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THE ETO ARDENNES CAMPAIGN: OPERATIONS OF THE
COMBAT GROUP PEIPER, 16-26 DECEMBER 1944.

By: Royce L. Thompson,
ETO Section, OCMH.
24 July 1952.
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P R E F A C E.

Organisational documents were missing among captured German records, and historical interviews lacked details, so an unusual source was researched to trace the operations of the Combat Group Peiper. This was the record of the U.S. General Military Government Court, which sentenced 73 of the Group's personnel in 1946 for the MALMEDY, Belgium massacres in nine localities 17-20 December 1944. Convictions were sustained in 1947 by the ETO's Deputy Judge Advocate for War Crimes, but an Administration of Justice Review Board in 1948 recommended reversal of 28, upholding Peiper's. Subsequent proceedings were not examined.

Tactical information was extracted from the 3268-page trial transcript and other records, and the trial prosecutor was interviewed. Search was made especially for the order of battle, route, line of march, roster, commitment of Tiger tanks as well as other armor, reasons for command decisions, changing estimate of American capabilities, supply problems, casualties.

Inasmuch as this was a war crimes case, evaluation of operational data involved at least these considerations;

1. Explanations of tactical situations by defendants and witnesses were incidental to the atrocity aspect. Ranking officers did not discuss operations as a professional subject primarily.

2. A defendant fought against incrimination, particularly as to the hour of his presence in a locality. Reasons for actions could easily be distorted to favor himself, e.g., Peiper.

C R I T I Q U E .

SUMMARY

Combat Group Peiper consisted of these I SS Panzer Division units:

1st, 2d, 6th, 7th SS Pz. Cos. (1st SS Pz. Bn., 1st SS Pz. Regt.)
9th, 10th, 11th, 12th SS Pz. Gren. Cos. (3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn., 2d SS Pz.
Gren. Regt.)
501st Heavy Tank Bn. (Tigers)
2d SS Pz. Recon. Co. (1st S^d Pz. Recon. Bn.)
9th SS Pz. Pi. Co.
2d SS Pz. Arty. Bn.
68th AAA Bn.

Probably a parachute battalion, and an AAA battalion of Luftwaffe.

It penetrated almost 60 miles between 160200 December and the evening of the 18th before it was stopped. The route led from BLANKENHEIM, Germany, through Belgian towns marked by the axis of HONSFELD-BULLENGIN-THIORMONT-A crossroads near MALMEDY-LIGNEUVILLE-STAVELOT-TROIS PONTS-LA GLEIZE-CHENEUX- Vicinity of VEUCY LA MARTEAU. When a bridge was blown up near VEUCY, reconnaissance found another, but it lacked capacity for the tanks. So, the force turned back, captured STOU MONT on the 19th, then to prevent encirclement, withdrew from there an CHENEUX to LA GLEIZE at dusk of the 21st. American attacks forced a breakout on foot from that town about midnight of the 24th. Peiper personally reported for reassignment to the I SS Panzer Division's CP on the 26th.

Panther tank engagements were indicated by trial testimony and photographs, but commitment of Tigers was not so conclusive. Personnel of the 501st Heavy Tank Battalion reached LA GLEIZE, according to testimony, but the main evidence of a Tiger action was the photograph of a disabled one in LA GLEIZE.

ORDER OF BATTLE

Combat Group Peiper was commanded by the commander of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment, I SS Panzer Division, and was formed around the first battalion of that regiment, with other divisional units as attachments.(II; Bibl. #8) Its organization was:

1st SS Pz Regt.
1st SS Pz. Bn.
SS Pz. Cos: 1st & 2d, Mark V tanks; 6th & 7th, Mark IV)

2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt.
3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn.
SS Pz. Gren. Cos.: 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th.
13th SS Pz. Gren. Co.?

501st Heavy Tank Bn, Mark VI(Tigers).

1st SS Pz. Recon. Bn.
SS Pz. Recon. Cos.: 2d, 1

1st SS Pz. Pi. Bn.
3d SS Pz. Pi. Co.

9th SS Pz. Pi. Co.

2d SS Pz. Arty. Bn.

68th AAA Bn.

Other Probable Components:
A parachute battalion, likely s ZBV of 3d Para. Div.
AAA Battalion of Luftwaffe.

All units were not atrocity participants. Personnel of these were not defendants: the 501st Heavy Tank Battalion, the 2d SS Panzer Artillery Battalion, the 68th AAA Battalion, and the parachutists. (II,III) Some of the 501st were trial witnesses, however.

ROUTE AND DEACTIVATION.

As maybe noted on the Map, the Group penetrated almost 60 miles by about 1700 on the 18th, before its retrograde movement.(I, VIII-C) Hours of the following march were approximate.(I, VIII) The prosecution and defendants disputed arrival time and atrocity occurrence.

18th.

0200 - Blankenheim, Germany vicinity. Departure.
Day - Dahlem, Hallschlag, Scheid, Losheim.
Night- Into Belgium, to Lanzerath.

17th.

0700 - Hensfeld.
1100 - Bullingen, to Schoppen.
Noon - Thirimont.
1400 - Malmedy Crossroads.
- Ligneuville(German name, Engelsdorf)
2200 - Stavelot.

18th.

1000 - Stavelot attacked and overrun.
- Trois Points.
- La Gleize.
- Cheneux.
1700 - Neucy La Marteau vicinity.
Midnight - Turned back and arrived at La Gleize.

19th.

Morning - Stoumont.
Day - Reached a point about 3 kilometers west of Stoumont.
Late in day - Driven back to Stoumont.

20th.

Some elements in Wanne, other in Stoumont.

21st - 24th

La Gleize breakout of encirclement.

Breakout from LA GLEIZE was the final action.(IV-A, VIII-C) Leaving some wounded and equipment, the force escaped during the night of 23/24---Peiper said about midnight. He related that he was slightly wounded and had a heart attack, but reached WANNE about 0300 on the 25th. Then on the morning of the 26th, he reported

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LINE OF MARCH.

The original column and that early on the 17th just before the first engagement near HONSFELD were listed by 2d Lt. Kurt Kramm, Adjutant, 1st SS Panzer Battalion.(VI) His was the only information located among the trial records. The prosecution considered him innocent, and due to his English and other qualities, made him semi-member of the investigation staff.(X)

Formations were:

160200 Dec.
BLANKENHEIM, Germany.

Point Platoon(Sternebeck)
10th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
Elements, 12th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
1st SS Pz. Co. (MKV)
11th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
6th SS Pz. Co. (MK IV)
Main Part, 9th SS Pz. Pfl. Co.
7th SS Pz. Co. (MK IV)
Main Part AAA Co, 1st SS Pz. Regt.
3d SS Pz. Pfl. Co.
13th AI Co., 2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt
501st Heavy Tank Bn.
AAA Bn. from Luftwaffe.

Not listed:
2d SS Pz. Co.
9th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
2d SS Pz. Recon. Co.
2d SS Pz. Arty. Bn.

Pre-dawn of 17th
LANZERATH, Belgium, Near border.

Point Platoon(Sternebeck)
10th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
Poetschke, Peiper, Diefenthal.
6th SS Pz. Co.
11th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
7th SS Pz. Co.
Main Part, 9th SS Pz. Pfl. Co.
13th Inf. How. Co.
AAA Co., 1st SS Pz. Regt.
1st SS Pz. Co.
2d SS Pz. Co.
Part of 12th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
501st Heavy Tank Bn.
AAA Bn. of Luftwaffe.

Not listed:
9th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
3d SS Pz. Pfl. Co.
2d SS Pz. Recon. Co.
2d SS Pz. Arty. Bn.

Changes occurred due to tactical situations, according to Kramm and Peiper, but complete details were not described. The former related that during the forenoon of the 17th, the 1st SS Panzer Company (MK V's) went to the point of the column in LIGNEUVILLE.(VI) Maybe,

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to the division CP in a castle about 10 kilometers east of WANNE.
He set up his own CP later in the day in a chateau at PETIT THIER.

