

SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS

First U.S. Army

1-31 October 1944

Prepared by G-3



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## GENERAL ADJUSTMENTS



Developments in the British zone of action were hampered by enemy resistance, water courses on the terrain difficult to cross, and the failure of the use of the First Airborne Army to free our advance on that flank. The approach of the Seventh U.S. Army toward the BELFORT Gap on the south and areas to the north thereof also had an effect upon our dispositions and plans. There was a tendency to concentrate First U.S. Army effort on the northern part of our front. Consequently there were certain changes in the army boundaries. The old northern Anglo-American boundary had run from just north of SITTARD almost due east above COLOGNE and the southern First-Third boundary had run northeast from south of TRIER to a point slightly south of KOBLENZ. This arrangement had placed COLOGNE directly in front of the advance of the XIX Corps, BONN in front of the advance of VII Corps and a long stretch of the RHINE in front of the narrowing zone of V Corps.

The shift of boundary lines farther toward the north was such as now to include DUSSELDORF in the zone of the XIX Corps, COLOGNE barely within the zone of the VII Corps, and BONN and REMAGEN in the zone of the V Corps. The right boundary of the army which had run through LUXEMBOURG--TRIER--KOBLENZ, was to be shifted to run from LONGUYON to ANDERNACH, closing V Corps up against the VII Corps boundary in such a manner that V Corps would be pinched out. However it was provided that V Corps would drive into and take over the southern portion of VII Corps zone, largely covered only by cavalry reconnaissance and a new boundary between VII and V Corps would reach the RHINE between COLOGNE and BONN. BONN would become the objective of V Corps, just as COLOGNE and DUSSELDORF would become the objectives of VII and XIX Corps respectively.

These changes were made as the month commenced.

Allocations of major combat units of the First U.S. Army as the month opened may be summarized as indicated in the Order of

Battle dated 27 September 1944, as follows:



XIX Corps

29th Inf Div  
30th Inf Div  
2d Armd Div  
7th Armd Div

VII Corps

1st Inf Div  
9th Inf Div  
3rd Armd Div

V Corps

4th Inf Div  
28th Inf Div  
5th Armd Div

THE AACHEN SITUATION

It will be recalled that the 1st Division in the VII Corps was by 13 September closely approaching AACHEN. The XIX Corps on its left (north) was at that time not yet completely up and in line. The 3rd Armored Division on its right and the 9th Division had made some slight penetrations of the forest of ROTGEN. By 24 September the 1st Division had pressed in more closely against AACHEN so as almost to form a semicircle to the south below it; the 3rd Armored Division and the 9th Division had pushed slowly through the STOLBERG area and the wooded slopes of the ROTGEN forest in what began to appear like an envelopment of AACHEN from its east and rear. These two divisions were, however, fighting in what was quite obviously readily defensible terrain. Prospects of substantial and rapid advances in this part of the area were slight. To the north, however, the 30th Division had moved forward almost to the line of the WURM River, and was facing east above AACHEN. Army orders issued at this time on the basis of this situation therefore contemplated a drive to the east by the XIX Corps to cut the AACHEN--COLOGNE Road. The last few days of September had been taken up with readjustments in order to put these orders into effect.

Arrived from the conquest of BREST late in September and assembling in the VALKENBURG--GULPEN area, the 29th Division took over the northern flank of the XIX Corps, freeing the 2d Armored Division for the eastward attack, and itself made advances northeast above GEILENKIRCHEN.

The drive northeast by VII Corps to objectives on the corps boundary planned in September was temporarily abandoned. The 1st Division in the VII Corps was to cling to the areas it had taken to the east of AACHEN, to mop up those areas, to push in against

AACHEN from the east and southeast, and to move against the VERLAUTENHEIDE--HAAREN area and the critical enemy supply route on the AACHEN--COLOGNE Road so as to make contact with the XIX Corps effort from the north at the inter-corps boundary. It would be unnecessarily costly to attempt to take AACHEN by direct attack.

Orders of the XIX Corps for this operation, issued 28 September, directed a movement to the east (south of GEILENKIRCHEN) by the 30th Division. That division was to be passed through by the 2d Armored Division moving toward the line of the ROER River between LINICH and JULICH. Then a new effort by the 30th Division directly to the south and at right angles to its original drive was to be made to secure an objective on the corps boundary to include the high ground between ALSDORF and WURBELEN.

