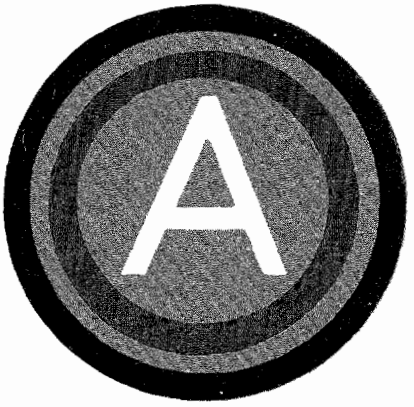
COMBAT STUDIES INSTITUTE

The Lorraine Campaign:

An Overview, September-December 1944

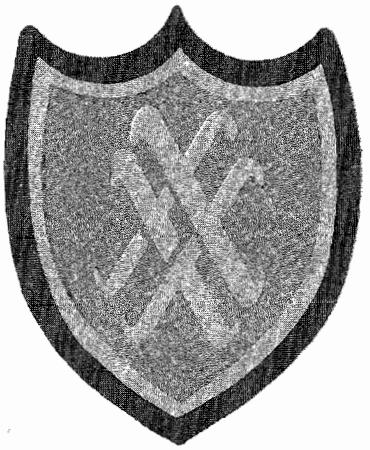
by Dr. Christopher R. Gabel
February 1985



THIRD ARMY



XII CORPS



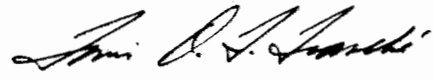
XX CORPS

FOREWORD

The Lorraine Campaign: An Overview, September–December 1944 originated at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College as an introductory lesson to a course on corps operations. It is an adaptation of a narrated slide presentation used to provide students with a historical context on which to base their studies of current doctrine. The Lorraine Campaign, which included failures as well as successes, was chosen because it encompassed a variety of operations that involved such factors as logistics, intelligence, and weather.

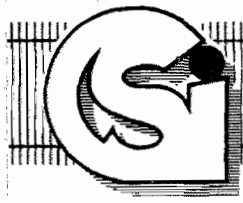
This overview serves as a point of departure for more in-depth studies, sets the stage for the analysis of unit operations from platoon to corps, and furnishes a useful reference for studying branch operations in battle. Repeated reference to this overview will give students an insight into specific operations or single branch actions.

This study also provides a concise summary of Third Army operations in one of the World War II European campaigns. Officers beginning their studies of American military history will find that *The Lorraine Campaign* overview contains important lessons for soldiers in today's Army.



LOUIS D. F. FRASCHÉ
Colonel, Infantry
Director, Combat Studies Institute

CSI publications cover a variety of military history topics. The views expressed in a CSI publication are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense.



The Lorraine Campaign:

An Overview,
September-December 1944

by Dr. Christopher R. Gabel
February 1985

U.S. Army
Command and General
Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900

87-1733

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Gabel, Christopher R. (Christopher Richard), 1954-
The Lorraine campaign.

Bibliography: p.
1. World War, 1939-1945—Campaigns—France—Lorraine.
2. Lorraine (France)—History. I. Title.
D762.L63G3 1987 940.54'21 87-690

ILLUSTRATIONS

Maps

1. European Theater 2
2. Geography of Lorraine 4
3. Route of the Red Ball Express 5
4. Third Army Positions, 1 September 1944, Lorraine 6
5. XII Corps Plan, 5 September 1944, Nancy 15
6. Capture of Nancy by XII Corps, 11-16 September 1944 16
7. German Counterattacks Against XII Corps, 19-30 September 1944, Nancy 18
8. XX Corps at Metz, 5-25 September 1944 19
9. Third Army Dispositions, 25 September 1944, Lorraine 21
10. XX Corps Operations, October 1944, Metz 25
11. XII Corps Attack, 8 November 1944, Nancy 26
12. XX Corps Capture of Metz, 8-21 November 1944 27
13. Third Army Operations, 19 November-19 December 1944, Lorraine 29
14. Third Army Redeployment, 20-26 December 1944 32
15. Third Army Operations in Lorraine 34
16. Third Army Gains, September-December 1944, Lorraine 37

Figures

1. German Volksgrenadier Division, 1944 8
2. German Panzer Division, 1944 9
3. German Panzer Grenadier Division, 1944 9
4. Third Army in the Lorraine Campaign 10
5. U.S. Corps, 1944 11
6. U.S. Infantry Division with Attachments and Typical Task Organization 12
7. U.S. Armored Division with Attachments and Typical Task Organization 13

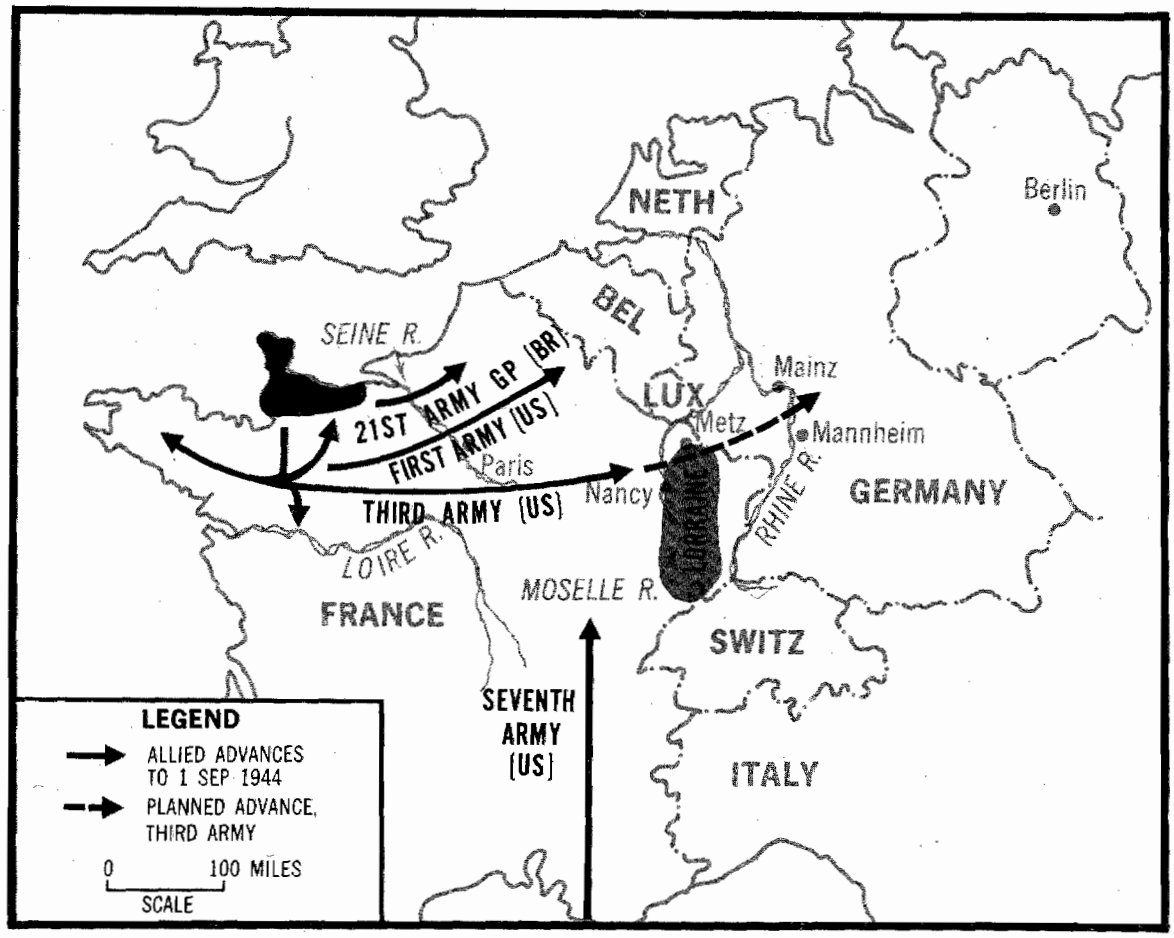
LORRAINE OVERVIEW

On 6 June 1944, Allied troops landed in Normandy, and the liberation of German-occupied France was underway. Throughout June and July, Allied soldiers expanded their beachhead against stiff resistance while building up strength for the breakout. On 25 July, American forces under the command of LTG Omar Bradley ruptured the German defenses on the western end of the beachhead and broke into the clear. The U.S. Third Army, under the command of LTG George S. Patton, Jr., became operational on 1 August and poured through the gap.

Thus began one of the most sensational campaigns in the annals of American military history. Patton's Third Army raced through a narrow corridor between the German Seventh Army and the sea, turned the flank of the entire German line in Normandy, and tore into the German rear. Third Army advanced in all four directions at once, with elements advancing south to the Loire River, west into the Brittany peninsula, north to a junction with the British near Falaise, and east towards the Seine River and Paris. (See Map 1.)

The German forces in Normandy collapsed and, barely escaping total encirclement, streamed back toward Germany with crippling losses in men and equipment. Patton's army pursued ruthlessly and recklessly deep into France. Armored spearheads led the way, with infantry riding the backs of the tanks. Overhead, fighter-bombers patrolled the flanks, reported on conditions toward the front, and attacked any German unit that took to the roads in daylight. Allied forces invaded southern France on 15 August and joined in the pursuit. With the remnants of two German army groups in full retreat, the Supreme Allied Commander, GEN Dwight D. Eisenhower, noted in his diary on 5 September, "The defeat of the German Army is complete."

As Third Army neared the French border province of Lorraine, Third Army's intelligence sources seemed to confirm that the war was virtually over. The top-secret interceptions known as Ultra revealed that the Franco-German border was virtually undefended and would remain so until mid-September. A corps reconnaissance squadron reported that the Moselle River, the last major water barrier in France, was also undefended. Patton issued orders to his corps to seize Metz and Nancy, sweep through Lorraine, and cross the Rhine River at Mannheim and Mainz.



Map 1. European Theater

Soldiers and generals alike assumed that Lorraine would fall quickly, and unless the war ended first, Patton's tanks would take the war into Germany by summer's end. But Lorraine was not to be overrun in a lightning campaign. Instead, the battle for Lorraine would drag on for more than 3 months. Why did the rosy predictions of August go unfulfilled? And how did it come to pass that Lorraine would be the scene of Third Army's bloodiest campaign?

The province of Lorraine is the most direct route between France and Germany. Bounded on the west by the Moselle River, on the east by the Saar River, with Luxembourg and the Ardennes to the north, and the Vosges Mountains to the south, Lorraine has been a traditional invasion route between east and west for centuries. The province has changed hands many times. Considered a part

of France since 1766, Lorraine fell under German possession between 1870 and 1914, and again in the period 1940-44, when Hitler proclaimed it a part of Germany proper.

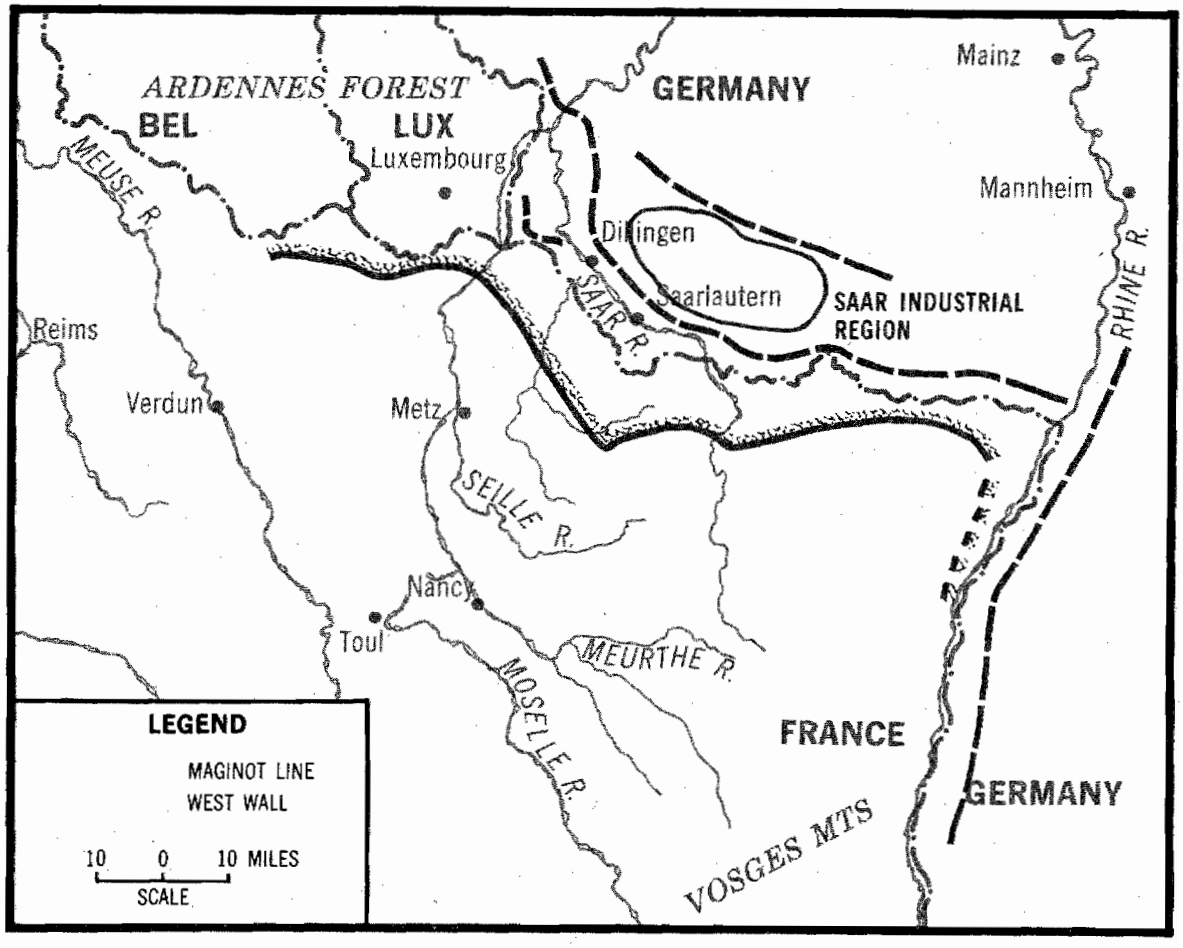
Despite its proximity to Germany, Lorraine was not the Allies' preferred invasion route in 1944. Except for its two principal cities, Metz and Nancy, the province contained few significant military objectives. After the campaign a frustrated General Patton sent the following message to the War Department:

> I hope that in the final settlement of the war, you insist that the Germans retain Lorraine, because I can imagine no greater burden than to be the owner of this nasty country where it rains every day and where the whole wealth of the people consists in assorted manure piles.

Moreover, once Third Army penetrated the province and entered Germany, there would still be no first-rate military objectives within its grasp. The Saar industrial region, while significant, was of secondary importance when compared to the great Ruhr industrial complex farther north. The ancient trading cities of the upper Rhine that had tempted conquerors for centuries were no longer of primary rank in modern, industrialized Germany. Viewed in this light, it is understandable that the basic plan for the European campaign called for the main effort to be made farther north, in the 21st Army Group's zone, where the vital military and industrial objectives lay. (See Map 2.)

Not only did Lorraine hold out few enticements, but it would prove to be a difficult battlefield as well. The rolling farmland was broken by tangled woods and numerous towns and villages, some of which were fortified. Because the ground rises gently from west to east, the Americans would frequently find themselves attacking uphill. Third Army would have to cross numerous rivers and streams that ran generally south to north and would have to penetrate two fortified lines to reach Germany--the French-built Maginot Line and the so-called Siegfried Line, or Westwall, which stood just inside of Germany itself. The Americans would not even be able to count on the unqualified support of Lorraine's inhabitants, for the Germans had deliberately colonized the province during their periods of control.