Disbandment or further employment of the Group were not clear among the trial records, nor were they the concern of this study. Two points may be mentioned, however. First, Peiper had a CP in PETIT THIER about 10 January 1945, but the fact resulted from other engagements subsequent to his 16-20 December operation as Combat Group Peiper.(Bibl. #1-A-1) Second, attention is called to the testimony of Brig. Gen. F. Kraemer, C/S, Sixth Panzer Army, about the transfer of the 1st SS Panzer Regiment and the I SS Panzer Division.(V) Perhaps he meant the regiment was west of ST. VITH, not east. Doubtless the ordnance company was the Service Company under Capt. Otto listed in the Order of Battle(See II).

but virtually all other evidence was that the Group did not reach that town until midafternoon.(VIII) As to Peiper, his comments on positions of various units may be read in the extracts of his testimony.(IV)

Reconnaissance missions altered the formation's order. Kramm mentioned that the 6th and 7th SS Panzer Companies and the 3d SS Panzer Pioneer Company were sent to search for another bridge over the SALA River on the 18th, returning late at night.(VI) Of the 7th Company, only commander Klingelhofer returned, the other tanks remaining ahead in STAVELOT. Was this the bridge reconnaissance near VEUCY that Peiper described, and which caused the Group's retrograde movement?(IV-A) Names and units may be compared by reference to the Order of Battle and Roster.(II)

The spearhead doubtless rotated according to tactical conditions, but the original point was identified. 1st Lt.(Obersturmfuehrer) Werner Sternebeck commanded it, according to Kramm.(VI) The Lieutenant explained in his sworn statement:"During the night from 15th to 16th December 1944, my tank was ordered to the point of the combat group and at that time I left the 6th Company."(Bibl. #7) That unit was the 6th SS Panzer Company, 1st SS Panzer Battalion, 1st SS Panzer Regiment, a Mark IV company, and his tank was No. 614.(VI; Bibl. #4.10) No other description was located.

When the column reformed at LANZERATH during the early hours of the 17th, Sternebeck was again at the head, with two Mark IV's forming the point.(VI) One was the Lieutenant's. Surely the other was also from the 6th SS Panzer Company or from the 7th, they being the Mark IV units of the Group.

TACTICAL INFORMATION

This was sought to supplement historian's interviews, to compare with American versions, and as a partial substitute for the missing operational records of the Combat Group Peiper.

Of the trial testimonies, Peiper's was the most significant. References to movements and actions were made by the approximate 100 defendants and witnesses, but organizing an accurate pattern of operations from them would be impossible. Peiper's commander viewpoint was extracted in detail, however.(IV) Editing was restricted to organizing questions and answers into coherent subjects or chronology. Reliability of his testimony was subject to certain considerations:

1. This was an atrocity trial, so explanations of tactical situations were incidental. Peiper fought incriminating assertions, sometimes declaring his oath was not binding. During the trial, he claimed some former sworn statements to be incorrect, e.g., FREISING interrogations. Instances involving hours of his personal location were constantly the subject of prosecution maneuvers to prove complicity. Also, his relationship, if any, to Lt. Col. H. D. McGown(Comdr., 2d. Bn., 119th Inf.) in LA GLEIZE appeared questionable. The prosecutor claimed it was discredited.

2. Even so, surely some explanations were accurate, and can be identified by their logic. Despite Peiper's declaration that some FREISING interrogation statements were untrue, the prosecutor expressed confidence in them generally.(X) Atrocity aspects were not then too pronounced, Peiper was unaware of what war crimes investigators did not know, and the historical inquiries on operations may have been partly disarming.

Peiper prepared a 70-page operations analysis, probably at the Third Army's Interrogation Center at PREISING in 1945, according to the prosecutor.

No copy has been found among retired war crimes records in Washington
and Kansas City.

EMPLOYMENT OF TIGER TANKS

Mark VI's were the armor of the 501st Heavy Tank Battalion, attached to the C. Gp. Peiper.(VII) Its commander, Lt. Col. (Obersturmbannführer) ___ von Westerbagen, was that of the organic, but non-operational 2d SS Panzer Battalion, of Peiper's 1st SS Panzer Regiment.

Mission of the 501st, according to Peiper's direct examination by the defense, was to be positioned in the rear of "closed, orderly march in order to, after the First Battalion(1st SS Ps. Bn/) were rubbed out, take over the heavy fighting itself."(IV-A) The CO of the 3d Company stated that 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."(VII-A)

A rear place was taken in the line of march, at least initially. The 501st was the next to last unit when the column moved forward 160200 December, and again during the night of 16th/17th at LANZERATH, just before the first engagement near HONSFELD.(VI) Although subsequent positions in the column were not clear, unquestionably the battalion, or elements, or some personnel in other vehicles were in various localities, particularly in LA GLEIZE on the 19th.

Advance of the 501st seemed slower than the most of the column, judging by statements of Peiper and certain 501st officers, the latter being trial witnesses. The CO of the 3d Company said that the battalion rested in THIRIMONT for three hours, not arriving in LICNEUVILLE until about 0900 on the 18th. (VII-S) When asked if the battalion caught up with the rest of Peiper's column on the 18th at CHENEUX and LA GLEIZE, the officer replied that the 501st was in CHENEUX on that date, when ordered

to return to LA GLEIZE due to the lack of fuel, then to await orders. A 501st mechanic, during suspect screening, said that only two of his company's(unidentified) 14 tanks were with the column, the 12 having motor trouble, which he repaired then reached LIGNEVILLE on the 20th. (VII-E) Maybe that applied to one company! In a pre-trial statement, Peiper described his 19 December STOUMONT attack strength, but noted: "I had at the most 6 tanks from the 2d Tank Battalion, that is the Koenistiger Battalion, and because of the speed with which we were advancing after Stavelot(18 Dec.) they were unable to keep up with us." (IV-B)

Personnel appeared to be in LA GLEIZE and vicinity on the 18th and 19th. Peiper said in his direct testimony that on the 18th, shortly after he left TROIS PONTS, Lt. Col. von Westerhagen joined him, and Peiper "asked him what the situation in his battalion was and about his casualties." (IV-A) No tactical information, only that about LIGNEVILLE shootings, was reported by Peiper as the answer. In response to the question if there were any later 501st attacks, Peiper answered "yes", but did not describe them. On the 19th, Peiper placed Colonel von Westerhagen in charge of LA GLEIZE, Major Poetschke (Comdr., 1st SS Pz.Bn) STOUMONT, and a Major Wolf(AAA Bn.) CHENNEUX. (Ibid.) A Captain Rolf Mobius of the 501st said he arrived in LA GLEIZE on the 19th, and referred to Peiper's orders to von Westerhagen about PW's.(VII-B)

Little was located about 501st actions. A 2d Lt. H. Buchner, 1st Company, described in his witness statement, that he approached STAVELOT from LODOMEZ on the 18th and stopped, out of fuel.(VII-B) An anti-tank gun

fired on him, but he did not mention his own action. Apparently remaining there, he stated: "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 toward WANNE. A photograph of a knocked out Tiger in LA GLEIZE was the most conclusive evidence of probably Tiger action.(XI) This, coupled with the already mentioned personnel in LA GLEIZE, seemed to be indication that the 501st Heavy Tank Battalion progressed to an approximate 50 mile penetration, even though the commitment of the tanks was not clear.

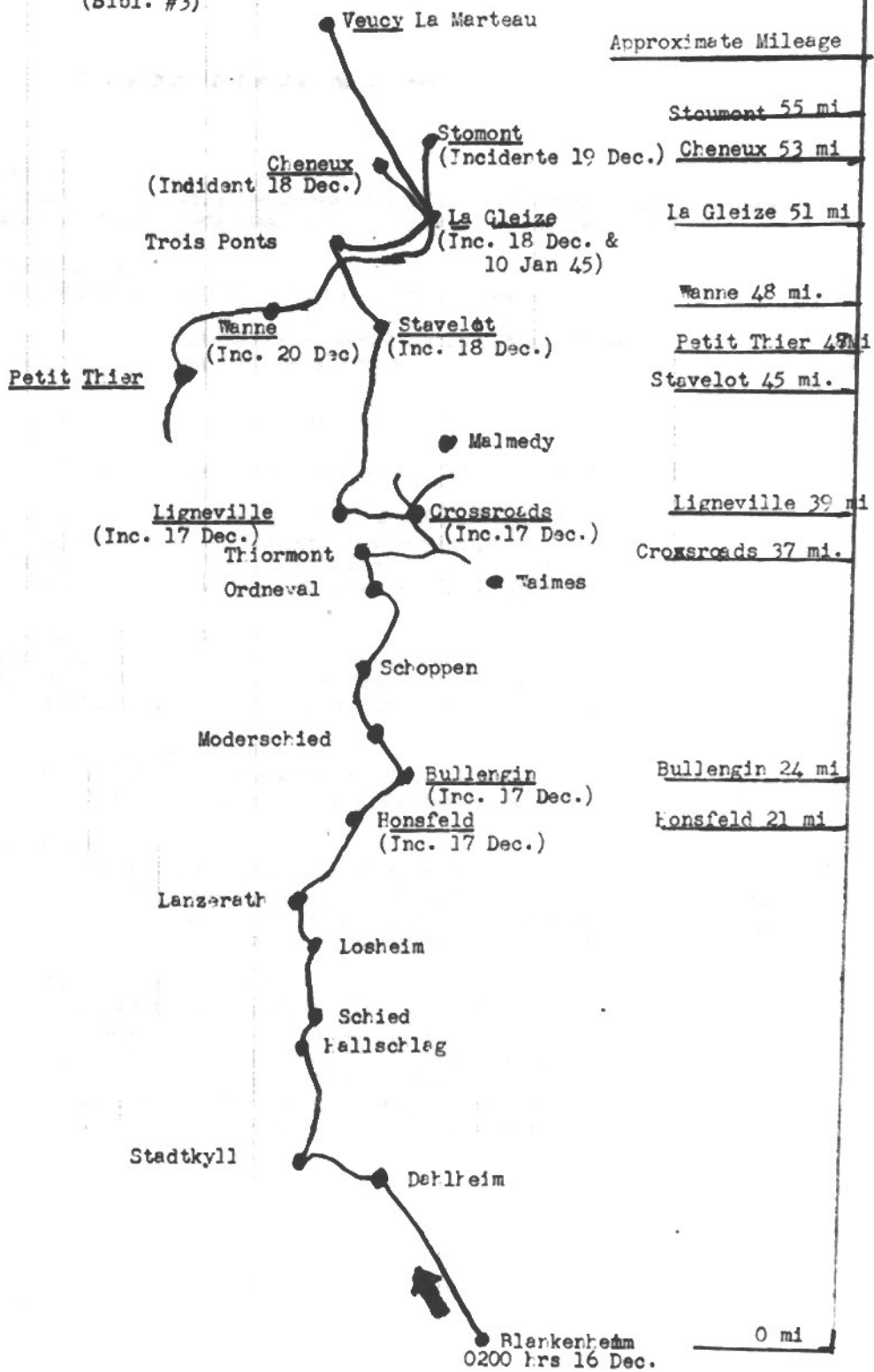
The foregoing was extracted from the MALMEDY trial transcript, but that source's service was limited. Interest in the 501st was slight, because its personnel was not involved in the crimes, the trial prosecutor related during a 1952 interview.(X) No one was a defendant, but five were witnesses.(VII) The prosecutor doubted that Tigers were extensively employed, and believed the 501st was a rear element.(X) He took the LA GLEIZE pictures, but was not sure the tanks were Tigers.