Although issued in September, these orders took effect in October.

There was minor aggressive activity on other portions of the First U.S. Army front during the first two weeks in October, and there were re-adjustments of boundaries and changes in dispositions made in accordance with the shifts in boundary lines described in the early paragraphs of this report above. Most of the activity during this early October period was, however, in the AACHEN area. It was stated in the report for the month of September that our principal problem was whether or not we would be able to exert the pressure from the middle of that month onward to drive in the enemy's scratch reinforcements before he could bring up stronger and better troops. We had not been able to do this. His prepared positions were too strong. He had been able to shift troops from other fronts to resist us. The supply services of the First U.S. Army achieved remarkable results in bringing forward ammunition, gasoline, and supplies of all sorts, but the opposing forces were such and the terrain was such that it was found necessary to confine our efforts to the AACHEN area largely with the troops already there. This necessity is reflected in the attack order already mentioned as issued by XIX Corps on 28 September for execution as early in October as weather would permit of substantial air support on the initial objectives north of ALSDORF.



On 1 October V Corps turned over its old zone of action to VIII Corps of the Ninth Army and relieved the 4th Cavalry Group which had been guarding the frontier south of MONSCHAU. On 8 October the 7th Armored Division and the Belgian 1st Brigade, which had been operating generally north of SITTARD along the line of the MEUSE, were released by XIX Corps to the Second British Army, and the Anglo-American boundary was restored to its previous practically direct line from HASSELT through SITTARD to the north edge of DUSSELDORF. During the first two weeks of October, the 9th Division was active locally, attacked on the 6th, made limited advances on the 8th, met heavy resistance on the 9th, and was subjected to several local enemy reactions in the mountainous wooded area in which it was operating. In general, however, it can be stated that activities on other parts of the line were principally local in effect and that major effort and action took place in the AACHEN area.

#### THE ATTACK ON AACHEN

The 116th Infantry was placed in XIX Corps reserve on 1 October and some of its elements took over the protection of the corps right flank through the marshy area northwest of AACHEN. On 2 October at 1055 hours the 30th Division jumped off, and crossed the branch of the WURM River to the immediate front within the first hour, inspite of strong resistance. A battalion of the 117th Infantry was within a mile of UBACH by night, and the 119th Infantry on the right was approaching MT HERBACH. On 3 October the 117th Infantry was in the center of UBACH by noon and by night was on a northwest-southeast line on a front of 1½ miles through UBACH; the 2d Armored Division had closed up in rear of these units and was on the northeastern edge of UBACH that day. The 119th Infantry had not made very substantial advances. The 1st Division met enemy resistance in the form of a counterattack during the same day. On 4 October the 30th Division attacked at 0700 hours without making much progress, the enemy attacked with tanks at MT HERBACH but was repulsed, and the 2d Armored Division

began leap-frogging the 30th Division toward the east at 1000 hours

On 5 October the 2d Armored Division thrust northeast to BEGGENDORF, but with its left flank at PRELENBERG on the WURM River its front extended--refused to its left--generally south of GEILENKIRCHEN, and the next day it occupied an arc PRELENBERG--WAURICHEN--BEGGENDORF. On the 5th the 117th had struck to the south and was west of MT HERBACH facing south the following day. The 119th was at MT HERBACH and southwest thereof. The 120th, which had relieved the 116th facing HOLZ and had advanced almost 4 kilometers on the 4th, had reached HOLZ on the 5th and was being relieved on the 6th by the 116th to free it to take part in a southward effort later.

On 7 October the drive to the south acquired momentum. While the 2d Armored Division was holding the line south of GEILENKIRCHEN and occupying BEGGENDORF and BAESWEILER, the 117th Infantry went almost two miles south to the outskirts of ALSDORF against light resistance.

The move on AACHEN from the north may be said to have been now well underway. On 8 October the 117th Infantry moved 1500 yards and was south of ALSDORF, refused so as to protect its left flank. The 120th Infantry was into NOPPENBERG. The 119th was 600 yards south of AFDEN by noon and almost a mile farther advanced by night. The 2d Battalion of the 116th Infantry was attached to the 2d Armored Division to move to ALSDORF for later employment. On the same day the 1st Division attacked north beyond EILENDORF and above VERLAUTENHEIDE and was only about a mile from the main AACHEN--COLOGNE Road, with a battalion of the 26th Infantry advancing on its left across the railroad. The strongly fortified key village of VERLAUTENHEIDE was taken after an 800 yard advance in the dark between 0400 and 0620.

