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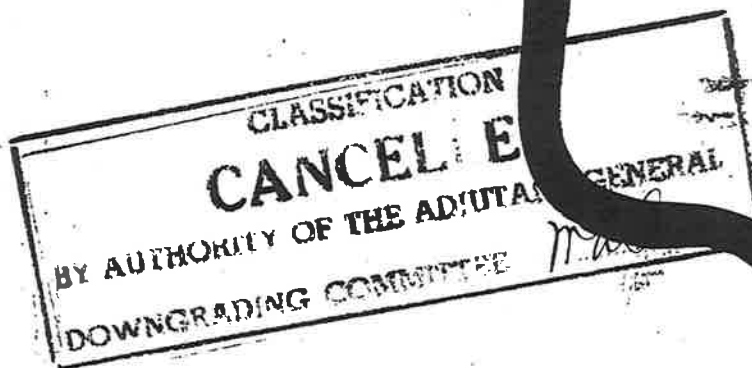
83^d

INFANTRY
DIVISION

L-551

FIRST
THE

ON
RHINE!



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AFTER ACTION REPORT
MARCH 1945

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HQ 83 INF DIV MARCH 1945



L-551

C O N T E N T S

I OPERATION "GRENADE"

Sketch Map
Photos - Rhine Bridges

II TRAINING

III WESTPHALIA

IV BATTLE LESSONS

Air Ground Cooperation
Sketch Map
Military Government

V TROOP LIST

VI ROSTER OF COMMANDERS, GENERAL AND SPECIAL STAFF

VII AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

VIII LOSSES IN ACTION

IX APPENDICES

G-1 Report, Journal and Supporting Papers * ✓
G-2 Journal and Supporting Papers * ✓
G-3 Journal and Supporting Papers * ✓
G-4 Report, Journal and Supporting Papers * ✓
Summary of Enemy Order of Battle
Enemy Positions in Dusseldorf

* Under Separate Cover

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I

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OPERATION GRIMADE

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DRIVE ON THE RHINE

Background

On the 23d of February, the XIX Corps with the 29th and 30th Infantry Divisions attacked across the Roer River and began its historic drive to the Rhine River. This maneuver was in effect a part of the flanking movement executed by the Ninth U S Army which, swinging wide of the strongly situated Munchen-Gladback area and driving against the Rhine, split the industrial area along the west bank of the River. After the Roer River, the Germans had nothing to offer in way of a major obstacle. When on the first of March the 83d Division was committed as a unit, the drive northeast toward the Rhine River had gained such momentum that the enemy could no longer fight an effective delaying action.

Terrain

The terrain between the Roer and the Rhine Rivers, being flat and arable, offered little tactical assistance for the enemy's defense. The Erft Canal, running parallel to the Roer, was to be used by the enemy as a line of defense. This plan was thwarted for two reasons: First, the impetus of our attack did not give him sufficient time to organize for it; and secondly, the direction of our attack was against his left flank rather than a frontal assault as he anticipated. As a result, each town became the center of resistance. Considerable trenchwork had previously been constructed by foreign laborers and civilians. These, however, were of little use to him because of his lack of sufficient personnel. In withdrawing, road blocks and mine fields had been placed at strategical places but again limited personnel prevented him from covering them with fire.

Synopsis

The Division began its drive to the Rhine at 1200 hours on 1 March. The river was reached at 0930 the following morning. The western ends of the bridges connecting Neuss with Dusseldorf were seized, but the bridges were subsequently blown by the enemy. Neuss was occupied by the 2nd of March and on the 3d the Division was engaged in mopping-up operations.

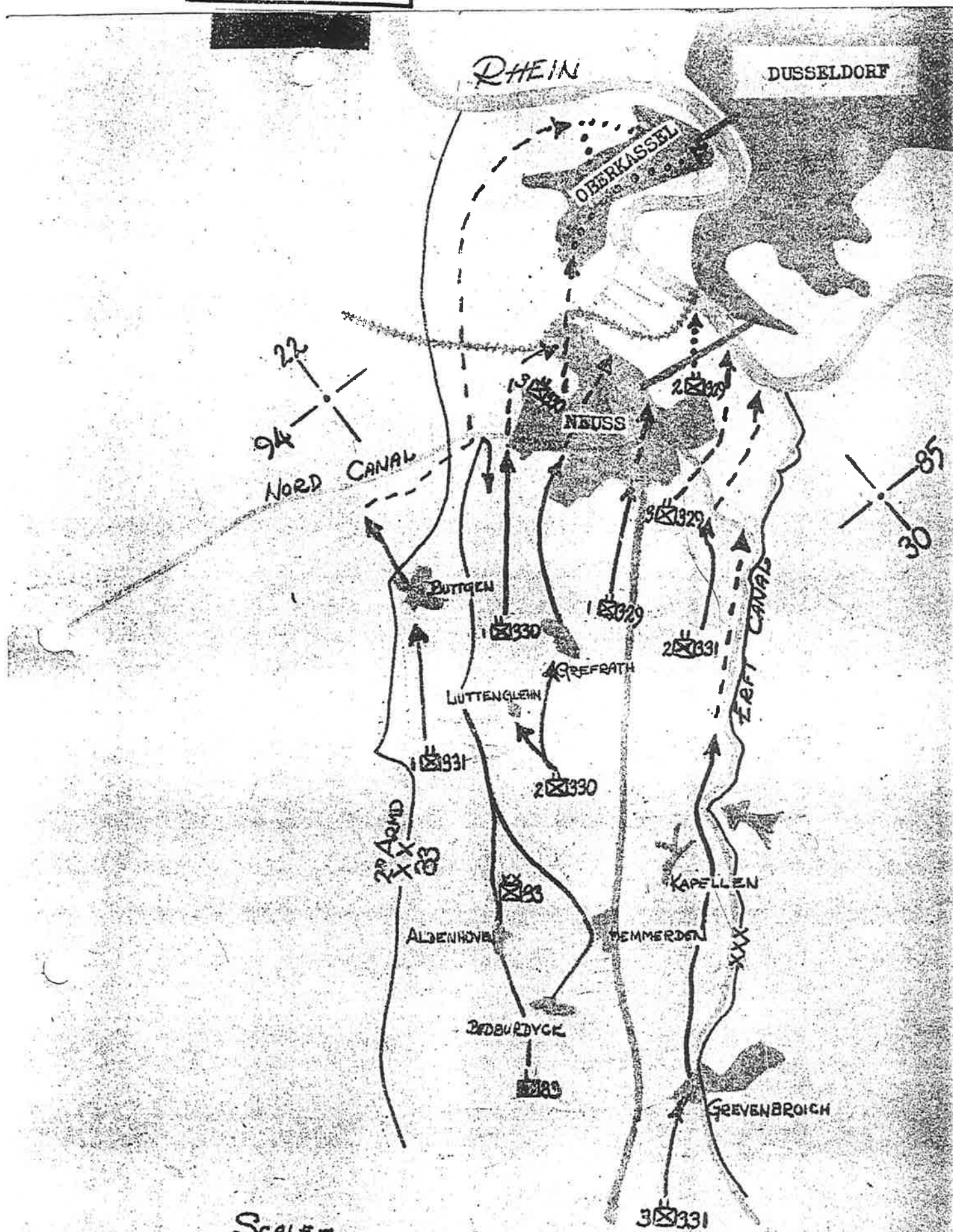
Mission

At 1200 on the 1st of March the 83d passed from reserve status to active participation in operation "Grenade", assuming responsibility for the right flank of XIX Corps. The mission of the Division was to capture Neuss, advance to the Rhine River and secure intact the three bridges connecting Neuss with Dusseldorf.