COMMANDERS' AFFIDAVITS ON ORDERS

Those of the Sixth Panzer Army, I SS Panzer Corps, and of Combat Group Peiper largely dealt with Hitler's conference of 12 December. (IX) They described their understanding of his instructions, and their own to their subordinates.

These were pre-trial sworn statements, and should be evaluated as to (1) the atrocity angles, not operational, (2) "passing the buck" to the dead Hitler.

I. Route of Advance Combat Group Peiper.
(Bibl. #3)



II. Order of Battle and Roster

Sixth Panzer Army. (1)

Commander, General(SS-Oberstgruppenfuhrer) Josef "Sepp" Dietrich.*
Chief of Staff, Brig.Gen.(Brigadefuhrer) Fritz Kraemer.*

I SS Panzer Corps.

Comdr.Maj.Gen.(Gruppenfuhrer) Hermann Priess.*

1st SS Panzer Division(Leibstandarte-SS Adolf Hitler) "LSAH"

Comdr. (Oberfuhrer) Wilhelm Mohrke.

Combat Group Peiper(1st SS Pz. Regt.), 1st SS Pz.Div.

Comdr. Lt.Col. (Obersturmbannfuhrer) Joachim Peiper.*
Adjutant, Capt.(Hauptsturmfuhrer) Hans Grubbe.* (2)
Signal Officer, 1st Lt.(Obersturmfuhrer) _____ Krause.
Surgeon, & Comdr. Hq. Co. Maj.(Sturmbannfuhrer) Kurt Siekel.*

1st SS Pz. Bn., 1st SS Pz. Regt.

Comdr. Maj.(Sturmbannfuhrer) Werner Fetschke. (3)
Adj. 2d Lt.(Untersturmfuhrer) Arndt Fischer.*
Aides, 2d Lts.(Untersturmfuhrer) Rolf E. Reiser* and Kurt Kraus.

1st SS Pz. Co.(Mark V's)

CO, 1st Lt.(Obersturmfuhrer) Karl Kraemer
1st SS Plat.Ldr. 2d Lt.(Untersturmfuhrer) Hans Hennecke.*

2d SS Pz. Co.(Mark V's)

CO, 1st Lt.(Obersturmfuhrer)Friedrich Christ.*
SS Plat. Ldr. 2d Lt.(Untersturmfuhrer) _____ Kaufmann.
2d SS Plat. Ldr. M/Sgt.(Hauptcharfuhrer) _____ Knappich.
2d SS Plat.Ldr. 2d Lt.(Untersturmfuhrer) Helmut Koch.

6th SS Pz. Co.(Mark IV's)

CO, 1st Lt.(Obersturmfuhrer) Benoni Junker.*
1st SS Plat. Ldr. 2d Lt.(Untersturmfuhrer) Hans Steininger.
2d SS Plat. Ldr. 1st Lt. (Obersturmfuhrer) _____ Sieg.
2d SS Plat. Ldr. 1/Sgt.(Obercharfuhrer) _____ Wien.
Initial(duration ?) leader of Point Platoon, G. Cp. Peiper. 1st
Lt.(Obersturmfuhrer) Werner Sternebeck.*

#2. OB & R.

7th SS Pz. Co. (Mark IV's)

CO. Capt. (Hauptsturmführer) Oskar Klingelhofer.*
1st SS Plat. Ldr. 2d Lt. (Untersturmführer) Heins Rahgel.*
2d SS Plat. Ldr. 2d Lt. (Untersturmführer) Erich Munkener.*
3d SS Plat. Ldr. T/Sgt. (Oberscharführer) Hans Siptrott.*

3d SS Pz. Bn., 2d SS Pz. Grenadier Bn.
Commander. Maj. (Sturmbannführer) Josef Diefenthal.*

9th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
CO. 1st Lt. (Obersturmführer) Max Leibe.

10th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
CO. Capt. (Hauptsturmführer) Georg Freuss.*

11th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
CO. 1st Lt. (Obersturmführer) Heins Tomhardt.*
2d SS Plat. Ldr. M/Sgt. (Hauptscharführer) Willi H. Hendel.*
___ SS Plat. Ldr. T/Sgt. (Oberscharführer) ___ Reiber.

12th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
CO. 1st Lt. (Obersturmführer) Jochen Thiele.
2d SS Plat. Ldr. Sgt. (Unterscharführer) Anton Motzheim.*
3d SS Plat. Ldr. T/Sgt. (Oberscharführer) ___ Pfalzer.

501st Heavy Tank Bn. (Tigers, Mark VI.) (4)
Commander. Lt. Col. (Obersturmbannführer) ___ von Westerhagen
Other officers: Obersturmführer Lukasius; Hauptsturmführer Rolf
Hobmann Feller, Amselgruber, Wessel; CO, 3d Co. ___ Heins
Birschwin; 2d Lt. Heins Busmer, of 1st Co.

1st SS Pz. Reconnaissance Bn. "LSAH" (5)
Commander. Maj. (Sturmbannführer) Gustav Knittel.*

2d SS Pz. Recon. Co.
CO. 1st Lt. (Obersturmführer) Manfred Coblenz.*

___ SS Pz. Recon. Co.
CO. 1st Lt. (Obersturmführer) Heins C. Colts.

9th SS Pz. Pioneer (Engineer) Co. (6)
CO. 1st Lt. (Obersturmführer) Erich Rumpf.*
___ SS Plat. Ldr. 2d Lt. (Untersturmführer) ___ Hering.

3d SS Pz. Pl. Co., 1st SS Pz. Pioneer Bn.
CO. 1st Lt. (Obersturmführer) Franz Sievers.*
Ldr. Co. Hq. Det. T/Sgt. & Co. Squad. Ldr. (Oberscharführer &
Kompanietruppführer) Willi Schaefer.*
1st SS Plat. Ldr. 2d Lt. (Untersturmführer) August Seitz.
2d SS Plat. Ldr. Sgt. (Unterscharführer) Max Reutner.
3d SS Plat. Ldr. ___ (_____) Rudolf Kampfe.

#3. OB & R.

24 SS Pa. Artillery Bn., 1st SS Pa. Arty. Regt.
Commander. Capt. (Hauptsturmführer) _____ Schlett.

60th Antiaircraft Bn.
Commander. Maj. (Sturmabführer) _____ Wolf.

Service Co., Hq., 1st SS Pa. Regt.
CO. Capt. (Hauptsturmführer) _____ Otto.

Other possible components:

15th SS Pa. Gren. Co., 24 SS Pa. Gren. Regt. — This was mentioned by Lt. Kramm (See Kramm testimony) as a unit in the line of march, but no other reference was located. No defendant was from it.

Parachute force. — Doubtless attached, but identity not clear. Peiper related his assignment troubles with a Major Tauber, who commanded a parachute battalion in HONSFELD, 17 December and indicated that parachutists were in LA GLEIZE on the 19th. Kramm mentioned a company of the parachute battalion ZBV in his order of battle, but not in line of march. (See Peiper and Kramm Test.) Mr. Chas. von Luttichau, OCMH, said parachutists were in the SCHOPPE-FAYONVILLE area, therefore likely in C. Gp. Peiper. He also said this ZBV battalion was of the 3d Parachute Division. Parachutists were not among trial defendants.