On 9 October quick pressure was applied from both directions against the exit routes from the northeast of AACHEN. BARDENBERG fell to the 119th Infantry; the 117th Infantry advanced 2000 yards south of SCHAUFENBERG with the 2d Armored Division; and the 18th Infantry of the 1st Division attacking from the south at 1730 hours

progressed a thousand yards against stiff resistance to cut south of WURSELEN, the second main northeast road out of AACHEN. On 10 October there was much consolidation and mopping up to be done. The 18th Infantry had to meet counterattacks and fight in three directions; there was pressure by the 26th Infantry, and there was street fighting in HAAREN on its left rear. The 18th Infantry, however, was on high ground north of HAAREN and northeast of VERLAUTENHEIDE dominating the exits from AACHEN. These hills, notably Hill 231, were strongly held and required slow and difficult cleaning up. On 11 and 12 October all front line units were in vigorous defensive action, cleaning up captured ground, and resisting armored counterattacks which were driven at them from the northeast, while the 26th Infantry on 12 October pushed in against the north edge of AACHEN and the 119th Infantry advanced almost to WURSELEN.

On 13 October the 116th Infantry attacked south through the 119th Infantry on a broad front, reached the south edge of WURSELEN with its right flank on the high ground west of the WURM River in the direction of RICHTERICH. On the same day units of the 26th Infantry drove west well into the edges of the city of AACHEN itself.

Some measure of the aerial cooperation received in these efforts to batter down the resistance of the defenders of AACHEN may be indicated by the tonnages of bombs dropped on that city -- already battered through several years of war -- during this three day period. Mostly by planes of the IX P.A.C., the following were the tonnages:

11 Oct	62.25 tons
12 Oct	99.00 tons
13 Oct	11.50 tons



On 14 October the 116th Infantry (30th Division) was still in position south of WURSELEN and the 26th Infantry (1st Division) continued pushing into AACHEN in house to house fighting. On 15 October the 116th continued its advance and the 26th continued its mopping up, fighting into the city. On 16 October initial



contact was made between the units of the two corps to the northeast of the city, and the ring was closed. The enemy nevertheless on this date counterattacked strongly from the northeast in considerable strength, but was checked by our liberal use of air and 8 inch and 240mm howitzer fire. The 119th Infantry had been thrust down so that it formed the right flank of the attacking wedge of the 30th Division, while the 116th Infantry formed the left flank.

Initial contact at first was light, but it was strengthened on succeeding days in conjunction with moves to beat off armored thrusts made by the enemy from the east. On 17 October defensive positions were maintained as the 26th Infantry continued house to house fighting to close in on and clean up AACHEN. On 18 October the 18th Infantry was required to repulse two enemy infantry and tank counterattacks and to recapture pillboxes temporarily lost to the enemy. On 19 October liberal use of our artillery checked enemy thrusts, damaged his armor, and was effective in counter-battery work against his artillery attempting coordinated fires. The later afternoon sun shining low and through under the clouds was in the enemy's eyes and greatly facilitated the work of our gunners and of our artillery observation planes.

On 20 October AACHEN was almost completely occupied by units of the 1st Division. On 21 October about noon at ~~AACHEN~~ the German Commander of the remaining units in the city formally surrendered, and pockets of resistance were mopped up by 1615 hours.

#### REGROUPING FOR FURTHER ADVANCE

From 16 October onwards, after initial contact had been made northeast of AACHEN by units of VII and XIX Corps and in the course of protecting that contact against enemy counterattacks, a definite front had been made to the east preparatory to further movements in that direction. Principal enemy blows against that front had been, and would continue to be, aimed at the 18th Infantry of the 1st Division.

