

File XX Corps

XX Corps

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World War, 1939-1945 -
Regimental histories.

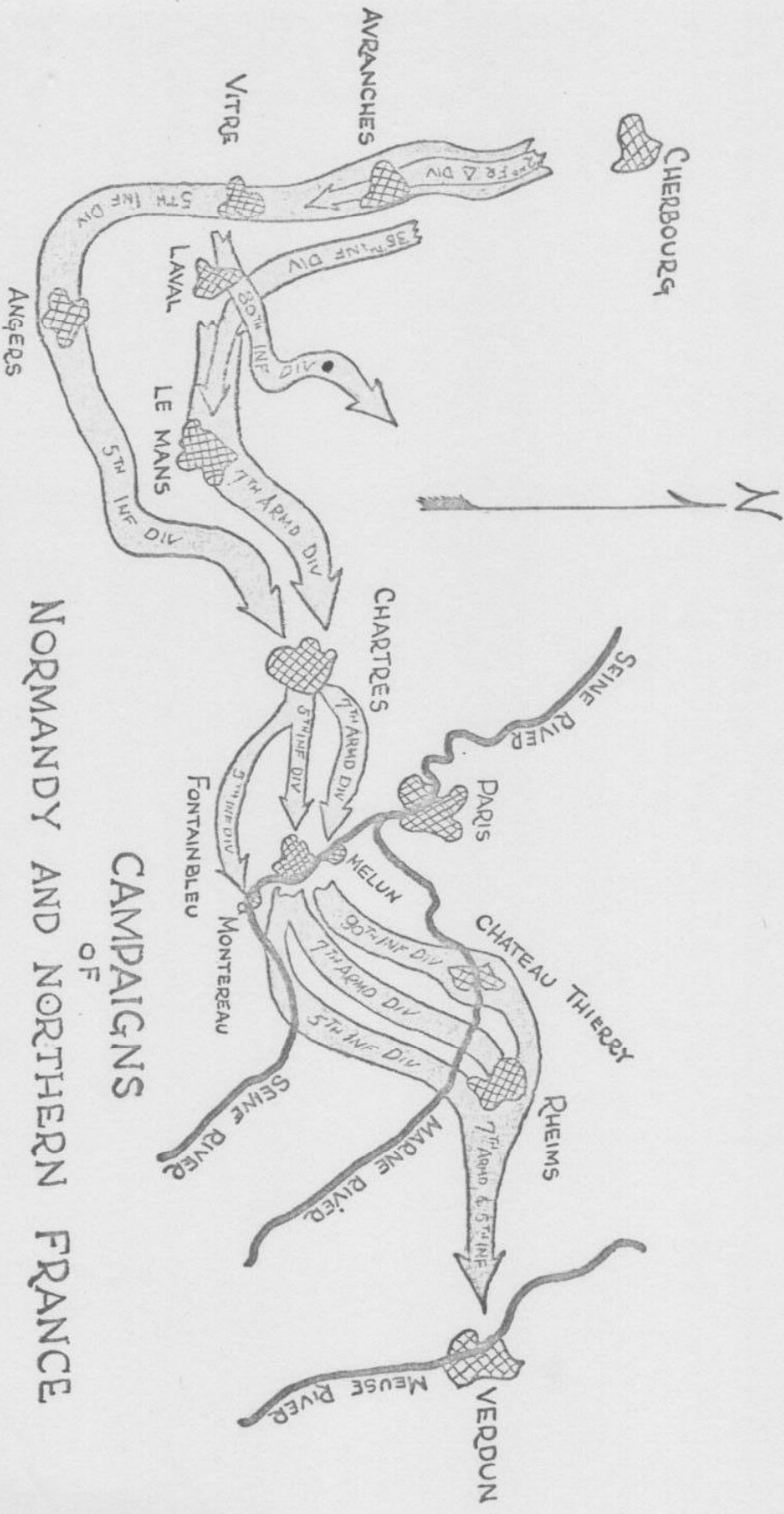
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U.S. Army

HISTORY OF THE XX CORPS ARTILLERY

21 October 1943 — 9 May 1945



CAMPAIGNS
 OF
 NORMANDY AND NORTHERN FRANCE

THE CAMPAIGNS OF NORMANDY AND NORTHERN FRANCE

1 August — 31 August 1944

On 1 August 1944 the Third U. S. Army, under command of Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., became operational. The time of action for XX Corps was imminent. On the same date the 5th Field Artillery Group and the 83rd, 695th, 696th, and 177th Field Artillery Battalions were detached from XX Corps Artillery and attached to VIII Corps for its drive through the Brittany Peninsula.

On 3 August, Corps Artillery's reconnaissance parties became the first units of the Corps Artillery to move. At 0717 hours they departed with the mission of looking for artillery crossing sites over the Rouse and Selune Rivers and the selection of bivouac areas in the vicinity of Fleury, some sixty miles south of St Jacques De Nehou. All Group Commanders were assembled at the command post of the Corps Artillery Headquarters the evening of 3 August and orders were issued for a march the next morning of all Corps Artillery units to the vicinity of Fleury.

Displacement began at 0935 hours, 4 August, and after travelling fifty-nine miles, Headquarters XX Corps Artillery set up its command post one mile southeast of Fleury at 1300 hours. Shortly after arriving in the area it was discovered that XX Corps Artillery was still a considerable distance from the fighting, which had been progressing rapidly to the south as the German lines disintegrated under the weight of the American breakthrough at Avranches.

Orders were issued at 0535 hours, 5 August, for Corps Artillery to hit the road again. The destination this time was St Martin de Landelle, thirty-six miles further south, which was reached at 0900 hours. It was here that Headquarters XX Corps Artillery had its first taste of enemy air bombardment as the Germans threw into action the long-quiescent Luftwaffe in an attempt to pave the way for their attack on 7 August from Mortain in the direction of Avranches.

The Luftwaffe was throwing in everything it had left. Our command post, just east of St Martin de Landelle, for three nights running felt the weight of the enemy's desperate bombing of our road columns and the bridges over the Selune and Rouse Rivers near St Hilaire de Harcourt. The night of 6 August was our first real baptism of fire in the war. The earth trembled from the crashing bombs, the ground was "light as day" from enemy flares that seemed to hang suspended in the air, the sky was red from the streams of .50 caliber tracers and the burst of 90 mm shells, two flaming Jerry planes glowed like balls of fire as they descended to their death, and the noise was deafening from the roars of motors, the crash of bombs, and the furious firing of the anti-aircraft. For three nights this "show" went on before the enemy efforts slackened. We shall never forget those nights. It was then that men and officers alike learned to use foxholes.

XX Corps at this time consisted of the 2nd French Armored Division and the 5th and 35th Infantry Divisions, and had the original mission of advancing east abreast of the XV Corps on to our south flank. However, the attack of the four German Panzer Divisions west out of Mortain toward Avranches became so serious that both the 2nd French Armored Division and the 35th Infantry Division, as well as the 80th Infantry Division just recently attached to XX Corps from XII Corps, were turned to halt the Germans. After two days of very heavy fighting, XX Corps and VII Corps (First U. S. Army) successfully stopped the enemy advance and thus helped create the Falaise pocket which later entrapped the bulk of the German forces in Western France (7th German Army).

