

# 23<sup>RD</sup> T.D. GROUP IN E.T.O.



ARDENNES



REINLAND



CENTRAL EUROPE

Donated by E.S. Nelson

R E S T R I C T E D

HEADQUARTERS  
23RD TANK DESTROYER GROUP  
APO 230

24 June 1945

SUBJECT: The 23d Tank Destroyer Group in the ETO.

TO : All Personnel of Hq and Hq Company.

1. A fairly accurate and complete narrative of the events and activities of the 23rd Tank Destroyer Group from the time of our initial alert for overseas movement up until victory in Europe has been prepared for all personnel of the Group. It is a story covering our move overseas, our activities and movement through France, Belgium, and deep into the heart of Germany where final victory was won.

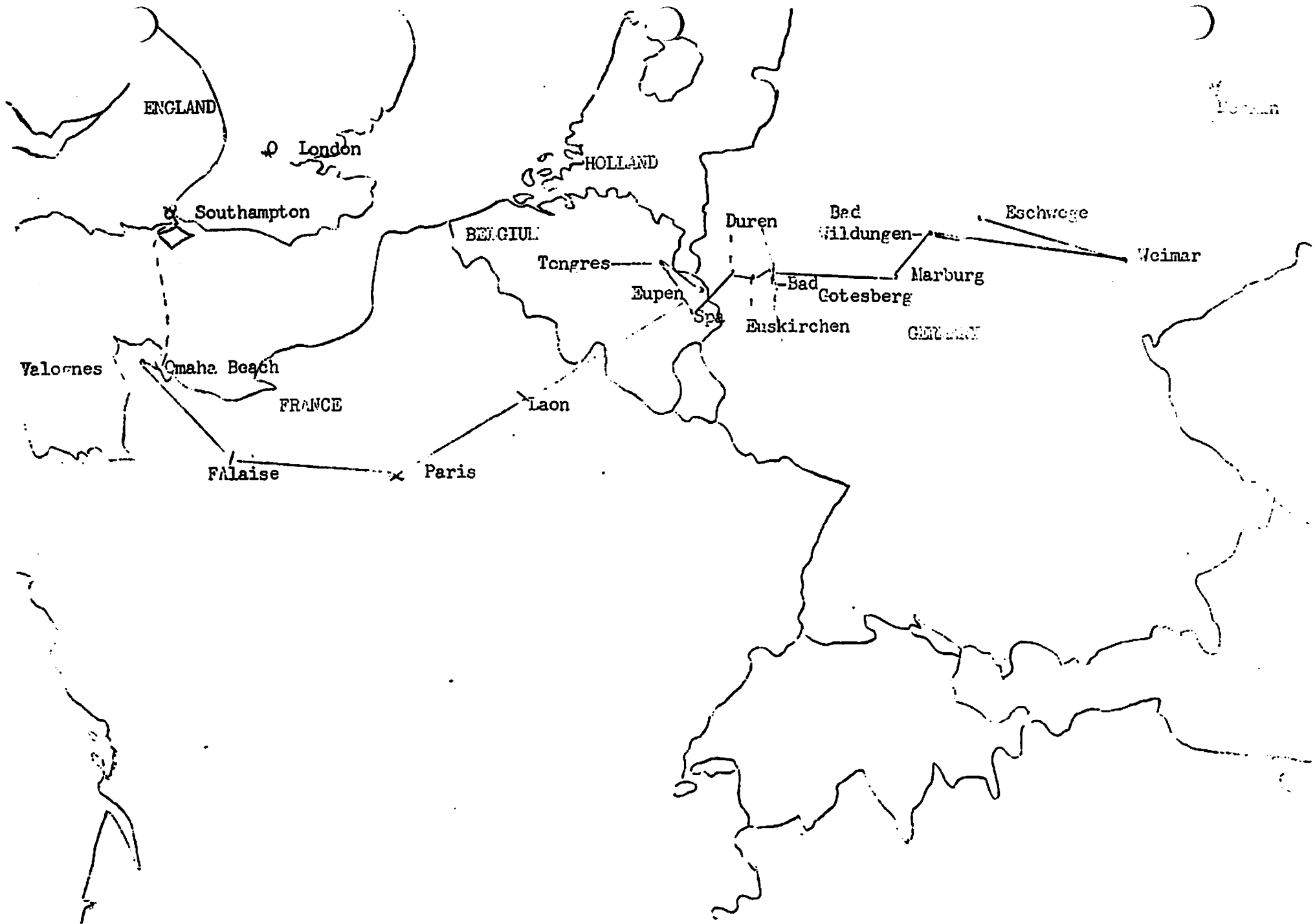
2. This narrative has been prepared with the thought in mind of providing each individual of the Group something which will be of interest and value to him in future years when he may be recalling his experiences in the ETO for posterity.