On 22 October the first fully coordinated steps were taken for the regrouping and reorganization in preparation for future power



drives into the lower reaches of the RHINELAND. At noon on that date Ninth Army Headquarters relinquished its control of the zone on the right (south) and took over the zone of XIX Corps on the left (north) of the First U.S. Army. XIX Corps with attached units in their present position passed to the control of the Ninth Army. The previous boundary between the VII and XIX Corps became the new northern boundary for the First Army, between the First and Ninth Armies. At the same time the VIII Corps, which had been on the south and right of the First U.S. Army, passed to the control of the First Army with units in their current positions consisting of the 2d, 8th, and 83rd Infantry Divisions, the 9th Armored Division, and attached units. The previous boundary between the Ninth and Third Armies became the new southern boundary of the First U.S. Army, separating it from the Third Army, and the previous First--Ninth interboundary on the south remained as boundary between V and VIII Corps. This reallocation of the control of zones of action generally gave the First U.S. Army an exceptionally broad front, approximating something over 60 miles as the crow flies.

The front of the First U.S. Army from this time onwards and the disposition of its front line elements may be described as follows, units being designated from north to south:

VII Corps: 1st Division from the neighborhood of WURSELEN south to a point on the main highway northeast of AACHEN, thence generally east above HEEREN to STOLBERG.

3rd Armored Division east from STOLBERG through MAUSBACH generally facing north.

The 9th Division extending south through the HURTGEN and ROTGEN Forests from SCHEVENHUTTE, west of LAMMERSDORF facing generally east.

The 4th Cavalry Group from below LAMMERSDORF in the neighborhood of MONSCHAU on the corps south boundary.

The front of this corps, a little less than 20 miles in a straight line, was bent so that its actual front was nearer 30. Most of the power of this corps was concentrated on the northern



half of this front where the 1st Division had been engaged with the assistance of the 30th Division in fighting into AACHEN and in resisting counterattacks from the east. As distinct from the relatively open country where this action was going on, the 9th Division had been engaged in many localized actions in thick mountainous country in what was approximately the center of the corps zone of action. To the south from near LAMMERSDORF down to MONSCHAU, the front was covered lightly with patrols and defended roadblocks.

V Corps: From MONSCHAU inclusive through HOFEN and ALZEN to the edge of the MONSCHAU Forest the 5th Armored Division had patrols covering the front.

Patrols of the 102d Cavalry Group covered the border through the wooded area for approximately 5 miles thereafter in a southeasterly direction.

Units of the 28th Division south from the clearings northeast of RAMSCHEID were along the frontier on the edge of the woods to a point approximately west of NEUNOF. This front was approximately 5 miles, ran from north to south, and faced almost directly east.

The 4th Division had a narrow front of approximately 2 miles through the BUCHHOLZ Forest, refused back however toward LOSHEIM, just across the corps boundary.

The front of the V Corps ran through high and heavily wooded country, and south of it practically followed the frontier boundary line. The major strength of the corps stood in the positions on the southern half of this zone, occupied by the 28th and 4th Infantry Divisions.

VIII Corps: The 2d Division held the frontier from the vicinity of LOSHEIM running slightly east or south across the valley of the OUR River and into the SCHNEE EIFEL wooded mountain line to a point west of OLZHEIM, thence southwest along the forward edge of the SCHNEE EIFEL toward HONTHIEM, thence west to BLEIALF and covered the open area to the southwest with patrols, except where units of

the 23rd Infantry stood between HABSCHHEID and KESFELD.

The 8th Infantry Division occupied a front of approximately 20 miles following the frontier along the line of the OUR River from the neighborhood of SEVENIG to the large bend northwest of ECHTERNACH, covering this front largely with extended patrols in position west of the river except on the south flank where the 121st Infantry was well concentrated above and below the WALLENDORF crossing and backed up by the 9th Armored Division in positions southwest of DIEKIRCH.

The 83rd Division occupied defensive positions from the bend of the OUR River northwest of ECHTERNACH to the junction of that stream with the MOSELLE and along the west bank of the MOSELLE to the Third Army boundary at the lower southeast point of LUXEMBOURG, south of REMICH and northeast of THIONVILLE, with its units disposed in extended positions approximating 5 miles per infantry battalion. The enemy had a small bridgehead at ECHTERNACH.

This VIII Corps front was exceptionally wide. It was faced with a river line for approximately three-quarters of the distance from flank to flank, and this river line being on the frontier was prepared for defense as part of the general SIEGFRIED position. Terrain to the front, in this part of the world called mountainous, was still somewhat open and not impassable. Its frequent forestation, its occasional excellent observation, its deep valleys, and its tortuous road nets made it however difficult fighting country unless struck in strength. That strength we did not have on that front.