Decision

After having conferred with the Corps Commander and the commander of the 2nd Armored Division, on 28 February, the commanding general assembled his unit commanders and announced a plan for the accomplishment of the Division mission. A march order for movement to assembly areas in rear of the contemplated LD was issued. (See G-3 Journal Entry No. 46 dated 1 March 1945).

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▽ 83d INF DIV ▽

DRIVE TO THE RHINE

Legend - Mar 1
Mar 2
Mar 3

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It was announced to the unit commanders and General Staff that the 33d Division would assume control of its zone at 1200 hours, 1 March, and that at 1300 the Division would resume control of the 331st Infantry Regiment, less one battalion.

It was ordered that the Division would be committed piecemeal. This decision was based on the following facts: (1) Enemy opposition was disorganized, (2) Maximum speed was essential, (3) Extremely congested traffic conditions of all routes of advance delayed the closing of units and precluded the early launching of a coordinated attack, (4) The Corps Commander had indicated that the Division mission was to be regarded as calling for a pursuit rather than an attack.

Screening

In preparation for the movement to assembly areas the 83d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop reconnoitered to the north and cleared the towns of Badburdyck (F1780) and Hammerden (F2001), continuing to screen the advance.

First Day

The 1st Battalion of the 329th Infantry had the city of Neuss as its objective. At 1300 on 1 March they attacked from an assembly area in the vicinity of Loveling (F2456). The advance moved through open terrain against enemy tanks and self-propelled guns. At the outer defenses of Neuss machine gun fire from inside the city slowed the attack. After dark the enemy put up a strong perimeter defense of heavy machine guns firing through pre-arranged zones. During the night this resistance was reduced by additional automatic weapons brought up to the troops.

Neuss Secured

By 0430 on 2 March Neuss was secured. At 0630 the 1st Battalion had advanced through the city to its eastern outskirts. By this time civilians crowding the streets impeded military operations as large numbers of prisoners of war were evacuated to the rear.

In the meantime the remainder of the regiment had closed in its assembly area in the vicinity of Jüchen (F1478), and the 2nd Battalion was held in reserve while the 3d Battalion prepared to attack to the east to seize the railroad bridge on the southwestern edge of Neuss — one of the two vital spans linking Düsseldorf with the west bank of the Rhine River.

The 330th Infantry in coordination with the 329th was to cross the Nord Canal and drive on to help secure Neuss. Assembled in the vicinity of Epsendorf (F2005), the 2nd Battalion began its advance at 1400 on the 1st of March. In two hours they had cleared the towns of Lutzerath (F2437) and Grefrath (F2336). They were then in position to protect the left flank of the 329th's advance toward Neuss. During the night the Battalion crossed the Nord Canal and by 0245 had advance elements in the built-up part of Neuss.

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The 331st Infantry, minus the 1st Battalion, returning to Division control at 1300 continued the attack it had launched at 0400 under control of the 2nd Armored Division. The 3d Battalion, as the assault battalion, advanced steadily on Grevenbroich (F1972), cleared the town and patrolled along the Erft Canal mopping up isolated resistance and protecting the left flank of the Division so that by nightfall the west side of the Erft Canal was clear of the enemy.

Second Day On the 2nd of March the 3d Battalion of the 329th Infantry was assembled for a drive east to seize the railroad bridge spanning the Rhine at Neuss. At 0045 they began a slow advance against small arms fire from dug-in positions. Company I in the lead, was stopped by heavy machine guns and 20mm anti-aircraft artillery.

By 1440 Company L occupied a position two hundred yards from the western end of the bridge at F299895. A quick follow-up secured the western approach. Earlier in the day, 0759, an explosion was observed in the vicinity of the bridge. After the western bank of the river was secured, patrols reported that the enemy had blown the eastern span. More extensive reports on the 3d of March showed that the center span was also demolished and the bridge impassable for either vehicular or foot traffic.

Leaving Neuss at 1230 on 2 March the 3d Battalion of the 330th Infantry maneuvered in a wide-swinging arch around Neuss heading for a light bridge at Oberkassel, a westbank suburb of Dusseldorf. Although supporting armored elements were temporarily delayed by a road block, the infantry advanced alone and destroyed six 75mm high velocity guns at F260923. During the night supporting engineers removed the road block and again the armor moved in support of the foot troops. By 0545 on 3 March the 3d Battalion had gone through Oberkassel and reached the bridge. Although our troops controlled the structure by fire, the Germans destroyed it at 0935. The Regiment completed preparations for defense by 1200 on 3 March.

Rhine River On 2 March the 2nd Battalion of the 331st Infantry launched its attack from the vicinity of the Erft Canal at 0130 in a swift drive to the Rhine River. Company E gained and held the west bank at 0930.

The 1st Battalion, 331st Infantry, was relieved from attachment to the 2nd Armored Division at 1630 and reverted to Division control. The Commanding General then ordered it re-attached to the 330th Infantry in support of the attack to the north.

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~~SECRET~~EnemyCounterattack

A major threat to the success of the entire operation developed at 0700 on 2 March when an enemy build-up in the vicinity of Kapellen (F2281) threatened the right flank of the Division. The necessity for providing organic flank security while carrying on a major offensive operation made it impossible to maintain defenses in strength along the entire flank. Consequently, when the enemy launched his counter-offensive consisting of approximately three hundred infantry, supported by twenty-one tanks, the initial defenses were overrun. The situation became critical when Company I of the 331st Infantry was completely surrounded by German tanks and infantry. All available arms were utilized and the counterattack was repelled. Artillery, tank destroyers, and infantrymen with bazookas, through cooperative effort, destroyed seven tanks. The Air Corps is credited with the destruction of an additional fourteen tanks and half-tracks during the day. A great part of the Division's success in containing the attack was due to timely and effective air support which prevented the enemy from building his counter-attack and exploiting his initial success. Five squadrons of P-47's took part in the effort and bombed, strafed, and fired rockets continuously from 0945 to 1430, when the threat had been completely eliminated.

The 83d Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop moved to Holzheim (F2685) as a protective element for the Division right flank. The 3d Battalion of the 331st Infantry was relieved by the 120th Infantry, 30th Infantry Division.

Enemy Losses

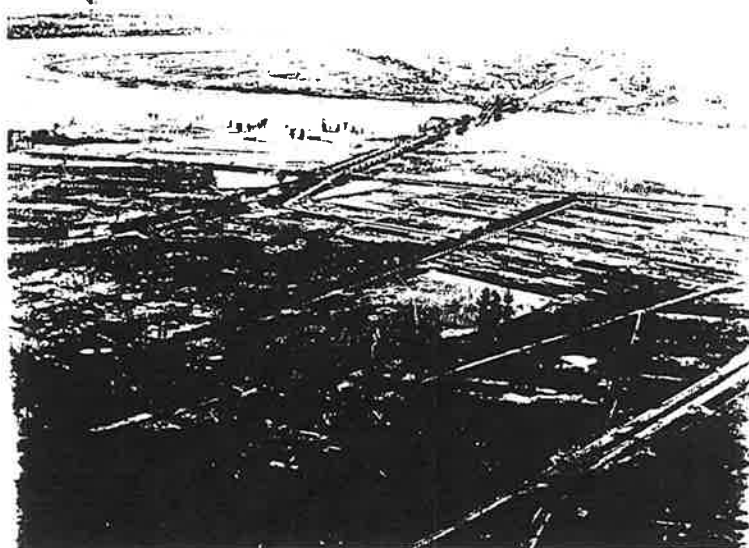
During the day the enemy lost a total of seven tanks to our ground troops, six to the 3d Battalion, 331st Infantry, and one to Company C, 643d Tank Destroyer Battalion. A German fighter plane was shot down by the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon of the 330th Infantry. The Air Corps destroyed an additional fourteen tanks and half-tracks.