*Thomas E. Williams*  
THOMAS E. WILLIAMS  
Lt. Col., FA  
Commanding

DISTRIBUTION:

- 1 - ea Off and EM
- 1 - Col Paul M. Martin
- 1 - Maj Richard H. Baker
- 1 - Capt Edwin G. Clapp
- 1 - Capt William B. Wilbraham
- 1 - Capt (Ch) William E. Maher
- 1 - Capt Louis Kanefsky

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Period 5 August - 30 November 1944

The 23d Tank Destroyer Group received its initial alert for overseas movement on or about 5 August 1944. At this time, the Group was located in North Camp Hood, Texas and had under its control the 614 TD Battalion and the 827 TD Battalion. On or about 10 August the 614 TD Battalion departed for the New York Port of Embarkation. The 827 TD Battalion was alerted for overseas movement about this same time. In the weeks that followed the initial alert all personnel were engaged in preparing and packing organizational and TAT property. On 8 September Major Adelbert A. Arter departed for Elmira Holding Point, Horseheads, New York to arrange for the procurement and shipping of vehicles. On the same date Captain Charles L. Fisher departed to the Boston Port of Embarkation as the second supply representative. On 15 September the Advance Detachment for overseas movement consisting of Major Richard H. Baker, 1st Lt Herbert B. Brown, M/Sgt Carroll S. Klingelhofer, and Tec 4 Marvin G. Oglesby departed for Ft Hamilton, New York arriving at their destination 18 September. On 23 September Hq and Hq Company, 23d TD Group, entrained at North Camp Hood, Texas departing by rail for Camp Miles Standish, Massachusetts. The same day the Advance Detachment of this organization departed from Fort Hamilton, New York by harbor boat for Pier 90, New York City and boarded the troop liner Queen Elizabeth. On 26 September Hq and Hq Company arrived at Providence, Rhode Island and departed for Camp Miles Standish by motor transport. On 30 September the Advance Detachment arrived Clyde River Harbor, Scotland and later disembarked at Greenock, Scotland where they boarded train at 1830 hours for Southampton, England. After an overnight trip they arrived Southampton approximately 1400 hours and boarded channel boat at 1630 hours. An overnight trip across the English Channel brought the Advance Detachment to Omaha Beach, France at approximately 1630 hours where they boarded motor convoy at 2330 hours arriving Camp 500, France at 0100. Upon arrival at Camp 500, the Advance Detachment was instructed to carry on necessary administration and make ready for the arrival of the unit. During the time that the Advance Detachment had departed from New York City and arrived in Valognes, France, Hq and Hq Company were receiving shots, attending classes and gas mask drill, issued gas protective clothing, and receiving final physical type inspections. On 10 October Captain Charles L. Fisher, Chaplain Kenneth M. Lindner, and Chaplain William E. Maher departed from Camp Miles Standish to the Boston Port of Embarkation to prepare for the unit's arrival aboard ship. This same date, Colonel Paul M. Martin returned from the station hospital where he had been ill since the arrival of the unit at Camp Miles Standish.

On 11 October Hq and Hq Company departed Camp Miles Standish by rail and arrived at the Boston Port of Embarkation at approximately 0930 hours where they boarded the U.S.S. Wakefield and sailed at 1700 hours. Upon docking in Liverpool, England at 1700 hours on 18 October, Colonel Paul M. Martin was taken off the ship immediately and taken to the U.S. Army Hospital in Liverpool. The unit dis-

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Period 5 Aug - 30 Nov 44, Contd

embarked at approximately 2030 hours and boarded the train at 2400 hours departing for Southampton. After an overnight trip the unit arrived at Southampton at 1200 hours and boarded the Channel Boat "New Hollandia" at approximately 1500 hours. At 0800 hours, 20 October the New Hollandia sailed in convoy for Omaha Beach. The convoy anchored off Omaha Beach at approximately 2000 hours the same day. During the night a storm arose and the water became very choppy. The following morning, 21 October, the unit started disembarkment. The main body disembarked minus Major C. B. Dear, 1st Lt Eugene Boggs, Tec 5 John Flannery, and Tec 5 Robert Burns who were left due to the difficulty encountered on disembarking men into the landing craft. The unit departed from Omaha Beach by motor convoy arriving in Area F-13 of the Valognes Staging Area. The Advance Detachment rejoined the unit upon arrival. Tents were set up in the mud in the midst of a driving rain. The following day Major Dear, 1st Lt Boggs, Tec 5 Flannery, and Tec 5 Burns finally succeeded in disembarking and arrived in the Valognes Staging Area at approximately 1700 hours. During the days that followed, the adverse weather conditions greatly hindered training and preparation for combat. The greater part of the time was spent attempting to keep out of the rain or finding some dry clothes. Several officers and enlisted men received passes to visit Paris. M/Sgt Robert Hallberg and Tec 4 Donald Appold departed for Liverpool, England by C-47 on 10 November to arrange for the shipment of officers foot lockers. On 24 November the unit left the Valognes Staging Area for Baelen, Belgium, travelling to Falaise, France for overnight bivouac. The following day they travelled approximately 250 miles to Laon, France where they bivouaced overnight. On 26 November the unit arrived Baelen, Belgium at approximately 2030 hours. On 27 November, the 23d TD Group was assigned the mission of Security Headquarters for First United States Army.

