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A STUDY OF BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

Historical Evaluation and Research Organization
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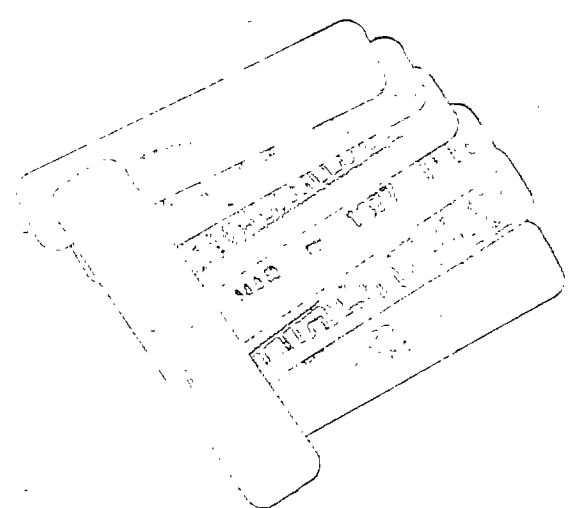
Final Report

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20. ABSTRACT (Continued)

Offensive of German XLVIII Panzer Corps in Southern Sector of Kursk Bulge, 4-15 July 1943; (7) Belgorod-Kharkov: Soviet Offensive from Kursk Salient, August 1943; (8) Operation Cobra: Allied Breakthrough in Normandy, 1944; (9) Soviet Invasion of Manchuria, August 1945, Breakthrough Operations of the 1st Far Eastern Army Group; (10) Soviet Invasion of Manchuria, August 1945, Breakthrough Operations of 1st Far Eastern Army Group; (11) North Korean Invasion of South Korea: Breakthrough to Seoul, 25-28 June 1950; (12) Third Arab-Israeli War, 1967: Israel vs Egypt, Israel vs Syria. Includes narratives covering background, plans, operations, exploitation and drawing conclusions for each, qualitative and quantitative assessments, and considerations for tactical nuclear warfare. Part II is a daily scenario of the attack of the German XLVIII Panzer Corps in the Battle of Kursk, 4-15 July 1943.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PART I - INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to examine breakthrough operations in past wars of recent history so as to provide a basic understanding of the essentials of such operations, and to assist those in the nuclear community who are modeling breakthrough operations, as well as those decision-makers who will shape the US capability to defeat a potential breakthrough in conventional or tactical nuclear combat.

A Breakthrough was defined as: An operation in which attacking forces penetrate the defender's main line of resistance, overrunning or bypassing local reserves, completely disrupting lateral ground communications of front-line defensive units on either side of the penetration, retaining the capability of continued and sustained forward movement, while the defending forces are incapable of immediately deploying effective resistance in front of the attacker's penetrating elements.

PART II - ASSESSMENT

A qualitative assessment identifies the factors which were most important to the achievement or near-achievement of breakthroughs in each of the fourteen specific operations considered in this study. The analysis led to the conclusion that success in achieving breakthroughs results from the following considerations:

- Careful planning
- Well-organized, well trained, well led forces
- Forces massed at the point of attack
- Ample reserves
- Mobility superiority
- Air superiority
- Surprise

A quantitative assessment reveals that the attackers had quantifiable combat power advantages over the defenders in one or more of the following five characteristics:

1. Substantial preponderance of ground numbers or firepower
2. Combat effectiveness superiority
3. Superior mobility
4. Overwhelming air support
5. Surprise

From these fourteen examples it was possible to draw a profile of a typical force that successfully achieved a breakthrough, based upon averages of the statistical data, omitting the air support figures:

	<u>Attacker</u>	<u>Defender</u>
Width of front ¹	18.0 km	18.0 km
Men/kilometer	4,546	2,485
Guns/kilometer	30.2	13.5
Tanks/kilometer	26.7	11.3
Relative combat effectiveness ²	1.94	1.0

¹Depth varied from about 12 to about 50 kilometers.

²Based upon quantitative assessment.

On the assumption that the two sides are equally matched in combat effectiveness or that differences cannot be discerned between the opponents in such contributions to combat effectiveness as leadership, training, morale, etc., the profile of the attacker for the same 18 kilometer front would be modified as follows:

Men/kilometer	8,819
Guns/kilometer	49.2
Tanks/kilometer	45.3

PART III - OPERATIONAL NARRATIVES

Operational narratives for thirteen of the fourteen breakthrough operations considered in this study are contained in this part of the report, as follows:

1. Megiddo Campaign: Breakthrough of the XXI Corps of Allenby's British Expeditionary Force in Palestine, 19-21 September 1918;
2. Battle of Flanders: Breakthrough on the Meuse by Guderian's XIX Corps of German Panzer Group Kleist, 10-15 May 1940;
3. Ukraine Invasion: Breakthrough of the German First Panzer Group, 21-26 June 1941;
4. Battle of Jitra: Breakthrough of the Japanese 5th Division in Malaya, 8-12 December 1941;
5. Leningrad Breakthrough: Operations of the Soviet Second Assault Army, Volkov Army Group, 12-18 January 1943;
6. Operation "Citadel," (see Part IV);
7. Belgorod-Kharkov Offensive: Operations of the Soviet Fifty-Third Army, of the Steppe Army Group, from the Kursk Salient, 3-11 August 1943;
8. Operation "Cobra": Breakout of the US VII Corps from the Normandy Beachhead, 24-28 July 1944;
9. Battle of Mutangkiang: Breakthrough of the Soviet 1st Far Eastern Army Group in Manchuria, 9-15 August 1945;
10. Korean Offensive: Breakthrough of the North Korean Army to Seoul, 25-28 June 1950;
11. Sinai Front, Six-Day War: Breakthrough of Tal's Division (Israeli) at Rafah, 5-6 June 1967;
12. Sinai Front, Six-Day War: Breakthrough of Sharon's Division (Israeli) at Abu Ageila, 5-6 June 1967;
13. Golan Front, Six-Day War: Breakthrough of Mendler's Brigade (Israeli) at Qala, 9-10 June 1967;
14. Golan Front, Six-Day War: Breakthrough of Bar Kochva's Brigade (Israeli) at Tel Fahar, 9-10 June 1967.

PART IV - SCENARIO FOR THE KURSK BATTLE, GERMAN XLVIII PANZER CORPS

This is a detailed survey of the operations of the German XLVIII Panzer Corps, of Kleist's Fourth Panzer Army, in the Oboyan Sector of the southern face of the Kursk Salient, 4-15 July 1943. Following a brief summary a detailed day-by-day, hour-by-hour scenario of the battle is presented, from the attacker's standpoint.

APPENDIX - CONSIDERATIONS FOR TACTICAL NUCLEAR WARFARE

Although beyond the scope of the terms of reference for the study, HERO's analysts, as professional military historians, offer some conclusions as to the implications of the historical experience of this report on breakthrough operations with respect to possible future tactical nuclear combat.

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PART I
INTRODUCTION

Most theater nuclear war scenarios under study today hinge upon a breakthrough operation. The purpose of this study was to examine breakthrough operations in past wars of recent history so as to provide a basic understanding of the essential ingredients of such operations. This understanding should improve the quality of theater nuclear war studies in general and could alter perceptions of the role of nuclear weapons on the battle field. It is hoped that this study will prove useful to those in the nuclear community who are modeling breakthrough operations, as well as those decision-makers who will shape the U.S. capability to defeat a potential breakthrough.

All twelve of the operations reviewed and analyzed in the following pages fit, or come close to fitting, HERO's definition of a breakthrough operation: one in which attacking forces penetrate the defender's main line of resistance, overrunning or bypassing local reserves, completely disrupting lateral ground communications of front-line defensive units on either side of the penetration, retaining the capability of continued and sustained forward movement, while the defending forces are incapable of immediately deploying effective resistance in front of the attacker's penetrating elements. While all of the operations were fought with conventional weapons, had tactical nuclear weapons been available to attacker or defender they might, under some circumstances, have been used. The implications of such use were considered in the analysis of the operations.

The twelve operations selected were:

1. Megiddo Campaign, September 19-21, 1918
2. Battle of Flanders, May 10-21, 1940
3. Ukraine Invasion, June 21-26, 1941
4. Battle of Jitra, Malaya, December 8-12, 1941
5. Leningrad Breakthrough, January 12-18, 1943
6. Operations "Citadel" (Kursk), July 4-15, 1943
7. Belgorod-Kharkov Offensive, August 3-11, 1943
8. Operation "Cobra" (Normandy), July 24-28, 1944
9. Battle of Mutangkiang, Manchuria, August 9-15, 1945
10. Korean Invasion, June 25-28, 1950
11. Second Sinai Campaign, June 5-8, 1967
12. Golan Heights Assault, June 9-10, 1967

In each of the two Six-Day War campaigns surveyed there were two simultaneous, coordinated, but independent breakthrough operations. Accordingly, all of these breakthroughs were surveyed separately, providing a total of 14 breakthrough operations. All but two of these operations had been analyzed in other aspects and for other purposes in earlier HERO studies. Nevertheless, substantial new research was required for each of the operational narratives, to assure a proper focus on breakthrough aspects essential for this study.

The terms of reference for the study required that a detailed day-by-day scenario be prepared for one operation. It was agreed with the client that if possible the operation chosen should involve Soviet forces. Because of limitations on time

and funds, it was essential that an operation be chosen for which substantial data on both sides, and particularly the attacker's side, was readily available. While it would have been desirable, if possible, to focus on the three Soviet breakthroughs reviewed in this study (Leningrad, Belgorod-Kharkov, or Manchuria), the time required for detailed scenario research for any of these would have far exceeded the available budgeted time, because readily available records and secondary sources proved to be inadequate in detail. However, both German and Soviet data on the Battle of Kursk was abundant, and the records of the German XLVIII Panzer Corps and its component divisions were particularly good. The attack at Kursk is particularly apt because it was made by a heavily armored force against a particularly well fortified defense system. It involved an initial breakthrough by the German attackers, complications introduced by unforeseen terrain and weather conditions, and an increasingly effective reaction by strong, unprecedentedly large Soviet tank forces that resulted in one of the major tank battles of the recent historical past and ultimately halted the Germans short of breaking through the last Soviet defense line. The scenario is based closely on the frequent reports to and observations by the commander of the XLVIII Panzer Corps, and so includes a wealth of detail and an authenticity that could not have been provided readily for other operations. Thus the scenario in this report presents practically an hour-by-hour picture of the operations of one of the principal attacking contingents in one of the major battles of history, and Soviet responses to the attack, including the introduction of unprecedented numbers of tanks.

Part II of this report is an overall assessment of the breakthrough operations considered, providing qualitative and quantitative evaluations which reveal patterns, common characteristics, similarities, and differences among the operations.

Part III contains the operational narratives for thirteen of the fourteen breakthrough operations.

Part IV is devoted to the nearly-successful breakthrough effort of the German XLVIII Panzer Corps at Kursk. It includes a brief narrative and the detailed day-by-day scenario.

HERO was charged with the task of examining historical breakthroughs to provide insights that will assist DoD/ERDA agencies and organizations that are performing theater nuclear warfare research to make extrapolations for possible future tactical nuclear ground combat. HERO's expertise in the field of military history and combat analysis does not extend to hypothetical tactical nuclear combat. However, HERO's analysts, as professional military historians, could not avoid reaching some conclusions as to the implications of this historical experience in breakthrough operations to possible future tactical nuclear combat, even though the drawing of such conclusions was beyond the scope of the study. These subjective, historians' conclusions are therefore offered in an appendix to this report, entitled "Considerations for Tactical Nuclear Warfare." Readers may give as much or as little weight as they wish to these conclusions.

PART II

ASSESSMENT

Of the breakthrough operations considered in this study, all except the Soviet attacks at Leningrad and Belgorod-Kharkov and the German attack in the Ukraine are part of operations studied by HERO for an earlier project on "Quick Wins," whose availability made it possible to perform this study more rapidly and at less expense.¹³ Additional research has been done on all of these operations, and more statistical data has been available for this Breakthrough study.

The 14 Breakthroughs were achieved by forces ranging in size from brigade to army. The smaller ones encompass a single penetration that in most instances were part of larger operations which may have included breakthroughs in other sectors as well. Three of the operations—Ukraine, Manchuria, and North Korea—include multiple penetrations. In all cases the attacker massed his forces in the area or areas selected for the breakthrough attempts. Thus, for example, the North Korean attack was made on a broad front along the entire border, but the attack was concentrated and forces were massed in four sectors, prescribed by the terrain, where a breakthrough was to be attempted.

Except for Operation Cobra in Normandy in 1944 all of the breakthroughs in this sample were achieved or attempted at the start of a campaign or after a lengthy break in the fighting, and completed in a short period of time. Analysis of rapid breakthroughs at the beginning of an offensive appear to have particular relevance to tactical nuclear warfare, since it is likely, if tactical nuclear weapons are employed, that they would be used to achieve a breakthrough quickly or to halt one at the outset.

QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT

Figure 1 shows the results of a qualitative assessment of the various operations, its purpose to identify the factors which were most important to the achievement of the breakthrough in each case. The X indicates a factor in which the attacker or defender (as the case may be) had a clear advantage, in some cases—underlined—sufficient to have had a decisive effect on the outcome. The 0 indicates a disadvantage worth noting. Blanks indicate that the factor related in approximately the same way to both sides, or were not considered to be of significance to the outcome. While it is possible to identify and assess the importance of these factors, it is immediately apparent that most of them overlap with others. It is also obvious that none by itself is likely to confer sufficient advantage to achieve success.

Five factors—force quality, reserves, mobility superiority, air superiority, and force preponderance—are characteristics of the attacking force. Two—weather and terrain and/or roads—are environmental characteristics over which neither side has control. Two—planning and surprise—relate to the operation itself. Three factors are included which relate to the defending force—fortifications, reserves, and leadership. They are assessed as contributing to the success of the breakthrough because they made the defense less effective, or to delaying or preventing it because of the advantage they gave to the defender.

Planning was considered to be the most important advantage to the attacker in 13 of the 14 operations and to be decisive to its success in 2. Only in the German attack at Kursk was it considered not to have been an advantage. The fatal flaw in that operation plan was the inadequate interpretation of intelligence information. The Germans had identified the location and strength of the Soviet fixed defenses with a considerable degree of accuracy. But they failed to realize the manpower strength available to the defenders and the speed with which Soviet tanks in effective strength could be brought up from reserve. Consequently, although they were

	Megiddo	Flanders	Ukraine	Malaya	Leningrad	Kursk	Belgorod-Kharkov	Cobra	Manchuria	North Korea	Sinai		Syria		Totals		
											Rafah	Abu Ageila	Qala	Tel Fahar	Advantage	Decisive	
Attacker*																	
Force Quality	x	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>			x			x	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	10	7
Reserves	x	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>		x	<u>0</u>	<u>x</u>	x	x	x	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	10	3
Mobility Superiority	x	<u>x</u>	x	<u>x</u>		x		x	x	x	<u>x</u>	x	x	x	x	11	3
Air Superiority		<u>x</u>	x	<u>x</u>				<u>x</u>	x	x	<u>x</u>	x	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	10	4
Force Preponderance	<u>x</u>			0	<u>x</u>	0	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	x	x						6	4
Weather	<u>x</u>	x	x	0	<u>0</u>			<u>x</u>	0		x	x	x	x	x	8	0
Terrain and/or Roads	x		x	0	0			x	0	0	x		0	0	0	4	0
Leadership	x	x	x	x						x	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	x	x	x	9	2
Planning	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	x	x	x	13	2
Surprise	<u>x</u>	x	<u>x</u>	x				<u>x</u>		<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>				8	5
Mass, narrow front	<u>x</u>	<u>x</u>		x	x	x	x	x	x		<u>x</u>	x	x	x	x	12	3
Defender*																	
Fortifications					x	<u>x</u>	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	9	1
Reserves	0		x	0		<u>x</u>		0	0		x	x	x	x	x	7	1
Leadership		<u>0</u>	0	<u>0</u>						<u>0</u>	0	0	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>			
* x = advantage; <u>x</u> = decisive advantage; 0 = disadvantage; <u>0</u> = decisive disadvantage.																	

Figure 1. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

partially successful, they were unable to achieve a complete breakthrough before the Soviets brought up reinforcements in strength. Note that Reserves is shown for the German attackers as a decisively negative factor because their available reserves were not sufficient to complete the breakthrough. For the defenders, Reserves in this operation were a decisive advantage.

Although, as noted, in all cases the attackers concentrated their forces at the breakthrough points, in only six of these examples did the attacker have a numerical preponderance of force overall. In four of these however—Megiddo, Leningrad, Belgorod-Kharkov, and Cobra—this preponderance was sufficient to give the attacker a decisive advantage.

The attackers in all of these operations were combined arms forces, and the efforts of infantry, artillery, and tanks, or, in the case of Megiddo, horses, supported by aircraft, were coordinated in the breakthrough operation. In most cases infantry divisions conducted the initial breakthrough attack, often supported by attached tank units, and the bulk of the armor was used to exploit the breakthrough. The tanks of course gave the attacker mobility, and—with the trucks and other vehicles available—superiority in mobility was achieved by 11 of the attackers. Movement or maneuver of the mobile forces was enhanced by the presence of air superiority, which was a factor in 10 of the operations.

The factor that was judged decisive in the greatest number of examples was force quality, that is, the training, experience, and morale of the men, the availability and distribution of weapons, and the coordinated performance of all elements in combat. Force quality was considered decisive in Flanders, the Ukraine, and North Korea, as well as in all four of the Israeli examples, the largest number of any of the factors. In only one of these, North Korea, was the attacker's force both considerably larger and of higher quality.

Although only eight of the attackers in this sample achieved surprise in their attacks, in five of these cases that surprise is considered to have had a decisive effect on the outcome. Whether it was a complete surprise to the defenders, like the North Korean attack on South Korea, the Israeli attack on Egypt, or the German attack in the Ukraine, or a surprise in timing, like the attack of the First Far Eastern Army Group in Manchuria, or as to place, like the attack by the German tank forces in Flanders in 1940, surprise threw the defenders off balance and assisted the attackers in the achievement of their objective.

In 12 instances the defender is judged to have contributed to the achievement of the breakthrough by his own failures or shortcomings. In four cases—Megiddo, Malaya, Cobra, and Manchuria—there were not sufficient reserves available to maintain the defense. In 8 cases there were failures in leadership. In Flanders, Malaya, North Korea, and Syria leadership failure is deemed to have had a decisive effect on the outcome.

From this analysis it may be concluded that success in achieving these breakthroughs resulted from:

- Careful planning
- Well organized, well trained, well led forces
- Forces massed at the point of attack
- Ample reserves
- Mobility superiority
- Air superiority
- Surprise.

QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENT

In Figure 2 the statistical results of the quantitative assessment of these breakthrough operations are summarized. Each breakthrough operation was analyzed by comparison of the numerical characteristics: manpower, major weapons strength, density, days to breakthrough, depth of penetration, and rate of advance. Each was also analyzed by use of the Quantified Judgment Model (QJM)¹⁴ to obtain the fire-power ratio, combat power ratio, effect of surprise, combat effectiveness value, and effective combat power ratio. The figures are for the most part self-explanatory, but a few comments are in order.

	Megiddo	Flanders	Ukraine	Jitra	Lenin-grad	Kursk-German	Belgorod-Kharkov	Cobra	Manchuria	North Korea	Rafah	Abu Ageila	Qala	Tel Fahar
Numerical Manpower Ratio	2.81	1.07	0.88	0.58	4.00	0.69	4.67	4.20	1.96	1.58	1.00	1.04	0.91	0.90
Width of Front (km)	24	9	65	8	13	16	7	11	12	40	21	18	5	3
Attacker's Density/km	2,132	5,333	2,031	875	9,231	3,875	10,000	11,455	12,250	1,500	929	1,071	1,170	1,792
Defender's Density/km	760	5,000	2,308	1,500	2,308	5,625	2,143	2,727	6,250	950	930	1,025	1,280	1,987
Attacker's Guns/km	16.0	18.7	4.1	6.0	62.0	19.4	92.3	66.5	111.3	5.3	4.0	4.0	4.8	8.0
Defender's Guns/km	6.3	21.3	5.0	7.0	8.2	40.4	7.7	28.2	18.0	4.0	3.2	7.0	14.0	19.3
Attacker's Tanks/km	-	66.7	11.8	5.0	24.3	32.6	41.6	59.1	64.2	2.5	11.4	6.7	18.0	3.3
Defender's Tanks/km	-	10.0	13.1	0	2.0	58.2	7.1	4.7	8.8	0	9.4	6.7	10.0	16.7
Attacker's Air Preponderance	-	11/1	4/1	10/0	5/1	3/2	/1	100/0	7/1	20/0	3/1	-	/0	/0
Firepower Ratio	2.99	2.42	1.17	2.06	4.83	0.79	5.03	7.34	4.00	1.73	1.45	0.94	2.27	1.79
Mobility Value	1.23	1.35	1.20	1.84	0.90	1.44	0.89	1.11	1.31	1.23	2.17	2.61	1.50	0.95
Combat Power Ratio	1.43	1.45	0.82	1.15	2.21	0.49	2.38	4.10	2.70	1.41	1.13	0.56	1.79	1.34
Effects of Surprise	1.92	1.41	1.33	1.15	-	-	-	-	1.09	1.20	1.98	2.07	-	-
Combat Effect Value (CEV)	1.88	1.32	3.10	1.91	0.68	2.68	0.66	0.73	1.07	2.67	1.87	2.69	2.50	3.34
Effective Combat Power Ratio	5.20	2.70	3.36	2.52	1.51	1.31	1.57	2.99	3.16	3.20	4.19	3.12	4.47	4.47
Days to Breakthrough	2	2	5	1	7	7	3	3	8	3	1	1	1	1
Depth of Penetration	70	10	120	10	7	35	26	21	160	50	45	20	7.5	5
Rate of Advance (km/day)	35	5	24	10	1	5	8.5	7	20	17	45	20	7.5	5

Figure 2. SUMMARIES OF QUANTITATIVE ASSESSMENTS

Inspection of Figure 2 in combination with Figure 1 bears out the obvious condition that in order to achieve a breakthrough of a defense zone the attacker must have some sort of advantage in combat power. This may be

1. Substantial preponderance of ground numbers or firepower
2. Combat effectiveness superiority
3. Superior mobility
4. Overwhelming air support
5. Surprise
6. Some combination of these.

Of the 14 breakthroughs shown here, the number of attackers with the advantage in each of these six categories was as follows:

1. 8 manpower, 7 guns, 9 tanks. (Of these, 5 with all three, 1 with men and guns, 1 with guns and tanks, 1 with men and tanks, 2 with tanks only, and 1 with men only.)
2. 11
3. 11
4. 10
5. 8
6. 14

The effective combat power ratio calculated by the Quantified Judgment Method measures the actual comparative power of the opponents as demonstrated by the outcome. This includes not only their numerical strengths but their strengths modified by the conditions of battle, by the achievement of surprise when applicable, and by comparative combat effectiveness. In these 14 examples, all but one show an effective combat power superiority of 1.5 or more. The exception is the only partially successful operation by the German XLVIII Panzer Corps at Kursk. This suggests that it is necessary to have an effective combat power superiority of at least 1.5 in order to be able to achieve a successful breakthrough. Analysis of other operations has demonstrated that a combat power advantage of 1.1 is enough to warrant a prediction of success in combat and that sustained advance not involving a breakthrough seems possible with an advantage of 1.3.

Only two of the other 13 examples—Leningrad and Belgorod-Kharkov—show an effective combat power ratio of the two contending forces below 2.5. (At Megiddo the value was more than twice that.) It should be recalled that this "effective combat power ratio" is a quantification of the outcome, reflecting three major measures of effectiveness: (1) Relative accomplishment of mission by both sides; (2) Relative ground-gaining or ground-holding ability of the opponents, and (3) Relative casualty effectiveness (numbers of casualties in relation to the strategic strengths of both sides). In both the Leningrad and Belgorod-Kharkov battles we have World War II Soviet attacks against Germans. In both instances the Soviets won clearcut successes, but at the same time the Germans fought skillfully in the defense, yielded ground slowly and reluctantly, and inflicted greatly disproportionate casualties on the attacking Soviets, who never had an opportunity (and apparently did not seek the opportunity) to launch an explosive exploitation of the undeniable breakthroughs they achieved. While these two examples may be unique to that war, the effective combat power ratios, in comparison with those of other examples in this study, suggest that for a decisive breakthrough exploitation the effective combat power ratio (or pre-calculated combat power ratio) should be greater than 1.5.

In an attempt to draw a profile of a typical force that successfully achieved a breakthrough, averages were taken of the statistical data in these operations, omitting the air support figures. They show

	<u>Attacker</u>	<u>Defender</u>
Width of front	18.0 km	18.0 km
Men/kilometer	4,546	2,485
Guns/kilometer	30.2	13.5
Tanks/kilometer	26.7	11.3
CEV	1.94	1.00

The average force in this sample, then, would have had these characteristics:

	<u>Attacker</u>	<u>Defender</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
	1 Corps	1 Corps	
	1 armd div, 1 mczd div, 2 inf divs, 9 arty bns	2 inf divs, 1 armd bde, 3 1/3 arty bns	1.72/1.00
Manpower:	81,828	44,730	1.83/1.00
Men/km	4,546	2,485	
Guns:	456	204	2.24/1.00
Guns/km	30.2	13.5	
Tanks:	420	178	2.36/1.00
Tanks/km	26.7	11.3	

If instead of the attacker's having a superiority of 94% in combat effectiveness, the two forces were assumed to be approximately even, the attacker would require a greater preponderance of force, and the comparison for an 18.0 kilometer front would be as follows:

	<u>Attacker</u>	<u>Defender</u>	<u>Ratio</u>
	1 Army	1 Corps	
	2 armd divs, 2 mczd divs, 3 inf divs, 20 arty bns	2 inf divs, 1 armd bde 3 1/3 arty bns	3.00/1.00
Manpower:	158,746	44,730	3.55/1.00
Men/km	8,819	2,485	
Guns:	885	205	4.34/1.00
Guns/km	49.2	13.5	
Tanks:	815	178	4.58/1.00
Tanks/km	45.3	11.3	

Of the examples studied here the forces at Leningrad, Belgorod-Kharkov, Manchuria, and Cobra come closest to having these characteristics. While these figures are statistically interesting, the importance of calculating such an average is not great, because so many other combat variables enter into any specific combat situation.

An inspection of Figure 2 shows that there is no obvious relationship between the rates of advance and the four different kinds of force ratios shown—numerical/manpower ratio, firepower ratio, combat power ratio, and effective combat power ratio. This bears out the results HERO has obtained in analyses of more than 100 engagements and campaigns of World War II and the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1967 and 1973: no apparent relationship between force ratios and rates of advance. Since most of the models of combat currently in use are based directly or indirectly upon an assumption that there is such a relationship, this finding, while not directly relevant to the breakthrough operations, may have considerable significance.

PART III
OPERATIONAL NARRATIVES

MEGIDDO: BREAKTHROUGH OF THE BRITISH EXPEDITIONARY FORCE
IN PALESTINE, 19 SEPTEMBER 1918

On 19 September 1918, in a brilliantly planned and flawlessly executed operation, the British XXI Corps attacked the Turkish defense line near the coast in Palestine, completely surprising the defenders. The British broke through the Turkish front in several places, and mounted troops rushed through the gaps to exploit the breakthrough.

BACKGROUND

At the end of February 1918 the Allied Supreme War Council approved a proposal for a major advance in Palestine, and General Sir Edmund Allenby, commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF), the British forces in Palestine, was ordered, together with General J.C. Smuts of South Africa, to formulate a strategic plan which would eliminate Turkey from the war. Allenby decided first to secure his right flank by occupying the Jordan Valley, seizing Amman, and cutting the Hejaz railway, thereby isolating the Turkish garrisons in the Arabian peninsula. The main effort of the EEF would then take the form of an advance along the coast to Haifa, Tyre, Sidon, and Aleppo, while a secondary column advanced along the railroad from Haifa to Damascus. The advance on the coast would be accompanied by and coordinated with an extension of the Suez Canal-Jaffa railroad to Haifa and Beirut.

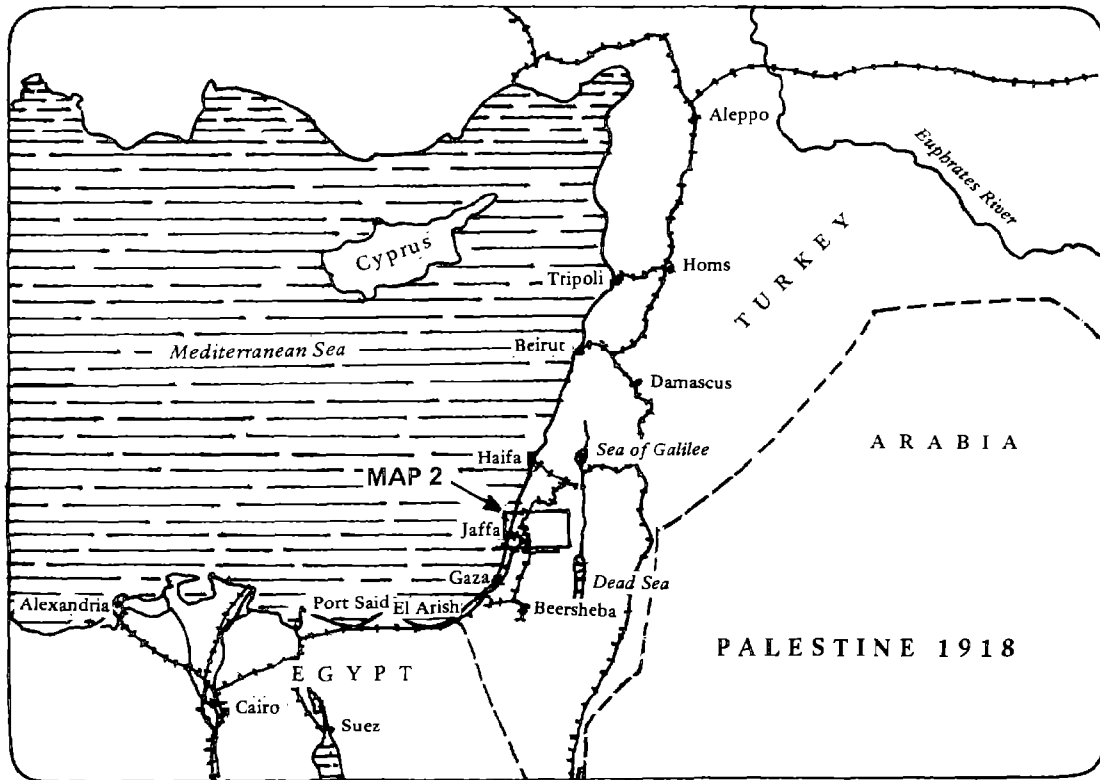
To facilitate this plan, during the spring and summer of 1918 Allenby carried out a series of raids across the Jordan River with the intention of drawing large numbers of Turkish troops away from the coastal region. While none of these raids succeeded in securing any significant objectives, the Turks reacted as Allenby had hoped, and by August most of the Turkish force in Palestine was established in the Judean hills and the Jordan Valley.

PLANS

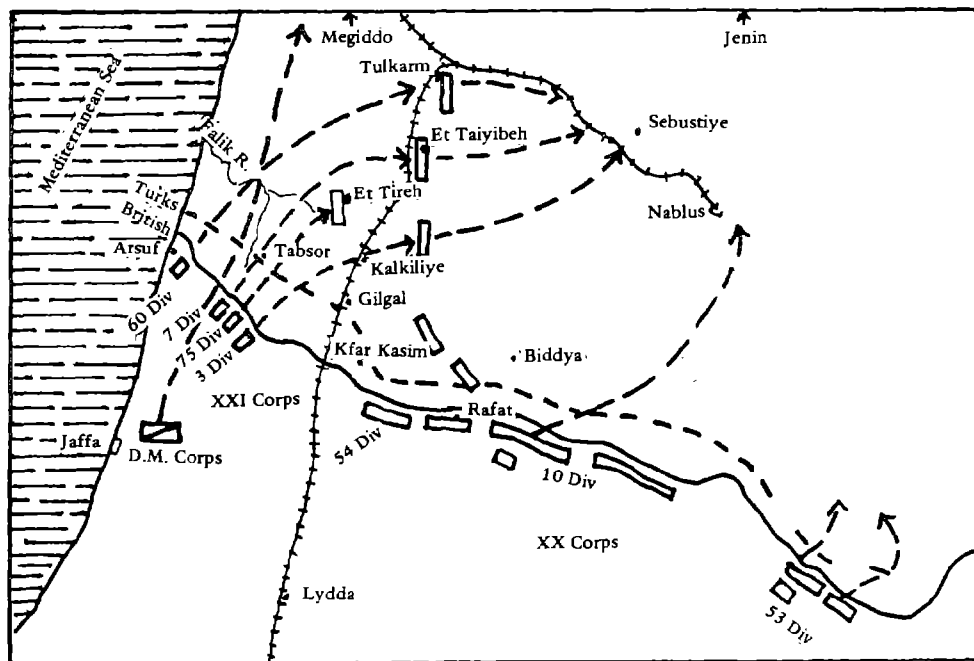
At the end of August, General Allenby completed plans for an operation that would take full advantage of his preponderance of force in Palestine—12,000 cavalrymen, 57,000 infantrymen, and 540 guns—and the superior mobility of his troops. He deployed his forces with the XXI Corps, under Lieutenant General Sir Edward Bulfin, massed along a front of about 15 miles between the coast at Arsuf, just north of Jaffa, and Rafat, with the 60th, 7th, and 3d Divisions from west to east between the coast and the inoperative Lydda-Tulkarm railway, and the 54th Division east of the railway line. Behind the XXI Corps was the Desert Mounted Corps of Lieutenant General Sir Henry Chauvel, comprising the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions and the Australian Mounted Division. A 20-mile front from Rafat eastward was held by the 10th and 53d Divisions of the British XX Corps, under the command of Lieutenant General Sir Philip Chetwode. In the Jordan Valley, the Anzac Mounted Division and eight attached infantry battalions were under the command of Major General Edward Chaytor.

Allenby's troops were supported by a force of some 8,000 Arabs. Of these, 5,000, under the leadership of the Emir Feisal and Captain T.E. Lawrence, were concentrated 50 miles east of Amman at Azrak, within range of the vital Deraa railroad junction.

Allenby's plan was for the five infantry divisions of the XXI Corps and the 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade, following a massive artillery and naval gunfire (from the destroyers Druid and Forester) bombardment, to break through the Turkish defense lines near the coast. The left flank of the XXI Corps would then swing



Map 1



Map 2

ATTACK OF XX AND XXI CORPS
19-21 September 1918

northeast, pivoting on the Corps right, and force the Turks back through the foothills toward Jenin, Afula, and Nablus. As soon as the XXI Corps had broken through the Turkish lines, the Desert Mounted Corps was to ride north along the Plain of Sharon until it reached the Mefjir River. It was then to turn northeastward, cross the seven-mile wide Carmel range and enter the Plain of Esdraelon through two passes: one in the northwest which begins at Abu Shushe and ends near Nazareth, and a second one in the southeast, the Musmus Defile, which terminates at Megiddo near Afula. The cavalry was to seize Beisan, Afula, and the Mejamie Bridge, thus cutting the Turkish rail communications and lines of retreat and trapping the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies. This advance was to be executed as rapidly as possible, with the cavalry avoiding all unnecessary engagements with Turkish troops en route to their objectives. A cavalry detachment was to seize Liman von Sanders's headquarters at Nazareth.

The XX Corps, meanwhile, was first to swing its right flank forward so that all the southern routes to the Damieh Bridge and the Jordan Valley would be blocked. In a second stage, it was to advance on Nablus from both east and west. The force under the command of General Chaytor in the Jordan Valley was to secure the right flank of the British operations while perpetuating the Turkish belief that an attack toward Amman was intended. The Arabs, reinforced by some 2,000 camels supplied by the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, were to cut the railway near Deraa and thus isolate the Turkish Fourth Army.

The Turkish forces in Palestine, under the overall command of German General Otto Liman von Sanders, were organized in three armies. The Eighth, commanded by General Djevad Pasha, held a 20-mile front from the Mediterranean coast to the Judean hills. It comprised the 7th, 20th, and 46th Divisions of the XXII Corps and the 16th and 19th Divisions of the German Asia Corps. On its left the Seventh Army, comprising the 1st and 11th Divisions of the III Corps and the 26th and 53d Divisions of the XX Corps, and commanded by General Mustapha Kemal Pasha, held another 20 miles stretching through the Judean hills and into the Jordan Valley, with its main strength astride the Jerusalem-Nablus Road. East of the Jordan River was the Fourth Army, commanded by General Mohammed Djemal Pasha, and consisting of the 48th and Composite Divisions of the VIII Corps and the 24th Infantry Division and miscellaneous forces of the II Corps.

All of the Turkish units were under-strength and were lacking sufficient transport and supplies. The Seventh and Eighth Armies and the VIII Corps of the Fourth Army included an estimated 3,000 cavalrymen, 23,000 infantrymen, 8,000 machine gun personnel, and 340 artillery pieces. The Fourth Army's II Corps comprised some 6,000 troops and 30 guns, and 3,000 troops and 30 guns were in reserve. Including non-combat troops, the overall Turkish strength in Palestine, Syria, and Arabia amounted to approximately 100,000 men.

As a result of the attitude and policies of the government in Constantinople, morale was very low, and ever-increasing numbers of desertions plagued the under-equipped, under-fed, disease-ridden, and poorly-led troops in Palestine. The senior officers of the Turkish armies were competent and had combat experience. But because of the extremely high attrition rates resulting from battle, disease, and desertion, junior officers were frequently uneducated, unprepared, untrained, and unable to conduct a simple maneuver.

Liman von Sanders's strategy for the defense of Palestine was largely based on his successful experience with trench warfare in Gallipoli, and (in the light of his manpower shortage) called for maintaining the majority of his troops and staff in prepared positions near or at the front, with no significant depth or reserves. Although this strategic plan capitalized on the strength of the Turkish soldier as a defensive fighter and recognized the difficulty of maneuver over a poor roadnet with inadequate transport, it failed to take into account the fact that the terrain in Palestine lacked the naturally defensive features which had made this strategy so successful in the narrow Gallipoli Peninsula. Thus he played directly into Allenby's hands.

The front-line Turkish defenses opposite the XXI Corps were based on a low, sandy ridge and ran to a depth of 3,000 yards. The defenses, consisting of trenches

and obstacles, including barbed wire, were sturdy and continuous. Approximately three miles to the rear was a second defensive line, which ran between Et Tireh and the Falik River on the coast. Although it was neither continuous nor reinforced by barbed wire, natural obstacles such as the Falik River and marshes rendered it impassable at all but a few points. A third line between Tulkarm and the coast was incomplete at the time of the British attack.

While the British and Turkish troops between Rafat and the Jordan Valley were almost evenly matched numerically, with a slight advantage to the Turks, on the 15-mile front of the XXI Corps in the coastal region which had been chosen by Allenby for the breakthrough, the British had massed 35,000 infantry, 9,000 cavalry, and 384 guns, facing Turkish forces of only 8,000 infantry and 130 guns.

In addition to numerical superiority, the British forces had an advantage in superior lines of communications. A double-tracked, narrow-gauge railway had been constructed between the Suez Canal and Beersheba. From Beersheba a single-tracked, standard gauge railway carried supplies to Lydda and Jaffa. The Turks, on the other hand, were dependent upon the railway from Aleppo to Deraa which was neither consistent in gauge nor continuous, and which lacked adequate transfer facilities. The main Hejaz line, which continued south from the Deraa junction and supplied the Turkish Fourth Army, was under frequent attack by the Arabs, who had revolted against the Turks in the Arabian peninsula in 1916 and had gradually extended their raids northward. The Palestine branch line from Deraa, which crossed the Jordan River at the Mejamie Bridge and passed through Beisan, Afula, and Nablus, was the only source of supply for the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies. Although the roads in Palestine were little more than tracks, the British were able to employ two light motorized artillery batteries and two light car patrols effectively in conjunction with the cavalry.