Third Day

On the third day the attack of the 331st Infantry developed into a mopping-up operation and at the close of the day the regiment was relieved by the 329th Infantry and placed in Division reserve. On the 3d of March the Division was ordered by the XIX Corps to complete the clearing of Neuss and begin a program of rehabilitation. In preparation for future employment, the Division Command Post moved from Aldenhoven (F1882) to Buttgen (F212892), Germany.

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TRAINING

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~~SECRET~~TRAINING

With the capture of Neuss completed and its participation in operation "Grenade" ended, the Division on the 4th of March complied with orders received from the commanding general XIX Corps and began a program of training and rehabilitation. Concurrent with this program, the Division maintained defensive positions in its sector along the Rhine from a point about two miles north of Oberkassell to the confluence of the Erft Canal and the Rhine River.

This training program was, in effect, a continuation of the highly remunerative program conducted during February in Belgium and Holland. That period had so clearly benefited all units of the Division that the new program was approached with marked enthusiasm.

River On the 6th of March training in the use of assault boats was begun, and was continued throughout most of the remainder of the month. A schedule of night and day river crossing was set up and followed until the latter part of the month. In this connection it is to be noted that while this training was scheduled so as to occur at various hours, stress was laid on problems conducted during hours of darkness. Engineer companies supported the infantry regiments in their training in operation of assault boats, the use of footbridges, and supported small stream crossing problems.

Bridges In addition, the Engineer Battalion trained with Bailey and treadway bridges, treadway and infantry support rafts. One company of engineers experimented loading vehicles and guns on DUKWs by two methods: (1) Using a crane and (2), using an improvised ramp. The ramp method was the more satisfactory.

Tank-Infantry Throughout the entire training period, special emphasis was placed on the infantry-tank team and Combination the infantry-tank destroyer team. Cooperation between these teams had been, during operation "Grenade", closer than ever before and the benefits of such cooperation had been clearly demonstrated to all troops. Exercises which were conducted therefore were looked upon favorably by both officers and men.

Weapons Additional training during the month included small arms firing, night problems, small unit problems and attacks on a village strong point over open terrain. Stress was placed on formations and movement and the correct use of supporting weapons. Troops were also given instruction in the function and firing of the Panzerfaust. Regimental tests of companies in day and night attacks were conducted. Familiarization firing of all arms was held, and unit headquarters held command post exercises. In addition, schools were conducted in the adjustment of artillery fire. Platoon leaders in the regiments were given opportunity for actual adjustment of fire from forward observation posts.

Relief On the 21st of March the Division was relieved from its sector of defense along the Rhine River and moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of Echt, Holland. There,

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training in bridging and assault boat crossings was conducted. This included infantry company, battalion, and regiment assault boat crossings, infantry support bridge and raft crossings, and M1 footbridge crossings. For the regimental assault problems the engineers manned 75 boats, constructed a 320 foot infantry support bridge, and a 248 foot bridge. Additional training was given in village fighting and the technique of tank and tank destroyer support of an attack on a village.

On the 26th and 27th of March all troops prepared for movement east, and on the 28th of the month the Division moved to an assembly area in the general vicinity of Munchen-Gladbach, Germany, preparatory to its movement across the Rhine River.

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WESTPHALIA

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WESTPHALIA

On the 28th of March the Commanding General of XIX Corps issued Field Order No 31 stating the Corps mission as follows: "Crosses Lippe Canal and River through bridgehead established by XVIII Corps. Advances east in zone and seizes Ludinghausen and crossings over Dortmund-Ems Canal and continues advances to cut communication facilities of the Ruhr east and southeast of Hamm." The 83d Division was ordered to be prepared to move, motorized, on order in two columns from its assembly area near Schiefbahn, Germany, behind the 2d Armored Division to a designated assembly area vicinity Hunxe (A3338), Germany, east of the Rhine River. Having reached this assembly area, the Division would then follow the 2d Armored Division, clean up enemy by-passed by it east of the line Halvern (A6250)-Dülmen (A6860). The Division was to remain motorized until further order. (See Field Order No 31, Hq XIX Corps, 282230)

In accordance with these instructions, the 83d Division moved from its assembly area in the vicinity of Schiefbahn, Germany, on 29 March. The Rhine River was crossed north of Rheinburg (A2128). (See Movement Order No 56, 29 March, item 1021). By the 30th of the month, all combat elements of the Division were assembled east of the river.

During the remaining days of March, the Division continued to advance behind the 2d Armored Division. Movement of all echelons was very rapid. Traffic congestions and large numbers of refugees and displaced persons moving along the roads to the west were the only obstacles to the advance of the Division.

On the 31st of the month the Corps Mission was changed to read: "Cross Dortmund-Ems Canal and secure all bridges intact across Lippe River with Dortmund Canal as right flank from Hamm to Dortmund and reconnoiter to south until hitting something." But as the month came to an end, it was apparent that there was no longer need for our troops to advance southeast of Hamm since elements of the First and Ninth Armies were joining up in the vicinity of Lippstadt, Germany.

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BATTLE LESSONS

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~~SECRET~~AIR-GROUND COOPERATION

"The timely and effective air support given to this Division during Operation 'Grenade' accounted greatly for the Division's success by preventing the enemy from building up his counterattack against the Division's right flank and exploiting his initial success in the counterattack."

(Ltr, C of S, 83d Div to CG, XIX Corps, 10 March 45)

Enemy
Attacks

An enemy build up of tanks and infantry was thrown against the Division's right flank in the vicinity of Kapellen (F2201) at 0700, 2 March. The principle strength of the 83d was concentrated in and around Neuss. Thus the extended right flank along the Erft Canal was vulnerable to counterattack. The 331st Command Post and the Division Prisoner of War Cage were near Kapellen. The Division Command Post at Aldenhoven was approximately three miles away. The situation became critical when the enemy overran outposts of the Division's infantry beyond Kapellen. A telephone request was made to XIX Corps for air support.