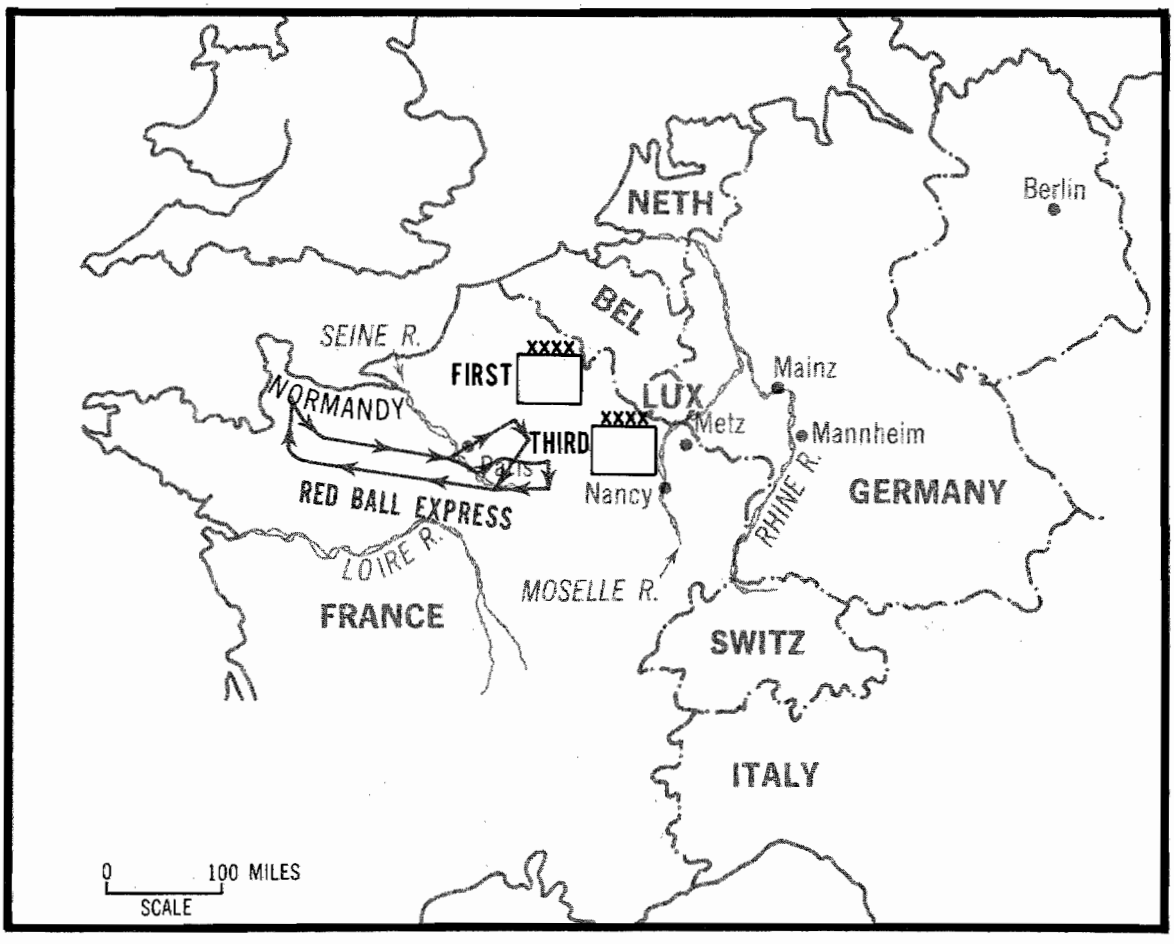
With so little going for it, why did Patton bother with Lorraine at all? The reason was that Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander, made up his mind to destroy as many German forces as possible west of the Rhine.



Map 2. Geography of Lorraine

Omar Bradley, Patton's immediate superior as commander of 12th Army Group, concurred. All Allied armies were ordered to press ahead on a broad front. In late August 1944, with the Lorraine gateway so invitingly open, it was unthinkable to Patton that Third Army should be halted in midstride.

Unfortunately, one final fact of geography was to disappoint Patton's hopes for the rapid dash into Germany. Lorraine lies some 500 miles from the Normandy beaches over which Third Army still drew much of its supply. During the August pursuit across France, Third Army consumed 350,000 gallons of gasoline every day. To fulfill this requirement and to meet similar demands from First Army, Communications Zone organized the famous Red Ball Express, a nonstop conveyor belt of trucks connecting the Normandy depots with the field armies.



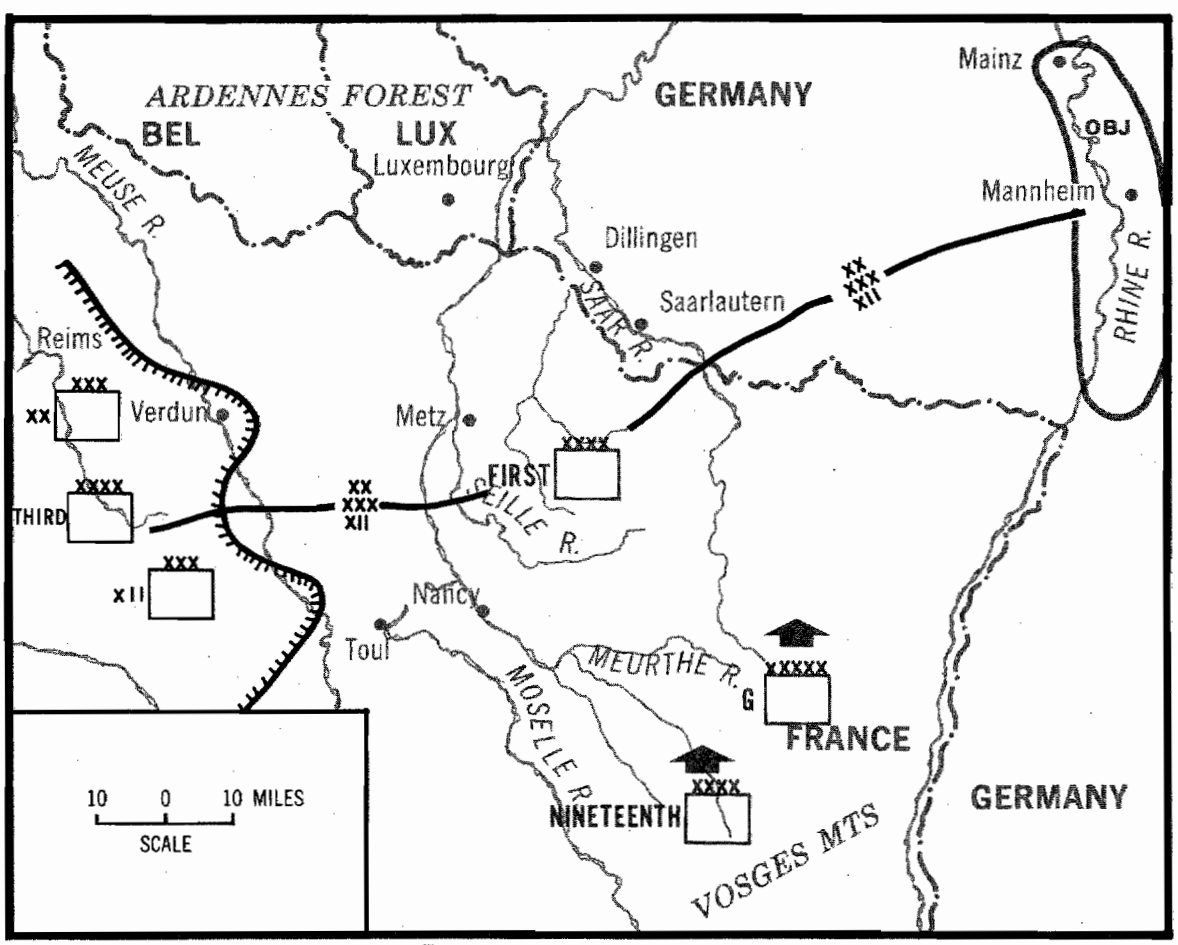
Map 3. Route of the Red Ball Express

At its peak, Red Ball employed 6,000 trucks that ran day and night in an operation that became more difficult with every mile the armies advanced. To meet the demands of logistics, three newly arrived infantry divisions were completely stripped of their trucks and left immobile in Normandy. The use of the Red Ball Express represented a calculated gamble that the war would end before the trucks broke down, for the vehicles were grossly overloaded and preventive maintenance was all but ignored. The Red Ball Express itself consumed 300,000 gallons of precious gasoline every day--nearly as much as a field army. (See Map 3.)

Thus, it was not surprising that on 28 August, with Patton's spearheads in the vicinity of Reims, Third Army's gasoline allocation fell 100,000 gallons short of requirements; and since all reserves had been burned up in the course of the pursuit, the pace of Patton's advance

began to suffer almost at once. The simple truth was that although gasoline was plentiful in Normandy, there was no way to transport it in sufficient quantities to the leading elements. On 31 August, Third Army received no gasoline at all. With fuel tanks running dry, Patton's spearheads captured Verdun and crossed the Meuse River.

For the next 5 days, Third Army was virtually immobilized. Eisenhower granted logistical priority to the British and American armies farther north, leaving Third Army with about one-quarter of its required daily gasoline allotments. Patton's troops captured some gasoline from the Germans, hijacked some from First Army depots, and received some gasoline by air, but when gasoline receipts finally increased to the point that the advance could be resumed, the opportunity of sweeping through Lorraine unopposed had passed. (See Map 4.)



Map 4. Third Army Positions, 1 September 1944, Lorraine

The gasoline shortage was followed by a shortage of ammunition, particularly in the larger artillery calibers that had not been in great demand during the fluid pursuit. When operations became more static along the Lorraine border, there was no way to build up ammunition stocks because all available trucks were carrying gasoline. By 10 September, Third Army's artillery batteries received only one-third of a unit of fire per day. Other shortages would crop up as the campaign progressed. At one time or another, rations, clothing, mattress covers, coffee, tires, tobacco, antifreeze, winter clothing, and overshoes would all be in critically short supply.

Third Army's intelligence sources began to run dry at the same time as its gas tanks. Ultra intercepts had proved invaluable during the pursuit when fleeing German units relied heavily on the radio for communication. Ultra would continue to produce intelligence of significant strategic value, but as Third Army approached Lorraine, Ultra provided less and less information of an operational and tactical nature. Free French sources had cooperated actively with Third Army during the pursuit, but Lorraine, with its partially hostile population and its swelling German garrison, was not a favorable setting for Resistance activities. Military intelligence interpreter teams found fewer knowledgeable natives willing to be interviewed, and the barrier posed by the Moselle River prevented the easy flow of both civilian agents and combat patrols. Moreover, the corps commanders did not receive Ultra at all. Their corps intelligence assets could, at best, see only 15,000 yards behind the enemy's front.

Significantly, the American gasoline crisis and lapse in intelligence coincided with a major German buildup in Lorraine. When Patton's tanks sputtered to a halt, the German forces defending Lorraine totaled only 9 infantry battalions, 2 artillery batteries, and 10 tanks. During the first week in September, while Third Army was immobilized, German forces flowed into Lorraine from the northern sector of the front, from southern France, and from Italy. The headquarters charged with the defense of Lorraine was Army Group G, under the command of GEN Johannes Blaskowitz. First Army, Nineteenth Army, and later Fifth Panzer Army were Blaskowitz's major forces, although all were badly depleted. Responsibility for the entire Western Front devolved upon Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, who had held that post during the Normandy campaign until he told Hitler's headquarters, "Make peace, you fools!" Hitler restored von Rundstedt to

command on 1 September and ordered the field marshal to keep Patton out of Lorraine until the defenses along the German frontier could be built up. Von Rundstedt also began amassing forces for a counterattack in the Ardennes that would eventually take place in December.

Few of the Germans defending Lorraine could be considered first-rate troops. Third Army encountered whole battalions made up of deaf men, others of cooks, and still others consisting entirely of soldiers with stomach ulcers. The G2 also identified a new series of German formations designated volksgrenadier divisions. (See Figure 1.) These hastily constituted divisions numbered only 10,000 men each and possessed only six rifle battalions; in theory they were to be provided with extra artillery and assault guns to compensate for the quantitative and qualitative inferiority of their infantry. Two to 3 panzer divisions faced Third Army in a mobile reserve role, but these units had managed to bring only 5 or 10 tanks apiece out of the retreat across France. (See Figure 2.) Instead of rebuilding the depleted panzer divisions, Hitler preferred to devote tank production to the creation of ad hoc formations, designated panzer brigades, that were controlled at the corps or army level. Other formations that Third Army would face in Lorraine included panzer grenadier (mechanized infantry divisions) and elements of the elite Waffen SS. (See Figure 3.)