The British also completely controlled sea communications in the eastern Mediterranean. Also, a Palestine Brigade of the Royal Air Force, with headquarters at Ramle, was placed at Allenby's disposal, giving him total air superiority. This force comprised two wings with a total of seven squadrons and included Bristol fighters and one Handley-Page bomber.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

On 16 September the Arabs, with air support, struck the Deraa junction. While the aircraft bombed the junction itself, the Arabs cut the railroad line between Amman and Deraa. By nightfall on 17 September they had also severed the lines connecting Deraa with Damascus and Beisan. The Turks responded as Allenby had hoped and sent reserves from Haifa to Deraa, thereby further weakening their ability to counter Allenby's planned massive assault on the coast.

At 1830 on the night of 18 September, the 53d Division, on the right flank of the XX Corps, began to advance across the Wadi Auja, a steep gorge some three miles long and three miles wide. The 160th Brigade, on the division's right, entered and crossed the rocky wadi with little difficulty, advancing its right flank forward toward the northwest. Upon reaching the far side at 0300, however, the brigade came under intense machine gun and artillery fire. Nevertheless, it turned to its left, attacked, and took the Turkish outposts facing the eastern end of the wadi from the east. At 2230 the 159th Brigade attacked Turkish positions opposite the western end of the wadi. Although it met stubborn resistance from the Turkish 26th Division, the brigade secured all but one of its objectives, thus sealing the southern exits from the Judean hills to the Jordan Valley. Everything was now ready for the main British attack.

At 0445 on 19 September, after 15 minutes of intense artillery and naval gunfire preparation, the XXI Corps began its advance. The 60th Division, on the left flank of the XXI Corps, had the greatest distance to cover on the first day—16 miles. With the attached 5th Australian Light Horse Brigade on its left, the 60th Division was to advance northward along the coast on a two-mile front to the Falik River, cut the first Turkish defensive line near the coast, and then cross the river and turn northeast toward Tulkarm. While the infantry division seized the town, the 5th Australian Brigade would sever the Tulkarm-Nablus road and railroad.

Despite heavy losses, the 60th Division succeeded in breaking through the Turkish defensive line, and then proceeded to advance to Tulkarm. The 5th Australian Brigade was ordered to remain on the left of the 60th Division and advance directly to the Nablus road, bypassing the town of Tulkarm, which the 60th Division was to attack in spite of the numerous casualties it had already suffered. The 5th Brigade reached the road and railroad at noon, overwhelmed and captured an Austrian battery, and by occupying positions on the road and railroad cut both lines of retreat for the forces on the right of the Eighth Army.

At first light, British aircraft had begun to bomb the headquarters of the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies at Nablus and Tulkarm, and the main telephone and telegraph exchanges in Afula. They completely cut communications between the Eighth Army at Tulkarm, and Liman von Sanders's headquarters at Nazareth. Communications between the Seventh Army and Liman von Sanders were not restored until noon.

Completely surprised by the speed and scope of the British assault, the Turks attempted to withdraw from Tulkarm toward Sebustiye and Nablus. As troops and vehicles entered the defile leading to Sebustiye, however, British planes poured bombs and machinegun fire down into the pass with devastating results. Since the Turks had only two antiaircraft guns between the Jordan River and the coast, there was little they could do to stop the air attack. By 1700 the 60th Division, with the help of the Royal Air Force, had overcome stiff resistance in Tulkarm and secured the town, capturing more than 3,000 Turkish troops and 15 guns.

To the right of the 60th Division, the 7th, 75th, and 3d Divisions were to assault the Turkish defenses along a four-mile front in the area of Tabsor. The 7th Division quickly seized the Turkish outposts which were its objective, broke through the fixed Turkish defenses behind them, and advanced to Et Tireh, which had already been secured by the 75th Division. In view of its success thus far, the commander of the 7th Division decided to continue the advance to the northeast, but, after crossing the Tulkarm road, the 7th Division met strong resistance from a German battalion at Et Taiyibeh and could progress no farther.

Despite stiff resistance by the 46th Turkish Division, which was holding the secondary defensive line at Et Tireh, the 75th Division, after breaking easily through the first Turkish line, was able to secure the town with the help of armored cars and a squadron of cavalry. Once inside Et Tireh the British infantry quickly seized the headquarters of the Turkish XXII Corps, and, although the corps commander, Refet Bey, was able to escape to Tyre, all of the corps documents were taken.

The British 3d Division was to advance northeast to Gilgal and Kalkiliye, south of Et Tireh on the Lydda-Tulkarm railroad line. The 7th Brigade, on the division's right, met only moderate resistance and captured Kalkiliye by 0900. Meanwhile, at 0600 a battalion from the 8th Brigade had been able to secure a railroad bridge over a wadi west of Kalkiliye, thereby facilitating the brigade's advance on Gilgal, which was also captured during the morning.

Between the 3d Division and the 54th Division on the right of the XXI Corps west of Rafat, was a six-mile wide area of open plain which was dominated by strong Turkish positions. These emplacements were to be bypassed initially and assaulted later from the west. The 54th Division was to advance northward to Kfar Kasim and then swing northeast and capture Bidya. A French brigade, which had arrived in Palestine during the summer of 1917 and which was deployed to the right of the 54th Division, was to serve as the pivot for the XXI Corps sweep to the northeast, itself attacking a well-fortified ridge opposite Rafat.

The 54th Division and the French brigade met the toughest opposition of the infantry attack. The 163d Brigade, on the left flank of the 54th Division, attacked Bidya during the morning of 19 September and was repulsed by a Turkish counterattack in company strength, but a second British attack in the evening resulted in the capture of the town at 0300 on 20 September. Resistance was equally fierce all along the front of the 54th Division, and although all of their objectives were secured and 700 prisoners, and nine guns were captured, the 54th Division and the French brigade lost 536 men in their effort. Thus by nightfall on 19 September the XXI Corps had opened up the entire coastal plain and held the line Tulkarm-Kalkiliye-Gilgal-

Biddya-Rafat, having completely broken the defenses of the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies.

In one day, 19 September 1918, the British XXI Corps had successfully achieved a breakthrough of the Turkish Eighth Army's main line of resistance. The defending Turks were incapable of deploying effective resistance in front of the penetrating elements. They were in fact withdrawing as rapidly as possible, while the British had before them the opportunity to proceed to cut off all avenues of retreat.

EXPLOITATION

At 0400 on the morning of 19 September the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions of the Desert Mounted Corps advanced to concentration points immediately to the rear of the XXI Corps, with the 4th Cavalry Division behind the 7th Division, and the 5th Cavalry Division on the left behind the 60th Division. The Australian Mounted Division (less the 5th Light Horse Brigade which had been attached to the 60th Division) advanced from Lydda to Sarona. After an interval of several hours, the Australians would follow in the path of the 4th Cavalry Division, which was to enter the Plain of Esdraelon by way of the Musmus Defile, advance on Beisan, and dispatch a detachment to seize the Mejamie Bridge across the upper Jordan River.

At 0630 the 4th Cavalry Division began to advance north along the coastal plain through the gap which had been created by the XXI Corps sweep to the northeast, and by 0830 it had crossed the Falik River in the area where the 60th Division had crossed earlier. The Turkish Eighth Army defenses had crumbled in the face of the attack by the XXI Corps, and the 4th Cavalry Division was able to advance rapidly. After a short rest at the Iskaderun River, at 1300 the division continued its advance and at 1630 arrived at the Mefjir River, where once again the force paused to water its horses. At 2300 the advance resumed. One battalion, the 2d Lancers, was sent ahead to the Musmus Defile, which it entered without opposition, reaching the tel of Megiddo at 0330 on 20 September. Meanwhile, the remainder of the division missed the entrance to the pass and, as a result, some two hours were lost in the advance.

When the bulk of the division reached the pass at 0450, word was sent to the 2d Lancers to continue their advance. By 0530 the battalion had passed through the Musmus Defile and entered the Plain of Esdraelon. A small Turkish column was surprised and captured as it approached the northern entrance to the pass. Soon afterward, however, the battalion encountered a second Turkish column of six companies, supported by twelve machine guns, deployed in two lines on the plain. While one squadron, supported by British machine guns and armored cars, engaged the Turks facing the pass, two other squadrons charged the Turkish flanks with their lances, killing or capturing the entire force of more than 500 men. The 2d Lancers reached Afula at the same time as the 14th Brigade of the 5th Cavalry Division, which took the town. After concentrating its forces, the 4th Division departed from Afula at 1300 and advanced down the Jezreel Valley toward Beisan. The division arrived at Beisan at 1800 and captured the garrison almost without resistance, having travelled a total of 70 miles in less than 36 hours. While most of the division rested in Beisan, at 1930 the 12th Brigade advanced an additional six miles to the Mejamie Bridge, which it reached and seized at 0500 on 21 September.

The 5th Cavalry Division, meanwhile, had left its concentration point on the coast at 0700 on 19 September and advanced through the gap made by the XXI Corps to the Mefjir River, where a halt was called until 1815. At that time the division turned northeastward and at 0215 on 20 September it reached Abu Shushe, where a second halt was called to concentrate the division. At 0300, the 13th Brigade, acting as the division's advance guard, cut the railway to Haifa and by 0430 the brigade was approaching Nazareth, having passed unopposed through the Carmel range. Because several detachments had been left behind to clear two small villages en route to Nazareth, however, the 13th Brigade was well under strength when it reached Nazareth. Fierce street fighting developed almost as soon as the brigade entered the town, and the British troops had difficulty in locating the Turkish headquarters. As a result of its numerical weakness, the 13th Brigade had been unable to block the roads leading north from Nazareth, and Liman von Sanders was able to escape to Tiberias. After some time, the Turkish headquarters was located and many important documents

were seized, but when the brigade commander learned that reinforcements could not reach him for several hours, he withdrew back to the Plain of Esdraelon. Meanwhile, the 4th Brigade had entered Afula, and captured it with only light opposition.

The Australian Mounted Division reached the Plain of Esdraelon at 1100 on 20 September, having passed through the Musmus Defile behind the 4th Cavalry Division without opposition. After receiving an air reconnaissance report that Turkish troops were fleeing from Jenin, the Australians began to advance on that town. A force of more than 1,800 Turkish troops was surprised and captured a few miles outside Jenin, and the town itself fell to the Australians after the cavalry overcame some stubborn resistance by the German defenders.

By nightfall on 20 September the British forces had captured a total of 25,000 Turkish troops and had almost completely encircled the Turkish Seventh and Eighth Armies, thus destroying Turkish power in Palestine.

CONCLUSIONS

The Megiddo operation was based on an imaginative and well designed plan which capitalized on British strengths and Turkish weaknesses. The breakthrough was executed by a concentrated force of infantry on a narrow front, with cavalry ready to follow through, dash ahead to exploit the breakthrough, and encircle the shattered Turkish forces. Allenby's operation capitalized upon the mobility of his cavalry units. The main breakthrough effort, dependent on timing and coordination of the various component forces, was also partially dependent on coordinated movements by the British and Arab forces across Palestine to the east.

Contributing critically to the success of the operation was the achievement of surprise. Allenby succeeded in deceiving the Turks, moving his main attacking force into position on the left while maintaining sufficient evident strength along his entire front so that the movement was not detected. Even when a defecting Indian sergeant told the Turks on 18 September to expect an attack along the coast they did not believe him.

The condition of the Turkish forces, numerically, physically, and morally, was correctly assessed by Allenby, and proved in the event, for those on the left could not withstand the attack, and elsewhere across the front also they were easily overcome or dispersed by the British troops.

BATTLE OF FLANDERS: BREAKTHROUGH ON THE MEUSE, MAY 1940

After twenty months of almost complete inaction on the Germans' Western Front, on 10 May 1940 German troops crossed the borders of Holland, Belgium, and Luxembourg in a concerted attack in strength that was to drive the British Expeditionary Force and many of the French defending troops off the Continent. The main attack was made by panzer forces that moved rapidly through the difficult terrain of the Ardennes Forest and surprised the Allies by striking at their weakest point, crossing the Meuse River, breaking rapidly through the inadequate defenses beyond it, and hastening to the Channel Coast.

BACKGROUND

On 10 May 1940 the French forces between the English Channel and the Swiss border comprised 92 divisions commanded by General A.J. Georges, under General Maurice Gamelin, Commander in Chief of the Allied land forces. The French troops, along with ten divisions of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) and one Polish division, were divided into three army groups and a 23 division reserve, with a total of approximately 2,000,000 men, deployed as follows: Army Group 1, commanded by General Gaston Billotte, was composed of the French Seventh Army, the BEF (less one division), and the French First, Ninth, and Second Armies; it held a line from Nieupoort, on the English Channel, to Languyon, near the Belgian-Luxembourg-French border; Army Group 2, commanded by General André-Gaston Pretelat, comprised the Third (including one British division), Fourth, and Fifth French Armies, and it held a line from Languyon to a point halfway between Strasbourg and Colmar; Army Group 3, under General Antoine Besson, comprised only the Eighth Army, and was deployed south of Army Group 2, between it and the Swiss border. Of the reserve forces, five divisions, three of them motorized, were between Paris and the Belgian border; seven divisions, including one motorized division, were deployed in the Thionville-Troyes-Nancy area; eight divisions were between the Swiss border and Chaumont; and three armored divisions were near Chalons.

From the Swiss border to Montmédy, France was protected by the Maginot Line of fortifications which had been built between 1930 and 1934. The Franco-Belgian border from Montmédy to the English Channel, however, lacked strong, continuous defenses. Between Montmédy and Givet, the government primarily relied on the rugged terrain and limited roadnet through the Ardennes Forest, and on the Meuse River for defense against a German attack. Fortification of the frontier in the Ardennes sector began in 1939, but only isolated antitank ditches and blockhouses had been built by May 1940. Northwest, in the Lille-Cambrai area, one of France's major industrial regions, fortifications along the frontier consisted only of isolated strongpoints.

The Anglo-French forces had a total of 3,345 tanks on the Continent—a numerical superiority of approximately 1.3:1 over the German armored forces with their 2,574 tanks. There were 3,035 French tanks: 2,300 were armed with a 37mm gun; 410 were Somua medium tanks with a 47mm gun capable of penetrating any German armor; and 325 had both a 75mm and a 47mm gun. The British Expeditionary Force had 401 tanks that were armed solely with machine guns, but only 287 of these were in France on 10 May. They also had 173 Mark II tanks with 2-pounder guns, and, while these were capable of penetrating any German armor, only 23 were available in France at the beginning of the campaign. All of the Allied tanks could be penetrated by the Germans' 88mm anti-aircraft gun, but the armor of the French tanks was generally superior to that of their German counterparts.



Map 3



Map 4
 GERMAN INVASION OF FRANCE AND THE LOW COUNTRIES
 May 10-June 4, 1940

The German tanks, however, had an important advantage in speed and range, being twice as fast as most of the French tanks. The Somua medium tank could match the German road speed of 25 miles per hour. The British light and medium tanks were faster (35 and 30 miles per hour, respectively), but the heavy tanks were approximately 50 percent slower. The range of the German tanks was 20 to 25 percent greater than that of the Allied tanks. This advantage was enhanced by well-planned and well-executed refueling arrangements, as well as by the exploitation of captured military and civilian fuel supplies. French tanks were frequently immobilized for lack of fuel.

Tied since World War I to the concept of fixed defenses and heavy firepower supported by massed infantry maneuver, the French designed their tanks primarily for an infantry support role and dispersed them over the entire front rather than massing them for decisive action. In addition to three armored divisions, the French had 34 tank battalions. Three light mechanized divisions and the tank units attached to cavalry divisions (700-800 tanks) were under cavalry command and used primarily for reconnaissance and screening. The rest of the French tanks were under infantry command, and were used for infantry support. Most units had 33 to 50 percent fewer antitank weapons than their quotas allowed. The more numerous French artillery could fire half again as much weight of metal and explosives as German artillery, but German artillery was more mobile, and German doctrine provided for more aggressive artillery employment.

The British, stimulated by J.F.C. Fuller, during the interwar years, had evolved an armored doctrine which called for the use of light tanks for reconnaissance, heavy tanks for close support of infantry troops, and medium tanks for mobile armored operations. Unlike the French, the British recognized the desirability of using armor for breakthroughs and exploitations, but financial restrictions, and conservative resistance to full acceptance of the doctrine, had prevented its complete implementation in the British Army.

The French Air Force had approximately 1,400 modern, first-line planes, most of them fighter, reconnaissance, and observation aircraft. Low- and high-altitude anti-aircraft defense was almost non-existent, while medium-altitude defense was limited but adequate. The Royal Air Force units stationed in France with the BEF had some 160 mainly obsolete bombers, 130 pursuit planes, and miscellaneous observation aircraft.

The Belgian Army, commanded by King Leopold, was organized into twenty infantry and two cavalry divisions, with a total of about 600,000 under-trained and poorly-equipped men. The main defense line extended southeast along the Albert Canal from Antwerp to Fort Eben Emael, where it turned southwest and followed the Meuse River to the French border between Dinant and Givet. Behind the Albert Canal a second line of fortifications, known as the Dyle Line, ran southward from Antwerp along the Schelde and Dyle Rivers to a point north of Louvain. From there it continued south through Louvain, Wavre, and Gembloux to the Meuse River at Namur.

The Dutch Army, under the command of General Henri Winkelman, consisted of approximately 400,000 men whose training and equipment was of an even lower standard than that of the Belgian Army. These forces were organized into nine divisions, which held three lines of fortifications running parallel to the German border. The first line lay immediately west of the IJssel River and extended southward from the Zuider Zee to Roermond. Given its length and the paucity of troops available to garrison it, this line was considered only a delaying position. The second defense line was known as the Grebbe Line between the Zuider Zee and the Maas River, and as the De Peel Line from the river to the Belgian border. The approaches to the Grebbe Line could be flooded by opening the dikes at the edge of the Zuider Zee, and the De Peel Line was protected by the De Peel marshes. The final line of defense, the Fortress of Holland, extended from the Zuider Zee east of Amsterdam to the Moerdijk Bridge, near the mouth of the Maas River. Although this line constituted the main defense of Rotterdam, The Hague, and Amsterdam, most of its fortifications were obsolete.

The German forces on the Western Front were divided into three army groups, with a total of 89 divisions, and a High Command reserve of 45 divisions; a total of

2,500,000 troops were assigned to the campaign against France and the Low Countries. On the north, between the North Sea and Aachen, lay Army Group B, which comprised 28 divisions, including three armored and one motorized, under the command of General Fedor von Bock, with the Eighteenth Army of General Georg von Kuechler on the north, and the Sixth Army of General Walther von Reichenau on the south. Army Group A, commanded by General Gerd von Rundstedt and deployed between Aachen and Saarburg, included 44 divisions, seven of them armored and three motorized. They were organized into five armies and one army-size armored formation: the Fourth Army, under the command of General Guenther von Kluge; the Twelfth Army, commanded by General Wilhelm List; the Sixteenth Army of General Ernst Busch; the Second Army, under General Maximilian von Weichs; the Ninth Army of General Adolf Strauss (to be activated on 14 May); and Panzer Group Kleist, commanded by General Ewald von Kleist, with five armored divisions divided into two armored corps; two divisions were under General Heinz Guderian. The seventeen divisions of Army Group C held the southernmost section of the German line between Saarburg and the Swiss border. Commanded by General Wilhelm von Leeb, it included the First Army, under the command of General Erwin von Witzleben, and the Seventh Army, under General Friedrich Dollman.

Of the 2,574 German tanks 1,478 were light tanks armed with machine guns; 683 were medium tanks equipped with 37mm guns; 278 additional medium tanks were armed with a short 75mm gun; and 135 were specially equipped command tanks. The ground forces were supported by some 3,500 combat aircraft, organized in two air fleets under Generals Hugo Sperrle and Albert Kesselring. These included 1,300-1,400 long-range bombers, 300-400 dive-bombers, 1,000-1,200 fighters, and 500-600 reconnaissance aircraft. More than 500 transport aircraft augmented the air fleets.

The Germans had evolved effective breakthrough tactics in 1917 and 1918, but their penetrations had failed to be decisive on the Western Front because they lacked the means for mobility in exploitation, logistical support, and fire support. Realizing that the effective employment of armored forces would go far to remedy their World War I failures, the Germans adopted and improved upon the organizational and doctrinal ideas of J.F.C. Fuller and others, combining these with the tactical concept of the combat group, which had been so successful in 1917 and 1918. Germany began organizing its tanks into armored divisions in 1935 and invaded Poland in 1939 with five armored divisions, four light armored divisions, and four motorized divisions. As a result of the Polish experience, the four light armored divisions were converted to armored divisions, and in preparation for the campaign in France the Germans created a tenth. In addition, five motorized divisions were available to exploit rapidly any breakthrough executed by the armored divisions, to mop up, to consolidate gains, and to protect flanks.

In accordance with the principles of the offensive and of mass or concentration, armored forces were grouped and used to pierce and overrun the enemy's weak points. Follow-up units would reduce any bypassed enemy strongpoints. Infantry and artillery closely supported the tanks, with the artillery often immediately behind the line of contact, firing over open sights. Armored ground reconnaissance and air reconnaissance were integrated and supported the whole. Engineers were available for mining and stream crossing. Antiaircraft guns were well forward and ready to protect river crossing sites and choke points from Allied air attack. These elements were combined by the Germans in closely integrated teams, which were well-trained in appropriate tactics and doctrine, had received combat experience in Poland, and trained intensively again during the winter of 1939-40.

PLANS

The Allies fully expected a German attack through the Low Countries, like that in 1914. But because of the determined and short-sighted neutrality of Holland and Belgium, no joint defensive plans could be prepared, and the Allies had to allow Germany the first move before they could advance into Belgium to block the German offensive. Once the Belgians indicated that they would resist a German invasion, however, the Allies could count both on advancing their forces into Belgium unopposed, and on the incorporation of the Belgian forces into the Allied defensive arrangements.

Working under the assumption that the Belgian Army would be able at least briefly to delay a German advance, the French and British planned to establish their

main defensive position with Army Group 1 on the Dyle Line in Central Belgium. The pivot for the movement to the northeast which would carry the Allied forces into Belgium was near Givet, northwest of the Ardennes Forest. The French Seventh Army would advance into Holland and aid the Dutch by extending the Fortress of Holland line south of the Maas. The Belgian Army would delay the Germans at the Albert Canal line, holding the vital Fort Eben Emael at the junction of the Canal and the Meuse River for at least three days, and then fall back to the Dyle Line between Antwerp and Louvain. The British Expeditionary Force, under General John Lord Gort, would continue along the Dyle Line from Louvain to Wavre. The French First Army would be deployed between Wavre and Namur, an area which included the vulnerable Gembloux Gap between the Dyle and the Meuse Rivers. The area from Namur to Flize would be held by the French Ninth Army, under the command of General André-Georges Corap. The part of General Corap's army between Givet and Flize, facing the Ardennes, was to remain in position along the Franco-Belgian border while the remainder of his forces swung northeast to the Meuse River line. Because the French believed that the rugged Ardennes Forest could be penetrated only by a long, slow march on a few narrow roads, affording them ample time to react to a German advance, Corap assigned the front from Givet to Revin to a second reserve division, while his fortress division, which was untrained and not equipped to conduct operations outside a fortress, held the sector extending from Revin to Flize. The independent cavalry brigade and two cavalry divisions of the Ninth Army were to cross the Meuse and advance toward Marche and St. Hubert. The southern exits from the Ardennes, between Flize and the Maginot Line, would be covered by the French Second Army, under General Charles Huntziger. Between Flize and Languyon General Huntziger had seven divisions (from right to left: two active, one first reserve, two second reserve, and two cavalry) and an independent cavalry brigade. Of these, however, the two cavalry divisions and the cavalry brigade were to be deployed forward to the line Libramont-Neufchateau-Virton, leaving only the two weak second reserve divisions to defend the southern part of the Second Army's front. Thus, the boundary between the French Ninth and Second Armies—the region selected by the Germans for their breakthrough—formed a lightly held hinge opposite the Ardennes, connecting the Allied left in Belgium with the right flank which was behind the Maginot Line.

The German General Staff originally favored a modification of the Schlieffen Plan of 1914, in which the main attack forces advanced west across the Belgian plain and then turned south into France, outflanking the Allied forces. The drawbacks to repeating this maneuver in 1940 were that the Allies expected it, thus reducing the possibility of surprise, and the Dutch, Belgians, and French had all constructed fortifications along their borders with Germany, thereby impeding an enveloping maneuver through the Low Countries. Under these conditions, even though the Germans—by surprise, speed and mass—might have sufficient strength to defeat the Allied forces, it would be difficult to achieve a decisive success. The operation was repeatedly postponed at Hitler's direction, and it soon became apparent that the Allies were prepared to move major forces to positions in Belgium, and that the Belgian Army would probably also resist a German invasion through the Low Countries. Thus the possibility of surprise and quick victory became more dubious.

In November 1939 Major General Erich von Manstein, Chief of Staff of Army Group A, suggested the possibility that Army Group A make a decisive armored thrust against France through the Ardennes toward Sedan, which would split the French front. This plan was enthusiastically supported by General von Rundstedt, who was in command of Army Group A. Opposing such an operation were Generals Franz Halder, Chief of the General Staff, and Walter von Brauchitsch, Commander in Chief of the Army. A simulated attack through the Ardennes was conducted at Coblenz during two war games in February 1940, and the results were sufficiently conclusive to convince Halder that an attack through the forest could have decisive results. Manstein himself convinced Hitler of the value of the Ardennes offensive in mid-February. Although the French had become aware of successive changes in the earlier German plans, they never discovered this basic alteration.

The German offensive was to be executed in two phases. The first phase was to be an offensive against the Low Countries and northern France, designed to break through the Allied forces in the Somme Valley. The second phase would be exploitation.

In the first phase Army Group B would thrust into Holland and northern Belgium and draw the Allies northward. The Eighteenth Army was to occupy Holland and advance west to the North Sea, capturing Antwerp. The Sixth Army would penetrate the Albert Canal line opposite Maastricht and seize Fort Eben Emael. It would then continue west to overcome the Dyle Line defenses and seize the Liege and Namur fortifications.

At the same time Army Group A, led by Panzer Group Kleist, would attack France through Luxembourg. Due to the difficulty of the terrain in the Ardennes, the General Staff expected that Army Group A would take three or four days to cross Luxembourg and southern Belgium, thereby giving the French and British time to complete their move to the Dyle Line in Belgium. The five armored divisions of Panzer Group Kleist would make the main penetration of the French defenses in two thrusts to the Meuse River. Reinhardt's corps would advance against Montherme while Guderian's pierced the French line at Sedan. Both would cross the river and establish bridgeheads to facilitate the crossing of the infantry.

From the Meuse the armored forces would move west to the coast at Abbeville and cut off the Allied forces in the north. The mass of the German infantry, proceeding on foot with animal transport, would follow in the wake of the armored and motorized spearhead to mop up, consolidate, widen, and defend the penetration. Since infantry units would not be able to keep pace with the 20 to 80 miles per day armored advance, there would be an undefended gap immediately behind the spearhead. While this worried the German command, they expected that the Allies, thrown off balance, would not be able to flow into this zone. This proved to be the case; Allied reconnaissance means were inadequate to locate the vacuum, and their mobile counterattack units were both inadequate and improperly handled.

While Panzer Group Kleist was pushing rapidly ahead, the Sixteenth Army was to move through Luxembourg, attack the Maginot Line extension between Montmédy and Sedan, and protect the left flank of the operation from Montmédy to the Moselle River. The remaining infantry forces of Army Group A were to push through the gap created by the armor at the Meuse and take up positions as follows: the Twelfth Army would hold a line along the upper Aisne River; the Second Army would hold the Oise-Aisne Canal; and the Ninth Army would hold the Somme River line from Ham to Amiens. The Somme River from Amiens to the English Channel was to be held by armored elements of Panzer Group Kleist until the Fourth Army could assume control of the area. Bridgeheads were to be established south of the Somme and Aisne Rivers in preparation for subsequent advance toward Paris. Army Group C had a strictly defensive mission during the first phase of the operation.

The German air fleets were to obtain complete air superiority, support the ground troops, attack enemy ground facilities and troops, and drop parachute detachments as advance elements in the operation.

In the second phase of the operation, the envelopment of the Allied forces would be completed by Army Group B and Panzer Group Kleist and elements of the Fourth Army of Army Group A. The rest of Army Group A would turn south and advance to Paris.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

At 0535 on 10 May Panzer Group Kleist crossed the German-Luxembourg border in two columns. On the right was Reinhardt's XLI Panzer Corps with 388 tanks in two divisions. On the left were, from right to left, the 2d, 1st, and 10th Panzer Divisions of Guderian's XIX Corps with 756 tanks and the Gross-Deutschland Infantry Regiment (less one battalion). Advancing rapidly, Panzer Group Kleist passed through Luxembourg unopposed, and by evening had overrun the Belgian border defenses and established contact with the battalion of the Gross-Deutschland Infantry Regiment which had been airlifted during the morning to Witry, Belgium. Because of minor breakdowns and extensive demolitions along the road, the armored divisions were forced to halt for the night just inside Belgium while the roads through the rugged terrain were cleared and repaired. The 2d Division, deployed near Strainchamps, passed the night engaged in minor skirmishing with Belgian border forces. At Martelange, the 1st Division met no opposition. The 10th Division, however, found itself engaged in a pitched battle near Arlon with the French 2d Cavalry Division, which was finally repulsed with heavy losses.

On the morning of 11 May the German armored divisions resumed their advance. At 1130 the 1st Panzer Division struck Neufchateau, which was held by Belgian forces which had been withdrawn from the front and some French cavalry units. After a brief fight, the town was taken, and the division continued on to Bertrix and Bouillon, which it reached at nightfall. The French troops holding Bouillon put up a fierce resistance in a large clearing northeast of the town, and they managed to maintain control of the area throughout the night. Meanwhile, the 2d Panzer Division took Libramont, which had only recently been occupied by the remaining cavalry division of the French Second Army, while the German 10th Panzer Division occupied Habay-le-Neuve against light opposition. At this time, the Gross-Deutschland Infantry Regiment was withdrawn into corps reserve.

At 0745 on 12 May the 1st Rifle Regiment of the 1st Panzer Division attacked the French positions at Bouillon and quickly drove the French from the area. Although the French forces demolished the bridges over the Semois River in their withdrawal, several points were found to be fordable by tanks, and the advance toward Sedan continued. Meanwhile, the engineers began to build a new bridge over the river. The 10th Panzer Division crossed the Semois farther downstream near Herbeumont, and, after overcoming some minor frontier defenses, it continued on through La Chapelle toward Bazeilles. During the early afternoon the German crossing points on the Semois were subjected to intense bombardment by Belgian aircraft, but there were few casualties, little damage was done, and the advance continued.

Soon after the air attack, Guderian received orders to be prepared to attack across the Meuse River on the following day, 13 May, at 1600. Although the 1st and 10th Panzer Divisions would be in positions to carry out this order, the 2d Panzer Division, which had been delayed in crossing the Semois, would not be prepared to do so. Kleist, however, was unwilling to modify his order, and Guderian therefore planned to execute this major thrust with only part of his corps.

Despite severe bombardment by French aircraft and long-range artillery, by the evening of 12 May the 1st and 10th Panzer Divisions had occupied the heights on the eastern bank of the Meuse, from which they had a clear view of the French defensive positions on the far side of the river, and had also taken the fortress and town of Sedan. During the night they moved artillery into position for the next day's assault, which was to be spearheaded by the 1st Panzer Division, supported by the Gross-Deutschland Infantry Regiment, the corps artillery, and the heavy artillery from the 2d and 10th Panzer Divisions.

By the morning of 13 May the major part of the 2d Panzer Division had advanced only as far as Sugny, and therefore its role in the attack remained limited. Its reconnaissance elements, however, were deployed at Donchéry, the 1st Panzer Division was at Floing, just north of Sedan, and the 10th Division was north of Bazeilles, all in position to attack.

At noon, squadrons of German bombers and dive bombers with fighter support began a systematic and continuous bombardment of the French defenses on the west bank of the Meuse. Under cover of this attack, German infantry forces moved up to the river's edge with equipment for the crossing. At 1600 German field artillery, antitank, and anti-aircraft guns opened fire on the French pillboxes lining the river, and by 1830 the 1st Rifle Brigade of the Panzer Division and the Gross-Deutschland Infantry Regiment had established a ferry at Floing and were smoothly carrying out the first stage of the crossing. The French artillery had been silenced by the German air attacks, and most of the French emplacements had been wiped out by the anti-tank and anti-aircraft fire; machine gunners were pinned down by German artillery fire. By nightfall, the infantry of the 1st Panzer Division had made a large penetration in the French defense line and had taken only light casualties in return. By 2300 the Division had taken Cheveuges on the main French defensive line and by midnight a ponton bridge was carrying tanks across the Meuse.

Because of the limited number of troops from the 2d Panzer Division available to attempt a crossing, the effort near Donchéry was unsuccessful. The 10th Panzer Division, near Bazeilles, however, managed to cross and establish a small bridgehead. As a result of its lack of artillery support, the division was engaged in some fierce fighting and was further hampered by flanking fire from the northern edge of the Maginot Line.

During the night and early morning of 14 May the 1st Panzer Division managed to increase the size of its penetration and reach Chemery. When reports reached the division commander that a French force, composed of the 5th Cavalry Division of the Second Army and the 3d Cavalry Brigade and 53d Infantry Division of the Ninth Army, was moving against them, he dispatched his tanks toward Stonne in an attempt to head off the French attack. Guderian immediately ordered the 2d Panzer Brigade of the 2d Panzer Division to change direction and cross the Meuse behind the 1st Panzer Division so that it would be in a position to support it against the French counter-attack. The French forces were met just beyond Chemery and at Bulson, where they were stopped. More than 70 French tanks, and most of the 5th Cavalry Division and the 3d Cavalry Brigade, were destroyed, and the 53d Infantry Division retreated to the Ardennes Canal.

Meanwhile, the remaining forces of the 2d Panzer Division had managed to cross at Donchéry, where they were engaged in heavy fighting. Despite intense Allied air attacks, no bridges were destroyed, and many Allied planes were lost to German anti-aircraft fire. Once the French armored threat had been eliminated and it was apparent that the crossing was proceeding well at all points, General Guderian ordered the 1st and 2d Panzer Divisions to cross the Ardennes Canal, turn west, and clear the French defenses.

Immediately north of Guderian's Corps General Reinhardt's XLI Corps had been moving parallel to Guderian's forces since 12 May. On 13 May this corps too had crossed the Meuse River at Monthermé on its second attempt, and advanced westward.

By evening of 14 May, the 1st Panzer Division had captured two bridges across the Ardennes Canal intact, had a large force across the canal, and had taken Singly and Vendresse against strong resistance. The armor of the 10th Panzer Division had reached the line Maisoncelle-Raucourt-et-Flabas, east of the Canal, with the rest of the division immediately behind. The two second reserve divisions of the French Second Army, which had been left to hold this sector, were routed by the German armored onslaught.

The main task now facing Guderian's Corps was the capture of the heights around Stonne. Possession of this area would deprive the French of any remaining chance to attack the German Meuse bridgeheads and would thus guarantee a safe crossing to the infantry forces of Army Group A. The attack, which was carried out by the 10th Panzer Division and the Gross-Deutschland Infantry Regiment, was repulsed several times by fierce French counterattacks made by an infantry division and the 3d Armored Division, which had moved up from the Allied reserve. But the defenses finally fell on 15 May. The breakthrough had been achieved. There was no organized defense in front of the German panzers, and nothing to prevent the exploitation of the breakthrough with a rapid advance to the coast while infantry units moved in behind the leading divisions.

EXPLOITATION

On 15 May it was decided that while the infantry divisions of Army Group A were moving up to replace Guderian's troops at the Meuse bridgeheads those units—the 10th Panzer Division and the Gross-Deutschland Infantry Regiment—would be placed under the command of the XIV Infantry Corps. The 10th Panzer Division was then ordered to cover the southern flank of Guderian's Corps along a line from the Ardennes Canal through Stonne to a bend in the Meuse River near Villemonty. During the course of the day, the division was reinforced by elements of the 29th Motorized Infantry Division.

On 16 May the advance of the 1st Panzer Division was slowed temporarily when it met fierce resistance at Bouvellemont, which finally fell before the German advance. From there the division advanced directly to Montcornet, while the 2d Panzer Division also proceeded to Montcornet, but by way of Poix-Terron. In Montcornet Guderian's corps was joined by the 6th Panzer Division of Reinhardt's corps. After agreeing on different routes of advance for each of the three divisions, Generals Reinhardt and Guderian decided that the forces would proceed westward until they exhausted their fuel supplies. The 1st Panzer Division reached Marle and Dercy (40 miles from the morning's starting point and 55 miles from Sedan) before it ran out of fuel.

Despite the stunning success of the German breakthrough, which had, in only seven days, created a gap in the French defenses 55 miles deep and 50 miles wide, on the morning of 17 May Guderian received orders from Kleist to halt the armored advance. Appalled at the idea of abandoning the momentum of the armored drive and the surprise that the fast-moving panzer divisions would doubtless continue to achieve, Guderian appealed to Rundstedt, who gave him permission to conduct a "reconnaissance in force."¹

During the preceding evening Guderian had ordered his divisions to continue their advance, and during the morning of 17 May, prior to the receipt of Kleist's order, the 1st Panzer Division secured Ribemont on the Oise River and Crecy on the Serre. The 10th Panzer Division, which had been returned to Guderian's command during the night of 16-17 May, had progressed as far as Fraillicourt. In the evening of 17 May a bridgehead across the Oise at Moy, 70 miles from Sedan, was established by the 1st Panzer Division.

At 0900 on the morning of 18 May the 2d Panzer Division captured St. Quentin, while the 1st Division advanced on Peronne, where it secured a bridgehead across the Somme River on the following day. The Germans had been relying on the natural protection that the Somme River afforded their otherwise unprotected left flank. Although the threat of a large-scale French counterattack was minimal as a result of the speed and scope of the German armored advance, the shattered state of the French defenses, and the position of the panzer forces north of the Somme, several small engagements did take place during 17-19 May between the 1st Panzer Division on the Corps's left near Laon and the newly-formed French 4th Armored Division which was under the command of General Charles de Gaulle. While these attacks inflicted no major damage on the German armor, and by the evening of 19 May Guderian's XIX Corps had reached the line Cambrai-Peronne-Ham, they did force a change in German tactics.

On 20 May Guderian received orders to advance to Amiens. To facilitate this movement the 10th Division was assigned to guard the corps left flank as far as Corbie, while the 1st Division seized Amiens and established a bridgehead on the south bank of the Somme. The 2d Panzer Division was to advance to Abbeville by way of Albert and clear the area between Abbeville and the coast.

At 0845 on the morning of 20 May, the 1st Panzer Division launched its attack against Amiens. By noon the city had been secured, and a bridgehead four miles deep had been established across the river. The 2d Division was delayed in Albert when it surprised and captured a British artillery battery. By 1900, however, it had reached Abbeville, where it secured its objectives despite some bombing by Allied aircraft. During the night of 20-21 May, one battalion of the 2d Panzer Division continued to advance westward and reached the Channel coast, severing all communications between the Allied forces in Belgium and those south of the German armored advance.

CONCLUSIONS

The breakthrough in the Ardennes was accomplished by a combination of German achievement and Allied, particularly French, failure. The German plan, based on good intelligence and analysis of Allied intentions, had a clear objective, to cut off and destroy the Allied forces in the area north of Paris and then turn south to Paris itself. It was simple in its major aspects, a main attack to penetrate in the center, and a secondary, supporting attack on the right, launched first and of sufficient intensity both to divert Allied strength to that area and to contribute significantly to achievement of the main objective.

The plan for the breakthrough sector had the clear objective of hitting hardest at the Allied weak point, with tanks pushing through the Ardennes forest. It was a difficult operation but simple in its conception and direct in its impact.

The command organization of the breakthrough forces was clear, with the major striking force of tank formations under the command of Kleist and the armies and the panzer group in turn under the command of Army Group A, Rundstedt.