As the second week in August opened, XX Corps Artillery moved still further south to open its command post near Vergeal at noon, 7 August. At Vergeal, the following Field Artillery battalions were attached to XX Corps Artillery and further attached to the 193rd and 195th Field Artillery Groups: 177th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzer), 204th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzer), 949th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzer), 733rd Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm Gun), and 736th Field Artillery

Battalion (8-inch howitzer). Although not involved directly in stemming the strong German counteroffensive at Mortain, Corps Artillery units were, with the 5th Infantry Division, occupied in protecting the Corps right flank, which was also the Third U. S. Army and Twelfth Army Group flank.

The 5th Infantry Division had been given the mission of seizing the city of Angers on the north bank of the Loire River near its mouth. The Loire was to be the anchor of General Patton's right flank as he raced through to Paris, and the Germans had secured Angers with a large force to retain a foothold north of the river. XX Corps Artillery's 204th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzer) was attached to the 5th Infantry Division and fired several hundred rounds in support of the Division's attack. After a hard fight Angers fell on 10 August. Following that battle, the 204th returned to Corps Artillery control.

Field Order No. 1, Headquarters XX Corps Artillery, 9 August, directed a movement to the east of Laval in the direction of Le Mans. This march was accomplished without further incident than moving through Laval and over the bridged Mayenne River in between German air-raids. Field Order No. 2, Headquarters XX Corps Artillery, 10 August, directed the Corps Artillery to support the attack of the 80th Infantry Division through Evron, Carrouges, toward Argentan with the mission of closing the Falaise pocket. On the same day the 943rd Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzer) joined the Corps Artillery.

The 943rd Field Artillery Battalion was destined to be the first XX Corps Artillery unit in the war to fire under Corps Artillery control. (The 204th Field Artillery Battalion at Angers was attached to the 5th Infantry Division.) On the 12th of August the 943rd Field Artillery Battalion fired in support of elements of the 3rd Cavalry Group advancing on the left flank of the 80th Infantry Division toward Carrouges. Quite a spirited small fight took place in the vicinity of Evron with the result that Corps Artillery units captured some forty-six German prisoners. In this action one man of the 943rd Field Artillery Battalion was killed by a sniper. That was enough, however, to make all units exceedingly security conscious and areas thereafter were never entered without a careful, preliminary search for hidden German soldiers, mines, and booby traps. Following this battle the XX Corps lost the 2nd French Armored Division to the XV Corps and both the 35th and 80th Infantry Divisions to the newly arrived XII Corps.

On 13 August, XX Corps' mission was changed from one of attacking north to that of advancing east from the Le Mans area to seize the famous cathedral town of Chartres. To accomplish this task the Corps retained the 5th Infantry Division and was also given the 7th Armored Division, newly arrived direct from the beaches of Normandy. Simultaneously the south flank of the Army was taken over by the XII Corps, leaving XX Corps free to attack and destroy the enemy in its zone up to and including Chartres.

Headquarters XX Corps Artillery and all the Corps Artillery units were on the road again early on 13 August and completed a seventy-two mile march to La Ferte Bernard by 1930 hours. This placed the Corps Artillery well ahead, for that night, of even the fast-moving columns of the 7th Armored Division; in consequence the Corps Artillery Commander directed that all guns be emplaced to cover all possible enemy avenues of approach.

The command post had been set-up during the night in a thick woods near an old chateau east of La Ferte Bernard. Most of the men and officers were having breakfast when the three Me 109's came over at tree-top height and started strafing. The traffic on the nearby road was apparently the target but the overhead slashing of the bullets through the trees sounded as though meant for us. Everybody scrambled for some kind of cover underneath the trucks. The ground was hard as flint and foxholes were of negligible size. The enemy planes circled and came back over us again with guns ablaze. The bullets "zinged" all around as we hugged the trucks. We had the distinct impression our presence there was resented. After one more pass the planes left. The troops of the 69th Signal Battalion on the road nearby suffered some casualties. We were more fortunate, nothing more than some breakfast upset in the melee.

The next day Corps Artillery remained in place while the 5th Infantry and 7th Armored Divisions passed by rapidly in the direction of Chartres. In the afternoon Corps Artillery resumed the march and established its command post that night two miles west of Chartres.

By 16 August the city was surrounded and XX Corps Artillery had its battalions emplaced prepared to deliver whatever fires were requested. Two more units, the 282nd Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer) and the 695th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm armored) joined at this time. Here too was welcomed back the 5th Field Artillery Group Headquarters.

On the 16th and 17th XX Corps Artillery delivered heavy supporting fires. Chartres turned out to be a fairly tough nut to crack as the Germans defended the town desperately. The 7th Armored Division by-passed the city to the south and then attacked it from the east with the 193rd Field Artillery Group in support. The 5th Infantry Division attacked on 16 August from the south and west, strongly supported by the remainder of the Corps Artillery. Several thousand rounds were fired, including some by direct laying when the 282nd and 695th Field Artillery Battalions' areas were attacked by German units infiltrating through the lines. Several massive concentrations were ordered by Corps Artillery Headquarters, most of them on the southern portion of the city, and every effort was made to spare the famed cathedral. Control became exceedingly important with more than a third of the Corps Artillery east of the town and the balance still west of it. Through very careful coordination, no American units fired at one another, although in several cases observers mistook American guns east of Chartres for German reinforcing artillery. Finally on 18 August the enemy was compressed into a small pocket, and after receiving several heavy Artillery concentrations, surrendered the city. Corps Artillery had paid a price, however. The 282nd and 695th Field Artillery Battalions reported several personnel killed and wounded in the close fighting in battery position areas.

After a one day rest to collect ourselves, following our first major engagement, all Corps Artillery units moved along in the combat columns of the 5th Infantry and 7th Armored Divisions in their next advance and attack on the German Seine river line.

On the recommendations of the Corps Artillery Commander, the Commanding General, XX Corps, directed that Corps Artillery units would advance in the Divisions' combat columns. Our liaison officers were placed in the Divisions' G-4 sections to aid in fitting our units into the Divisions' march orders. This method worked to everyone's satisfaction. When needed urgently at the Seine river, Corps Artillery was right up with the combat columns and quickly went into action giving prompt and timely support.

Headquarters XX Corps Artillery with the 5th and 195th Field Artillery Groups moving in the north (7th Armored Division) columns of the Corps, reached the vicinity of Melun on the Seine river the afternoon of the 23rd of August. The 193rd Field Artillery Group with three battalions moved in the XX Corps' southern columns (5th Infantry Division) to Fontainebleau and Montereau. Heavy fighting took place in all three locations. XX Corps Artillery rendered invaluable support to the 7th Armored Division at the Melun crossing. Here also the first Corps Artillery "Time on Target" was fired with excellent results upon a German four heavy gun position blocking the advance of the armor. Melun was taken on the 25th, the same day the Montereau and Fontainebleau crossings were made by the 5th Infantry Division with the 193rd Field Artillery Group arriving at a critical time to render strong support. The weight of the XX Corps onslaught had cracked the Seine river line in just two days.

Three new battalions joined the Corps Artillery during its stay at Fontainebleau Forest the 25th and 26th of August. These were the 241st Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm howitzer), the 274th Field Artillery Battalion (105-mm armored howitzer), and the 558th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm gun S/P). XX Corps Artillery now had a total of three Field Artillery Groups and twelve Field Artillery Battalions.