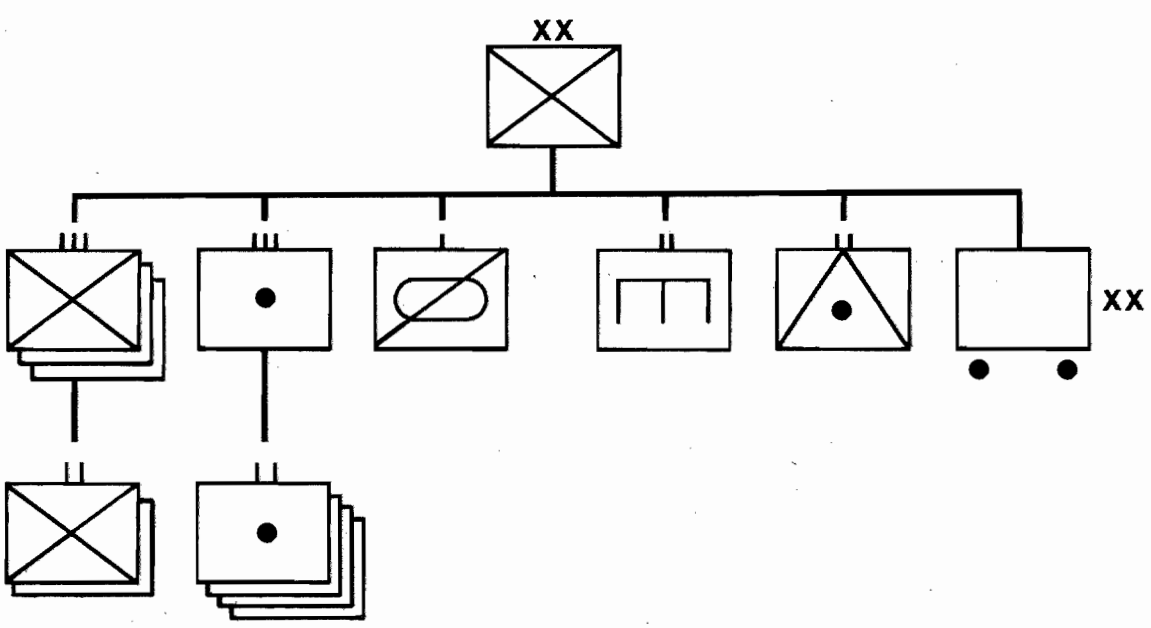


Figure 1. German *Volksgrenadier* Division, 1944

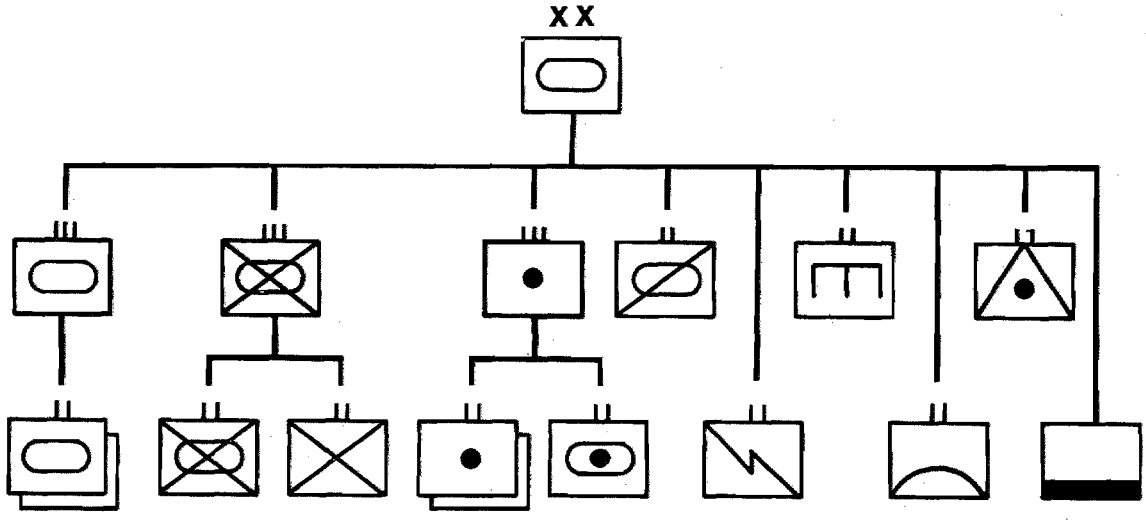


Figure 2. German Panzer Division, 1944

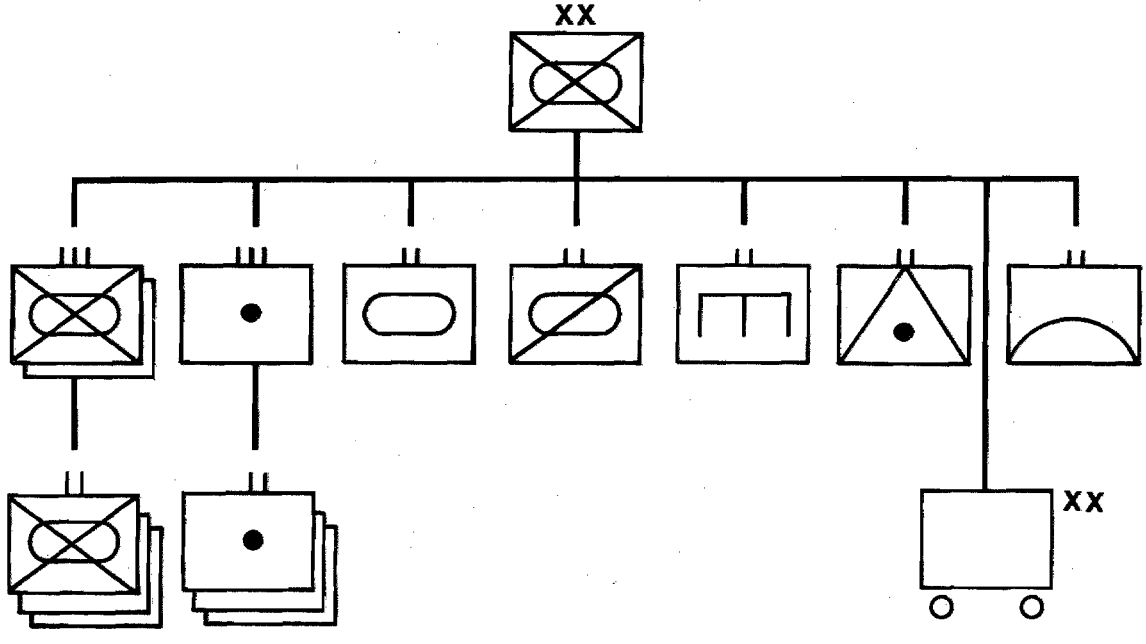


Figure 3. German *Panzer Grenadier* Division, 1944

On the eve of the autumn battles along the German frontier, von Rundstedt's Western Front forces were outnumbered 2 to 1 in effective manpower, 25 to 1 in artillery tubes, and 20 to 1 in tanks. But despite its tattered appearance, the army that rose up to protect the borders of the Fatherland was not a beaten force. When Patton's troops received enough gasoline to resume their advance towards the Moselle on 5 September, after a delay of nearly a week, the troops quickly discovered that the great pursuit was over. Instead of running down the fleeing fragments of shattered German units, soldiers all along Third Army's front encountered enemy soldiers who contested every foot of ground and who counterattacked

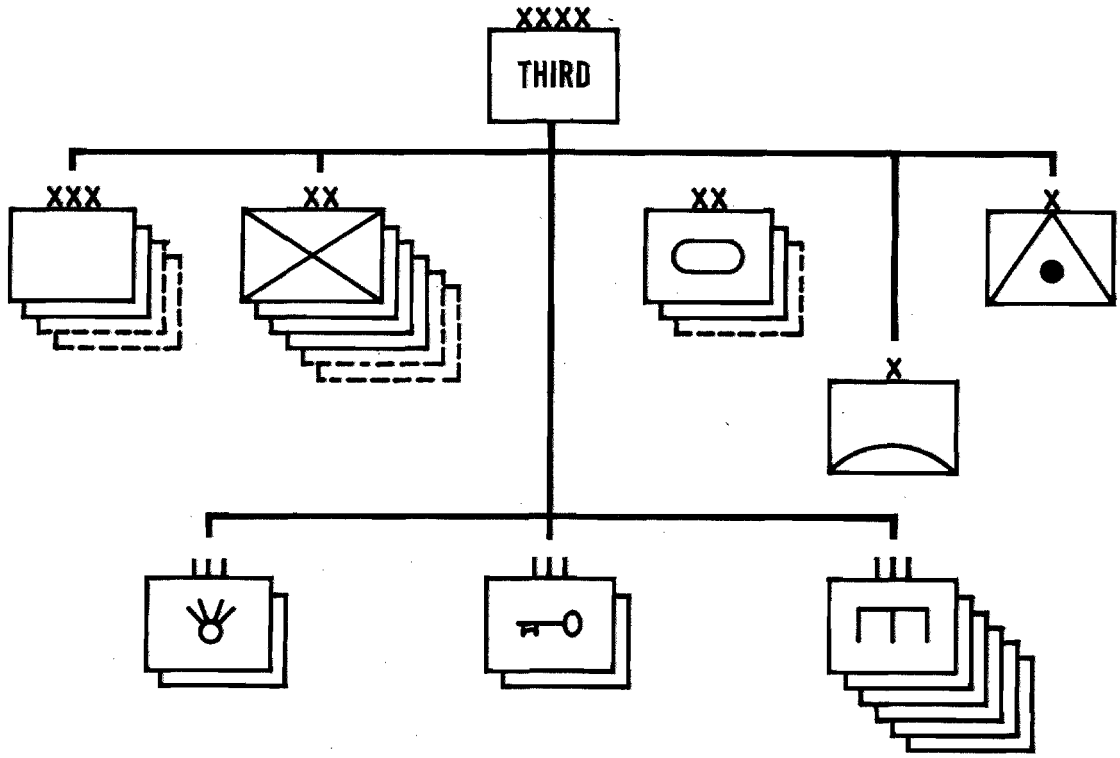


Figure 4. Third Army in the Lorraine Campaign

viciously to recover lost positions. Third Army intelligence clearly indicated that the Germans were no longer in headlong retreat, yet some time would pass before Patton and his corps commanders accepted the fact that the pursuit had ended.

At the same time that Army Group G received reinforcements, Patton's Third Army was being trimmed down. In the pursuit across France, Third Army had controlled four far-flung corps, but during September two of those corps were detached from Patton's command. For most of the Lorraine campaign, Third Army would consist of two corps, the XX and the XII. Four to six infantry divisions and two or three armored divisions would carry the bulk of the burden for the next 3 months. In addition to these major combat elements, Third Army controlled 2 quartermaster groups totaling 60 companies, 2 ordnance groups comprising 11 battalions, and 6 groups of engineers. An antiaircraft artillery brigade and a tank destroyer brigade provided administrative support to their respective battalions, most of which were attached to lower echelons. (See Figure 4.)

Each of Third Army's two corps possessed as organic troops a headquarters with support elements and a corps artillery headquarters. In the Lorraine campaign, two or three infantry and one or two armored divisions were

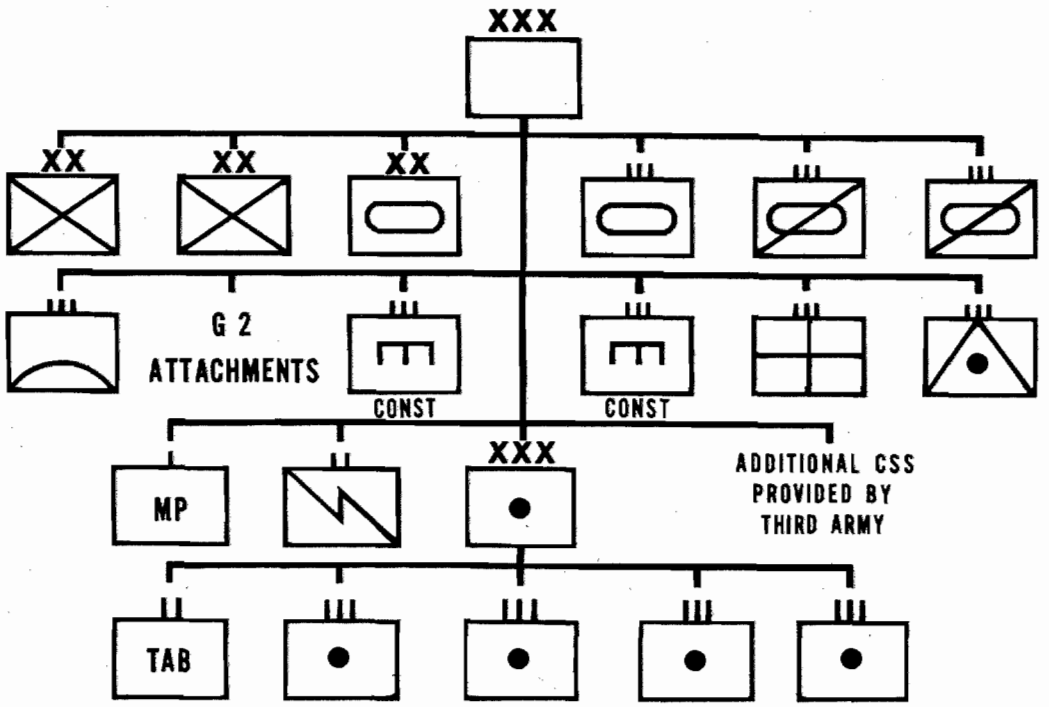


Figure 5. U.S. Corps, 1944

usually attached to each corps. One or two cavalry groups of two squadrons each provided corps reconnaissance. (See Figure 5.)

Corps artillery consisted of four to five field artillery groups controlled by a corps fire direction center (FDC), which could allocate its assets to the divisions or control them itself. Corps artillery also tied into the divisional artillery, making it possible to coordinate every field artillery tube within that corps. In the Lorraine campaign, the corps zones became so wide that one FDC could not control all of the corps artillery. A field artillery brigade headquarters frequently served as a second FDC, splitting the corps zone with the corps artillery FDC.

The corps FDC system was highly efficient at massing artillery fires and proved to be extremely responsive and flexible. On one occasion during the Lorraine campaign, an infantry unit about to make an assault contacted XX Corps FDC with a request for artillery support. The FDC plotted the target and issued orders to the appropriate artillery battalion. The battalion in turn assigned the mission to a battery which delivered 67 rounds on the target. The total elapsed time from receipt of request to completion of the mission was 6 minutes. At the other extreme, XII Corps artillery, aided by the 33d Field Artillary Brigade, organized a program of fires in support of the November offensive that involved 380 concentrations over a 4-hour period.

The American infantry division in World War II was the 15,000-man triangular division, so called because it possessed three infantry regiments, each of which consisted of three battalions, and so on. Four battalions made up the divisional artillery, whose primary weapons were the 105-mm and 155-mm howitzers. Typically, the triangular division, which was originally designed to be a "light division," also included plug-in components such as quartermaster trucks, extra artillery, and extra engineers. For example, although the division could motorize only one regiment with organic truck assets, by attaching six quartermaster truck companies, it could be made 100 percent vehicle mobile. Most infantry divisions controlled a tank battalion and a tank destroyer battalion which was usually equipped with tank-like vehicles. The division was capable of breaking down into regimental combat teams, each with its own complement of artillery, engineers, armor, and tank destroyers. Regimental combat teams, however, were not provided with support elements. The infantry division had to fight as a division. (See Figure 6.)

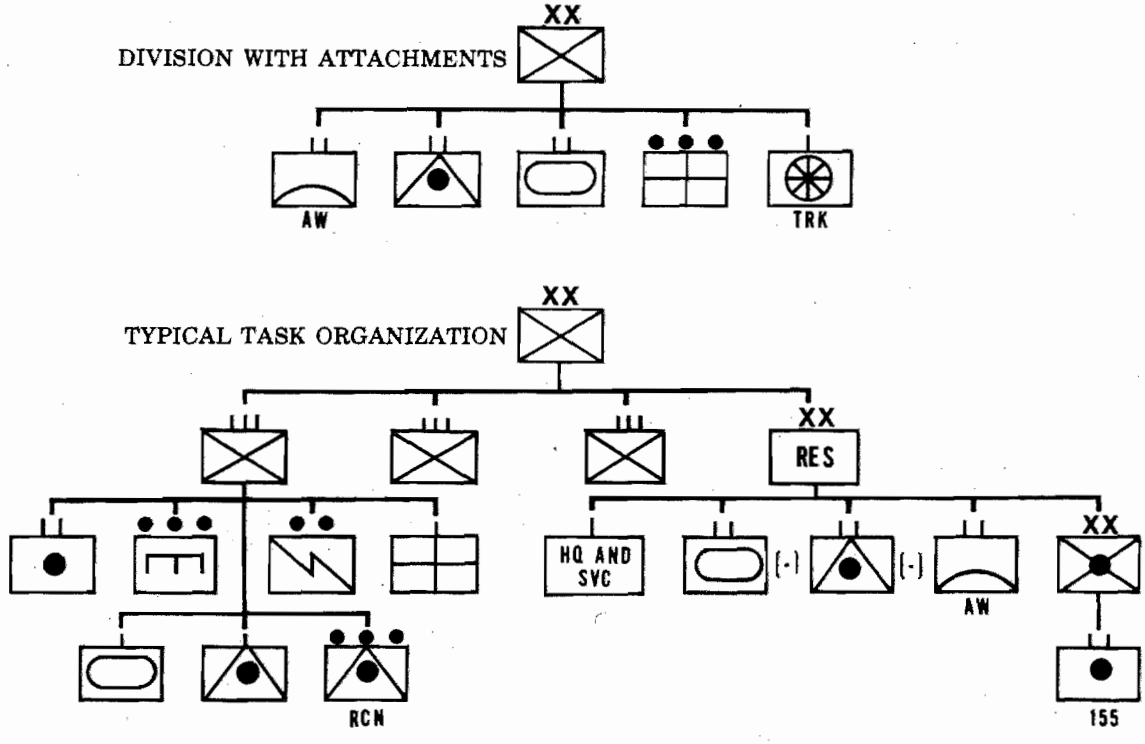


Figure 6. U.S. Infantry Division with Attachments and Typical Task Organization

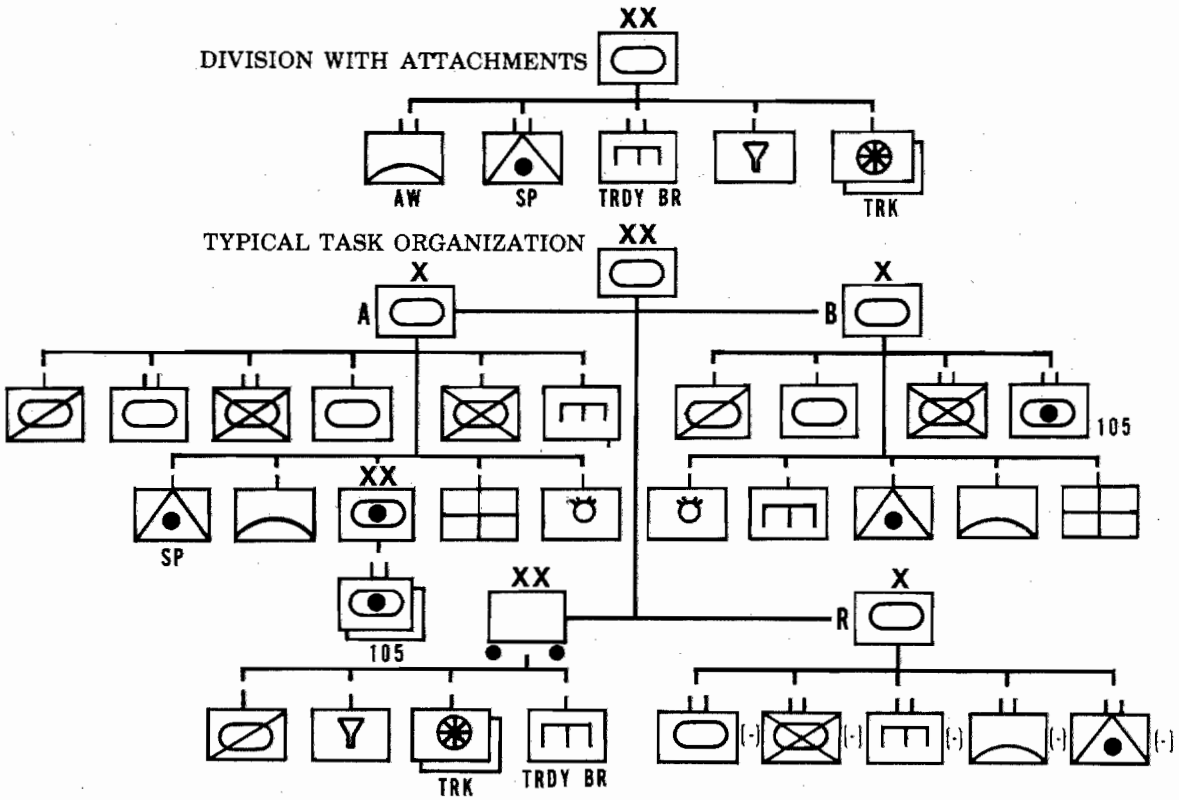


Figure 7. U.S. Armored Division with Attachments and Typical Task Organization

The 1944 armored division was a relatively small organization of 11,000 men and 263 tanks. It possessed three tank battalions, three battalions of armored infantry, and three battalions of self-propelled artillery. Three task force headquarters, designated Combat Commands A, B, and R, controlled any mix of fighting elements in battle. According to doctrine, the armored division was primarily a weapon of exploitation to be committed after the infantry division had created a penetration. The M-4 Sherman tank reflected this doctrine. It was mobile, reliable, and mounted a general purpose 75-mm gun in most of its variants. In keeping with doctrine, tank destroyers and not tanks carried the high-velocity antitank guns. (See Figure 7.)