To achieve the breakthrough the Germans concentrated their tank forces on the offensive in the attack area, while—through economy of force—deploying only enough

strength elsewhere on the front for security and for diversionary secondary attacks. Behind the tanks in the attack area were massed sufficient infantry forces to follow in and exploit the breakthrough and to serve as reserves as needed.

Most significant to the achievement of the breakthrough was the German accomplishment of complete tactical surprise with the location, power, and speed of the attack and of substantial strategic surprise with its timing.

The breakthrough was assisted by the lack of a strong and competent unified command among the Allies and by their failure to anticipate and prepare adequately for an attack other than through the Low Countries.

THE BREAKTHROUGH OF THE GERMAN FIRST PANZER GROUP IN THE UKRAINE, JUNE 1941

On 21 June 1941, massive German forces advanced across the entire western frontier of Russia in an enormous operation codenamed Barbarossa. In the weeks that followed, German troops penetrated the Soviet defenses in many places. This study is about the breakthrough of the First Panzer Group at the junction of the Soviet Fifth and Sixth Armies, west of the Dnieper in the Ukraine.

BACKGROUND

The German plan for the war against the Soviet Union provided for a powerful blow to destroy the main Soviet forces in the western area, followed by rapid advance deep into Soviet territory, to include the seizure of key political and economic centers. Four army groups would participate: Army Group Norway, Army Group North, Army Group Center, and Army Group South.

Army Group South, under Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt, was deployed on the right flank of the German forces, from the Lublin area in the north to the mouth of the Danube River in the south. From north to south it was composed of the Sixth, Seventeenth and Eleventh Armies, the First Panzer Group, the Rumanian Third and Fourth Armies, and a Hungarian Mobile Group. There were 48 infantry, cavalry, and mountain divisions, 9 motorized panzer divisions, and 13 independent brigades, most of them infantry.

Army Group South was supported by the Fourth Air Force (Luftflotte 4), composed of the IV and V Air Corps, totalling 12 bomber groups, 7 fighter groups, one long-range reconnaissance squadron and 2 transport squadrons. Also attached to the army group were 14 close range and 5 long range reconnaissance squadrons. The total strength was about 790 planes.

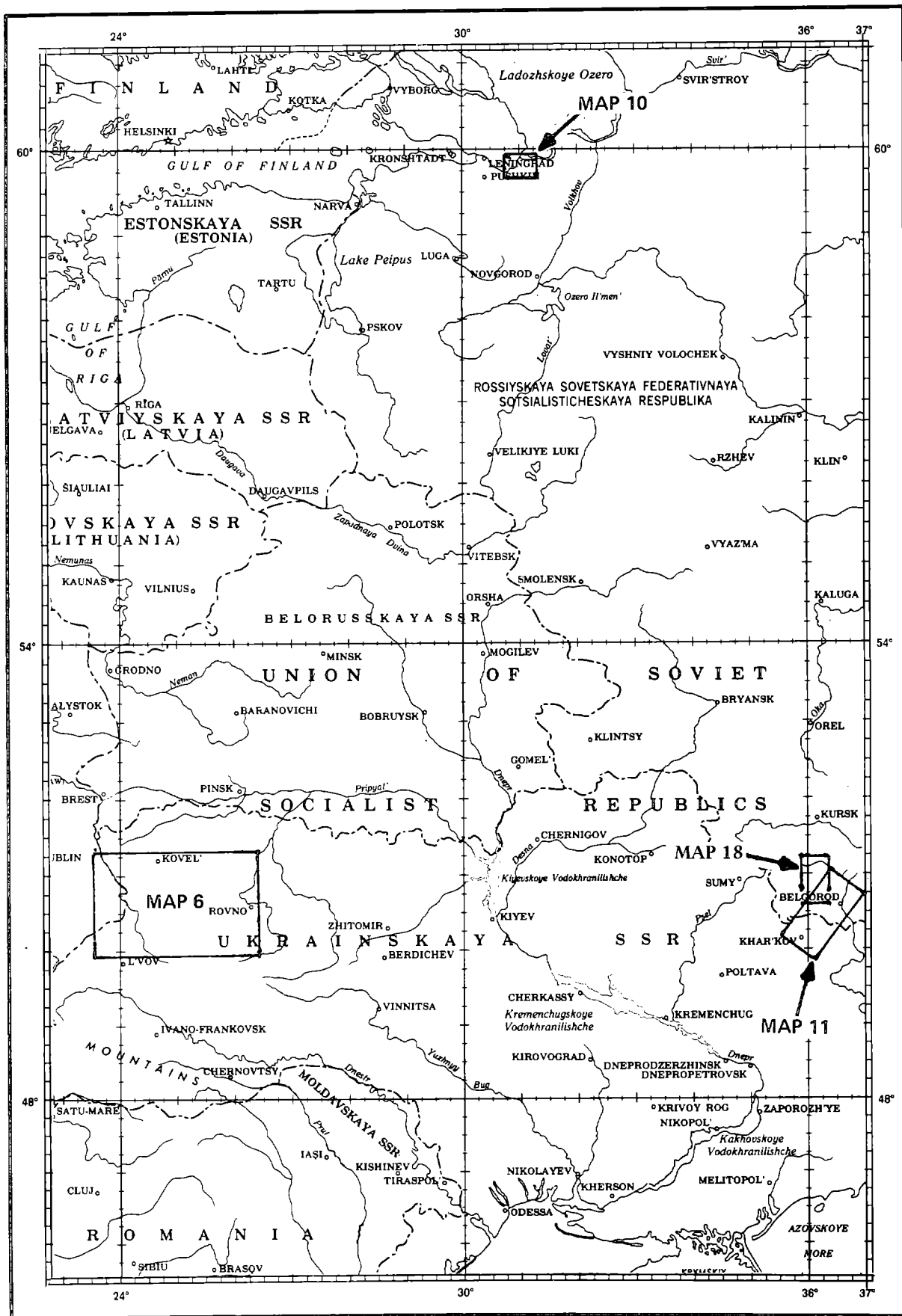
The objective of Army Group South was to destroy the Soviet forces in the Ukraine west of the Dnieper River and to establish bridgeheads on the eastern bank, thus setting the stage for a subsequent offensive toward the Volga River and the Caucasus. The Army Group planned to penetrate the Soviet defenses in the north, pressing forward to Kiev with a strong, mobile northern wing, while at the same time tying down as many Soviet forces as possible farther south along the Prut River and in the area between the Dniester and the Bug Rivers.

Opposing Army Group South along the 1,500 kilometer front were Soviet forces of the Kiev Special Military District under Colonel General E.P. Kirponos, and the Odessa Military District, commanded by Lieutenant General Ya. T. Cherevichenko. On the outbreak of hostilities these military districts were renamed the Southwestern Army Group and the Southern Army Group respectively.

The Soviet forces consisted of 45 rifle, 20 tank, 10 motorized, and 5 cavalry divisions. However, it should be noted that only about 25 divisions were in the first echelon, deployed 10 to 50 kilometers from the border, with the rifle divisions in front and tank divisions behind. The remaining 50 divisions were 80 to 300 kilometers from the frontier. Directly on the border were only a few thousand frontier guards, armed with light infantry weapons. Supporting the ground forces were ten air divisions and two independent air regiments, with fewer than 1,000 aircraft. About 80% of them were obsolete.²

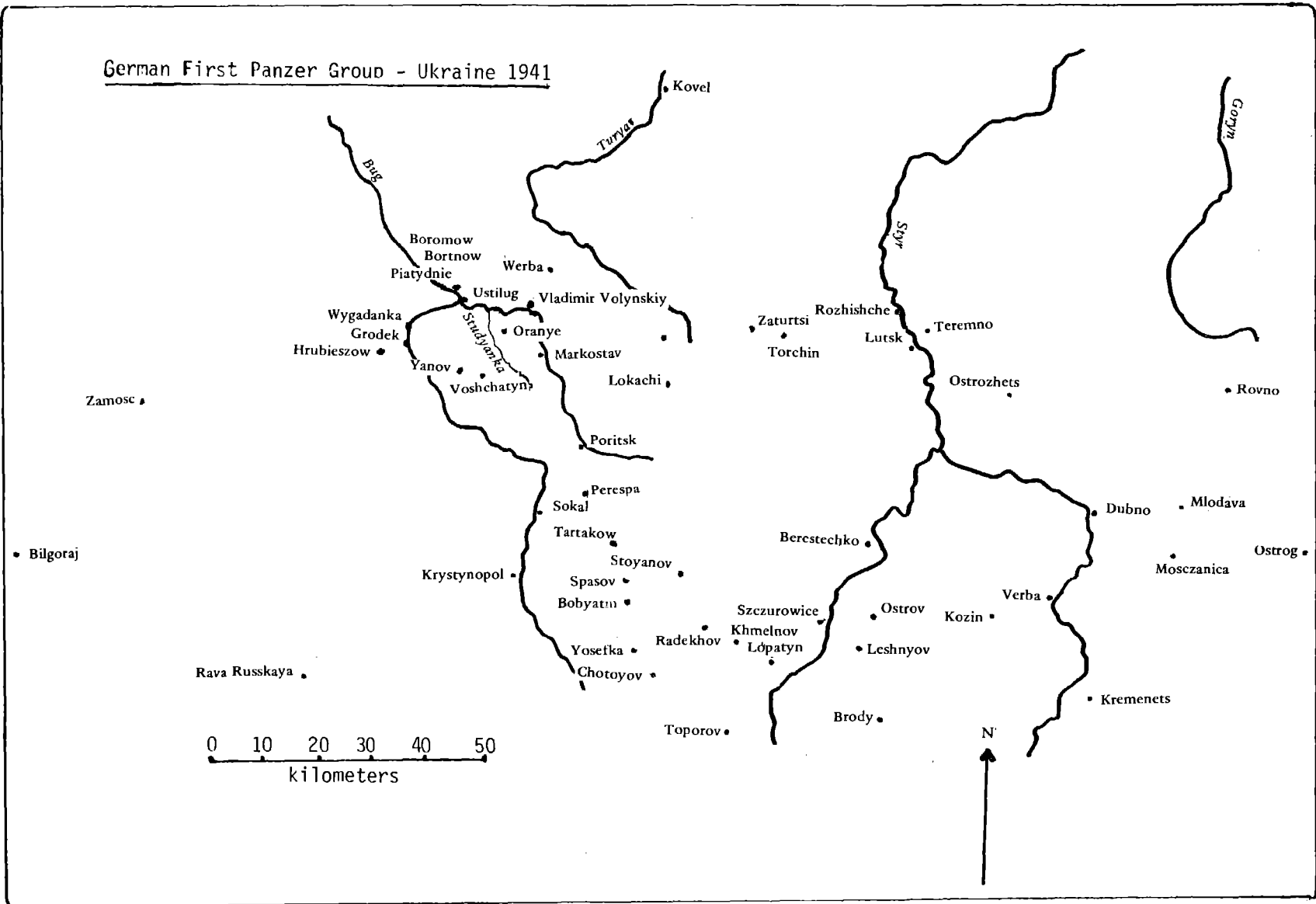
PLANS

The First Panzer Group, commanded by Colonel General Ewald von Kleist, was temporarily attached to the Sixth Army and deployed on the left flank of Army Group



Map 5

German First Panzer Group - Ukraine 1941



Map 6

South. For the breakthrough operations the First Panzer Group included the III, XXIX, XLVIII, and XIV Army Corps. The Group was to deliver a sledgehammer blow through the Soviet defenses, advance eastward without delay, cross the Styra River, and push through to Kiev and the Dnieper River via Berdichev and Zhitomir. As soon as the breakthrough of the Soviet border defenses was accomplished and operational freedom for the Panzer Group achieved, the attachment of the First Panzer Group to the Sixth Army would be terminated, various units would be returned to the Sixth Army, and the First Panzer Group would operate directly under Army Group South.

Aside from the temporarily assigned Sixth Army elements, the First Panzer Group had its own five panzer divisions (9th, 11th, 13th, 14th, and 16th), two motorized divisions (16th and 25th), and two SS divisions (SS Adolf Hitler and SS Viking). As of 21 June 1941 the strength of the First Panzer Group was:

Ration strength* 132,000
Combat strength 109,119, including 2,894 officers, 16,181 NCOs,
89,756 enlisted men, 228 civilians
Tanks 715, of which only half were Mark III or Mark IV.

While the organizational structure was to be kept as flexible as possible, on the eve of D-Day the organic divisions of the First Panzer Group were assigned to the attached Sixth Army formations as follows:

11th Panzer Division to the XLVIII Corps (which also had two infantry divisions)
14th Panzer Division to the III Corps (with two infantry divisions)
9th, 16th Panzer, and SS Viking Divisions to the XIV Corps

The 13th Panzer, 16th and 25th Motorized Infantry, and the SS Adolf Hitler Divisions remained directly under Panzer Group control. There were no panzer or motorized divisions attached to the XXIX Army Corps, which was composed of two infantry divisions.

The First Panzer Group deployed for combat in two echelons, with the XLVIII, XXIX, and III Corps in the first, and the XIV Corps in the second. The XLVIII Corps, on the right, was to make an assault crossing of the Bug River on both sides of Sokal, break through the Soviet border fortifications, and open up the way via Kremenets and Dubno to Berdichev. The III Corps, after an assault crossing of the Bug east of Krubieszow and at Ustilug, was to advance via Rovno to Zhitomir. The XXIX Corps, between the more powerful XLVIII and III Corps, was to exploit the success of its neighbors and advance toward Poritsk and Yaneviche. The XIV Corps, depending on the situation, would either a) transfer its divisions to one or more of the corps of the first echelon, b) follow the attacking corps as the second echelon of the Panzer Group, or c) if the Seventeenth Army on the right should break quickly through the Soviet defenses and the destruction of Soviet forces in the area could be anticipated, advance through the Seventeenth Army zone through Rava Russkaya to Kremenets.

In the area facing the First Panzer Group the Soviets had been constructing a system of fortifications since the summer of 1940, following an order from the Soviet Ministry of Defense to the Commander of the Kiev Special Military District.** Emphasis was placed on construction of fortified areas in the sectors where German attack might be expected.

Depending on the nature of the terrain, a typical Soviet fortified area was about 100 kilometers wide and 40 to 50 kilometers deep, big enough so that forces could maneuver freely and present a more dynamic defense. The main elements in the fortified areas were 25 or more centers of resistance or strongpoints made up of antitank and antipersonnel obstacles. At the front edge of the fortified areas field fortifications were built. The areas were manned by special permanent garrisons, their strength depending on the size of the fortified area and its strategic

*Ration strength includes non-combat troops; combat strength does not.

**Most of the fortified areas built along the old frontiers farther east were no longer functional. Their garrisons had been reduced by one third, and in 1941 some artillery and other equipment were removed. However, the old defense system had not been entirely dismantled, since it was assumed that it could serve as a strong defensive line in the event of withdrawal.

importance. In extremely dangerous situations Soviet doctrine envisaged that field army troops could occupy the fortifications.

In June 1941 many of the fortified areas were not yet ready, despite the fact that in the Kiev Special Military District, in addition to engineer and other troops, some 44,000 civilian laborers were engaged in military construction. In some of the fortifications which had been completed, armament and other equipment had not yet been installed. Furthermore, only skeleton garrisons were occupying the fortified areas.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

A few nights before D-Day German supporting troops began moving into combat positions. The artillery units entered their designated areas three or four nights before the attack, in order to prepare firing positions and observation posts. However, those firing positions close to the front were not occupied until the night before D-Day. Assault infantry units also moved into their jump off positions during the last night prior to the attack.

The mobile formations of the First Panzer Group took up their positions either a few hours before the attack or shortly after it started. The panzer divisions of the two front line corps were assembled about ten kilometers west of the Bug River. The 11th Panzer Division of the XLVIII Corps was divided in three combat groups, deployed in a narrow sector, one of them west of Krystynopol (Chervonograd), one west of Sokal, and the third behind the second. The 14th Panzer Division of the III Corps was concentrated in the Hrubieszow area, ready to advance toward Vladimir Volynskiy (Włodzimierz) as soon as bridgeheads across the river were captured.

The panzer and motorized divisions of the XIV Corps and the divisions attached directly to the Panzer Group remained temporarily in their concentration areas, north of Sandomierz and west of Zamosc.

At 0315 on 21 June 1941 the First Panzer Group attacked along its entire front, with its main effort along the axis Sokal-Dubno, at the junction of the Soviet Fifth and Sixth Armies. A powerful artillery barrage was directed at recognized targets and fortifications in the breakthrough areas and at military headquarters in the rear. Concurrent Luftwaffe strikes were aimed at the destruction of the Soviet Air Force.

The infantry formations of the three first echelon corps jumped off at the start of the artillery preparation. Smoke screens blinded Soviet observation points and rendered the fire of the border guards ineffective. In surprise assaults, the road bridge over the Bug River south of Sokal and two railroad bridges near Grodek and Horodowice fell into German hands by 0330. Against scattered resistance of the border guards and forward elements of the Soviet Fifth and Sixth Armies, the First Panzer Group advanced without major difficulties.

The formations of the Soviet Fifth and Sixth Armies had not been alerted in time to prepare to meet the attack. Some of them were given no more than an hour's notice, and most of them learned about the outbreak of war only after the German aircraft had flown their first air strikes and the German infantry had crossed the border. The Soviets were caught completely by surprise.

The main forces of the Soviet rifle divisions of the first echelon, each of which was defending a sector from 20 to 40 kilometers wide, were concentrated in camps or barracks and 10 kilometers behind the border. Most of them had not occupied their planned border defense positions before the German attack. To the extent the positions were occupied, or the troops were able to reach them, the Soviets fought tenaciously, stubbornly, and doggedly. Almost every pillbox had to be taken individually. As a whole, however, the resistance was too weak to stop the offensive.

At 0700, in view of the considerable distance advanced by the infantry formations, especially on the right flank, General Kleist ordered the XLVIII and III Corps to bring up their tank divisions to the Bug River. He also ordered the 13th Panzer Division to move forward to the area around Zamosc and Bilgoraj, and the 16th Panzer Division to the area around Bilgoraj and Janów Lubelski.

At about 1100 the 75th Infantry Division of the XLVIII Corps took Tartakow, and the 298th Infantry Division of the III Corps captured the bridge near Piatydnie. At this point, to prevent the Soviets from reorganizing their defenses, as well as to increase the strength and speed of the attack, Kleist decided to commit the 11th and 14th Panzer Divisions to spearhead the XLVIII and III Corps, respectively. They were ordered to advance rapidly to the east and capture the crossings of the Styr River.

As the day proceeded, Soviet resistance stiffened. Northeast of Sokal individual bunker crews fought bitterly, and it took time and additional heavy weapons to silence them. Nevertheless, by about 1400 the infantry divisions of the XLVIII Corps had advanced to the line Perespa-Tartakow-Jozefka. Shortly thereafter the reconnaissance battalion of the 11th Panzer Division broke out from Tartakow toward Stoyanov. The XXIX Corps advanced to Poritsk (Poryck) and Lakhnov and the Luga River at Yaneviche.

In the III Corps sector a difficult situation developed. The 44th Infantry Division was engaged in heavy combat for fortifications west of Yanov. To the north, the 298th Infantry Division, after capturing the bridge near Piatydnie, continued to fight a bitter battle six kilometers northwest of Vladimir Volynskiy, with elements of the Soviet 87th Rifle Division of the XXVII Rifle Corps and elements of the XXII Mechanized Corps.

At sunset, in spite of several Soviet counterattacks, the XLVIII Corps had advanced about 20 kilometers and reached the line Perespa-Spasov-the forest northeast of Tartakow-Bobyatin-Yosefka. The 11th Panzer Division was approaching Stoyanov. In the XXIX Corps sector the 111th Infantry Division had taken Poritsk and crossed the Luga River north of it at several points. South of the 111th Division, two regiments of the 299th Infantry Division had reached the Luga Zvinayreyka River near Zamlitse and built a bridgehead at Biskupice. The third regiment, on the division's left flank, was engaged in heavy combat with Soviet troops counterattacking from the direction of Vladimir Volynskiy.

The most effective and strongest Soviet resistance had been met in the III Corps sector. As evening came, the 44th Infantry Division was still fighting on both sides of Yanov. An attack on the town, preceded by an artillery preparation at 0500, was beaten off. The 298th Infantry Division also made little progress, and its left flank was forced to pull back in the face of Soviet counter attacks and fire from Boromov-Bortnov. Only the reconnaissance battalion of the 14th Panzer Division managed to cross the Bug River, as Soviet aircraft pinned down other elements of the division around Ustilug.

The German V Air Corps, which supported the First Panzer Group, destroyed 396 Soviet aircraft on the ground and 60 in the air battles during the day. Except for the attack on Ustilug there was little evidence of Soviet air activity.

In general, Kleist was satisfied with the results of the first day of the offensive, especially in the XLVIII Corps sector, where the 11th Panzer Division had made good progress. He decided to make the main effort there on the following day, believing that further advance in that area would quickly resolve the temporary difficulties facing the III Corps in the north.

Except for artillery fire in the III Corps sector near Piatydnie, the night passed quietly. Despite strong objection from Kleist, the Commander of the Sixth Army, Field Marshal von Reichenau, attached the 13th Panzer Division from reserve to the III Corps and ordered it to advance as quickly as possible via Zamosc and Hrubieszow to the III Corps zone. The III Corps was directed to take Vladimir Volynskiy by a frontal attack and a double enveloping maneuver. For this purpose the 44th and 298th Infantry Divisions were to continue their frontal attacks. The 14th Panzer Division was to cross the Bug at Ustilug and advance through the left flank of the 298th Infantry Division to lunge at Vladimir Volynskiy from the north. The 13th Panzer Division would cross the Bug near Gordek and Wygadanka, advance in the direction of Khobultov, and turn north toward Vladimir Volynskiy.

At dawn on June 23 the First Panzer Group continued its advance along the entire front. Early in the morning, in the XLVIII sector, the 15th Panzer Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division took the town of Stoyanov after a short but fierce battle with

elements of the Soviet 37th Tank Division of the XV Mechanized Corps. Continuing south, at about 0800 the 11th Panzer Division became engaged north of Radekhov (Radziechow) in a stiff battle with the forward elements (one tank and one motorized infantry battalion) of the Soviet 10th Tank Division. The engagement lasted the entire forenoon. Finally the Soviet units, with no other elements of the tank division coming to their aid, were forced to retreat. Official German reports claim that the Soviets lost 45 tanks in this first major tank battle. The Soviets report their losses as 6 T-34 tanks and 20 armored carriers. They put German losses at 20 tanks. Available German records do not report their own losses.

Meanwhile the German 57th Infantry Division reached the line Perespa-Spasov against modest resistance, and early in the afternoon advanced toward the road from Stoyanov to Druzhkopol. The 75th Infantry Division advanced rapidly against weak Soviet forces on both sides of the Zalyznya Brook. A battle for the complex of fortifications near Kol. Ravshchyzna progressed well for the Germans despite fierce opposition.

In the III Corps sector at about 0800 the 44th Infantry Division penetrated the fortifications at Yanov with great difficulty. While some elements of the division remained there, engaged in hand to hand combat, other elements took Voshchatyn at 1000. The 298th Infantry Division, after beating off a strong counterattack by Soviet infantry and tanks from the area around Kartshunek, was able to advance slowly. By 0930 it had reached the eastern edge of the forest northwest of Vladimir Volynskiy. The division approached the northwestern edge of the city at about 1600. There it encountered serious resistance. After a fierce battle the military barracks were taken, and at 1700 Vladimir Volynskiy fell to the German infantry.

The 14th Panzer Division had concentrated on both sides of Ustilug late in the morning, prepared to advance eastward toward Lutsk (Luck) as soon as Vladimir Volynskiy was secured by the infantry. The 13th Panzer Division put its first units across the Bug near Grodek at noon, but physical difficulties at the first crossing site caused many delays. At a second crossing, near Wygadanka, there was an 18-ton bridge. But it was in poor condition, hardly fit for tanks, and there were long delays in crossing there also. The important east-west roads were blocked for a considerable time, and the planned tank assault on Vladimir Volynskiy could not be made.

On the right flank of the Panzer Group, at about 1600 the 110th Motorized Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division took Khmelnov after a fierce fight, and one hour later captured strongly defended Lopatyn. In a daring push, the 61st Motorcycle Battalion of the 11th Panzer Division captured two undamaged bridges over the Styr River, near Marva and Berestechko (Beresteczko), at about the same time, greatly speeding the advance of the division across the river.

The offensive of the XXIX Corps on 23 June moved smoothly. After mopping up the Poritsk area, the 111th Infantry Division advanced toward the Styr River. The 299th Infantry Division also pushed eastward, against little opposition.

By the end of 23 June the First Panzer Group had made considerable progress. In the XLVIII Corps sector, the 11th Panzer Division, advancing eastward from Radekhov, had reached the Styr River near Shchurovitchi (Szczerowice). Although the bridge there had been blown up by the retreating Soviet troops, the Germans were able to repair it enough to make some use of it, and they also used the two bridges captured earlier by the motorcyclists. Crossing the Styr the tank units established a bridgehead on the eastern bank, creating favorable conditions for future advance toward Dubno and Kremenets.

In the III Corps sector, the tanks of the 13th Panzer Division advanced southeast from Ludzin and crossed the Studyanka River south of Oranye despite strong Soviet resistance from units in entrenchments along the eastern bank of the river. The division's next objective was the bridge near Markostav.

The 44th Infantry Division, after an almost day-long battle, finally broke through the fortifications on both sides of Yanov, and reconnoitered toward the Studyanka River, before advancing toward it. There the division became engaged in heavy fighting with the Soviet forces entrenched on the opposite bank. During the

night, however, the Germans crossed the river and took the Soviet strongpoint at Oranye.

Soon after Vladimir Volynskiy fell, the 14th Panzer Division moved eastward through the city and assembled during the evening about five kilometers to the south-east. The 298th Division, meanwhile, was mopping up the remaining Soviet forces around Vladimir Volynskiy.

Shortly after midnight the Sixth Army informed Kleist that as of 1200 the XXIX Corps, the infantry divisions of the XLVIII and III Corps—except for the 57th and 298th—and support units of the Sixth Army temporarily attached to the First Panzer Group would return to Army command.

Soviet resistance stiffened on 24 June. In the XLVIII Corps sector it was 1000 before the 11th Panzer Division had moved all its units across the Styr River and was able to move out toward Dubno. The advance was slow because of intense Soviet air raids which caused many casualties. At 1130, however, the division took Kozin, and Soviet resistance seemed to be weakening.

In the III Corps sector to the north, at 0700 the panzer regiment of the 13th Panzer Division crossed the bridge near Markostav. Toward noon the division, pushing forward against scattered resistance, reached Lokachi, and its advance elements reached the Luga River. The 14th Panzer Division moved out at 0600, and soon became engaged in severe combat in the Aleksandrovka area, west of Torchin. The Soviets brought in fresh troops from Lutsk. After several hours of fighting, the Soviets were finally pushed back, and the division approached Torchin. According to a preliminary report, the 14th Panzer Division destroyed 158 Soviet tanks during the day.

The 298th Infantry Division of the III Corps, having secured the Vladimir Volynskiy area, advanced toward Rieslin, with the mission of capturing the bridge at Roshchice, which was very important for tank supply traffic. At 1500 the division's forward elements reached a forest five kilometers east of Kohilno, where strong Soviet forces were concentrated. Elements of the Soviet XV Rifle Corps, in the meantime, had advanced from Kovel in an attempt to retake Vladimir Volynskiy. They attacked the 298th Infantry Division north of the town, but after prolonged and heavy combat their attack was repulsed.

The 11th Panzer Division of the XLVIII Corps had encountered strong resistance east of Kozin. However, it managed to continue to the east in heavy fighting, and reached the outskirts of Verba at about 1800. At 1400, forward elements of the 16th Panzer Division, which had been attached to the XLVIII Corps the day before, crossed the Bug River at Krystynopol. Toward 1700 it reached Radekhov, but it could not proceed, for the road was blocked by the 11th Panzer Division. Kleist, informed of the situation, ordered the 11th Panzer Division to clear the road no later than midnight. The 57th Infantry Division reached the area northwest of Berestechko early in the evening and was ordered to secure the right flank of the corps in the Chotoyov and Toporov areas against the threat from a Soviet tank force approaching from the south. The Soviets attacked during the night but were driven off.

By this time the Soviet Southwestern Army Group was marshalling its forces to try to halt the imminent breakthrough by the First Panzer Group. Three rifle corps from Army Group reserve, the XXXVI, XXXI, and XXXVII, were moved into a defensive position between Stophkhov, north of Lutsk, and Golagur, south of Kremenets, during 24 and 25 June.

On 25 June Soviet resistance intensified along the entire front of the First Panzer Group, as the Soviets brought up several additional mechanized and rifle corps. However, they were unable to concentrate large tank or infantry forces to counterattack, and they committed their units piecemeal as they arrived in the battle area. German reports indicate that the Soviet Air Force was very active, especially against the advancing tanks. However, the Germans maintained overall air superiority, and the Luftwaffe delivered heavier blows and caused greater losses.

Early in the morning of 25 June both tank divisions of the German XLVIII Corps moved out. At about 0630 the 11th Panzer Division was stopped at the outskirts of Dubno by strong Soviet tank and infantry counterattacks. After regrouping, the

Germans broke into the city in a double envelopment, with the 110th Motorized Regiment attacking from the south and the reconnaissance battalion from the north. Fierce fighting lasted several hours as Soviet tanks and infantry counterattacked repeatedly and each time were driven off. Finally, at about 1400 Dubno was taken. The 11th Panzer Division then moved on toward Ostrog. However, after only four tanks had crossed the bridge over the Styr River, the bridge was blown up by remote control. The advance was delayed while repairs were made and further delayed by renewed Soviet resistance from the hills east of Dubno. But at 1830 the reinforced reconnaissance battalion renewed the drive forward. It had proceeded only a few kilometers, however, when extremely heavy resistance was encountered, and the advance was again halted.

On the right of the XLVIII Corps the 57th Infantry Division, charged with securing the southern flank of the Group, took up defensive positions in the Lopatyn and Leshnyov areas, anticipating counterattacks by large Soviet tank and motorized formations from the area south of Khotoyov (Chojow) and Toporov and from Brody.

The tank regiment and the reconnaissance battalion of the 16th Panzer Division, not yet engaged in combat, moved through Radekhov at 0500 on 25 June. Again they were held up by the 11th Panzer Division, which was on the road just east of the town. It was early evening before the division's reconnaissance battalion reached Sitno. The main body of the division arrived at Kordovka, south of Berestechko. It was ordered to prepare to advance on Kremenets.

In the III Corps sector the 13th Panzer Division, facing strong Soviet resistance, advanced slowly toward Lutsk. At 1300 it was south of Torchin, and at 1630 the division took the village of Antonovka, nine kilometers west of Lutsk. The division's reconnaissance battalion had reached the Styr River south of Lutsk a few hours earlier. At about 1800 forward elements of the division burst into the city. Heavy street fighting followed, but by midnight the city was firmly in German hands. Crossing the river, the division established a bridgehead from which to continue the offensive.

The 14th Panzer Division, which had moved out early in the morning of 25 June, at 1000 reached the Turya River north of Zaturtsi, where it came in contact with a large Soviet tank force, probably a division, from the XXII Mechanized Corps, supported by the 1st Antitank Artillery Brigade. After beating off the Soviet attack, the Germans advanced toward Torchin. There a bitter tank battle developed, lasting several hours. But at 2000 the Germans took the town, having lost 17 tanks, and moved on toward Lutsk.

All morning the 298th Infantry Division had been under severe tank and infantry counterattacks northeast of Vladimir Volynskiy, near Antonovka Rostio and Werba. By noon it had repulsed Soviet efforts to break through to Vladimir Volynskiy. The Soviets withdrew northeast across the Turya River. In view of the continuing threat from the north and northeast, where Soviet mechanized and rifle corps were deployed, the Commander of the German III Corps ordered the 298th Infantry Division to secure the northern flank of the Panzer Group and to mop up the Soviet troops still fighting in individual bunkers in the Ustilug area.

During the night of 25/26 June General Kleist ordered the XIV Corps to alert its 16th Motorized Infantry Division to stay ready to move behind the 16th Panzer Division on the right flank of the Panzer Group, where a Soviet attack seemed likely. As the German units resumed the advance on 26 June, Soviet resistance increased along the entire front. Four panzer divisions were engaged in fierce battles. Over 600 Soviet tanks were either involved or on their way to the battlefields.

The anticipated Soviet tank and motorized infantry attack on the right flank started at about 0900 and developed into a series of bitter battles which lasted the entire day. The Soviet VIII Mechanized Corps directed its main effort toward Leshnyov (Leszniow) and north of Kholoyov (Cholowow).

The German bridgehead at Kholoyov was defended by the 179th Infantry Regiment of the 57th Infantry Division, and the area north of Kholoyov by the 297th Infantry Division of the XXXIV Army Corps, on the right. All Soviet attacks in the latter area were repulsed; but at Leshnyov, the Soviet VIII Mechanized Corps, using a number

of medium and heavy tanks—against which the German infantry antitank weapons were ineffectual—broke through the German defenses. The Germans suffered heavy casualties and were forced to retreat from Leshnyov. Elements of the 279th Infantry Division, supported by quickly introduced antitank artillery, stopped the main Soviet attack near the southern edge of the forest north of Leshnyov. However, other Soviet units still advanced, toward Berestechko and Ostrov.

During the entire afternoon the situation south of Berestechko was critical for the Germans. Soviet tanks continued to advance from the Leshnyov area and pushed through Redkov to Ostrov. In the evening Soviet units blocked the main road from Dubno to Ostrov and approached within six kilometers of the command post of the XLVIII Corps. The situation became so bad that the German Command issued orders to prepare the bridges over the Styr for demolition. However, after all available reserves of the 57th and 279th Infantry Divisions and additional antitank artillery had been thrown into the battle the Soviet advance was stopped near Berestechko. Since the Soviets had no readily available reserves, the entire counterattack collapsed, and the remnants of the mechanized corps retreated southeastward, whence it had come. The German V Air Corps had played an important role in defeating the Soviet tank assault; its repeated attacks set a great many Soviet tanks and vehicles afire.

While the infantry divisions were fighting hard in the south the tank divisions of the First Panzer Group were also fighting savage tank battles with Soviet mechanized formations. In the XLVIII Corps sector the 16th Panzer Division set out at 0330 toward Kremenets, which it reached in the evening, after fighting off numerous Soviet counterattacks. The 11th Panzer Division, thrusting toward Ostrog, initially made good progress. At 0630 Mlodava was taken. However, by midmorning the advance slowed considerably. At about 1300 a Soviet tank formation was observed moving from Hrushvitsa toward Mlodava. One hour later this force was met by the 15th Panzer Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division near Varkovitse (Warkowice). A severe engagement lasted until evening. Infantry elements of the 11th Panzer Division in the meantime captured Wielka Moszczanica at about 1400 and, continuing to advance, reached Bushcha in the evening.

In the III Corps sector, the 13th Panzer Division jumped off from Lutsk at 0500, headed for Rovno. The advance was slowed by mines which had been laid on some stretches of the road. At about 1300 the division captured Ostrozhetz (Ostrozec), nearly 15 kilometers southeast of Lutsk. Overcoming stubborn Soviet resistance, the Germans reached Muravitsa and the area north of it during the evening.

The main force of the 14th Panzer Division left Lutsk early in the morning and pushed north toward Rozhishche. Near Teremno the Soviets offered strong resistance. By early evening, after fighting hard, the motorcycle battalion captured the railroad bridge at Rozhishche and became involved in heavy combat for the bridgehead with violently counterattacking Soviet tanks and infantry.

The 298th Infantry Division was busy all during 25 June, defending the northern flank on the Turya River from Soviet attacks that were continuous, although weaker than those of the day before. The last Soviet troops were cleared from the Ustilug area by 298th Division troops.

At 2000 on 26 June the First Panzer Group was detached from the Sixth Army. Field Marshal von Rundstedt concluded that the breakthrough in the First Panzer Group sector had been accomplished and operational freedom for the First Panzer Group had been achieved.

EXPLOITATION

During the next several days the First Panzer Group, taking advantage of the 50 kilometer gap between the Soviet Fifth and Sixth Armies, slowly pushed its way toward the east. The Soviets still offered resolute resistance, counterattacking German panzer and infantry formations with mechanized units brought up from the rear. This considerably slowed the Panzer Group's advance, and caused some concern in the Army Group South Command, but did not stop it.

The First Panzer Group advanced along three axes—northern, central and southern—having the central column in the front and the two others echeloned to the rear.

When counterattacked by Soviet tanks and infantry, the central column would stop and retreat and by so doing would draw the Soviets into a trap, bringing them under flanking attacks by both of the other columns.

By the end of June, the Panzer Group had advanced over 150 kilometers, taken Shepetovka and Zhitomir, was continuing rapidly toward Kiev and the Dnieper River, cracking the Soviet Southwestern Army Group right down the center.

CONCLUSIONS

The area carefully selected for the attack of the German First Panzer Group was near the junction of the Soviet Fifth and Sixth Armies. Soviet defensive plans envisaged that in the event of a hostile attack it would be likely to be focussed farther south, toward Lvov, where the terrain, roads, and railroad net were more favorable for the operation of a major tank force. Thus they had not fortified the area as strongly, had not completed construction of the fortifications that were planned, or fully manned and equipped those that were complete. Not only was an attack not anticipated, the choice of the area of the main effort contributed to the surprise, which was an important factor in the achievement of a breakthrough.

The First Panzer Group was initially attached to the Sixth Army, in order to coordinate its effort with the Army's attack. The attachment of a number of infantry divisions to the Panzer Group assured the tank formations of constant infantry support during the period before the breakthrough was achieved.

While attacks were launched all along the First Panzer Group's front, the main effort was made in two sectors, that of the III Corps in the north and that of the XLVIII Corps in the south. As the advance in both sectors began to make considerable progress reserves were thrown in to give additional weight to the attack and maintain the momentum.

The defending Soviet forces properly moved to threaten the flanks of the advancing German tank units, and Kleist properly used his infantry divisions to secure these flanks and drive off the Soviet attacks. However, the Soviets introduced their second echelon troops and their reserves piecemeal and thus not very effectively.

The concentration of power, the selection of the junction between two Soviet armies as the area of attack, the use of highly mobile forces, and the achievement of surprise, all contributed to the planned breakthrough. Once it was achieved, the First Panzer Group was released from Sixth Army control so that it could operate independently and use its panzer units to exploit their initial success.

BREAKTHROUGH IN MALAYA: THE BATTLE OF JITRA DECEMBER 1941

The British in northern Malaya in December 1941 had no comprehensive, integrated fixed defenses and only inadequately equipped forces to attempt to halt the Japanese invasion. The main Japanese attack was made down the main road from Thailand, from Singora on the Thai coast. Having lost the opportunity to attempt to prevent the landings at Singora, the British quickly established their principal defense position at Jitra, about 25 miles below the border with Thailand. Pushing aside British units in two advance defense positions, the Japanese proceeded down the road and attacked at Jitra. This is an account of the breakthrough of the Jitra defenses.

