

#### IV. Lt. Col. J. Peiper --- Atrocity Trial Testimony.

He was convicted in 1946 as a participant in the MALMEDY, Belgium Massacres, 17-20 December 1944, and his 81-page direct testimony, plus the cross and redirect, explained some tactical operations of Combat Group Peiper. Because he was a defendant, his remarks need evaluation. They were more detailed in some respects than the three Peiper interviews possessed by the Foreign Studies Branch, OCMH, thus of probable value. The following extracts of the tactical data will be connected into as orderly a sequence as possible, but interrogation was not always chronological.

(Bibl. #4. Joachim Peiper, pp. 1885-2045.)

#### A. Direct Examination by Lt. Col. John S. Dwinell, Asst. Defense Counsel.

Regimental Conference, ~~1600~~ 141600 Dec. at CP in Blankenheim forest. --- Attending were Commanders: of 1st Pz Bn, Major Poetschke; 2d Pz Bn, Lt. Col. Von Westerhagen; 3d Bn, 2d Pz Regt (atohmt), Capt. Diefenthal; 2d Arty. Bn; AAA Bn; his Adjutant and Signal Off. The Divisional attack order was read. Then: "Subsequently I had a conference about purely tactical matters in which I explained that we had to make an attack in a terrain unsuitable for tanks, that the only chance of success depended upon speed, surprise, and relentless commitment of person and material and I explained the basic thought -- to form a point which consisted of the First Panzer Battalion, the Third Panzer Grenadier Battalion, Panzer Anti-Aircraft and Panzer Engineers, should be composed in such a manner that it should be suitable because of its speed, armor, and fire power, to solve all coming problems. This group should without regard advance, should not pay any attention to unimportant enemy goals nor booty nor prisoners of war, and the task of this group should be finished then if only one Panzer Model 4 were to reach the Meas without any inside. That was clear to me and I carried it through and I explained it that because of the very difficult terrain and because of the regrouping of the enemy this group should be entirely rubbed out and that it would then depend that the Kings Tiger Battalion would be sent behind in a closed, orderly march in order to, after the First Battalion were rubbed out, take over the heavy fighting itself. And that was according to my judgment the area of the Slopes of the Ardennes into the area of the Meas. That is, in other words, that the First Battalion received a very desperate task, which I explained very closely to the officers." Ammo. was to be used sparsely, because of supply. Had only one tankful of fuel in his tank, because "I could not figure on reinforcement and had to depend to supplement my vehicle by enemy fuel." As to the point, its decisive part was the march order. Bad, narrow roads would make an order of march change later, therefore the composition was carefully planned. Talked to Commanders for two hours about it. "The entire band of march which was under was about 25 kilometers long. Because of the fact that the broadcast was very limited, due to the bad terrain, I had to choose a place for myself almost in the center. If I wanted to have an essential point of inference." Divided column into section. Major Poetschke commanded the point, consisting of his 1st Pz Bn, the 3d Pz Gren. Bn, 9th Pz Engr. Co, and regtl. AAA Co.

Corps conference on 15th. Skorzeny discussed GREIF. Etc.  
Another Regimental conference on 15th, evening. Regt. order,  
largely based upon divisional, finished about midnight of 15th.

March began on 16th, "about 6:00 o'clock in the morning to 12:00 o'clock noon. I fell out with my group ~~xxx~~ at about 1600 hours." ~~By~~ the bad road conditions and the immense number of vehicles that was compressed in this area, together with the group of Skorzeny, which apparently had not had very much training, the traffic on the road proved to be of chaotic extent. Road jams prevented engineers from getting through to repair a blown up bridge. Entire arty. of 12th VG Div. "had to change positions to the front," and being horse-drawn, there was a terrible heap of Kings Tiger tanks on the road and four-legged mules." He and commanders personally directed traffic, "and since the bridge was not completed on time I had to have a detour built, by reason of which I could only start off with being twelve hours late."

First reached town was Losheim. He about 1700, in darkness. Had been taken by 12th V G Div. Traffic jam; "exceptionally dark night and the town was under American artillery fire."

Next town: "Contrary to my original orders according to which I was supposed to proceed along the main highway, I here received a radio order to take route by way of Lanzerath." Mine fields impeded. "To best of my recollection I therefore lost about three tanks and five half-tracks on the way from Losheim to Lanzerath." He arrived in Lanzerath about midnight, and having received a radio order to received the 3rd A/B Div., ordered its comdr. to prepare a bn. for attack along Lanzerath-Honsfeld road, as his flank ~~xxx~~ defense.

17th: About 0400 attacked with tanks, motorized inf. and foot inf. towards the forest. "Contrary to reports received from the Parachute troops the forest was freed of enemy troops." It was under severe arty. barrage. "At dawn of 17th we surprisingly penetrated Honsfeld." Questioned about combat conditions there: "An American reconnaissance unit was stationed at Honsfeld. The vehicles were standing in front of all the doors of all the houses in town and there were plenty of weapons around, particularly tank destroyers, but the troops were not at their weapons or in their vehicles, but were in the houses asleep." Hardly any fighting. First moving spearheads led by 1st Lt. Preuss merely shot at some houses "and the two ~~xxx~~ passed without any serious resistance." He was with the point. His own command group which was to march behind Poetschke's group remained "way behind" and he stayed with the point to take action more rapidly, to encourage troops, "and to evaluate the results of the reconnaissance performed by the unit Knittel and the Unit ~~xxx~~ Hardick, both of which were supposed to pass by me." The airborne bn, under a Major Taubert was left behind in Honsfeld, due to orders misunderstanding.