The relationship among field army, corps, and division was prescribed by LTG Lesley J. McNair, head of Army Ground Forces in Washington. Divisions were to be lean and simple, offensive in orientation, with attachments made as necessary. The corps was designed to be a purely tactical headquarters that could handle any mix of infantry and armored divisions. The field army allocated divisions to the corps and assigned supplemental combat support and service support elements where needed.

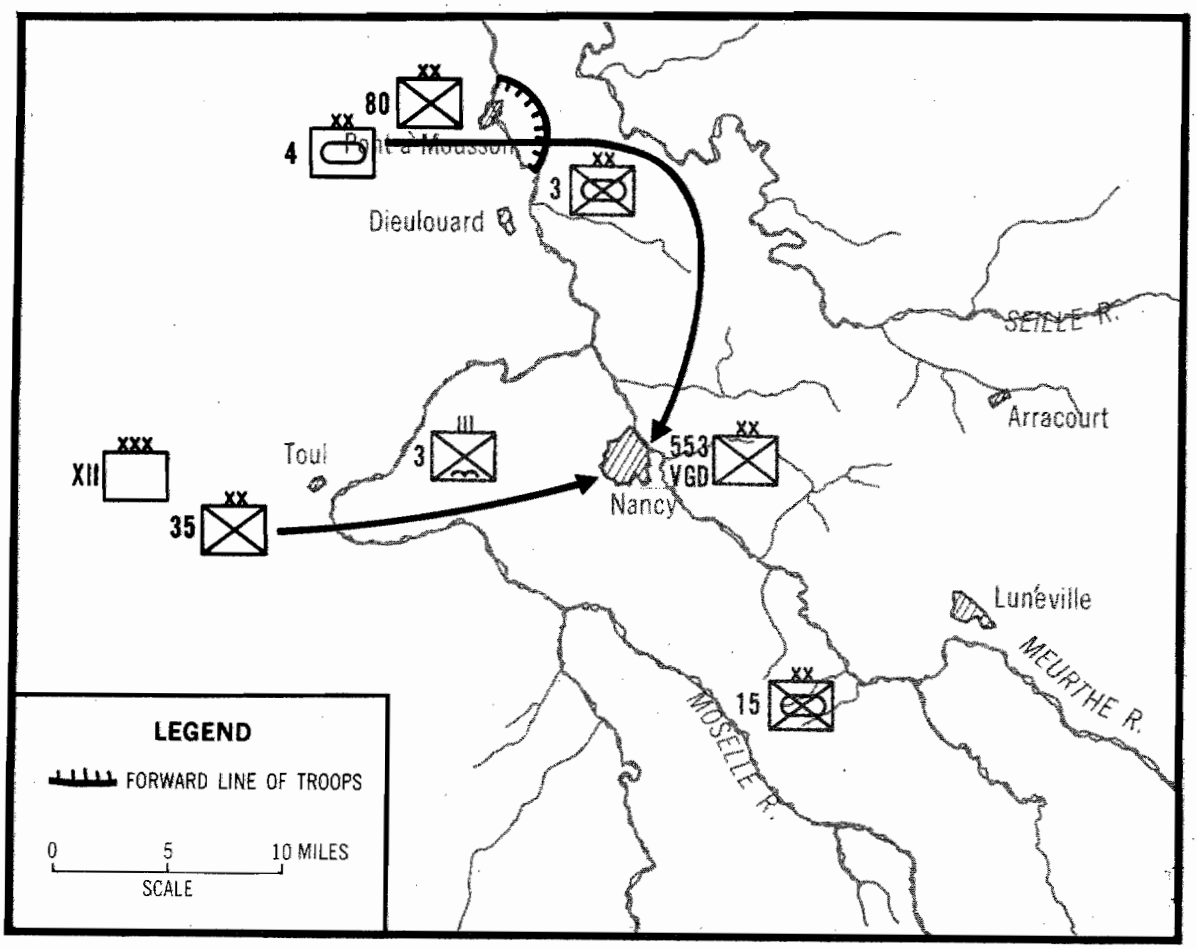
Logistics flowed from Communications Zone through the field army to the divisions, theoretically bypassing the corps echelon. In actual practice, the corps did become involved in logistics, at least to the extent of designating truck heads and allocating service support units. The typical division slice in the European theater was 40,000 troops, of which 15,000 were organic to the division, 15,000 were corps and army troops, and 10,000 were Communications Zone personnel.

Rounding out the weapons in Patton's arsenal for the Lorraine campaign was the XIX Tactical Air Command (TAC), which had cooperated with Third Army throughout the pursuit across France. Fighter-bombers from the XIX TAC flew 12,000 sorties in support of Third Army during August, but in September, TAC's efforts would be divided between the Lorraine front and the battles being waged to reduce the German fortresses still holding out along the French coast. As the autumn wore on, XIX TAC would be increasingly frustrated by poor weather. By this stage in the war, however, the German air force was capable only of sporadic operations.

Thus, at the outset of the Lorraine campaign, Third Army was logistically starved, depleted in strength, and denied the full use of its air assets. In spite of this, Patton and his superiors remained convinced that the war could be ended in 1944. On 10 September, 12th Army Group ordered Third Army to advance on a broad front and seize crossings over the Rhine River at Mannheim and Mainz. Patton's forces were already on the move.

The focus of attention in September was on XII Corps, commanded by MG Manton S. Eddy. The XII Corps was the southern of Third Army's two permanent corps. Its principal components were the 35th and 80th Infantry Divisions and the 4th Armored Division. Later in the month, the 6th Armored Division would join the corps. Eddy's immediate objective was Nancy, one of two major cities in Lorraine. Although unfortified, Nancy was protected by the terrain and, most important, by the Moselle River. (See Map 5.)

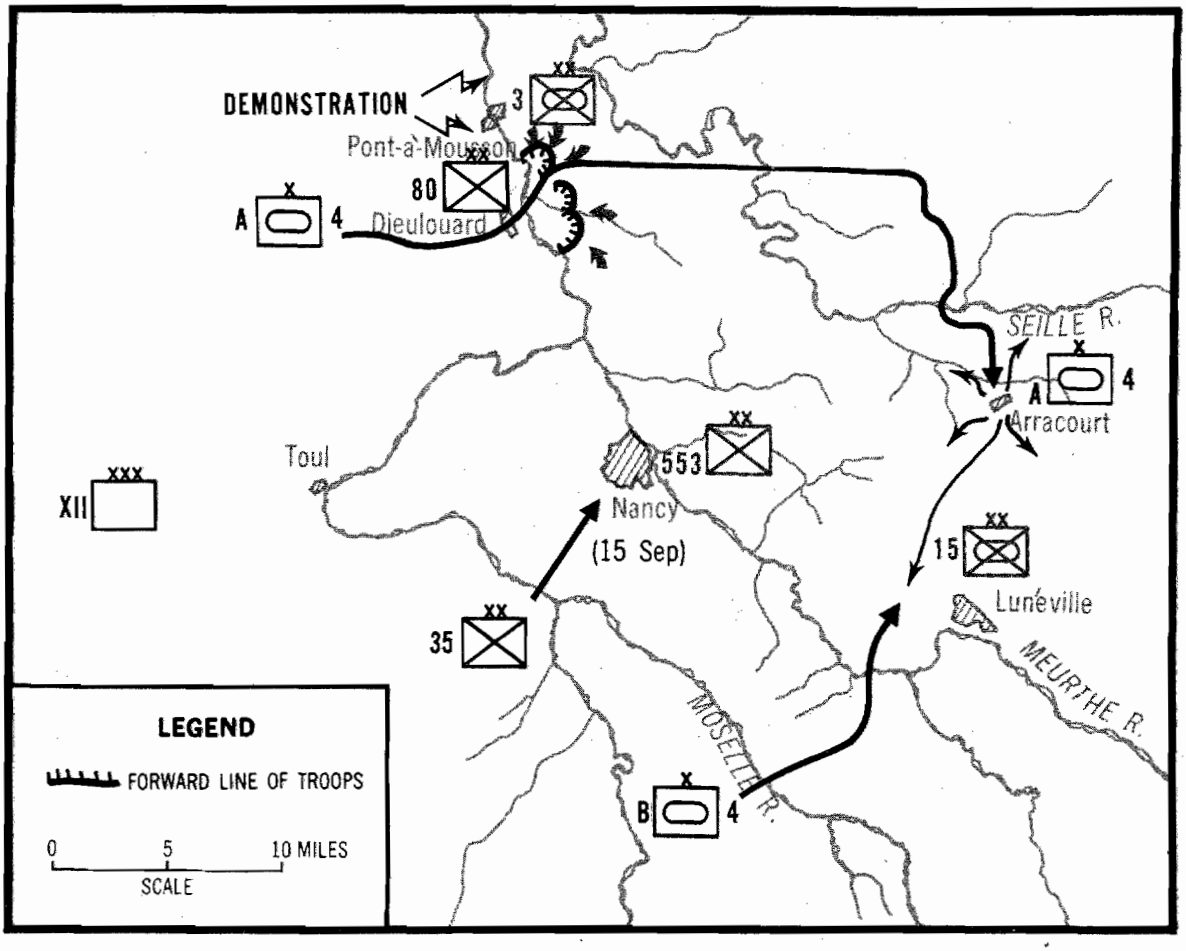
The XII Corps' first attempt to capture Nancy began on 5 September, the day that Third Army received just enough gasoline to resume its advance. Eddy ordered 35th Division to attack Nancy from the west. Simultaneously, the 4th Armored Division, passing through a bridgehead across the Moselle (to be secured by 80th Division), would attack the city from the east. The plan was foiled when



Map 5. XII Corps Plan, 5 September 1944, Nancy

80th Division failed to obtain its bridgehead. The crossing attempt, staged at Pont-à-Mousson, was made straight off the march, without reconnaissance, secrecy, or adequate artillery support. Such improvised operations had worked during the pursuit, but when the 80th Division pushed a battalion across the Moselle, it collided with the 3d Panzer Grenadier Division, just arrived from Italy. The Germans held dominating ground and could not be dislodged. The American bridgehead collapsed, and the survivors returned to the west bank.

Following this reverse, Eddy took 5 days to regroup his corps and prepare a more deliberate operation. On 11 September, a regiment of 35th Division, supported by corps artillery, established a bridgehead across the



Map 6. Capture of Nancy by XII Corps, 11-16 September 1944

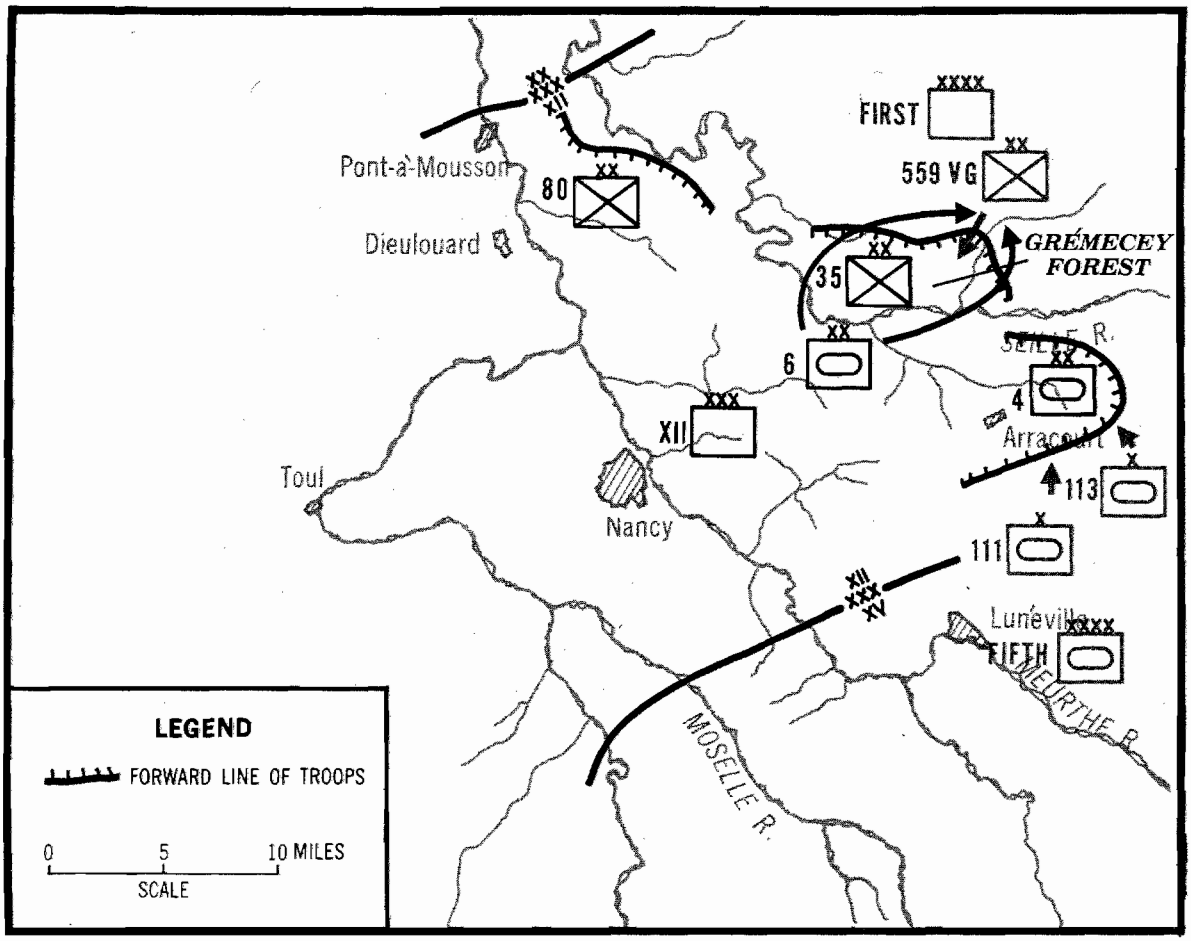
Moselle south of Nancy and fought its way toward the city. North of Nancy, 80th Division made a successful crossing on the following day at Dieulouard. This time secrecy and a careful deception plan paid off. The Dieulouard bridgehead was established against little opposition and pontoon bridges were quickly emplaced. However, once the initial surprise wore off, German reaction to the Dieulouard bridgehead was savage. Heavy artillery fire and repeated counterattacks by 3d Panzer Grenadier Division threatened to erase 80th Division's bridgehead across the Moselle. (See Map 6.)