In the early morning of 27 August, all Corps Artillery crossed the Seine river at Fontainebleau and moving rapidly closed up on 28 August to what was

thought to be the next German defense line, the Marne river. The Corps now had three Divisions, the 90th Infantry Division having joined at Fontainebleau just after the Seine river crossing. Advancing in wedge formation with the 7th Armored Division spearheading and the two Infantry Divisions closely following abreast, the Corps simply steamrolled the opposition into the ground. Nogent-Sur-Seine and historically famous Chateau Thierry fell on the 26th of August, Epernay on the 28th, and Rheims on the 29th. There were scattered, small, hard fights, but the Germans facing us were so badly disrupted and disorganized by the speed of the Corps' advance that they were unable to defend the Marne river. Closely following the three Divisions, the Corps Artillery poured across the Marne river into the Champagne country around Rheims early on the 29th and set up its command post in the Romont Chateau. The 189th Field Artillery Battalion (155-mm howitzer) and the 204th Field Artillery Group Headquarters joined the XX Corps Artillery here, and on August 30th, the 773rd Field Artillery Battalion (4.5-inch gun) was added, bringing XX Corps Artillery to a strength of four Field Artillery Groups and fourteen Field Artillery Battalions.

With the securing of Rheims by the 5th Infantry Division, the 7th Armored Division was directed to continue its march to the east. On 30 August it launched its attack toward the Meuse river and took the high ground east of the river by the 31st. The 5th Infantry Division turned over its investiture of Rheims to the 90th Infantry Division, and then also struck east for Verdun.

XX Corps Artillery moved out of the Rheims area the night of August 30th. The following morning after a night blackout march of some sixty miles through terrain "cleared of Germans to road ditches only", Headquarters XX Corps Artillery closed in Dombasle, west of Verdun, with most of its Groups and Battalions in and around the city. This march carried Corps Artillery through the Argonne Forest, scene of months of extremely heavy fighting in World War I, in a matter of hours.

As the Third Army's XX Corps knifed and slashed its way through the collapsing German lines in France, Corps Artillery, by keeping well forward in the advancing combat columns, invariably was able to furnish supporting fires at the critical times needed to help clear the way for the Infantry and Armor.

XX Corps, employing three Divisions, had made the most spectacular advance of the whole campaign of France during the last week of August. It had bridged the Marne and Meuse rivers, two important natural obstacles in the approach to Germany, had run through practically the entire battle area of World War I, and captured the historically famous cities of Chateau-Thierry, Rheims, and Verdun. The XX Corps Artillery had covered a distance of five hundred and twenty-eight miles, captured five hundred and ninety-two prisoners of war, and suffered twenty-five casualties, nine men killed and sixteen wounded.

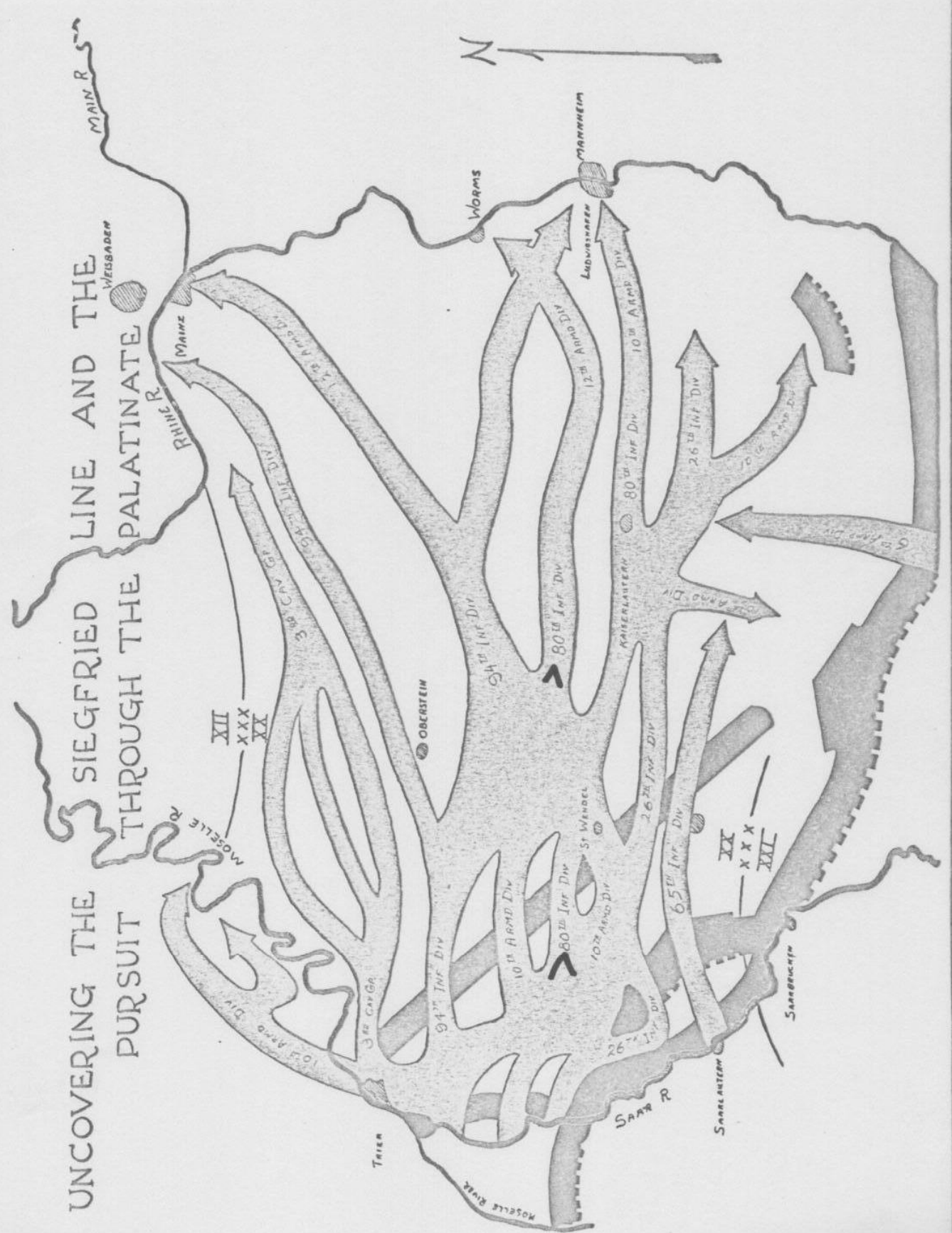
Corps Artillery Organization — 9 August 1944

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery XX Corps Artillery
7th FA Observation Battalion
193rd FA Group
 177th FA Battalion (155 H)
 949th FA Battalion (155 H)
195th FA Group
 733rd FA Battalion (155 G)
 736th FA Battalion (8' H)
4th Tank Destroyer Group
 774th Tank Destroyer Battalion (T)
 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion (S/P)

Organization for Combat — 31 August 1944

7th FA Observation Battalion	G/S Corps zone.
5th FA Group	Reinforce 7th Armored Division.
274th AFA Battalion (105 H S/P)	
558th FA Battalion (155 G S/P)	
695th AFA Battalion (105 H S/P)	
193rd FA Group	Reinforce 5th Infantry Division.
204th FA Battalion (155 H)	
949th FA Battalion (155 H)	
195th FA Group	G/S Corps zone.
189th FA Battalion (155 H)	
733rd FA Battalion (155 G)	
736th FA Battalion (8' H)	
204th FA Group	G/S Corps zone.
177th FA Battalion (155 H)	
773rd FA Battalion (4.5' G)	
943rd FA Battalion (155 H)	
4th Tank Destroyer Group	Prepare to render AT protection
774th Tank Destroyer Battalion (T)	to North flank of Corps.
Attachments:	
5th Infantry Division	
241st FA Battalion (105 H)	
282nd FA Battalion (105 H)	
284th FA Battalion (105 H)	

UNCOVERING THE PURSUIT THROUGH THE PALATINATE



UNCOVERING THE SIEGFRIED LINE AND PURSUIT THROUGH THE PALATINATE

13 March — 26 March 1945

At the beginning of the period the XX Corps was poised for its headlong dash through Germany to the Rhine River. During the preceding period the Siegfried Line switch positions in the Saar-Moselle Triangle had been thoroughly smashed and the enemy in the sector annihilated. The time was now ripe to uncover the main Siegfried Line east of the Saar River and sweep into central Germany.