AAA Bn. of Luftwaffe. — Kramm listed such in his line of march, but no other information was located. (See Kramm Test.)

Explanations.

* — Convicted for one or more of MALMEDY case atrocities, 16-20 Dec.
(See also next page, Convictions)

(1) Sixth Panzer Army was not SS when activated nor during Ardennes period, according to Chas. von Luttichau, OCMH. It was an army T/O, although staffed with SS officers.

(2) Captain Gruble was the regimental officer with operational authority, second to Peiper, according to Mr. von Luttichau. Trial proceeding described him as the regimental adjutant, as did Peiper; he termed himself as Executive Officer in his trial affidavit.

(3) Major Poetschke was described as deceased by Peiper and trial prosecution. (Bibl. 4, p. 2033) As a principal officer, he would have doubtless been a defendant, if not convicted.

(4) 501st Heavy Tank Bn. was assigned to the C. Gp. Peiper as the 2d SS Pa. Bn., 1st SS Pa. Regt. Lt. Col. von Westerhagen was the commander of the 2d SS Pa. Bn. organizationally, and became that of the 501st.

#4, CB & R.

(5) 1st SS Pz. Recon. Bn. was directly under command of 1st SS Pz. Div., according to C. von Luettichau, Assigned to C. Gp. P.

(6) 9th SS Pz. Pioneer Co. was organic to the 1st SS Pz. Regt., according to C. von Luettichau.

Bibliographical Notes. ---

Compiled from the records of U.S. v. V. Borcin et al, Case 6-36, by a General Military Government Court, at Dachau, Germany, 1946. This was the so-called MALMEDY, Belgium atrocities trial, of war crimes committed during the German Counteroffensive, 17-20 December 1944, at the MALMEDY Crossroads, HONSFELD, HULLINGEN, LIGNEVILLE, STAVELOT, LA GLEIZE, CHESSIX, STOURMONT, WANNE. Documents used were the ETO, Deputy JAG's 1947 review of conviction (Bibl. #1-A), the 1946 trial transcript (Bibl. #4), and various prosecution data (Bibl. #6).

Errors cannot be ruled out, but the writer is confident that at least the main elements of C. Gp. Peiper were established. Units and their commanders from the company level up were identified, whether organic or attached. Omission of some platoons did not necessarily mean inactivity; rather their status was not ascertained. Despite editing, the identity and grades of some EM may have occurred, but officers are believed to be accurate.

Inasmuch as the C. Gp. Peiper was an SS organization, the SS ranks were given, not regular army titles.

Thanks are extended to Charles von Luettichau, OCSH, for checking of nomenclature and other technical details, but responsibility for this compilation is the writer's.

Convictions: As indicated on the previous page the personnel marked by an * were convicted defendants, the sentences being further recommended by the Deputy JAG for War Crimes, ETO, October 1947. On 4 February 1948, however, the European Command, JAG, War Crimes Board of Review #1, reported recommended disapproval of many ~~sentences~~ (Bibl. #2-A) while the final disposition, if any, of the ~~sentences~~ was not located by this writer, for purposes of indication of presence in the tactical area, he considered the original conviction as sufficient. Nevertheless, the following list of disapprovals is provided, the defendant's number and surname being given: #4, Braun; #11, Dietrich; #15, Friedrichs; #16, Gebauer; #17, Godicke; #21, Fecht; #25, H. Hofmann; #33, Kraemer (Fritz); #36, Mante; #37, Mikolaschek; #38, Motsheln; #43, Plets; #45, H. Priess; #46, Rau; #47, Rauh; #49, Reiser; #50, Richter; #52, Rizer; #53, Rodenburg; #56, Schwanbach; #58, Siegmund; #62, Sternebeck; #64, Stock; #65, Szyperaki; #66, Tomczak; #68, Tonk; #71, Weis; #72, Werner.

III. Units of Convicted Defendants.

Those of the 73 convicted men were the main elements of the C. Gp. Peiper.

The following tabulations will carry defenants' numbers, e.g. Cpl. M. Hammerer #20, usually without names, as personal identifications. Ranks and military assignment will be specified when appropriate, to point out that the rank and file participated.

(Sources: Bibl. 2-A-1; 1-A-1)

A. Units.

The following command level tabulations associates the unit and the total number of convictions per unit.

Sixth Pz. Army: Comdr., Gen. J. Dietrich, #11; C/M, Brig. Gen. F. Kraemer, #33.
I SS Pz. Corps: Comdr., Maj. Gen. E. Priess, #45.

Combat Group Peiper(1st SS Pz. Regt., 1st SS Pz. Div.):

Comdr., Lt. Col. J. Peiper, #42.
Adj. Capt. H. Gruble, #19.
Surg., Maj. K. Sickel, #57.
Two Sgts., #24, #73.

1st SS Pz. Bn.: Adjs. #13, #49; #41; Comdr. was deceased.
1st SS Pz. Co.: 2d Lt., Plat. Ldr., #23; #1, 5, 12, 32, 69.
2d SS Pz. Co.: CO, #7; #25, 37, 43, 52, 65, 72.
6th SS Pz. Co.: 1st Lt., CO, #29; 2d Lt., Ldr. C. Gp. Point, #62;
#27, 68.
7th SS Pz. Co.: Capt., CO, #35; Two Lts. & 1 Sgt., Plat. Ldrs., #39, 48,
60; #8, 14.

~~2nd SS Pz. Gren. Regt.~~

3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn., 2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt.: Comdr., Maj. #10.
9th SS Pz. Gren. Co.: #6, 74.
10th SS Pz. Gren. Co.: Capt., CO, #44.
11th SS Pz. Gren. Co.: 1st Lt., CO, ##67; M Sgt., Plat. Ldr., #22;
#4, 16, 15, 17, 21, 46, 47, 50, 58, 64, 66,
12th SS Pz. Gren. Co.: Sgt., Plat. Ldr. #38; #53, 56, 71.

#2. Units of C. D.

- 1st SS Pz. Recon. Bn.: Maj. Comdr., #31.
3d SS Pz. Recon. Co.: 1st Lt., CO, #9
3d SS Pz. Pioneer Co., 1st SS Pz. Pi. Bn.: 1st Lt., CO, #59; #2,18,
20, 26, 28,30,40,55,61,63,70.
9th SS Pz. Pi. Co., 1st SS Pz. Regt.; 1st Lt.,CO, #54; #34,36,51.

B. Atrocity Locations & Units.

The following are the order of battle per specific crime location, omitting atrocity generalizations, such as convictions of ranking commanders for overall responsibility. Peiper is also excluded, inasmuch as another section of this study deals with him.

Honsfeld, 17 December.

- 3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn., 2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt.
12th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
2d Plat., Ldr. Sgt. #38.

- 1st SS Pz. Pi. Bn.
2d SS Pz. Pi. Co.
2d Plat. Driver. Cpl. #18.
3d SS Pz. Pi. Co.
2d Plat. Messenger. Cpl. #20.

Bullengin, 17 December.

- 2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt.
3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn.
12th SS Pz. Gren. Co. ~~3d~~ CO, Capt. #44.
3d SS Pz. Pi. Co., 1st SS Pz. Pi. Bn.
2d Plat.: Ldr., Sgt. #2; Driver, Cpl., #18; Rifleman & Gurner, PFC, #28.

Crossroads, 17 December.

- 1st SS Pz. Recon. Bn., 1st SS Pz. Regt.
1st SS Pz. Co.
1st SS Pz. Plat.: Ldr., 2d Lt. #23; Tank Comdr., Sgt. #5;
Radio Opr., PFC., #12.
2d SS Pz. Co. CO, 1st Lt., #7.
6th SS Pz. Co.
2d Plat. Tank Comdr., S/Sgt., #27.
7th SS Pz. Co.
1st SS Pz. Plat. Ldr., 2d Lt., #48
2d SS Pz. Plat. Tank Comdr, S/Sgt., #8.
3d SS Pz. Plat.: Ldr., M/Sgt., #60; Asst. Gurner, PFC, #14.

#3. Units of C.D.

2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt. Comdr., ~~xxx~~ Maj., #10.

3d SS Pz. Pi. Co., 1st SS Pz. Pi. Bn. CO, 1st Lt., #59.

2d ~~Rik~~ SS Pz. Pi. Plat.: Ldr., Sgt., #2; Drivers, Messenger,
Rifleman & Gunners, Cpl., PFC's, Pvt., #18, 20, 26, 28, 40, 61, 63, 70.

3d SS Pz. Pi. Plat. Machine Gunner, PFC, #30.

9th SS Pz. Pi. Co., 1st SS Pz. Regt.: CO, 1st Lt., #54; Mach. Gun, Sgt., #6.