Early on the morning of 13 September, Combat Command A of 4th Armored Division began to cross into the threatened bridgehead. The leading armored elements routed a German

counterattack then in progress and broke through the German forces containing the bridgehead. Spearheaded by 37th Tank Battalion, under the command of LTC Creighton Abrams, and reinforced by a battalion of truck-mounted infantry from 80th Infantry Division, Combat Command A punched into the enemy rear, overrunning German positions with all guns firing. Operating on a front equal to the width of the lead tank and with its supply trains accompanying the combat elements, Combat Command A covered 45 miles in 37 hours, overran the German headquarters responsible for the defense of Nancy, and established a position blocking the escape routes from the city. Combat Command B, which had passed through the bridgehead south of Nancy, linked up with Combat Command A between Arracourt and Lunéville. Nancy itself fell to the 35th Division on 15 September.

With XII Corps established on the east bank of the Moselle, LTG Patton hoped to resume the war of movement in which Third Army excelled. He ordered MG Eddy to attack eastward with divisions in column. The objective of XII Corps was still to cross the Rhine. The Germans, who had no reserves in the area, feared that XII Corps was on the verge of a breakthrough. But before he resumed the eastward advance, Eddy chose to clear out pockets of resistance around Nancy, giving the Germans 3 days to bring reinforcements to the sector. Army Group G received orders to drive in XII Corps' right flank and throw Patton's forces back across the Moselle. To carry out this mission, the Germans recreated Fifth Panzer Army, a hastily scraped together force commanded by General Hasso von Manteuffel, an armor expert imported from the Russian Front. From 19 to 25 September, two panzer brigades of the LVIII Panzer Corps hammered at Combat Command A's exposed position around Arracourt. Although outgunned by the German Panther tanks, the American Shermans and self-propelled tank destroyers enjoyed superior mobility and received overwhelming air support when the weather permitted. The fogs which interferred with American air strikes also neutralized the superior range of German tank armament. At the end of the week-long battle, Combat Command A reported 25 tanks and 7 tank destroyers lost but claimed 285 German tanks destroyed. (See Map 7.)

To the north of Fifth Panzer Army, the German First Army attempted to eliminate XII Corps' bridgehead across the Seille River. The 559th Volksgrenadier Division launched a series of attacks against 35th Division in the Grémecey Forest that lasted from 26 to 30 September. In contrast to the tank battle at Arracourt, 35th Division's engagement at Grémecey was a swirling infantry battle

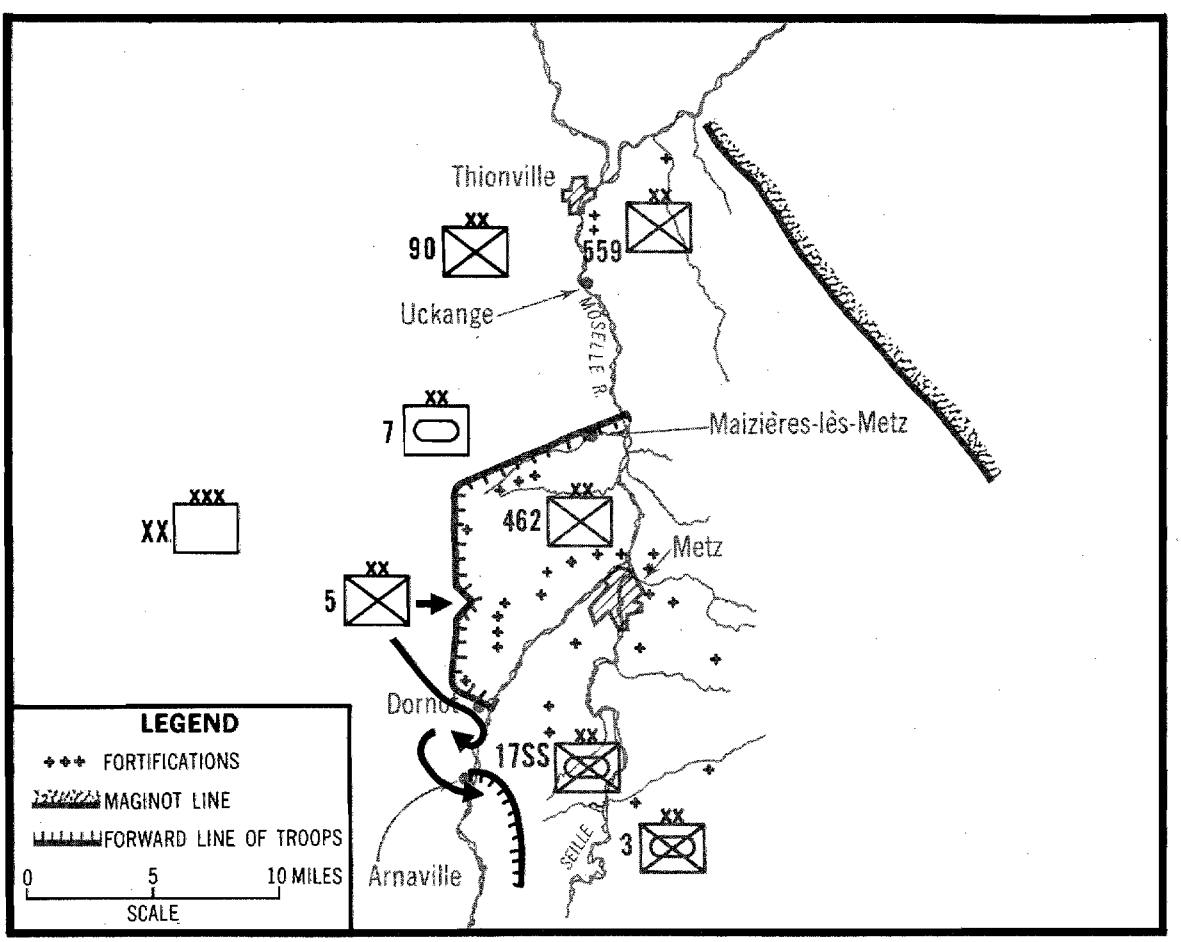


Map 7. German Counterattacks Against XII Corps, 19-30 September 1944, Nancy

fought out at close quarters among thick woods and entrenchments left over from World War I. After 3 days of chaotic, seesaw fighting, Eddy ordered the 35th to withdraw across the Seille, an order which Patton promptly countermanded. The arrival of 6th Armored Division from Army reserve restored the situation with a double envelopment of the hotly contested forest. However, Eddy's status as corps commander suffered badly. His relationship with the division commanders never fully recovered, and Patton seriously contemplated relieving him. (See Map 7.)

Hitler responded to the loss of Nancy and the failed German counterattacks by relieving Blaskowitz from command of Army Group A. To replace him, Hitler chose General Hermann Balck, an experienced corps commander from the Russian Front.

In the northern sector of Third Army's front, MG Walton Walker's XX Corps also established a bridgehead across the Moselle during September. Walker's orders were to capture Metz and sweep to the Rhine, a task far beyond the capabilities of a corps that held a 40-mile front with three divisions, the 5th, 90th, and 7th Armored. Moreover, Metz, unlike Nancy, was thoroughly fortified. Forty-three intercommunicating forts on both sides of the Moselle ringed the city. Although some of the older fortifications dated from the nineteenth century, the more modern ones could house garrisons of up to 2,000 men and were armed with heavy artillery mounted in steel and concrete turrets. Designed to hold an entire field army, the Metz fortifications were manned by 14,000 troops of the 462d Division. At this point in the campaign, XX Corps was using Michelin road maps and thus had virtually no knowledge of the Metz fortifications. (See Map 8.)



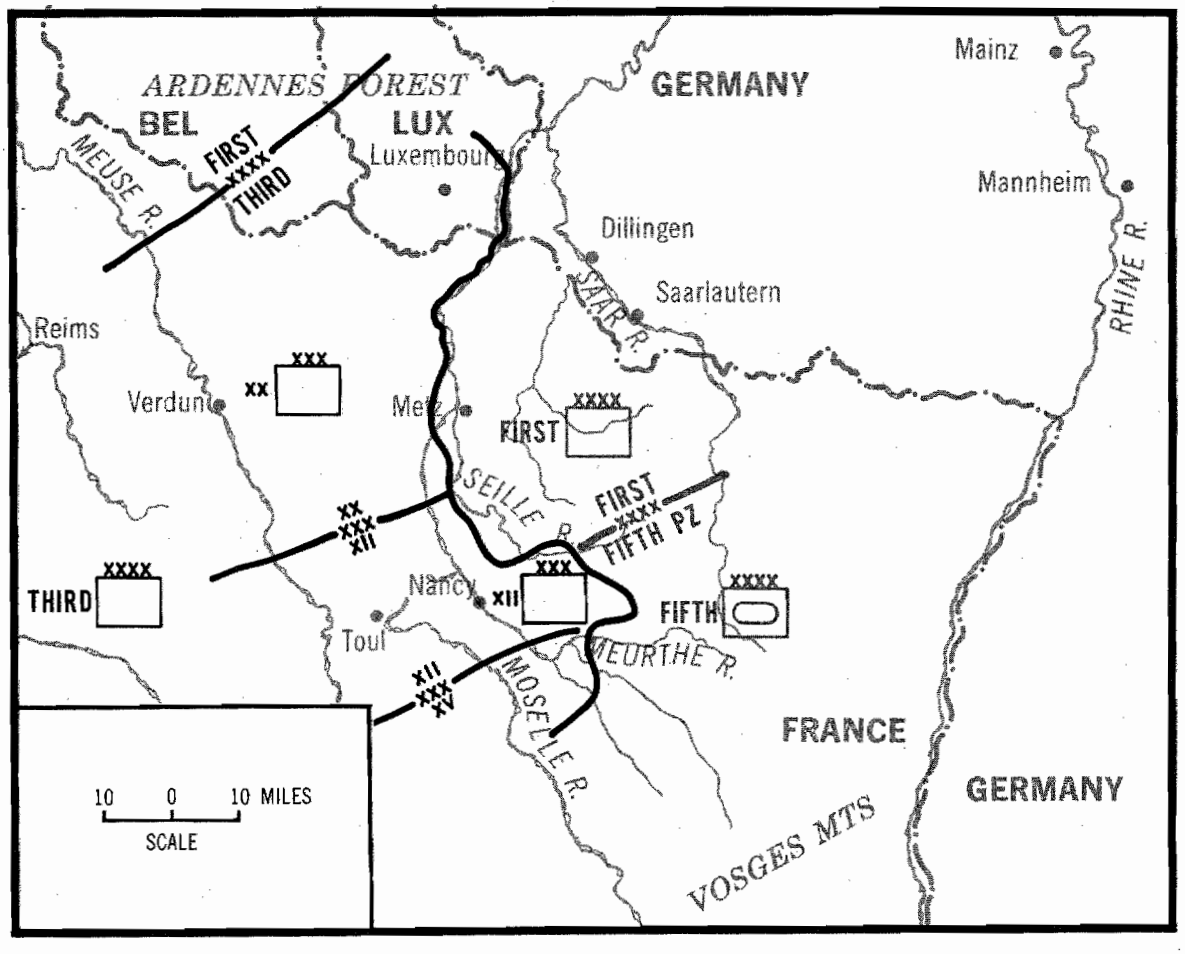
Map 8. XX Corps at Metz, 5-25 September 1944

On 7 September, 5th Infantry Division opened the assault on Metz, ignorant of the fact that it was attacking the most strongly fortified city in Western Europe. For a week one of its regiments was chewed to pieces among the forts west of the Moselle, which were manned by students of an officer candidate school. Even when reinforced by a combat command of the 7th Armored Division, the American attack made little progress. Incidently, this action took place on the same ground upon which two German field armies were mauled in equally unsuccessful assaults during the 1870 Franco-Prussian War.

In an attempt to encircle Metz, MG Walker also ordered 5th Division to establish a bridgehead across the Moselle south of the city. The 5th Division's first crossing, made at Dornot, was a makeshift frontal assault against a prepared enemy, which included elements of the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division. The crossing operation was marked by great confusion. It lacked adequate artillery support, and it was subjected to hostile fire coming from both banks of the river. Four companies established a tiny bridgehead on the east bank which was bombarded continuously by artillery and mortars. For 2 days the bridgehead forces turned back repeated counterattacks, while German fire disrupted ferrying operations and prevented the building of a bridge. Finally, the survivors in the bridgehead were withdrawn without their equipment.

A more carefully planned crossing operation succeeded nearby at Arnaville on 10 September. Under the covering fire of 13 artillery battalions, plus air support and a generated smoke screen, 5th Division established a permanent bridgehead over the Moselle that became the main divisional effort. The artillery of XX Corps and the P-47s of XIX Tactical Air Command helped break up counterattacks mounted by the 3d and the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Divisions. Although the 5th Division had successfully crossed the Moselle, the ring of fortifications protecting Metz was still virtually intact. The 7th Armored Division crossed into the Arnaville bridgehead with orders from MG Walker to hook behind Metz while 5th Division captured the city itself. However, the terrain was unsuited to armored operations, and 5th Division was bled white--by the end of the month the 5th required 5,000 fillers to bring it up to strength. Meanwhile, a stalemate ensued along XX Corps' front.

On 25 September, Third Army operations came to an abrupt halt. Even with the Red Ball Express running at full capacity, logistical support was inadequate to sustain operations by all of the Allied forces on the Continent. Accordingly, GEN Eisenhower decreed that the main Allied effort would come from the British 21st Army Group, which received transportation priority. The 12th Army Group, including Third Army, was to hold its present positions until the logistical crisis receded. LTG Patton was unwilling to yield the initiative to the enemy, so he ordered Third Army not to dig in, but rather to establish outpost lines and maintain active, mobile reserves. (See Map 9.)



Map 9. Third Army Dispositions, 25 September 1944, Lorraine

Third Army was relatively dormant from 25 September to 8 November. Patton's forces utilized the time to carefully husband resources and build up reserves for future operations. Stringent gasoline rationing went into effect on 3 October, and although gasoline receipts for the month were only 67 percent of requested amounts, Third Army managed to amass a small reserve. The larger calibers of ammunition were also strictly rationed. To take the place of silent artillery tubes, tanks, tank destroyers, and mortars were surveyed in for use as artillery. Extensive use was also made of captured German ordnance. One time on target (TOT) fired in XX Corps' zone was executed with captured German 105-mm howitzers, Russian-made 76.2-mm guns and French 155-mm howitzers (also captured from the Germans), and German 88-mm antitank guns. Eighty percent of the artillery ammunition expended by XX Corps in the last week of October was of German origin.

A number of factors facilitated Third Army's logistical recovery. One of these was the speed with which the French railroad system was rehabilitated and put to military use. Although the railroads in Normandy had been thoroughly interdicted prior to and during the invasion, those in central and eastern France were relatively undamaged by Allied aircraft and had been abandoned almost intact by the retreating Germans. During the October lull, Third Army brought its railheads as far forward as Nancy. For a time, Third Army personnel actually operated the trains themselves. The French civilian sector provided rolling stock and trained personnel to supplement Third Army's quartermasters.

The French civilian economy, by providing what we today call "host nation support," helped ease Third Army's logistical burdens in other ways as well. The Gnome-Rhone engine works in Paris were retooled to repair American tank engines. Other manufacturers produced tank escape hatches and track extenders that greatly facilitated mobility in the Lorraine mud. When colder weather precipitated a critical shortage of antifreeze, French industry supplied thousands of gallons of alcohol in lieu of Prestone. Local sources also produced fan belts, and when tires became so scarce that all spares were removed from their racks and put into use, French tire manufacturers turned their production over to the U.S. Army. With Patton's permission, Third Army's ordnance units moved inside existing French facilities with the result that ordnance productivity increased 50 percent. In fact, Third Army utilized everything from local coal mines to dry-cleaning plants.

Captured German supplies were another important source of materiel during the October lull. In addition to the

weapons and ammunition mentioned earlier, Third Army used captured gasoline transported in captured jerricans, spark plugs rethreaded for American engines, and thousands of tons of food that fed both soldiers and local civilians.