Air
Support

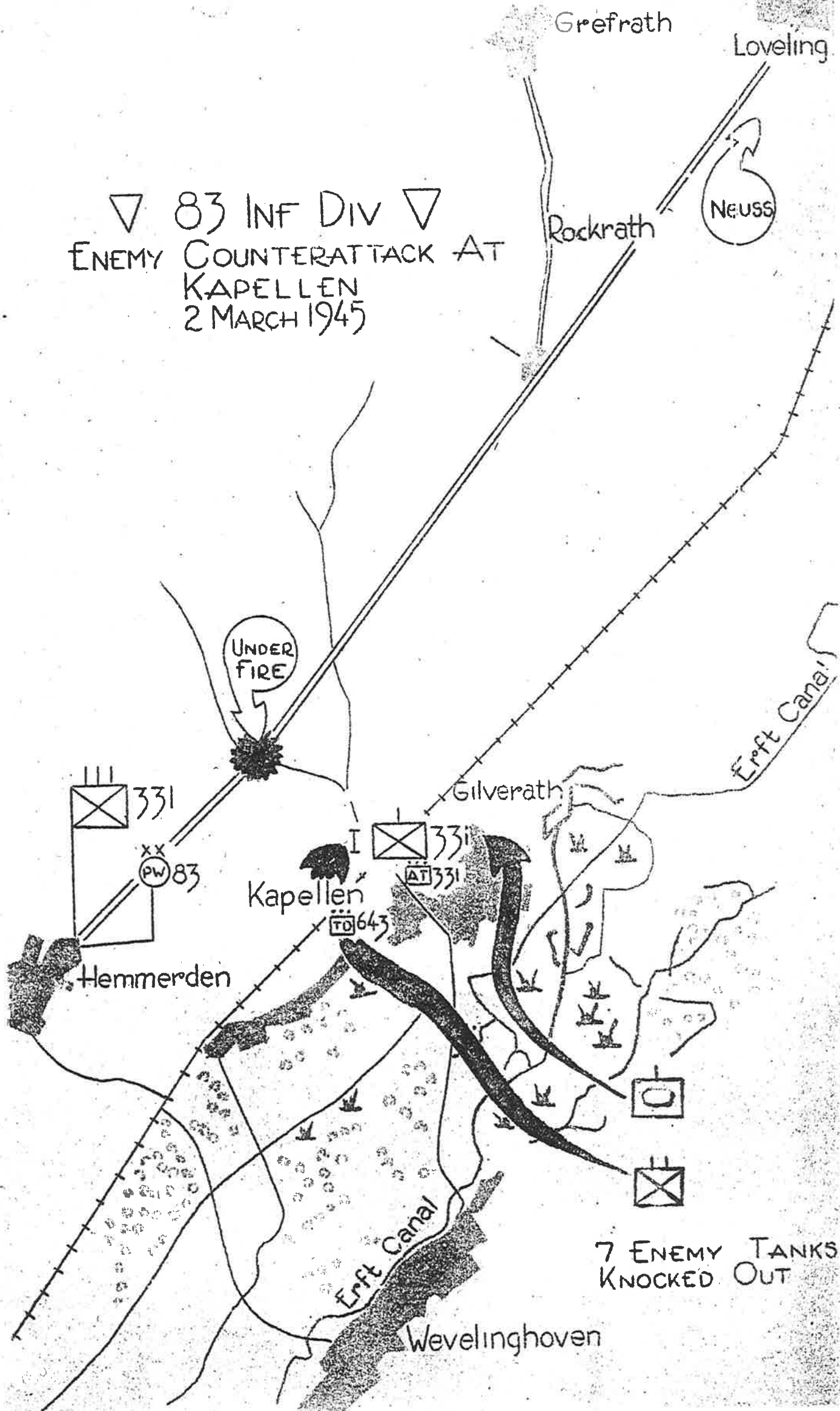
From 0945 to 1045 four squadrons bombed, strafed and employed rockets on enemy tanks and infantry which had penetrated into Kapellen. Further sorties in support of the Division's infantry troops in that area continued. From 1230 to 1300 two squadrons attacked enemy elements which were endeavoring to continue the counterattack. At 1340 an armed reconnaissance squadron flew along the Erft Canal, fired rockets on enemy tanks and infantry, removing a threat to the Division's main supply route. From 1403 to 1430 a squadron for the third time attacked the enemy's positions by bombing and strafing. And at 1430 another armed reconnaissance squadron along the Erft Canal strafed and bombed ground troops and tanks.

Dusseldorf

Air activity over Dusseldorf was effected from 1500 through 1740 by three single squadron flights. From 1555 to 1645 friendly aircraft bombed enemy gun positions emplaced on the southeastern side of the highway bridge, which had been firing direct into elements of the Division in the vicinity of Neuss.

The success of these operations and the effectiveness of the air-ground teamwork was made possible by the prompt coordination of these two arms of the service. Combined ground and air operations repulsed the enemy counterattack completely, thereby preventing a possible disruption of the entire Division's operations.

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~~SECRET~~MILITARY GOVERNMENT IN NEUSS-OBERKASSEL

The Neuss-Oberkassel area provided the 83d with its first real experience in Military Government of Germany, a forerunner of what is to come.

The total civilian population of the Division area was approximately 75,000 of which 30,000 were in Neuss (normal population 60,000) and 20,000 in Oberkassel (that portion of Düsseldorf west of the Rhine.) Of these about 4000 were so-called Displaced Persons, (Russians, Poles, French, Belgians, Dutch, etc.,) brought to Germany by the Nazis.

Organization Military Government trained personnel available to the Division Commander for his Military Government operations consisted of the Division Military Government Staff (five officers and seven enlisted men), Military Government Detachment 112E3 Spearhead Detachment remaining with Division (four officers and nine enlisted men), Military Government Detachment 18C2 (assigned permanently to Neuss, three officers and six enlisted men), and Military Government Detachment FLD3 (assigned permanently to Düsseldorf, that portion of it in this operation consisting of three officers and six enlisted men).

The Spearhead Detachment moved into Neuss the afternoon of 2 March and immediately posted the city with Military Government Proclamations and enactments. The Oberbürgermeister, Dr. Wilhelm Todtman, and part of his staff were found to be still in the city and were authorized to continue to function temporarily. Dr. Todtman was subsequently removed from office on 6 March, for former Nazi affiliations, after investigation by CIC.

On 4 March 45, the Spearhead Detachment also moved into Oberkassel and established administration there. By this time the permanent Neuss Detachment, 18C2, had arrived and entered the city.

Screening In the initial stages of occupation the primary consideration is always public safety, hence every effort was made to rehabilitate the local police forces as rapidly as possible. At the expiration of three days of occupation approximately 75 police were on duty in Neuss and 50 in Oberkassel. Many of these were former policemen in these cities who had been evacuated to Division prisoner of war camps in the early stages of combat because they wore uniforms, were subsequently screened by CIC and returned to duty. On the whole local police functioned fairly well, but their efficiency was impaired by the lack of uniforms (without which they felt a lack of authority), by unfamiliarity with their duties under Military Government, and by uncertainty as to the extent which their actions would be backed up by the occupying forces, all matters which would normally be corrected by time. It is apparent that the German civilians as a whole are prepared to obey literally the will of Military Government, but it must be made clear and explicit, firmly and strictly explained and enforced.

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~~SECRET~~Nazis

From the standpoint of general civilian administration, the Neuss-Oberkassel operation, like all others so far encountered by the Allies in Germany, showed a general willingness to cooperate with the U. S. Army. Generalization is perhaps erroneous because to date practically all ardent and active Nazis have been evacuated before our advance. Those that were left were lukewarm party members and they, with the majority of civilians found, are primarily interested in reestablishment and continuation of the normal essentials of life.

Fortunately the area administered had no great food shortages. Supplies were adequate, the only difficulty encountered being those of distribution caused by lack of transportation. Primarily for this reason, the initially strict curfew of 1200 to 0900, was relaxed as quickly as security warranted to permit civilian circulation from 0700 to 1800. This allowed the civilians to make arrangements for their own provisioning and to resume farming operations, a matter of vital concern for the whole future occupation of Germany.