On the 13th of March, the 94th, 80th, and 26th Infantry Divisions and the 3rd and 16th Cavalry Groups jumped off in their respective zones against heavy resistance. After three days of fierce fighting the Siegfried Line was sufficiently weakened to commit the 10th Armored Division in the zone of the 94th Division. By the 17th, the Siegfried Line had been completely breached and the amazing pursuit across the Palatinate to the Rhine River had started.

On the 16th of March, the command post of the XX Corps Artillery displaced to a position near Zerf, and on the following day moved to Losheim. The latter town was especially interesting to members of the Corps Artillery because of the great amount of firing done in the locality and because we suspected that there was a 170 mm gun in the vicinity that we had been unable to locate. One of the officers of the PI team tracked it down on the ground even though he couldn't find it on the photos. It was very cleverly camouflaged.

The 65th Infantry Division was ordered to attack on the 18th out of the Saarlautern bridgehead and the 416th Field Artillery Group with the 558th Field Artillery Battalion attached made a forced march the night of 17 - 18 March from Trier south of Ittersdorf to support the Division.

The 12th Armored Division, which arrived in the Corps zone on the 17th, attacking in the north of the Corps zone, made such rapid progress that on the following day the 204th Field Artillery Group and its attached battalions (176th, 204th, and 282nd Field Artillery Battalions) were pulled into assembly areas to await a time when the advance slowed down and artillery support was needed.

We moved to Tholey on the 19th of March. The XX Corps Artillery did little firing from this time until the crossing of the Rhine River. German resistance west of the Rhine River was completely smashed. The full effect of the crushing of the Saar-Moselle Triangle and the reduction of the Siegfried Line was now very apparent. The battle for the Palatinate turned into a race to see whether the XX Corps or the German remnants would reach the Rhine first.

On the 20th of March we displaced to Weilerbach, the 10th Armored Division passed through Kaiserslautern and went onto Frankenstein, and the 65th Infantry Division went through Saarwellingen to start breaching the Siegfried Line in the Saarlautern area.

Although there was little artillery firing during this period, the liaison planes of the Corps Artillery were busy during all the daylight hours spotting the spearheads of the armored columns and reporting their locations to higher Headquarters.

The extent of the defeat of the German Armies west of the Rhine was impressed forever on the memories of those who saw the road between Frankenstein and Baddurkheim. Here the retreating trains and artillery of at least a Division, which had been flushed out by the 10th Armored Division, were caught in a narrow defile and massacred by the Air Corps. Those who saw the acres of twisted wreckage had little doubt that the backbone of the German Armies west of the Rhine had been broken.

After midnight, on 21 March, the 6th Armored Division and 45th Infantry Division of the Seventh Army raced up from the south into Kaiserslautern and into the flanks of our own XX Corps' Divisions. The traffic jam caused by this colliding of Divisions of two different Armies in their wild dash to the Rhine will long be remembered by all who were there. On the 22nd and

80

23rd of March, Corps Artillery units, with the exception of the 5th Field Artillery Group, moved to assembly areas preparatory to a realignment of Army and Corps boundaries. The 5th Field Artillery Group supported the 94th Infantry Division in its assault on Ludwigshafen.

On 23 March, the command post of the XX Corps Artillery displaced to Lauterecken and the same day the XII Corps on the north crossed the Rhine at Oppenheim. The XX Corps Artillery prepared plans to support the crossing of the Rhine by the 80th Infantry Division in the vicinity of Mainz on 28 March. On 26 March XX Corps Artillery Headquarters displaced to Elsheim and all Corps Artillery units moved into positions to support the crossing.

80

Organization for Combat

13 March 1945

Uncovering the Siegfried Line (Saarburg area) and the pursuit through the Palatinate

7th FA Obsn Bn (plus B Btry, 288th FA Obsn Bn)	G/S Corps Zone.
5th FA Group	
284th FA Bn (105 H)	Reinforce 26th Infantry Division.
736th FA Bn (8" H)	G/S Zone <u>80th</u> and 26th Infantry Divisions.
943rd FA Bn (155 H)	Reinforce 26th Infantry Division.
193rd FA Group	Reinforce 94th Infantry Division initially; reinforce 10th Armored Div when that Div is committed.
247th AFA Bn (105 H) (S/P)	
689th FA Bn (155 H)	
776th FA Bn (155 H)	
195th FA Group	G/S Corps Zone.
243rd FA Bn (- C Btry) (8" G)	
270th FA Bn (240 H)	
733rd FA Bn (155 G)	
204th FA Group	Reinforce <u>80th</u> Infantry Division.
176th FA Bn (4.5" G)	
204th FA Bn (155 H)	
282nd FA Bn (105 H)	
416th FA Group	Reinforce <u>80th</u> Infantry Division.
241st FA Bn (105 H)	
558th FA Bn (155 G) (S/P)	
4th TD Group	Coordinate AT defense in Corps zone.
10th Armored Division Artillery	G/S Zone 94th Inf Div and 3rd Cav Gp; revert to 10th Armd Div when that Div is committed.
410th AFA Bn (105 H) (S/P)	
420th AFA Bn (105 H) (S/P)	
423rd AFA Bn (105 H) (S/P)	
Attachments:	
65th Infantry Division	
744th FA Bn (8" H)	
C Btry 243rd FA Bn (8" H)	
26th Infantry Division	
818th TD Bn (- A Btry) (S/P)	
94th Infantry Division	
774th TD Bn (T)	
10th Armored Division	
609th TD Bn (- A and C) (S/P)	
3rd Cav Group	
A Co 818th TD Bn (S/P)	
A and C Cos 609th TD Bn (S/P)	
Note: 1. 17 March, - 241st Field Artillery Battalion attached 3rd Cavalry Group with 558th FA Bn, 744th FA Bn, and C Btry 243rd FA Bn, given mission of reinforcing 65th Infantry Division.	
2. 18 March, - 204th FA Group given mission of supporting 12th Armored Division.	