Ligneuville(Englesdorf), 17 December.

1st SS Pz. Bn., 1st SS Pz. Regt.

Hq. Co. M/Sgt., #41.

Stavelot, 18 December.

1st SS Pz. Bn., 1st SS Pz. Re-t.

1st SS Pz. Co.

1st SS ~~Rik~~ Pz. Plat.: Ldr., 2d Lt., #23; Tank Comdr., Sgt., #5.

6th SS Pz. Co.

2d SS Pz. Plat. Tank Comdr., M/Sgt., #68.

1st SS Pz. Recon. Bn. Comdr., Maj., #31.

2d SS Pz. Recon. Co. CO, 1st Lt., #9.

La Gleize, 18 December.

3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn., 2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt.

11th SS Pz. Gren. Co.

1st SS Plat.: Driver, Radioman, Rifleman, Cpl., Pvts., #21, 17, 50, ~~xxx~~

2d SS Plat. Rifleman, PFC, #64.

4th SS Plat. Riflemen, PVTs, #16, 46.

La Gleize, 18, 20, 21, 22 December.

1st SS Pz. Bn., 1st SS Pz. Regt. Adj. (22d Dec.) 2d Lt. #49.

1st SS Pz. Co.

1st SS Plat. Ldr. (21st or 22d), 2d Lt., #23.

2d SS Pz. Co. CO (21st), 1st Lt., #7.

2d SS Plat.: Gunner (21st or 22d), Cpl. #25; Tank Drv (21st), Cpl., #72.

3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn., 2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt.

10th SS Pz. Gren. Co. CO (22d), Capt., #44.

11th SS Pz. Gren. Co.

2d SS Plat. Motor Mechanic (21st), Sgt., #58

4th SS Plat. Driver (22), Cpl., #47

12th SS Pz. Gren. Co.

1st SS Plat. Pers. Carr. Comdr. (22), Sgt. #56.

2d SS Plat. Driver (22) Sgt., #53; Mach. Gun. (20th) PFC, #71.

#4. Units of C.D.

3d SS Pz. Pz. Co., 1st SS Pz. Pz. Bn.
Hq. Plat. Gp. Ldr.(22d), S/Sgt. #55.

9th SS Pz. Co., 1st SS Pz. Regt. CO, 1st Lt.(21st) #54.
1st SS Pz. Plat. Medic, Sgt.(22d), #36.

Cheneux, 18 December.

3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn, 2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt. Comdr., Maj. #10.
9th SS Pz. Gren. Co. Driver, Sgt. #74.
11th SS Pz. Gren. Co.: Riflemen, Pvts., #16,46.

Stoumont, 19 December.

1st SS Pz. Regt.
Hq. Co.
Communication Plat. Driver, Sgt. #24.

1st SS Pz. Bn.
2d SS Pz. Co. CO, 1st Lt. #7.
Hq. Sect. Tank Comdr. Sgt. #43.
2d Plat.: Gunner, Radio Opr., CPL, PFC, #25,37.
3d Plat.: Tank Brv.Cpl., #65; Mach. Gunner, PFC, #53.

2d SS Pz. Gren. Regt.
3d SS Pz. Gren. Bn.
11th SS Pz. Gren. Co.
4th Plat: Cpl. #66; Mach. Gun., PFC, #4; Driver, Pvt., #15.

3d SS Pz. Pz. Co., 1st SS Pz. Pz. Bn. CO, 1st Lt., #59.
Hq. Plat. Gp. Ldr., S/Sgt., #55.
2d Plat.: Drivers, Messenger, 2 CPL, 2 PFC, #5,18, 20,26,61.

Wanna, 20 December.

1st SS Pz. Bn., 1st SS Pz. Regt.
1st SS Pz. Co.
2d SS Plat.: Tank Comdr., Sgt., #1; Plat. Ldr., PFC, #69; Radio
Opr., PFC, #32.
6th SS Pz. Co. 1st Lt., #62.

Petit Thier, Late December or January.

Hq. Co., 1st SS Pz. Regt.: Surgeon, & CO., Maj. #57; Sgt., #73.

VIII. Route and Atrocity Incidents---Narratives.

A. Route Description. (Bibl. 1-A-2)

"Units of Combat Group Peiper proceeded generally on the following itinerary: from the forest area around Blankenheim, Germany, on 16 December 1944, to Dahlem, Germany; thence to Hallschlag, Germany; thence to Scheid, Germany; thence to Losheim, Germany; thence into Belgium during the night 16-17 December 1944 to Lanzerath; thence to Honsfeld which was reached by the point at approximately 0700 hours 17 December 1944; thence to Bullingen which was reached about 1100 hours 17 December 1944; thence to Schoppen; thence to Thirimont which was reached by the point about noon 17 December 1944; thence to the Calmedey Crossroads which was reached at about 1400 hours the same day; thence to Ligneuville (German name is Engelsdorf); and thence to Suvelot which was reached at about 2200 hours. In the morning of 18 December 1944 at about 1000 hours Strvelot was attacked and the column proceeded to the next village of Trois Ponts, thence to La Gleize, thence to Cheneux, thence to Stoumont on 19 December, and thence to La Gleize." *(See E-Annex)*

B. Narrative of Incidents and Units., Prosecution Evidence. (Bibl. 1-A-3)

a. Honsfeld. "Combat Group Peiper proceeded without any incidents of interest from the Blankenheim area to Honsfeld, Belgium. American troops assigned to various units of the 612th Tank Destroyer Battalion were located in this area. ... In the early morning hours of 17 December 1944, the Germans attacked the various positions occupied by the Americans. In one instance a house containing 18 enlisted men and four officers was surrounded by troops of the 1st SS Panzer Division and was in the process of being destroyed by '88's' when a white flag was displayed from a window and firing on both sides ceased. ..." A column of some 200 prisoners was marched toward the rear, and a German tank opened fire.

About 0800 or in the morning of the 17th, in the vicinity of Honsfeld, members of the 3d SS Pz Co. saw 6-10 American PW's standing in front of a house with their arms raised in surrender.

b. Bullingen. "Shortly before the 3rd SS Panzer Company arrived at the airport near Bullingen on 17 December 1944, six or eight unarmed and surrendered American prisoners of war were seen walking along the road toward the rear of Combat Group Peiper. ... Between the airfield and Bullingen the crew of a half-track belonging to the 3d SS Panzer Company fired into two separate groups, each consisting of from five to eight unarmed and surrendered American prisoners of war." Other groups were shot by other 3d SS Pz Co. men, in the Bullingen vicinity. An American PW, a flight officer, was shot to death near Bullingen after "he had been interrogated by accused Preuss, commander of the 10th SS ~~xxxx~~ Panzer Company."

In Bullingen, the commander of the 1st SS Pz Co. motioned to 8-10 unarmed Americans, who were shot.

Two American PW's were shot by a member of the

10th SS Pz Gren Co. about 0800 on 17th.
In Bullingen, RIFDER of the 9th SS Pz Pion Co.
shot a woman.

About a kilometer beyond Bullingen, in the
direction of Thirimont, 3d SS Pz Co. men shot 6-8 American PW's.

c. Crossroads. "Elements of Combat Group Peiper arrived at a road intersection between Malmédy and Ligneuville, known as the 'Crossroads,' between 1200 and 1400, 17 December 1944. The Crossroads is located about four kilometers southeast of Malmédy at a point where one road leads northwesterly to Malmédy, another northeasterly to Waimes, and another south about four kilometers to Ligneuville." Elements of Combat Group Peiper captured personnel of the American 285th FA Obs. Bn. "German armored vehicles, a tank, and half-trucks were moved into position to fire upon the Americans." "German armored vehicles proceeded along the road opposite this group of American prisoners." "This unwarranted shooting of surrendered and unarmed prisoners of war was carried out by elements of various units of Combat Group Peiper."

d. Ligneuville. "After leaving the Crossroads the German column resumed its advance toward Ligneuville. ... At Ligneuville, about 1600 hours 17 December 1944, eight prisoners of war were shot by personnel of the 9th SS Panzer Company."

e. Ligneuville - Stavelot Road. A troop carrier and personnel guarded 15 American PW's, and shot the PW's, according to reports.

f. Stavelot. "On 21 December 1944 when certain units of Combat Group Peiper were endangered by American tanks, accused Knittel gave an order to shoot 8 PW's. This took place "at the edge of a woods near a single house located near Ambleve Bridge, three kilometers west of Stavelot." ((Gustav Knittel, No. #31, was a Major, Comdr, 1st Pz Recon Bn.(1-A-1)))

"Units of Combat Group Peiper continued their advance to Stavelot and reached there on 18 December 1944." Some Belgian civilians were fired upon by one of four tanks parked on the road leading to the hospital.

On the outskirts, on evening of 18th, two civilians were shot by "members of the 6th SS Panzer Company."