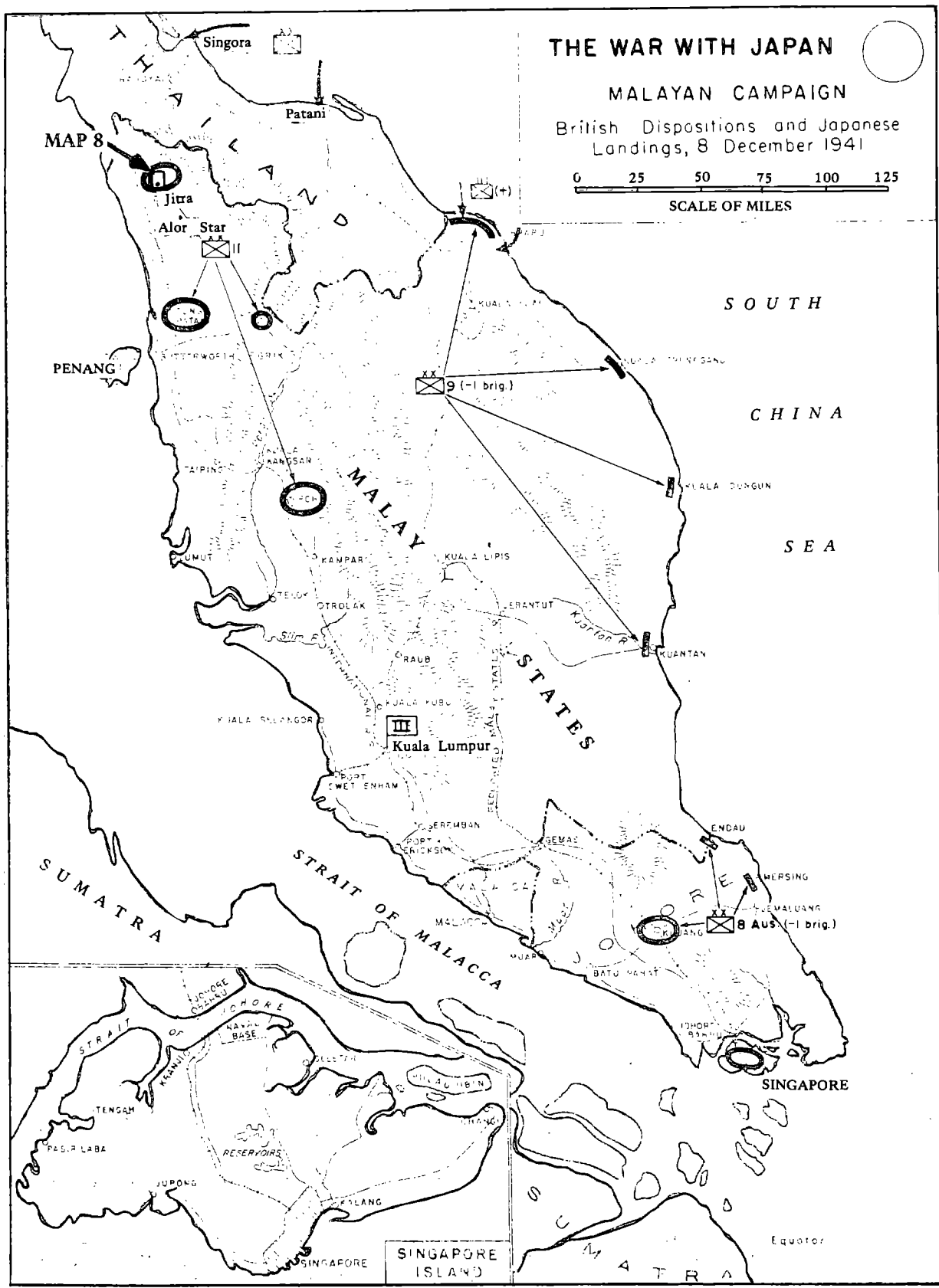
BACKGROUND

Britain's major concern in Malaya was for the defense of the naval base at Singapore. On the general assumption that the jungles of Malay were impenetrable and attack on Singapore would come from the sea, its defense had long been based upon fixed guns pointing seaward, and upon support from the British fleet. However, since 1939, the Royal Navy had been more than adequately occupied in defending the British Isles and transport in the North Atlantic, so that by December 1941 Admiral Sir Tom Phillips's Eastern Fleet had only one modern battleship, HMS Prince of Wales, and one elderly battle cruiser, HMS Repulse, both newly arrived, plus three cruisers, six destroyers, and a few auxiliaries; he had no aircraft carriers, heavy cruisers, or submarines.

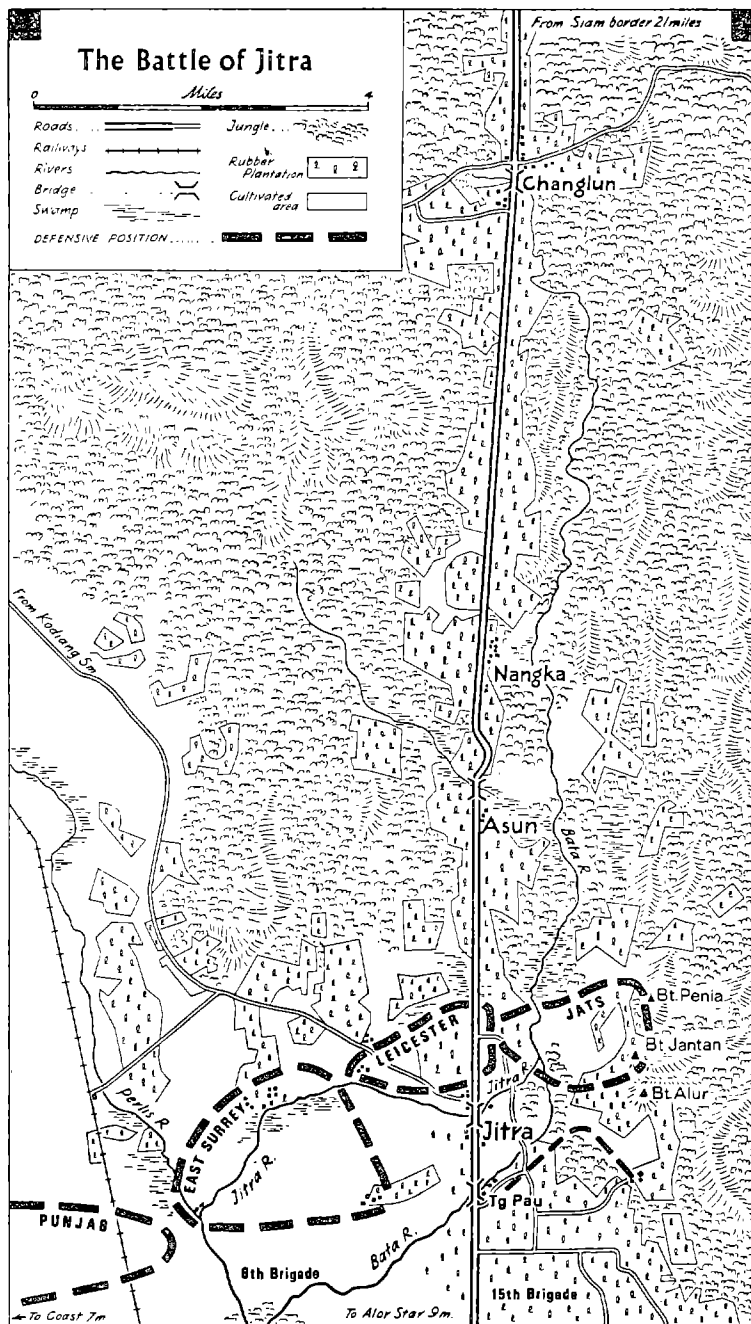
Recognizing the inadequacies of the fleet, the British Chiefs of Staff in August 1940 decided that defense of Singapore should rest on airpower. Airfields were scattered, without strategic orientation, throughout Malaya, and land forces were deployed to provide maximum defense for them rather than a coordinated defense of the peninsula. However, there were only 158 obsolete or obsolescent aircraft, and they included no transports, long range bombers, dive bombers, photo reconnaissance planes, or army support aircraft.

In December 1941 Britain had the equivalent of four infantry divisions stationed in Malaya, about 80,000 men, under the command of Lieutenant General Arthur Percival. Over Percival was the Commander in Chief Far East, Air Chief Marshal Sir Robert Brooke-Popham, who had operational control of all British ground and air forces in Malaya, Burma, Borneo, and Hong Kong. Percival's command included the 9th and the 11th Indian Infantry Divisions of the III Indian Corps, the 8th Australian Division, and additional miscellaneous infantry forces. (Total strength was increased to about 130,000 with the arrival of additional troops during the campaign.) The artillery in Malaya, however, was below strength, there were no tanks, the training and arms of most troops were not suited to jungle operations (many men had been diverted to Malaya while en route to the Middle East), there was a shortage of experienced junior officers as a result of the rapid expansion of the military forces in the Far East and India, and vital defense construction had not taken place because of a shortage of labor and the time required to obtain approval from London for all expenditures in excess of £20,000.

The peninsula of Malaya is divided lengthwise by a jungle-covered north-south range of hills which rises to 7,000 feet and separates two coastal plains, which are mostly covered with rain forests and cut by numerous rivers and streams. In 1941 the eastern plain was undeveloped and its broad, sandy beaches were highly suitable for amphibious landings. But a major advance from northern Malaya southward to Singapore would undoubtedly occur in the west, since the western plain contained the main north-south road and railway lines. Vital to any advance would be the capture



Map 7



Map 8

of the Thai airfields at Singora and Patani, and the British airfields in Kelantan, in order to provide air support for the ground troops.

PLANS

Having decided to attack Singapore from the landward side, the Japanese planners developed a three phase project: (1) amphibious landings on the east coast of the peninsula combined with an overland invasion from Thailand, (2) establishment of air supremacy, and (3) a main drive down the west coast, with a secondary parallel attack down the eastern plain.

Responsibility for the capture of Malaya was assigned to the 60,000-man Twenty-fifth Army, commanded by General Tomoyuki Yamashita. The ground forces under his direction consisted of three infantry divisions, two of which, the 5th and the 18th, plus eleven artillery battalions, four tank regiments, and various service units, would be landed in Malaya. A third infantry division, the Imperial Guards, was to advance through Thailand and enter Malaya by rail. The 56th Infantry Division was available to serve as Army reserve, but, as a result of the rapid progress made by the Japanese forces in the opening days of the campaign, it remained in Japan and was never committed.

To support or participate in the assault on Malaya Japanese naval forces consisted of two battleships, eight heavy cruisers, four light cruisers, sixteen destroyers, six submarines, and a number of auxiliaries and transports. The 3d Air Group, with more than 450 aircraft based in Indochina, was to support the landings and the subsequent operations, taking over airfields as soon as they were captured.

The entire operation in Malaya was planned to be completed in 100 days. The 5th Infantry Division, 16,000 men under Lieutenant General Matsui, was to land four regiments in southern Thailand, the 11th and 41st Regiments of the 9th Infantry Brigade and the 21st Regiment of the 21st Brigade at Singora, and the 42d Infantry Regiment of the 21st Infantry Brigade at Patani. These forces were to advance down the Singora-Alor Star and Patani-Kroh roads to the Malayan border, and then proceed into northwestern Malaya. Any British forces in northwestern Malaya would be cut off by the second of these at the same time they were being attacked by the first. The Japanese objective was to secure the airfields in Kedah, cross the Perak River 200 miles to the south, and capture Kuala Lumpur.

Meanwhile the 56th Regiment of the 18th Infantry Division, under the command of Lieutenant General Renya Mutaguchi, was to land at Kota Bahru on the northeast coast of Malaya and advance south to Kuantan, capturing the airfields at Kota Bahru, Gong Kedah, and Machang en route. The Imperial Guards Division, commanded by Lieutenant General Takuma Nishimura, was to advance overland from Indochina to Thailand, seize Bangkok, and bring that country completely under Japanese control. It would then continue south by railroad and enter Malaya to support the activities of the 5th Division. The remaining units of the 5th and 18th Divisions were to be landed at various times throughout the campaign. Of course the ultimate objective was Singapore, and all the forces were to concentrate in southern Malaya to attack it.

In the Malay peninsula north of Johore Lieutenant General Sir Lewis Heath was in charge of defense. Under him was the III Indian Corps, with the 11th Indian Infantry Division, under Major General D.M. Murray-Lyon, deployed in Perlis and Kedah, less one battalion, the 3/16 Punjab, at Kroh and the 5/14 Punjab on the island of Penang, the 9th Indian Infantry Division on the east coast with its 8th Brigade in Kelantan and 22d Brigade in Kuantan, and the 28th Brigade as Corps reserve at Ipoh.

The 8th Australian Division under Major General H. Gordon Bennett was responsible for Johore and Malacca, except for some of the Singapore anti-aircraft defenses in Johore and the Pengerang defenses in southeastern Johore, which were to be defended by two brigades of the Straits Settlements Volunteer Force under Major General F. Keith Simmons.

The 12th Infantry Brigade at Port Dickson was assigned as command reserve to support the III Corps in the event of a major advance into Thailand.

For some time it had been recognized by the British commanders in Malaya that the Japanese might attempt to enter the country from the north and advance down the

peninsula. The General Officer Commanding Malaya, Major General L.E. Bond, who preceded General Percival, had begun to formulate a plan whereby British forces would enter Thailand and seize the airfields and amphibious landing sites at Singora and Patani as soon as there was evidence of Japanese intentions to attack Malay. The plan was further developed under General Percival, and given the code name, "Matador."

By late fall of 1941, Matador had been modified, for it had become evident that the forces available in Malaya were inadequate to secure both Singora and Patani, and there was little hope that sufficient reinforcements would arrive in the foreseeable future. Two brigades of the 11th Indian Infantry Division in the modified plan would advance into Thailand to seize Singora. A second force of two battalions, the 3/16 Punjab at Kroh and the 5/14 Punjab on Penang, designated Kroh-col, would advance 35-40 miles inside Thailand to a position known as The Ledge, where the Patani-Kroh road cuts into the side of a steep hill. The remainder of the 11th Division was either to support these offensives or to hold a defensive position north of the Alor Star airfield and block the main Japanese thrust expected to be directed there.

The troops of the 11th Indian Infantry Division were mainly Indian soldiers, with a battalion of British troops in each brigade. Neither men nor officers of the Indian units were experienced, or even (the sources suggest) thoroughly trained. They had no tanks, and few had ever seen one. In the uncertainty as to whether or not Matador was to be carried out morale suffered and the fixed defenses on the potential Japanese invasion routes were not completed.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

On 5 December 1941 Air Marshal Brooke-Popham received authorization from the Chiefs of Staff to launch Matador without reference to London, if he had information that a Japanese expedition was advancing across the Gulf of Thailand with the apparent intention of landing in South Thailand, or if the Japanese violated any part of Thailand.

At 1130 on Saturday, 6 December, British air reconnaissance sighted two Japanese convoys, a total of 43 transports, 1 battleship, 7 cruisers, and 14 destroyers, moving westward into the Gulf of Thailand on a course which would lead them to Singora. This movement met the conditions under which Matador could be launched, and the III Corps accordingly was put on alert. Soon afterward, a third convoy of three transports and one cruiser was seen travelling northwestward in advance of the first two. The course of this convoy evidently led Brooke-Popham to conclude that all three forces were probably heading to a port on the west coast of Indochina from which they could later advance into Thailand. Therefore, keeping in mind British policy of avoiding war with Japan if possible, Brooke-Popham did not order the implementation of Matador.

Because of poor weather conditions, it was not until 1848 on 7 December that the convoys were seen again; at that time they were 70 miles off the east coast of the Kra Isthmus and definitely heading toward Singora and Patani. Because of the difficulty of the terrain that British troops would have to cross in an advance on Singora, it was then too late to order the execution of Matador as such. Although the advance to the Ledge was still possible, no order to proceed was given.

The first Japanese troops landed on the coast approximately one mile east of the airfield at Kota Bahru at 0030 on 8 December. By dawn, when air attacks began in support of the invaders, 5,300 troops were ashore. Before the day was over, in spite of British air counterattacks and spirited resistance, Japanese troops had taken possession of the airfield. At 0300 Japanese troops had landed at Singora and Patani, and begun to advance south unopposed. At 0400 the Japanese carried out their first air bombardment of Singapore, which provided an easy target with all its street lights ablaze. At dawn a series of almost continuous Japanese air attacks commenced against airfields in northern Malaya, first from Malaya, then from air bases in Thailand quickly seized by the Japanese. The weak British air units, inadequate anti-aircraft defenses, (one light and one heavy anti-aircraft battery in northern Malaya) and the absence of an air attack warning system rendered the

defenders helpless against the heavy bombing and strafing attacks. Large numbers of British aircraft were destroyed on the ground; others were attacked in the air or withdrawn to fields farther south. By nightfall of 8 December only 50 of the original 110 British planes were still operational. The following morning only ten planes remained in northern Malaya, at Butterworth Airfield, opposite Penang.

The Japanese 42d Regiment landed at Patani at 0300 on 8 December and set off promptly down the road to Kroh. When word of the landing reached Brooke-Popham shortly before 1000, he ordered Percival to release the troops that were alerted to proceed to Singora, and prepare instead to defend Jitra. He also directed that the Krohcol units be sent to the Ledge. The order did not reach General Heath, Commander of the III Indian Corps, until 1300, and General Murray, 11th Division Commander, until a half hour later, Japanese aircraft were already attacking Malayan airfields.

Despite the fact that the III Corps had been on alert since 6 December, the Krohcol force had not been concentrated at Kroh. At 1330 on 8 December when Lieutenant Colonel H.D. Moorhead, commanding Krohcol, received the order to advance, only the 3/16 Battalion was ready. The other battalion had not arrived from Penang and did not arrive until the action was over. Nevertheless, Moorhead entered Thailand at 1500 and met almost immediate opposition from Thai border guards. By nightfall he had advanced only three miles. On the following day two more miles were traversed as stubborn opposition persisted. On the morning of 10 December Moorhead began his final advance to the Ledge, but six miles short of his objective he encountered the Japanese 42d Regiment with tanks and artillery support. They had already advanced 75 miles and secured the vital position. The tanks overran the British forces, and by 12 December Moorhead's unit had been reduced to half of its original strength. He was forced to withdraw to Sungei Patani, leaving the 11th Division's line of communications vulnerable to an attack from Kroh.

The 11th Indian Division, less Krohcol, had been on alert in heavy rain near the Thai border since 6 December in anticipation of the launching of Matador. At 1330 on 8 December the division received orders to return to the Jitra position and prepare to block the Japanese advance. The defenses at Jitra had never been completed, and their condition was made worse at this time by the steady rain which soaked everything. While work on them was being rushed, Major General D.M. Murray-Lyon, commander of the 11th Indian Division, sent two companies of the 1/8 Punjab Regiment, with some engineers, across the Thai border to delay the Japanese on the Singora-Jitra road. An infantry detachment of the 2/16 Punjab Regiment was sent northwest to guard the railroad.

The Japanese 11th, 21st, and 41st Regiments of the 5th Division landed unopposed at Singora on 8 December, and as soon as they were organized an advance detachment of about 300 men, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Shizuo Saeki, with three medium tanks and a field gun, started off on the road to Jitra. At 2130 this force encountered the advance Punjab unit near Ban Sadao, ten miles north of the Malaya border, where they had hastily built a defense position. The Punjabis knocked out the Japanese tanks but were soon themselves forced by the Japanese infantry and mortar shells to withdraw to Changlun, six miles inside Malaya. They destroyed three bridges behind them, but the delays thus imposed on the Japanese were more than offset by the discovery in one of the abandoned British cars of a map of the defenses at Changlun and Jitra.

To gain more time for preparation of the defenses at Jitra, Murray-Lyon sent Brigadier K.A. Garrett, commanding officer of the 15th Brigade, to Asun, about 12 miles above Jitra, with the 2/1 Gurkha Battalion from the 28th Brigade, the only available reserve, with orders to hold the Japanese there until 12 December, should they break through the Punjabis at Changlun.

While this slender force was organizing to meet the Japanese attack and try to prevent the invaders from proceeding south toward Singapore, disaster struck the British at sea. Japanese torpedo planes and bombers removed Britain's only hope of naval support by sinking the Prince of Wales and the Repulse not far from the coast of Malaya, in the South China Sea.

The Japanese advance detachment proceeded toward the Thai border, leaving its vehicles behind as it reached the bridges destroyed by the withdrawing Punjabis. About 200 men entered Malaya on foot in the dark night of 9/10 December, wading across streams, and pushing forward until they encountered a blown bridge and artillery fire just above Changlun. Then they sought cover in rubber plantations along the road and waited during the next day, preparing a plan of attack while the engineers repaired bridges behind them in order to bring up the tanks and other vehicles, and commenced repairs on the bridge in front of them, under intense artillery fire from concealed British guns.

By the morning of the 11th of December the Japanese advance detachment numbered more than 1,000 men. Additional tanks had been added to the original complement, and it included infantry, light and medium tanks, mountain artillery guns, engineer, communications, and medical units. Not far behind it was the 21st Infantry Regiment, the advance elements of which, in fact, were providing local security for the artillery of the advance detachment.*

In the early morning of 11 December the fight for Changlun began. By midday the Japanese infantry, who had waded across the river, had managed to infiltrate around the right flank of the Punjabis, concealed among the rubber trees. Late in the afternoon a heavy rain began to fall, but by that time the repairs had been completed. Ten Japanese medium tanks, taking advantage of the downpour, moved in ahead of the light tanks and crossed the bridge. With machine guns blazing they drove through the defending 1/14 Punjab Regiment, which scattered and sought cover under the rubber trees. At a bridge in front of the Asun outpost position the leading Japanese tank was hit by antitank fire and halted, holding up the whole column. Infantry moved on ahead, attacking the Gurkhas, until once again the tanks could be moved up.

Halted occasionally by obstacles in the road the tanks pushed on as darkness fell, overrunning British armored cars and scattering the enemy. Infantry following, or sometimes ahead of, the halted tanks fought hand-to-hand. Many of the defenders were cut off, and many were taken prisoner by the Japanese. Others, including Brigadier Garrett, managed to get through to Jitra, but the Gurkha battalion was no longer an effective unit.

Ahead of the Japanese, the greater part of the 11th Indian Division was deployed 12 miles north of the Alor Star airfield on a 12-mile front astride the intersection of the Perlis-Jitra and the Singora-Jitra roads, which join at Jitra to form the main west coast road, leading to southern Malaya. Although the defenses had not been completed, they still presented a formidable obstacle. On the left, swamps provided a natural defense. On the right an extensive minefield covered much of the line. The main fortifications, in the center, included several lines of barbed wire entanglements and a complex of trenches.

The 15th Indian Infantry Brigade, with two infantry battalions, the 2/9 Jats and the 1st Leicesters, covered a four-mile front. The Jats were on the right of the road, stretching across to some low hills on their right. The Leicesters were astride the Singora-Jitra road and extended left across the Perlis-Jitra road. A reserve Gurkha battalion lay to the rear of the Leicesters. On the left, the 6th Indian Infantry Brigade held an eight-mile front astride the Perlis railroad and extending to the sea, with two battalions, the 2d East Surreys and the 2/16 Punjabis. (The covering force sent into Thailand on the railroad had returned to Jitra, having blown up all the bridges below the Thai border; unfortunately the last bridge was blown prematurely, and the troops had had to abandon all their carriers and vehicles,

*The total Japanese strength committed at Jitra was at least 2,000 men, and probably closer to 3,000 or 4,000, supported by at least one regiment of the divisional artillery of the 5th Division, with most of the remainder of the division prepared for commitment. This is evident from a careful reading of Col. Masanobu Tsuji, Singapore, The Japanese Version (New York, 1960), pp. 107-127, the principal source. Perfunctory reading of Tsuji, however, has led some historians to conclude that the Japanese attack at Jitra was conducted by less than 600 men.

four mountain guns, and seven antitank guns.) The East Surreys lay between the Perlis-Jitra road and the railroad, while the 2/16 Punjabis were astride the railroad, with the 1/8 Punjab Battalion behind as reserve. The remaining battalion of the 28th Brigade was deployed near the Alor Star and Sungei Patani airfields, south of Jitra. Artillery support consisted of the 155th Field Regiment with two batteries, each with eight 4.5-inch howitzers, the 22d Mountain Regiment, less one battery, with 16 3.7-inch mountain guns, the 80th Antitank Regiment with 36 2-pounders, the 16th Light Antiaircraft Battery with 16 40mm Bofors, and the 137th Field Regiment, with 24 25-pounders.

At about 0300 on 12 December the leading Japanese tanks were halted at a demolished bridge in front of the Jitra defenses by heavy artillery fire. Japanese guns responded, and Japanese infantry was sent in to attack in the darkness, unaware of the density of the defense position in front of them. The frontal attack resulted in heavy losses to the attackers, but probing attacks on the Japanese left discovered gaps in the British defensive positions.

Command of the 15th Brigade had been assumed by Brigadier W.St.J. Carpendale, commander of the 28th Brigade, when Brigadier Garrett was cut off at Asun. Carpendale also was given a battalion of the 28th Brigade, the last of Murray-Lyon's reserve, for the third battalion had been assigned to protect the airfields at Alor Star and Sungei Patani. As a result of exaggerated reports by his junior officers, and unfamiliarity on his own part with the terrain, Carpendale was under the impression that the Japanese probes on his right flank constituted a major threat, and that the Japanese were trying to turn his right flank. To counter this possibility, he deployed his Gurkha battalion astride the main road parallel to the Bata River, to the rear of the Jitra position, and requested aid from Brigadier W.O. Lay, the commander of the 6th Brigade. He received four companies, which he deployed to strengthen the positions of the Gurkhas and the Jats.

With daylight the situation became clearer and the Japanese moved up more artillery and prepared to bring up more troops. An attack on the left by a battalion of the 41st Regiment, which had been close behind the advance detachment, created a gap in the line of the 15th Brigade between the Leicesters and the Jats. An attempted British counterattack failed, and Carpendale requested further help, which Lay sent, leaving himself with only the East Surreys. Carpendale then ordered the 1/8 Punjab Battalion to counterattack in the center of the Jitra position. However, the Jats and Punjabis mistook each other for Japanese and opened fire, with the result that this second counterattack failed with heavy casualties.

At 0900 Murray-Lyon, who was with division headquarters at Ipoh, was informed about the situation at Jitra. Aware that the Alor Star airfield had been abandoned by the Air Force on 10 December, that his line of communications was threatened by the Japanese attack from Patani, that he had no reserves, that his was the only force available to defend northern and central Malaya, and that the Japanese were probably planning to launch a full-scale attack on 13 December, as indeed they were, Murray-Lyon decided to withdraw about 50 miles to Gurun, behind the Kedah River. However, permission for the withdrawal was denied by Percival in Singapore, who was unaware of the desperate tactical situation at Jitra and was concerned about the morale of the civilian population in Malaya. He accordingly ordered Murray-Lyon to make a stand at Jitra.

Immediately after this decision was made, the Japanese attacked once again, enlarging the gap in the line of the 15th Brigade. The Japanese broke through on the Jats' left and reached the Gurkha position on the Bata River. In response, Carpendale decided to withdraw the Jats to a line on the Bata River east of the Gurkhas, and concentrate the Leicesters west of the Singora road for a counterattack at dawn on 13 December. He also asked Lay to counterattack with the East Surreys, who had yet to be engaged. Murray-Lyon, however, ordered the East Surreys to withdraw into reserve at Alor Star, although he approved the rest of Carpendale's plan.

Now, however, Carpendale changed his plan for the operation and ordered the Leicesters to abandon their prepared defenses and move to a new defensive position running northwest from the bridge at Tanjong Pau on the Bata River. As a result of this movement and the inexperience of his junior officers, Murray-Lyon soon began to

receive false reports that the Leicesters were retreating in the face of Japanese attacks, that the Jats had been overwhelmed, and that the Japanese were attacking the right flank of the Gurkha position. At the same time, he learned of the disaster that had befallen Krohcol. Well aware of the hopelessness of his position, at 1930 Murray-Lyon again asked permission to withdraw behind the Kedah River. This time Percival allowed him to use his discretion in the matter.

At 2200 Murray-Lyon ordered the 11th Division to disengage at midnight and withdraw to Gurun. In the dark, in a downpour, the withdrawal was made in good order, despite utter confusion in the defense area. Runners provided the only communications between units, with the result that some did not receive orders to withdraw. Ammunition and supplies were left behind, guns and vehicles were bogged down in the heavy mud. Only about 600 exhausted and disorganized men of the 15th Brigade made it to Gurun. The 6th Brigade was reduced to about half strength. Of the 28th Brigade, only troops enough to man one company remained of the battalion that had manned the defenses at Asun, and the other battalion had lost about 100 men. Over 3,000 men had been captured by the Japanese.

The Japanese had broken through the only prepared defensive position in northern Malaya. They found there about 50 field guns, 50 heavy machine guns, about 300 trucks and armored cars, and provisions and ammunition enough for a division for three months, a bonanza for them since their logistics planning depended on capturing supplies and living off the country. The detachment which had broken through had lost 27 killed and 83 wounded. The major fighting had been done by the 21st Infantry Regiment which, with supporting tanks, artillery, and engineers, probably committed 3,000 to 4,000 troops to the battle.

EXPLOITATION

On the morning of 13 December the Japanese seized the bridges over the Kedah River north of Alor Star, and on the following day they moved their army headquarters into the town. Japanese aircraft made immediate use of the abandoned British airfield and supplies of food, fuel, and ammunition, and the Japanese were thus able to bring Gurun under air and artillery fire as the first British troops arrived there during the early afternoon of 13 December.

At 1010 on the morning of 14 December the Japanese succeeded in securing the bridges south of Alor Star, and the 21st Regiment continued its advance southward in pursuit of the retreating British. Attempting to make a stand at Gurun, the remains of the 11th Indian Division was deployed with the 28th Brigade to the right of the main road and the 6th Brigade on the left, north of the Gurun crossroads. The remaining forces of the 15th Brigade were assigned the role of division reserve. At 1500 Japanese infantry began their attack on the British forward positions, while Japanese aircraft continued their bombardment of the Gurun crossroads. Soon after sunset the Japanese launched a full-scale attack on the Gurun defenses and at 0130 on 15 December they secured the crossroads. Realizing that continued resistance at Gurun was futile, General Murray-Lyon ordered a further withdrawal. By 0700 the road to the south was again open to the Japanese, and the British forces were retreating toward their next prepared defenses several hundred miles to the south in Johore.

CONCLUSIONS

The Japanese objective in trying to break through the British defenses at Jitra was to open the route down the west coast of the Malayan peninsula to their ultimate objective, Singapore. The Japanese plan was simple, to use infantry, tanks, and engineers, with artillery and air support, to break through the obstacles, rebuild bridges, and exploit the breakthrough. The breakthrough was accomplished by the equivalent of a reinforced infantry regiment, using tanks to lead the attack when possible, moving up infantry when the tanks were halted, and pushing the tanks forward again when they could maneuver. Reserves were available but not used. The overwhelming air superiority achieved by the Japanese immediately upon landing in Thailand was no more than a psychological and a planning factor in the breakthrough operation itself, since pouring rain or darkness prevented extensive use of close air support.

Strategic surprise was impossible. The British had anticipated the possibility of a Japanese landing at Singora and learned of it quickly when it was made. However, tactically the Japanese achieved surprise by attacking in heavy rain and darkness and using tanks, which in addition to their tactical capabilities provided a psychological shock to the defenders.

The defenders contributed to the success of the breakthrough by their incomplete defense system, inadequacies of the defenders, both in number and in training, and lack of reserves. The 11th Division, alerted for Matador and then ordered not to proceed with it but to hold the defensive position at Jitra, had no time to complete the construction of the position or to prepare for the defense role. The absence of contingency plans was obvious in the confusion evident at all levels of command.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS OF THE SOVIET SECOND ASSAULT ARMY,
VOLKHOV ARMY GROUP, AT LENINGRAD, 12 - 18 JANUARY 1943

In August 1941, German armies reached the southern shore of Lake Ladoga, east of Leningrad, severing the city's lines of communications to the east. Finnish forces had already cut off Russian access to Leningrad from the north. The lake became the only route by which men and materiel could move in and out of the city, and a highly unsatisfactory one. In January 1943 the Soviets launched an attack from the east, coordinated with an attack from the west, within the Leningrad sector, and broke the siege. This narrative relates the experience of the Second Assault Army, part of the Volkhov Army Group, which broke through the German defenses from the east.

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 1942, the Soviet Supreme Headquarters directed the Leningrad and Volkhov Army Groups to break the siege of Leningrad in the Schlüsselburg-Sinyavinosalient reaching up to Lake Ladoga (see map).

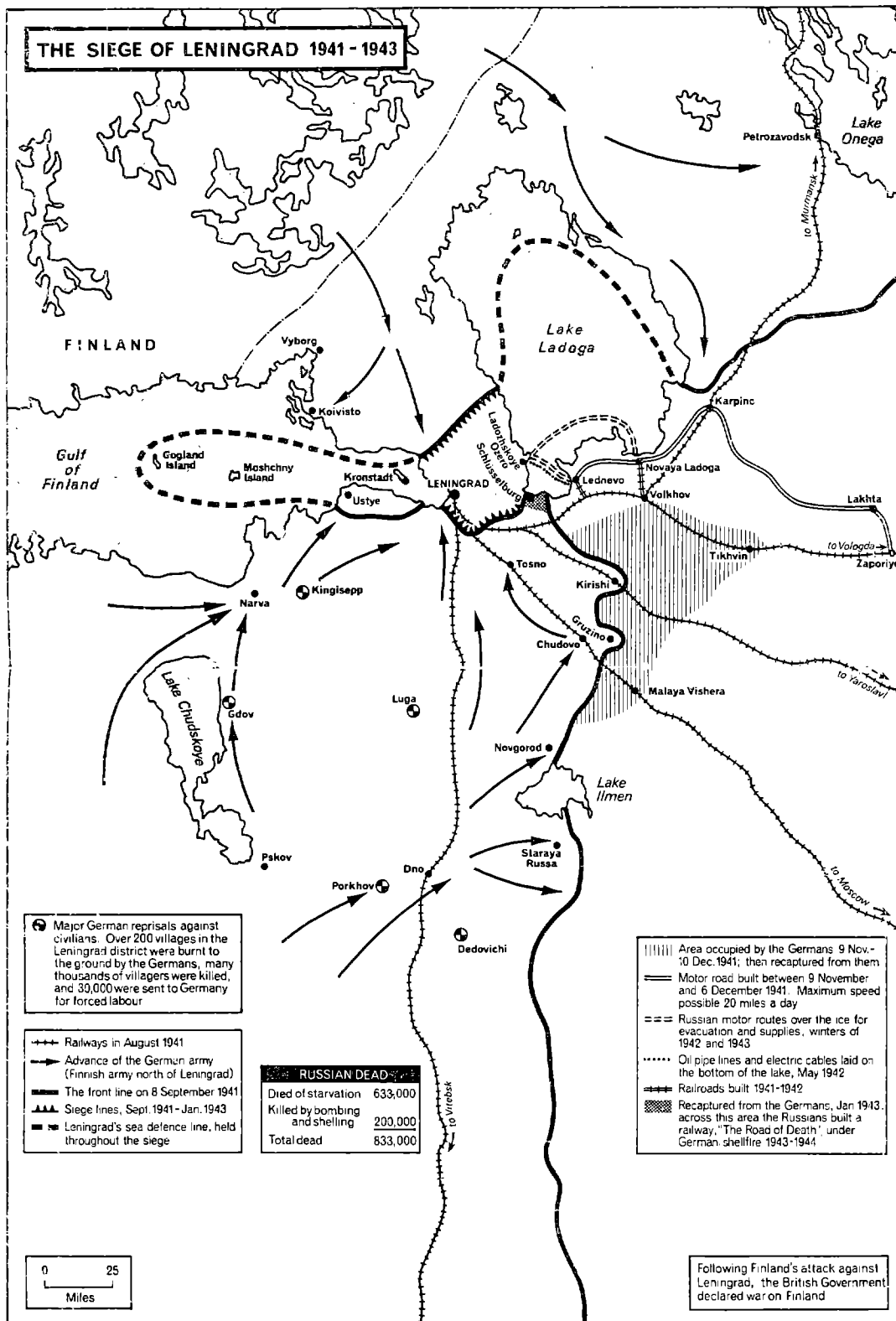
The plan of the operation, code named "Spark" (Iskra), called for the two army groups to break through the German defenses south of Lake Ladoga, where the German-held area between the Soviet groups was narrowest (some 12 to 14 kilometers wide). In a coordinated offensive the Leningrad Army Group would attack from the west, while the Volkhov Army Group struck from the east, to drive the German forces from the Schlüsselburg-Sinyavino area, thereby breaking the 16-month long blockade.

The Volkhov Army Group was deployed along the line running from Lake Ladoga in the north to Lake Ilmen in the south. The sector between Bugrovskiy Lighthouse (on Lake Ladoga) to Gaytolovo, where the breakthrough was planned, was held by four divisions of the Soviet Second Assault Army. The main forces of this Army were concentrated some 15 to 20 kilometers behind the front line, where they were engaged in extensive training. To the left of the Second Assault Army, on the line Gaytolovo-Lodva-Kirshin, were the Eighth and Fifty-fourth Armies, and from there to Lake Ilmen and the Volkhov River the Fourth, Fifty-ninth, and Fifty-second Armies.

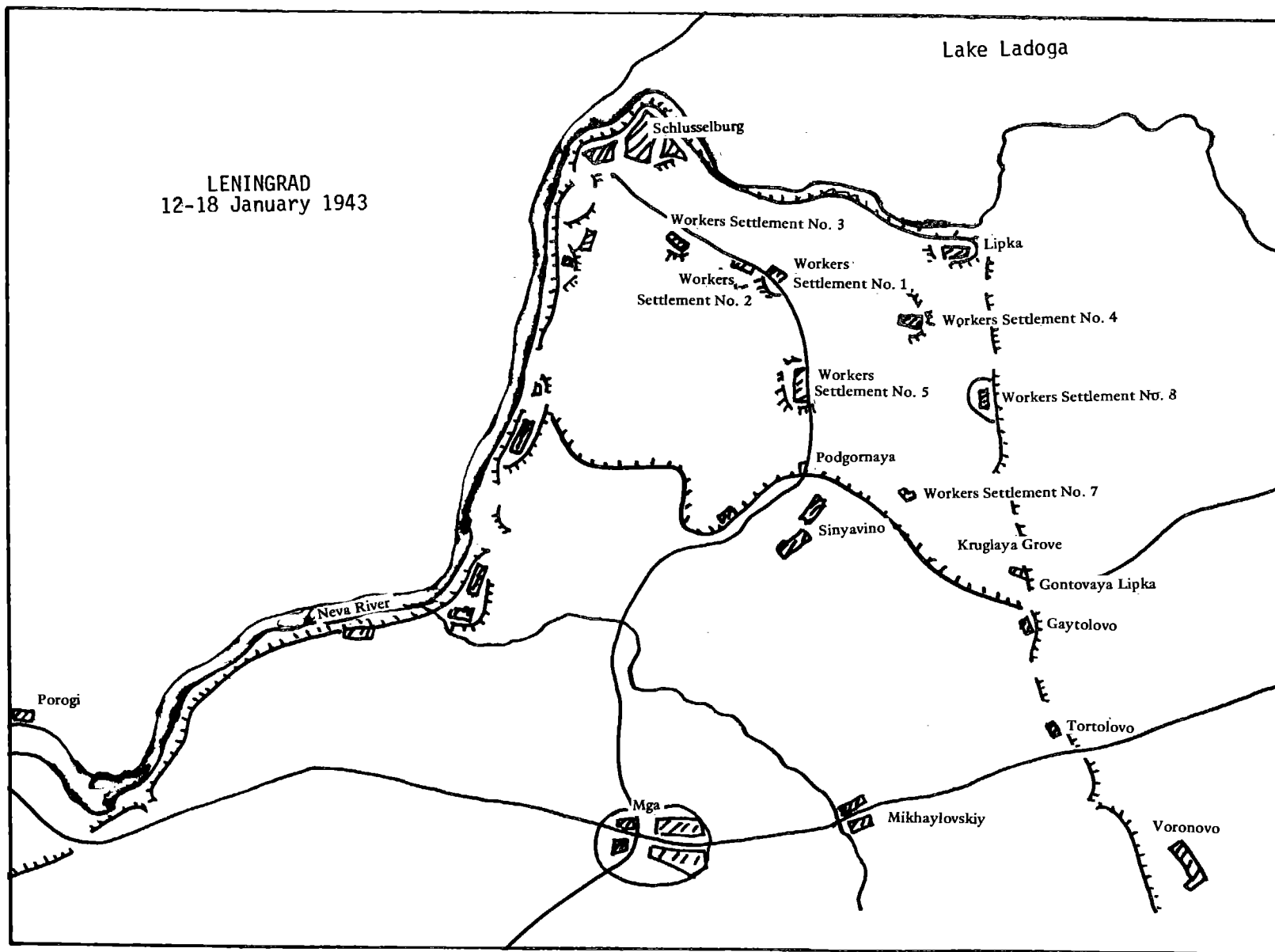
Across the planned route of advance of the Soviet troops lay a vast swamp, where before the war there were extensive peat workings. In summer, this area was practically impassable, but in winter, when snow covered the swamps, and the temperature dropped to -15° to -20° C, infantry and light guns could cross. However, heavy equipment such as trucks, tanks, and artillery could pass only after tracks through the snow had been strengthened by whatever material was on hand.