Period 1-16 December 1944

The 23d Tank Destroyer Group reported to Headquarters, First U.S. Army on 27 November 1944 for the purpose of organizing and coordinating the Army Rear Area security. The Army rear area security plan was begun by organization into nine areas and appointment of the commanding officers of the nine areas. Each area commander was furnished a company-grade officer to act in an advisory capacity on security matters. Area plans were formulated, revised, approved, and placed into operation. Members of the staff at Security Headquarters made frequent inspections of all areas to ascertain the progress and completeness of the Army rear area security plan. A test of the entire security system was in preparation when an actual emergency provided an ideal test. During this period there were numerous reported enemy paratroop landings. All of these reports received individual investigation and reports forwarded to Army Headquarters. Some of the landings proved to be false, others were accurate and resulted in the

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Period 1-16 Dec 44, Contd

capture of enemy personnel. On 6 December, liaison was established and security plans coordinated with the 99th Infantry Battalion, which was designated as the Army rear area reserve. On 10 December, Corps rear boundary was moved forward which necessitated a change in the Army security plan in order to bring under Security Headquarters the sector vacated by Corps. On 12 December, the 5th Belgian Fusilier Battalion was attached to First U.S. Army with a mission of guarding vital Army installations in order that combat and service troops could be relieved for normal duties. On 16 December, a liaison officer from Security Headquarters was sent to assist in the formation of a new Belgian Fusilier Battalion which was to be attached to First U.S. Army at a later date. During the latter part of this period, numerous enemy bombing-strafting attacks occurred within the Army rear area.

Period 17-24 December 1944

At 0033 hours, 17 December, the Security Commander, First U.S. Army, ordered all areas alerted for expected large scale paratroop attacks and infiltration of enemy troops dressed in American uniforms. The transmission of this information to all areas was extremely difficult due to the jamming of the radio net by the enemy, however, all areas and the Army Reserve Force were alerted within one hour in spite of transmission difficulties. Enemy aircraft was active throughout the night. Small groups of enemy paratroops were landed within the Army rear areas. These landings were in most cases contained by Army rear area forces. During this period, the enemy succeeded in the large scale breakthrough in the southern part of the Army sector which resulted in the commitment of the Army rear area reserve plus a "T" Force composed of one armored Infantry battalion, less one company, and a TD company. This force was committed in the vicinity of Malmedy and Stavelot. Area 7 Headquarters, being close to the zone of action, was forced to withdraw to their rear area boundary. Continued jamming of the security warning net required an alternate radio frequency to be resorted to. The town of Eupen and vicinity was subjected to several strafing and bombing attacks. During the period 17-21 December, frequent reports of the presence of paratroops were received, most of which were found to be false. At 1800 hours, 21 December, Army boundaries again changed as the enemy continued to force a penetration. At 2100 hours, Colonel Paul M. Martin, CAV, arrived Security Command Headquarters (23d TD Gp) and assumed command. At 2020 hours, 24 December, CP Security Command Headquarters closed at Eupen and opened at Tongres, Belgium.

Period 25-31 December 1944

The enemy breakthrough resulted in the movement of a majority of the rear Army service installations. This resulted in a complete reorganization of the Army rear area. During this period, new area commanders were appointed and security officers reassigned. Enemy action in the rear areas continued. On 25-27 December, Captain Emerson

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Period 25-31 Dec 44, Contd

S. Nelson, Inf., Captain Charles L. Fisher, FA, and 1st Lt. E. I. Peterson, Inf., reported to First U.S. Army Headquarters for special air reconnaissance missions. A total of 14 missions were flown by these officers. New area security plans were formulated, coordinated, and approved.

Period 1-10 January 1945

During this period, area security plans were revised and improved. Frequent inspections by members of Security Command Headquarters staff were made of all areas to ascertain the adequacy of Army rear area security. During this period there were numerous reported enemy paratroop landings and reports of infiltration of enemy agents into the Army rear area. All reports were investigated individually and the results reported to Army Headquarters. On 2 January 1945, Security Officer, First U.S. Army, and members of Security Command Headquarters attended a meeting at Ninth Army Headquarters to coordinate security along the First and Ninth Army boundaries. On 4 January 1945, security for the city of Liege was coordinated between First U.S. Army and the 29th Infantry Regiment which was controlled by Adsec. During this period, an investigation was made of the defenses of vital installations in the Army rear area. The Army Engineer barrier plan was coordinated with the Army areas barrier plan to prevent duplication of effort. On 8 January 1945, reconnaissance of the rail line from Liege to Aywaille was made to determine the security measures necessary to protect the bridges and tunnels. Preparations were initiated for the employment of the 11th Belgian Fusilier Battalion.