THE RHINE ASSAULT AND SWEEP INTO GERMANY

21 March — 17 April 1945

The enemy's ability to resist had been thoroughly crushed west of the Rhine River. Frantic efforts were made by the bewildered Nazis to replace their losses but they were overwhelmed by the powerful, onrushing attacks of the Allied forces. Enemy artillery was nearly wiped out west of the Rhine and thereafter only sporadic artillery fire was met and that mostly from anti-aircraft weapons. After the Rhine crossing the Corps Artillery did not function in its primary role of counterbattery except for brief intervals; even at the time of the bridging of the Rhine very little enemy artillery fire was encountered. The Corps Artillery followed closely the spearheading Divisions' columns in case it was needed. The main use of the Corps Artillery during this period was that of softening up towns that showed a will to resist. In this role the Corps Artillery mediums and heavies ably demonstrated their value and greatly increased the speed of the advance through central Germany and Austria. Kassel, Gotha, Erfurt, Weimar, Jena, Gera, Chemnitz, and Regensburg were some of the cities that felt the sting of Corps Artillery and were quick to capitulate after receiving a few "persuasive" concentrations.

On the 28th of March the 80th Infantry Division crossed the Rhine in assault boats at Mainz against slight resistance. This same day, Corps Artillery Headquarters moved to Gonsenheim on the outskirts of Mainz. A day later the bridge over the Rhine at Mainz, 1,896 feet long, the longest tactical bridge in the ETO, was completed by the XX Corps Engineers, and Corps units poured across the last major barrier protecting the heart of Germany.

On the 30th of March, the 195th Field Artillery Group Headquarters was detached from XX Corps Artillery and went to Third U. S. Army for line of communications duty. From length of service the 195th was the oldest Group Headquarters in the Corps Artillery, having been with us in the United States, England, and through all our battles since the first days in France. With it went the 243rd and 270th Field Artillery Battalions, the 8th gun and 240 howitzer Battalions that had served so well in harassing the enemy and in cracking the defenses of the Siegfried Line.

The last day of March our Headquarters crossed the Rhine at Mainz and displaced ninety-seven miles to the town of Ziegenhain, the 2nd of April to Nieder Vorschutz and on the 3rd to Grifte.

The rapidity of the advance during this period and the many enemy pockets bypassed made the rear areas almost as dangerous to travel as the forward areas. Elements of the 6th SS Mountain Division made severe raids on our supply lines in the vicinity of Bad Homborg and inflicted a number of casualties. A seven man enemy patrol was intercepted during the night in Grifte by one of our command post guards. In the ensuing fire fight one of our guards was shot in the leg and one of the enemy was wounded and captured the following morning.

On the 2nd of April, twenty new Tiger Royal Tanks, just off the assembly line in Kassel, counterattacked the 80th Infantry Division near Nieder Vorschutz and succeeded in knocking out six tank destroyers before being dispersed. The 8th howitzers of the 736th Field Artillery Battalion assisted in repelling this counterattack. The Division had a stiff 48 hour fight in clearing Kassel. After finishing off the enemy there, the Division moved on to Gotha.

On 6 April the Corps Artillery command post displaced to Eschwege. Here we were ahead of the Division command posts and enemy patrols were active within a thousand yards of our Headquarters. After four days the enemy had been cleared to the flanks and to the rear and our Headquarters moved to Langensalza on the 10th, to Grafentona on the 11th, and into a museum in Molsdorf on the 12th. While in Grafentona trucks were taken from the 284th, 752nd, 204th, 241st Field Artillery Battalions and the 7th Field Artillery Observation Battalion to transport the Infantry in their rapid advance behind the 4th and 6th Armored Divisions.

On the 13th of April the 80th Infantry Division cleared the town of Erfurt after a hard fight. On the same day the Corps Artillery command post moved from Molsdorf, paused briefly in Weimar and went on to Jena. There

the command post was set up in the luxurious home of Colonel General Herman Hoth, commander of the 4th German Panzer Army. The following day we moved on to Gera, the 15th to Meerane, and on the 16th to the town of Penig, close to Chemnitz. Plans were completed on the 16th for the capture of Chemnitz and the 943rd and 177th Field Artillery Battalions fired 500 "persuasive" rounds at selected military targets in the city prior to the dispatching of a surrender ultimatum. We were anxious to "get on" to be the first to meet the Russians, who were reported to be some 20 miles east of Chemnitz.

Shortly thereafter word was received that the Corps zone had been changed and that the entire Corps would be assembled near Bamberg, 178 miles to the southwest, for future offensive operations. The following day plans were completed for the change of direction and the long march to the Bamberg area and all units were given their road clearances and movement schedules for the displacement to start on the 18th of April.

The V Corps, on our XX Corps' north flank, moved into the XX Corps zone and thus was given the privilege, which we had hoped would be ours, of being the first to join up with our Russian Allies.

Organization for Combat — 27 March 1945

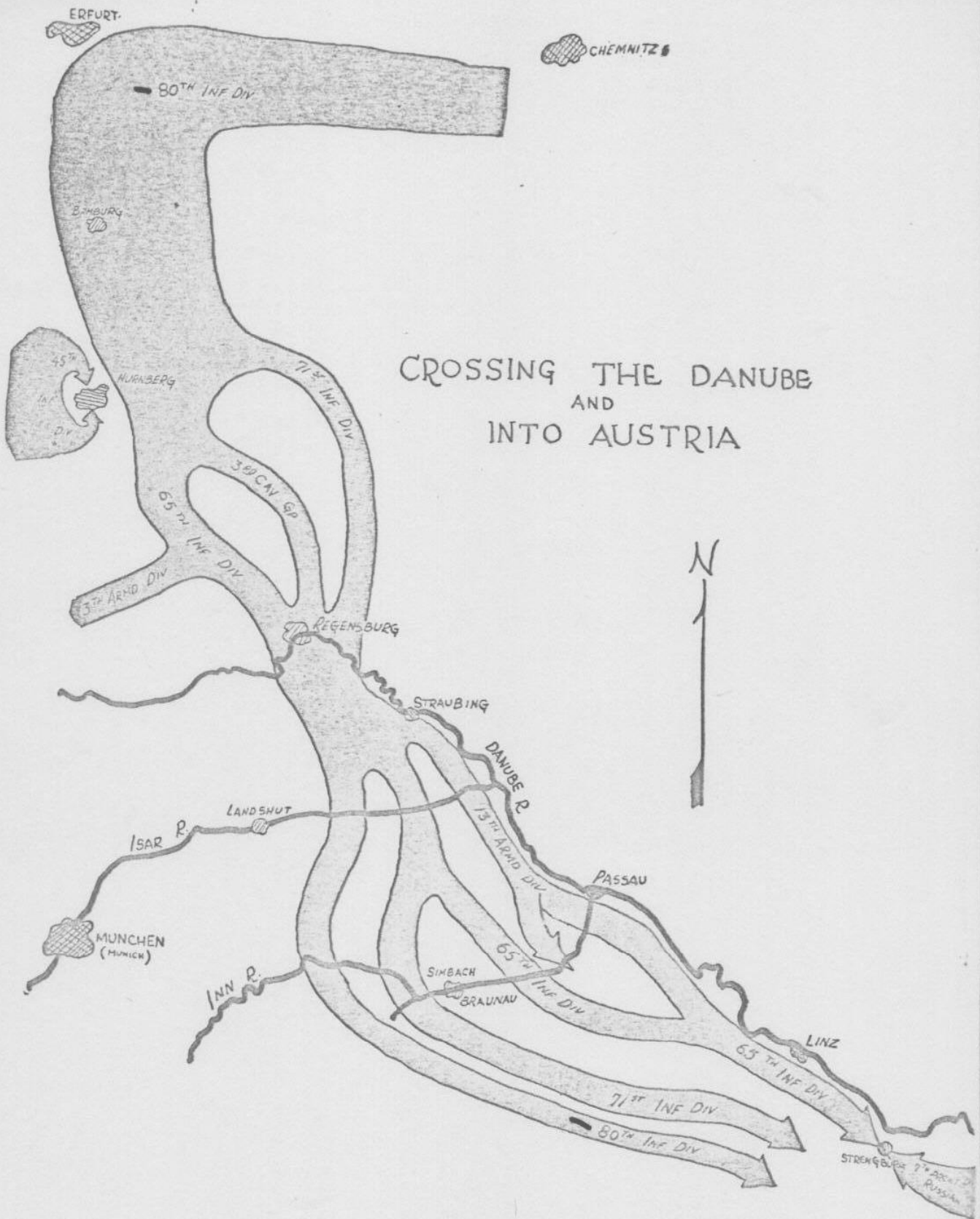
The Rhine assault and sweep into Germany (Rhine crossing phase)