Occupied by elements of the German Eighteenth Army, the sector between Lipka and Gaytolovo was a strongly fortified area with a dense system of antipersonnel and antitank barriers, continuous minefields and other obstacles. The Germans divided their defense structure into five centers of resistance, around Lipka, Workers Settlement No. 8, the "Kruglaya" Grove, Gaytolovo, and to the south, in the Soviet Eighth Army zone, Tortolovo Woods.

German defense fortifications were deeply echeloned, well built, and saturated with a large quantity of weapons. The Soviet troops would have to overcome five strong positions organized into numerous battalion centers of resistance, which in turn consisted of a number of strongpoints adapted for all-round defense. The strongpoints were protecting road junctions, defiles, and approaches to the settlements and villages.



Map 9



Map 10

Along the front line ran a continuous trench, and some 200 to 300 meters behind it another one. Where the marshy terrain did not permit construction of trenches, the Germans built wide, solid ramparts of earth and peat and durable log fences. In front of the first line of trenches were minefields, dense barbed-wire entanglements, post obstacles, and two high, ice covered, ramparts.

All German positions were connected by communication trenches and switch positions. Artillery and reserves were concentrated in the center of the salient at the Sinyavino Heights, from where it was easy to fire and launch counterattacks in any direction.

German forces, part of the XXVI Corps, defending the Lipka-Gaytolovo-Porechye line consisted of the 227th Infantry Division (minus the 328th Infantry Regiment), the 1st Infantry Division, the 374th Regiment of the 207th Security (Garrison Duty) Division, and the 425th Infantry Regiment of the 223d Infantry Division. All together, north of the Voronovo-Mga-Porogi line, the Germans had three infantry divisions, each with about 10,000-12,000 combat troops, and four independent infantry regiments. In reserve, in the Mga area, the German Command concentrated one division (96th Infantry Division), and one regiment (85th Regiment of the 5th Mountain Division). There were in the whole salient about 50,000 German troops, up to 450 guns, 250 mortars, and about 50 tanks and self-propelled guns.

On the eve of the offensive, the Soviet Second Assault Army, commanded by General V.Z. Romanovskiy, was composed of 12 rifle divisions, each 6,000 to 7,000 men strong, 2 ski infantry and 4 tank brigades, 1 tank regiment, 4 independent tank battalions, 38 artillery and mortar regiments, 2 engineer brigades, and 6 (some sources say 3) independent combat engineer battalions. The Second Assault Army had a 5:1 superiority over the Germans in manpower and weapons. The Sixty-seventh Army, attacking from the west was composed of 7 rifle divisions, 6 rifle, 3 tank and 1 ski brigades, 2 independent tank battalions, 1 rocket launcher brigade, 12 artillery brigades, 8 mortar regiments and 23 naval artillery batteries. The troops of both armies were well trained and supplied.

The Second Assault Army was deployed in two echelons. In the first echelon there were 5 rifle divisions (from right to left: 128th, 372d, 256th, 327th and 376th), reinforced with artillery, combat engineers, a heavy tank regiment, and a tank brigade. The second echelon consisted of four rifle divisions and three tank brigades. One rifle division and two ski infantry brigades were in army reserve. On the average, the density of artillery was 160 guns and mortars per kilometer of frontage.

Most of the tank units were deployed on the Army's left flank, directly supporting infantry formations advancing toward Sinyavino. There the density of tanks was 20 per kilometer. This density increased to 30-32 tanks with the commitment of the tank units of the second echelon.

PLANS

The mission of the Second Assault Army was to break through the German defenses in a 13-kilometer sector between Lipka and Gaytolovo, capture Sinyavino and Workers Settlements Nos. 1 and 5, and, after linking up with the forces of the Leningrad Army Group, turn the front 90° to the left and advance southward. The breakthrough operation was planned to last seven days.

The protection of the left flank of the Second Assault Army was assigned to the Eighth Army, whose right wing formations were to advance toward Tortolovo and Settlement Mikhaylovskiy, thus pinning down a considerable German force. The operation was supported by the Soviet Fourteenth Air Army, about 400 aircraft strong.

Intensive training and preparation went on almost to the last day before the attack. Rifle divisions and other formations were concentrated in special training areas where they were taught the art of offensive operations in wooded marshland. German fortifications were copied exactly from aerial photographs to make the training as realistic as possible. The troops practiced such things as storming fortified positions, destroying obstacles, crossing open stretches of swamps, following the rolling artillery barrage closely, securing the captured positions, and beating off enemy counterattacks. In each rifle company assault groups were formed. Their

objective was to block and destroy bunkers and other fortifications. These groups learned how to cooperate closely with tanks and artillery.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

Until 11 January Soviet troops remained at their old positions. It was only on the night of 10/11 January that elements of the first echelon started secretly to take up assault positions. The rest of the troops moved into assigned lines about 300 to 500 meters from the German outpost during the night on the eve of the attacks. Tanks moved into starting positions during the artillery preparation.

During the night of 11/12 January, obstruction removal groups removed Soviet barbed wire entanglements and cleared the minefields. Then, still in darkness, combat engineers crossed the neutral zone and moved close to the German position, where they waited until the artillery preparation started. Some 40 minutes before the end of the artillery preparation they started to cut the barbed wire, blow up the minefields, and remove obstacles, to clear passages for the attacking troops. In this way about 15 passages were made for each attacking regiment.

At 0930 on 12 January the artillery preparation opened with a barrage from over 2,100 guns and mortars, which lasted until 1115. (The total strength of artillery in the zone of advance of the Volkhov Army Group was 1,250 guns and 2,000 mortars.) Toward the end of the barrage, small groups of Soviet planes attacked German resistance centers and artillery positions in Sinyavino and Workers Settlements Nos. 4, 5, and 7.

At 1115, assault units of the first echelon of the Second Assault Army, supported by artillery and covered by air strikes, jumped off. From the very outset the Germans put up stubborn resistance. Along the entire front, the day long battle frequently developed into hand-to-hand clashes. Slowly, with persistence and steadiness, Soviet rifle divisions and tank elements chewed into German defenses. By the end of the day, the Army had advanced two, and in some places three, kilometers, breaking through the first German position.

German resistance in the Kruglaya* Grove, one of the most important elements of the German defense system, located to the northwest of the settlement called Gontovaya Lipka, was especially powerful. The Kruglaya Grove was a well fortified resistance center surrounded by minefields and other obstacles and a two meter high rampart covered by ice. All approaches to the Kruglaya Grove were densely mined and protected by several rows of barbed wire. Behind were strongpoints with well constructed trenches and weapon emplacements.

About 100 meters to the rear of the rampart was a log barrier about one kilometer long and two meters high, and behind it another one, a little shorter, but also very strongly constructed. The barriers and the rampart made formidable anti-personnel and antitank obstacles.

Ordered to break through the Soviet defenses at Kruglaya was the Soviet 327th Rifle Division under Colonel N.A. Polyakov. For the operation the division was reinforced with one artillery division (2d Breakthrough Artillery Division). In addition, one independent battalion of medium tanks, a company of heavy tanks, and a company of flame-throwing tanks were attached to the division.

The density of artillery in the 327th Rifle Division's sector was above the average, reaching nearly 180 barrels per kilometer of frontage. Tanks were used for direct support of the infantry.

Assault groups, one in each company, were composed of one platoon of submachine gunners, one or two heavy tanks (KV), one flame-throwing tank, several close support guns, and one squad of combat engineers.

The artillery moved into position during the night of 8/9 January, 1/3 of the infantry was deployed in assault positions in the night of 10/11 January, and the

*"Kruglaya" was a code name.

rest of the force at night on the eve of the offensive. Tanks took up jumping off positions shortly after the artillery preparation started. During the preparation a number of 122mm and 152mm guns and howitzers were firing pointblank. Only in this way could these heavy weapons breach passages for tanks and infantry through the ice covered rampart. The artillery preparation ended with a powerful salvo of multiple rocket launchers. Immediately after that, assault groups, followed by rifle companies, moved out.

The 327th Rifle Division attacked in two echelons, two regiments in the first, the 1100th Rifle Regiment on the right and the 1098th Rifle Regiment on the left, and the 1102d Rifle Regiment in the second. The advancing troops kept as close as possible behind a rolling barrage in order to reach the German positions before the defenders could recover from the deadly shelling. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting erupted in the trenches. The deeper the division penetrated the stronger was the resistance of the defending 366th Infantry Regiment of the 227th Infantry Division. One and a half hours after the start of the assault the Germans began to counter-attack, at first with small, platoon and company size units, and later in battalion strength.

Particularly intense was the German pressure on the 1098th Rifle Regiment. Taking advantage of the fact that on the regiment's left the 376th Rifle Division had fallen behind, the Germans used their pre-established switch positions to deliver strong counter-blows. Although the Soviet regiment was able to repel all of the counterattacks, its advance slowed to a crawl. Only after the regiment commander committed his third battalion, which was in the second echelon, to the battle was the German resistance shaken. Nevertheless the left flank of the Soviet Division remained in danger, since the gap between the 1098th Regiment and the 376th Rifle Division continued to widen. The 376th Rifle Division was stopped by the stubborn resistance of the German 1st Infantry Division soon after it broke into the first trench.

At the right wing of the 327th Rifle Division the 1100th Rifle Regiment was more successful than the 1098th. To exploit the regiment's considerable progress, Colonel Polyakov decided to commit the 1002d Regiment of the second echelon on the right flank.

Late in the evening of 12 January, Colonel Polyakov reported to the Army that his division had captured a substantial part of the Kruglaya Grove and reached its western edge. The German 366th Infantry Regiment was defeated, and more than 70 permanent strongpoints had been destroyed. However, the Germans still held a considerable number of bunkers and pillboxes, each equipped with one or two guns and two or three machine guns, which hindered the division's advance. In an attempt to destroy these obstacles the Soviets used special groups of heavy tanks, artillery, combat engineers, and submachine gunners. The division commander also ordered the employment of a number of guns to put direct fire on the remaining fortifications.

To ease the situation on the 327th Rifle Division's left flank, General Romanovskiy decided on 13 January to commit the 71st Rifle Division at the junction between the 327th and 376th Rifle Divisions. On the right of the 327th Rifle Division the 256th Rifle Division under Colonel Fetisov had made its main effort in the area between the Kruglaya Grove and Workers Settlement No. 8, across open swampy terrain, on which the Germans had constructed three ramparts made of wood, earth, and peat, and covered with ice. Soviet artillery made multiple breaches in the ramparts, and for awhile the division moved forward successfully. Soon, however, the division's flanks became exposed as it pushed out ahead of the divisions on both sides. This forced the division commander to divert part of his forces to deal with threats from the resistance centers at Kruglaya and Workers Settlement No. 8, thus considerably slowing the rate of advance. Tanks also dropped behind, unable to keep pace with the infantry because the ice in some parts of the peat swamp was too thin to support their weight. Only direct-fire artillery continued to support the troops, shelling German firing positions point blank.

The neighbor of the 256th Rifle Division on the right, the 372d Rifle Division, commanded by Colonel P.I. Radygin, assaulted Workers Settlement No. 8. The Germans had converted the settlement into a formidable defense center surrounded by two

trenches, 250-300 meters apart, and by reinforced peat ramparts. All approaches to the settlement were protected by minefields and barbed wire. All stone houses and other stone constructions were turned into strongpoints. In addition, numerous reinforced ferroconcrete and earth-and-timber pillboxes dotted the entire area.

Elements of the 256th Division which were diverted toward Workers Settlement No. 8 stormed the German fortifications with vicious determination, captured two trenches, and approached the center of the settlement, but could not take it.

To the north of the 372d Rifle Division, the 128th Rifle Division directed its main effort toward Lipka. However the frontal attack against the village failed because of strong resistance. South of the village, however, the division penetrated to the depth of one to one and a half kilometers. In view of the slow progress in this area, General Romanovskiy decided to commit the 12th Ski Infantry Brigade against Lipka. The brigade was ordered to advance across Lake Ladoga and envelop Lipka and Workers Settlement No. 1 from the north.

During the night of 12/13 January, army troops secured the captured positions and readied themselves for the next day's attack. The Army commander ordered the 18th Rifle Division from the second echelon to move to the battle zone.

The Germans also reinforced their front-line units. During the night they brought the 96th Infantry Division from the Mga area. At the Mga railroad station three transports arrived from Tosna with infantry and one with artillery. From intelligence reports it became clear that the German Command was preparing strong counterattacks and that its major effort would be directed against the Kruglaya Grove.

During the day on 13 January, the 372d Rifle Division continued to attack, with its main effort made by the 1100th and 1102d Rifle Regiments on the right flank. The Germans fought unyieldingly, their artillery firing continuously and effectively. The Soviet 1002d Rifle Regiment attacked in two echelons, with two battalions in the first and one in the second. But only one of the battalions penetrated German lines. The other stopped, under a hail of fire. The attack failed. On the left flank, the 1098th Rifle Regiment assaulted the enemy positions and took 11 bunkers, but toward evening the Germans moved up reserves, counterattacked and pushed the regiment back.

Other divisions were also unable to show much progress, and the advance degenerated into a number of local battles aimed at improving positions. Due to bad weather the Soviet Fourteenth Air Force, which on 12 January flew over 500 sorties, was inactive.

As a result of the two first days of the offensive, the Second Assault Army, after penetrating the German fortifications between Lipka and Gaytolovo, had advanced in the center some two to four kilometers, and was engaging the enemy at the approaches to Workers Settlements Nos. 4 and 5.

On 14 January, Soviet intelligence reported that the German Command had thrown the 61st and 69th Infantry Divisions into the battle, and that the 212d and 227th Infantry Divisions and a number of other units would soon enter too. Many new artillery batteries were sighted. These German reinforcements prevented the Soviets from exploiting their initial tactical success.

In the Kruglaya Grove area, the Germans counterattacked fiercely but with little success. However, these attacks prevented the Soviets from advancing. After the 191st Rifle Division was committed to the right of Polyakov's troops on 14 January, however, German defenses weakened somewhat, and Soviet forces began to move very slowly forward.

In the evening of 14 January, the Volkhov Army Group Commander, General Meretskov, informed General Romanovskiy that his army would be strengthened by an additional rifle division, the 239th, from the Army Group reserve. At the same time General Meretskov demanded that the Second Assault Army increase its pressure in the Workers Settlement No. 5 area, as well as on the Army's left flank toward Sinyavino.

Workers Settlement No. 8 was still in German hands. The 256th and 372d Rifle Divisions, which were attacking both sides of the settlement, were unable to take

it. To help them out, the 18th Rifle Division from the second echelon, commanded by Colonel Ovchinnikov, was committed in the junction between the 256th and 372d Divisions.

By the time the 18th Rifle Division moved into action, Soviet troops in that area had penetrated German defenses on both sides of Settlement No. 8 to the depth of three to four kilometers, and one of the 372d Rifle Division regiments encircled the German garrison in the Settlement. The 18th Division was ordered to complete the destruction of the encircled garrison and then advance toward Workers Settlement No. 5, where it was to link up with units of the Sixty-seventh Army of the Leningrad Army Group, advancing from the west.

After passing through the battle formations of the 256th and 372d Rifle Divisions, regiments of the 18th Rifle Division attacked the Settlement. The Germans resisted stubbornly. The division had to fight for practically each meter of the terrain. What made the situation particularly difficult was the fact that the 18th Division had little intelligence regarding the German defense and fire systems (although presumably this could have been available from the 256th and 372d Divisions).

On 15 January the intensity of combat along the entire front increased. The Germans counterattacked viciously, committed more units to the battle and efficiently maneuvered their reserves. The Germans in the Kruglaya Grove area were especially persistent, and the Soviets had great difficulties in beating off their strong counterattacks.

To the north German strongpoints at Lipka and Workers Settlement No. 8 were isolated and cut off. All attempts to relieve them by fresh German troops transferred from the Mga area proved fruitless. Then, during the night of 16/17 January, the German regiment encircled in Workers Settlement No. 8 broke out to the west through the Soviet ring and joined the main German force near Settlement No. 5. This was a serious blow to the Soviets, who had believed that the fate of the encircled garrison was sealed.

In the northern part of the salient in the area between Lipka and Workers Settlement No. 4 another group of German troops was locked between Soviet forces to the south and Lake Ladoga to the north, unable to receive reinforcement and supplies. The German Command assembled them north of Workers Settlement No. 1, organized them into a task force, and ordered them to attack southward, split the battle formation of the Soviet 372d Rifle Division, and break through to Sinyavino. However, the 12th Ski Infantry Brigade, after a forced march across the Ladoga ice, cut into the rear of the group, severing its communications with Lipka. This worsened the situation of the task force immensely, and also made the status of the German forces in Lipka hopeless. The 128th Rifle Division attacked the village and crushed the resistance of its defenders.

On 17 January, the heaviest fighting was done by the 18th Rifle Division in the peat fields one to one and a half kilometers southeast of Workers Settlement No. 5. The terrain there was extremely difficult to cross. Tanks, trucks, and guns continuously sank through the surface ice into the deep, swampy peat. This, of course, slowed the division's advance. The division attacked with all three regiments in line: the 414th in the center, the 424th on the right, and the 419th on the left. The division was approaching the central German defense line running along the railroad track from Workers Settlement No. 6, through railroad stations Podgornaya and Sinyavino, to Workers Settlements Nos. 5 and 1. The railroad stations and Workers Settlement No. 5 were turned by the Germans into main defense centers at the approaches to the commanding Sinyavino Heights, from where the Germans could flank the left wing of the Second Assault Army.

Repeated attempts of the division to break through the German positions failed. Men were exhausted, and ammunition and food were short. To give the troops some rest and bring up supplies, combat was halted for the night. Only reconnaissance groups actively reconnoitered German positions.

At sunrise 18 January, what remained of the German forces in the northern part of the salient south of Lake Ladoga tried to force their way south through the

narrow corridor still open (one to one and a half kilometers wide) between the Leningrad and Volkhov Army Groups. At the same time German units attacked from the south in a desperate effort to widen the corridor and help the northern group. Both German attempts failed, and Soviet troops turned to the final offensive. At 0930 elements of the 372d Rifle Division linked with units of the Leningrad Army Group in Workers Settlement No. 1. Two hours later, at 1130, the 18th Rifle Division made contact with the 136th Rifle Division of the Sixty-seventh Army from Leningrad in Workers Settlement No. 5. Finally, the 327th and 376th Rifle Divisions broke into the Sinyavino railroad station (not to be confused with the village of Sinyavino). Thus the breakthrough of the German defenses was successfully carried out, and the blockade of Leningrad lifted.

CONCLUSIONS

Concentrating forces south of Lake Ladoga in an attack to the west in coordination with an attack from Leningrad to the east, the Soviet Second Assault Army crossed very difficult terrain that restricted their maneuverability. Movement in this area of swamps and peat bogs was possible only in winter when the surface was frozen. They attacked very strong German defenses and broke through to join the Leningrad force, pinching off the salient as intended.

The breakthrough resulted from careful planning, backed up by good intelligence information about the defense configuration, and very thorough preparation, including training on full-scale terrain models to familiarize the men with obstacles they would encounter. It resulted also from the overwhelming superiority in numbers of men, artillery pieces, tanks, and aircraft (although the bad weather limited the use of air support). This superiority proved to be a positive factor not only in overcoming the weaker defenders but in maintaining the strength and momentum of the attack, since tanks and heavy equipment were prone to break through the ice. German strongpoints which dotted the entire area had to be assaulted frontally, because the terrain was unsuitable for maneuver.

BELGOROD-KHARKOV:
THE SOVIET OFFENSIVE FROM THE KURSK SALIENT, AUGUST 1943

German forces attacking the northern shoulder of the Kursk salient in July 1943 were quickly stopped, but at the south shoulder they advanced for about a week before reinforced Soviet troops counterattacked and halted the German offensive. Soon after this the Germans withdrew to their original positions. On 3 August the Voronezh and Steppe Army Groups in the south launched a counter offensive. This is an account of the breakthrough made in the German line by the Fifty-third Army of the Steppe Army Group.

BACKGROUND

On 5 July German forces attacked the Soviet Central Army Group, commanded by General Konstantin Rokossovsky, which was defending the northern part of the Kursk salient, and the Voronezh Army Group, commanded by General Nikolai Vatutin, which was defending the southern part. To the east the Soviets had the Steppe Army Group under General Ivan Konev in reserve. Bitter fighting erupted along the entire front, but the German attempts to hammer through the shoulders to Kursk with tanks were thwarted by the solid Soviet defenses. In the north the Germans were halted by 9 July, after advancing only 9 to 12 kilometers. In the southern sector in some areas they broke through the first defense zone, and almost through the second, but they were halted and thrown back after advancing some 24 to 35 kilometers.

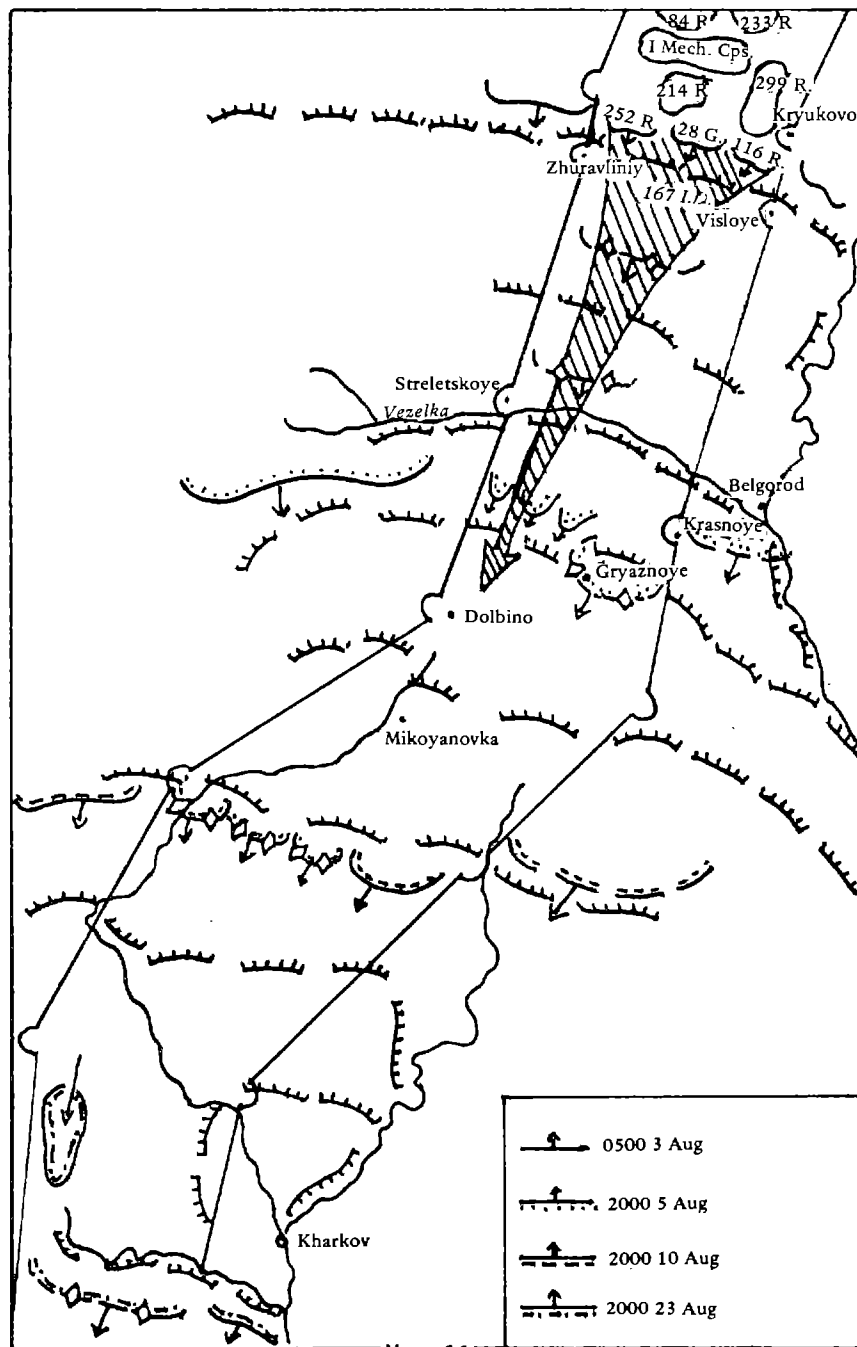
While the Germans were still advancing toward Kursk from the south on 12 July, north of the Kursk salient the Soviet Bryansk and Western Army Groups launched an offensive designed to smash the German forces around Orel and continue to advance toward the west. On 15 July the Central Army Group, having halted the attempted German northern penetration of the Kursk salient, joined in the offensive.

The German drive south of Kursk was stopped on 13 July by the Voronezh Army Group and elements of the Steppe Army Group. Three days later, under heavy pressure the German forces in the south started to withdraw. By 23 July they had been pushed back to the fortified defense positions from which they had jumped off on 5 July.

The Soviet troops halted at the German defense line in order to regroup their forces and equipment, replace losses, replenish ammunition, fuel, and other supplies, and organize the necessary coordination among the various arms for an offensive, which the Soviets code-named "Rymyantsev."

The aim of Rymyantsev was to smash the German forces in the Belgorod-Kharkov area, and then drive toward the Dnieper River. The main thrust would be delivered from the Belgorod area by the Voronezh and Steppe Army Groups, in the general direction of Bogodukhov, Valki and Novaya Vodolaga, passing west of Kharkov.

The Steppe Army Group, on the left of the Soviet attack, comprised the Fifty-third and Sixty-ninth Armies, the Seventh Guard Army, and the I Mechanized Corps. It was to deliver the main blow with its right wing in the direction of Yerik, Bolkhovets, and Repnoye. It would have to break through a deeply echeloned defense system in an 11-kilometer sector, destroy the German forces in the Belgorod area, and then advance on Kharkov from the north. The striking force included the Fifty-third Army under General I.M. Managarov, the I Mechanized Corps under General M.D. Solomatın, and the XLVIII Rifle Corps of the Sixty-ninth Army under General Z.Z. Rogozniy. General Gorynov's Fifth Air Army would support the operations.



Map 11

Soviet Fifty-third Army - Kursk 1943

PLANS

The Fifty-third Army, with the Sixty-ninth Army on its left, was ordered on 25 July to break through the German defenses in a seven-kilometer sector between Zhuravliniy and Visloye, and, by concentrating its main attack in the direction of Gremuchiy, Streletskoye, and Repnoye, advance about 20 kilometers, to reach the Vezelka River by the end of the second day. Toward the end of the third or fourth day the army was to have advanced another 20 kilometers to the line Dolbino-Novaya Derevnaya-Shagarovka. Thereafter it would continue toward Mikoyanovka, Dergachi, and Peresechnaya, enveloping Kharkov from the west.

The Fifty-third Army was composed of seven rifle divisions (28th Guard, 84th, 116th, 214th, 233d, 252d, and 299th Rifle Divisions), one mortar regiment (461st), two antitank artillery regiments (232d and 1316th), and various support units. Attached to the army were the 16th Artillery Division, 1327th and 1328th Cannon Regiments, three medium tank regiments, one heavy tank regiment, and one regiment of self-propelled assault guns. Each rifle division had from 6,000 to 7,500 men. The army had a total of 2,088 guns and mortars, 79 tanks and self-propelled guns (probably 65 tanks and 14 self-propelled guns), and 62 antiaircraft guns.³ Supporting it was the 1st Fighter-Bomber Air Corps and the 1st Bomber Corps of the Fifth Air Army.⁴

Facing the Fifty-third Army was a well-prepared German defense in an area 85-90 kilometers in depth. The first defense zone of this area was six to seven kilometers deep and fronted on the line Kameniy Log-Zhuravliniy-Visloye-Khokhlovka. It had three positions organized in company strongpoints and battalion centers of resistance, and saturated with artillery, tanks, minefields, and other obstacles. About 10 to 12 kilometers behind the first portion of the first defense zone was a second defense zone some three to four kilometers in depth. Five more fortified zones were constructed behind that, each one and a half to three kilometers deep. All inhabited localities in the area were transformed into resistance centers, and likely approach routes for tanks as well as gaps between the resistance centers were covered by minefields and various other obstacles.

Defending the sector directly in front of the Soviet Fifty-third Army was the German 167th Infantry Division, reinforced with one artillery regiment, one battalion of heavy mortars, one medium panzer battalion (30 tanks), one company of heavy tanks (10 Tigers), and one company of self-propelled assault guns (10 Ferdinands). There were about 10,000 men, 171 guns and mortars, and about 50 tanks and assault guns. The division was deployed in two echelons, with two reinforced infantry regiments in the first, and one infantry regiment with one tank battalion in the second. Morale was low because of losses received in the unsuccessful offensive and subsequent forced retreat.

Behind its seven-kilometer front, the Soviet Fifty-third Army deployed three divisions (252d Rifle, 28th Guard, and 116th Rifle) in the first echelon and four rifle divisions in the second (84th, 214th, 299th, and 233d). It was unusual to have more divisions in the second echelon than in the first, but this posture was considered necessary because of the narrow zone of the army's advance and the depth of the German defenses. Each of the first echelon divisions covered two to two and a half kilometers of front, with two rifle regiments forward and one rifle regiment behind. One tank regiment was attached to each first echelon rifle division. The divisions in the second echelon were assigned axes of advance and informed of the line from which they would be committed to combat.

General Managarov organized the army artillery into three groups: destruction, long range, and breakthrough. The last two were subdivided into three sub-groups according to the number of divisions of the first echelon. In addition the army had an AAA group. The army's antitank reserve consisted of one antitank artillery regiment.

Attached to the Fifty-third Army was the I Mechanized Corps, some 10,000 men strong, with three mechanized brigades (19th, 35th, and 37th), a tank brigade (219th), some artillery, and other supporting units. It had 212 tanks, 61 armored cars, and 22 armored personnel carriers.⁵ It was to be committed to combat as soon

as the rifle divisions of the first echelon broke through the first defense zone, in order to prevent the German forces from organizing a new defense line along the southern bank of the Vezelka River. The corps would deliver its main blow in the direction of Gryaznoye and Novo Nikolayevka and an auxiliary attack toward Koloniya and Dubovoye, assisting the Sixty-ninth Army in capturing Belgorod.

For the breakthrough operation the following density per kilometer of frontage was established: 174 artillery tubes (army artillery and artillery of the division of the first echelon), and 11 tanks. With the inclusion of the I Mechanized Corps the density of tanks was increased to 41 tanks and self-propelled guns per kilometer. There were the equivalent of 32 engineer companies, 4.5 per kilometer of front.

The operation was to be carried out in three phases:

1. 3 to 5 August. Break through the tactical defense zone and, in cooperation with the Sixty-ninth Army, destroy the German forces in the Belgorod area and capture the city.

2. 6 to 11 August. Exploit the success and advance the troops to the outer defense belt of Kharkov.

3. 12 to 23 August. Destroy German forces in the Kharkov area and liberate the city.

The immediate objective of the Soviet divisions of the Army's first echelon was to break through the Germans' first defense zone to the depth of some seven or eight kilometers and destroy the forces in the breakthrough sector. Then they would advance another seven or eight kilometers and take the second defense zone.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

The attack started at 0500 on 3 August 1943 with a five-minute "shock" artillery barrage against German strongpoints and artillery positions. After 30 minutes of silence there were 60 minutes of adjustment fire and multiple rocket fire. Then at 0630 72 minutes of artillery preparation began. At the same time groups of 50 to 100 aircraft delivered concentrated attacks against artillery positions, resistance centers, and reserves deployed in tactical depth.

The infantry and tanks began moving out at 0755. Minutes later, while the infantry continued to attack, the tanks had to stop. A number of them had been blown up on minefields not previously discovered and thus not cleared by the combat engineers. The tanks could support the infantry only by fire from standing positions, while the engineers tried feverishly to find gaps in the minefields or clear them. Thanks to the artillery, which continuously supported the attacking infantry and was able to neutralize the German troops, the Soviet forces, with little tank support, were able to penetrate the first line of trenches. However, the initial delay of the tanks considerably slowed the planned pace of the attack. Only when the tanks finally negotiated the minefields and caught up with the infantry did the forward momentum accelerate.

As the infantry jumped off, artillery fire was immediately laid on the first German trench, until the attacking Soviet troops approached. Then the artillery lifted its fire to the second trench, and subsequently to the third one. These successive concentrations of fire lasted a total of some 20 minutes and were intended to secure the breakthrough of the first position up to two kilometers. Artillery fire concentrated on strongpoints and other targets at the same time. Antitank guns and direct support artillery units advanced in the midst of the infantry's battle formations.

Bitter fighting developed for the villages of Zhuravlinyy and Gonki and two hills which had been made into strongpoints. The Soviet Air Force was called in, and a group of fighter bombers bombed and strafed the defenders. Then infantry units successfully attacked the positions from the flanks and rear and took them.

By about 1000 the divisions of the first echelon had penetrated some 3.5 kilometers and taken the first and second positions of the first defense zone. However,

German resistance was not broken. The defenders stubbornly clung to every inch of the terrain, counterattacking often with infantry groups of company strength or less and a few tanks. They organized effective ambushes with tanks and self-propelled guns.

The Soviet troops continued to advance, however, reaching the line Berezov-Gremuchiy-Hill 214.5 by 1500. At this point the Army Command decided to throw advance elements of the I Mechanized Corps into action in order to complete the breakthrough of the first defense belt. Forward units of the 37th Mechanized Brigade, together with the 3d Battalion of the 928th Regiment of the 252d Rifle Division, enveloped and took Hill 218.0. At the same time, elements of the 19th Mechanized Brigade successfully crossed the Yerik River and continued to advance with the 28th Guard Division. Not so successful were the operations of elements of the 219th Tank Brigade. Because of poor intelligence they were ambushed by six Tiger tanks and two Ferdinand self-propelled guns, and they lost ten tanks. They were forced to withdraw and regroup.

German resistance was finally broken by the combined operations of infantry, artillery, tanks, and aircraft. After suffering considerable losses, the defenders started to withdraw to the south. By the end of the first day of operations troops of the Fifty-third Army with the forward elements of the I Mechanized Corps had broken through the first defense zone along the entire seven kilometers of front and penetrated the German defense to a depth of ten kilometers. They were approaching the second defense zone as they halted for the night. Except for probings there were no attempts to continue the attack during the night.

The first day of the offensive had revealed several shortcomings. The Soviet reconnaissance of minefields was weak. Cooperation between infantry, tanks, and artillery was not always good. Some units had not maneuvered at all on the battlefield or had maneuvered poorly. In general the advance had been too slow. In the evening General Konev brought all of this to the attention of the division commanders and strongly demanded improvement in subsequent days.

Early in the morning of 4 August, after a powerful 30-minute artillery preparation, the Soviet advance was resumed. First to penetrate the defense positions of the second defense zone, and to secure a route of advance for other units, was the 932d Regiment of the 252d Rifle Division. In spite of the fact that only a small number of tanks directly supported the infantry, because during the first day some 50% of them were lost and no replacements had yet arrived, by the end of the day the rifle divisions had advanced more than ten kilometers and reached the line Streletskoye-Bolkhovets-Krasnoye.

During the two days of the offensive the army had penetrated and broken through the German tactical defense zone for 20 kilometers, and created a very favorable situation for subsequent advance. The situation of the neighboring armies was also favorable. On the right the Fifth Guard Army was fighting along the line Tomarovka-Kozychev, and on the left the Sixty-ninth Army had reached the line Oskognoye-Chernaya Polyana, and was preparing for the assault on Belgorod.

The advance of the Fifty-third Army continued during the night of 4/5 August. At dawn on 5 August the army took Streletskoye, and made an assault crossing over the Vezelka River, thus securing the crossing of the main force of the I Mechanized Corps.

At 1100 5 August, to give momentum to the advance, the army commander committed the 84th Rifle Division on the army's right flank. The division passed through the combat formations of the 252d Rifle Division and attacked in the direction of Vodyanoye. On the left flank of the Army the 116th Rifle Division, together with elements of the I Mechanized Corps, took Krasnoye and Gryaznoye and by so doing cut off the roads of retreat from Belgorod toward the southwest. In the center, the 28th Guard Division also moved forward.

In the course of the day the Fifty-third Army advanced over ten kilometers, cut the Belgorod-Kharkov railroad, and cooperated with the Sixty-ninth Army in seizing Belgorod. With the capture of Belgorod the first phase of the operation ended. The Fifty-third Army had successfully broken through the tactical depth of the German defense system in three days of concentrated attack.

EXPLOITATION

Having gained control of Belgorod, Soviet forces began to develop their offensive in the direction of Kharkov, starting the second phase of the operation. In this phase, the Fifty-third Army, despite strong German resistance, advanced on the average seven to ten kilometers per day. In its zone of advance the army broke through several German defense lines north of Kharkov, reaching the Kharkov outer defense belt on 11 August.

In the third phase, which started 12 August, the fight was exceptionally bitter. The army's zone was widened to 14 kilometers. The German command committed new units. Now the Fifty-third Army had in front of it the 3d and 4th Panzer and 168th and 198th Infantry Divisions. The Luftwaffe also became much more active.

During the first and second phases, the Fifty-third Army suffered considerable losses. Because of this the numerical superiority of Soviet forces was no longer so high. The ratio of infantry decreased to 2:1 and tanks to 1.3:1 in favor of the Soviets. Nevertheless the army continued to attack, although not in the direction of the main effort, and on 22 August took part in the assault on Kharkov.

During the entire operation the Fifty-third Army, with the attached I Mechanized Corps, inflicted heavy casualties on the German forces. About 14,000 German soldiers were killed and 600 men captured.⁶

CONCLUSIONS

The Soviet plan was clear and simple, to break through the heavily fortified German area on a very narrow front and push ahead to destroy the opposing German troops. This was to be accomplished by concentration of force using infantry and a small number of direct support tanks to break through German defenses. In order to maintain momentum three rifle divisions were deployed in front and four in the second echelon. Additional tanks (I Mechanized Corps) were brought in early to increase the weight of the attack. Artillery and air support were used to soften up the areas where the attack was to be made. Very important also was the abundance of reserve forces available to the commander. Careful preparation, including good intelligence work about the German defenses, strengths, and location of strong-points and centers of resistance was a major factor in the rapid breakthrough.

In this operation surprise was not a factor. Although the timing of the attack may not have been known to the Germans they were certainly expecting it and prepared to resist it when it came. Success was achieved by massing overwhelming combined arms strength, then employing it vigorously and aggressively.

OPERATION COBRA: THE ALLIED BREAKTHROUGH IN NORMANDY, 1944

Six weeks after Allied forces first landed in Normandy on 6 June 1944 they had progressed only as far as they had expected to be on 11 June. Consequently a major effort was mounted, with a preliminary air attack of unprecedented strength, which broke through the German defending forces and opened the way not only to Brest (a seaport objective) but all the way to the German border.