Beyond Honsfeld: Point filled in approx. one kilometer west of Honsfeld. Peiper stopped; he was in Poetschke's tank or Diefenthal's vehicle, and in the lead. Continued on the road he had originally planned, but testimony explained: "I first had had the orders to march to Hoppenbach from Honsfeld; on account of the obviously poor road conditions I decided to go by way of Buellingen. Buellingen itself was assigned to the Division Hitler Youth by the operational order. Since I heard the noise of combat which was due to the division Hitler Youth comparatively far to the rear and up northeast, I thought it might be possible to pass through the town of Buellingen without causing a traffic jam together with the Hitler Youth Division." Continued along the main road to Buellingen. Airdrome on left, just outside of Buellingen, at which were 12-13 American liaison planes, propellers moving, ready for take-off. Crews surprised, hid in hedgrows, fired upon Peiper's force. Fire from town also. Point vehicles strafed with MG and arty. destroying planes. Time about 2100 or 2130 on 17th. He went into Buellingen about 2130. Captured a fuel dump, vehicles left Buellingen at full speed in order of refueling, along a road to the southwest. American arty. speeded the departure movements.

About three kilometers from Buellingen, at a fork, Peiper ordered a short break, so column could close up. Point vehicle, 1st Lt. Preuss, lost contact with rest of column because he continued along the road Peiper originally ordered him on, namely southwest. "But since down here in the next town there was one other side and those were particular--points of particular danger for us, I decided at this road fork to choose the road into Moderscheid by way of the forest, instead, particularly since this resulted in time saving and was a short cut and also took us away from an unexpected direction,"

toward

Went from Moderscheid to Schoppen, then to Onderval, to Thirimont, about noon on 18th. He indicated his whole Command Group was not with him, and the identity of the force was not clear from testimony, but he rode Diefenthal's vehicle at least some between Onderval and Thirimont. Stopped jeep driver who was to repair a telephone line, and learned that the American troops had given up Malmedy and were retreating in a westerly and southwesterly direction." No combat at his location. But, "at about that time I suddenly heard my cannons and machine guns open fire. I, therefore, realized that the point had hit the main road from Malmedy to Petit Thier and, since at that moment I was completely along with the jeep driver, I drove off to the point in the jeep. The column behind me was detached since the piece of road between this road fork and Moderscheid was exceptionally difficult." About here, a road a kilometer east of Beugnez, he met his "armored spearhead."

~~They were~~

"About five tanks and about the same number of half tracks were standing in front of me and they were shooting with all weapons at their disposal in a southwesterly direction at the road over here, at a range of about 500 meters." This was the road leading south from the Malmedy Cross Roads. This was about 1300 or 1330 on 17th. He personally saw an American truck convoy. Ordered a cease fire several times, and in about two minutes was understood by units. Annoyed at having his armored spearhead held up, so much time already being lost. Also, "I was annoyed at having these beautiful trucks, which we needed so badly, all shot up." Ordered forces to drive on "at a great

Speed." Had Major Poetschke radio Division enemy was leaving Malmedy, retreating toward south and southwest, and "we had reached the main road south of Malmedy." Mounted Diefenthal's veh, and followed the others already moving towards the Cross Roads. Road leading south from Malmedy Cross Roads, from beginning of the forest was pretty well blocked by American vehicles." Panther pushed them off road.

He reached Cross Roads about 1330, riding in Diefenthal's vehicle. Testimony about Crossroads was detailed, mainly about atrocity.

He drove into Ligneville, arriving shortly before 1400, in Diefenthal's vehicle. Ordered Diefenthal to clean out town with his Grenadier troops. A tank knocked out a Sherman. In town about 45 minutes. Burning Ammo exploding. He bandaged Lt. Fischer, Adj. of 1st Pz. Poetschke arrived on foot. "I was also informed that a high echelon American CP had been located in the hotel here which according to the testimony of the innkeeper of the restaurant already had been disturbed at their dinner. A strong tank column was also supposed to be immediately toward our front. Changed march order of spearhead, bringing 1st Pz. Co. from rear to take over spearhead. Continued to Stavelot.

Estimated arrival there about 2000 or 2100 on 17th. "I had at once attempted to take the town in one rapid attack. That, however, proved impossible because all our Infantry Troop which were available were not strong enough and because the tanks had no chance to come into action along the street. The terrain was extraordinarily unfavorable, sloped down very much towards the left, and a hair pin curve was right outside of town so that everybody passing by this curve was knocked out by several American tanks and tank destroyers which were located behind road blocks at the edge of town. My own attacking Infantry remained at edge of town and suffered severe casualties and had to dig in." Officers with him: Poetschke, Diefenthal, Capt. Nueske, Capt. B. Gruhle and an officer from the Skorzeny group. Took Stavelot in morning of 18th. "When we penetrated Stavelot too many civilians shot at us from the windows and openings in the roofs. The only goal that I was looking for was the bridge near Trois Ponts. I therefore had no time to spend on those civilians and I continued driving on although I knew that the resistance in this town had not been decisively broken." Established an aid station for many wounded, number not specified. Left behind were ~~xxx~~ CO of 1st Co., and Co of 11th Pz Gren. Co., but latter escaped at night. "In the meantime violent resistance had been reopened in town consisting of newly arrived American soldiers and civilians. With the help of a few tanks of mine which followed behind some Infantry we succeeded in the counter attack to get our wounded out."

Drove from Stavelot towards TROIS PONTS at "great speed." In that town: "We were standing below the railroad bridge and received rather severe Infantry fire from the bridge across the river (Salm) further down." One of the 7-12 PW's was brought over to him, one said "he belonged to an American Engineer Bn. and that they were ordered to stop our advance by demolition."

Shortly after leaving Trois Ponts, (Lt. Col.) von Westerhagen

arrived. He was "the commander of my 2nd Panzer Bn., the heavy Tiger Detachment 501." "I asked him what the situation in his battalion was and about his casualties." von Westerhagen referred to a PW shooting at Ligneuville, but no tactical information was reported in Peiper's testimony about Tigers' action. Question: "Were there any attacks of the 501 Heavy Group through Trois Ponts later on?" Answer: "Yes." /s to arty. about two batteries of the battalion assigned to Peiper drove through Trois Ponts. And there was a Triple A Bn. there. The blown up bridge impediment: "Yes, my road of advance from Trois Ponts on west could not be maintained and I had to find another crossing somewhere." "I decided to take the route by way of La Gleize to cross the Ambleve southwest of La Gleize in order to get back on to the main road in the southwest." This was on the 18th.