7th FA Obsn Bn (plus B Btry 288th FA Obsn Bn)	G/S Corps zone.
5th FA Group 284th FA Bn (105 H) 943rd FA Bn (155 H) 736th FA Bn (8" H)	Reinforce 80th Infantry Division.
193rd FA Group 176th FA Bn 274th AFA Bn (105 H S/P) 689th FA Bn (155 H)	G/S Corps zone.
195th FA Group 243rd FA Bn (8" G) 270th FA Bn (240 H)	G/S Corps zone.
204th FA Group 204th FA Bn (155 H) 241st FA Bn (105 H) 662nd FA Bn (8" H)	G/S initially; reinforce 65th Inf Div when committed.
416th FA Group 733rd FA Bn (155 G) 744th FA Bn (8" H)	G/S Corps zone.
4th TD Group	A/T Defense Corps zone.
Attachments: 94th Infantry Division 774th TD Bn (T)	

Organization for Combat — 9 April 1945

The Rhine crossing and sweep into Germany

7th FA Obsn Bn (plus B Btry 288th FA Obsn Bn)	G/S Zone 76th and 80th Inf Divs.
5th FA Group 58th AFA Bn (105 H S/P) 177th FA Bn (155 H) 943rd FA Bn (155 H)	Reinforce 4th Armored Division.
193rd FA Group 176th FA Bn (4.5" G) 274th AFA Bn (105 H S/P) 689th FA Bn (155 H)	Reinforce 6th Armored Division.
204th FA Group 204th FA Bn (155 H) 241st FA Bn (105 H) 662nd FA Bn (8" H)	Reinforce <u>80th</u> Infantry Division.
416th FA Group 284th FA Bn (105 H) 733rd FA Bn (155 G) 736th FA Bn (8" H) 744th FA Bn (8" H) 752nd FA Bn (155 H)	Reinforce 3rd Cavalry Group. G/S Corps zone. Reinforce 76th Infantry Division. G/S Corps zone. Reinforce 76th Infantry Division.
Attachments: 4th Armored Division 704th TD Bn (S/P)	



CROSSING THE DANUBE AND INTO AUSTRIA

ERFURT

CHEMNITZ

80TH INF DIV

BAMBERG



MUNICHBERG

71ST INF DIV

399 CAV GRP

65TH INF DIV

13TH ARMD DIV

REGENSBURG

STRAUBING



ISAR R. LANDSHUT

MUNICH (MUNICH)

DANUBE R.

13TH ARMD DIV

PASSAU

INN R.

SIMBACH

BRAUNAU

65TH INF DIV

LINZ

71ST INF DIV

80TH INF DIV

65TH INF DIV

STRENGSBÜHL 7TH ARMD DIV RUSSIA

CROSSING THE DANUBE RIVER AND INTO AUSTRIA

18 April — 9 May 1945

On the 18th of April all units of the XX Corps Artillery started their memorable march to assembly areas in the vicinity of Bamberg. Headquarters and Headquarters Battery XX Corps Artillery displaced 178 miles to the southwest to the town of Memmelsdorf.

It was on this march that Lieutenant Colonel Pardee Marshall, our Corps Artillery Headquarters S-3, while on a forward reconnaissance met with the fatal accident that took from the Corps Artillery one of its oldest and most valuable officers. To Lieutenant Colonel Marshall was due a great deal of the credit for the many successful operations of the XX Corps Artillery.

The last of the Battalions of the Corps Artillery closed in assembly areas on the 19th and on the 20th the Corps Artillery command post displaced sixty-eight miles to Lauf. On the 22nd of April the 3rd Cavalry Group, with the 5th Ranger Battalion and 274th Field Artillery Battalion attached, attacked in the direction of Regensburg with the mission of securing bridges over the Danube River. The 71st and 65th Infantry Divisions closely followed. The XX Corps advance continued rapidly against little resistance. The Corps Artillery command post moved to Lauterhofen on the 23rd, Frauenberg on the 24th and to Undorf on the 26th. The 65th and 71st Infantry Divisions attacked across the Danube on the 26th against light resistance and on the following day bridges across the Danube in both Division zones were completed. The 71st Division negotiated the surrender of Regensburg after a due amount of "persuading" by the medium and heavies of the Corps Artillery. The 13th Armored Division passed through the Infantry and the race to meet the Russian armies was on again.

In quick succession the Corps Artillery Command post displaced to Kofering, Weichshofen, and Pfarrkirchen on 29 April, 30 April, and 2 May. The war was rapidly drawing to a close and little firing was done by the Corps Artillery during this period. On the 4th of May, the 689th Field Artillery Battalion fired 25 registration rounds, which proved to be the last rounds fired in the war by the XX Corps Artillery.

On the 5th of May, the XX Corps Artillery Headquarters displaced to Simbach directly across the Inn river from Braunau, Austria, the birthplace of Hitler. A more appropriate place to end the war could not have been picked.

At 1200 hours on the 6th of May, the Commanding General of the XX Corps Artillery announced that the reinforcing and general support missions of the units of the Corps Artillery would cease and that all units would remain in assembly area. At 1845 hours on the 8th of May elements of the 65th Infantry Division made contact with the advance guard of the Russian 7th Parachute Division in the vicinity of Sternberg, Austria.

Brigadier General Slack issued the following order of the day, to be read to all units of the Corps Artillery at a formation at 0900 hours on 9 May 1945.

"Order of the Day"

"1. A representative of the German High Command signed the Unconditional Surrender of all German Land, Sea, and Air Forces in Europe, simultaneously to the Allied Expeditionary Force and the Soviet High Command at 0141 hours, central European time, 7 May, under the terms of which all forces would cease active operations at 0001 B hours today.

2. In 11 months and 2 days since crossing the beaches of Normandy, the Allied Armies have brought complete defeat to the ambitions of the German people to be the masters of the world. The once powerful armies of Germany have been driven from the lands they sought to dominate and have been brought to a final crushing defeat on the soil of Germany itself. One phase of this gigantic world struggle has come to a close. Europe is rid of the forces which sought to subjugate human beings as slaves. The forces of freedom and democracy have asserted themselves again on the continent of Europe.