On the 18th, on the edge of Stavelot on the road to La Gleize, "personnel from the vehicle of the commander of the 1st SS Panzer Company" fired upon women.

On 19th, Units of C. Gp Peiper shot other Belgians

g. Cheneux. "Some units of Combat Group Peiper proceeded to Cheneux and vicinity where they were subjected to a very severe air attack." An American PW was shot a few meters from the vehicle in "which the commanding officer of Combat Group Peiper was riding."

On evening of 18th, 30-40 Americans were collected on outskirts, and German personnel from four or five tanks and a half-track fired upon them.

h. La Gleize. Among the elements of the C. Gp Peiper entering the town about 1500 on 18th, were units of the 11th SS Pz GrenCo., 9th SS Pz Pion. Co., and 3d SS Pz Pion. Co. PW's were shot were the ~~xxxx~~ church.

"During the period 18-23 December 1944, other units of Combat Group Peiper entered La Gleize, departed therefore, and returned thereto. ..." American PW's were frequently killed by units of C Gp Peiper during these six days.

A pasture in the vicinity of ~~xxx~~ school house was the scene of some shootings. Some shootings "were carried out with the approval of accused Peiper."

19th

i. Stoumont. XOn morning of 19th, after various units of C Gp Peiper had left Ligneuville, Stavelot, and La Gleize, the column arrived in Stoumont, and shooting took place.

While a paratrooper was escorting seven PW's to the rear of the German lines, elements of the 11th SS Pz Co. took and shot them.

On same day, elements of the 3d Pz Pion. Co. shot PW's .

Elements of the 9th SS Pz Co. were seen with PW's.

On ~~22~~ 19th, 15-20 PW's were killed by the crew of a Mark IV at a point next to a house which was thought to be the command post of Peiper. Also, three others were killed in Peiper's presence.

Elements of the 2d SS Pz Co. also killed men in Stoumont. 15-25 PW's were guarded by German paratroopers when fired upon by crews of several German tanks.

About 1400 on 19th, elements of 2d SS Pz Co. "reached the most westerly point attained during the offensive, approximately two kilometers west of Stoumont." MG's of two tanks fired at some 15 PW's.

j. Warne. On 20 or 21st some elements of C Gp Peiper were in Warne. They were units of the 1st SS Pz Co., 7th SS Pz Co.

k. Luttrebois. On 31 Dec. "certain units" of the 9th SS Pz Co. were in that town.

l. Trois Ponts. Civilians and 11 American paratroopers were shot to death. No identification of units(German) was given.

m. Petit Trier. Accused Peiper was in his Hq on 10th or 13 Jan, in a castle near that town. Fickel was with him.

C. Route Description Amended.
(Bibl.#2-A)

The February 1948 War Crimes Board of Review, amended the D/JAG's "General Outline of Campaign" last sentence about the ~~18~~ 18th, thus:

"In the morning hours of 18 December 1944 at about 1000 hours Stavelot was attacked and overrun, after which the column of Combat Group Peiper proceeded to the next village of Trois Ponts; thence to La Gleize, thence via Cheveux to the vicinity of Teucy Le Marteau, the point of the column reaching this place about 1700, 18 December (references to trial manuscript). In the vicinity of Teucy Le Marteau, Forges, and Lorce-Chevron the column was turned back by American forces (ref. to transcript); whereupon it retraced its route to La Gleize, the point arriving there at about midnight 18-19 December 1944 (tr.ref.). The following morning (19 December 1944) the column attacked and overrun Stoumont, and during the day reached a point about 3 kilometers west of Stoumont (tr. ref), but late that day was driven back to that village. The evening of 21 December, the entire force was pulled back to La Gleize (tr. ref.), where by 22 December they were surrounded by Americans, to the extent of controlling all roads immediately leading into La Gleize (tr. ref.). Moreover, the survivors escaped by foot through the woods the night of 23-24 December (tr. ref.).

IX. Sworn Statements.

A. Dietrich.

I, Oberstgruppenführer and Generaloberst, Sepp DIETRICH, having been first duly sworn, make the following statement:

During the NIFEL Offensive in December 1944 and January 1945, I was Supreme Commander of the 6th Panzer Army.

On 12 December 1944 a conference with the Führer took place in BAD NAUHEIM. All officers up from Divisional Commander belonging to those units which were to be committed in the impending ARDENNES Offensive participated in this conference. The Führer gave a three-hour address at this conference. In this, he said among other things, that the impending battle must be won by all means. The decisive hour of the German people had arrived and it was to be or not to be. We would have to fight hard and recklessly. The Führer said furthermore that we would have to act with brutality and show no humane inhibitions. The Führer also said that a wave of fright and terror should precede us and that the enemy's resistance is to be broken by terror.

In the order which I issued for the 6th Panzer Army for the NIFEL Offensive, due to the talk of the Führer, I ordered that our troops have to be preceded by a wave of terror and fright and that no humane inhibitions should be shown.

I can no longer remember the exact wording but this was the sense of the order.

I ordered further that every resistance is to be broken by terror.

However, I certainly did not order that the prisoners of war should be shot. I didn't mention prisoners of war at all. Whoever claims anything of the sort is speaking the untruth!

I have made this statement voluntarily and of my own free will, not having been influenced by threats, force or duress, or promises of any kind.

I swear to God that the facts which I have set forth in this statement are true and I am prepared to repeat same

I, Oberstgruppenfuhrer and Generaloberst Sepp DIETRICH, being duly sworn state the following:

The present Gruppenfuhrer and General-Lieutenant of the Waffen SS Fritz Ludwig Karl KRAEMER, was from November 1944 until 10 May 1945 Chief of Staff of the 6th Panzer Army. Before and during the ARDENNES offensive his rank was Brigadefuhrer and Generalmajor of the Waffen SS.

All orders which were issued by the 6th Panzer Army either originated from him or were prepared on his orders. All orders which were submitted to me for signature went through the hands of my chief of Staff Brigadefuhrer KRAEMER.

When before the beginning of the ARDENNES offensive I came back from the conference with the Fuhrer I briefly informed Brigadefuhrer KRAEMER of the speech and intentions of the Fuhrer.

I believe that the order which was to be read to the troops immediately before the beginning of the offensive was drawn up and signed by me immediately after my above described short meeting with Brigadefuhrer Kraemer, therefore probably on the 13th December 1944.

On the early morning of the 15th or 16th December 1944 I do not recall the exact date any more, it was a short time before the beginning of the offensive, I visited the Commanding General of the 1st SS Panzer Corps, General Lieutenant PRIESS at his command post. There I discussed with him the method of the commitment.

I have made this statement voluntarily and of my own will uninfluenced by force, threats or duress, and uninfluenced by promises of any kind.

I swear before God that the statements in this deposition are true and I am prepared to repeat same before any court under oath.

(signed) Sepp DIETRICH
Generaloberst-Oberstgruppenfuhrer
11 April 1946

Witnessed in the presence of
MORRIS ELOWITZ
Civilian Examiner
WCB USFET

Sworn to and subscribed to before me this
11th day of April 1946, At Schmaebisch Hall,
Germany.

WILLIAM R. PERL
1st Lt. N.I. O-555149
Investigator-Examiner
War Crimes Branch USFET.

(Bibl.#7)

B. Priess.

I, Hermann PRIESS, Generalleutnant of the Waffen SS, having been duly sworn upon oath make the following statement:

In December 1944 I was the commanding general of the I SS Panzer Korps. Under my command were two SS Panzer Divisions, 2 Volksgrenadier Divisions, and 1 Paratroop Division. The two SS Divisions were: 1st SS Panzer Division "Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler" under the command of SS Oberfuhrer MOHRKE and 12th SS Panzer Division "Hitler Jugend" under the command of the SS Standartenfuhrer KRAAS. My Korps was attached to the 6th Panzer Army. The commanding general was SS Oberstgruppenfuhrer and Generaloberst of the Waffen SS DIETRICH, Josef. On the 11th or 12th December 1944 I was ordered to BAD NAUHEIM, and there a speech of the fuhrer took place. I remember with certainty that at this speech SS Oberstgruppenfuhrer Sepp DIETRICH and SS Oberfuhrer MOHRKE were present. The Fuhrer spoke for about two hours. The Fuhrer said to us that in the coming offensive the fate of Germany would be decided. I am not now able to remember any longer all the details of the speech of the Fuhrer, but I do know that it concerned itself exclusively about the coming offensive in the west which later on was known as the "RIFEL offensive." The part of the speech of the Fuhrer in which he occupied himself with terror methods, as far as I remember now was when he said to us, "Terror is to be met with terror. Any resistance is to be broken ruthlessly." The Fuhrer did not explain what he meant by "terror". In interpreted the phrase of the Fuhrer, referring to terror as meaning that the enemy air attacks of the German civilian population should finally be avenged. I considered the speech of the Fuhrer as propaganda which preceded the offensive and did not conclude from it that the fighting methods on the western front should be changed. Several days before the start of the "RIFEL Offensive" I received the Field Order and shortly before the start of the attack the Order of the Day from the headquarters of the 6th Panzer Army. I transmitted the part of the field order which concerned the divisions to the respective divisions, and the Order of the Day, to all division commanders under my command to be read to all troops. I remember that these two orders said that we had to push through ruthlessly to the NAAS; that every man had to give his best and that terror had to be met by terror. I do not remember at this time anything in the two orders of the 6th Panzer Army stating that a wave of fear and terror should precede our troops. However, it is possible that the orders contained such a remark, but at this time I do not remember it. I interpreted those remarks concerning ruthlessness, use of terror, etc. as propaganda in the same manner as I did the speech of the Fuhrer in BAD NAUHEIM and I did not believe that through that there would be any irregularity in fighting methods. I also assumed that my division commanders understood and interpreted these remarks as I did.