BACKGROUND

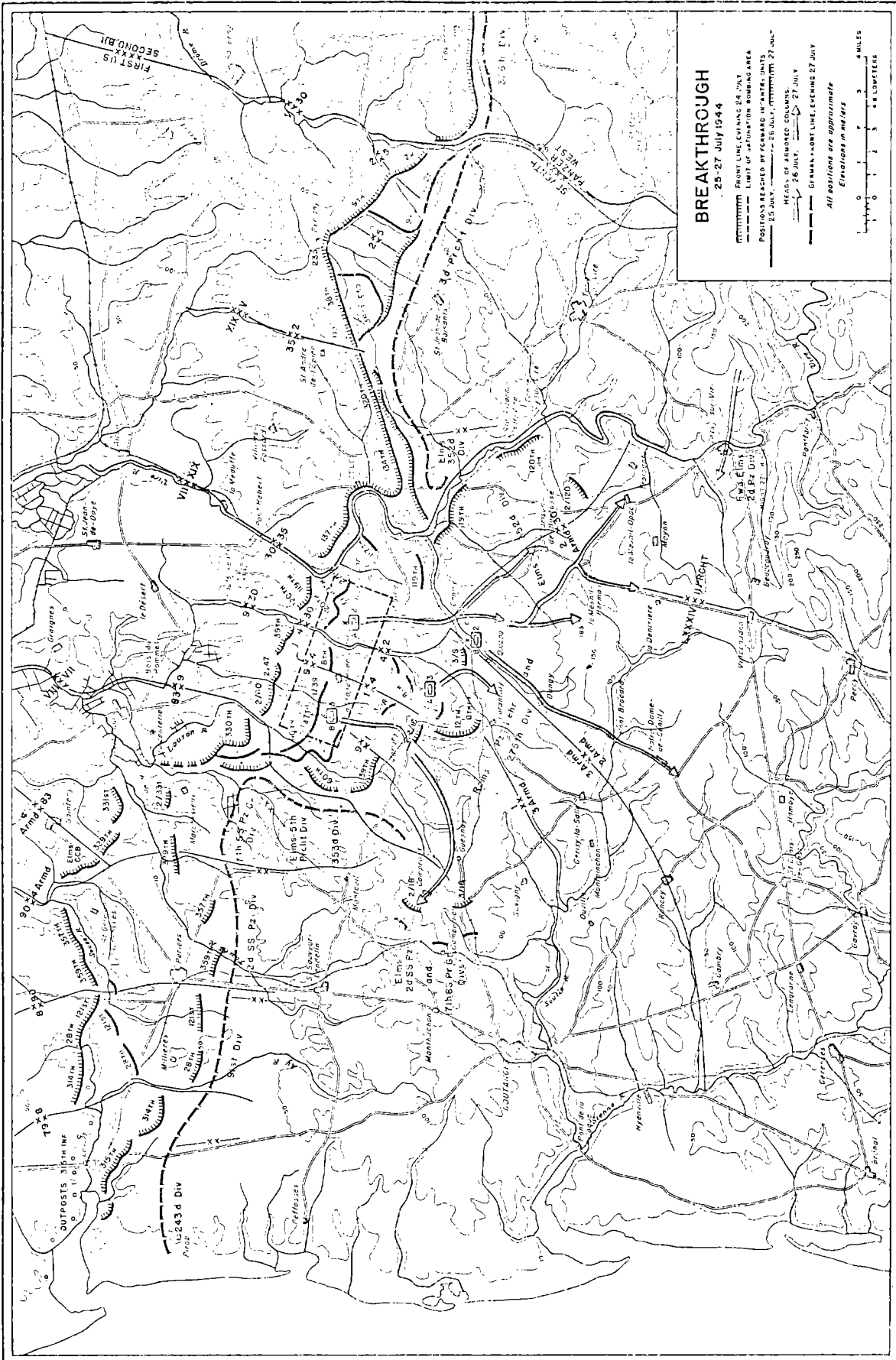
On 18 July 1944 the Allied line from the Gulf of St. Malo to the Drome River was held by the US First Army's four corps, from right to left the VIII, VII, XIX, and V, with a total of 15 divisions at the front, plus two in reserve in Normandy and one still in Great Britain. The First Army was commanded by General Omar Bradley. The British Second Army under General Sir Miles Dempsey held the area from the Drome to the Orne River and comprised the British XXX and XII Corps, the Canadian II Corps, and the British VIII Corps. On 25 July the Canadian First Army under Lieutenant General Henry Crerar, which at first consisted only of the British I Corps, was activated, and it took control of the Allied line between Caen and the Orne. All of these forces were under the 21st Army Group, commanded by General Sir Bernard L. Montgomery, who thus directed all of the Allied ground forces in western Europe. In mid-July headquarters of the US Third Army, under Lieutenant General George S. Patton, Jr., was moved to Normandy, to prepare to advance into Brittany and take Brest when opportunity offered. It would comprise the VIII Corps, to be transferred from the First Army, the XII, VI, and XX Corps.

General Field Marshal Guenther von Kluge, Commander of the German forces in the West, had taken direct command of Army Group B, facing the Allied forces in Normandy, after General Field Marshal Erwin Rommel was severely wounded by Allied strafing on 17 July. The Seventh Army, under General Paul Hausser, faced the Americans from the Gulf of St. Malo to the Drome, and comprised the LXXXIV Corps and the II Parachute Corps, with a total of 14 divisions--nine infantry, two parachute, one panzer grenadier, and two panzer. Facing the British Second Army was the Fifth Panzer Army, with the XLVII Panzer Corps, the II SS Panzer Corps, the I SS Panzer Corps, and the LXXXVI Corps, with eight infantry and five panzer divisions

PLANS

The plan developed by the Allies in July called for the British Second Army to initiate offensive operations around Caen to capture the city and to attract German reserves, particularly armor, to the area, leaving only weak infantry forces farther west, opposite the Americans. Then the US First Army, pivoting on its left flank, would swing to the southeast and advance to the line Caumont-Fogueres, where it would face east to protect the advance of the Third Army into Brittany.

The main effort of the First Army, code-named COBRA, was to be initiated by the combat-experienced 9th, 4th, and 30th Infantry Divisions of the VII Corps, under the command of Major General J. Lawton Collins. Following an intensive air and artillery bombardment of the German positions, the 9th and 30th Divisions, on the left and right of the US line, would penetrate the German line, seize the towns of Marigny and St. Gilles, and secure the flanks of the breakthrough. The 4th Division would advance in the center of the breakthrough zone toward La Chapelle-en-Juger. The remainder of the VII Corps--2d and 3d Armored Divisions and 1st Infantry Division (Motorized)--would push through the three-mile gap in exploitation, fanning out to the southeast, south, southwest and west.



Map 12

To support its attack the VII Corps non-divisional artillery, including allocations from the First Army, amounted to 258 pieces. VII Corps also controlled 312 divisional artillery pieces and 96 artillery pieces from the two divisions in army reserve. Artillery fire was to be directed at specific German troop concentrations and installations between the Périers-St. Lô highway and a line 3,000 yards to the south.

The major preparation for the VII Corps advance, however, was to be a massive air bombardment designed to disrupt German communications, neutralize German reserves, destroy German equipment, emplacements, and forces, and devastate German morale. The air attack, which was to be carried out by all of the heavy bombers of the US Eighth Air Force and the medium bombers and fighter bombers of the US Ninth Air Force, was to focus on an area 7,000 yards wide and 2,500 yards deep immediately south of the Périers-St. Lô highway, the threshold of the VII Corps ground attack. Some 500 fighters from the US Eighth Air Force and the RAF 2d Tactical Air Force were to provide cover. To prevent casualties to American troops while guaranteeing that the forces assigned to the breakthrough would be able to advance the instant the air attack finished, General Bradley ordered the front line units to withdraw 1,200 yards north of the highway just before the air attack was to commence.

The air bombardment was to begin eighty minutes before the ground attack, and one hour after ground troops had withdrawn. The first phase of the air attack would consist of a 20-minute strike by 350 fighter-bombers on a strip 250 yards deep immediately south of the highway. These aircraft would be followed by 1,800 heavy bombers, which would attack the entire target area, including the 250-yard strip, for one hour. As the infantry forces began their attack toward the Périers-St. Lô road, the 350 fighter-bombers would repeat their 20-minute attack. Finally, as the infantry troops reached and crossed the highway, 396 medium bombers would attack the southern half of the target zone for 45 more minutes. In all, some 2,500 aircraft were to bomb an area of six square miles for two hours and twenty-five minutes, with 5,000 tons of high explosives, napalm, and white phosphorus.

Between 18 and 21 July, the British VIII and XII Corps and the Canadian II Corps executed a series of attacks near Caen which succeeded in taking the city and securing a bridgehead over the Orne River. The Germans responded as the Allied planners hoped by reinforcing the eastern sector of the front at the expense of both the western sector and their reserves.

On the eve of COBRA the German forces of the LXXXIV Corps deployed in front of the US VII Corps included 3,200 men of the Panzer Lehr Division, one regiment, 500 men, of the 5th Parachute Division, 450 men of Battle Group Heinz from the 275th Division, and two companies from the 2d SS Panzer Division. The remainder of the 275th Division was in Seventh Army reserve, directly behind this sector of the front. The German troops totalled approximately 30,000 men, of whom only some 5,000 were actually close to the front. There were 50 tanks, in the Panzer Lehr Division and its attached units.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

On 24 July 1944 the 9th and 30th Divisions withdrew from the area north of the Periers-St. Lo road as planned, although the sky was heavily overcast. Only shortly before the attack was scheduled to begin, and after the ground troops had moved north, Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory postponed the air attack, unfortunately too late to stop all the planes, most of which were already airborne. Consequently three groups of fighter bombers and a formation of 300 heavy bombers attacked the target area. Sixteen of the heavies mistakenly dropped their bombs 2,000 yards north of the highway, killing 25 men of the 30th Division and wounding 131.

Some German troops moved into the area that had been vacated by the US troops, and when General Collins ordered the two divisions to move back up to the line they encountered stubborn resistance from these and intense artillery fire from the alerted German units south of the road. Eventually, however, the original positions were regained.

The premature bombardment had caused the Germans to expect a major Allied

attack, and they believed they had halted it when the Americans stopped at the highway. Although the German losses were limited to about 350 men and 10 tanks, Lieutenant General Fritz Bayerlein, commander of the Panzer Lehr Division, withdrew most of his outposts to positions south of the highway and requested 200 replacements from the 275th Division, in the belief that the attack would be renewed on the following day.

At 0940 hours on 25 July, the Allied aircraft reappeared over the target zone. More than 1,500 B-17 and B-24 heavy bombers dropped some 3,300 tons of bombs. A further 650 tons of high explosives were dropped by 380 medium bombers, and 550 fighter bombers dropped more than 200 tons of bombs and additional quantities of napalm. Dust and smoke and excessive caution on the part of some pilots caused some bombs to fall outside the target area but south of the highway. Fragmentation bombs and high explosives from 77 medium and heavy bombers landed within the US lines, resulting in 111 men killed and 490 wounded, the serious disorganization of several units, and demoralization among the troops.

The effect of the bombardment on the Germans in the target area was devastating. Communications were completely cut, massive amounts of equipment were destroyed (only 12 tanks remained operational), approximately one-third of the combat effectives—some 1,000 men—were killed or wounded, and the only unit larger than a battalion that remained capable of action was Combat Group Heinz. Those soldiers physically uninjured in the attack were dazed.

At 1100 the infantry forces of the VII Corps began their advance. They soon found that German resistance had not been annihilated. On the right flank of the VII Corps, the 330th Infantry Regiment, which had been detached from the 83d Division of the VIII Corps, was to seize a section of the Périers-St. Lô highway, including an important road intersection near the Taute River marshes, just outside the air bombardment target zone. There it would block any German effort from the west to reinforce the troops facing the VII Corps, while forming the pivot for the VII Corps swing to the southwest and Coutances. A pre-COBRA attempt by the 83d Division had failed to capture the German salient at la Varde, with the result that the 330th Infantry, attacking across difficult terrain, would be hampered by fire from Marchesieux on its right rear flank. The 330th Infantry began its advance while the last wave of fighter bombers was completing its attack and, under cover of the aerial bombardment, it was able to move rapidly ahead. As soon as the planes left, however, the largely undamaged regiment of the German 5th Parachute Division which was holding the area opened fire, and with the support of artillery fire from Marchesieux it was able to stop the 330th Regiment several hundred yards from its objective.

The 9th Division was to advance south along the Montreuil-Marigny highway, with the regiments of the division peeling off to the west as they proceeded toward Marigny, in order to clear the highway for the armor and protect the right flank of the armored thrust. The division passed through some German outposts north of the Périers-St. Lô highway with little trouble, but when the troops crossed the road they were surprised to encounter stubborn resistance despite the intensity of the aerial bombardment in this sector. When the regiments turned to the west and began to engage German forces which had been outside the carpet bombing zone, they were unable to advance, and only a few units reached their objectives.

The 8th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Division attacked on a 2,000 yard front in the center of the VII Corps zone, with two battalions abreast. By nightfall one battalion had reached a point just east of la Chapelle-en-Juger, but the second battalion, which was supported by a column of 18 tanks, was delayed for two hours in an orchard north of the Périers-St. Lô highway by German troops with excellent fields of fire. Fire from the American tanks finally broke the German resistance, and the battalion was able to cross the road and advance for about 700 yards before it was stopped by a German force supported by two tanks. The battalion executed a double envelopment of the German position and destroyed the two tanks, but resistance continued until the American armor, which had fallen behind the infantry, came up and fired on the German positions. Upon receiving orders to capture la Chapelle-en-Juger, the battalion turned westward and soon seized the outskirts of the town.

On the Corps left, the 30th Division was to capture Hébécrevon, clear the road to St. Gilles, and block the bridges over the Vire River south of St. Lo, many of which had been damaged in the air attack. As it crossed the Périers-St. Lo highway, the division encountered a roadblock which was supported by three German Mark V tanks. A frontal infantry attack by one regiment with armor support was unsuccessful, and three American tanks were destroyed. Although an attempted double envelopment was initially unsuccessful, the roadblock was finally removed by combined infantry and armor fire. In order to attack Hébécrevon, the 30th Division had to cross a valley on an unpaved and mined road and execute a frontal assault. There was no room for maneuver, and air strikes seemed to have little effect on the German defenders. Furthermore, artillery fire from elements of the German 352d Division in the village prevented the engineers from clearing the mines, and the tanks were therefore initially unable to advance with the infantry. Under cover of darkness, however, the infantry was able to guide the armor through the minefields to positions within firing range of the town, and by midnight the Americans had secured Hébécrevon. The VII Corps casualties during this first day of full-scale battle totalled 1,060, including 152 killed.⁷

Meanwhile, at 1600 hours the commander of the German LXXXIV Corps, Lieutenant General Dietrich von Choltitz, having just learned that the Americans had penetrated south of the Périers-St. Lô highway at several points, ordered a regiment of the 353d Division from corps reserve to secure la Chapelle-en-Juger, in an effort to halt the penetration. Soon afterward, General Hausser, commander of the Seventh Army, sent a regiment of the 275th Division from Canisy to reinforce the effort to hold la Chapelle-en-Juger and the road network that the town dominated. Hausser hoped to establish a new defense line between that town and Hébécrevon, but, due to the breakdown of both telephone and radio communications, he was unaware of the extent of losses to his troops. The Panzer Lehr Division, with the attached regiment of the 5th Parachute Division and Battle Group Heinz, had been almost completely annihilated in the Allied bombing, and therefore the elements of the 352d Division in Hébécrevon were fighting with an exposed left flank. The regiment from the 275th Division moving north from Canisy was destroyed by an Allied air interdiction effort shortly after setting out.

On the morning of 26 July General Choltitz, unaware that the Americans had taken Hébécrevon and consequently had an open road to St. Gilles, dispatched the rest of the 353d Division eastward toward the Montreuil-Marigny line, in an effort to slow the advance of the US 9th Division. General Hausser, who did not know that the regiment of the 275th Division had been wiped out, ordered a counterattack near Marigny by the reserve company of tanks and company of infantry of the 2d SS Panzer Division. These units became involved in trying to hold the US 1st Division. General Kluge suggested to Hausser that he withdraw his left in order to shorten his line and thereby disengage the entire 2d SS Panzer Division for a counterattack. But by that time, the US VIII Corps had begun to exert pressure along the front west of the VII Corps and was tying down the German left. However, Hausser managed to free one tank and one infantry battalion and moved them toward the breakthrough sector.

When the first day's gains had proved less than General Collins had hoped for he decided on the afternoon of 25 July to commit some of his armored units on the 26th to assist in gaining the penetration. The US infantry units on the 26th made slow gains against heavier resistance than had been anticipated, and the armored columns started their advance through the infantry lines.

On the right flank of the VII Corps on 26 July, German antitank fire from Marchesieux ceased during the day as pressure from the US VIII Corps increased, and the 330th Infantry was able to resume its advance. Resistance from the regiment of the German 5th Parachute Division remained fierce, however, and progress was slow.

During the morning, Major General Manton Eddy, commander of the 9th Division, received orders to clear the road through his sector in preparation for the advance of the 3d Armored Division, which General Collins had decided to commit. By the end of the day, the 9th Division had pushed two and a half miles south of the Périers-St. Lô highway and two miles west of the Marigny road, in the face of stiff

opposition from the 353d Division. Most of the other infantry also made slow progress.

Early in the morning of 26 July the 8th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Division took la Chapelle-en-Juger and then started moving slowly south, overcoming pockets of German resistance. The reserve battalion was thrown in in the afternoon, and the added strength speeded the advance, which overran part of the 353d Division and caused some artillery units of the Panzer Lehr Division to withdraw in haste. By the end of the day the regiment had cut the road from Coutances to St. Lô, having advanced about five miles from the Périers-St. Lô highway.

The 30th Division, whose mission was to protect the Corps left flank and allow an armored column to pass through to exploit the breakthrough beyond St. Gilles, was pinned down in the morning by very heavy artillery fire, estimated to be from one medium and three light artillery battalions and some 88mm guns. Artillery units of the 30th Division, and the VII and XIX Corps poured counter-battery fire on the German artillery positions, so reducing their effectiveness that the division was able to resume the advance. An armored column of the 2d Armored Division then drove through and headed for St. Gilles.

The 117th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Division, on the left, attacked toward the loop of the Vire River at St. Lô. The regiment came to a halt at a steep ravine, where elements of the German 352d Division had established a defense, supported by artillery of the II Parachute Corps on the high ground south of St. Lô. Five attacks by the 117th Infantry failed. During the evening the Germans started to withdraw at the same time that a heavy US 4.2-inch mortar preparation was poured on their positions. The American regiment then crossed the ravine and moved up to within two miles of the western edge of St. Lô.

The 119th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Division advanced rapidly two miles south from Hébécrevon, where they cut the Coutances-St. Lô highway. It was promptly ordered to proceed two more miles to cut the road from Canisy to St. Lô. By nightfall the regiment was halfway to that objective.

Confident that the German defenses had been penetrated, General Collins ordered the infantry to continue their attack through the night.

Although the 330th Infantry still was unable to reach the highway during the night of 26/27 July the 9th Division on its left and all the other US units advanced. The 8th Infantry Regiment of the 4th Division in particular made significant gains. Leaving its vehicles and antitank guns behind, the regiment advanced for several miles and outflanked the remaining artillery positions of the Panzer Lehr Division and the reserves of the 275th Division at Marigny. The 117th Infantry of the 30th Division advanced into the Vire River loop, and the 119th cut the Canisy-St. Lô road. Still on the morning of 27 July both Marigny and St. Gilles remained in German hands. Meanwhile, in order to push ahead more rapidly, on 25 July General Collins had alerted the 1st Infantry Division (Motorized) and the 2d Armored Division to be prepared to move out the next day. General Bradley assigned all available air support to the VII Corps for the 26th. Attached to the 1st Division was Combat Command B of the 3d Armored Division. CCB was to pass through the 9th Division and proceed down the west side of the road while the 18th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Division proceeded on the east side, take Marigny and then head west for Coutances.

Shortly after dawn on 26 July the advance units crossed the highway and began to drive slowly toward Marigny. German resistance was mainly confined to small arms fire from behind the hedgerows that lined the road, and, although US artillery and tank fire eliminated most of the German opposition, the infantry suffered heavy casualties.

Just north of Marigny, the 1st Division engaged elements of the German 353d Division and two companies of the 2d SS Panzer Division which were supported by several Mark IV tanks and some 75mm antitank guns. These were the units Hausser had sent there to make a counterattack. Unable to advance against this opposition, CCB unsuccessfully attempted to envelop the left German flank. An air strike in the late afternoon enabled some armored units to reach the northern edge of Marigny,

but CCB made no further progress in its envelopment and spent the night about one mile west of Marigny. As a result of poor communications the commander of the 18th Infantry of the 1st Division, who knew that some tanks were close to Marigny, believed that the town had been taken. He therefore sent a battalion to swing to the east, bypass the town, and secure the high ground to the south. The battalion did seize some high ground at approximately midnight and accordingly reported that its mission was complete, but in reality it had taken the wrong objective and no one was quite sure where it was.

Also working under the assumption that Marigny had been taken, General Collins ordered Major General Clarence Huebner, commander of the 1st Infantry Division, to exploit toward Coutances during the night. However, Huebner could not carry out the order because he was uncertain of the location of his advance forces, he had no confirmation that Marigny had been secured, his troops were facing continuing resistance, and he was afraid that a major movement during the night would only result in further disorganization.

On the left flank of the VII Corps, meanwhile, Major General Edward Brooks's 2d Armored Division, with the 22d Infantry attached, was to pass through the 30th Division, and proceed down the road to St. Gilles and capture it. The division's mission was essentially to guard the flank of the Cobra forces on the south and southeast, but its commander made no attempt to assume a purely defensive role.

Combat Command A, leading the division, moved out early on 26 July in a single column. Although German antitank fire destroyed one Sherman tank just below the Périers-St. Lô highway, the column continued southward at a steady pace, slowed by bomb craters and occasional scattered resistance. In the early afternoon the Americans were delayed by a roadblock several hundred yards north of St. Gilles, but an air strike, combined with fire from the tanks, quickly overcame it, destroying four Mark IV tanks and a self-propelled gun. Soon thereafter the advanced elements entered St. Gilles against negligible opposition. Capture of this important point marked the breakthrough of the German defense position. There was no organized resistance remaining, and only uncoordinated defense positions to prevent exploitation. The following day the 18th Infantry of the 1st Division took Marigny, the other major objective of the breakthrough operation. The attached CCB of the 3d Armored Division had already bypassed Marigny and departed in exploitation toward Coutances.

EXPLOITATION

CCA of the 2d Armored Division did not stop at St. Gilles, but continued south toward some high ground about five miles ahead which commanded an extensive road network to the east and south. At Canisy, two miles south of St. Gilles, mortar, artillery, and antitank fire, combined with bomb craters, minefields, and defended hedgerows, caused some delay. German forces tried to make a stand at a railroad embankment north of the town, but this position was quickly outflanked from the east. Allied dive bombers struck Canisy, starting many large fires. During the evening CCA passed through Canisy and continued to a fork just south of the town, where the armored force divided in two columns. One continued southeast toward St. Simon-de-Bonfosse, which was taken at 2300; the other advanced south toward le Mesnil-Herman.

With breakthroughs on its right, and the VIII Corps pressing hard against the troops on its left, the German XXXIV Corps began to withdraw its western elements during the night of 26/27 July, its right flank guarded by the 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Division, the 353d Division, and the 2d SS Panzer Division. Elements of CCB and the 1st Division, moving west from the Marigny area on 27 July to take vital points on the way to Coutances, encountered some of these forces and had to fight their way east. The German withdrawal was accelerated as the day progressed and the weight of the American attack was felt. Most of the defenders succeeded in passing across in front of the slowly advancing Americans, or managed to infiltrate and pass through the American units to the south.

The 4th Armored Division of the US VIII Corps captured Coutances in the afternoon of 28 July and then spearheaded a rapid move down the coast toward Avranches.

CONCLUSIONS

There can be no doubt that the achievement of the breakthrough in COBRA at this time was facilitated by the intense air bombardment that preceded it, although it did not reduce the German ability to resist to the extent that had been hoped. Also contributing at least as significantly was the earlier British attack on the left of the Allied line, which convinced the Germans that it was there that the main attack was to be made and resulted in the strengthening of that sector at the expense of the sector where the VII Corps actually made its attack. The Allies achieved tactical surprise not only in selecting this area for attack, but also by the weight of the preceding air bombardment, and by launching the offensive on the 25th after an apparent attack on the 24th had been contained.

The objective of the operation was clear, to break through the German defense and free the Allied forces for more rapid advances. It was basically a simple plan: diverting German forces to the east and making a concentrated strike in the west. The air bombardment was new, and not simple, for it involved coordination of many air units with each other and all air units with the ground forces. The ground attack plan was well designed and simple, calling on infantry to open a gap through which armored forces could move in exploitation. When the infantry did not succeed rapidly enough there was sufficient flexibility to change and send the armor through the infantry to take the primary objectives.

It should be noted that, although the air bombardment created both physical and psychological shock among those German troops that were in the attack area, and caused large numbers of casualties, the carpet bombing did not succeed in completely destroying the effectiveness of the surviving troops. They rallied fairly promptly, and with reinforcements sent in from sectors outside the target area held the attackers short of their initial objectives. It should also be noted that the bombing itself interfered with the Allied attack, not only in the effect of the bombing errors on morale as well as the casualties suffered, but also by creating bomb craters which slowed the advance of the attacking units, both infantry and armor.

SOVIET INVASION OF MANCHURIA, AUGUST 1945
BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS OF THE 1st FAR EASTERN ARMY GROUP

In August 1945 the Soviet Union launched an attack on the Japanese forces in Manchuria in the only operation between the two nations in World War II. It was a three-pronged attack with the main effort from the west—with a strong supporting attack from the east and northeast, and a smaller attack from the north—designed to cut off the Japanese Kwantung Army. This is an account of the attack of the First Far Eastern Army Group (or First Far East Front) which broke through the strong fixed defenses from the east and northeast.

BACKGROUND

Between March and August 1945 the Soviet Supreme Command assembled in the Far East a force comprising eleven combined arms armies, one tank army, three air armies, and three air defense armies, with an aggregate strength of over 1,500,000, plus four cavalry divisions, one tank brigade, one tank regiment, an artillery regiment, and an air division of the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Army. The Soviets had 26,000 guns and mortars, 5,500 tanks and self-propelled guns, and about 3,800 aircraft, and 600 vessels and over 1,500 aircraft of the Pacific Fleet and the Amur Flotilla.⁸

The Soviet forces were organized in three army groups or fronts, the Transbaikal, and the 1st and 2d Far Eastern, under the overall command of Marshal Alexander M. Vasilevskiy. Based in the Maritime Provinces, the 1st Far Eastern Army Group, commanded by Marshal Kirill Meretzkov, was to breach the Japanese fortified areas, advance through the taiga and mountain ranges to Kirin, cutting the Kwantung Army in two, while the Transbaikal Army Group, commanded by Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, struck east toward Changchun and Kirin, and the 2d Far Eastern Army Group, commanded by General of the Army M.A. Purkayev, delivered a strong secondary attack from the north toward Harbin.

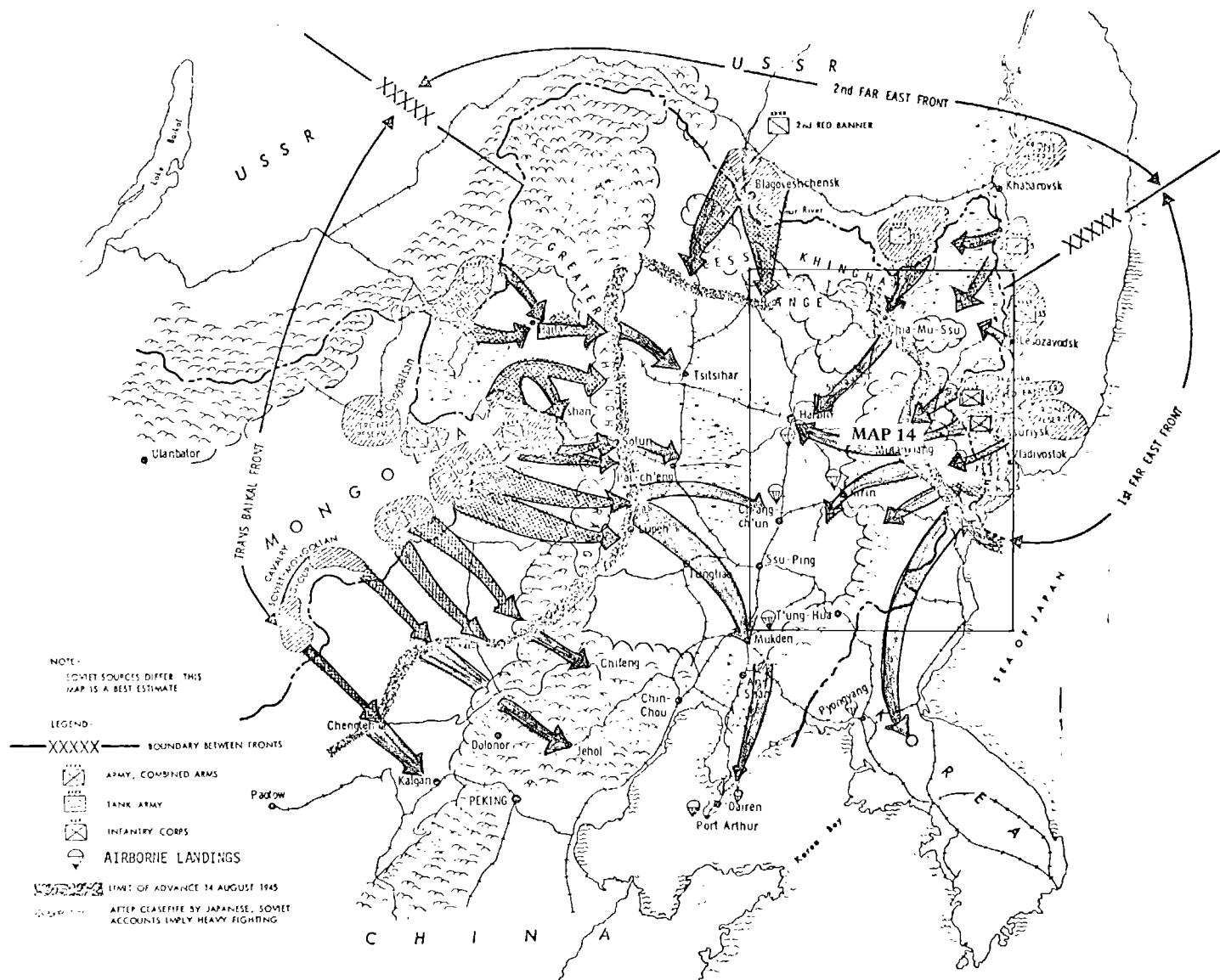
The Soviet 1st Far Eastern Army Group was composed of four combined arms armies, one air army, one air defense army, a mechanized corps, a cavalry division, and a maritime task force. It had 586,000 combat troops, 8,600 guns and mortars, 1,860 tanks and self-propelled guns, 1,538 antitank artillery pieces, 504 antiaircraft guns, 516 multiple rocket launchers, and 1,158 aircraft.⁹ It was deployed in a zone 700 kilometers in width.

The Japanese Kwantung Army, under General Otozo Yamada, was deployed in a huge arc 4,500 kilometers long, formed by Manchuria's borders with the Soviet Union and the Mongolian People's Republic. It comprised three army groups (1st, 3d, and 17th), seven field armies, two air armies, and the Sungari River Flotilla. Also available to the Japanese were forces in Korea, Southern Sakhalin, and the Kurile Islands, and local troops of Manchukuo, Inner Mongolia, and the province of Suiyuan. All together there were about 1,200,000 men, with some 1,200 tanks, 5,400 guns, and nearly 1,800 aircraft.¹⁰

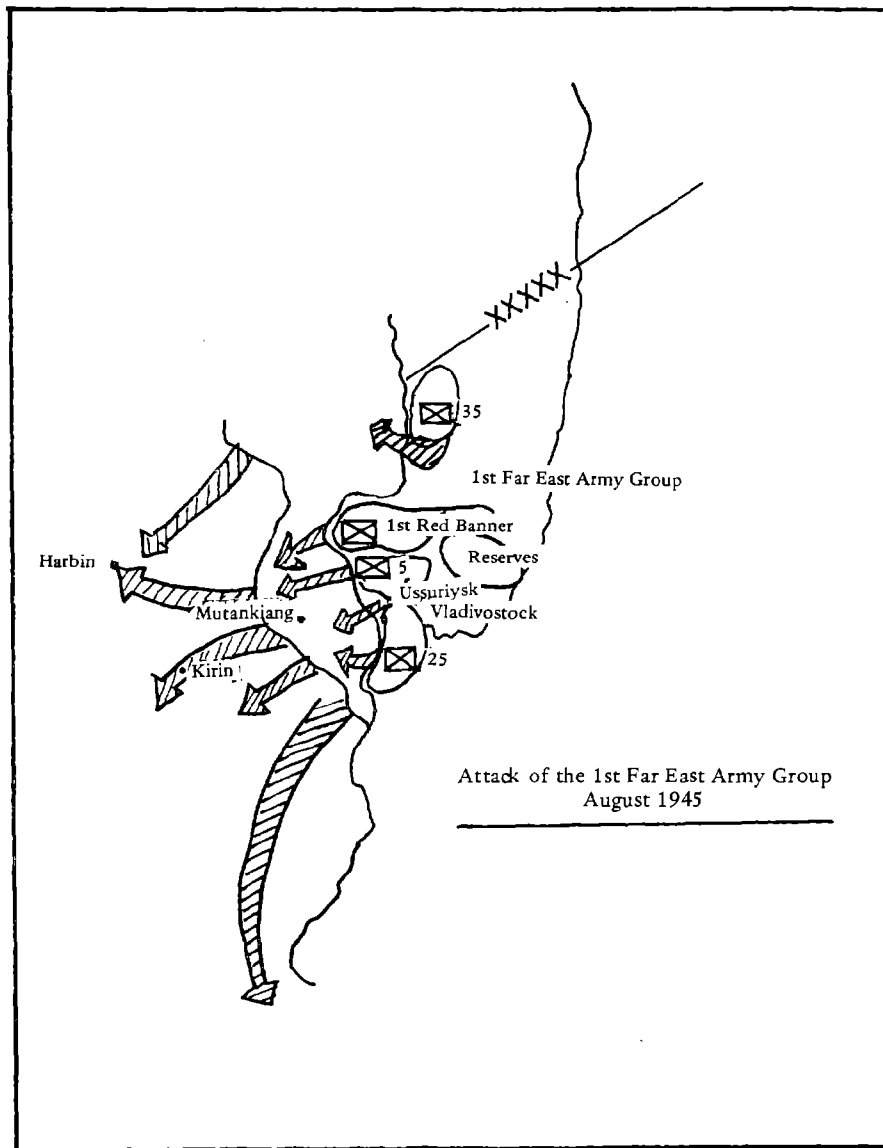
Facing the Soviet 1st Far Eastern Army Group was the well-entrenched Japanese 1st or East Manchurian Army Group under General Kita Seiichi, consisting of the Third and Fifth Armies, with ten divisions and an infantry brigade. Its main forces were concentrated in the Mutangkiang region, defending the approaches to Harbin and Kirin. Soviet estimates put the strength of the 1st Army Group at 390,000 men, with 2,150 guns and mortars and 233 tanks. General Seiichi said in a postwar interview that he had only 175,000 effectives, 75,000 in the Third Army, 80,000 in the Fifth Army, and 20,000 in Army Group reserve.

The Japanese defense system in that area was basically designed in three parallel lines of defense, sited to take advantage of natural obstacles. The first line,

THE SOVIET CAMPAIGN AGAINST JAPANESE FORCES IN MANCHURIA, AUGUST 1945



Map 13



Map 14

just behind the border, had minefields, and concrete, log, and earth bunkers, but was lightly garrisoned. The second, the main line of resistance, had been hastily constructed in the spring of 1945 between the Mutangkiang and Muling Rivers, following the Tumen River in the south. As soon as the defenses were established, the infantry divisions were moved into the line, leaving only a regiment of each to cover the main areas of the border zone. The third, or rear defense, line was still being built when the war started, in the area extending from Lake Tsinpo Hu to Yenki and the Tumen River. Behind these three defense lines fortified areas were built at strategic points.

At seven points behind the border, most vulnerable to attack, fortified areas were built. Most of these were in eastern Manchuria. All had artillery and machine gun pillboxes and bunkers, underground communication passages, and a system of observation and command posts with shelters. One such area was in the Mutangkiang region. From the border to a depth of five kilometers the terrain, naturally defended by mountains, virgin forests, and taiga, was specially prepared to delay advancing troops. Behind it, to a depth of approximately four kilometers, were the permanent concrete emplacements of the main line of defense. About 15 kilometers farther to the rear was a defense line about three kilometers in depth, and another 15 kilometers behind that was another defense line about four kilometers deep. All the defense zones had very formidable resistance centers, each with about 15 permanent artillery emplacements, five artillery and machine gun emplacements, over 50 machine gun emplacements, and a large number of field entrenchments and weapons emplacements, as well as antitank and antipersonnel obstacles. In addition the Japanese built resistance centers in all border villages, making embrasures in every house and turning some of the stone houses and larger buildings into veritable fortresses.

With the tiered fire emplacements, extensive network of shelters, underground passages, antitank and antipersonnel obstacles the Kwantung Army felt reasonably secure. The Japanese reasoned that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to crack such a formidable defense perimeter. However, Soviet intelligence established that there were lightly defended areas between the Japanese resistance points. There were gaps also between their fortified areas. This fact turned out to be very important in Soviet planning and conducting of the operation.

PLANS

The armies of the 1st Far Eastern Army Group were deployed in a 700 kilometer sector from north of Lesozavodsk to the Sea of Japan. On the right flank of the Army Group was the Thirty-fifth Army, commanded by Lieutenant General N.D. Zakhvatayev, on a 235-kilometer front north of Lake Khanka, along the Ussuri River and the Sungacha River, which flows out of the lake. The Army's left flank was covered by the launches of the Amur Flotilla, but their operational zone was naturally limited. Beyond the Sungacha was a stretch of open, marshy country with occasional oak and maple forests densely covered by vines. It was very difficult terrain for movement. The advancing army would have not only to assault fortified areas but to negotiate places where there was more water than land, and where the men would have to wade waist-deep for tens of kilometers at a stretch.

West of Lake Khanka the First Red Banner Army, commanded by Colonel General A.P. Beloborodov, held a 135-kilometer front. With its main forces concentrated on the left flank, the army was to fight its way across the Muling Ho Valley. Having pushed through forests and dense woodland in the Khanka lowland and the hills of the Sungtien, the Army would encounter an area of almost impassable taiga on the main route to the Muling-Mutangkiang sector. Frontal advance was out of the question. Hence General Beloborodov planned to execute a series of maneuvers from depth. The Army's combat deployment was to be very deep, with an especially strong vanguard made up of tank, sub-machine gun and engineer units. The tanks would fell the trees, the engineers would clear out the saplings and undergrowth, and the sub-machine gunners would drag the trees away, clearing a trail up to five meters in width. Troops that followed would improve these trails, making them fit for the movement of heavy equipment.

On the left of the First Red Banner Army was Colonel General N.I. Krylov's Fifth Army in a 65-kilometer sector. This Army had an exceptionally difficult mission. It was to breach the fortified areas around Pogranichnenskiy and Volyn. Built along mountain ridges, these areas were particularly formidable, and three very strong advance detachments were formed to attack them. They included mountain artillery and engineer units as well as infantry. After crushing the Japanese defenses along the ridges they were to advance around through the marshy areas to try to cut off the Japanese retreat.

In the breakthrough sector Soviet rifle divisions covered three kilometers of front each, with as many as 200 guns and mortars per kilometer.¹⁰ This high density of men and artillery was essential because the Army had to start its offensive by reaching a fortified zone. The X Independent Mechanized Corps was not assigned to the first echelon of attack but retained in the second echelon. This decision was determined by the nature of the terrain and the pattern of the Japanese defenses, which made it impossible to employ the mechanized corps efficiently in the beginning of the operation. Its main task was to exploit the Fifth Army's breakthrough of the main fortification zone, so that there would be no slackening in the speed of the offensive, and the Japanese would not be allowed to recover and organize a stable defense.

On the left flank of the 1st Far Eastern Army Group was the Twenty-fifth Army under Colonel-General I.M. Chistyakov. The Army's prime objective was to breach the Dunnin Fortified Area. From there it was to advance along a 285 kilometer front, coordinating its actions with that of the Pacific Fleet. Strong vanguard detachments were to effect a surprise night crossing of the border, and, acting as a battering ram, clear the way for the main forces advancing in their wake.