Period 11-20 January 1945

During this period, a plan for the classification for all service units in the Army rear area was devised. This plan gave the mission of all units in the Army security plan and their relative importance. The guarding of the railroad bridges near Tillf was assigned to the 820 TD Battalion. During this period, many service units were moved from one Army area to another, requiring small changes in the area and sub-area plans. Dental officers of Security Command Headquarters were sent to the 820 TD Battalion to conduct a dental survey and to perform the necessary dental work for the unit. On 20 January 1945, two German soldiers in U.S. uniform were discovered cutting wire in the Army rear area. Both escaped and were not apprehended. At 1200 hours, 20 January 1945, the Corps rear boundary moved forward requiring a reallocation of Army rear areas and a readjustment of rear area security teams. On 20 January 1945, Lt. William Honan, 230th Inf, Co "M", reported for duty with this Headquarters.

Period 21-31 January 1945

On 21 January 1945, the Corps rear boundary again changed. This Headquarters submitted an overlay plan to the Army Security Officer for approval. On 22 January 1945, plans were completed for the employ-

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Period 21-31 Jan 45, Contd

ment of the 11th Belgian Fusilier Battalion. Plans called for or provided for the attachment of the entire battalion to Ordnance units of the First U.S. Army. On 23 January 1945, the plan for the changing of area boundaries was approved. The new plan required that areas 6 and 8 be consolidated and that the security team from area 6 move to the new area. The new plan became effective at 1200 hours 23 January 1945. On 23 January 1945, parachute bundle was dropped in Army rear area in vicinity of Hanunt. Investigation disclosed parachute bundle to be an American air-ground set and was dropped by a badly damaged U.S. four-motored bomber. VII Corps, with three divisions attached, moved into the Army rear area to rest and re-fit. Security plans for the Corps and its divisions were coordinated with the Army security plan. On 25 January 1945, report was received concerning six or eight German soldiers in the vicinity of Celles. The investigating party was dispatched to this location with negative results. On 26 January 1945, the Corps rear boundary again moved forward requiring changes in area boundaries to include the new area of responsibility. This necessitated the combining of areas 6 and 7; and the security team of area 7 was dispatched to organize the new area. On 31 January 1945, security plans were coordinated with the 2d Armored Division which had moved into the Army rear area for re-fitting. Also on this date, the commanding officer, 3d Replacement Depot, was assigned as the area commander of Area 1.

Period 1-10 February 1945

During this period, area security plans were revised and improved. Major Baker was designated Field Inspector for the coordination of area security plans and special inspections of vital service installations. Two bazooka instructors were sent to Ninth Tactical Air Command for a period of one week on verbal orders, Commanding General, First U.S. Army. Captain Kyne, Security Officer, Area 5, was relieved from DS to Security Command and returned to his organization 3 February 1945. Captain Gatto, Security Officer, Area 7, was relieved from attachment this Headquarters, and returned to his unit on 7 February 1945. First Lieutenants Honan and Sanders assumed security officer responsibility to these areas respectively. Defense plans of Area 1 were coordinated with the Seventh Armored Division which was temporarily located in the Army area. The Second Armored Division moved from the Army rear area on 3 February 1945. As a result of the movement of Army service troops forward in the Army rear area, numerous changes in area and sub-area headquarters were made. Coordination was effected with VII, XVIII, and V Corps through their security sections and numerous conferences were held to exchange information. During reconnaissance trips throughout the security areas, numerous bodies were found and reported to the Graves Registration Section. Major Dear coordinated security plans with 29th Infantry in the area Huy-Liege. Chaplain Maher reported to the 45th and 96th Evacuation Hospitals on DS for an indefinite period. A new table of organization for Tank Destroyer Groups was received and action initiated for authorization of this unit to reorganize accordingly. A detailed study of service installations within the Army rear area was made to determine the method of employment and probable dispositions of available Belgian Fusilier troops. The 12th Belgian Fusilier



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Period 1-10 Feb 45, Contd

Battalion came under control of the First U.S. Army on 13 February 1945 and was attached in accordance with the results of the above mentioned study. First Lieutenant Boggs was transferred as Liaison Officer of the 12th Belgian Fusilier Battalion to the 21st Belgian Fusilier Battalion. Through agreement with the 9th U.S. Army, the responsibility for the defense and security of Aachen was invested in the First U.S. Army. Detailed plans were received and area plans coordinated with the 690 FA Battalion under whom the defense plan was organized. At 2400 hours, 10 February 1945, the boundary between 1st and 3d Armies was changed, resulting in the consolidation of Areas 6 and 5, and 4 and 9.

Period 11-20 February 1945

As a direct result of reconnaissance made during the period following the December German counter-offensive, it was recommended and approved that all civilians having in their possession Army equipment of any kind or nature whatsoever be turned over to the military police and a report forwarded to this Headquarters. An inspection of the Army Class III Dump located at Aubel revealed the need for an extensive study and reorganization of the installation defense. A new plan was drawn up and submitted to the Commanding Officer of the unit charged with operation of the dump and an additional company of Belgian Fusiliers assigned. As a result, pilfering had decreased by almost 100 per cent two days following adoption of the new plan. During this period a number of reports were received concerning paratroopers but after investigation, all were found to be propaganda leaflet drops. To obtain better coordination, several changes, minor in scope, were made in area boundaries. Colonel P. M. Martin and Captain E. S. Nelson conferred with various staff sections of Third U. S. Army in order to better coordinate security efforts between the two Armies. 8th Tank Destroyer Group was assigned First Army and attached to III Corps as their security section.