3. The magnificent accomplishments of the XX Corps, of the Third U. S. Army, could not have been realized without the able, vigorous and ever alert work of the units of XX Corps Artillery. You demolished enemy strongpoints, harassed enemy supply lines, and cut a path through the defenses of the Siegfried Line. At all times you delivered accurate, heavy, and timely fire when called for by the Infantry. You silenced the hostile batteries that attempted to slow the progress of our troops. You have in every way justified the faith placed in you. Signed — Slack, Brig Gen."

Organization for Combat — 21 April 1945
Crossing the Danube river and into Austria

7th FA Obsn Bn	G/S Corps zone.
5th FA Group	Initially in Assembly area; Reinforce
177th FA Bn (155 H)	13th Armd Div when committed.
943rd FA Bn (155 H)	
193rd FA Group	Reinforce 65th Infantry Division.
176th FA Bn (4.5" G)	
274th AFA Bn (105 H S/P)	
284th FA Bn (105 H)	
689th FA Bn (155 H)	
204th FA Group	Reinforce 71st Infantry Division.
204th FA Bn (155 H)	
662nd FA Bn (8" H)	
744th FA Bn (8" H)	
416th FA Group	General support.
733rd FA Bn (155 G)	
736th FA Bn (8" H)	
752nd FA Bn (155 H)	

UTILIZATION OF CAPTURED GUNS AND AMMUNITION

It became necessary late in September to conserve artillery ammunition and to reduce ammunition expenditures to some extent for the time-being. Reconnaissance parties from Corps Artillery, Ordnance, and G-4 sections were sent out all over France to locate weapons, sights, spare parts, and ammunition of foreign manufacture. It was hoped that German, French, Russian or Italian guns and ammunition captured from the Germans could be found and utilized.

This search was successful. The guns were located, as well as complete rounds of ammunition to match. The weapons were brought to the 537th Ordnance Company (Heavy Maintenance, Field Artillery) which, in conjunction with a XX Corps Artillery team, thoroughly repaired, serviced, checked, and test-fired each weapon. The ammunition was carefully checked by the same Ordnance — Artillery team. The final result of these efforts produced and turned over to the Corps Artillery: ten (10) German 88 mm guns, four (4) Russian 76.2 mm guns, two (2) Russian 122 mm guns, six (6) German 105 mm howitzers, three (3) French 155 mm howitzers (Schneiders); six (6) German 150 mm Infantry howitzers; eight (8) 100 mm French fort guns, turret-mounted, in Fort Guentrange (west of Thionville).

The 100 mm Fort guns were of German design and had been mounted in about 1900. Improvements had been made on the fort by the Germans, the French, and again the Germans. The guns were mounted on a pedestal mount, each in a hand-powered armored turret. Ammunition was prepared in rooms below the guns and hoisted by hand-powered conveyors to the turrets. Projectiles were fuzed in the turret with delay, quick, or super-quick fuzes. Ammunition was separate loading, employing a re-usable cartridge case. Propelling charges were made up in small sacked increments and primers were of the percussion type designed to screw into the base of the cartridge case. No firing tables were available so it was necessary to determine a range-elevation relationship by firing. The 241st Field Artillery Battalion conducted extensive firing with the guns against German positions on the east side of the Moselle and in the German held portions of Thionville. These guns were in action for approximately one month and fired 7,142 rounds with excellent effect.

The principal difficulty encountered with using the captured guns was a lack of sights. There were practically no German sights or sight mounts available, the Germans having removed or destroyed most of them, whereupon Ordnance instrument personnel modified spare American sight brackets and mounts to fit the captured equipment. Spare parts were obtained from damaged guns that littered the roadsides and with much improvisation and ingenuity, Ordnance armament men were able to keep the guns in constant operation.

Firing tables were a problem as the only ones obtainable at first were abbreviated 88 mm Tables. Range elevation tables for the different type guns were worked out from firing results. The weapons then were used very satisfactorily against targets of opportunity and for harassing and interdiction missions. It was not deemed advisable to use them on close-support missions. On several occasions the guns were massed, along with American artillery, to fire TOT's on German position. Results of the massing were very good.

The 949th Field Artillery Battalion Commander felt certain that the French 155 mm howitzer (Schneider) powder and projectiles could be used satisfactorily in his American 155 mm (M-1) howitzers, and on approval of the Corps Artillery Commander, the Battalion with the assistance of the Corps Ordnance Officer conducted a series of tests. These proved very successful, whereupon the battalion shot out corrections and built up range tables for Schneider ammunition fired in American 155 mm howitzers. All Corps medium howitzers thereafter fired some captured Schneider ammunition. The Graphical Firing Tables with appropriate corrections were used.

The captured weapons were in action for a little more than a month. On November 14th the weapons were turned over to the 244th Field Artillery Battalion of III Corps Artillery. The Artillery with the XX Corps was then heavily engaged in supporting the final attacks on Metz.

The following total amounts of ammunition were fired in the captured weapons during the period 15 September to 15 October:

100 mm Fortress Guns	7,142
88 mm Guns	8,469
76.2 mm Guns	6,763
122 mm Guns	313
105 mm Howitzers	8,160
155 mm Howitzers (Schneider)	9,337
150 mm Infantry Howitzers	1,818

Total 42,002

The use of the captured guns, and captured ammunition assisted in keeping the enemy off balance and under constant harrassment during the period of the build-up for the final attack on Metz. The application of ingenuity, cooperation, technical knowledge and hard work on the part of all concerned contributed greatly to this end.