Health

General health conditions in Neuss and Oberkassel were found to be good. The fact that sufficient electric power was available to operate the water systems of both cities was no small factor. Sewage disposal was adequate. One of the first instructions issued to the new local administration, was to repair these public services as rapidly as possible and to boil all drinking water. As a result there were no serious health problems during occupation by this Division and sanitary conditions were rapidly being improved when we left.

Industries

It is not the policy of SHAEF to rehabilitate German industry except to the extent it may be specifically authorized as being necessary for Allied prosecution of the war. In any event, such rehabilitation is of secondary importance in the initial stages of any occupation, and no steps in this direction were taken other than to authorize concerns to make estimates of their condition and needed repairs. Two concerns, International Harvester and American Radiator, of American ownership were found and suitable custodians of their properties appointed under Military Government.

All monuments, fine arts, and archives listed by SHAEF as protected installations were inspected, suitable arrangements made for their protection, and report to higher headquarters rendered.

Military Government Summary Courts provided speedy trials for violation of Military Government Enactments. During the 19 day period some 75 cases were tried, over 85% for infractions of curfew and circulation. Fines ranging from 25 to 100 Reichsmark and prison sentences up to 30 days were imposed. Imprisonment was in local civilian jails, which had been set up in both Oberkassel and Neuss as one of the first steps in civilian control.

Displaced Persons

By far the most thorny problem encountered by Military Government was the handling of Displaced Persons. SHAEF directives require them as well as all German civilians

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to "standfast" in the area where found. Divisions which did not enforce this policy produced many needless problems. This Division did, largely through the efforts and efficiency of the combat units.

Of the 4000 odd displaced persons in Division area, approximately one-third were Russian, one-third Polish, one-sixth French, and the remaining one-sixth Dutch, Belgian, Italian, Slovak, Czech, Lithuanian, Austrian, etc. The German authorities were required to house and feed all displaced persons. In the smaller communities they were cared for on farms or in small groups in towns. Some worked and were paid in addition to getting their food. In the larger cities of Oberkassel and Neuss, it was found better to segregate displaced persons in centers by nationality, where they could be more easily controlled and cared for. Registration of all displaced persons was undertaken and at the time of our departure 3000 had been registered.

The relatively small total of 394 displaced persons was evacuated by regiments to Division prisoner of war cage early in the operation. All these were males wearing uniforms, including usually parts of Wehrmacht or green uniforms, so combat troops had little choice but to handle them as prisoners of war. Military Government ultimately took these from the cage as displaced persons.

Control of Displaced Persons

It is important that all units understand, and that the displaced persons be made to understand, that all enactments of Military Government apply to displaced persons as well as to German civilians. Naturally the displaced persons feel liberated by our occupation and the German authorities have difficulty in controlling them. Military Government and the occupying forces must do so. It is apparent that the collection and evacuation of displaced persons to properly staffed and equipped centers for their eventual repatriation is essential to permit rapid and efficient establishment and operation of the Division Commander's responsibility of Military Government. Until this can be arranged, "standfast" must be enforced. That it can be and the "scorched earth" policy avoided was proved by the disciplined conduct of our combat units in the Neuss-Oberkassel operation.

Lessons

Several important lessons have been learned. The Germans can and will cooperate, but they must be firmly handled, explicitly instructed, and our will imposed. Wherever possible tactical boundaries should be established to coincide as nearly as possible with political boundaries and so as not to isolate normal local civilian food and service centers. For proper control curfew should be uniform throughout more than Division area, and as rapidly as possible relaxed to include all daylight hours permitting the civilians to take care of themselves. It is inadvisable to use any Nazi-tinged people in any governmental positions. Initial efficiency can well be sacrificed for a proper foundation for the future. The German civilian as a whole is lethargic in matters political, and affirmative action by Military Government is and will be required to bring forward non-Nazis to positions of authority and to induce them to believe that they can now begin restoration of non-Nazi government under strict Military Government control. There is a feeling of neutrality until Military Government has proved that it can and will eradicate Nazism.

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Above all the Neuss-Oberkassel operation offered convincing proof of the fact that Military Government is a government of all the army. It is a responsibility which can only be properly discharged by the employment of all the forces at the disposal of the Division Commander. It is a problem which will become of ever increasing importance.

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T R O O P L I S T

1 - 31 MARCH 1945

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ORGANIZATION FOR COMBAT

ATTACHED UNITS

SUPPORTING UNITS

CHANGES IN MISSIONS AND ATTACHMENTS

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T R O O P L I S T - 1 - 31 M A R C H

FIELD ORDER #52, 83d Infantry Division, issued 282300 February 1945:

329TH INF:

Atchd: 322d FA Bn (for movement only)
Co A, 643d TD Bn (T)
Co D (-1 Plat); 1 Plat, Co B; 1st Plat AG;
Mort Plat; 736th Tk Bn
Co A, 308th Engr Bn (for movement only)

330TH INF:

Atchd: 323d FA Bn (for movement only)
Co B, 643d TD Bn (T)
Co B, 308th Engr Bn (for movement only)
Co A, 2d Plat, AG; 736th Tk Bn
Plat Y, 453d AAA Bn (AW)

331ST INF (-1st Bn, atchd to 2d Armd Div):

Atchd: Co C, 643d TD Bn (T)
Plat Z, 453d AAA Bn (AW)

308TH ENGR BN:

Co A in direct support of 329th Inf
Co B in direct support of 330th Inf
Co C in direct support of 331st Inf

308TH MED BN

83D CAV RCN TR

83D DIV ARTY:

Atchd: 453d AAA Bn (AW) (less Plats Y & Z)
643d TD Bn (T) (less Cos A, B & C)
322d FA Bn in direct support of 329th Inf
323d FA Bn in direct support of 330th Inf
908th FA Bn in general support
324th FA Bn in general support

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83D DIV SP TRS:

83d Hq & Hq Co
83d QM Co
83d Sig Co
783d Ord (LM) Co
83d MP Plat

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ATTACHED UNITS:

453d AAA Bn (AW) (1 through 31 March)
643d TD Bn (SP) (1 through 31 March)
(643d TD Bn, originally a towed unit, was converted to a self-propelled unit during month; conversion completed 13 March.)
736th Tk Bn (-Co C) (1 through 31 March)
Co C, 736th Tk Bn (28 through 31 March)
2 Secs, 83d Cml Smoke Gen Co (1 and 2 March)

~~SECRET~~ATTACHED UNITS (CONT'D):

24th FA Bn (105 How) (1 March only)
 25th FA Bn (105 How) (2 through 11, and 28 through 31 March)
 751st FA Bn (155 How) (2 through 12 March)
 351st FA Bn (155 How) (9 through 12 March)
 Btry B, 8th FA Obsn Bn (for operations only - 16 through 20 March)
 967th FA Bn (155 How) (28 through 31 March)
 15th Cav Gp (31 March only)
 Btry A, 226th AAA Splt Bn:
 3 Secs - (3 through 9 March)
 6 Secs - (10 through 12 March)
 1 Plat - (13 March only)
 1 Plat (-3 Srlts) - (14 through 20 March)
 Air-Ground Cooperation Party (1 through 31 March)
 83d CIC Det (1 through 31 March)
 MII Team No. 428-G (1 through 31 March)
 OB Team No. 20 (1 through 31 March)
 IPW Team No. 51 (1 through 31 March)
 IPW Team No. 48 (1 through 31 March)
 PI Team No. 42 (1 through 31 March)
 Mil Govt Det IEC2 (2 through 21 March)
 Mil Govt Det FLD3 (9 through 21 March)
 Mil Govt Spearhead Det II2E3 (1 through 31 March)
 168th Sig Photo Det (5 through 31 March)
 XIX Corps Wire Team (1 through 31 March)
 XIX Corps Radio-Link Team (1 through 31 March)