Period 21-28 February 1945

During this period an extensive study was made of the lines of communication as ground work for future planning and allocation of Belgian Fusiliers to guard those bridges and tunnels considered vital for present and future operations. 9th Armored Division moved into Army rear area to re-group and re-fit. Division G-2 reported to Commanding Officer, Security Command Headquarters, and was oriented as to the security situation. On 21 February 1945, a Belgian guard attached to the Class III gas dump at Aubel was shot through the arm by an unknown person. Investigation was made by this Headquarters and report forwarded through channels. On 22 February, G-2 reported two paratroopers dropped near Aachen on the Rotgen Road but patrols sent from the security areas adjacent failed to obtain any additional information. VII and III Corps rear boundary moved forward effective 1200 28 February. This new sector was designated Area No. 8 in the Army Security Plan and Lt Brenner assigned thereto as Security Officer. Army Class III dump at Aubel lost one stack of approximately 5,000 gallons of gasoline by fire but the investigation failed to produce any evidence

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Period 21-28 Feb 45, Contd

of sabotage.

Period 1-10 March 1945

During this period area security plans were revised and improved. Security Command assumed the mission of the reconnaissance and reporting to the proper special staff section the location, type, and amount of enemy materiel to include particularly Ordnance and Engineer. Several hundred battalion and regimental dumps, plus numerous unmarked German and American mine fields were found by area security officers and reported to the service concerned. 1st Lt Eugene H. Boggs attended the Orientation and Education School in Paris, France for a period of one week being relieved temporarily of his liaison mission with the 21st Belgian Fusilier Battalion currently in training at Charleroi, Belgium. Major Richard H. Baker reported to Evacuation Hospital due to a knee injury and subsequently was moved to England for treatment. 534 Quartermaster Group was appointed Area Commander for Area No. 5. Commanding Officer, Security Command, accompanied by various staff officers inspected the service installations in the Army Rear Area. During all reconnaissance phases, an effort was made to locate as many bodies, both American and German, as was possible, and several hundred were reported to Graves Registration for action. During the day of 2 March, three enemy aircraft appeared in the Aachen area, strafed and bombed N-3 in the vicinity of Eupen-Henri Chapelle resulting in slight damage to the Class I Dump. Continued study and reconnaissance of the lines of communication, with particular emphasis on security of the rail line was carried on during the entire month. Lt Sydney Gravitz, Dental Officer, was placed on detached service to the 820 TD Battalion for an indefinite period. At 1200 hours, 8 March, Corps Rear Boundary moved forward resulting in the consolidation of old areas and the formation of new. Requests for Belgian Fusilier guards continued to be received and in accordance with the present policy, each organization was referred to G-4 for priority. Security Command assumed responsibility of guarding the Roer River bridges 10 March relieving security elements of Jayhawk-VII Corps-1st TD Group. Advance party left for Duren, Germany 9 March 1945. An additional change in Corps Rear Boundary necessitated a revision in the Army Security Plan and consolidation and formation of areas, effective 1200 10 March 1945.

Period 11-20 March 1945

Security Command closed Spa, Belgium and opened Duren, Germany 1200 11 March 1945. The following Area Commanders were appointed in accordance with change in Corps Rear boundary; 47 QM Group, Area 8; 61 Engr (C) Bn, Area 4; 1128 Engr (C) Gp, Area 5. To increase the security of troop movement and location of service installations and elements, the combined Field Code became the primary communication means. An additional change in Corps Rear boundary on 14 March 1945 necessitated additional changes in areas. During this period, personal liaison was maintained with all Corps security sections in order to give this Headquarters prompt and current information on the security situation forward of the Corps Rear boundary. The 2d and 4th Companies of the 12th Belgian Fusilier Battalion which had been attached to III Corps

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Period 11-20 March 45, Contd

reverted to the control of First U.S. Army and Security Command upon receipt by III Corps and attachment thereto of the 6th Battalion Belgian Fusiliers. All elements of VII Corps security within the new Army area were relieved by Security Command. At this time, responsibility of guarding various captured enemy materiel dumps was assumed by this Headquarters. On 16 March Security Command closed Duren, Germany and opened Euskirchen, Germany at 1600 hours. The 23d Tank Destroyer Group reorganized 17 March 1945 under T/O and E 18-10-1, dated 31 October 1944 per Letter Headquarters First U.S. Army, 320 (C), dated 17 March 1945, authorizing 15 officers and 61 enlisted men assigned. Report of unidentified parachutist in the vicinity of Trooz, Belgium was investigated and reported negatively. Commanding Officers, 71 Ordnance Group and 1255 Engineer Battalion were appointed Area Commanders of Security Areas No. 7 and 6 respectively. Additional priority Signal Installations were designated by Signal Officer for coverage and Belgian Fusilier guards were placed in accordance with these requests. Four instructors on Springfield Rifle were sent to G-5 Supply Section, Liege, Belgium, for a period of one week on verbal orders, Commanding General, First U.S. Army, for the purpose of instructing a French Battalion of drivers, used by Military Government, in the operation and use of the Springfield 1903 Rifle. During this period, service troops continued to move forward rapidly necessitating numerous changes in Area Security plans.