#### CLOSING SITUATION

It should be noted, in the description of the V Corps dispositions somewhat above, that the 4th Division had for a time been occupying a very narrow front, and that the 28th Division had not been very actively engaged.

In the VII Corps zone the 1st Division was deeply involved in the AACHEN situation. The 9th Division although not so deeply involved had been through a period of difficult fighting for some time.



It was, therefore, arranged that the 4th Division should take over the front held by the 28th Division in the zone of the V Corps, and a separated unit of the 110th Infantry (28th Division) should be relieved between MONSCHAU and ALZEN by the 5th Armored Division already in position on the right of that front. The 28th Division was to move to relieve the 9th Division in the zone of the VII Corps except for a regiment of the 9th Division which was attached to the 3rd Armored Division. A temporary boundary would be established between V and VII Corps north of the previous and permanent boundary so as to include the major portion of the front on which the 9th Division had been engaged. The 9th Division was to be withdrawn for rehabilitation and training, and the 28th Division would participate in any local advances to readjust the line projected for that neighborhood. Control was left in the hands of the V Corps at this point so that that division might continue to operate under familiar command. Boundaries between V and VII Corps were in detail to be as follows:

Permanent boundary: Effective 1200A 26 Oct.: No change to K-7818 - EUPEN (incl V Corps) - LAMMERSDORF (incl VII Corps) - F-010298 (incl VII Corps) - thence along stream to F-050328 (incl V Corps) - OBERMAUBACH (incl VII Corps) - thence along RR to KREUZAU (F-1239) (incl VII Corps) - GLADBACH (F-2341) (incl V Corps) - BLIESHEIM (F-3543) (incl V Corps) - BRUHL (F-4248) (incl VII Corps) - F-4649 (incl VII Corps).

Temporary boundary: (Effective 1200A 25 Oct.): EUPEN (incl V Corps) - ROTF (K-9233) (incl V Corps) ZWEIFALL (K-9537) (incl VII Corps) - OBERMAUBACH (F-0936) (incl V Corps).  
NOTE: Responsibility, other than tactical control, for area between new permanent boundary and temporary boundary will remain under VII Corps.

The changes spoken of above took place during the closing days of the month. A regiment of the 4th Division relieved two regiments of the 28th Division as planned and the 5th Armored Division took over the defense of the zone as far as MONSCHAU. The 28th Division assembled in its rear area on 23 October and prepared to move to an assembly position in the woods slightly north of the town of ROTGEN. On 25 October the 28th Division commenced the relief of the 9th Division and assumed responsibility for the front at 1530 on 28 October, taking over from and relieving the last units of the 9th Division on 27 October. In the meanwhile the 9th Division on



25 October came under control of V Corps, and commenced movement to CAMP ELSENBOERN, less the 47th Infantry which remained attached to the 3rd Armored Division. On 27 October the 9th Division, less the detachment mentioned above, was completely assembled and engaged in rehabilitation and training. Also the 4th Division in V Corps was made available to the VII Corps on call.

On 25 October the temporary boundary between V and VII Corps was declared effective at noon and on 28 October there were adjustments made in the boundary between the First Army and the Third Army on the south.

While these changes in disposition were going on there was little major activity. Certain areas in WURZELN northeast of AACHEN were cleared on 22 October. Local attacks mounted by the 1st Division to a limited objective northeast of HAAREN, on 24 October, were not successful and units returned to their former positions. There were small demonstrations, active patrolling operations, and considerable air and artillery activity at various portions of the front, mostly in the neighborhood of AACHEN, but these were without substantial result.

In the V Corps zone the 28th Division was preparing its attack. In the VII Corps zone the front was lightly held.

Allocations of major combat units at the close of the month may be summarized as indicated in the Order of Battle dated 27 October 1944 as follows:

<u>VII Corps</u>	<u>V Corps</u>	<u>VIII Corps</u>
47th RCT	9th Inf Div (-47 RCT)	2d Inf Div
1st Inf Div	4th Inf Div	8th Inf Div
3rd Armd Div	28th Inf Div	9th Armd Div
	5th Armd Div	83rd Inf Div

For the future operations army boundaries were established at the end of the month as follows:

Between Ninth and First Armies: TAVIERS (K-0127) - GRAND AXHE (K-2234) - VIVEGNIS (K-5235) - NEUFCHATEAU (K-6237) - TEUVEN (K-6741) - K-8647 - KINZWEILER (K-9451) (all inclusive to First Army) - ALTDORF (F-0354) - HAMBACH (F-0956) - ELSDORF (F-1860) (all inclusive to Ninth Army) - QUADRATH (F-2661) (inclusive to First Army) - PULHEIM (F-3467) - VOLKOBEN (F-4069) - MERREMICH (F-4570) (all inclusive to Ninth Army).