By the time full-scale operations resumed in November, Third Army's program of rationing and local procurement had resulted in the establishment of substantial reserves. On the average, each division held 4 days of Class I and 5 days of Class III supplies when the eastward advance was resumed. Except for heavy artillery shells, the ammunition shortage was no longer critical.

Third Army's intelligence picture also improved during the October lull. Through Ultra and other sources, the German order of battle was well known to Third Army's G2 and would remain so throughout the campaign. Ultra revealed that the Germans, too, were rationing gasoline. Even the panzer divisions were partially dependant on horse-drawn transportation. The XX Corps received detailed plans of the Metz fortifications obtained from archives in Paris and supplemented by French officers who had built and manned the citadel. The most encouraging intelligence received in October revealed that the Germans were withdrawing many of their best units from Lorraine, including Fifth Panzer Army. Intelligence did not disclose, however, that these forces were being amassed for the Ardennes counteroffensive which came in December.

The quality and quantity of Patton's forces improved while the German defenders in Lorraine declined in effectiveness. During October and the first week in November, American units were rotated out of the line to rest, refit, and absorb replacements. The XX Corps gave up the 7th Armored Division but acquired the 95th Infantry and 10th Armored Divisions in return. In addition, XII Corps obtained the 26th Division, raising Third Army's strength to six infantry and three armored divisions.

Although ordered by 12th Army Group to hold its position, Third Army conducted several limited operations during the October lull. The XII Corps closed in on the Seille River, giving its new units some exposure to combat and securing jump-off positions for future operations. Meanwhile, XX Corps prepared for a systematic reduction of Metz. An extensive and highly integrated artillery observation system was established that tied together 70 ground observation posts and 62 airborne observers. All XX Corps divisions rotated out of the line for training in the reduction of fortifications. The 90th Division patiently cleared the Germans out of Maizières-lès-Metz in

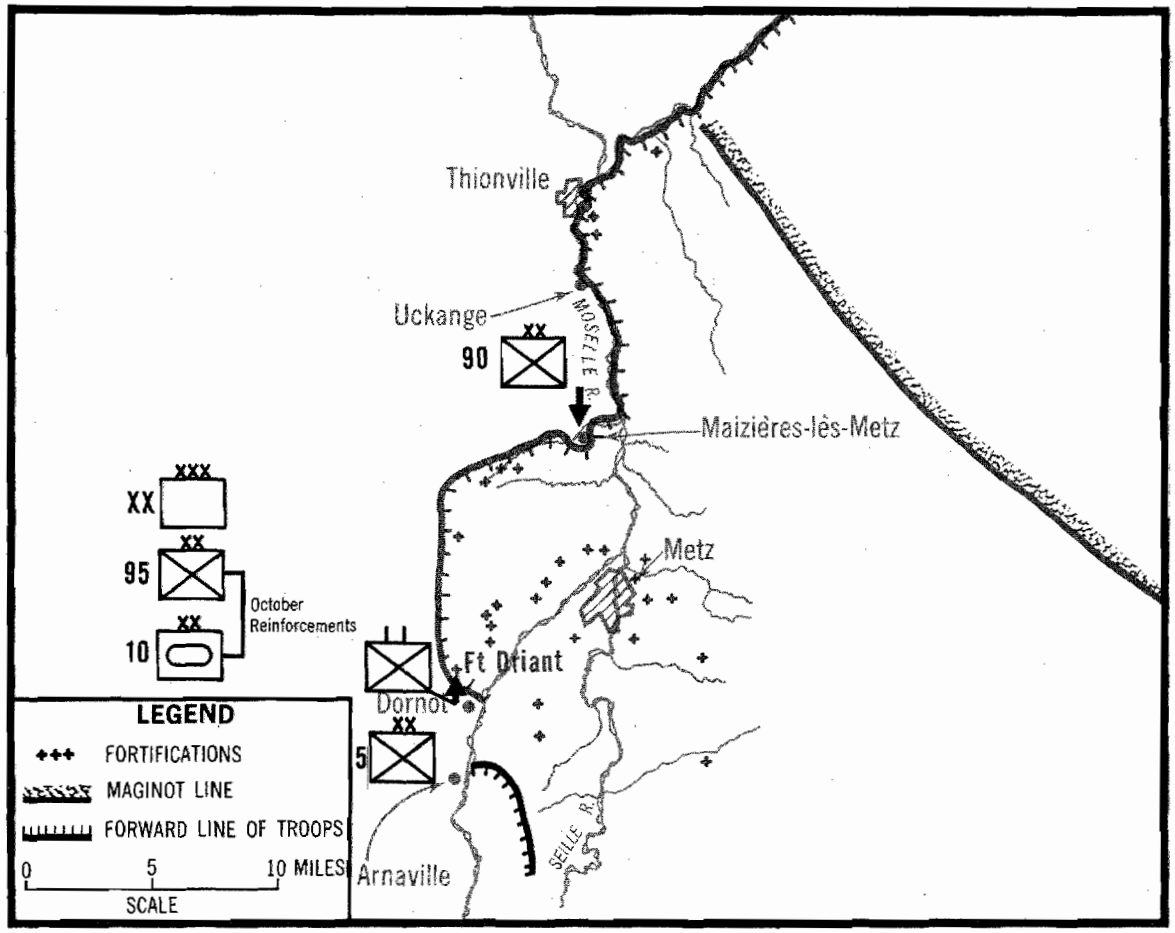
a carefully controlled operation that simultaneously opened the only unfortified approach to Metz and provided the division with experience in urban combat. (See Map 10.)

On 3 October, XX Corps' battle-scarred 5th Division mounted an ill-advised attack on Fort Driant, one of the fortress complexes protecting Metz from the south and west. With the support of 23 artillery battalions, 1 rifle battalion reinforced by tanks and tank destroyers managed to occupy Driant's surface, but the American infantrymen were unable to penetrate the underground galleries. American artillery was disappointingly ineffective against Driant's five batteries. An American 8-inch gun scored eight direct hits on one of Driant's artillery turrets, silencing the German piece for 15 minutes, after which it resumed operation. Following 10 days of fighting in which 50 percent of the assaulting infantry were killed or wounded, American forces withdrew from Fort Driant. (See Map 10.)

On 21 October, Third Army received orders to resume full-scale offensive operations on or about 10 November. Patton's objective was still the Rhine River. By this time Third Army outnumbered the Germans in Lorraine by 250,000 to 86,000. However, the Germans were about to obtain a valuable ally in the form of the weather. Seven inches of rain fell in November, about twice the normal amount. Twenty days that month had rain. Lorraine suffered from its worst floods in 35 years. On two different occasions, floodwaters washed out the Moselle bridges behind the Third Army in the midst of heavy fighting. Almost all operations were limited to the hard roads, a circumstance that the Germans exploited through the maximum use of demolitions. Third Army engineers built over 130 bridges during November.

The weather virtually negated American air superiority. The XIX Tactical Air Command, which had flown 12,000 sorties in the golden days of August, flew only 3,500 in November. There was no air activity at all for 12 days out of the month.

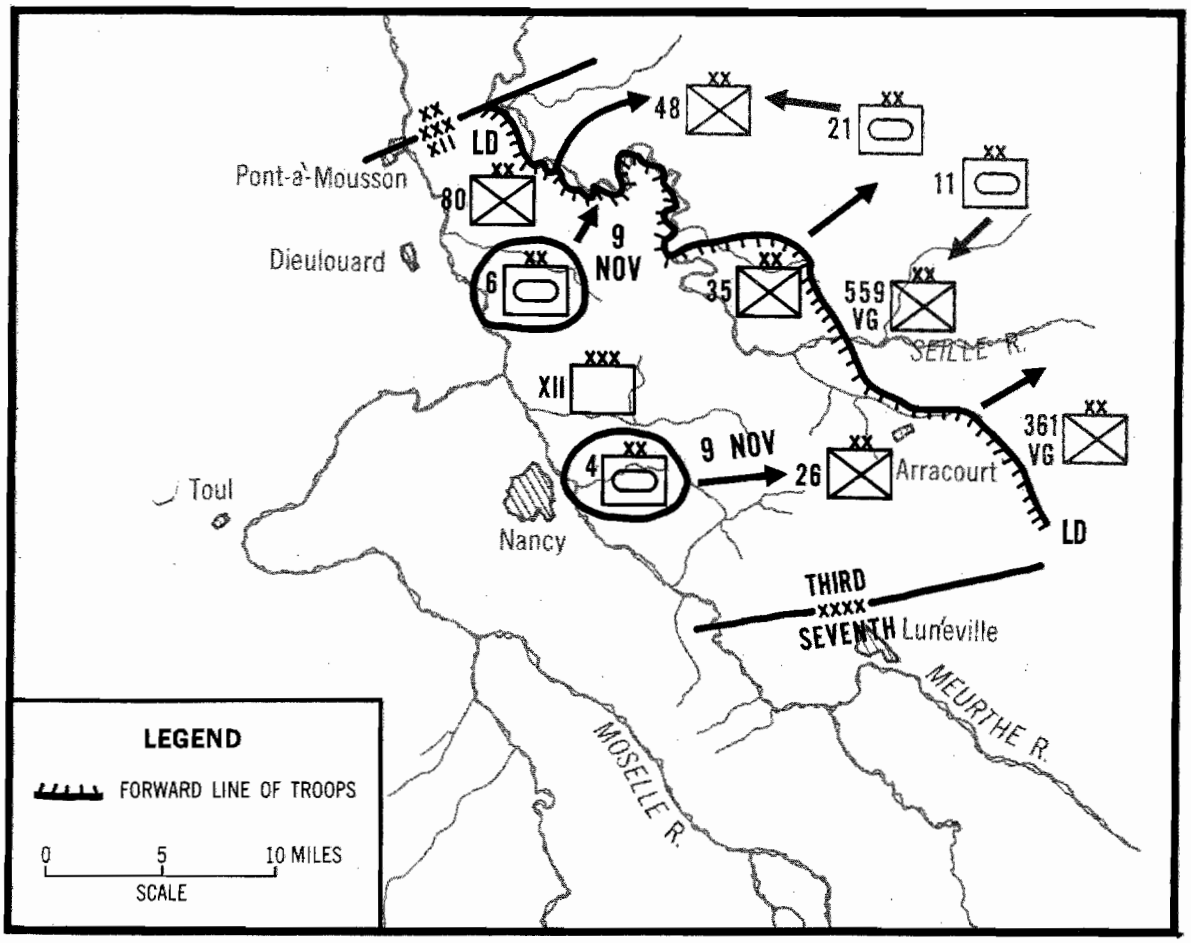
Third Army's offensive began on 8 November in weather so bad that MG Eddy, XII Corps commander, asked Patton to postpone the attack. Patton told Eddy to attack as scheduled or else name his successor. Despite the total lack of air support, Eddy attacked on the 8th and throughly surprised the defending Germans, who believed that the weather was too bad to allow offensive operations. The most massive artillery preparation in Third Army history preceded XII Corps' attack. All of XII



Map 10. XX Corps Operations, October 1944, Metz

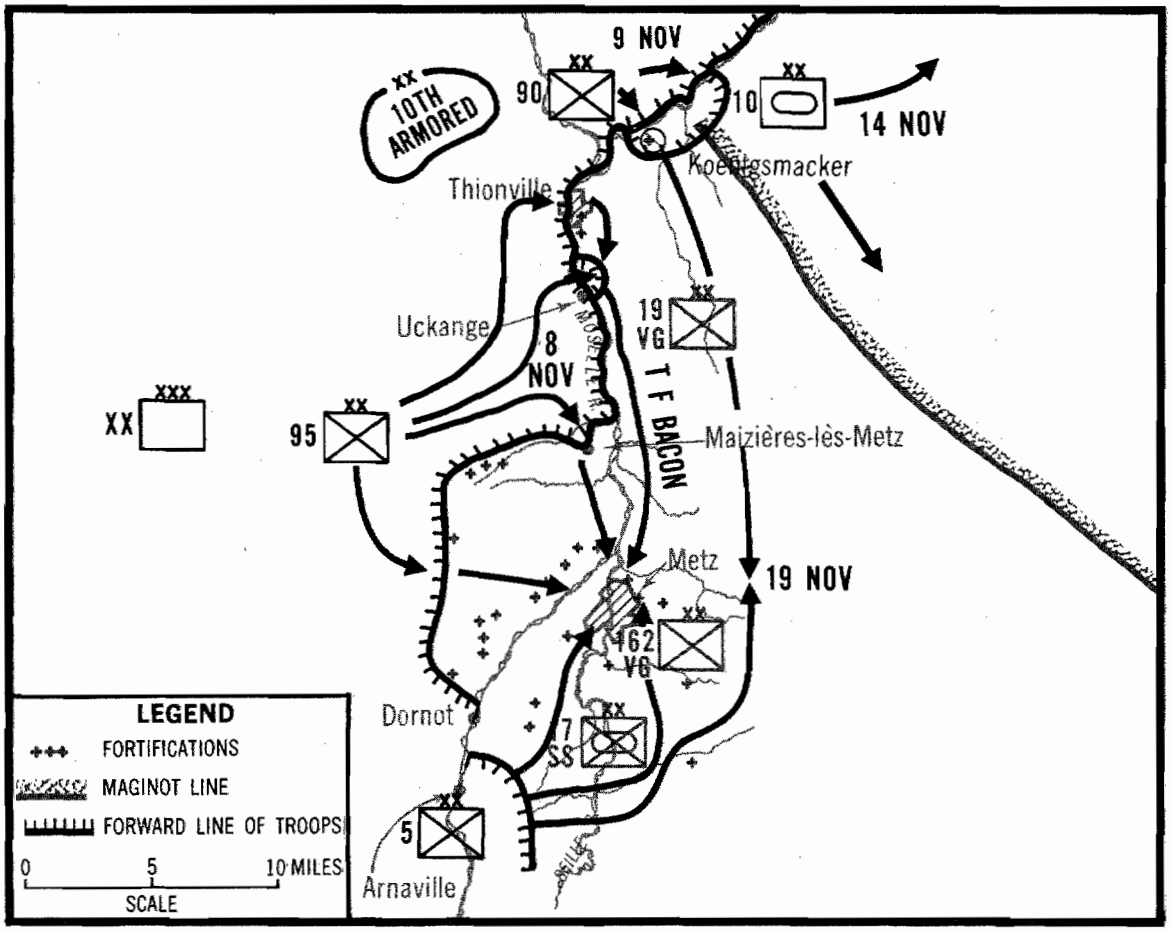
Corps' artillery plus 5 battalions borrowed from XX Corps--for a total of 42 battalions and 540 guns--poured 22,000 rounds on the stunned Germans. At 0600, XII Corps jumped off with three infantry divisions abreast and two armored divisions in corps reserve. Instead of waiting for a decisive opportunity in which to commit his reserve, Eddy broke the armored divisions up into combat commands and sent them into the line on D plus 2, thus relegating Third Army's most powerful concentration of armor to an infantry-support role. With the American armor dispersed, the defending German 11th Panzer Division was able to restrict XII Corps' rate of advance with a relatively thin delaying screen and local counterattacks. (See Map 11.)

General Walker's XX Corps made its main attack across the Moselle in the Metz sector on 9 November, one day after XII Corps. It, too, achieved surprise. The 90th



Map 11. XII Corps Attack, 8 November 1944, Nancy

Division and 10th Armored Division had shifted to assembly areas north of Thionville in great secrecy. A detachment of special troops maintained radio traffic and manned dummy guns in the vacated zone. There was no artillery preparation so as not to disclose the imminent attack. The Moselle flooded out of its banks, which complicated the crossing operation but had the side benefit of inundating the German minefields on the east bank and lulling the defenders into a false sense of security. Finally, 95th Division staged a demonstration south of Thionville that involved crossing a battalion to the east bank, thus drawing attention away from the main effort farther north. General Balck, commander of German Army Group G, had ordered his units to hold the front with a minimum of strength until the anticipated artillery barrage had passed, whereupon they were to rush forward in force to meet the American assault waves. Since there was



Map 12. XX Corps Capture of Metz, 8-21 November 1944

no artillery barrage, and since the Germans otherwise failed to predict the attack, Balck's defensive scheme was unhinged at the outset of the operation. (See Map 12.)