Period 21-31 March 1945

The anticipated arrival of the 21st and 22nd Battalions, Belgian Fusiliers and attachment to Security Command, First U.S. Army, was cancelled. The Commanding Officer and S-3 attended a conference with the Army Chief of Staff and Deputy Chief of Staff to present the status, availability, and additional requirements for Belgian Fusiliers or other security troops. As a result, the 3d Battalions of the 271 and 272 Infantry Regiments, 69th Infantry Division, were attached operationally to Security Command. Operations Memorandum No. 17, Headquarters First U.S. Army, dated 27 March 1945, augmented the responsibilities of Security Command by giving the Security Commander operational control of all units employed on security missions. This included two Field Artillery Battalions, the 74 and 773, which were on Military Government missions. New Corps Rear boundary became effective 1200 hours, 23 March and Army Security areas changed accordingly. The mission of establishing Frontier Guard on the German-Belgian border was assigned to the 12th Belgian Fusilier Battalion, augmented by Btry C of the 773 FA Bn. These troops were replaced three days later by the 2d Bn, 109 Infantry, which had been assigned to First Army for security mission. Two captured enemy ammunition dumps, 10,000 tons and 150,000 tons, respectively, were reconnoitered and taken under guard employing one company of Belgian Fusiliers at each dump. 74 and 773 FA Bns currently on Military Govt security installations and functions came under operational control but continued their currently assigned missions. On 26 March, plans were made to replace the two Infantry bns of the 69th Inf Division by the 1st and 3d Bns, 109 Infantry, 28th Division. The Commanding Officers and respective staffs of the new units reported this Headquarters 1630 hours, 26 March and the following morning, after a

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Period 21-31 Mar 45, Contd

conference and orientation with the S-3, coordinated transfer of security missions with the elements being relieved. Colonel Throckmorton, Asst G-3, First U.S. Army, visited Security Command Headquarters and several Area Headquarters and installations on 27 March 1945. New Corps Rear boundary effective 1200 28 March and Security plans formulated accordingly. The 49th AAA Brigade was assigned the mission of guarding and securing the Rhine River crossings. Through personal liaison, this was included and coordinated into the Army Security plan. Definite information was received regarding the plans for relief of First Army Security by the Fifteenth Army west of the Rhine River. Study was made and plans formulated to cover the four phases commencing 1 April and terminating 15 April 1945. Commanding Officer, 23d Tank Destroyer Group, presented to the Commanding Generals and respective staffs of the First and Fifteenth U.S. Armies the security organization and proposed reliefs in order to free First Army Security personnel for employment east of the Rhine River. Security Command closed Euskirchen, Germany and opened Bad Godesberg, Germany 1000 30 March 1945. A parachute alert was received 2150 hours 30 March and investigated by motor patrols from Areas 4 and 8 as well as by CIC. Thorough investigation of this area four miles south of Duren, Germany resulted in a negative report.

Period 1-10 April 1945

During this period Area security plans were revised and improved to meet the rapidly moving and constantly changing situation. A new security officer, Captain Ayres, replaced 1st Lt Peterson. Corps rear boundary and area changes became effective 1200 1 April 1945 with the usual revision and renumbering of security areas. A large fire was reported raging in the railroad yards in Bonn, Germany, but investigation revealed that the fire was under control. Corps rear boundary moved forward again effective 1200 3 April necessitating further revision and renumbering of security areas. The security of the German-Belgian border was taken over by the Fifteenth U.S. Army. A staff conference was attended by the Commanding Officer at 0900 hours 4 April. The Military Government of Aachen, Germany requested additional guards for civilian officials following the assassination of the Mayor by German Luftwaffe personnel. During this period Army rear area extended both east and west of the Rhine River and Security Command was hard pressed for enough troops to adequately secure the vast area. It was decided by the Commanding Officer and Provost Marshal, First U.S. Army, to give precedence to guarding of installations east of the Rhine River. Hq & Hq Co, 23d TD Group departed to Marburg, Germany 0900 hours 6 April. On 7 April Provost Marshal; Col Nelson, CO 112 Infantry; and CO, 941 FA Bn met with the Commanding Officer and S-3, this organization, to be briefed concerning security missions. On 8 April 1945, Combat Team 112 was placed under operational control of Security Command Headquarters in order to provide security for the large number of overrun enemy installations and the ever expanding Army rear area following the crossing of the Rhine River. The 941 FA Bn relieved a battalion of the 109 Infantry. Effective 1200 9 April, Corps rear boundary moved forward. Security areas 2 and 4 were consolidated and designated as Area 2 with Commanding Officer, 103 AAA Group, as Area Comdr. Areas 6 and 3 were consolidated and designated as Area 6 and Commanding Officer, 52 Ordnance Group appointed as Area Comdr.