He moved to La Gleize. "Were there any American forces there? --No, La Gleize wasn't taken." Belgians were hiding in cellars. He and his force "left La Geize in the southwest direction and came to the bridge across the Ambleve,..." "We saw some persons rushing around the bridge, and since we had to expect that this bridge too would be blown right in front of our noses, the point stopped and opened fire." No order was given; natural reaction. Tank that fired was about 400 meters from the bridge, Peiper himself about 450 meters. Visibility was satisfactory; no effort to attempt identity of people. Peiper arrived at the bridge on a bicycle. ~~At~~ Then: "On the other side of the bridge my column was attacked by a heavy ~~mix~~ American air raid." "The street on the other side takes a sharp curve and goes up to Cheneux and the tank at the point was blown to pieces by a direct hit from a bomb right there. It was therefore not possible to pass by this tank for a while. We made desperate attempts to pull it back towards the road but nevertheless lost at least two and a half hours. I then ordered Diefenthal to proceed at once in the same direction at a great speed to reach the main road and to prevent by all means the blowing of the next bridge which was near Veucy." Proceeded to Cheneux about 1600 or 18th.

Went to Cheneux. No American forces there. "At the bridge near Cheneux I was ~~reached~~ reached for the first time by my command group and I routed a radio vehicle of this group and I received a report of all radio messages that had come in from my communications officers which, of course, had not reached before then." Responding to other witnesses' testimony that Americans had been killed in La Gleize and just before Cheneux was entered, Peiper said that was "impossible": "Because there weren't any American soldiers at all at that time in those village."

Passed through Cheneux. "After darkness fell we again reached the main road which we had planned to continue on from Trois Ponts and just outside of Veucy another bridge was blown before our noses." "I then order Captain Diefenthal to start two combat bridge reconnaissance patrols, namely, on north of the main road, the other one south. The patrol south of the road found only one small bridge and got into ~~Barbomont~~ Barbomont. The reconnaissance patrol on the north side of the road commanded by 1st Lieutenant Preuss was trapped in ambush by American troops on the other side of the river and only the leader of the patrol himself came back in his car. The capacity of the bridge which he had used was not high enough for our heavy vehicles. I therefore had to decide to turn the whole column around in order to proceed west on the road located further north near La Gleize and Stoumont, my plans being

to re-cross the Ambleve Bridge west of Stoumont and thus finally being able to reach my main road again. I arrived in La Gleize for the second time about midnight" of 18th.

"I immediately proceeded to reconnoiter Stoumont. The results of the reconnaissance were that heavy enemy concentrations were in Stoumont. Upon that I planned and prepared an attack in the early morning hours. ~~making the attack~~ "Contrary to my first plan I was not able to attack Stoumont at dawn because there was a heavy fog. The attack began at nine o'clock. The terrain was very unfavorable. I was barely able to make use of my tanks. The enemy had dominating positions. The attack itself was studded with severe crises and in one of these crises the tanks of the Battalion Poetschke attacking on the right flank proceeded to my back so I gave Poetschke ~~him~~ the order to take a hand in there at once. Poetschke himself left his tank, took hold of a rocket launcher, went over to every tank and threatened every commander to shoot him down at once if he would go back one more meter. In that manner the backward movement on this flank was stopped, while at the same time I myself organized everything that was lying in the ditch, including Company Rumpf, for an attack on the town which made the decision. About thirty prisoners of war were brought back from the main enemy line of defense which continued around the edge of ~~the~~ town. Upon that I gave the order to send them on to La Gleize at once."

During an exchange of questions and answers concerning a P" aspect, Peiper said he was "in La Gleize at about 12:30 with Poetschke and Knittel since at the time mentioned (1000-1100) here I was definitely still occupied with the attack on Stoumont. The conference: "Knittel reported at this time that only about two-thirds of the battalion had arrived in La Gleize and that the rest of it was lost somewhere towards the rear because the enemy had completely taken Stavelot again and that his vehicle situation ~~would~~ would not continue in a westerly direction any longer. I then ordered him to turn around at once, to clean up Stavelot and to ascertain whether our main ~~route~~ route of supply which went through Stavelot would be secure. Knittel asked me to make some tanks available to him for this undertaking but I could not do that and I had to send him away rather annoyed at the time because that was not a very nice mission for him. At that time the commander of the 2nd Battalion of the Panzer Grenadier Regiment (apparently this new force was of the 2d Pz. Gren. Regt, whose 3d Pz Gren. Bn. under Diefenthal had been part of the Combat Group Peiper) reported to me. Captain Schnelle, who had just passed through Stavelot made reports about the situation there to me and put his battalion under me." Peiper said "Stoumont was taken at ~~1910~~ 191100 Dec. Prosecution read testimony of four witnesses who said P"s were shot in Stoumont about 7-8 a.m. on 19th, but Peiper emphasized "At that time it was barely dawn at seven o'clock. I already described that after dawn a heavy fog prevented me from attacking and that I did not start to jump off on the attack before nine o'clock..."

Stoumont engagement continued: "After the first prisoners were brought back from the enemy line of resistance-as I have mentioned-and my attacking infantry had disappeared in the town, I, myself drove into town promptly with a jeep. Since violent firing was still going on, on that front, I stopped at the first hour on the left hand side. An American anti-tank gun was standing next to that house, as was a knocked out and burning panther, so I assumed that the clearing of the town would take

awhile yet. I planned to establish a message center in this house at first. Some of the officers of my staff, as well as Poetschke, Westerhagen and Neuske arrived at my place, as did my communications officer." Conversation with American medic. "at the same time I ordered that the medic would be taken to the aid stations, since we could use him, and I then went to an American anti-aircraft position which was quite near the house in order to determine whether these weapons were still of use. A severe artillery barrage started, when I returned, which forced me to take cover." Ordered SR adjutant to establish CP at a distance, because arty. "was zero'd in too well at that point." With and in Major Poetschke's jeep, he drove through Stoumont, met Capt. Diefenthal on the town's western edge, "and ordered him to follow the escaping enemy at once and to see to it that all the vehicles would not stop under any conditions but rather increase their speed." With Poetschke, followed the "attacking ~~point~~ point," "and met them again at about the railroad station,xx" which was several kilometers west of the town proper. Talked to the first tank, which was behind a sharp right-hand turn under severe American AT fire. "On the right, that is, on the North end of the woods, were enemy infantry was located and a lot of firing was done. Met Diefenthal and 1st Lt. Christ(10, 2d SS Pz Co.) in the ditch, had a short conference with a map. "By that time it had become quite definite that due to our fuel situation we ~~we~~ would no longer be able to attack further. I therefore had to abandon my intention to capture the next bridge, and therefore ordered to hold the position which we had achieved until further notice."