Between First and Third Armies: STENAY (P-1502) - LONGUYON (U-4596) - ESCH (P-7302) - BIERCK (L-0094) - SAARBURG (L-1413) (all inclusive to Third Army) - TRIER (L-2029) - TRARBACH (L-5550) - KOBLENZ (L-8995) (all inclusive to First Army).



COMMENTS

ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONS

It will be noted from the preceding summary, as has already been briefly indicated above, that the principal activities of the First U.S. Army during the month of October were devoted to the neighborhood of AACHEN. Although during the month of August 12th Army Group had granted what practically amounted to permission to delay further tactical advance until the critical supply situation had been remedied, the First U.S. Army had not limited its activities on account of any shortage of supply. It moved, but it moved supplies too. By 1 October supply installations had been pushed well forward, and dumps were being built up within reasonably close proximity to the front line. It is true that there were instances of shortages, as on the occasion when a corps ordered an armored division to move as far forward as gasoline supply would permit. But in general supplies were pushed well up. If it is felt that our advance was delayed, it is only fair to state that it was delayed by enemy action. His defenses along the frontier, although not fully manned and although in places manned by relatively inferior troops, were sufficient to check any substantial forward movement at a rapid pace with the forces at our disposal on our extremely extended front. The early surrender of a wide portion of our front to the VIII Corps and the Third Army (later taken over temporarily by the Ninth Army) did for a time narrow our front. However, the shift of the XIX Corps to the Ninth Army on our left and the resumption of control over the VIII Corps on our right again gave the First U. S. Army an extremely broad front. It is true that this front covered large spaces of terrain not suitable for offensive fighting. It was terrain easily defended by an enemy and it would have been profitless for us to have thrown strength into the mountainous area of the ARDENNES. Similarly, the enemy realized the characteristics of that terrain and he, himself, did not accumulate substantial strength

against us there. Not planning an offensive against us in that region, he had sufficiently weak strength opposed to us to permit our holding large portions of our line very lightly ourselves.

Even this exercise of economy in troops on those portions of our line did not give us sufficient force for decisive action against him on other portions of the line. In the first place, the enemy knew very well the difficulties of the terrain west of the RHINE River from BONN to KOBLENZ. It was perfectly apparent to the German commander that the maneuver area for decisive action lay in the neighborhood of and north of the line from COLOGNE to AACHEN. He resisted us tenaciously in that area from well prepared defenses. Some of his best troops held on to the last in certain positions. Early in October we had thought to pinch off AACHEN by a stroke eastwards between GEILENKIRCHEN and AACHEN. It, however, became apparent that we did not have power enough for that stroke. There is no intention of making excuses for lack of success, but it is worthwhile pointing out that the operations have demonstrated, as was pointed out in a previous report of the First U.S. Army, that power is necessary as well as mobility. To compare the operation north of AACHEN with the breakthrough at ST LO, we can find a front of approximately the same size struck by less air bombardment than was landed along the ST LO--PARIS Road, and an armored division and one infantry division on our front north of AACHEN as compared to three infantry divisions in the assault wave at ST LO, followed up by a breakthrough force of two armored divisions and one highly motorized division.

The air strike, through clouds, was not as effective as at ST LO. The infantry division making the first thrust was not able to break through as far and as cleanly, for there was simply not enough infantry available. Then the single armored division had actually to fight for the ground on which it was to deploy and used up some of its strength in that fighting. The area was thick with pillboxes which had to be reduced. We were fighting in the SIEGFRIED Line itself. Next, if we accept the fact that the



initial eastward thrust would have difficulty in itself reaching through to LINNICH and JULICH, we find it was checked in order to divert strength to assist the infantry division to drive through pillboxes and defended towns southwards against the AACHEN exits. All of the above is an explanation of what happened. If there is any lesson to be learned from this operation, it is the lesson, previously pointed out in First Army reports, that power is needed for power blows against a solidly emplaced enemy.