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Period 1-10 Apr 45, Contd

At 1400 hours 9 April, First Army G-2 called S-3 in regard to guerrilla activities. 15-20 German soldiers attacked an American convoy with the result that 3 vehicles were destroyed, 3 men injured, and one man missing near the vicinity of Jesberg, Germany. This made a total of 3 such incidents which had occurred in this area. Captain C. L. Fisher and 1st Lt E. H. Boggs returned from temporary duty from Shaef Mission after acting in the capacity of liaison officers with the Belgian Army for two and four months, respectively. During the entire period enemy guerilla activity in the form of sniping on convoys, wire cutting incidents, and attempted demolition of bridges along main supply routes were reported throughout the entire Army rear area. Displaced Persons continued to be a major problem during the period. Check points were set up throughout the areas to apprehend PW's and to stop the movement of displaced persons westward. The Rhine River was set up as a barrier which effectively stopped most movement.

Period 11-20 April 1945

Due to the lack of transportation and the necessity of evacuating large numbers of PW's, an arrangement was made whereby PW's were taken to the nearest truckhead and evacuated by empty ration trucks going to the rear. At 2230 hours 11 April 1945, Major General Kean, Army Chief of Staff, called requesting the Commanding Officer and S-3 to report at once to his office for conference. At 1200 hours 12 April, the 259 FA Bn came under operational control of this Headquarters. On 13 April advance party of the 142 AAA Bn reported in and was given missions with Military Government. At the same time the advance party of the 20th Armored Division reported and was given the mission of taking over the security of Army rear area on a general line: Hallenberg-Marburg-Giessen and west to the Rhine River. The 229 FA Bn and Combat Team 112 were assigned to 20th Armored Division operationally. On 14 April the Commanding Officer of 172 FA Bn reported for an orientation and assignment of security missions. Effective 1800 hours 14 April, Corps rear boundary moved forward. The 20th Armored Division assumed responsibility for security on a line-Wabern-Fritzlar-Wega-Afforderm-Medabach. Installations in the parts of Areas 4 and 8 that were affected by this change were turned over to 20th Armored Division on 15 April. Security Command moved to and opened at Bad Wildungen, Germany and closed at Marburg, Germany 1200 hours 16 April. The 20th Armored Division was relieved of responsibility of security for Army rear area. The 78th Infantry Division assumed this responsibility. With the moving forward of Corps rear boundary effective 1200 19 April, a new plan for Army security was established. The northern sector of First U.S. Army rear area was turned over to the Ninth U.S. Army and the VIII Corps sector of Third U.S. Army was absorbed into First U.S. Army area. The 78th Infantry Division was to assume responsibility for Army rear area behind a general line Warburg-Zuschen-Niederstein,Feldberg-Jussa-Weidenau. The area forward of this general line up to Corps rear boundary was divided into two sectors with the 23d TD Group assuming security responsibility for the northern sector and the 49th AAA Brigade for the southern sector. The security area boundary was determined by political boundaries. The 23d TD Group area was further divided down into 9 sub-areas with political boundaries as a basis for this sub-division. The general plan being to assign each FA battalion 3 Land Kreis with one battery acting as

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Period 11-20 Apr 45, Contd

Area Hq in each Land Kreis. The two Belgian battalions, the 5th and 12th, were to be attached to the FA battalions operationally for disposition and use as guards on permanent installations and main supply routes. At 1200 hours 19 April, the Command Officer, Security Command, attended staff conference with the Commanding Generals of the First, Ninth, and Fifteenth U.S. Armies at which time the definite boundaries between Armies was decided upon. Captain Wilbraham, Liaison Officer, attended a staff conference with XVI Corps. On 20 April, the Commanding Officer made a trip to Third Army to verify boundary changes. Again during the period guerilla activities continued. A much improved system of check points and screening of civilians was instituted with the result that many German PW's in civilian clothes were apprehended trying to make their way back to German lines after escaping from the Ruhr pocket. The evacuation of PW's continued to be a problem due to the mass surrenders and the ever existing shortage of transportation. The lack of guards and facilities for evacuation can be stressed by the fact that in several instances there were only four guards on a roped-in enclosure of twenty-five to thirty thousand PW's. Frequent clashes between German civilians and displaced persons, usually Russians or Poles, were reported. This trouble was usually precipitated by the displaced persons making unreasonable demands for food and clothing of the German civilians.