The 90th Division crossed the swirling waters of the Moselle at Koenigsmacker early on 9 November and established a secure bridgehead. The 10th Armored Division moved up to the west bank, ready to cross into the bridgehead as soon as the engineers were able to build a bridge. Due to the high, fast waters, 5 days would pass before armor crossed the Moselle in force. The Moselle crossings taxed Third Army's engineers to the utmost. An infantry support bridge put in behind 90th Division was swept away, and the approaches were flooded. When the waters finally subsided, bridges were established for the 90th and 95th Divisions, only to be inundated by a

second flood even greater than the first. The bridges themselves were saved, but their approaches were completely underwater rendering them useless until the Moselle once more receded. Meanwhile, liaison aircraft and amphibious trucks helped keep the bridgehead supplied, and concentrated artillery fire from the west bank helped break up the repeated German counterattacks mounted against 90th Division until armor could cross the Moselle.

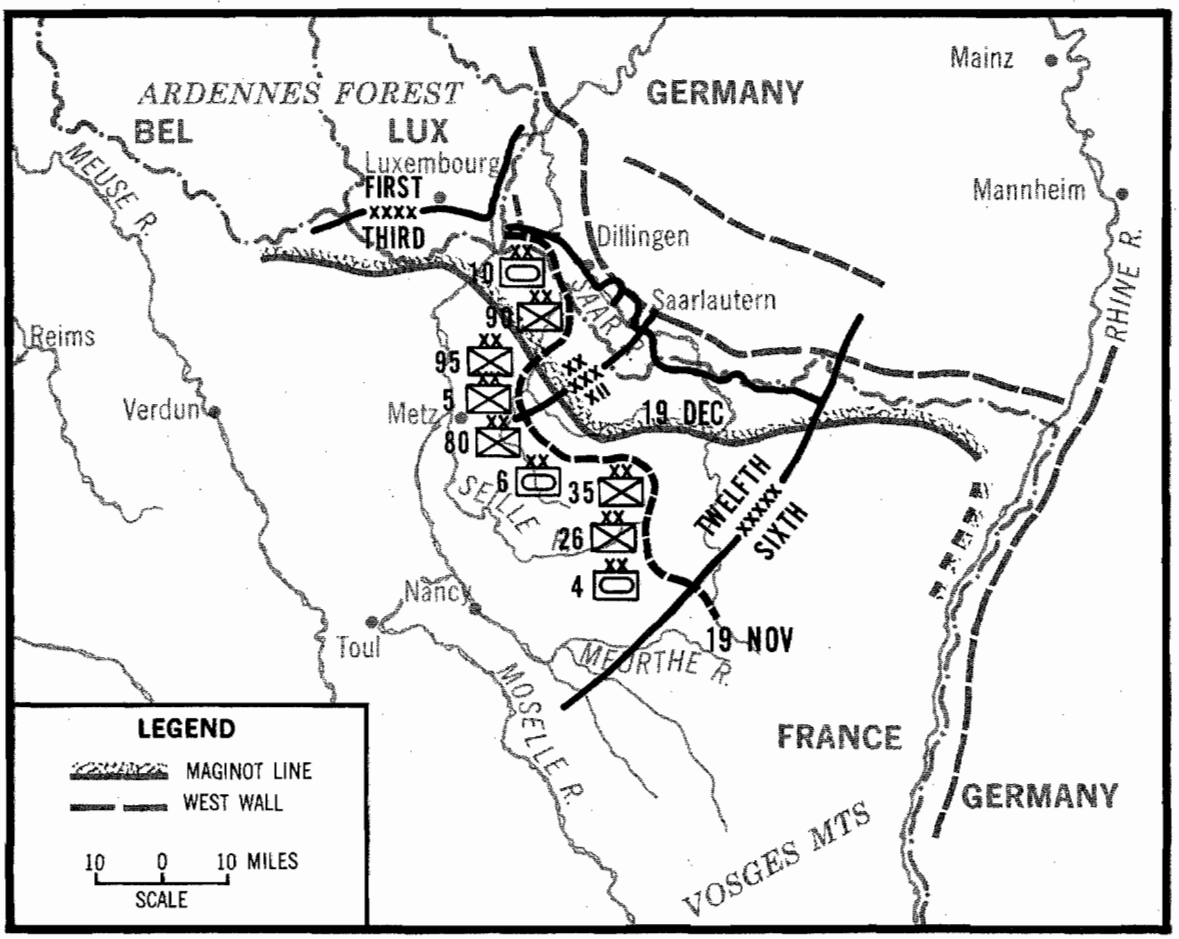
The XX Corps' artillery also saw to it that the Germans suffered as much as possible from the atrocious weather. The 17 artillery battalions supporting 90th Division shelled all buildings in the assault area, driving the defenders out into the rain and mud. The U.S. Eighth Air Force contributed to this effort by sending over 1,000 four-engine bombers to conduct saturation bombing of the towns and villages in the assault area. The poor weather forced the airmen to bomb by radar, which detracted significantly from the accuracy of the attack.

With 90th Division established at Koenigsmacker, 5th Division pushing north from the Arnaville bridgehead, and 95th Division advancing across the old Franco-Prussian War battlefield west of the city, XX Corps had three divisions poised to close on Metz. Then, XX Corps created another threat by converting 95th Division's demonstration at Uckange into a major effort and reinforcing it with armor. Given the designation Task Force Bacon, this battle group fought its way toward Metz in mobile columns led by tanks and tank destroyers that shot up all possible centers of resistance, to the extent of using 3-inch antitank guns to knock out individual snipers. All of the forces closing on Metz employed new techniques in dealing with fortified areas. Frontal assaults were avoided. Instead, strongpoints and forts were surrounded, bypassed, and systematically reduced with high explosives and gasoline. Task Force Bacon entered Metz from the north on 17 November, the same day 5th Division reached the city from the south and 95th Division neared the Moselle bridges to the west. As street fighting ensued in Metz itself, XX Corps' artillery laid interdiction fire on all German escape routes east of the city. (See Map 12.)

Although Hitler had declared that Metz was officially a fortress, meaning that it would hold out to the last man, General Balck decided to make no further sacrifices for the city. He abandoned the second-rate division fighting in downtown Metz and broke contact, withdrawing to the east. On 19 November, 90th Division and 5th Division linked up east of Metz, completing the encirclement of the city. Although some of the forts held out for two more weeks, the commander of the German

garrison in Metz surrendered on 21 November. Thus, XX Corps was the first military force to capture Metz by storm since 451 A.D.

The XX Corps left some elements at Metz to reduce the holdout forts and regrouped the remainder of its forces to join XII Corps in Third Army's eastward advance. The next obstacle confronting Patton's troops was the Westwall, known to the Allies as the Siegfried Line, that lay just within Germany proper. The 10th Armored Division had finally crossed the Moselle on 14 November with orders to exploit east and north to the Saar River. The American tanks made some progress to the east against the determined resistance of the 21st Panzer Division, but the push to the north came to a halt along an east-west extension of the Westwall. There would be no clean breakthrough in XX Corps' sector, just as there had been none for XII Corps. (See Map 13.)



Map 13. Third Army Operations, 19 November-19 December 1944, Lorraine

The German defenders were critical of, but grateful for, Patton's decision to advance on a broad front of nine divisons spread out over 60 miles. In particular, they felt that the Americans made a grave error in not concentrating their three armored divisions into one corps for a knockout blow. The 3 panzer divisions in Lorraine were down to 13, 7, and 4 tanks respectively, a fact that Patton was well aware of, thanks to Ultra. On paper, there were 12 German divisions facing Third Army's 9, but in reality, the defenders possessed just 1 battalion for each 4 miles of front. Therefore, Patton's decision to tie his armored divisions to the infantry enabled the Germans to delay the Third Army with a thin screen and pull the bulk of their forces back into the Westwall.

Facilitating the German delaying action were the fortifications of the Maginot Line, numerous streams, and of course, the weather. Noncombat casualties, most due to trench foot, roughly equaled combat casualties for the month of November. Moreover, 95 percent of the trench foot cases would be out of action, at least until spring. Part of the blame for the high rate of noncombat casualties must go to the Quartermaster, European Theater of Operations, who had refused to order a newly developed winter uniform for the troops because he believed that the war would end before cold weather came. Not until January was there an adequate supply of jackets, raincoats, overshoes, blankets, and sweaters. As a result, 46,000 troops throughout the European theater were hospitalized, the equivalent of three infantry divisions.

Weather and enemy action took their greatest toll among the infantry, which sustained 89 percent of Third Army's casualties. By the end of November, Patton could no longer obtain enough infantry fillers to replace the losses among his rifle units. Manpower planners in the Pentagon had failed to foresee that the battle along the German frontier would be a hard-fought affair conducted in terrible weather and had thus failed to allocate enough manpower to infantry training. Back in the States, tank destroyer and antiaircraft battalions were broken up and sent to infantry training centers. In Lorraine, General Patton "drafted" 5 percent of army and corps troops for retraining as infantry, and when bloody fighting along the Westwall sent infantry losses soaring, he "drafted" an additional 5 percent.

In early December, Third Army's leading elements had pushed across the German border at several places along its front as the Germans withdrew into the Westwall. The 95th Division captured an intact bridge across the Saar River at Saarlautern in XX Corps' zone and encountered

some of the stiffest resistance yet experienced, as the German troops fought to defend their own soil. The Americans discovered that the town of Saarlautern itself was part of the Westwall. Unlike the Maginot Line or the Metz fortifications, the Westwall did not consist of gigantic underground fortresses and heavy artillery emplacements. Instead, it was a belt of tank obstacles, barbed wire, pillboxes, and fortified buildings. Although the Germans considered the Westwall to be antiquated, shallow, and poorly equipped, it nonetheless constituted a formidable military obstacle. In Saarlautern the fighting was literally house-to-house and pillbox-to-pillbox. To facilitate the slow infantry advance, XX Corps' artillery fired in direct support of small units. The 8-inch and 240-mm pieces adjusted their fire on individual buildings on one side of the street, while American infantrymen on the opposite side of the street prepared to advance. The 90th Division forced a crossing of the Saar at Dillingen and encountered similar resistance. Casualties mounted as the Germans brought to bear the heaviest artillery fire that Third Army had yet experienced. (See Map 13.)

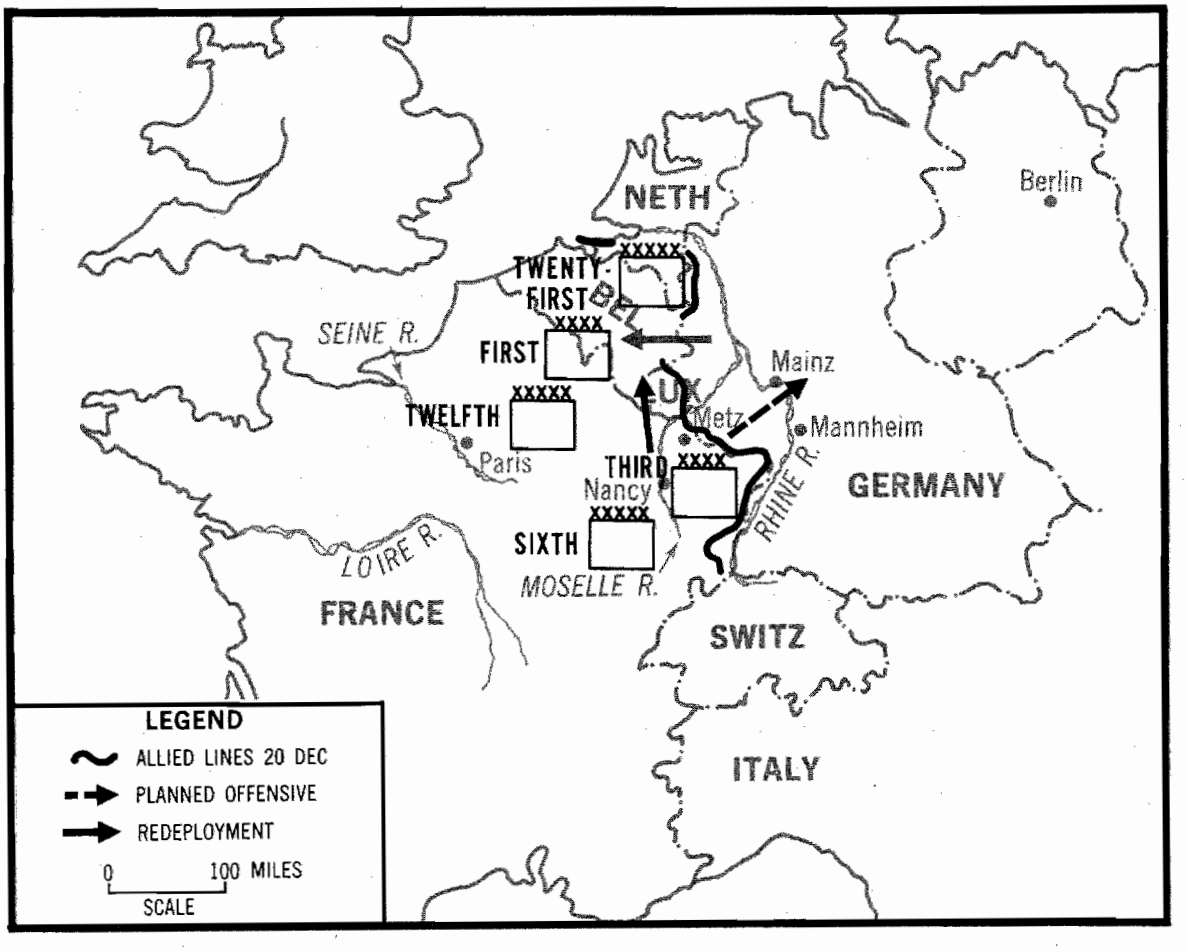
With toeholds established in the Westwall, LTG Patton initiated planning for a new offensive scheduled to jump off on 19 December. Veteran units such as the long-suffering 5th Division were pulled out of the action for reorganization and training. Patton received another corps headquarters, III Corps, and some fresh units, including 87th Division. Third Army's objectives for the December offensive were the same as they had been in August--bridgeheads across the Rhine in the vicinity of Mannheim and Mainz.

Preparations for the attack were well under way when, on 16 December, Third Army received fragmentary indications of trouble in First Army's sector to the north. It rapidly became apparent that a full-scale German counteroffensive was under way in the Ardennes. Patton quickly canceled the December offensive and implemented a contingency plan drawn up some days previously. The XX Corps abandoned its dearly bought bridgeheads over the Saar and assumed defensive positions on the west bank. On 20 December, XII Corps and III Corps, which had supervised the retraining of infantry fillers, shuffled divisions and turned north to strike the flank of the German penetration in the Ardennes. Third Army eventually assumed control of one other corps fighting in the Ardennes. The reorientation of a field army from east to north involved routing 12,000 vehicles along four roads, establishing a completely new set of supply points, and restructuring Third Army's entire

signals network to support a new army headquarters in Luxembourg. Third Army troops entered the Battle of the Bulge on 22 December, and 4 days later LTC Creighton Abrams of Arracourt fame led his battalion of the 4th Armored Division to the relief of Bastogne. (See Map 14.)

The Lorraine campaign, which began in September with the promise of imminent victory, ended in December with Third Army rushing north to help avert disaster in the Ardennes. What conclusions can be drawn from this costly and frustrating campaign?