At the end of the month on our front there was evidence that the enemy had elements of two panzer divisions and also eight infantry divisions apparently in the front line, not to include several panzer divisions capable of intervening either on the British front to our left, the Ninth Army front on our immediate left, or on our front. He appeared throughout the month to be temporarily content with a relatively stabilized front and, except for local and somewhat fragmentary attacks (including armored attacks) in the neighborhood of AACHEN, to forego his established tactical practice of organizing immediate and heavy counterattacks. The enemy had been severely shaken by the allied success in FRANCE in rapidly overrunning his forces and capturing hundreds of thousands of his troops as prisoners. Whatever delay he could impose upon us from his defensive positions along the frontier he would wish to utilize to prepare for more serious and possibly decisive fighting later.

In spite of the fact that the preceding passages would seem to indicate a relative success on the part of the enemy during the month of October in imposing his general will upon us, it is not too much to say that the First U.S. Army retained the initiative on its front and accomplished a substantial result in closing out and securing a firm base on the AACHEN area front facing the COLOGNE plain. This action was truly preparation for future advance. Pressure upon the enemy in other theaters and enemy losses

in those theaters during the month of October was such as to give us confidence that he could not have prepared to defend the region of COLOGNE as well as we have prepared to attack it, or to have prepared his troops, vehicles, motor and ammunition supplies, and equipment, as well as our forces have been able to do. It is true that this section of this report should presumably be devoted to the subject of operations, but these considerations based upon enemy information and upon the supply situation (covered in a subsequent section of this report more thoroughly) have, of course, a determining effect upon our tactical decisions and operations. They have therefore been included here, although given in detail elsewhere.

A POINT OF TECHNIQUE

There is a rather interesting matter of technique in the procedure of speaking of front line units which has been developed in practice in the First Army and may be worthy of comment. As is well known, our service schools have for years been teaching that dispositions of troops on the front line should be indicated in field orders and in operations reports in order from right to left.

A somewhat different practice has grown up in the First U.S. Army since the invasion. Occasionally the old training in technique reasserts itself, but the tendency has grown to describe unit dispositions from left to right. This tendency began on the beachhead when Army headquarters came ashore with the 1st Division and V Corps. Contact was not established with VII Corps on the right or western beach for a little time and officers at Army headquarters tended to add to the information concerning V Corps that of the VII Corps in that order, that is, naming the units from left to right instead of from right to left. Similarly, in V Corps itself, the 1st Division was the first ashore with a Combat Team from the 29th Division attached to it. Then headquarters of the 29th Division went in on the right of the 1st Division, and it was natural, although not in accordance with training in technique, after stating more familiar information concerning the more familiar

units of the 1st Division, to add the information concerning the 29th Division. During the entire beachhead period headquarters was facing south, and it was natural to describe the front line positions of V and XIX Corps also facing the south in that order and then to add information concerning the VII Corps which was fighting over our right shoulder in the CHERBOURG Peninsula.

Then during August and September, when the drive to the east was under way, our front line formed somewhat of a north and south line. It was generally natural in looking at a map and in transcribing data from a map to start at the top of the map and work down towards the bottom of the map, as one reads a page in a book. The result has been that in many of the documents of the First Army a list of units appears in order down the page in the order in which the units stand on the map from top to bottom. This, of course, gives them, if we imagine ourselves facing the enemy, from left to right along the front instead of from right to left as the old school technique taught.

In the summary of operations in the After Action Reports of the First Army during the past few months neither of these rules has been strictly adhered to. It was often considered more desirable to give the first and more prominent position to units most prominently engaged. However, it may be said that the school training in technique has to a great extent broken down in practice on account of these purely physical writing and topographical considerations.

It may be worthwhile at this point to raise the question, if it might not be more desirable to establish as fixed technical procedure, the rule, of describing units from left to right rather than from right to left. If we say that units on the front line are 1st, 2d, and 3rd Divisions from right to left in that order, we have written those numerals on the page actually from left to right rather than from right to left as they stand on the ground. It would seem much more desirable to say that the front line units were the 3rd, 2d, 1st Divisions in that order from



left to right and then the numerals appear in the text in exactly the left to right positions which they occupy on the ground.