About 1200, with Poetschke, returned to Stoumont to the CP, which, in the meantime had been set up by the adjutant "in the big castle located between Stoumont and La Gleize," on 19th. I ordered the C.P. to be taken out of the castle and to be removed to a small house located directly on the road Stoumont to La Gleize, since wounded were already lying in the castle and since I had no intention to establish my C.P. under the flag of the Red Cross. Then I continued to drive on to La Gleize with Major Poetschke, after ascertaining whether any radio messages had come in." Met Capt. Schnalle, Comdr. of 2d Bn, 2d SS Pz Regt. Returned to CP, planned defense. Placed Maj. Poetschke in charge of Stoumont, Lt. Cbl. Westerhagen in La Gleize, and temporarily Maj. Wolff of the AAA bn. in Cheneux.

"What was the situation in Stavelot at that time?" "I had not received any message that made sense from Stavelot at that time, but was of the opinion that troops which were following us should not have any trouble to break that resistance, particularly since a Panther of the 1st Battalion arrived in the course of the afternoon, which was manned only by a driver, because the whole crew had become casualties. This man also reported about the condition in Stavelot to me. He said that he had gotten out several times, had fought his way through with a machine pistol, but otherwise it was still possible to get through."

"What happened on 20th?" "On the 20th, the conditions became much more strained; I was out of communications with the Division, the supply line had not been cleared either. Reconnaissance patrols which were sent out in the direction of Stavelot returned without performing their task. Furthermore, reconnaissance patrols of mine could notice enemy concentrations North of La Gleize. In the afternoon, heavy attacks from the West were made in Stoumont, Cheneux was attacked from the southwest, and about 45 enemy tanks passed by us going east towards Stavelot. Through Intelligence

and P's he ascertained he "was surrounded" by the 36th Div., 3d AD, and 82d A/B Div. "The conditions in Stoumont were particularly difficult, because it was no longer possible to fight back the enemy which had broken through, and the enemy was in control of the western part of the town from then on." He was in the CP of 1st Lt. Frans Sievers, CO, 3d Ps. Lion. Co., in Stoumont in the 20th's afternoon.

"Did you give up the town of Stoumont?" "In the night from the 20th to the 21st, I made a counterattack in Stoumont, ~~which~~ when I regained the positions we had lost. In the course of this, two officers and I believe thirty-five men were captured in a castle-like building ~~in~~ in the western part of Stoumont. Combat in this house was particularly severe. Fights took place for every individual room, and the tanks on the outside had to scot down the individual rooms which were pointed out to them by the Infantry inside."

Stoumont position became "much more serious on the 21st," and Peiper considered giving it up. In early afternoon, the road about 100 yards from his CP--about half way between Stoumont and Lagleize, was cut by American troops. "Trees had been demolished there--there were mines hidden in between them--and the danger of Stoumont being cut off became obvious. I saw clearly that the enemy had now perceived my undefended northern flank, which had been represented by the big forest between La Gleize and Stoumont, and I had to expect that stronger American forces would follow through these ~~tanks~~ troops which had cut the road. This place, where the place was cut, was eliminated again with all available messengers, liaison officers and later part of Preuss' Company." He planned evacuation of the main aid station in the castle. All slightly wounded were taken to La Gleize, about 50 more severely ones unable to be transported and some 15 Americans and medics were left behind. "Since I was faced with the possibility of being surrounded simultaneously in Stoumont, La Gleize and Cheneux, I decided to withdraw to La Gleize with all my troops, while, however, still attempting to keep control of the bridge southwest of La Gleize, since I had not yet given up hopes of troops following us from behind. At dusk of the 21st of December 1944, the units ~~withdrew~~ from Stoumont to La Gleize."

McGown

Interrogation concerned a Lt. Col. ~~McGown~~, captured by Diefenthal's 3d Ps Gren. Bn.-x. Discussed exchange of P's and wounded with McGown. (Lt. Col. Harold D. McGown, Comdr., 2d Bn, 119th Infantry, 30th Div.. He testified pp. 1815-1853) ~~Name~~ ~~McGown~~ or McGown.) *Believe this*

Asked about the exchange arrangement, Peiper replied: "I might perhaps be permitted to ask something which belongs here. Our position in La Gleize had become very difficult. The town itself consists of a few houses only. It is surrounded by mountains and offers very excellent artillery observation points to the enemy. Furthermore, to the north and west the forest is very close to the town and therefore offers very good lines of approach to infantry. In view of the great enemy superiority, it was only a matter of days that the whole town would be shot to rubble. It was hardly possible to move in the streets. All squares of the streets of the town were under direct machine gun and tank destroyer fire. Connected with that was a very great increase in our own casualty rate. The town hardly had any cellars. The few cellars which were available