BREAKTHROUGH

At the end of July 1945 the army commanders had received orders for the offensive, and during the first week of August all the forces were concentrated in the predesignated areas.

From the Maritime Provinces the assault group of the 1st Far Eastern Army Group consisting of the First Red Banner and the Fifth Armies,* was to make the main effort, attacking the Japanese after a powerful artillery preparation, and push toward Mutangkiang. Zero hour was set for one minute after midnight on 9 August. But a sudden tropical storm disrupted the Soviet plan. General Meretskov intended to begin the attack in the blinding light of searchlights. But torrents of water lashed the troops waiting for the signal to attack, and the artillery was silent and the searchlights were not turned on because of the adverse weather.

It was decided to move out without artillery preparation. At 0100 some 30 advance battalions crossed the border in the heavy rain and attacked the Japanese positions, gaining control of road centers and breaking into fortified villages. The Japanese, taken by surprise despite orders to be ready for a possible Soviet attack, were unable to offer effective resistance. Taking advantage of the downpour and the pitch-dark night, the advance battalions, with frontier guards as guides, reached their appointed objectives and demolished the Japanese border fortifications.

Advance units of the infantry divisions of the forward echelons of the two armies poured into the gaps created by these demolitions, and, knocking the Japanese out of the main mountain passes, road junctions and defiles, ensured the unhindered advance of the main forces. The Japanese began to withdraw, but Soviet advance troops drove wedges between their units, breaking up their operations, disrupting communications, and disorganizing their defense. The first day Soviet troops advanced approximately 20 kilometers, and encircled several Japanese strongholds.

*The First Red Banner Army was composed of six rifle divisions. It had 1,413 guns and mortars and 410 tanks and self-propelled guns. The Fifth Army consisted of 12 rifle divisions and had 2,945 guns and mortars, 432 rocket launchers, and 607 tanks and self-propelled guns. P.Ya. Yegorov, Marshal Meretskov, Moscow, 1974.

The main forces of the First Red Banner Army advanced across the forested Pogranichnenskiy Range, hacking its way through virgin forest and towing its heavy weapons over roadless, rugged terrain. On 10 August, elements of the XXVI Rifle Corps, after pushing ahead through nearly 40 kilometers of taiga, broke into the town of Muling. Capture of this major road center enabled the Soviets to thrust swiftly at Mutangkiang from the northeast. At the same time, on the army's right flank troops were storming strongpoints of the fortified zone around Mishang, and frontier forces were wiping out small Japanese garrisons, which had been bypassed.

Protracted fighting developed along the approaches to Muntangkiang, where the Japanese Fifth Army offered strong resistance. The First Red Banner Army and the Fifth Army were engaged in fierce fighting in difficult hilly and wooded country. Bitter fighting for Mutangkiang lasted several days, during which Soviet troops had to repel many counterattacks by Japanese armor and infantry. On 16 August the Soviets finally broke the Japanese defenses, crossed the Mutangkiang River and captured the city. The Soviets estimated Japanese losses during the battle for Mutangkiang as high as 40,000 men. Soviet casualties are not known.

After taking Mutangkiang the First Red Banner Army struck west toward Harbin and the Fifth Army headed southwest toward Kirin. To reach their objectives both armies had to overrun numerous fortified centers and defense positions. Some Japanese fortified areas maintained their resistance after they were bypassed by advancing Soviet troops. Later, filtering through Soviet lines in small groups the Japanese fought their way to the areas where larger units of the Kwantung Army were still battling the Soviet forces.

Meanwhile the main forces of the Twenty-fifth Army, led by a strong advance detachment, which attacked shortly after midnight on 9 August, on the first day of the offensive advanced approximately 12 kilometers. In the vanguard of the advancing forces was the 72d Independent Tank Brigade, which had been ordered to negotiate the 1,000 meter high Taipingling mountain pass, the Tufangtseh marshes, and the dense taiga of Huoshao Nu, take the town of Wangching and push ahead toward Yenki-Tunghwa - Kirin. First the 72d Tank Brigade made a breach in the Dunnin Fortified Area, and then a mobile group composed of two reinforced tank brigades was hurled into the gap. Wangching, in the Pochouling Hills, which was one of the objectives of the 72d Tank Brigade is almost completely surrounded by rivers. Making use of this natural barrier, the Japanese defended all fords, valleys, and mountain passes with numerous combat teams. In addition, the approaches to the town were covered by artillery and mortar fire from well placed positions, by fortifications, and by antitank and antipersonnel mines. Colonel S.A. Panov, the brigade commander, decided to break into the town from the west, from the Noa River. While one unit executed a diversionary maneuver, the main forces crossed the river. At the same time other units assaulted the town frontally. The defenders, being unable to withstand the twofold attack, gave up the town.

At this point, the brigade ran out of fuel. The supply units were still some 60 kilometers behind. However, the brigade was able to fill up its empty tanks with diesel fuel and oil saved from the burning Japanese fuel dumps, and the Soviet brigade moved forward toward Yenki.

The Japanese troops retreating from Wangching tried to halt the 72d Tank Brigade east of Tumen, but they were attacked by the Soviet 257th Tank Brigade, which was advancing with the 72d Brigade. At Nangyangtsung the brigade's advance was blocked by the Japanese 128th Infantry Division. A fierce battle developed. The three tank battalions of the brigade, moving separately, from different directions converged on the Japanese positions, destroyed several bunkers and other fortifications, and moved toward the nearby village, which had been made into a resistance center by its Japanese garrison. After a brief battle the garrison surrendered. The brigade continued its thrust toward Yenki, which was captured on 15 August.

On the right flank of the army group, shortly after midnight on 9 August the Thirty-fifth Army moved into action after a short artillery preparation which softened up Japanese strongpoints. The army crossed the Ussuri and Sungaru Rivers and negotiated a large stretch of marshy country. It penetrated the Japanese defense zone, and by nightfall reached the rear of the strongly fortified positions at Hutou, about 12 kilometers from the border. During the next five days all of the fortified

frontier zones were breached, and the army, moving through difficult, hilly terrain, advanced 120 to 150 kilometers inside Manchuria.

EXPLOITATION

Having crushed the Japanese resistance by the end of the first week of the war, the 1st Far Eastern Army Group overran numerous fortified zones, routed the main Japanese forces in them, and came close to the Harbin-Changchun line. The Japanese command lost control of most of its troops, and was faced with complete military defeat at the time of the surrender of Japan on August 15.

CONCLUSIONS

The plan of the three-front attack by Soviet forces on the Kwantung Army was imaginative, well conceived, and—taking into consideration its vast scope—simple. The portion of that plan assigned to the 1st Far Eastern Army Group was well designed to strike weak points in the formidable defense system constructed by the Japanese and well adapted both tactically and in the types of forces to be employed to the difficult natural obstacles in the area.

The Soviets used massed forces of combined arms for the attack. They had sufficient forces in reserve to exploit initial gains. In the area selected for the breakthrough they concentrated rifle divisions—deployed one per three kilometers of front—with unusually strong artillery support. By this overwhelming force they were able to penetrate the fortified zone. Having penetrated, they committed the X Independent Tank Corps to exploit the breakthrough, maintain the momentum of the attack, and prevent the Japanese from recovering and organizing a stable defense.

The Japanese had certainly fortified this portion of the front strongly and manned it with sizable forces. To what extent they were surprised by the sector selected for the breakthrough attack is not clear. However, they were clearly surprised by the suddenness and speed of the attack at night at the start of the hostilities. The advantage thus gained by the attackers was an important factor in the achievement of the breakthrough.

NORTH KOREAN INVASION OF SOUTH KOREA:
BREAKTHROUGH TO SEOUL, 25-28 JUNE 1950

Since the end of World War II Korea had been divided by the 38th Parallel of latitude into the communist Korean Peoples Democratic Republic (KPDR) and the democratic Republic of Korea (ROK). In 1950 the KPDR, having been unable to unite the country under its government by political and subversive means, invaded the ROK with encouragement and assistance from the USSR, in an attempt to achieve its objective by force of arms. This is an account of the breakthrough by forces of the KPDR of the ROK defenses along the 38th Parallel.

BACKGROUND

On the eve of the invasion of South Korea, the North Korean People's Army (NKPA) was organized in two corps, with ten divisions (1st, 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th, 13th, and 15th), an independent infantry regiment (the 766th), a motorcycle reconnaissance regiment (the 12th), a tank brigade (the 105th, composed of three tank regiments and one motorized regiment), and one independent tank regiment. The NKPA divisions were triangular in organization and had a strength of approximately 11,000 men. It had a small air force and an embryonic navy. In addition, North Korea had five Border Constabulary (BC) brigades (1st, 2d, 3d, 5th, and 7th) about 18,000 men strong, organized, trained, and supervised by Soviet personnel.

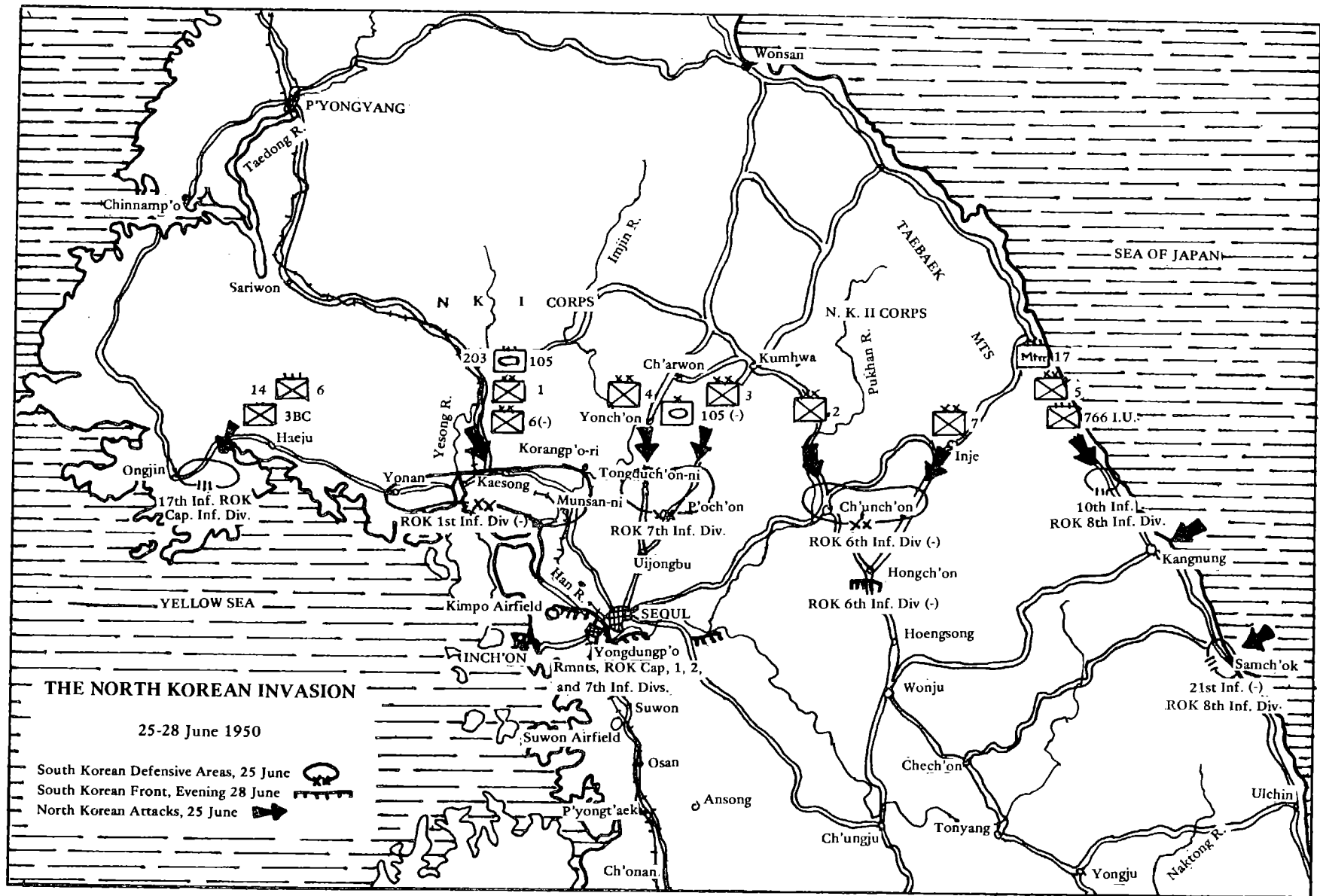
The personnel strength of the NKPA and BC was over 150,000 men. All the armament and equipment was Soviet made and Soviet provided. It consisted of 1,600 guns and mortars (76mm and 122mm howitzers, 122mm guns, 76mm selfpropelled guns, 45mm antitank guns, 120mm and 81mm mortars), 151 tanks, and 145 aircraft (only 30 pilots), of which 70 were bombers, 40 fighters, and the rest mostly trainers and reconnaissance planes.!!

The North Korean forces were well trained and well led. Most of the high ranking officers of the NKPA were Koreans who had formerly lived in the Soviet Union, and as Soviet citizens had served as line or staff officers with the Soviet armed forces in World War II. The North Korean General Staff was composed almost entirely of such individuals. The service heads and branch heads also were for the most part ex-Soviet citizens. The other officers had served with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (CPLA) or were commanders of Korean partisan units. In addition, a large group of Soviet advisers was attached to the GHQ, and advisers were assigned to various combat units and the technical and quartermaster branches.

About 65 percent of the NKPA troops were Koreans who had formerly served in the CPLA, giving the army combat experience and efficiency that it would not otherwise have had. Substantial numbers of these veterans were in the ranks of the 1st, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Divisions, which were deployed in the first echelon at the start of hostilities. Other NKPA formations at least had officers and non-commissioned officers from the CPLA.

The combat forces of the ROK Army were organized into eight divisions, the 1st to 8th (less number 4), and the Capital Division and one independent infantry regiment (the 17th). Five of the divisions (the 1st, 2d, 6th, 7th, and the Capital) had three regiments; two (the 3d and 8th) had two regiments, and one division (the 5th) had two regiments and one battalion. Only four divisions (the 1st, 6th, 7th and the Capital) were near full strength of 10,000 men; the rest had about 7,000 men each.

When the war started the total strength of the ROK Armed Forces was about 108,000 men. Of this the Army had nearly 98,000, the Marine Corps 1,100, the Air Force about 2,000, and the Coast Guard some 6,000. In the Army some 65,000 men were in the combat



units, and 33,000 in various headquarters and service organizations. The United States Korean Military Advisory Group (KMAG), had less than 500 US Army officers and enlisted men in South Korea to advise the ROK government and its armed forces on military matters.

The state of training of the South Korean troops was, in general, satisfactory. The majority of the units had completed small unit training at company level, and were engaged in battalion training. However, there were few men with active combat experience.

The South Korean forces were armed with US weapons and equipment. The ROK arsenal included over 700 artillery pieces and mortars, of which 91 were 105mm howitzers and the rest 81mm and 60mm mortars, about 140 57mm antitank guns, some 1,900 60mm bazookas, and 27 armored personnel carriers. The Coast Guard had 71 small vessels and the Air Force 12 liaison type aircraft and 10 trainers. No South Korean pilots were qualified to fly combat missions. There were no tanks and no heavy combat equipment of any type. The supply of artillery and mortar ammunition was low, enough for only a few days of combat. The entire Army had only 2,100 US Army motor vehicles. An estimated 15 percent of the weapons and 35 percent of the vehicles were unserviceable.

PLANS

By the end of May 1950, North Korean plans for invasion of South Korea were completed. The preparation had been directed and closely supervised by Soviet advisers and a group of high ranking Soviet staff officers specifically organized for this purpose. The overall planning and control was the responsibility of General Aleksey Innokentevich Antonov, the Chief of Staff of the Soviet General Staff.

The plan called for a surprise attack across the 38th Parallel on a 250 kilometer front from the Yellow Sea to the Sea of Japan. The main effort was to be directed toward Seoul through the Uijongbu Corridor. Supporting thrusts were to be launched against the Ongjin Peninsula in the west, against Chunchon and Hongchon in the central mountain chain, and along the coast in the east against Kangnung and Samchok. The last was to be combined with an amphibious operation in the Samchok and Kangnung areas.

The North Korean objective was to envelop, encircle, and destroy the main South Korean forces deployed north of the Han River and capture the capital city of Seoul. The North Korean High Command expected that such an operation would result in the disintegration of the ROK Army and immediate capitulation. However, should this not occur, the North Koreans did not anticipate any strong resistance south of the Han and expected to occupy the entire peninsula in about one month.

During the period 15-24 June, the North Korean Command moved all the forces assigned for the invasion, approximately 90,000 men and 150 T-34 tanks, to the close vicinity of the 38th Parallel, and deployed them along their respective planned lines of departure for the attack on South Korea.

Commander of the invasion force was General Choi Ung Jun. He was assigned seven infantry divisions and a few BC units. The North Korean Navy was to provide vessels for coastwise transport and amphibious operations.

The entire front was divided into four sectors—the western, the western-central, the central and the east coast. The first two were under the I Corps, the last two under the II Corps.

In the western sector, the NK 6th Infantry Division deployed two regiments for the attack toward Kaesong and one for the attack toward Ongjin. The NK 1st Infantry Division, with the supporting 203d Tank Regiment of the 105th Tank Brigade, concentrated its main force between Namchonjom and Kunhwa, ready to attack toward Korangpo-Munsan.

In the western-central sector, where the main breakthrough effort was planned, the NK 4th Infantry Division with the attached 107th Tank Regiment of the 105th Tank Brigade assembled in the Yonchon area ready to advance toward Tongduchon, Uijongbu and Seoul, and the NK 3d Infantry Division, with the attached 109th Tank Regiment of

the 105th Tank Brigade, concentrated near Unchon for the thrust along the road Pochon-Uijongbu-Seoul.

In the mid-central sector the NK 2d Infantry Division assembled between Kumhwa and Hwachon, ready to advance toward Chunchon, an important road center on the Pukhan River. Some 50 kilometers farther east, the NK 7th Infantry Division, with an attached tank regiment, concentrated in the Inje area, was ready to jump toward Hongchon.

On the east coast the NK 5th Infantry Division and the 766th Independent Infantry Regiment, as well as several guerrilla units, were assembled near Yangyank and poised to cross the parallel along the coastal road. Some elements of these units were assigned for amphibious landings at the Samchok and Kangnung areas.

On the eve of the North Korean offensive the ROK Army had the following forces deployed for defensive purposes in the border area:

In the west, the ROK 17th Independent Regiment (2,500 men) was deployed on the Ongjin Peninsula, having one battalion on the line facing the NKPA, and two battalions in reserve.

The Kaesong sector was defended by the ROK 1st Division (9,715 men), with one regiment manning the defense line, and two regiments in reserve at Kimpo (over 50 kilometers from the frontier) and Munsan.

The Tongduchon sector on the main route of approach toward Uijongbu and Seoul was defended by the ROK 7th Division (9,698 men) with one regiment near the parallel, and two in reserve behind it around Pochon and Uijongbu.

In the central sector, the ROK 6th Division (9,112 men) deployed one of its regiments in Chunchon to man the front line, and kept two regiments in reserve in Hongchon and Wonju. The Hongchon regiment was engaged in anti-guerrilla action.

In the east coast sector along the Sea of Japan, the ROK 8th Division (6,866 men) deployed one of its two regiments near the 38th Parallel at Kangnung, and the other in reserve at Samchok.

On the day of the North Korean invasion, the ROK Army had only five regiments on the entire front line. Since many officers and men had received weekend passes, the forces actually in effective positions along the 38th Parallel amounted to no more than four or five full strength battalions, except for the ROK 6th Division, where no passes were issued, and the positions were fully manned by the troops.

The ratio of forces greatly favored the North Koreans. Had the ROK units been at full strength the ratio of forces would have been as follows:

In the Ongjin area 2.6 : 1

In the Kaesong-Munsan area 2.2 : 1 (in tanks 40 : 0)

In the Tongduchon-Pochon area 2.3 : 1 (in tanks 80 : 0)

In the Chunchon-Hangchon area 2.4 : 1 (in tanks 30 : 0)

In the east coast area 1.6 : 1

However, since only a very small number of troops were able to reach their units in time to contribute effectively, and since the NKPA forces were concentrated in narrow sectors and the ROK defenders were widely spread along the front, the NKPA actually had a much greater advantage in force strength in the attack areas.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATION

At 0400 on a rainy Sunday morning, 25 June 1950, the NKPA, after a 20 minute artillery preparation, attacked south across the 38th Parallel.* The unexpected

*The North Korean Government, in an effort to justify the invasion, announced on the same day that the South Koreans had initiated the attack and that accordingly it was declaring war on the Republic of Korea. This falsehood is still held valid by the communist countries. In its June 1975 issue, the authoritative Soviet Military Historical Journal, (*Voenno Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*), published an article on Korea by Major General Professor V. Matsylenko in which it was stated that "at

blow surprised the ROK Army garrisons in their thinly held defense positions. Taking the initiative, the North Koreans intended, by flanking movements from all directions, to cut and destroy the ROK forces deployed along the parallel and the reserve in the near rear areas, and then close in on Seoul in the west and capture all other cities north of the Han River.

In the west, the Ongjin Peninsula, which was never considered defensible, because it was cut off by water from the rest of South Korea, was attacked by the 14th Regiment of the NK 6th Infantry Division and the 3d BC Brigade. After heavy fighting, the front line battalion of the ROK 17th Independent Regiment which defended the peninsula was overrun and lost most of its men. Two remaining battalions of the regiment were evacuated by sea to Inchon early the following morning. Thus, on the second day of war, the entire Ongjin Peninsula was in NKPA hands.

East of the Ongjin Peninsula the NK 6th Infantry Division (less the 14th Regiment engaged on Ongjin) advanced toward Kaesong some three kilometers south of the parallel. It was met just north of the city by two entrenched battalions of the 12th Regiment (ROK 1st Division). The third battalion of the regiment was deployed some 30 air kilometers to the west in the Yonan area and did not take part in the fight for the city, but fought a separate battle in Yonan. Elements of the 13th and 15th Regiments of the NK 6th Infantry Division attacked frontally and after a short but fierce fight broke through the South Korean defense perimeter. The assault was helped by an unusual operation. A train of some 15 cars loaded with North Korean troops and equipment moved south on the Pyongyang-Seoul rail lines and shortly after the start of hostilities arrived at the Kaesong railroad station, in the rear of the ROK troops. This sealed the fate of the city, and by 0930 Kaesong was entirely occupied by the North Koreans. The 12th Regiment ceased to exist as a combat unit. It lost almost all men and weapons, except for two companies (less than 200 troops) which escaped and reported to the division headquarters north of Seoul the next day.

The remaining two regiments of the ROK 1st Division, the 11th and the 13th, were ordered to move rapidly northward to the Munsan-Korangpo areas and occupy prepared defensive positions there to protect the approaches to the Imjim bridge. The 11th Regiment took up positions in the Munsan area and the 13th moved in to the right of it in the Korangpo area.

The NK 1st Infantry Division, supported by some 40 tanks of the 203d Tank Regiment, fought for nearly three days for the positions around Korangpo. Vastly outnumbered and outgunned, the ROK 13th Regiment stood fast and withdrew toward the Han River only after it was outflanked by the North Korean breakthrough in the Uijongbu Corridor and was threatened with being cut off.*

The main effort of the North Korean attack was in the western-central sector and directed toward the Uijongbu Corridor, the gateway to Seoul. It was delivered by the NK 3d and 4th Divisions, supported by two tank regiments with some 80 tanks. The NK 4th Infantry Division jumped off from the Yonchon area and pushed south along the Tongduchon-Uijongbu road. To the left of it, the NK 3d Infantry Division struck along the Kumhwa-Pochon-Uijongbu road. The two roads converge in Uijongbu less than 20 kilometers north of Seoul.

The North Korean attack was met by the ROK 7th Division. Its 1st Regiment was deployed along the 38th Parallel. Behind it, the 3d Regiment held positions at Tongduchon and on the road to the south, while the 9th Regiment was deployed in the area of Pochon. The single regiment near the border was no match for the concentrated infantry and tank attack, and in a short time the NKPA forces smashed through

daybreak units of the South Korean Army encroached upon the territory of the Korean People's Democratic Republic (2-3 kilometers) but suffered a repulse and were forced to retreat with heavy losses. The Korean People's Army then turned to the counter-offensive, during which it reached the southern regions of the country."

*Voенно Исторический Журнал, 6, 1970, criticizes the operation of the NK 1st Division, calling it indecisive and pointing out that it could not overcome the resistance of a small South Korean force.

the defenders' line, inflicting heavy losses on the ROK 1st Regiment and driving its remnants south toward the rest of the division positions. The South Koreans put up strong resistance as the NKPA units drove down upon them, but the defenders were unable to do more than slow their advance.

Late in the afternoon of 25 June the NK 4th Infantry Division broke through the Tongduchon defenses, captured the town and continued to advance southward. On the Ponchon road, Ponchon was firmly defended until midnight 25 June. Then the 9th Regiment, which was fighting there, was ordered to march immediately west to the Tongduchon road, where the entire ROK 7th Division was supposed to concentrate for an early morning counterattack. The defenses held by the 9th Regiment were to be taken over by the ROK 2d Division, which also was to counterattack at the same time as the 7th Division. However, the 2d Division, which was stationed at Taejon, over 120 kilometers south of Seoul, could not possibly reach the front line on time. As a result the NK 3d Division advanced south unopposed.

On the morning of 26 June the NK 3d and 4th Infantry Divisions with its supporting tanks reached the outskirts of Uijongbu and were poised for the converging attack on the city and further drive toward Seoul.

At that point the ROK 7th Division counterattacked. However, the failure of the 2d Division to join the 7th in the counterattack resulted in the collapse of the counterblow and catastrophic losses for the South Koreans. The ROK 7th Division after suffering heavy casualties retreated below Uijongbu. Two battalions of the ROK 2d Division—all of the division's units that arrived by the morning of 26 June—were unable to withstand the assault of the 7th Regiment of the NK 3d Infantry Division and fled into the surrounding hills. Late in the day both the NK 3d and 4th Infantry Divisions and the supporting elements of the 105th Tank Brigade entered Uijongbu, the last stronghold on the way to Seoul. The road to the South Korean capital was practically open, for there was no more organized South Korean force which could have stopped the NKPA north of Seoul.

During the day of 27 June, what was left of the ROK 7th Division and elements of the freshly introduced ROK 2d, 5th, and Capital Divisions fought uncoordinated delaying actions between Uijongbu and Seoul. However, confusion reigned. Roadblocks were built but seldom manned, many obstacles were not covered by fire, communication between units and higher commands was broken. At 1930 the first North Korean troops entered the suburbs of Seoul. Throughout the night of 27/28 June heavy fighting continued at the edge of the city and in the city itself. By morning of 28 June Seoul was in NKPA hands.

In the mid-central sector, meanwhile, the NKPA had attacked along two axes. The NK 2d Infantry Division struck against Chunchon, and the NK 7th Infantry Division attacked to the east of it against Hongchon. Both cities, according to the North Korean schedule, were to be taken during the first day of operation.

The Chunchon area was defended by one regiment of the ROK 6th Division, the 7th. Another regiment of the division was in Hongchon, and the third in Wonju, over 60 kilometers from the parallel, where the division headquarters also was located.

The main battle developed for Chunchon. The 7th Regiment, deployed in well dug-in positions, reinforced with concrete pillboxes on the high ridge just north of the city, staunchly defended all avenues of approach. The NK 2d Division tried to outflank the defenders. Its 6th Regiment attacked frontally along the river road, while the 4th Regiment climbed over the mountains, attempting to assault the city from the flank. However, facing persistent resistance, neither regiment was able to break through. In view of the reverses, the commander of the NK 2d Division decided to commit his reserve regiment, the 17th into the battle. This did not help much, and the South Koreans fought the NKPA to a standstill.

The failure of the NK 2d Infantry Division to capture Chunchon forced the North Korean High Command to change its plans. The NK II Corps was ordered to stop the advance of its 7th Infantry Division and the supporting tank regiment toward Hongchon and instead turn west toward Chunchon and assist the 2d Division in the battle for the city. The 7th Infantry Division reached the vicinity of Chunchon in the evening of 26 June and entered the battle on 27 June. The fight raged for the

entire day, and during the night of 27/28 June the ROK forces finally withdrew southward.

It should be pointed out that the success of the ROK 6th Division was primarily due to the fact that the division was on the alert, no passes had been issued, and the well prepared positions were fully manned. Also in favor of the South Koreans was the lack of tanks in the NK 2d Infantry Division. Tanks joined the battle for the city only after the arrival of the NK 7th Infantry Division.

Immediately after the fall of Chunchon the NK 7th Infantry Division moved southward toward its initial objective, the city of Hongchon, which it took a day later. The NK 2d Division, having suffered extremely heavy losses (about 40 percent) turned west toward Seoul.

On the remote east coast, across the high Taebaek Mountain Range from the ROK 6th Division, the two regiments of the ROK 8th Division were deployed defensively, the 10th Regiment just south of the parallel and the 21st Regiment about 40 kilometers south of the border, near Samchok.

The NK 5th Infantry Division attacked the 10th Regiment at daybreak on 25 June, and advanced south along the highway, meeting only slight resistance. To assist the advance of the 5th Division the North Koreans conducted an amphibious operation, landing at two points north and south of Samchok. This added to the surprise and greatly disorganized the actions of the ROK 8th Division. The Division, after suffering considerable losses, and having its retreat to the south cut by the amphibious force, withdrew toward the west across the mountain range (27 June), taking along what was left of its equipment and weapons. Having no more troops in front of it, the NK 5th Infantry Division continued its drive south unopposed.

It had taken the NKPA less than three days to break through the South Korean border defenses and penetrate more than 50 kilometers into South Korea, thus successfully ending the first phase of the operation. All the territory north of the Han River was overrun by the North Koreans. The NKPA suffered relatively small losses, the most serious by the 4th Division at the battle north of Uijongbu (about 1,100 casualties) and the 2d Division in the battle for Chunchon (estimated at about 4,000 casualties). The South Koreans lost nearly 50,000 men killed or captured, and almost 70 percent of their weapons and equipment. Of all the ROK divisions engaged in initial fighting only two (the 6th and the 8th) which fought in the areas of secondary North Korean effort escaped with their organization, weapons, and equipment relatively intact, although their losses were sizable.

EXPLOITATION

After breaking through the ROK border defenses and capturing Seoul, the North Koreans exploited their initial success with a lightning strike toward Pusan, which they hoped would end in total victory. However, early in August they were stopped by the combined South Korean and UN Forces along the Naktong River north of Pusan. The NKPA was unable to break through the so-called Pusan Perimeter and the offensive tapered off. When on 15 September US forces landed at Inchon, the North Korean Army was forced into a disorganized retreat northward, during which it suffered heavy losses in men and equipment.

CONCLUSIONS

Probably the major element in the achievement of a breakthrough of the South Korean defenses on the 38th Parallel was surprise. The South Koreans, and their US military advisors, were not expecting an attack, and the prepared defenses on the border were neither adequate nor adequately manned to resist a determined attack.

The North Korean armed forces overall were also superior in numbers, training, leadership (most of it trained by Russians or in Russian armies and accompanied by Soviet advisors), and equipment to the South Koreans. They concentrated almost their entire army in the several narrow sectors where breakthroughs were planned, achieving overwhelming superiority in those areas. Only minimal forces were left in the sectors they were holding, or where no operations were expected. And because a quick victory was anticipated, minimal reserves were provided.

The plan for the attack was based on excellent intelligence data on South Korean strengths, defense installations, front line positions, order of battle, and morale. Selecting the most important strategic points for the initial attack, and concentrating overwhelming strength at those points, the North Korean plan anticipated a rapid breakthrough, and it was achieved.

THIRD ARAB-ISRAELI WAR, 1967

The war that took place in the Middle East from 5-10 June 1967 was, for all practical purposes, three separate brief but intense wars, one between Israel and Egypt, one between Israel and Jordan, and one between Israel and Syria. On each of these fronts Israeli forces broke through Arab defense zones, at Rafah and Abu Ageila in the Sinai, at Jerusalem and Jenin in Jordan, and at Qala and Tel Fahar in Syria. This narrative covers the breakthrough operations in the Sinai and Syria. No narrative has been prepared for the Jordanian front.

BACKGROUND

President Nasser of Egypt, who had concluded an alliance with Syria (November 1966), accused Israel of threatening aggression against Syria and on 16 May 1967 promised to come to Syria's aid. Declaring a state of emergency, he moved several divisions close to the Israeli-Egyptian border, in the eastern Sinai. In the next two days Syria and Egypt put troops on maximum alert, and Jordan, Iraq, and Kuwait announced mobilization. On 18 May Nasser demanded the withdrawal of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF), which had been patrolling the 1948-1956 ceasefire line. UN Secretary General U Thant ordered an immediate UNEF withdrawal. On 22 May, Nasser, having placed a garrison at Sharm el Sheikh, announced the blockade of the Strait of Tiran, effectively closing the Israeli port of Eilat.

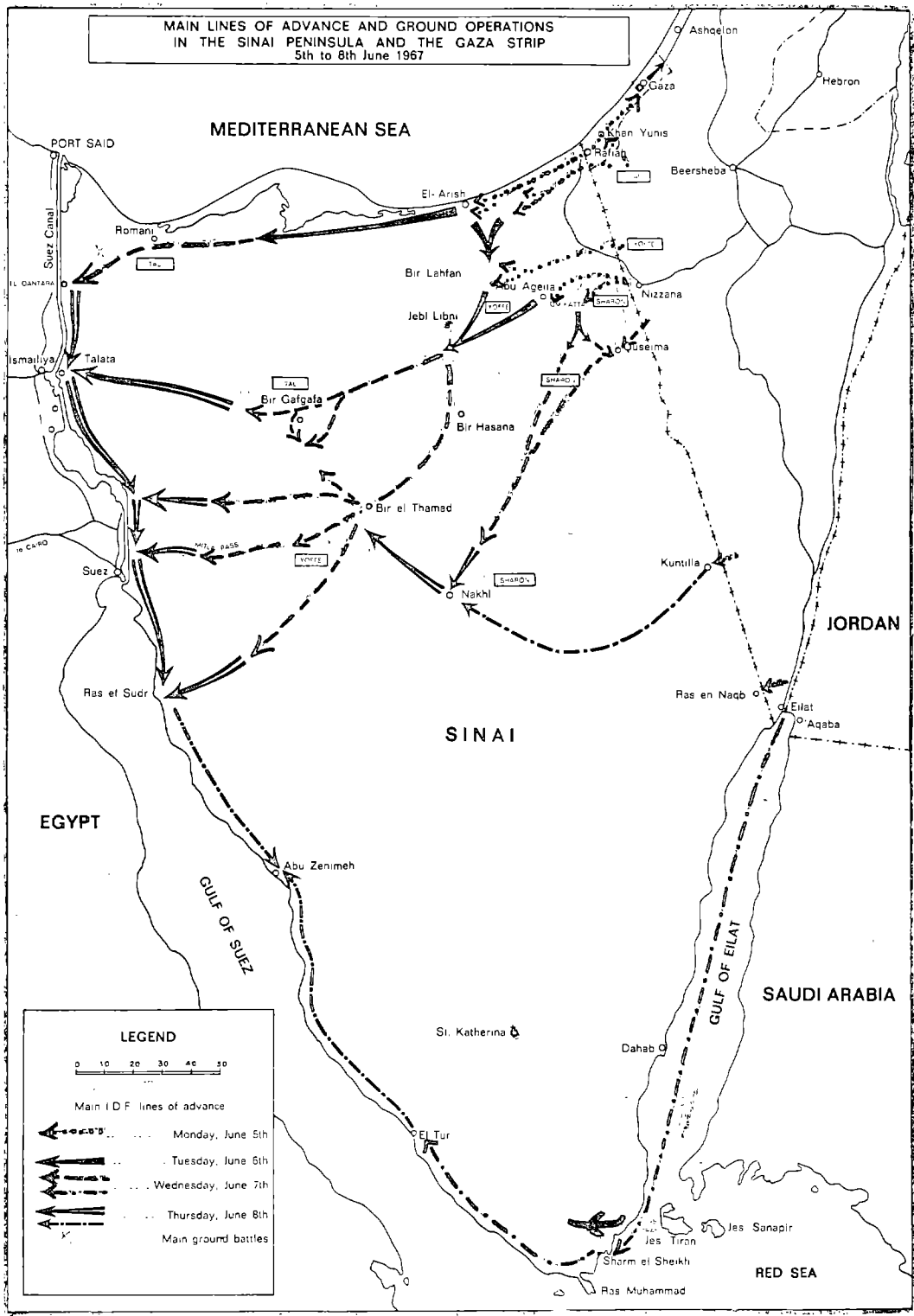
While the United States, within and without the UN, endeavored to find a formula for peace, both sides seemed bent on war. In fact, it is obvious in retrospect that Nasser had no intention of precipitating war. However, the Israelis took his threats and announced intentions seriously. On 20 May they completed partial mobilization. On 30 May Egypt and Jordan signed a Mutual Security Treaty, and Egypt at once sent General Abdul Moneim Riadh to take command of allied Arab forces on the Jordan front. Iraqi troops moved into Jordan on 31 May. By then Sudan and Saudi Arabia had joined the other Arab states in preparing for war.

Earlier Israel had announced that it would go to war under any of the following conditions: closing of the Strait of Tiran; sending of Iraqi troops to Jordan; signing of an Egyptian-Jordanian defense pact; withdrawal of UNEF forces. All of these conditions now existed. War thus was inevitable, although Nasser, surprisingly, did not think his actions would provoke an Israeli attack.

PART ONE - ISRAEL VS EGYPT

Plans

Israeli planners intended to initiate the war with a surprise attack on Egypt and overwhelm that nation's armies as quickly as possible, before dealing with Jordan or Syria. A massive series of air blows would knock out the Egyptian Air Force and (if necessary) the other Arab air forces and assure air superiority. On the ground the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip were to be attacked by forces of the Southern Command under Brigadier General Yeshayahu Gavish. The major elements of his command were three divisions, under Brigadier Generals Israel Tal, Ariel Sharon, and Avraham Yoffe, and independent units at Kuntilla, Eilat, and alongside the Gaza Strip. Their composition varied, but all had strong armored components. Tal's Division consisted of two armored brigades, a paratroop brigade and a reconnaissance force (nearly a brigade), with a total of 250 tanks, and 15-20,000 men. Sharon's Division was made up of an armored brigade, an infantry brigade, a paratroop brigade, six artillery battalions, and a reconnaissance unit. It had about 150 tanks and about 15,000 men.



Map 16

Yoffe's Division contained two armored brigades with approximately 200 tanks and about 12,000 men. The force opposite the Gaza Strip was about 7,000 men in strength, the brigade at Kuntilla was about 4,000 strong, and the unit at Eilat had less than 2,000 men. The total combat strength of General Gavish's command was more than 70,000 men and 750-800 tanks.

General Gavish's plan had four phases: (1) a breakthrough of the Egyptian front lines in two sectors: along the Rafah-El Arish coastal axis by Tal's division, and at Abu Ageila-Um Katef by Sharon's division; (2) the introduction of Yoffe's division either between the Tal and Sharon divisions, or farther south (depending upon the deployment of the Egyptians) to carry out a deep penetration into the Sinai and smash the second Egyptian line in the vicinity of Jebel Libni; (3) concentration of the armored units of Tal, Sharon, and Yoffe in the general triangle Nakh1, Mitla Pass, and Bir Gifgafa; and (4) an advance to the Canal and the capture of Sharm el Sheikh.

Contributing to the general operational concept, as well as to the objective of trapping Egyptian forces deep in the Sinai, was an elaborate deception plan carried out while the Israeli Army was mobilizing in the last week of May. The secret concentrations of the major forces and a variety of other activities were designed to make the Egyptians believe that, as in 1956, the Israelis would wheel into the Sinai from the south around a pivot near the Gaza Strip. In fact, the Israeli plan was just the opposite, a wheel from the north, pivoting around Eilat.