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SUPPORTING UNITS:

295th Engr (C) Bn (1 through 20 March)
 288th FA Gp: (2 through 17 March)
 228th FA Bn (155 How)
 967th FA Bn (155 How)
 979th FA Bn (155 Gun)
 793d FA Bn (8" How)
 1115th Engr Gp (31 March only)

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CHANGES IN MISSIONS AND ATTACHMENTS WITHIN DIVISION DURING MONTH:

011625 Mar - S-3, 331st Inf requested 1 Plat, Mod Tks - request approved.
 02130 Mar - 83d Cav Rcn Tr atchd to 331st Inf, eff 012300 Mar 45.
 021130 Mar - Msg fr Div Arty - Organization of arty for combat:
 Gpmt "A" (322d & 25th FA Bns) in direct support of 329th Inf
 323d FA Bn in direct support of 330th Inf
 908th FA Bn in direct support of 331st Inf
 324th & 751st FA Bns in general support
 021530 Mar - 1st Bn, 331st Inf atchd to 330th Inf, upon reverting to control
 of 83d Div from 2d Armd Div at 021630A Mar.
 022045 Mar - G-3 directed S-3, 331st Inf to send Co B (-1 Plat), 736th Tk Bn
 to 1st Bn, 331st Inf.

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CHANGES (CONT'D):

- 030920 Mar - G-3 direct S-3, 329th Inf to send Co B, 736th Tk Bn to 330th Inf.
- 031550 Mar - S-3, Div Arty advised G-3 that 25th FA Bn reverts to general support 020900.
- PM, 03 Mar - 1st Bn, 331st Inf detchd from 330th Inf and reverted to control of 331st Inf.
- 031830 Mar - G-3 to S-3, 331st Inf - Atchd to 331st Inf:
908th FA Bn (direct support)
Co C, 308th Engr Bn
Co B, Co D (-1 Plat), 736th Tk Bn
2 Plats SPs, 1 Plat Towed, 643d TD Bn
- 032050 Mar - G-3 to S-3, 330th Inf - 2d Plat AG, Co B, 736th Tk Bn and 2 Plats, 643d TD Bn detchd from 330th Inf and atchd to 331st Inf, except Co B, Tanks which go into Div Res.
- 032215 Mar - G-3 notified S-3, 330th Inf that 1 Plat, Co A, 736th Tk Bn will report to 1st Bn, 331st Inf 040700 Mar.
- 032100 Mar - CG ordered 331st Inf to advance to North with:
908th FA Bn
Co C, 308th Engr Bn
Co B, Co D (-1 Plat), 1 Plat Co A, AG Plat, Mort Plat, 736th Tk Bn
Plat Z, 453d AAA Bn (AW)
Co B (-1 Plat), 1 Plat SPs, Co C, 643d TD Bn
- 040940 Mar - G-3 notified all three regts that all tanks would revert to 736th Tk Bn, except 1 Plat of Lts w/329th Inf and AG Plat on 329th's flank.
- 051010 Mar - 329th & 330th Infs will have 1 Plat of towed TDs in position in secondary mission; 331st Inf will have 1 plat of towed TDs in mobile res; all SPs return to Bn control.
- 051720 Mar - 308th Engr Bn now in general support of the Division.
- 051800 Mar - 83d Cav Ren Tr detchd from 329th Inf effective 1800A.
- 051820 Mar - S-3, 736th Tk Bn notified G-3 that 2d Plat, Co D and AG Plat had returned to control of 736th Tk Bn.
- 112030 Mar - Plats X & Y, 453d AAA Bn (AW) atchd to 329th and 331st Infs respectively, are detchd as of 2000A.
- 141140 Mar - G-3 notified 83d Div Arty that 643d TD Bn (SP) was detchd from Div Arty and reverted to 83d Div control as of 142100 Mar.

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VI

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ROSTER OF COMMANDERS, GENERAL AND SPECIAL STAFF

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| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
| DIVISION COMMANDER | Macon, Robert C., Maj Gen, USA (1 March to 31 March) | 0-4733 |
| ASST TO DIV COMMANDER | Ferenbaugh, Claude B., Brig Gen, USA (1 March to 31 March) | 0-12479 |
| CHIEF OF STAFF | Boyle, Conrad L., Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-15951 |
| AC of S, G-1 | Hackenzie, Alan P. S., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-253371 |
| AC of S, G-2 | Deshotelis, Jules H., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-273934 |
| AC of S, G-3 | Duke, Robert F., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-365127 |
| AC of S, G-4 | Hughes, Shelly G., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-165757 |
| SIGNAL OFFICER | Byrne, George A., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-21219 |
| ENGINEER OFFICER | Dodge, Roy T., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-21468 |
| CHEMICAL OFFICER | Shaver, Paul F., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-213755 |
| AIR-GROUND COOPERATION OFFICER | Stephens, Raymond D., Maj (1 March to 31 March) | 0-367023 |
| ADJUTANT GENERAL | Harrell, Robert G., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-318679 |
| JUDGE ADVOCATE | Smith, John D., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-915645 |
| INSPECTOR GENERAL | Tubb, James H., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-371106 |
| FINANCE OFFICER | Snuck, Russell H., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-474859 |
| SURGEON | Blotfelter, David W., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-20029 |
| MILITARY GOVERNMENT OFFICER | Barrahan, James C., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-520279 |
| INFORMATION-EDUCATION OFFICER | Welf, John C., Capt (1 March to 31 March) | 0-454413 |
| ORILLANCE OFFICER | Lundy, Thomas F., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-252065 |
| QUARTERMASTER | McLaughlin, John D., Maj (1 March to 31 March) | 0-452948 |
| SPECIAL SERVICE OFFICER | Lybrook, Robert C., Maj (1 March to 16 March) Reeder, Julius C., Capt (17 March to 31 March) | 0-262407 0-1300743 |
| CHAPLAIN | Donnelly, Augustine P., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-23681 |