Historians and analysts have often criticized the American commanders in the Lorraine campaign. One shortcoming that they have identified was a tendency toward overoptimism, an understandable development given

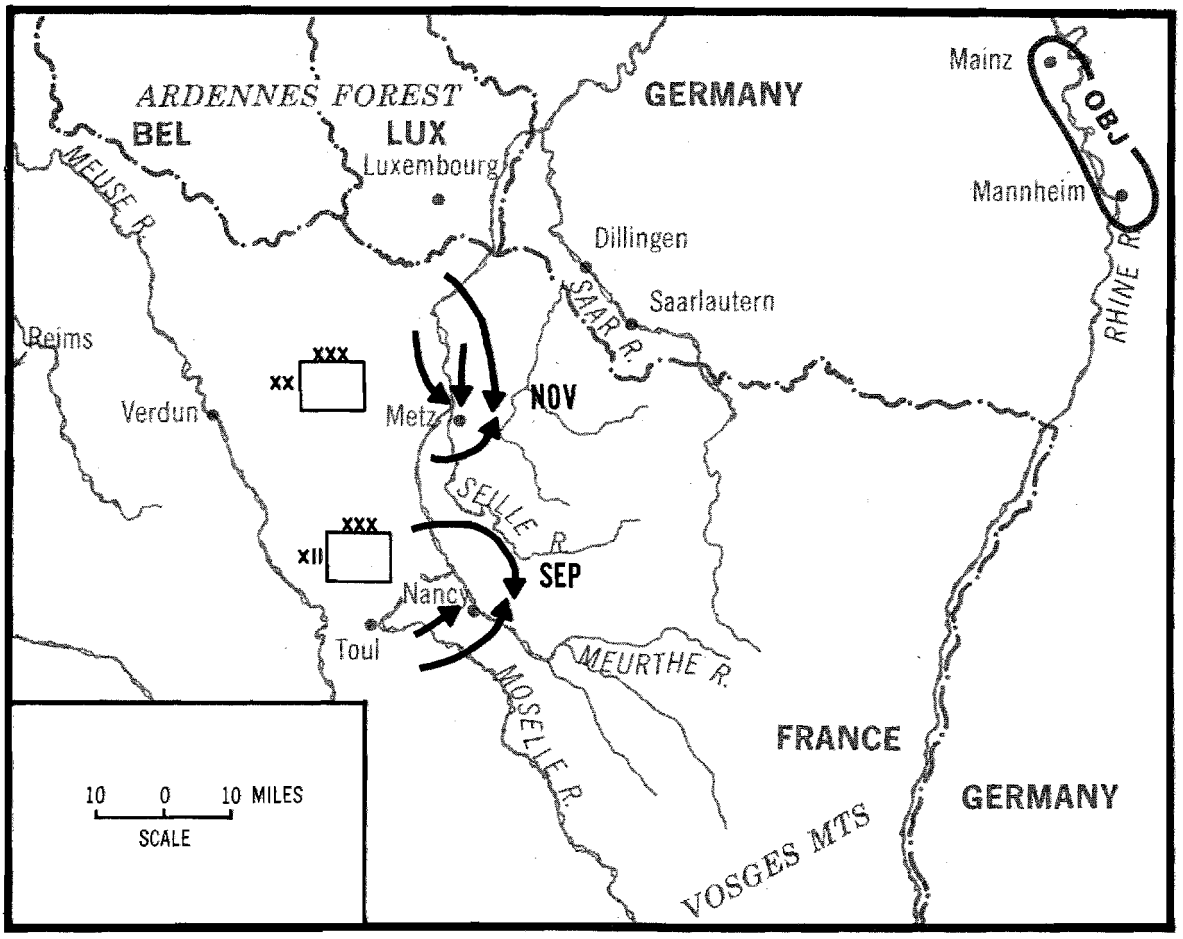


Map 14. Third Army Redeployment, 20-26 December 1944

the great victories won in July and August and the information generated by Ultra. The successful conduct of the operational level of war requires the commander to look beyond the immediate battlefield and project himself forward in space and time, but this trait was carried to excess in Lorraine at the echelons above corps. From September to December, Eisenhower, Bradley, and Patton had their sights set firmly beyond the Rhine. Consequently, they underestimated the obstacles and opposition that their soldiers would have to overcome along the way. Thus, a difference in outlook arose between the higher commanders who drew large arrows on maps and the tactical units fighting for yards of muddy ground.

General Patton can also be faulted for neglecting to practice economy of force. We have noted several instances in which Third Army's forces were spread out on a broad front in an attempt to be strong everywhere with the result that they were decisively strong nowhere. In retrospect, the important battle in September was XII Corps' fight around Nancy, and in November, the main effort was XX Corps' assault against Metz. And yet Patton failed to concentrate Third Army's resources in reinforcement of the corps engaged in decisive operations. Furthermore, Patton never made an attempt to punch through the German defenses with divisions in column, even though he received approval for such an operation from his superior, LTG Bradley. One rule of thumb for mechanized forces that emerged from World War II was to march dispersed but concentrate to fight. In Lorraine, Third Army fought dispersed. (See Map 15.)

A similar criticism can be made of Patton's corps commanders. Walker and Eddy tended repeatedly to disperse their divisions and assign them missions beyond their means. We have seen several examples of important operations undertaken by divisions or parts of divisions without adequate planning or support, even though other forces could have been obtained to augment the effort by practicing economy of force. The corps commanders were trapped between Patton, who continually urged aggressive action, and the grim realities of terrain, weather, and a determined enemy. Perhaps it is not surprising that at times Walker and Eddy became preoccupied with local problems and lost sight of the broader issues. As a result, at the corps level the Lorraine campaign was a disjointed affair, with little cooperation between corps, and little continuity from one operation to the next. However, such operations as the tank battle leading to Arracourt and the 90th Division crossing of the Moselle at Koenigsmacker demonstrated that the American corps commanders were not incapable of applying force in a flexible and decisive manner.



Map 15. Third Army Operations in Lorraine

The Lorraine campaign taught us some lessons in combined arms warfare. The tank and the airplane, two weapons which were commonly believed to have revolutionized warfare, were an unbeatable combination during the pursuit leading up to Lorraine. But when the enemy dug in and the weather turned bad, infantry, artillery, and engineers reemerged as the dominant arms. The critical shortage of infantry fillers demonstrated that the American high command had failed to anticipate this development.

This campaign also demonstrated some of the drawbacks associated with the concept of a relatively light division reinforced by corps attachments. The triangular division embodied the characteristics of mobility and maneuver, but in Lorraine it was repeatedly employed in direct assaults against an emplaced enemy. The heavy casualties that

occurred in such operations were more than the triangular division could sustain, with the result that the entire division was often rendered virtually combat ineffective and had to be withdrawn from the line to rebuild. Perhaps the division, corps, and army commanders should be faulted for failing to utilize a greater degree of maneuver for which the triangular division was much better suited. The concept of plugging in temporary reinforcements from corps was seldom practiced as prescribed by doctrine. Instead, corps tended to assign combat and support elements to the division on a semipermanent basis, thus making up for some of the muscle that the triangular division lacked organically.

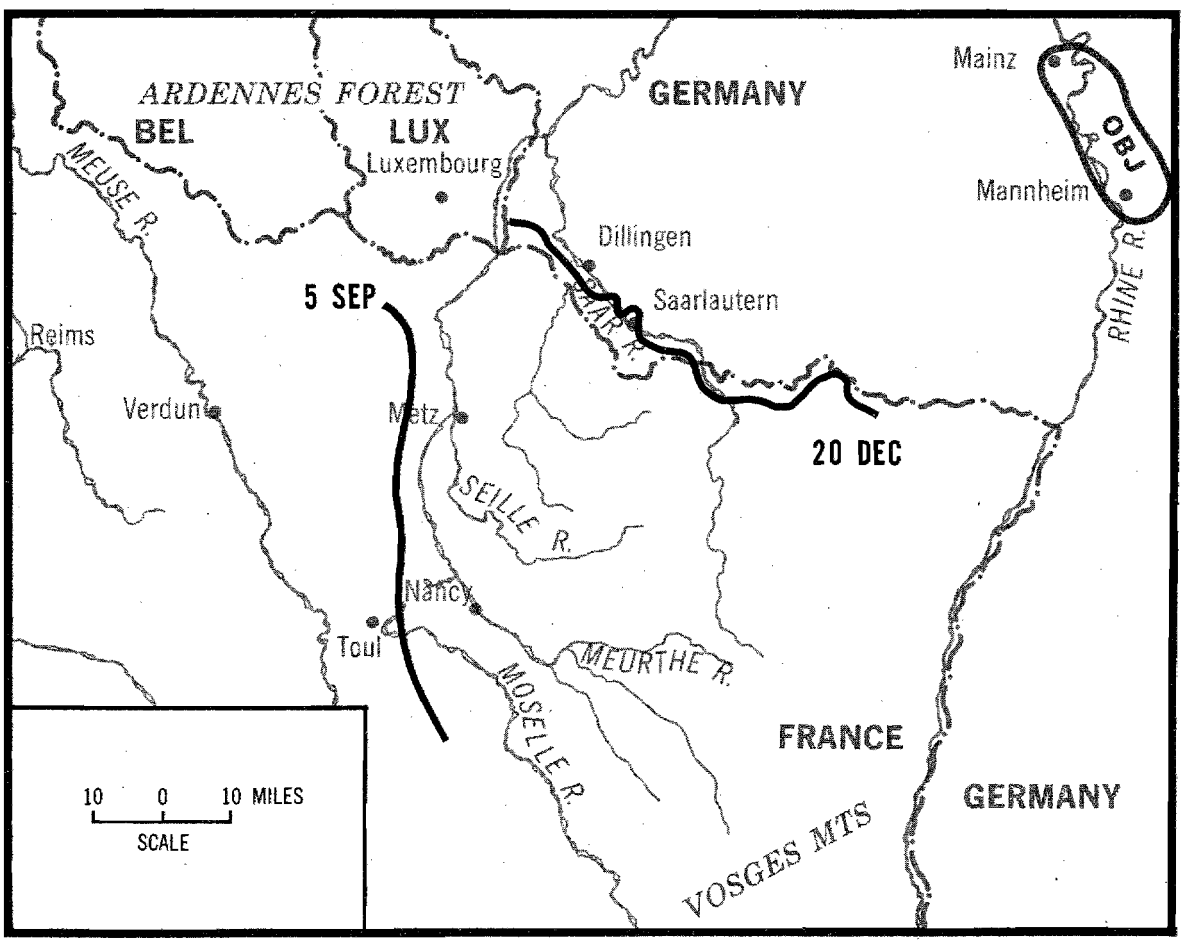
The American armored elements were not at their best in Lorraine either. Much of this can be attributed to the weather, but some of the blame must be given to the army commander for binding his armored divisions into infantry-heavy corps. Patton's reluctance to mass his armor came as a pleasant surprise to the Germans, who believed that their panzer divisions were just as useful in creating breakthroughs as they were in exploiting them. At a lower level, the combat command concept provided great tactical flexibility through decentralized control, but it also tempted Patton's corps commanders to break up the armored division and parcel it out by combat commands, a policy that further diluted Third Army's armored punch. Organizationally, the Armored Division of 1944 proved to be weak in infantry, a shortcoming often made good by detaching battalions from infantry divisions and assigning them to armored combat commands.

In addition, American tank crews repeatedly paid a heavy price for a doctrinal decision made before the war that declared tanks to be offensive weapons not intended for defensive combat against other tanks. As a result of this official policy, the M-4 Sherman tanks in Lorraine were badly outgunned by German panzers that mounted superb antitank pieces. The tank-stopping task was officially assigned to the tank destroyers, which were supposed to be thinly armored, highly mobile, heavily armed antitank specialists. Doctrine called for the majority of tank destroyers to be pooled in special corps and army antitank reserves, which could rush to the scene of an armored attack anywhere along the front. But Third Army didn't need an antitank reserve in Lorraine because German tanks usually appeared a few at a time. Consequently, the tank destroyer concept was discarded after the war, when the U.S. Army decided that the best weapon to stop a tank was another adequately armed tank.

Finally, the Lorraine campaign demonstrated that logistics often drive operations, no matter how forceful and aggressive the commanding general may be. In the August pursuit that brought Third Army to Lorraine, General Patton daringly violated tactical principles and conducted improvised operations with great success. He discovered, however, that the violation of logistical principles is an unforgiving and cumulative matter. Sooner or later, every improvisation and shortcut taken must be repaid. Third Army's logistical shortcuts included burning up gasoline reserves to keep an advance going and then neglecting ammunition supply to bring up gasoline. The slowdown that affected all of the Allied forces in September and October was the inevitable price to be paid for gambling logistically that the war could be ended in August. Moreover, in spite of the logistical mobility afforded by motorization, remember that the trucks running the Red Ball Express consumed a greater and greater proportion of their cargoes as the advance progressed, forcing Third Army to turn to two time-honored methods of supply--railroad transport and local requisition.

The lessons of the Lorraine campaign were not all negative. The American soldier proved himself capable of carrying the fight to a determined enemy under adverse conditions, a lesson that would be demonstrated even more conclusively in the Battle of the Bulge. Armored troops more than held their own against an enemy possessing superior equipment. Infantry formations endured trench foot and debilitating casualty rates. The artillery's ability to mass its fire at critical points was tactically decisive time after time. Engineers performed miracles in their efforts to keep Third Army moving in spite of demolitions and floods. Support troops overcame logistical nightmares through ingenuity and sheer hard work. When the weather permitted, the Army Air Force blasted out enemy strongpoints in close cooperation with the ground elements, denied the enemy the use of the roads in daylight, and forced him to abandon tactics that had worked against every other opponent.

Was the Lorraine campaign an American victory? From September through November, Third Army claimed to have inflicted over 180,000 casualties on the enemy. But to capture the province of Lorraine, a problem which involved an advance of only 40 to 60 air miles, Third Army required over 3 months and suffered 50,000 casualties, approximately one-third of the total number of casualties it sustained in the entire European war. (See Map 16.)



Map 16. Third Army Gains, September-December 1944, Lorraine

Ironically, Third Army never used Lorraine as a springboard for an advance into Germany after all. Patton turned most of the sector over to Seventh Army during the Ardennes crisis, and when the eastward advance resumed after the Battle of the Bulge, Third Army based its operations on Luxembourg, not Lorraine. The Lorraine campaign will always remain a controversial episode in American military history.

SUGGESTED READINGS

Bennett, Ralph. Ultra in the West. New York: Scribner's, 1980.

Bykofsky, Joseph, and Harold Larson. The Transportation Corps: Operations Overseas. U.S. Army in World War II. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1957.

Cole, Hugh M. The Lorraine Campaign. U.S. Army in World War II. Washington, DC: Historical Division, U.S. Army, 1950.

Greenfield, Kent Roberts, Robert R. Palmer, and Bell I. Wiley, The Organization of Ground Combat Troops. U.S. Army in World War II. Washington, DC: Historical Division, U.S. War Department, 1947.

Kemp, Anthony. The Unknown Battle: Metz, 1944. New York: Stein and Day, 1981.

Koch, Oscar W. G-2: Intelligence for Patton. Philadelphia: Whitmore, 1971.

MacDonald, Charles B., and Sidney T. Mathews. Three Battles: Arnaville, Altuzzo, and Schmidt. U.S. Army in World War II. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1952.

Mayo, Lida. The Ordnance Department: On Beachhead and Battlefront. U.S. Army in World War II. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1968.

Mellenthin, F. W. von. Panzer Battles. Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956.

Ross, William F. The Quartermaster Corps: Operations in the War Against Germany. U.S. Army in World War II. Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Military History, 1965.

U.S. War Department. General Staff. Small Unit Actions. American Forces in Action Series. Washington, DC: Historical Division, War Department, [1946]. See "Singling (4th Armored Division, 6 December 1944)."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr. Christopher R. Gabel

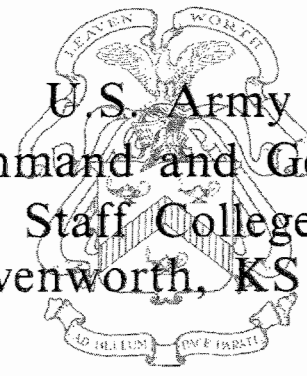
Dr. Christopher R. Gabel is an associate professor at the Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He received his bachelor's degree at The Pennsylvania State University and earned M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in history at The Ohio State University. His graduate studies focused on the doctrine of the U.S. Army in the interwar and World War II periods.

COMBAT STUDIES INSTITUTE

Mission

The Combat Studies Institute was established on 18 June 1979 as a department-level activity within the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. CSI has the following missions:

1. Conduct research on historical topics pertinent to doctrinal concerns of the Army and publish the results in a variety of formats for the Active Army and Reserve Components.
2. Prepare and present instruction in military history at USACGSC and assist other USACGSC departments in integrating military history into their instruction.
3. Serve as the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command's executive agent for the development and coordination of an integrated, progressive program of military history instruction in the TRADOC service school system.
4. Direct the Combined Arms Center's historical program.
5. Supervise the Fort Leavenworth Museum.



U.S. Army
Command and General
Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-6900

92-1554