UNITS THAT SERVED WITH THE XX CORPS ARTILLERY

1 AUGUST 1944 — 9 MAY 1945

XX CORPS CO: GEN Julius S. Slack

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Caliber</u>	<u>Commander</u>	<u>Period</u>
7th FA Obsn Bn		Lt Col J. P. Schwartz	1 August 44 — 9 May 45
286th FA Obsn Bn (-B)		Lt Col F. G. Johnson	1 October 44 — 30 October 44
A Btry 286th FA Obsn Bn			31 October 44 — 16 December 44
B Btry 288th FA Obsn Bn		Capt Reuling	25 February 45 — 18 April 45
33rd FA Brigade		Brig Gen W. D. Brown	6 September 44 — 31 October 44
III Corps Artillery Headquarters		Brig Gen P. V. Kane	31 October 44 — 16 December 44
5th FA Group		Col R. C. Conder	1 August 44 — 1 August 44
		Col J. E. Theimer	16 August 44 — 9 May 45
40th FA Group		Col P. H. Weiland	25 October 44 — 27 January 45
193d FA Group		Col H. A. Cooney	1 August 44 — 19 December 44
			26 February 45 — 9 May 45
195th FA Group		Col S. F. Clark	1 August 44 — 30 March 45
203d FA Group		Col J. C. Butner	7 September 44 — 19 December 44
204th FA Group		Col C. A. Pyle	29 August 44 — 9 May 45
416th FA Group		Col F. B. Porter	10 March 45 — 9 May 45
4th TD Group		Col S. R. Browning	1 August 44 — 27 March 45
58th AFA Bn	105 H S/P	Major S. W. Wood	7 April 45 — 21 April 45
176th FA Bn	4.5" G	Lt Col R. H. Earp	24 February 45 — 28 April 45
177th FA Bn	155 H	Lt Col J. S. Billups	1 August 44 — 1 August 44
			8 August 44 — 16 December 44
			6 April 45 — 9 May 45
204th FA Bn	155 H	Lt Col N. L. Yuille	6 August 44 — 9 May 45
241st FA Bn	105 H	Lt Col M. Deal	24 August 44 — 13 April 45
		Lt Col J. S. Hughes	
243rd FA Bn	8" G	Lt Col J. G. Rucks	4 October 44 — 30 March 45
244th FA Bn (Captured Weapons)		Lt Col J. J. Davis	5 November 44 — 16 December 44
270th FA Bn	240 H	Lt Col J. C. Gabriel	6 September 44 — 30 March 45
274th AFA Bn	105 H S/P	Lt Col Leon Bieri	26 August 44 — 19 December 44
			26 February 45 — 9 May 45
277th FA Bn	240 H	Lt Col W. A. Gudmundson	8 September 44 — 28 December 44
282nd FA Bn	105 H	Lt Col W. G. Hinckley	14 August 44 — 16 December 44
284th FA Bn	105 H	Lt Col H. L. Sanders	20 August 44 — 14 April 45
		Major C. R. Sparra	21 April 45 — 9 May 45
558th FA Bn	155 G S/P	Lt Col M. E. Conway	21 August 44 — 27 May 45
		Major G. W. Elkins, Jr.	
662nd FA Bn	8" H	Lt Col J. Lockett	20 March 45 — 9 May 45
689th FA Bn	155 H	Lt Col G. C. Merkel	28 August 44 — 9 May 45
695th AFA Bn	105 H S/P	Lt Col M. E. Conway	1 August 44 — 1 August 44
		Major H. W. Kale	16 August 44 — 22 December 44
733rd FA Bn	155 G	Lt Col C. C. Seavey	6 August 44 — 9 May 45
		Lt Col M. G. Weiss	
736th FA Bn	8" H	Lt Col E. J. Stocks	8 August 44 — 28 December 44
		Lt Col E. A. Peach	18 February 45 — 9 May 45
739th FA Bn	8" H	Lt Col H. M. Brown	7 September 44 — 7 February 45
773rd FA Bn	4.5" G	Lt Col H. C. Page	30 August 44 — 18 January 45
		Major R. C. Childress	
744th FA Bn	8" H	Lt Col R. B. Gardner	8 March 45 — 9 May 45
752nd FA Bn	155 H	Lt Col F. G. Striginger	30 March 45 — 9 May 45
776th FA Bn	155 H	Lt Col Blake	19 February 45 — 24 March 45
943rd FA Bn	155 H	Lt Col L. J. Conway	10 August 44 — 9 May 45
949th FA Bn	155 H	Lt Col R. H. Frink	7 August 44 — 19 December 44
989th FA Bn	155 G	Lt Col M. K. Bruce	6 September 44 — 10 September 44
999th FA Bn	8" H	Lt Col M. T. Watson	6 September 44 — 10 September 44

OTHER UNITS SERVING WITH THE XX CORPS ARTILLERY

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Commander</u>
119th AAA Bn (-A & B) (90 mm)	Lt Col E. L. Mickelson
607th TD Bn (T)	Lt Col Sundt
609th TD Bn (S/P)	Lt Col R. A. Brown
614th TD Bn (T)	Lt Col F. S. Pritchard
704th TD Bn (S/P)	Lt Col Bidwell
705th TD Bn (S/P)	Lt Col Templeton
773rd TD Bn (S/P)	Lt Col Spiess
774th TD Bn (T)	Lt Col C. B. Sturgis
807th TD Bn (T)	Lt Col Smith
814th TD Bn (S/P)	Lt Col R. B. Jones
818th TD Bn (S/P)	Lt Col Hale

UNITS SUPPORTED BY THE XX CORPS ARTILLERY

1 AUGUST 1944 — 9 MAY 1945

5th Infantry Division	2nd French Amored Division
26th Infantry Division	4th Armored Division
35th Infantry Division	6th Armored Division
65th Infantry Division	7th Armored Division
71st Infantry Division	CC A 8th Armored Division
76th Infantry Division	10th Armored Division
80th Infantry Division	12th Armored Division
83rd Infantry Division	13th Armored Division
90th Infantry Division	
94th Infantry Division	3rd Cavalry Group
95th Infantry Division	6th Cavalry Group
	16th Cavalry Group
	5th Ranger Battalion

STATISTICAL DATA

1 AUGUST 1944 — 9 MAY 1945

— Travels of Headquarters XX Corps Artillery —

Number of miles marched — 1,729 miles
Number of CPs occupied — 72
Shortest Displacement (Rustroff) — 600 yards
Longest displacement (Penig to Memmelsdorf) — 178 miles

In the 49 days from when we left Saarburg until we reached Pfarrkirchen we traveled 883 miles, an average of 18 miles a day.

During our travels we crossed 250 rivers and streams. The Seine, the Marne, the Meuse, the Moselle, the Saar, the Saale, the Mulde, the Danube, the Isar, the Inn, and the Rhine Rivers, to name only a few. The crossing of the Rhine was made on the longest treadway bridge in the ETO, 1,896 feet.

— Accomplishments of the 7th FA Obsn Bn —

Plots of enemy artillery by sound ranging — 2,723
Plots of enemy artillery by flash ranging — 375
Sound registrations and adjustments — 104
Flash registrations and adjustments — 121
Meters of survey performed — 1,280,125
Metro messages delivered — 1,779

— XX Corps Artillery Air Sections —

Combat hours flown — more than 20,000

— Photo Interpretation Team 61 —

Number of Prints received — 69,300
Area covered — 52,000 square miles
Enemy batteries located by PI — 445
Occupied emplacements located by PI — 216
Other targets — 185

— XX Corps Artillery map depot —

Number of Maps distributed — 750,000
"If spread on the ground this number of maps would cover 91 acres."

— Shellreps and counterbattery missions —

Shellreps received — 5,216
Number of rounds reported by Shellrep — 61,634
Number of Counterbattery missions fired by XX Corps Artillery — 4,294

— Ammunition expenditure —

U.S. Field Artillery Ammunition			
	Corps Arty	Division Arty	Total
105 mm Howitzer	229,509	967,621	1,197,130
155 mm Howitzer	195,870	136,583	332,453
4.5" Gun	40,317		40,317
155 mm Gun M-1	48,714		48,714
155 mm Gun S/P	30,584		30,584
8" Howitzer	43,831		43,831
8" Gun	3,819		3,819
240 mm Howitzer	10,568		10,568
Total	603,212	1,104,204	1,707,416

Other U.S. Ammunition fired in Artillery role

3" TD	114,007
76 mm TD	17,885
90 mm Tank	9,616
90 mm AAA	9,318

Total 150,826

Other Allied Ammunition

British 25 pounder 8,647

Captured Enemy Ammunition

	Corps Arty	Division Arty	Total
Russian 76.2 mm		6,763	6,763
German 88 mm	5,601	2,868	8,469
German 100 mm	7,142		7,142
German 105 mm		8,160	8,160
Russian 122 mm	313		313
German 150 mm	1,286	532	1,818
French 155 mm (Schneider)	7,670	1,667	9,337
Total	22,012	19,990	42,002

Ammunition fired by Artillery with the XX Corps

U.S. Field Artillery ammunition	1,707,416
Other U.S. Ammunition in Field Artillery role	150,826
Other Allied Ammunition	8,647
Capured Enemy Ammunition	42,002
Total Rounds	1,908,891