0-12479

0-21468

DECLASSIFIED

| | | |
|---|---|-----------|
| PROVOST MARSHAL | Ogilvie, George, Maj (1 March to 31 March) | 0-445620 |
| HEADQUARTERS COMMANDANT | Lewis, Raymond J., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-271706 |
| SIC DETACHMENT | Victor, Oliver A., Capt (1 March to 31 March) | 0-1049003 |
| <u>329TH INFANTRY</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Grabill, Edwin B., Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-6769 |
| <u>330TH INFANTRY</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Foster, Robert T., Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-11258 |
| <u>331ST INFANTRY</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Tork, Robert H., Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-21341 |
| <u>83D DIVISION ARTILLERY</u> | | |
| COMMANDING GENERAL | Montague, Robert H., Brig Gen, USA (1 March to 31 March) | 0-12261 |
| EXECUTIVE OFFICER | May, Robert P., Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-16212 |
| S-1, S-4 | Seidler, Howard B., Maj (1 March to 31 March) | 0-394165 |
| S-2 | Faxon, Alfred A., Maj (1 March to 31 March) | 0-361523 |
| S-3 | Smith, Robert B., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-411990 |
| <u>308TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Dodge, Roy T., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-21468 |
| <u>83D CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE TROOP</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Drum, Hoister H., Capt (1 March to 2 March) | 0-23923 |
| | Wells, Keith L., 1st Lt (2 March to 31 March) | 0-1030205 |
| <u>308TH MEDICAL BATTALION</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Higdon, Robert B., Lt Col (1 March to 31 March) | 0-21459 |
| <u>DIVISION HEADQUARTERS COMPANY</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Cederberg, Alfred A., Capt (1 March to 31 March) | 0-1286960 |
| <u>783D ORDNANCE (LH) COMPANY</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Horton, John J., 1st Lt (1 March to 31 March) | 0-7548986 |
| <u>83D SIGNAL COMPANY</u> | | |
| COMMANDING OFFICER | Harkey, Marion L., Capt (1 March to 31 March) | 0-454655 |

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83D QUARTERMASTER COMPANY

COMMANDING OFFICER

Brauch, George F., Capt
(1 March to 31 March)

O-1573740

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VII

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AWARDS AND DECORATIONS
* * *

~~SECRET~~AWARDS

| | Bronze Star | Silver Star | Soldiers Medal | Air Medal | Total |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|-------|
| Headquarters 83d Infantry Div | 3 | | | | 3 |
| 329th Inf Regt | 38 | 34 | 1 | | 73 |
| 330th Inf Regt | 48 | 8 | | | 56 |
| 331st Inf Regt | 171 | 17 | | 1 | 189 |
| Headquarters 63d Div Arty | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 322d FA Bn | 6 | | | | 6 |
| 323d FA Bn | 5 | 1 | | | 6 |
| 324th FA Bn | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 908th FA Bn | 5 | 3 | | | 8 |
| 308th Engr Bn | 12 | 2 | | | 14 |
| 308th Med Bn | 2 | 1 | | | 3 |
| 83d Cav Recon Tr | 3 | 2 | | | 5 |
| Hq Co (Sp Trs) | | | | | |
| 83d Sig Co | | | | | |
| 83d QM Co | 1 | | | | 1 |
| 783d Ord Co | | | | | |
| MP Plat | 4 | | | | 4 |
| Attached Units: | | | | | |
| 453d AAA Bn (A/I) | 5 | | | | 5 |
| 643d TD Bn | 3 | 2 | | | 5 |
| 736th Tk Bn | 12 | 1 | | | 13 |
| 25 FA Bn | 1 | | | 3 | 4 |
| | 321 | 71 | 1 | 4 | 397 |

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WIII

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LOSERS IN ACTION

* * *

CONFIDENTIAL

| | KIA | MIA | MIA | LBC | POW | ALLIED | Plus |
|---------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|------|
| Headquarters 83d Inf Div | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | |
| 229th Inf Regt | 13 | 92 | 6 | 143 | 254 | 254 | |
| 330th Inf Regt | 8 | 70 | 7 | 146 | 231 | 291 | |
| 331st Inf Regt | 14 | 72 | 74 | 103 | 263 | 233 | |
| Headquarters 83d Div Arty | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | |
| 222d FA Bn | 0 | 1 | 0 | 14 | 15 | 19 | |
| 223d FA Bn | 3 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 10 | 9 | |
| 324th FA Bn | 1 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 9 | 7 | |
| 908th FA Bn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 9 | 8 | |
| 308th Engr C Bn | 0 | 1 | 0 | 20 | 21 | 18 | |
| 308th Med Bn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 14 | 18 | |
| 83d Cav Rcn Tr | 1 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 11 | 11 | |
| Hq Co (Sp Trs) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 9 | |
| 83d Sig Co | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | |
| 83d QM Co | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 4 | |
| 783d Ord Co | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 3 | |
| MP Plat | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | |
| TOTAL DIVISION | | | | | | | |
| Attached Units: | | | | | | | |
| 453d AAA Bn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 | 19 | 7 | |
| 643d TD Bn | 8 | 11 | 19 | 17 | 55 | 14 | |
| 736 Tk Bn | 3 | 6 | 0 | 19 | 16 | 31 | |
| 25th FA Bn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | |
| 751st FA Bn | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | |

TOTAL 51 256 107 537 953 985 171

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IX

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APPENDICES

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~~SECRET~~Summary of Enemy Order of BattlePart One

The enemy Order of Battle confronting the 83d Infantry Division in its sweep to the Rhine River was as confused during this period as it was during the last. The enemy committed a host of miscellaneous units in a desperate attempt to slacken the pace of our drive. Since it was evident even to the Germans that the XIX Corps' attack could no longer be stopped West of the Rhine, an attempt was made to extricate at least units of divisional size and salvage them on the East bank of the river. In this effort, the enemy partially succeeded, for he was able to withdraw elements of the 11 Panzer, 130 Panzer Lehr, and 338 Infantry Divisions across the Rhine while he sacrificed to our advancing column the second and third rate units primarily under the control of the 476 Mobilization Division. At 0930 on 2 March 1945, the 83d Infantry Division became the first unit of Ninth US Army to reach the Rhine, thereby climaxing the lightning thrust of Allied arms across the Roer into the German Rhineland. Thereafter and for the greater part of the month units of the 83d Infantry Division patrolled the West banks of the Rhine River opposite Dusseldorf.

Among the conglomeration of AAA, Fortress, Police, Home Guard, Volksturm, and Security Battalions contacted (for a complete list of units identified through the capture of PWs, see Part Two), the following deserve some explanatory remarks:

536 Replacement and Training Regiment: According to PW claims, the regiment with its Home Station in Dusseldorf, Wehrkreis VI, constituted an element of the 476 Mobilization Division which was charged with the defense of the Neuss - Dusseldorf area. As part of the 476 Mobilization Division, it controlled some of the hastily organized units committed to delay our push to the Rhine.

IV Fortress Regiment: This regiment, a static defense unit under control of the 476 Mobilization Division, consisted of 6 companies of men suffering from minor ailments and drafted approximately three weeks prior to commitment.

766 Volks Artillery Corps: Only the 1 Battalion of this unit was committed on our front. It consisted of a Headquarters Battery and two firing batteries, the latter equipped with 6 - 150mm Howitzers each. The battalion had left the Bitburg area on 21 February to be employed in defense of the Dusseldorf - Cologne sector.

1203 Panther Turn Company: This newly formed unit was organized to fight from detached Panther turrets dug into the ground as pillboxes. Since the turrets did not arrive, however, the men were committed as infantry.

1074 Security Battalion: This battalion with a strength of 700 men was organized into 4 companies. It was composed of older age personnel employed in trench digging and as security guards. Toward the middle of the month the battalion was attached to the 338 Infantry Division.

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6 Police Home Guard Battalion: This battalion consisted of regular and auxiliary police from Wehrkreis VI and was charged mainly with the performance of police duties and the evacuation of civilians. During the final stages of the battle, this unit was also committed as infantry.

3 Flak Corps: The 3 Flak Corps was responsible for the AA defense of the Dusseldorf - Neuss area and consisted of light and heavy anti-aircraft battalions. After our crossing of the Roon River, the units of the 3 Flak Corps were employed in an antitank capacity and, after their guns were knocked out, in an infantry role. As far as could be ascertained from captured documents and PW statements the following Anti-aircraft battalions belonged to the 141 Flak Regiment, which was attached to the 3 Flak Corps: 404, 407, 474, 133, 151, and 177.