Period 21-30 April 1945

The new area, formerly a part of Third U.S. Army area, was a "hotspot" at the time. The Third U.S. Army had moved through the area so fast that in many cases the civilians had never been disarmed. Many small bands of SS troops were roving the area looting, committing acts of sabotage and firing on American convoys. This situation demanded that troops be placed in this newly acquired area at once to clean out the small bands of enemy soldiers and establish order. On 21 April, the 134 AAA Bn was temporarily assigned security areas 5, 6, 7, and 8 and the 142 AAA Bn was temporarily assigned areas 2 and 4. These temporary assignments were made until the FA battalions operating under Security Command could be relieved of missions in 78th Infantry Division area. Lt Marotti, Capt Ayres, and Lt Brenner were sent to Areas 6, 7, and 8, respectively, to coordinate and work in conjunction with the 134 AAA Bn. On 23 April at 1330 hours, Major General Kean, First Army C/S, called requesting information as to how many guards it would require to completely isolate the Buchenwald Concentration Camp in Weimar, Germany. Since no communication existed, it was necessary for 1st Lt Boggs to fly to Weimar to obtain requested information. At 1200 hours 25 April Security Command closed Bad Wildungen and opened in Weimar, Germany. Captain Nelson, S-3, made inspection tour of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp on 26 April and conferred with CO of the 134 AAA Bn and CO of 172 FA Bn. Major C. B. Dear, S-2, departed for London, England on 7 day leave on 27 April. An inspection tour of Areas 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 was made by the Asst S-3 to determine how effectively the area was being secured. A special detail was sent to a salt mine which contained hundreds of tons of ammunition in addition

R E S T R I C T E D .

Period 21-30 Apr 45, Contd

to valuable paintings and art treasures. At 2150 hours, 30 April, the Provost Marshal called informing us that drunken Russians were causing trouble at the local Airstrip and requested that several squads be sent to investigate immediately. Military Government troops were dispatched to the Airstrip but upon investigation, found the report to be false. Throughout the entire month covered by this report, the situation was constantly changing and better and more effective methods of security devised. One of the most difficult problems encountered was the enforcement of the "standfast" order for displaced persons whose mass movement was interfering with military operations by jamming main supply routes with thousands of carts, tractors, and make-shift devices of transportation. To relieve this critical situation, check points were placed at all road intersections and along all main roads. All displaced persons were stopped and sent to the nearest Burgomeister for quarters, even if it meant moving a German family to another house. Displaced persons camps were set up and all other displaced persons were directed to these camps to remain there until adequate transportation is made available for their removal back to their respective countries.

Period 1-10 May 1945

During this period, area security plans were consolidated following the previous rapidly moving situation. On 1 May, Security Command Headquarters assumed the responsibility of disseminating all security information to all security forces in First U.S. Army. On this date about 500 Russian Displaced Persons broke into an alcohol warehouse in Muhlhausen and drank grain alcohol, resulting in 175 dead, 500 ill, with an estimated 50% of these to die, and the remainder facing the possibility of blindness. An investigation was immediately made and it was determined that the guarding of the installation was inadequate. Sufficient guards were immediately placed to insure that no such further incidents occurred. On the following day, G-5 First U.S. Army issued an order requiring all senior Military Government officers to make a thorough search of their areas for stores of alcohol, liquor, and additional products. When such stores were found they were to be stored and guarded against possible theft and mis-use by Displaced Persons. News was received that all German forces in Italy and Southwestern Austria had surrendered unconditionally. Through G-2 sources, it was determined that an organization called Kommandos Viennestock was activated by the German Airforce southeast of Munich. Five hundred pilots manning one hundred planes and commanded by a Colonel Lerman were assigned a mission of blowing bridges and railway trestles in Army rear area. Once this mission was completed, the pilots were to change to civilian clothes and make their way to their homes. All security units, First U.S. Army, were immediately placed on the alert to intercept and prevent these pilots from carrying out their mission. During this period numerous training planes flown by pilots of the Kommandos organization landed in Army rear area. Several pilots were captured but no acts of sabotage were reported. A TWX was received on 7 May directing that all

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R E S T R I C T E D

Period 1-10 May 45, Contd

offensive operations cease as of 0001 9 May 1945 officially proclaiming this as V-E Day. On 10 May 1945, Lt Colonel Williams and Major Nelson went to 78th Infantry Division Headquarters to receive our new mission and orders. During this entire period there were few sabotage incidents reported, the greatest problem again being Displaced Persons who continued to loot and antagonize German civilians.

Period 11-20 May 1945

On 11 May 1945 a conference was held with the Commanding Officers and S-3's of our four FA battalions and two Belgian battalions in which Major Nelson explained the new mission that had been assigned to us by 78th Infantry Division. We were to be charged with security responsibility of 3 Land Kreis with two battalions to each Land Kreis. This being a much smaller area than any we had previously had, made it possible to institute complete security coverage. On 13 May 1945 this organization moved to its new location in a castle near Eschwege. Colonel Martin, Commanding Officer of the organization, was transferred as Deputy Chief of Staff to XII Corps. Captain Wilbraham, Liaison Officer, was transferred to Headquarters, First U.S. Army. On 17 May 1945, the 23d Tank Destroyer Group was relieved of all security responsibilities and an intensive training program was instituted. Physical profiles for all officers and enlisted men were completed.

Period 21-31 May 1945

Training Situation Schedule and a plan for the completion of training was submitted to Commanding General, 78th Infantry Division, and approved. During this period intensive training was continued.