were used for the prisoners and wounded exclusively, and the prisoners represented a terrific burden to me at that time, but it happened constantly that the guards who were standing outside the cellars in which the prisoners were kept, ran away during the artillery fire. In the evening of the 21st, while inspecting the lines of combat I saw a number of Americans--I think there a out eight--lying on the edge of town shot. I wasn't able to make any investigation since it was dark and firing was going on very lively. I continued on my way to the CP of Major Poetschke and I asked him whether he knew anything about those American soldiers I had seen out there. And he said, Yes, they had been shot in course of an enemy attempt to escape during the afternoon, in the afternoon of the 22nd. In the afternoon, in the noon of the 22nd, the enemy had attacked with very strong infantry--very strong tank concentrations from the west--from the east--and infantry concentrations from the west. They had penetrated the outermost houses. The whole town was filled with fog and the impression one had was that the infantry men were in front of our doors. I myself jumped out of my cellar with a machine pistol while my adjutant began burning the secret matter. At that occasion I saw the whole town full of brown figures but could not decide where these were the attackers or the escaping prisoners. In connection with this attack Poetschke related the incident just mentioned. ((Above dates correctly copied.--RLT)) Until that time I had the intention of defending the town until the last man, even if no aid would come. About noon of the 23d I received a mangled radio message from division from which I gathered that the combat group which had been sent to my relief was not moving forward any more and that, furthermore, higher headquarters had the wish that I return. I thereupon made the preparations for a break. I called McGown over in order to talk over the matter of prisoners and casualties. And made a written agreement with him on these subjects." All PW's were to be left under an anti-tank captain, who give the written agreement to Americans reaching the town. A German doctor was also to be left, a 2d Lt. Dr. Dittmann. Major McGown, was however, excepted, and was to accompany Peiper, who ~~xxx~~ in later days would exchange McGown for the left behind German wounded.

"Wounded and PW's were left, when "we broke out of la Gleize at about 1:00 a.m. the 24th December."

Peiper personally got to "Anne" about three o'clock in the morning, on the 25th," slightly wounded. "I had a violent heart attack and was taken ~~down~~ down there unconscious." "wounded "while breaking through the American main line of resistance which was precisely west of the Salm." Asked about sleep: "I did not sleep for nine days during the offensive." "Was bandaged and slept at regt. aid station(Surgeor, "Dr. Sicker")

In morning of 26th, "I was ordered to my division C.P." "I had to report the--report what had happened in the operation which had been concluded, to my division commander in presence of the commanding general, General Priess." Div. CP was in a "little castle about ten kilometers west of Warne--east of Wanne." "as there until noon. Drove to Blanche Fontaine from there, and set up a CP in the chateau Petit Thier, on 26th.

Direct testimony concluded with a discussion on availability to the Prosecution the next day of the notes Peiper used in testimony.

B. Cross-examination by Prosecutor, Lt. Col. Burton ~~E.~~ Ellis.

Although Peiper's Direct testimony to defense counsel, needed some evaluation, that dealing with tactical matters generally reliable, surely. An exception however, may well have been hours of attack whose connection with atrocity times was obvious, e.g., Stoumont.

Cross-examination sought or did bring out discrepancies, some with tactical implications, pp. ~~1967~~ 1967-2021. These will be extracted, with references provided to the Direct ~~xxxx~~ extracts pages, e.g. (#2.P.)  
Recross-Examination pp. 2532-2547.

Cross: Cross-examination.

Direct: Direct-

Freising: Investigation, Malmédy case. W.C.B. File No. 624, Examination of prisoner of war, 25,26 Aug. 1945, in Freising, Germany. This is not to be confused with the Hechler historical interview in September. It was a sworn statement. During a telephone conversation on 24 June 1952, Colonel Ellis explained to the writer that at Freising, Peiper drew upon his memory, lacked knowledge of what the prosecutor knew or did not know, and Ellis felt the tactical data recorded at Freising generally was factual. Later, during the trial, Peiper was on the defensive, and attempted ~~effort~~ to ~~dis~~ disassociate himself from atrocities. One such means was to name attack hours or times of his presence at variance with other witnesses.

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Honsfeld and La Gleize as to Maj. Taubert and his parachute Bn---

In Direct, Peiper indicated the Taubert force participated in the Honsfeld action, but was left there due to orders misunderstanding-- that is Taubert said he had to await regimental orders. (#2.P)

In Cross, the Freising statement was read: "I ordered him to immediately mount all his paratroops on my vehicles, to advance with me at top speed to take BUE Lingen." Tauber required Division orders, and Peiper ~~xxx~~ angrily told him to stay in Honsfeld.

In Cross, Peiper added he had forgotten to mention in Freising: "I found out that I had a company of parachutists with me for the first time in La Gleize while attacking Stoumont." (*See #12. Peiper*)

Buellingen:---

In Direct, Peiper said he entered it about 2100 or 2130. (#3,P)  
~~Freising statement and in Cross said: "It could have been about 2100 or 2130."~~  
"In Cross, he was uncertain as to eight or nine o'clock."

Crossroads:--

Both Direct and Cross were too complicated, pertained primarily to atrocity aspect. (#4.P) Suffice it to say, Peiper was there.

Ligneville:--

Same as Crossroads, except his Direct was likely acceptable for tactical matters with two exceptions. (#4.P) Arrival time was noon, not 1400, according to Cross and Freising, but Peiper ~~xxxx~~ would not

agree to that. Second exception: A Sherman tank was knocked out, but by whom or how was not clear.

(#4.P.)

Stavelot:---Arrival, but not entry, time of both Direct and Cross was about 2000 or 2100 on 17th. Cross added these tactical details: Peiper did not go into Stavelot upon arrival. "It was impossible to take the town. The whole town was full of American vehicles and a very large number of columns were passing the town from north to northwest. With the weapons at our disposal, we fired into the town and attempted at least to disturb the traffic of these columns. Then an American column attacked the road, but I can't say with certainty whether this was in the evening, or the early morning hours. This attack was ~~not~~ conducted by American infantry to our left flank. I have already described yesterday how the terrain was much higher on our left. We were in a closed formation on the road at the time of this attack and we defended against the attack by directing the fire from the weapons on our vehicles to our left -- the direction of the attack." That attack ~~started~~ was at night or early morning hours. "It is possible that it was getting light already." His Direct did not indicate a time of his own attack, but the Cross estimated about 0800, and he did not know his Freising answer as to that time. He spent the night in Diefenthal's vehicle, then in the morning before his attack, had a conference in a house next to the river, about 800-1000 meters southeast of Stavelot.