On the afternoon of 15th December 1944, I spoke at my C.P. in SCHMIDTBEIN to the commanding officers of the advance elements and, I believe, to the Division commanders. Due to the fact that several commanders arrived late and I immediately thereupon had to go to another meeting, my speech was very short. I published the Order of the Day of SS Oberstgruppenführer DIETRICH and reminded each commander briefly on his mission and on his duty.

I make this statement consisting of 4 pages voluntarily, without coercion, threats, or promised of reward.

(signed) Hermann PRIESS
Generalltn. of the Waffen SS
15 April 1946.

Subscribed and sworn to
before me this 16th day
of April 1946

(signed) ROBERT E. BIRNE
1st Lt JAGD.

Witnessed in the presence of

(signed) Morris KLOWITZ
Civilian Examiner
WOB, USFET

C. Peiper.

I, SS Standartenführer Joachim PEIPER, make the following statement under oath, after being first duly sworn.

During the WIPPEL offensive, in December 1944, I was SS Obersturmbannführer and Commander in charge of the Armored Group.

I, myself, was notified only very late about the particulars of the coming campaign, and I could not influence the preparation of this offensive.

About the 12th of December (1944) in the vicinity of ELLIN, a meeting with the Führer took place at which all commanders down to Division commanders participated. I did not participate at this meeting. I do not know what orders were issued there. Only I know that the Führer made a three-hour address. Until the 10th December, I had not the slightest idea in which direction our offensive would take place. On the 14th December 1944 I was ordered to the Division Command Post which was located in BLANKENHEIM, where I had but a short conversation with the Division Commander - Oberführer MOHRE. The field order and the other material such as maps, disposition of the enemy etc., I received from the Ia of the Division, SS Obersturmbannführer ZIESSER. I did not read the material given me at the Divisional Command post because I was in a hurry, and was also in a bad mood because I disagreed with the entire preparation for the undertaking which lacked highly defective to me.

I then returned on the same day to my command post which was located in a forester's house in the BLANKENHEIMER woods. First I ordered my Adjutant Hauptsturmführer Hans GRÜLL, to call a commander's meeting for the same day, for about 1600 hours. This left me about two hours which I used to study the material handed to me at the Division. The very first impression of the terrain which I got, with the aid of the maps, reassured my opinion that it was a desperate undertaking. I can remember that in this material, among other things, was an order of the 6th SS Panzer Army, with the contents that considering the desperate situation of the German people, a wave of terror and fright should precede our troops. Also this order pointed out that the German soldier should in this offensive recall the innumerable German victims of the bombing terror. Furthermore, it was stated in this order that the enemy resistance had to be broken by terror. Also, I am nearly certain that in this order it was expressly stated that prisoners of war must be shot where the local conditions of combat should so require it.

This order was incorporated into the regimental order which was drawn up on my command by Hauptsturmführer GRÜLL, based on the material handed to us.

Close to 1600 hours, the Commander's meeting took place at which the following persons participated: myself, Sturmbannführer Werner POTSCHE, Sturmbannführer (then Hauptsturmführer) Josef DIEFENTHAL, Sturmbannführer Gustav KNITTEL, (although he arrived a little late), Obersturmbannführer

HARDING, Sturmbannführer Dr. SICKEL, Hauptsturmführer OTTO, and I believe also the Major who commanded the Anti-aircraft Battalion attached to me. In addition Hauptsturmführer GRUBER was at least temporarily present. At this meeting I did not mention anything that prisoners of war should be shot when local conditions of combat should so require it because those present were all experienced officers to whom this was obvious.

In the meantime the Regimental orders were written and were picked up by the battalions either during the night, or on the following day.

It is possible although I don't know for sure, that the paragraph of the regimental orders which dealt with the prisoners of war, and was taken from the Army orders without receiving any additions, was not sent to the battalions in writing, but for reasons of security was only looked at at the regimental, and remained there to avoid this order falling into enemy hands.

The above Army order about which I have just talked, was signed by SS Oberstgruppenführer and Generaleoberst Sepp DIETRICH.

I know, however that the order to use brutality was not given by Sepp DIETRICH out of his own initiative but that he only acted along the lines which the Führer expressly laid down.

When I was received on 14 December 1944 by Division Commander, Oberführer MOHRKE, he told me that he was present at the meeting with the Führer and that on orders of the Führer, it had to be fought with special brutality. Whether at this occasion Oberführer MOHRKE used the word "brutality" or something similar I don't know any longer, at least this was the sense of it. Oberführer MOHRKE also said that the Führer stated: "It has to be fought without humane inhibitions, and one should remember the victims of the bombing terror." Oberführer MOHRKE also said at this occasion that the Führer spoke excellently - three full hours - and that he had expressed the fullest confidence for victory. After the Führer's address as Oberführer MOHRKE told me, only Field Marshal MODEL gave a "Sieg Heil" to the Führer - nobody else spoke. On the morning of 15 December 1944, I was at the command post of the 1st SS Panzer Corps, where the Commanding General SS Gruppenführer General Lieutenant FRIESS spoke in front of all Regimental commanders and commanders of independent units under him. Independent units have at least the size of a battalion but they are not under a regiment but directly under division.

At this meeting about 30 commanders and leaders of independent units participated. Among others I saw SKORZENY there for the first time. From my Panzer Group only Sturmbannführer Gustav KNITTEL was present, with the exception of myself. General Lieutenant FRIESS spoke about the meeting with the Führer and he also said that on orders of the Führer, to fight with reckless brutality and hardness. Here also

I don't know the exact wording, but I am nearly certain that General Lieutenant PRIESS used the words as they were in the Army order when he talked about the manner in which to treat the enemy and fight him. Anyhow, out of his words emerged that we had to fight with brutality and that this was the expressed wish of the Fuehrer.

I make these statements voluntarily and out of my own free will, uninfluenced by pressure, threats, harsh treatment or promised of any kind. I swear before God that these statements which I made are true and I am prepared to repeat them under oath before any court.

(signed) Joachim PEIPER
SS Sturmbannfuhrer
21.3.1946

witnessed:

RAPHAEL SHUMACKER
Capt. GMP

Sworn to and subscribed before me this
21st day of March 1946, at SCHWABISCH HALL, Ger.

WILLIAM R. PEEL
1st Lt. M.I. C-655149
Investigator-Examiner
War Crimes Branch, USFPT.

(Bibl. #7)

X. INTERVIEWS WITH COL. BURTON F. ELLIS, 13 JUNE 1952.

13th:Trial ~~xxxxxxx~~ Judge Advocate(Prosecutor).

June 1952: JAG, Chairman of Board of Review #6, 3E275, x56651. The Pentagon.

Combat Group Peiper was not at full strength. Not over 3,000.
 Had lengthy conversations with Peiper, who wrote a paper of about
 70 pages on tactical aspects of the ~~xxxxxxx~~ Dennes. Now in Landsburgh(?) Prison.
 Considered P. as a very capable military man. Will try to obtain a
 copy of the paper from an trial associate. Peiper spoke English well.

Peiper travelled mostly with the 3d Pz Gren. Bn, in a halftrack,
 a SWP. Maj. Josef Diefenthal was CO of the Bn. Peiper was with Diefenthal
 on 18th.

xxxxxx

Point of the C Gp. Peiper rotated. Was 2dPz Co, 1st Bn. in Stoumont
 on 19th.

xxxxxx

Kurt ~~xxxxxxx~~ Kramm, now in Berlin, was Adjutant of _____
 He spoke English well, developed virtually as a member of the
 investigation team, used shorthand, and confidence was placed in him.
 His line and of march and OB information was the most complete obtained.
 Was a prosecution witness, not a defendant. Investigation absolved him
 from complicity.

Col. Ellis doubted that the 501st Heavy Tank Bn. was involved in
 atrocities. No 501st man was a defendant. Little information about
 the unit, although definitely an element of the C Gp Peiper, and
 began the march on the 16th. He was certain the 501st was in the
 Group's point, but always in the rear. La Gleize was the only locality
 connected with 501st. However, he was very dubious of the use at least
 of Tigers during the operation, 16-20th. Americans tended to claim
 Tigers, but Col. Ellis believed Panthers were the more likely armor.
 Took pictures of tanks in La Gleize, and identification did not establish
 them as Tigers.