This practice could also be applied logically to the situation of the U.S. forces now fighting toward the East. As has already been indicated, if we should say that the major units of the First Army are advancing on GERMANY disposed along the front in the order VII, V, VIII Corps from left to right (north to south) or particularly if we tabulated the information in separate paragraphs, the successive paragraphs describing the positions of those corps would appear on a typed page from top to bottom in exactly the order in which they stand from top to bottom on the map, which is the normal order of scrutinizing a map or reading a page.

#### USE OF ARTILLERY



It will be recalled that the report of operations for the First U.S. Army for the month of October made special mention of an exceptional use of artillery units. By the opening of the month of October the extreme seriousness of the supply situation had been greatly alleviated by this use of artillery vehicles for transportation purposes. It had likewise become evident that a more stabilized situation would require a greater weight of artillery fire concentration in support on the front. Artillery of the First U.S. Army, therefore, during October returned to its more proper role. Indeed in certain stages of the operations during this month its employment was a major portion of our effort. In addition to rendering normal support the artillery with the Army was regrouped in preparation for both normal and coordinated attacks.

In the 2 October attack to complete the encirclement of the town of AACHEN, part of the artillery with both the VII and XIX Corps was attached to the divisions making the main effort. During this action, the heavy artillery of the 32d Field Artillery Brigade had the mission of supporting the fires of the XIX Corps with long range fires on communication and supply centers. The

infantry-artillery-air coordination effected during this operation involved a carefully prepared counterflak program designed to silence enemy antiaircraft artillery during the air bombardment phase, a counterbattery and long range interdiction preparation prior to the attack, planned supporting fires following H hour, and close liaison between corps and divisions in establishing successive "no fire lines".

One of the contributing factors in the final closing of the AACHEN gap on 16 October by the 1st and 30th Infantry Divisions, was the rapidity with which the field artillery neutralized enemy artillery positions and reacted to requests for close supporting fires on enemy strong points. The accurate location of enemy gun positions was attributed to the efficacy of the carefully sited sound bases of the 8th and 13th Field Artillery Observation Battalions.

Concurrent with the closing of the AACHEN gap, the 1st Infantry Division, supported by elements of the VII and XIX Corps Artillery, launched an attack to reduce the town of AACHEN itself. Self-propelled 155mm guns and tank destroyers were used extensively in the ensuing street fighting. Following the expiration of the ultimatum on the afternoon of 11 October, 12 battalions of light, medium and heavy artillery fired a total of 169 tons of ammunition into the city. The cessation of active enemy resistance in AACHEN on 21 October was due indeed, in no small part, to the continuous daily pounding by division and corps artillery.

The city of AACHEN and its defenders were badly shattered.

Although the phrase just above about "continuous daily pounding" is absolutely correct, it must not be permitted to give a false impression. German prisoners have constantly spoken with something approaching awe as to the accuracy and volume of our artillery fire. It is possible that their impression of awe may be due more to efficiency than to volume. We must not get the idea that our resources were unlimited.



The supply flow of ammunition was never such as to permit of spendthrift habits. Indeed, certain items were extremely critical. For example, although it is not artillery, the 81mm mortar was steadily considered short of ammunition in the 1st Division. Strict rationing had to be used on this item, even though that mortar was eminently suited for the terrain on which the October action took place. That division's commanding general felt that he had to control distribution of that type of ammunition personally, and its divisional artillery officer controlled the fire of these weapons and permitted shooting only on selected targets.



ORDER OF BATTLE - MAJOR UNITS  
First U.S. Army

27 September 1944

XIX Corps

29th Inf Div  
30th Inf Div  
2d Armd Div  
7th Armd Div

VII Corps

1st Inf Div  
9th Inf Div  
3rd Armd Div

V Corps

4th Inf Div  
28th Inf Div  
5th Armd Div



27 October 1944

VII Corps

47th RCT  
1st Inf Div  
3rd Armd Div

V Corps

9th Inf Div (-47 RCT)  
4th Inf Div  
28th Inf Div  
5th Armd Div

VIII Corps

2d Inf Div  
8th Inf Div  
9th Armd Div  
83rd Inf Div

HEADQUARTERS  
FIRST UNITED STATES ARMY  
Office of the Artillery Officer  
APO 230

17 November 1944

SUMMARY OF ARTILLERY OPERATIONS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

In addition to rendering normal support, the Artillery with the Army was regrouped during October 1944, in preparation for both local and coordinated attacks.

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For the Artillery Officer:



DEWEERE ARMSTRONG  
Colonel, Field Artillery  
Executive Officer



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