~~Stavelot~~

During Cross, the following Freising statement was read in reponse to a query as to the time he started out on the morning of the 18th: "I would like to say the following first: during the night I committed an armored group -- that is to say a weakened panzer company, which had the mission of reaching Trois ~~Ruisseaux~~ Ports(6698) by way of Wanneranval(7197) and Aisomont(6997). During the night, I only received one message from this company which notified me that ~~they~~ ~~they~~ they were running into severe terrain difficulties. On the 18th at 0600 hours I started the attack on Stavelot. At this time much demolition could be seen in Stavelot, especially three large gas dumps. The infantry advanced to the outskirts of the city, but they were stopped there because of a heavy trap that had been erected in the outskirts of this city, behind which Sherman tanks and anti-tank weapons were standing. Besides this, we were drawing artillery and anti-tank fire from the northern flank. Because we had to take the bridge in Stavelot at any cost, before it was destroyed, I now had to advance at all costs. I gave the order to three Panthers to take a running start and at top speed crash down on to the tank trap." Asked: "Now, is that answer correct?" Answer: "In the main, that answer is correct."

La Gleize--first time, and Cheneux:--- Details of the Direct(#5.P) should be compared with the following of the Cross: Peiper arrived at La Gleize about noon on 18th. He related that ~~that~~ "I just rode through, which might have taken about three minutes. The middle part and the end of my column didn't go through La Gleize at all, since I had already turned around at the time when they reached La Gleize and I ordered that that part of the column following would be stopped." Some vehicles followed him through, but no identities were specified. "At what time did you reach Cheneux?" "I had an air attack outside of Cheneux; this was about twelve-thirty, in my estimate. This air attack delayed us for about ~~two~~ two and half hours, as I have mentioned. In other words, that means that we arrived at Cheneux at about 1530 or 1600 hours." He was sure

19th

Stoumont:--- Direct testimony was that although Peiper planned a dawn attack, fog ~~xxxxx~~ delayed until 0900 on 19th. (#6.P.) Cross ~~xxxxxxx~~ strove to make Peiper admit the attack and capture of PW's was 0600-0800. Cross read the Direct (1st par. #6.P) which Peiper said was correct. Then, when Peiper denied the 0600-0800 hours, Cross read the following Freising statement:

"After my r-connaissance had given me a clear picture of the enemy situation in Stoumont, I assembled for the attack on Stoumont at approximately 0600 on the morning of the 19th. The troops that I had with me at that time ~~xxxx~~ was a grand conglomeration and mixture of all the units that I had with me at that time. I had tanks from my own regiment, panzer grenadiers from the 2d Regiment, an AA unit of the air corps, an artillery battalion of our own division artillery, and at least one reinforced company of paratroopers, which were mounted on my tanks during the whole advance. I had at the most 6 tanks from the 2d Tank Battalion, that is the Koenigstiger Battalion, and because the speed with which we were advancing after Stavelot, they were unable to keep up with us. The attack on Stoumont was a difficult one because I couldn't attack with an extended armored front and the point vehicles could only fight from the road. Enemy resistance was great and was being constantly fed by troops coming in from the north and the west. This was the first time that I was able to realize that strengthened American opposition was in the making. After about 2 hours of combat Stoumont was taken by my tanks. We captured approximately 200 American soldiers. The beaten enemy was followed for approximately 5 kilometers and then we had to stop because we didn't have a drop of gasoline left. At this time I tried to take up communication with my ~~xxxx~~ division by radio to ask them what steps had been taken as far as Stavelot was concerned and when I could figure on supplies coming up to me." Question: "Is that answer correct?" Reply: "No."

N.B.--- Despite the negative answer, maybe both that Freising statement--except for attack hour, and the Direct (#6.P) about Stoumont, were rather reliable descriptions of the tactical situation, as distinct from the atrocity angle. The former prosecutor, Col. B. F. Ellis, in a telephone conversation 24 June 1952, pointed out the Freising statement ~~was~~ tended to be factual as to operational subjects, because it was well before the trial, and Peiper was not so much on the defensive. It may be noted that the Cross seemed to be concerned only with the attack time, to prove Peiper was ~~xxxx~~ a participant. Maybe the American story can verify or not some of both the Direct and Freising statements.

Stavelot:--Direct had brought out Peiper conferred in La Gleize about 1230 on 19th with Knittel (Comdr., 1st SS Pz Recon. Bn), who reported "the enemy had completely taken Stavelot again," and Peiper had sent Knittel ~~xxxx~~ it. (#6.P) The statement was read during Cross, and Peiper claimed he had not said completely taken, "but we had serious difficulties with the enemy at Stavelot." He said a translation error in the Direct testimony had been made, adding that was his only change. There was further ~~xxxx~~ reading of a Freising statement, which contained the gist of the tactical matters, but placed the conference hour as 1000. In a word, ~~xxxx~~ references to a La Gleize conference on Stavelot were part of the prosecution's effort to implicate Peiper in the Stoumont atrocity, by means of establishing his movements to the hour. Peiper was obviously in the named news, the precise hour debated by him and the prosecution.

V. General Fritz Ludwig Karl Kraemer.  
(Chief of Staff, Sixth SS Panzer Army)

The following extracts or information were from his testimony during the MALMEDY Massacres Trial, Dachau, Germany, June 1946. (Bibl. #4, pp.1650-1709)

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A. He gave many details of the formation of the Sixth SS Panzer Army prior to the Coun eroffensive, and other Ardennes data. This may supplement other data from him, e.g., historical interviews and papers sent to Col. S.L.A. Marshall. This folder of Kraemer's testimony can be obtained, doubtless, from Col. B.E. Ellis. (See Bibl.#4.)

B. Deactivation of Combat Group Peiper.

Direct Examination by Defense, pp. 1682--

6th Panzer Army "participated in the Ardennes offensive from the 16th of December until approximately the 20th of January."

Then: "The headquarters were, together with the 1st and 2nd Panzer Corps, moved by train beginning on the 18th of January. They were committed into action again in Hungary early in March."

1st SS Corps in sector: "Corps and Divisions were changed very frequently during the action. The 1st SS Panzer Corps together with the 1st SS Panzer Division and the 12th SS Panzer Division was relieved on the 28th of December, and they were sent to the 5th Panzer Army in the time between the 27th and 30th of December. Then the accused Dietrich and also General Model found out that the Ordnance Company of the 1st SS Panzer Division had remained behind near in the forest ---in other words, St. Vith. That was not known to the Army, and that occurred upon the instigation of the Division." Did not know the number of men, "I only know that 10 or 12 tanks were repaired there."

