Day	0630	0630	
13. Light and Visibility	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	Dark, foggy. Visibility poor	745th Tk Bn AAR
14. Terrain	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	Open, rolling, with occasional tree lines	GSGS 4414 "Hot Corner"
15. Max. Engagement Range of Weapons	50 yards	50 yards	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
16. No. of Rounds Fired by Type	No main gun rounds. A return burst of MG fire kills the AT gunner who immobilized the tank	1 rounds, 57mm DS	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
17. Type of Attack Maneuver Used by Enemy	Attempt to drive between two US AT gun positions	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
18. Quality of Defensive Position Preparations	---	Good; troops and guns dug in under as much cover as local conditions allowed	

DATA OBJECTIVES	ATTACKER	DEFENDER	REMARKS
19. Extent of Warning of Attack, and Intelligence on Its Size and Composition	---	Not surprised	
20. Air and Artillery Support and Effects	US arty breaks up German tank-infantry teams and slows their advance while inflicting heavy casualties on the grenadiers. Several panzers believed disabled by arty fire	German preparatory barrage causes up to 50% casualties in the US front line troops, and cuts all communications with Bn HQ except by radio. The rest of Warner's crew wounded, probably by arty barrage	EIO Cbt Int Gendron Monograph
21. No. of Overwatching vs. Maneuvering Enemy Tanks	None	---	Rivette Monograph "Hot Corner"
22. Size of On-Hand Ammo Supply and Round Types	Assume full load of 79-82 rounds for Mk V panzer, 80 rounds for Mk IV, 55 rounds for PzJg IV, and 60 rounds for PzJg V	US 57mm AT gun unit doctrine called for 100 ready rounds to be present: 30% HE and 70% APC. Several (7-10) rounds of British 2-lb DS were also available	von Senger und Etterlin, <u>German Tanks</u> ; FM 101-10, 21 Dec 1944

APPENDIX A

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APPENDIX B

**INDEX TO FILES AND REFERENCES ON ENGAGEMENTS
AT DOM BÜTGENBACH**

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FOLDER NUMBER

TITLE

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