16th:

Per his offer on the 13th, Col. Ellis brought a box of the trial
 transcript, photos, etc. to my desk, as a loan. Introduced to and talked
 a few minutes with General Ward. A letter of receipt is being sent to him.

Brought extra copies of some snapshots he had taken for our retention,
 and agreed the others could be reproduced by us. Included some of La
 Gleize tanks.

Agreed that trial records retired to Kansas City from 7708 War
 Crimes Group(March 45---Nov. 46) might contain Peiper's 70-page ms.,
 as well as other data.

XI. Photographs.

These were extras or reproductions kindly provided by Col. Burton F. Ellis, Trial Prosecutor, from his personal collection. [See X] They were selected for tactical significance, including terrain, but those dealing with the atrocities only or other subjects were rejected.

These few were only those available for my use. A larger number were given to Dr. Hugh M. Cole, for his Ardennes Volume.

rocked out park

out to

1980



township, 50

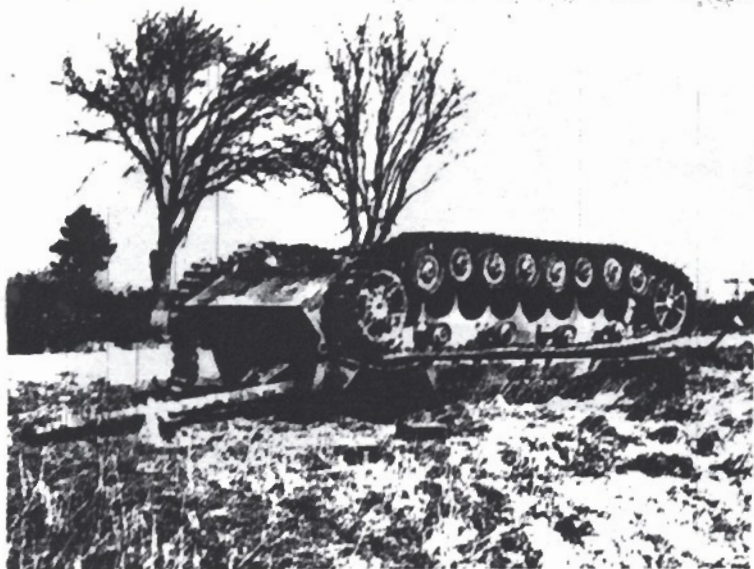
Front view of Church. Late Dec. 20, 1941.



La Gleize, Bel.

Chas. Von Luetichau believes this a Tiger,
and definitely not a Panther.

Knocked out German armor, Sullingen & Aimes, Belg.





Chas. Von Luettichau, OCMH, identified it
as a **Right Tiger.**

School

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Notes.

Records of Combat Group Peiper were destroyed by 2d Lt. Kurt Kramm, Adjutant, 1st SS Panzer Battalion, according to his testimony. When 2d Lt. Arndt Fischer was wounded on the 17th, Kramm became adjutant, until 2d Lt. R. R. Reiser arrived from Germany on the 19th, Reiser related in a pre-trial affidavit. Kramm became assistant adjutant, having the journal duty. When the defense counsel complimented him on his memory, and asked if he kept a diary, he replied: "I only made the entries when important matters occurred and I had to make entries into the combat daily journal of the battalion." He added that he burned it before his Christmas Day capture.

This study was based upon the investigation-trial documents of the MALMEDY, Belgium massacres in nine localities, 17-20 December 1944. An indication of the major proceedings and their sources may be appropriate:

27 Jan. 45. First Army. Inspector General. Information to Establish Prima Facie Case Required by SHAEF Court of Inquiry. (See #7,14),¹³

1945. Historical and War Crimes Interrogations. Screening of suspects were held at various PW compounds. More formal questioning occurred at the Third Army Interrogation Center, Froesing, Germany, and later at the USFET Military Intelligence Service Center, Oberursel, Germany. (See #12,4)

16 May-16 July 46.

Trial transcript of 3268 pages. Record of Testimony in the Trial of the U.S. v. Valentin Berwin, et al, by General Military Government Court, at Dachau, Germany. Case 6-24. (See #4)

Prosecution exhibits, mainly pre-trial affidavits. (See #7)

A preliminary statement titled "Information on the MALMEDY CASE to be Heard at Camp Dachau, Germany, 16 May 1946. Prepared by the Prosecution. (See # 6)

20 Oct 47. JAG approval of convictions. Review and Recommendations of the ETO Deputy JAG for War Crimes. (See #1-A)

4 Feb. 48. Recommendation of some reversals, some reductions of sentences, and approvals. Report of Proceedings of Administration of Justice Review Board. (See #2-A)

Later period. Other clemency investigations, particularly the congressional, but not pertinent to this study.

Sources.

DRB: AGO, Departmental Records Branch. RG #208. Office of the Judge Advocate General. War Crimes Division. 6-24. MALMEDY (Special). Drawers # 16, 17, 18.

#1. 6-24. Exhibits. Part 3, Book I. Report of Proceedings of Administration of Justice Review Board. In DRB, Dr. 18.

A. Review and Recommendations of the Dep/JAG for War Crimes, 20 Oct. 47.

1. Section VI. Evidence and Recommendations. By numerical list of defendants.

2. Section IV. Summary of Evidence.

B. General Outline of Campaign.

C. Evidence for Prosecution.

3. Incidents.

#2. 6-24. Exhibits. Part 3, Book 2, Report of Proceedings of Administration of Justice Review Board. In DRB, Dr. 18.

A. War Crimes Board of Review and Recommendations in the Case of U.S. v Valentin Bersin, et al. 4 Feb. 48.

1. Appendix 1. Map of route. Shows the advance, retreat to and from LA GLKIZE. Omits arrival days and distances, but otherwise corresponded to the map of #3-A.

2. Appendix 3. List of accused, per place or incident.

#3. Route map.

A. Photographic negative titled: Route of Advance Combat Group Peiper. Although the compilation authority was not indicated, the towns and dates were verified by various other MALMEDY case data. In DRB, Dr. 17.

B. See also #2-A-1.

#4. Trial transcript. Located extant copies:

That used for this study was borrowed from the former prosecutor, Col. Burton F. Ellis, Chairman, Board of Review # 6, Office of the JAG, The Pentagon, Rm. 3E278, X 86651.

JAG's War Crimes Division. Edward F. Lyon. Pentagon 3B256, x71436/ On indefinite loan to a Senate committee.

- #6. Interviews with above Col. B. F. Ellis, June 1952
- #6. Information on the Malmedy Case to be Heard at Camp Dachau, Germany, 16 May 1946. Prepared by Prosecution. In: DRB, Dr. 17; also in Col. Ellis' possession.
- #7. Prosecution Exhibits, Case 6-24. Relating to the 12 condensed photostats of sworn statement. In: DRB, Dr. 18.
- #8. Order of Battle of the German Army, March 1945. Military Intelligence Division, WD.
- #9. Conversations with Chas. von Luettichau, Foreign Studies Branch, Office Chief of Military History, June 1952.
- #10. Binder title "Lt. Col. Ellis." Contents: 1. A partial roster of C.Gp. Peiper, totalling 339 persons, unquestionably incomplete. 2. Suspects' statements during 1945 screening period.
Borrowed from Col. B. F. Ellis (see #4), who said this was a guide primarily, consisting of miscellaneous data.
- #11. WD. TM-E 30-451. Handbook on German Military Forces, 15 Mar 45.
- #12. Interviews with Lt. Col. J. Peiper. Transcript located in files of the Applied Studies Branch, OCMH.
A. Kampfgruppe Peiper, 15-26 Dec 44. By Historical Div., European Command. Undated. 20 pp.
B. In interview with Obst Joachim Peiper, 1 SS Ps. Regt., 11-24 Dec 44. By Maj. Kenneth W. Hechler, at Third Army Interrogation Center, Freising, Germany. 7 Sep 45. Historical Section, ETOUSA. 25 pp.
C. An interview with Obst Joachim Peiper, 1 SS Ps. Regt., 16-19 Dec. 44. By 1st Lt. Samuel J. Tobin, at USFET Military Intelligence Service Center, Oberursel, Germany. 18 Sep. 45. Historical Sect., ETOUSA. 9 pp. Supplement to Hechler's interview, mostly consisting of questions from ETO Historical Section.
- #13. First Army's IG Report. In: #7; Departmental Records Branch, AGO. War Crimes Sect. DMT Numbered Files EF 382.
- #14. Various records on Malmedy case.
A. JAG's War Crimes Division retired some. In: DRB.
B. Retired files of Office of Military Government U.S. and 7708 War Crimes Group of JAG(ETO) In: Kansas City Records Center.