Redirect Examination by Prosecution, pp.1708--

"You said on direct examination that the 1st Panzer Regiment was withdrawn from the offensive about 28 December 1944 if I recall correctly?"

"That is not correct, I did not say it this way."

"What did you say then?"

"I stated that the 1st SS Panzer Division was transferred to the 5th SS Panzer Army on the 27th or 28th December in the beginning of January then I found out that the damaged 1st SS Panzer Regiment did not go to the 5th SS Panzer Army, but the Panzers had to remain behind in the woods east of St. Vith. I further told you that the 1st SS Panzer Army were transferred to Hungary on 20 January 1945."

"Therefore the 1st SS Panzer Regiment was still in Belgium up to and including 13th January 1945 is that not correct?"

"Yes that is correct."

Redirect Exam. by Defense, pp.1709-10.

"From the Regiment of Peiper did only the ordnance Company or the whole regiment remain behind? //

#2. Kraemer.

"No, the entire regiment was arranged in the forest - remained in the forest east of S. Vith. This regiment-this division had sent along from the 5th(doubtless meant 6th) Panzer Pioneer Army one Panzer Battalion, Regimental units for instruction, an Armored Pioneer Company, and probably also parts of the single Company. East of St. Vith were parts of the Regimental staff, parts of the Stabs Company, and those parts of one Panzer Battalion that could not be committed any more. Furthermore, it is Ordnance Company what had been in this forest ---"

Defense stated: "The witness stated before that all the units listed were sent to the 5th Panzer Army."

Prosecution replied: "That is correct."

No further questions, and Kraemer retired from stand.

VI. Malmedy Trial Testimony, SS 2d Lt. Kurt Kramm.

(Bibl. #4, pp.186-219)

Direct examination by defense:---

He was <sup>1st Lt.</sup> Adjutant, ~~Hq. Co., of 1st Section,~~ 1st SS Armored  
Regt., LSSAH. *1st Lt. Peiper*

He spoke English.

"Do you know the element of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment, primarily referred to as Combat Group Peiper, that participated in this of ensive.?"

Yes, and they were: "The 1st SS Armored Regiment with the Headquarters Company, the 1st SS Armored Battalion under the command of SS Major Werner Poetschke, the 9th Armored Engineers Company under the command of the 1st Lt. Erich Rumpf, the anti-Aircraft Company of the 1st Armored Regiment under the command of 1st Lt. Vogel, the 3d Battalion of the 2nd Armored Regiment of the LSSAH under the command of C pt. Josef Diefenthal, the 3rd SS Armored Engineers Company of the 1st SS Armored Engineers Battalion LSSAH commanded by 1st Lt. Franz Sievers, the 3rd Armored Infantry Company of the 2nd SS Grenadier Regiment, the Independent Heavy Armored Detachment 501, Royal Tigers, and one Anti-Aircraft Detachment of the Air Corps and one of the companies of the Parachute Battalion ZBV. These are all of the units of the Armored Command"

As to reconnaissance units: "Only such reconnaissance units as were found within the units themselves. These were equipped only with light vehicles without armor." "Do you know whether there is any connection between the Recon. Bn commanded by Knittel and the Combat Group commanded by Peiper.?" "There was undoubtedly some connection but just what the points of contact were I don't know."

Identified the units' commanders. (Listed on ROSTER.)

Route of March: --- Kramm traced it, indicating hours of arrival in the various towns of the point and "the midst of the column," all in English. This is not extracted for two reasons: 1. The route he traced was that reflected on a map titled Route of Advance Combat Group Peiper contained elsewhere in this study. 2. Hours were disputed by the Prosecution and defendants as to coincidence of arrival time and atrocity occurrence.

Order of march, at Blankenheim, 160200 Dec. That is, the actual order not that necessarily specified by order: --- Were SS units.

Point platoon. Obersturmfuehrer Werner Sternebeck, Commanding.

10th Pz Gren. Co.. Oberstufuehrer Georg Preuss, ~~and~~ Comdg.

Elements, 12th Pz Gren. Co. with canon SPW's.

1st SS Pz Co.

11th Pz Gren. Co.

6th Pz Co.

Main part, 9th Pz. Pioneer Co. Obersturmfuehrer Erich Rumpf, Comdg.

7th Pz. Co. Hauptsturmfuehrer Oskar Klingelhoef, Comdg.

Main part, AAA Co. of 1st SS Pz Regt.

3d Pz. Pion. Co., Obersturmfuehrer Franz Sievers, Comdg.

13th Armored Infantry. Co., 2d SS Pz Gren. Regt.

501st Heavy Tank Bn.

AAA Bn. from Luftwaffe.

Order of march, at Lanzerath, 17 Dec.

Point Platoon, Obersturmfuehrer Werner Sternebeck, consisting of two Mark IV tanks.

Tanks of 10th Pz Gren. Co. Obersturmfuehrer Geor Preuss, with part of the 12th Pz Gren. Co. with armed SPW's.

Comdr., 3d Pz Bn. (with Comdr. 1st Pz Regt. Obersturmbannfuhrer Peiper, and Comdr., 3d Armored Bn. Obersturmbannfuhrer Josef Diefenthal. (N.B.--Confused titles. Maybe he meant these three principal officers: Maj. (Sturmbannfuhrer) Werner Poetschke, Comdr., 1st Pz Bn., 1st SS Pz Regt.; Peiper; Maj. (Sturmbannfuhrer) Josef Diefenthal, Comdr., 3d Pz Gren. Bn., 2d Pz. Gren. Regt.)