Though it was known what units escaped from the West banks of the Rhine via the Wesel Bridgehead, it was not known how those units were redispersed on the East bank. For a while enemy Order of Battle dispositions were unknown except for the Remagen Bridgehead area.

During the 83d Infantry Division's "Wacht Am Rhine" enemy Order of Battle in the Dusseldorf area was clarified to a considerable extent by careful interrogation of deserters who succeeded in getting across the river. They disclosed the interesting information that 183 Volksgrenadier Division was on the East bank of the Rhine in the vicinity of Dusseldorf. This division was composed of 330 and 351 Volksgrenadier Regiments, the 343 Volksgrenadier Regiment ostensibly having been dissolved. The 330 Volksgrenadier Regiment, in turn, consisted of two battalions and probably a 13 and 14 company. The units then composing the 330 Volksgrenadier Regiment had drawn their personnel from replacement - training and convalescent units and were thrown into the organization in the vicinity of Mettmann and Wulfrath, East of Dusseldorf. The personnel, formerly belonging to the two units of the 183 Volksgrenadier Division, had been wiped out on the West banks of the Rhine River while trying to maintain a bridgehead for the withdrawal of the bulk of the German forces. In short, PWs asserted that the 183 Volksgrenadier Division was composed of entirely new personnel than those which had been contacted by our forces in their drive to the West banks of the Rhine River. PWs further stated that 176 Volksgrenadier Division was South of 183 Volksgrenadier Division (in Dusseldorf) and that 338 Volksgrenadier Division was South of Dusseldorf. In addition, a captured document indicated a large group of low caliber Landesschutzen and reserve replacement battalions of 406 and 476 Mobilization Divisions in the Ruhr area.

There were no indications of the presence of Panzer divisions on the East bank of the Rhine River in our sector, but it was known that 116 Panzer, 15 Panzer Grenadier and 130 Panzer Lehr Divisions were somewhere North of Dusseldorf since they had extricated themselves from the Wesel Bridgehead only a short time before.

The development of the Remagen "magnet" clarified enemy Order of Battle of the entire western front. By the middle of the period XIX Corps was able to give the following picture of enemy dispositions, South to North, from Cologne to Emmerich: 363 Division, 59 Division, 338 Division, 176 Division, 183 Division, 2 Parachute Division, 8 Parachute Division, 130 Division, 7 Parachute Division, and 6 Parachute Division with 190 and 84 Divisions fitting into the local reserve picture between Duisburg and Emmerich. As mobile reserves for the northern front 15 Panzer Grenadier and 116 Panzer Division were listed.

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The attack by Twenty First Army Group at the end of the period verified in considerable detail the picture of enemy dispositions as given above. 83d Infantry Division attacked along the northern banks of the Lippe Canal at the end of the period, capturing a mounting number of PWs primarily from the many units of the Wehrkreis VI replacement and training system. The divisional units, which initially faced the attack of XIX Corps along the northern banks of the Lippe Canal, were considered destroyed.

Part Two

List of PWs Captured and Units to Which They Belong

Infantry:

| | |
|-----------------------|------------|
| 338 Inf Div | 54 |
| 59 Inf Div | 8 |
| 183 Inf Div | 7 |
| 476 Mob Div | |
| 536 Repl and Tng Regt | |
| 453 Repl and Tng Bn | 135 |
| 454 Repl and Tng Bn | 168 |
| IV Fortress Regt | 102 |
| 466 Mob Div | |
| 18 Repl and Tng Bn | 198 |
| 1074 Security Bn | 80 |
| 545 Repl and Tng Bn | 4 |
| 492 Home Guard Bn | 3 |
| | <u>759</u> |

Artillery:

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| 246 Volks Arty Corps | 1 |
| 388 Volks Arty Corps | 1 |
| 766 Volks Arty Corps | 2 |
| 130 Pz Arty Regt (Pz Lehr Div) | 1 |
| 33 Arty Regt (15 Pz Gren Div) | 1 |
| 1534 Fortress Arty Bn | 1 |
| 503 Arty Bn | 1 |
| 1513 Fortress Arty Bn | 62 |
| | <u>70</u> |

Pz or Pz Gren:

| | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| 130 Pz Lehr Div | |
| Escort Co | 37 |
| 901 Pz Gren Regt | 1 |
| 902 Pz Gren Regt | 4 |
| 11 Pz Div | |
| 11 Pz Rcn Bn | 1 |
| 110 Pz Gren Regt | 8 |
| 111 Pz Gren Regt | 9 |
| 116 Pz Div | 1 |
| 1203 Panther Turm Co | 1 |
| | <u>62</u> |

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Engineer:

| | | |
|-------------------------|----------|-----|
| 125 Constr Bn | 87 | |
| 22 "B" Constr Bn | 8 | |
| 26 Engr Bn (26 Inf Div) | 6 | |
| 756 Engr Bn (GHQ) | <u>3</u> | 104 |

Anti Tank:

| | | |
|----------------------|----------|----|
| 688 TD Bn | 22 | |
| XIV Fortress AT Bn | 4 | |
| 61 TD Bn (11 Pz Div) | <u>1</u> | 27 |

Signal:

| | | |
|-------------------|----------|---|
| 32 A Air Sig Regt | 7 | |
| 309 GHQ Sig Bn | <u>2</u> | 9 |

Anti Aircraft:

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------|-----|
| 141 Flaksturm Regt (mtz) | 119 | |
| 151 AA Bn | 8 | |
| 404 AA Bn | 3 | |
| 8 Flak Regt | 2 | |
| 31 AA Bn | 3 | |
| 250 AA Bn | 1 | |
| 277 AA Bn | 12 | |
| 377 AA Bn | 1 | |
| 401 AA Bn | 2 | |
| 503 AA Bn | 1 | |
| 680 AA Bn | 6 | |
| 826 AA Bn | 34 | |
| 941 AA Bn | <u>3</u> | 195 |

Miscellaneous:

| | |
|----------------------------|----|
| 31 Sacke Co | 10 |
| I Police Bn | 62 |
| 6 Home Guard Police Bn | 62 |
| Grevenbroich Police | 3 |
| Erkelenz Police | 1 |
| 505 Security Guard Co | 1 |
| 15th Army Hq Guard Co | 4 |
| Dusseldorf Air Raid Police | 20 |
| Neuss Air Raid Police | 22 |
| Luftwaffe Pilot | 1 |
| Neuss Military Hospital | 5 |
| Dusseldorf Med Bn (A/C) | 3 |
| Dusseldorf Med Bn (Army) | 4 |
| Customs Officials | 19 |
| *Italians | 60 |
| *Russians | 53 |
| *Poles | 29 |
| *French | 26 |

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| | |
|--|------------|
| *Dutch | 14 |
| *Yugoslavs | 3 |
| Volksturm | 97 |
| Former Members of Wehrmacht (CIC Screening) | 56 |
| Stragglers | <u>29</u> |
| | <u>604</u> |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Total PWs Processed..... | 1830 |
| PWs taken last day of period and not included in above tabulation..... | 38 |
| PWs through Medical channels not processed..... | <u>113</u> |

GRAND TOTAL 1981

* All non-Germans were members of the Wehrmacht.

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