At:

Hans

6th SS Pz. Co. Untersturmfuehrer Steininger, 1st Plat. Ldr., Comdg., because Company Comdr., Obersturmfuehrer Benoni Junker was sick.  
11th Pz. Gren. Co., Obersturmfuehrer Heinz Eomhardt, Comdg.  
7th SS Pz Co., Hauptsturmfuehre Oskar Klingelhoef, Comdg.  
Main part, 9th Pz Pion. Co.  
13th Inf. Howitzer Co., 2d Pz. Gren. Regt.  
AAA Co, 1st SS Pz Regt.  
1st Pz Co., Obersturmfuehrer Karl Kremser, Comdg.  
2d Pz Co., " Frits Christ, "  
Part of 12th Pz. Gren Co with armed SPW's.  
501st Heavy Tank Bn.  
AAA Bn. of Luftwaffe.

Order of march ~~xxxx~~ changes later:

Forenoon, 17th, 1st Pz Co. bypassed the companies in front of them and reached "the point with the whole Armored Column in Ligneuville."

Morning of 18th. 6th Pz Co., 7th Pz. Co. and 3d Pz Pion. Co. sent on special mission to south to search another bridge over the SALA R. Returned late in night when "Armored Group were already in La Gleize." Of 7th Pz Co., only the comdr. Klingelhoef returned to the Armored Group, the other tanks of the co. "stayed ahead in Stavelot."

American opposition: First part of offensive faced by 80th Div.. later 30th.

Kramm was captured on Christmas Day.

Tank types of 1st Pz. Bn;

Mark V --- 1st and 2d ~~am~~ Pz. Cos.; Mark IV--6th and 7th.

Kramm's records: Defense, during Cross, said he seemed to possess an admirable memory, and asked if he kept a diary. Kept one, but not hour-to-hour: "I only made the entries when important matters occurred and I had to make entries into the combat daily journal of the battalion." He burned it before capture on Christmas Day. Although he was in other campaigns, including Russia, he was not an officer, but being one and the adjutant, he had the journal duty. This explanation was given for his memory of dates, formations, etc.

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1st SS Pz. Bn. Adjutants: 2d Lt. (Untersturmfuehrer) Arndt Fischer was Adj. until when wounded on 17th. 2d Lt. (U/Sturmfuehrer) Kurt Kramm was Adj. provisionally until 2d Lt. (U/S) Rolf Roland Reiser arrived from Germany on 19th. (Bibl. #7, Reiser affidavit)



VII. 501st Heavy Tank Battalion

Its armour was the Mark VI, the Tiger Tank. (Bibl#8.) Its commander was Lt. Col. (Obersturmbannführer) \_\_\_\_\_ Von Westerhagen. (Bibl. 1-A, 6,4) At least as of and for the operations, 16-22 December, 1944 of this Combat Group Peiper, it was an ~~integral~~ unit, but not organic. (Ibid.) While it was a separate battalion, it was attached to C Gp Peiper, and commanded by Von Westerhagen. This officer was the commander of the organic, but apparently unoperational, 2d Panzer Battalion of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment. (Ibid., 9) Witnesses ~~xxx~~ during the trial for the Malmedy Massacres referred to their organization as the 501st Heavy Tank Bn., not the 2d Pz. Bn.

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A. Malmedy trial testimony of the CO, 3d Co., \_\_\_\_\_ ~~Mr~~ Heinz Birschein.  
(Bibl.#4., pp.2046-2060)

15

Bn. officers as of 15 December 1944 were Hauptsturmführer Mobebius, Feller, Amselgruber, Wessel, and Obersturmführer Lukasium. Commander was Von Westerhagen. Attended Bn. conference on 15th, and received orders. "The Battalion had the mission to drive behind the First Battalion, and after we came out of the hilly terrain we were to drive ahead to the Maas River." Route of march did not take to the Malmedy Crossroads, but the column was in Engelsdorf (also known as Ligneuville). Von Westerhagen drove behind the 2d Co., which was the point. Drove from Engenwald to Thirimont, where rested 3 hours, then to Ligneuville.

"Your Battalion caught up with the rest of Peiper's column on or about the 18th of December, in the vicinity of Cheneux and La Gleize, is that correct?" "We were in Cheneux and the order reached us that we should stop and that the regiment would turn around and our Battalion was to drive back to La Gleize, because of a lack of fuel, and await further orders there."

Said he ~~xxx~~ reached Ligneuville about 0900 on 18th., and recalled a hill in the down.

He was obviously in Ligneuville with his company, but the date and hour were debated due to the atrocity implications. No action mentioned.

B. Malmedy trial testimony of 2d Lt. Heinz Buchner, member 1st Co.,

(Bibl. #4. pp. 2647--)

At noon on 18th., about 400 meters in front of entrance of Stavelot, "When you are coming on the road from Lodomex to Stavelot." Stopped there because out of fuel. He was fired upon by anti-tank, but did not mention firing himself.

"Towards the evening of the 19th Tiger and several Mark IV attacked the bridge and the entrance of the town of Stavelot. The attack was broken and the tanks retired in the direction of Wanne." The bridge was blown off about an hour later, but did not know how.

Apparently he and his Tiger were at Stavelot approach, but remained.

#501st Hv. Tk. Bn.

C. Malmedy trial testimony of \_\_\_\_\_ Franz Wagner.  
(Bibl. #4, pp2842---

Member the Bn. He personally was in La Gleize 18/19 night - night of 23d. Guarded PWs; no mention of tank action, or of his tank, if any.

D. Malmedy trial testimony of SS Capt. Rolf Mobius.  
(Bibl. #4, pp. 2854-2865)

Member of 501st. Reached La Gleize 19 Dec., late afternoon. Col. Peiper instructed Lt. Col. Von Westphalen to appoint an officer to handle the welfare of PW's, who was not Mobius. Had no PW duty himself. Bn., he said, passed by Crossroads at night. He was riding with Bn. into Englesdorf(Ligneville).

No mention of tactical action. Testimony dealt with crimes aspect.

E. Malmedy trial investigation statement of Edmund Zeger.  
(#10)

Interrogated during screening of suspects Nov. 1945.

Was a mechanic of 501st. Claimed there were 14 tanks from his company, but only 2 were actually with Peiper's column, because the "other 12 had motor trouble along the way." He repaired them and arrived at ENGLSDORF(LIGNEUVILLE) on 20 Dec.