Egyptian forces were deployed as follows: In the north, in the Gaza Strip, was the 20th Palestine Liberation Army (PLA) Division, with a number of supporting Egyptian units, mainly artillery, and a brigade of about 50 Sherman tanks. The combat effectiveness of this division was low. Just to the south of the Gaza Strip was the hastily assembled 7th Infantry Division, in strong field fortifications in the Rafah-El Arish area. To the southeast, in the Abu Ageila-Kusseima area, was the 2d Infantry Division, a good division, but commanded by an inept political appointee. The 6th Mechanized Division, reinforced by a tank brigade, covered the area of Kuntilla-Nakh1; it was a good division with a competent commander. The 3d Infantry Division, in the Jebel Libni-Bir Hassna region, was in Army reserve. This division, too, was commanded by an incompetent political appointee. Also in Army reserve was an armored task force, essentially a reinforced armored brigade group, east of Bir Hassna and west of Lussan, generally backing up the 6th Mechanized Division. In strategic reserve, under control of GHQ in Cairo, was the effective, well-commanded, 4th Tank Division, deployed in the Bir Gifgafa area. An independent infantry brigade garrisoned the recently occupied positions at Sharm el Sheikh. During late May three hastily mobilized reserve infantry brigades had been rushed to garrison the strategic Giddi and Mitla Passes. The total Egyptian force in the Sinai was about 100,000 men and 930 tanks.

In 1966 the Egyptian General Staff had evolved a defensive-offensive plan for the defense of the Sinai, code-named "Kahir." The basic concept was of a mobile defense in depth, the mass of the army to be concentrated in the center of the peninsula, with only a covering screen in the border area. Save for the retention of such key defensive positions as El Arish and Abu Ageila, the Israeli enemy was to be allowed, indeed encouraged, to penetrate deeply into the Sinai to a previously designated "killing area," a triangle roughly defined by Jebel Libni, Suweitma (east of Bir Thamada), and Bir Gifgafa. It was anticipated that by the time the enemy had marched and fought his way across the desert to this region he would have fully committed himself, and his deployment would be clearly known to the waiting Egyptians, who were prepared to envelop all or most of the invading army. The Egyptians were also prepared to carry out a second, last-ditch defense back at the three defiles.

Although plan Kahir was committed to paper, little had been done to implement it. Furthermore, when President Nasser ordered the massing of forces east of the Suez Canal in May 1967, he refused to permit redeployment in accordance with the plan, since he was not willing to abandon, even temporarily, Gaza, Rafah, Kuntilla, El Arish, or Abu Ageila. Then came a series of orders from Field Marshal Amer, Commander of the Egyptian Armed Forces, shifting units around from place to place. Thus, when war broke out, the Egyptian units were confused as to their missions and plans.

Breakthrough Operations

Beginning at 0845 Egyptian time on 5 June, a preemptive attack by the Israeli Air Force caught the Egyptians by surprise. Israeli aircraft destroyed about 300 Egyptian aircraft on the ground and eight MiG-21s in the air, and killed 100 of Egypt's qualified pilots, at the cost of 19 Israeli aircraft. This surprise attack assured Israeli air supremacy for the whole campaign.

Simultaneously the Israeli ground forces began their move across the Sinai Peninsula. The first task of General Tal's division was to break through in the Rafah-El Arish sector, held by some six brigades of the 20th PLA and Egyptian 7th Division, including about 70 tanks. Rafah was an essential link in the Egyptian defensive system linking Gaza and Khan Yunis in the north, and Abu Ageila to the southeast, with the main Egyptian base at El Arish to the west.

Rafah was defended by a brigade of the 20th PLA Division supported by miscellaneous Egyptian units, including armor, artillery, antitank units, and antiaircraft units. Running south-southwest from the town, for a distance of more than ten kilometers, was a strong defensive line, consisting of barbed wire, antitank guns and extensive minefields, defended by two infantry brigades of the Egyptian 7th Infantry Division, supported by a 122mm howitzer brigade and a battalion of 100mm guns. This defensive zone was the principal Egyptian concentration in the area and would have to be neutralized or destroyed before any further advance toward the El Arish base could be made.

To avoid a frontal attack, General Tal decided to envelop this formidable defensive position by penetrating the Palestinian-Egyptian coastal defenses near Khan Yunis, defended by elements of the 20th PLA Division. Once the Israelis had reached the main road and railroad, Tal intended to drive west to overwhelm Rafah and expose the left flank of the 7th Division's position south of the town.

At 0815 on the 15th, Tal's 7th Armored Brigade, under Colonel Shmuel Gonen, struck westward across the frontier into the Gaza Strip toward Khan Yunis. Tal's other armored brigade, under Colonel Menachem Aviram, struck due south through the sand dunes to outflank the Egyptian defenses running south from Rafah. Linking these widely divergent prongs of a double envelopment, the paratroop brigade of Colonel Rafael Eitan, supported by light and medium armor from the division's reconnaissance regiment, carried out a holding attack against Rafah.

Gonen's thrust broke through Egyptian defenses near Khan Yunis. Without stopping, the brigade drove southwest from Khan Yunis toward Rafah in two parallel columns. On the right was a battalion of Pattons, advancing along the railroad line. Further inland, following the road directly toward the Rafah junction, a regiment of Pattons and AMZs was followed by a Centurion battalion. The antitank positions just north of the intersection, supported by several dug-in tanks, were hit by a pincer movement from front and rear. Surprised particularly by the unexpected attack from the north, the Egyptian defenders put up little resistance, and were rapidly overwhelmed.

Gonen and his tankers advanced quickly to Sheikh Zuweid, a strongly fortified position held by the northern of the two 7th Division brigades south of Rafah. Once again the combined shock, surprise, and confusion created by the two-pronged tank attack enabled the tankers to overrun the infantry position with relatively few losses.

Under instructions from Tal, Gonen sent most of his brigade toward El Arish, while he returned to Rafah with one of his battalions. Following closely behind Gonen's assaults at the Rafah crossroads and Sheikh Zuweid, Eitan's paratroop brigade captured and consolidated the Rafah strongpoints and Sheikh Zuweid. Many Egyptians were captured, and the remainder withdrew in considerable confusion westward into the desert.

Meanwhile, Aviram's armored brigade had more difficulty in attempting to envelop the 7th Division entrenchments south of Sheikh Zuweid. While Aviram's mechanized infantry battalion made a holding attack, his leading tank battalions turned short and passed between two of the Egyptian strongpoints. In the confused

fighting that followed, Aviram and his battalion were surrounded by the Egyptians and subjected to heavy artillery, antitank and small arms fire. The second tank battalion reached the 7th Division artillery positions shortly after these had been hit by an Israeli air strike. After silencing the guns, and creating havoc in the Egyptian rear, this battalion turned back to assist Aviram and his beleaguered unit. But with the Egyptian infantry recovered from their surprise and shock, it was a more difficult job to return east than it had been to make the original rush to the west.

It was because of this confused and initially dangerous situation that Tal had ordered Gonen to return to Rafah with one of his tank battalions. But before Gonen could move to his rescue, Aviram's brigade retrieved the situation, overrunning the Egyptian infantry positions, which were quickly seized by the Israeli infantrymen. After regrouping, in the late afternoon Aviram took a tank battalion and an infantry company to assault the isolated right flank Egyptian battalion. He attacked shortly after dark; by midnight the battle was over, the Egyptian battalion retreating westward in confusion.

The main positions of the Egyptian 7th Infantry Division were completely in the hands of the Israelis. That division suffered more than 3,000 casualties; Israeli losses were less than 500 killed and wounded.

When it had become evident that the situation in Aviram's sector was under control, Tal ordered Gonen to return west toward the main Egyptian stronghold of El Arish, and sent with him the remainder of Uri's regiment, which had been in division reserve. After a brief battle with bypassed Egyptian units at Jiradi, Gonen rejoined the rest of his battalion at about 0300 on the outskirts of El Arish. After replenishment of fuel, at dawn the 7th Armored Brigade attacked El Arish. By mid-morning the town and its surrounding positions were secured.

Having accomplished the first phase of his assigned mission, Tal issued orders for carrying out the second phase. He sent one column, consisting of one of Aviram's armored battalions, most of the division engineers, and most of the division artillery, in a thrust toward the canal down the coastal road, under the command of Colonel Granit Yisrael. This column (Task Force Granit) was to be joined by Eitan's paratroop brigade, to which was attached some armor from Uri's regiment, as soon as they had completed their mission in and near Gaza.

The remainder of the division, spearheaded by Gonen's brigade, turned south toward Bir Lahfan and then westward toward Jebel Libni, in accordance with the original plan.

Meanwhile, the leading elements of General Sharon's division crossed the frontier near El Auja and Nitzanan shortly after 0800. After brief clashes with Egyptian outposts, at Tarat Um Basis and Um Tarpe, by 1500 Sharon's reconnaissance battalion and armored brigade had reached the El Arish-Abu Ageila highway at several places north of the fortified complex at Abu Ageila-Um Katef. They established a block northwest of Abu Ageila to prevent any possibility of reinforcements arriving from El Arish or Bir Lahfan. The reconnaissance battalion of AMX tanks and jeeps also overran the small position of Darb el Turki, connecting the Um Katef position with Kusseima.

Sharon's plan for dealing with the main Um Katef-Abu Ageila positions was based upon intensive Israeli study of their failure there in 1956. The Centurion battalion of Lt. Colonel Zippori's armored brigade—crossing a supposedly impassable area of sand dunes—was to envelop the Abu Ageila-Um Katef complex from the north, while the Super Sherman battalion and mechanized infantry battalion from that brigade conducted a holding attack against the front of the Um Katef strongpoint. The main effort would be made by Lt. Colonel Adam's infantry brigade, attacking over sand dunes from north of Um Katef, parallel to the lines of entrenchments, one battalion assigned to each of the three lines. As the infantry advanced, the Super Sherman battalion would swing around to the right from the front of the Um Katef position into the sandy area, to follow behind Adam's infantry, to strengthen the envelopment.

This assault was to take place after dark, when the Egyptian artillery would not be able to fire with precision against the attackers, and when the less disciplined Egyptian soldiers would be expected to become disorganized. While the Israeli artillery concentrated on the Egyptian infantry in front of the attacking units, one battalion of Colonel Dani Matt's paratroopers was to carry out a helicopter assault to neutralize the Arab artillery in the rear. The remaining paratroop battalion was in division reserve.

The operation began at dusk, with delivery of the paratroop battalion by helicopter into the Egyptian artillery area in three waves. The Israeli artillery, which had been displaced well forward during the late afternoon and had registered on a number of important checkpoints before dusk, now began to hammer the Egyptian trenches. Egyptian artillery, confused by the paratroop attack, could not reply.

At 2300, after an intensive pre-assault artillery preparation, Adam's infantry attacked the Um Katef positions from the north. As the battalions moved forward in line in accordance with the plan, the Super Shermans swung in behind them, providing suppressive overhead fire down the trenches.

Meanwhile, the Centurion battalion had reached the El Arish-Abu Ageila road at dusk, then waited for H-Hour. As the fighting broke out to the south, these tanks advanced southward and effectively neutralized the defenders of the Abu Ageila strongpoint. They then bypassed the crossroads and continued southward toward the center of the Egyptian position (from which the paratroops had withdrawn). There they were to be joined by the remainder of the Super Sherman battalion, ready to deal with an anticipated Egyptian counterattack. There were careful prearranged plans for nighttime coordination.

Although the Shermans were delayed by a number of Egyptian minefields and road demolitions, by 0330 they finally broke through the Um Katef position and successfully joined forces with the Centurions. About this time, as anticipated, the Egyptian armor moved up from reserve to help restore the battle in the contested position. A fierce and confused armor struggle then took place, with the Sherman and Centurion battalions having considerably the better of the battle in the darkness.

After losing about 40 tanks—nearly half its strength—at about dawn the Egyptian armored brigade began to withdraw, its commander recognizing that it would be hurt even more seriously if the Israelis were able to operate in daylight with air support. By this time the Israelis had lost 19 tanks. The infantry was completely evacuated by the Egyptians. The Egyptians in the Abu Ageila strongpoint, also, had withdrawn during the night.

While the divisions of Generals Tal and Sharon were fighting their fierce battles on the approaches to the northern and central corridors across the Sinai, General Avraham Yoffe's division was advancing across the trackless desert between them. The Egyptians, confident that these sand dunes were not traversable by military forces, either on foot or in tracked vehicles, had not put any defenses in this region. However, careful Israeli reconnaissance of the Sinai desert during the weeks after the 1956 War showed that this desert could be crossed by tracked vehicles, even though with difficulty.

One of Yoffe's brigades, commanded by Colonel Isska Shadni, headed across country, due west through the sand dunes, toward the road junction of Bir Lahfan. The other brigade, that of Colonel Elhanan Sela, at the same time moved southwestward across a desert track just north of Sharon's division, by passing the early morning fighting at Abu Ageila, and expecting to reach Jebel Libni late on the 6th. There it was anticipated that Shadni's and Sela's brigades would combine, probably with some elements from both Tal's and Sharon's divisions, to fight a major battle for control of the central Sinai.

Shadni's brigade was held up not only by the difficulty of the terrain but by the necessity for clearing out Egyptian minefields. Thus it was almost dark on 5 June when Shadni's brigade reached the vicinity of Bir Lahfan, after an advance of about 50 kilometers. The brigade was soon in blocking positions across the three roads to the junction, from El Arish in the north to Jebel Libni in the southwest,

and Abu Ageila in the southeast. An Egyptian force, unaware that it was surrounded, was entrenched around the junction.

Meanwhile, as the Israelis expected, the Egyptians tried to reinforce El Arish and Abu Ageila from the division at Jebel Libni. Two brigades—one armored and one mechanized—were sent northeast from Jebel Libni along the road through Bir Lahfan, planning to envelop Sharon from the north. At about 2100 this force struck Shadni's roadblock southwest of Bir Lahfan, precipitating an all-night engagement. During the fight the Egyptians lost 28 tanks and the Israelis about half that number. The fight continued on into the morning.

During the early morning, Gonen's brigade, spearheading Tal's advance toward Jebel Libni, approached Bir Lahfan from El Arish. After establishing radio contact with Shadni, Gonen sent his mechanized infantry down the road—smashing through the Bir Lahfan position—to support Shadni. With his two tank battalions Gonen turned right into the desert, to envelop the Egyptian west flank.

At about 1000 an Israeli air strike hit the Egyptians southwest of Bir Lahfan in preparation for a combined attack by Shadni and Gonen. Then, as the assault was pressed home, the Israelis discovered, to their surprise, that the Egyptians were already withdrawing. This withdrawal—although the Israelis did not know it—was in response to orders from Jebel Libni. Gonen and Shadni immediately pursued.

Late in the afternoon of 6 June the brigades of Shadni and Gonen approached Jebel Libni from Bir Lahfan. Quickly they deployed for action and attacked the Egyptian fortified camp. About the same time they were joined on their left flank by Yoffe's other brigade—Colonel Sela's—just arriving by way of Abu Ageila, having bivouacked most of the day in the desert.

The battle for the Jebel Libni camp began at dusk and continued on into the night. Actually the Israelis were engaged by only the Egyptian rear guard, since—as a result of withdrawal orders from Cairo—the main body of the division was already moving down the road toward Bir Gifgafa and Ismailia. In its desperate defense the Egyptian rear guard—which began withdrawing before midnight—lost 32 tanks.

Thus, by dawn of 7 June the Israelis had consolidated their initial multiple penetrations into one massive breakthrough. In the north Task Force Granit from General Tal's division was moving along the coastal road toward Romani and the Canal. Yoffe's and Tal's divisions, comprising the central Israeli force, having captured Jebel Libni, the principal Egyptian installation of the east-central Sinai, were prepared to exploit toward Bir Gifgafa and the Giddi and Mitla Passes. Further south Sharon's division was advancing toward Nakhil, threatening to isolate elements of the Egyptian 6th Mechanized Division and of the independent armored task force still in the El Thamad area; these Egyptians had been held in that area by the advance from the southern Negev of an independent Israeli armored brigade, under Colonel Albert Mendler, which had captured Kuntilla on the 6th. Also far to the rear most of the garrison of the Gaza Strip had surrendered to an Israeli reinforced brigade under Colonel Reshev; the remainder of that garrison, at Khan Yunis, was about to surrender to Colonel Eitan's paratroop brigade.

The Israeli breakthrough had been greatly facilitated by the inept leadership of Egyptian Field Marshal Amer, who had severely damaged the plan of his General Staff by confused maneuvers before the Israeli attack, and who completed the ruination of that plan by ordering a withdrawal from the Sinai before the main elements of his command had been engaged.

Exploitation

Almost complete destruction of the Egyptian forces in the Sinai was accomplished on 7 and 8 June, primarily by two mutually-supporting Israeli actions, but aided greatly by Egyptian performance. First, and probably most important, was the devastating effect of unhampered and unchallenged Israeli air attacks on the retreating Egyptian columns, and upon the few isolated defensive positions which Egyptian units attempted to hold, in efforts to delay the Israeli ground advance.

Second, General Gavish extemporized a unique and effective exploitation plan when he realized that large portions of the Egyptian army had not been engaged or cut off. He ordered his two central divisions—Tal and Yoffe—to send spearhead columns westward to cut through and around the retreating Egyptians, then to establish roadblocks against which the main bodies of the divisions would crush Egyptian forces thus isolated. From Jebel Libni Tal sent Gonen's brigade as his spearhead toward Bir Gifgafa. At the same time, Yoffe sent Shadin's brigade southwestward from Jebel Libni to seize the Giddi and Mitla Passes. Aviram was to follow Gonen toward Bir Gifgafa, driving bypassed Egyptians before him against the anvil of Gonen's roadblocks. Sela was to perform a similar mission in following Shadni toward the passes.

The demoralization of the Egyptians was already well in process before the Israeli Air Force and the tanks of Gonen and Shadni began to slash at them. The groundwork had been established by confusion and incipient panic created by Field Marshal Amer's inexplicable and unexplained withdrawal order. The panic became real when a number of the senior Egyptian commanders carried out their withdrawal orders too literally, rushing back to the Canal in their cars, and abandoning their troops, on foot and in trucks, to get back as best they could.

Tal's division, operating against rear guards of the competent Egyptian 4th Tank Division, did not move as rapidly as Gavish and Tal had hoped. But only a relatively small number of stragglers was bagged by Aviram's and Gonen's leapfrogging brigades. At Bir Gifgafa one Egyptian armored brigade was encircled by Gonen, and destroyed by his brigade and Aviram's. It was a brilliant success, but the tangible results were disappointing.

The bag at the Giddi Pass was also disappointing. At the Mitla Pass, however, after a series of running fights with retreating Egyptians, most of Shadni's tanks ran out of fuel and ammunition before they reached the eastern end of the Pass. With the few troops he could bring with him, Shadni seized captured Egyptian weapons and ammunition, and established an effective roadblock in front of the entrance to the pass. Desperate Egyptians came close to overrunning this small and isolated Israeli force, but without any top-level coordination these frantic efforts failed. With the arrival of Sela late that night, Shadni was rescued and a major portion of the Egyptian army destroyed.

Simultaneously, further west, Sharon and Mendler had cooperated at Nakh1 to defeat an Egyptian attempt to break through from El Thamad. About the same time Sharm el Sheikh, abandoned by the Egyptians, was seized by an Israeli paratroop force.

On the 8th, Task Force Granit, Gonen's 7th Armored Brigade, and Sela's brigade all pushed westward against the remnants of the Egyptian Army, whose delaying efforts were better coordinated than they had been the previous day. But Egyptian strength was so depleted that they could not offer prolonged or effective resistance to the Israeli advance, which reached the Canal near Kantara in mid-afternoon, and arrived opposite Suez at about 0200 the next morning.

One company from Sela's brigade, advancing southwest from the Mitla Pass, reached Ras Sudar on the Gulf of Suez shortly after midnight. A paratroop unit was dropped at Ras Sudar, shortly after that town had been entered by Sela's tanks. The combined force then proceeded southward along the road east of the Gulf of Suez, while the paratroops from Sharm el Sheikh moved north to El Tur. The two forces joined at about mid-day on the 9th at Abu Zenima. Except for the marshlands east of Port Fouad, the entire Sinai Peninsula was now in Israeli hands.

Total Egyptian combat losses in a little more than four days of intensive fighting are not known, although Egyptian casualties were officially reported as 10,000 soldiers and 1,500 officers killed. Perhaps half of these were killed in battle; most of the remainder probably died of thirst and exhaustion in the desert. The Israelis captured 5,000 soldiers and 500 officers, and of these about half were wounded. The Egyptians left some 700 tanks in the Sinai, 600 having been destroyed and 100 captured intact and undamaged. In addition, either destroyed or captured intact were about 400 Russian-made field guns, 50 self-propelled guns, 30 155mm guns,

and about 10,000 trucks and other vehicles. On November 23, when announcing Egyptian casualties, President Nasser confirmed that 80% of Egypt's military equipment that had been committed in the Sinai battle had been lost.

Israeli losses on this front were reported as 275 men killed, 800 wounded, and 61 tanks destroyed.

PART TWO - ISRAEL VS SYRIA

Plans

The Golan Heights is a plateau extending westward from the Damascus Plain. It is bounded by Mt. Hermon on the north, the upper Jordan Valley and the Sea of Galilee (Lake Tiberias) on the west, and the Yarmuk River on the south. A rugged escarpment at the western edge drops abruptly 1,500 feet to the below-sea-level Huleh Valley and the Sea of Galilee, and dominates eastern Galilee. Since 1949 the Syrians had built a defense line with non-continuous rows of bunkers and tank and gun emplacements more than ten kilometers deep, with about 265 guns along the length of the escarpment in position just behind it.

During the first four days of the war, Syrian artillery shelled Israeli settlements in the Huleh Valley and was hit with counterbattery fire. Frequent Israeli air strikes were made on Syrian positions. Otherwise the only ground action came on 6 June, when a Syrian force of about one infantry battalion with 15 to 20 tanks made three attacks on separate positions just across the frontier near Dan and were driven off with the help of air strikes.

Brigadier General David Elazar's Israeli Northern Command (including attached units from Central Command) consisted of eight brigades: three armored, and five infantry. Most of the infantry brigades had a company or battalion of tanks, and at least one of the battalions in each brigade was mounted in halftracked armored cars. Of these brigades, two were deployed opposite the Syrian frontier, one was nearby, opposite Lebanon, and an armored brigade was in reserve not far from the Syrian frontier. Elazar's other units, beginning 5 June, were deployed against the northern defenders of Jordan's West Bank.

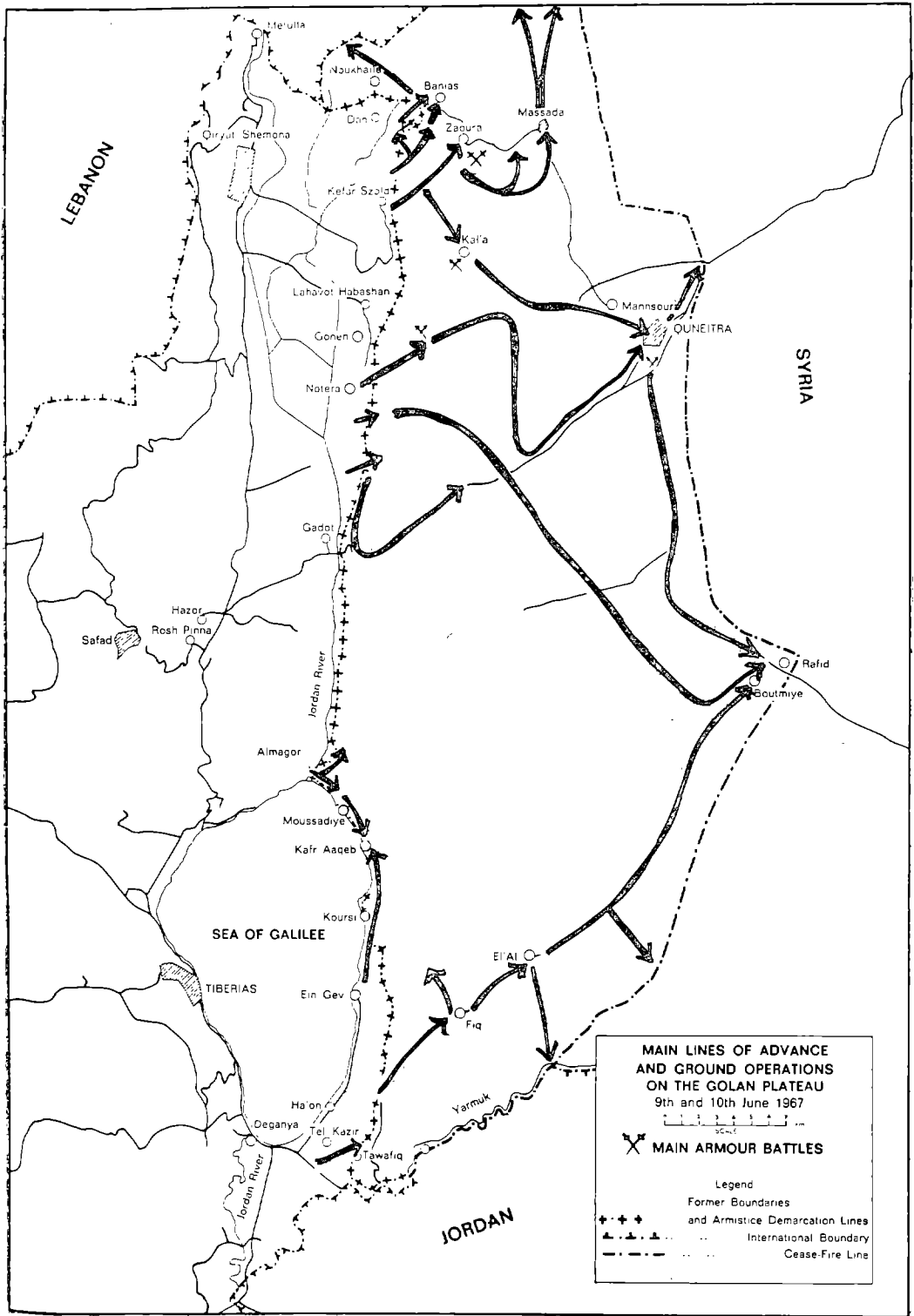
Syrian forces, under the command of General Yousef Chakkour, totaled about 70,000 troops, with combat elements organized into twelve brigades: six infantry, three armored, and three mechanized. The six infantry brigades were deployed in two lines on the Golan Heights west of Kuneitra. Two armored and two mechanized brigades were deployed between Kuneitra and Damascus; the remaining two brigades were stationed in and around Damascus.

General Elazar had been anxious to attack Syria since 6 June, and was convinced that he could carry out the operation with the troops available to him. However, the Israeli General Staff insisted that he wait for reinforcements to be moved up from the Jordanian front before undertaking an assault. Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan was particularly emphatic in cautioning Elazar against any overt activity that could lead to major ground hostilities. With the Israeli Army already occupied on two fronts, Dayan was worried about the possibility of Soviet reaction if Israeli troops moved against Syria.

After the ceasefire on the Jordan front began, late on 7 June, Elazar received permission from the General Staff to attack the Syrians on 8 June. Shortly after midnight, however, he was ordered to wait until the 9th. Meanwhile, heavy firing was taking place all along the front.

Early in the morning of 9 June, during a furious exchange of artillery fire, General Elazar received orders to attack. Long prepared plans called for the main breakthrough to take place in the Tel Azazyat-Qala-Zaoura area of the northern Golan Heights. The Israeli attack would begin with an infantry-armor thrust up the ridge south of Tel Azazyat, through territory that was so difficult and steep that it had been only lightly fortified by the Syrians. Such a drive, if successful, would open the old road through Baniyas, at the foot of Mount Hermon, permitting an armored advance through Masa'ada toward Kuneitra from the north.

At the same time, secondary attacks at night with armor support would be made along the heights farther south, near the Jordanian strongholds of Darbashiya,



Map 17

Dardara, and Jalabina. In the southern sector paratroopers and armor would attack Tawafik, Kfar Hareb, Fiq, El Al, and Boutmiya, to open up the southern access into the Golan Heights. Concentrated air support would be available to the attackers throughout the operation.

The main effort in the north was to be made by an armored brigade under Colonel Albert Mendler (who had been rushed north for this assignment after successfully commanding the diversionary force in the Kuntilla-Nakhl area in the Sinai), and the Golani Infantry Brigade, under the command of Colonel Yona Efrat. While Mendler's brigade, assisted by bulldozers, was driving its way up the mountainside north and east of Kfar Szold, the Golani Brigade, on the extreme left, would follow the old main road from Dan toward Banias, first striking the Syrian fortifications at Tel Azaziyat, then driving eastward against Syrian positions on the heights of Tel Fahar.

Breakthrough Operations

At 1130 Mendler's brigade, jumping off from the vicinity of Kfar Szold, crossed the border. The route lay over extremely difficult terrain, which had to be negotiated during daylight, with the entire column moving along a single axis. The ascent to the top of the ridge had to be carried out smoothly, despite heavy Syrian fire. Any stoppage of vehicles en route would block the entire column, and would leave it completely vulnerable to devastating fire from Syrian guns on top of the ridge.

Mendler's troops headed generally east and northeast up the steep rocky slope, led by an engineer detachment with eight unprotected bulldozers, followed closely by Centurion tanks and halftracks. The bulldozers almost immediately came under withering fire from dug-in Syrian tanks. These tanks were later destroyed by Israeli infantry, but all of the bulldozers were hit, three of them were destroyed, and each of them lost several crews during this costly advance.

Surprisingly, the momentum never faltered. The position of Naamush was easily overrun by the advancing tank force. From there it was to follow a rough road which led in the general direction of Zaoura. Unknown to the Israelis, however, there were two of these mountain tracks, and the leading battalion took the wrong one, leading east through Sir Adiv to Qala, instead of northeast to Zaoura.

It was not until the leading tank battalion was engaged against the defenses of Sir Adiv and Qala—which included antitank obstacles, SU-100 guns, and a variety of antitank weapons—that Mendler realized the mistake. This was not serious, however, since the crest had been reached. Mendler therefore split his brigade, allowing the lead column to continue the attack on Qala, while his second brigade advanced on Zaoura, which was quickly captured at about 1600.

The formidable defenses of Qala, however, continued to frustrate Mendler's leading battalion, which was repulsed several times and left with only two tanks still in operation. Shortly after dark, Mendler's battalion from Zaoura moved south to envelop the Qala position, which the Syrians then promptly evacuated.

Meanwhile, at about noon on the 9th, the Golani Brigade had jumped off from the vicinity of Dan, advancing in two columns. One of these took the old road toward Banias; the other went across country, between the Syrian positions of Tel Azaziyat and Tel Fahar. Tel Azaziyat was bypassed, and the two principal columns of the brigade converged on Tel Fahar, where three double-apron barbed wire fences, and several minefields, surrounded a number of trenches, machine gun and antitank positions, and dugouts. After three hours of fierce hand-to-hand fighting in and around the trenches Colonel Efrat's troops finally cleared this key fortification.

The defenders of Tel Azaziyat, now exposed to fire from their right rear, withdrew about dark, and the Golani Brigade soon occupied this height as well. Patrols were pushed further up the escarpment, and by midnight the Golani had secured positions at the top of the first crest, having achieved their first day's objective.

While the efforts of the main Israeli attack force were thus crowned with success, the infantry brigades of Colonel Emanuel Shehed and Colonel Yehuda Gavish, deployed further south, carried out their assigned secondary attacks. Three key Syrian positions were taken at Darbashiya, Jalabina and Dardara, just northeast of

the Sea of Galilee. Just after nightfall Colonel Uri Ram's armored brigade, which had moved up from Jordan, jumped off from the vicinity of Gonen, north of Darbashiya, and pushed its way up the winding mountain road to seize the village of Rawiya, on the Trans Arabian Pipeline (known as the TAP line).

Thus, by midnight the first and most powerful Syrian defensive line had been penetrated and virtually smashed. However, the Israelis had defeated only about one quarter of the Syrian Army, and had not encircled any major defensive positions. There was little firing between midnight and dawn, as the Israeli units regrouped, rested, and prepared for continuing the fight the following day. During the evening the Syrian armored and mechanized brigades from Damascus joined the four reserve brigades east of Kuneitra. However, not only were these brigades not committed, no coordinated defensive or offensive efforts were made by the three second line brigades north, south, and west of Kuneitra, who simply held their positions, until ejected from them the following morning.

Shortly after dawn on the 10th of June, Lieutenant Colonel Moshe Bar Kochva's armored brigade, which also had recently been fighting in Jordan, pushed up the road from Dan behind the Golani Brigade, to attack toward Tel Harma, and the village of Baniyas. These attacks were successful, and the two brigades, now securely on the Golan Plateau, moved eastward from Baniyas, north of Zaoura, to clear Ein Fite and Masa'ada on the southern slopes of Mt. Hermon.

Also shortly after dawn Mendler's brigade moved eastward from Zaoura and Qala in the general direction of Kuneitra. At the same time Ram's brigade, after advancing southeast along the TAP line to Kfar Naffakh, also turned northeast toward Kuneitra. Thus by late morning a complete breakthrough had been achieved, and three Israeli brigades were advancing toward Kuneitra on a broad front, in an arc extending from Masa'ada in the north to Kfar Naffakh in the south.

Exploitation

An expected Syrian counterattack did not materialize, and by 1300 the three Israeli brigades had the city of Kuneitra completely surrounded. Mendler's brigade then advanced into the center of the city, encountering no opposition except for an occasional sniper, and, after the tanks crossed and recrossed the city several times, Mendler reported by 1430 that it was secure.

Meanwhile, an equally successful but very different kind of operation was taking place on the southern Golan Heights between the Sea of Galilee and the Yarmuk River. Operations in this region were coordinated by Brigadier General Dan Lazar, General Elazar's deputy. The principal force was a division commanded by General Peled, which had just completed a successful operation against the Jordanians in Samaria. The division, substantially reorganized, included Colonel Avnon's infantry brigade, Colonel Mordechai Gur's paratroop brigade (which had captured Jerusalem), and a mixed armored and infantry brigade from the Beit Shean area.

Avnon's brigade led the advance, climbing the cliffs to Tawafik and capturing the abandoned village at about 1500 on 10 June. The armor then followed, along the winding Yarmuk Valley road to the heights. Simultaneously a helicopter-borne paratroop battalion took the towns of Fiq and El Al, cutting the lines of communication of all of the Syrian troops remaining in the southwestern Golan area. This battalion then proceeded to dash northward toward Boutmiya and the Rafid junction.

Colonel Shehed sent his armor battalion eastward and southeastward from Darbashiya, sweeping through the central section of the Golan to join Peled and his paratroopers at Boutmiya. At the same time Shehed's infantry and paratroop battalions drove southwest to capture the Bridge of Jacob's Daughters. From there they turned eastward to follow their armored battalion toward Al Knashniah and Boutmiya. At the same time the brigade of Colonel Gavish moved southward from Dardara to clear the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

The Israeli troops had taken all of their objectives by the time a new United Nations ceasefire became effective at 1430. This was confirmed the following morning by the local Israeli and Syrian commanders, who signed a ceasefire document in Kuneitra.

Israeli losses in this two day battle of the Golan Heights were reported as 115 killed and 306 wounded; 160 Israeli tanks were knocked out, although most of these were soon repaired. Syrian losses have never been reported, but were estimated at about 1,500 killed, 5,000 wounded, and about 600 captured or missing. Approximately 70 Syrian tanks were destroyed, and 40 were captured intact. The Syrians also lost about 130 artillery pieces, half of these destroyed by Israeli artillery or air strikes, the rest captured.

CONCLUSIONS

The all-out air attack on airfields of Egypt, Jordan, and Syria which initiated the war, and the prompt launching of the ground offensive in the Sinai, achieved strategic surprise for the Israelis, which was an important element in the successful accomplishment of the breakthroughs there. The resultant situation of complete air supremacy for the Israelis was also of particular importance because, except in Jordan, the Israelis did not have a preponderance of force on the ground.

By careful study of the territory on which the fighting would take place, including review of what had happened in the same area in 1956, and by skillful intelligence work and interpretation of data produced by it, the Israelis devised an excellent plan for the offensive in the Sinai that was well executed and resulted in the accomplishment of the breakthrough of Egyptian defenses whose location and approximate strengths were anticipated. On the Golan Heights the plan was less complicated in part because the alternatives were few.

The speed with which the breakthrough, and particularly the exploitation of it, were accomplished in the Sinai was considerably influenced by the weakness of command at the top level in Egypt. There were failures at lower levels also, but not everywhere. It was the withdrawal order from Field Marshal Amer that resulted in virtual abandonment of defense positions that enabled the Israelis to move rapidly to the Canal. Syrian leadership also contributed to the Israeli breakthroughs by its generally poor quality, at least as much because of prewar training neglect as from inept combat performance.

An important factor in the success of the operations both in the Sinai and on the Golan Heights was the superior quality of the Israeli combat units. The men were better trained, better equipped, and better led than their opponents, and as a result they generally performed better. The principal manifestation of this was greater Israeli flexibility at all levels, while the principal Arab weakness (even among the better-trained Jordanians) was an inability to coordinate the operations of adjacent units of battalion, brigade, and division strengths. There were Egyptian units that stood and fought well, but the performance of the Israeli units on the whole was better and contributed to the success of the operation.

PART IV

OPERATION "CITADEL": THE OFFENSIVE OF THE GERMAN XLVIII PANZER CORPS IN THE SOUTHERN SECTOR OF THE KURSK BULGE, 4-15 JULY 1943

Summary*

BACKGROUND

In the spring of 1943 the German High Command decided to launch an offensive operation against the Soviet Kursk Salient. The plan called for two converging blows at Kursk, one from Orel to the south, and the other from Belgorod to the north, thus encircling and destroying Soviet Forces in the Kursk Bulge.

PLANS

To accomplish this task the Germans created two powerful striking groups, the Ninth Army in the north (Orel area) and the Fourth Panzer Army and Task Force Kempf in the South (Belgorod-Kharkov area). The German Second Army was deployed along the western edge of the salient, ready to attack when the encirclement was accomplished.

The XLVIII Panzer Corps (Fourth Panzer Army) was to attack in a sector of about 16 kilometers on the left flank of the Fourth Panzer Army, directing its main effort toward the Psel River and Oboyan. It was composed of two panzer divisions (3d and 11th), two infantry divisions (167th and 332d), and the Gross Deutschland Panzer Grenadier Division. The Corps had about 62,000 men, 700 guns and mortars (76mm and larger) and about 500 tanks and assault guns.

The Soviets were aware of the German intentions, and prepared carefully for the battle. The area was strongly fortified and fresh troops were brought in. The Soviet plan was for a planned defensive-offensive, waiting for the Germans to attack, then bleeding them white before turning to the counteroffensive.

Two Soviet army groups were assigned to defend the salient: the Central Army Group in the north and the Voronezh Army Group in the south. A third army group, the Steppe Army Group, was deployed behind the Central and Voronezh Army Groups in GHQ reserve.

The sector in which the German XLVIII Panzer Corps was to break through was defended by the Soviet Sixth Guard Army, in a formidable defense system. This consisted of two deep defensive zones, with a considerable number of strong points between them and to the rear of the second zone. The Army's defenses were organized to a total depth of 35 to 38 kilometers. The relative strength of German and Soviet forces in the sector defended by the Sixth Guard Army was about three-to-two in the Soviets' favor. However in the narrow sector where the XLVIII Panzer Corps attacked the ratio favored the Germans.

BREAKTHROUGH OPERATIONS

Combat operations started with a German pre-offensive attack in the afternoon of 4 July in order to capture Soviet outposts and to bring German forces close to the Soviet main line of resistance (MLR). This attack was only partly successful, and furthermore the Germans lost any chance of tactical surprise for the main assault to be started the next morning.

*This is a brief summary of the detailed scenario of this operation, which begins on page 108.

On 5 July the main effort (about 11 kilometers wide) was launched by the two panzer divisions and one panzer grenadier division, with a total of approximately 500 tanks including 188 new Panthers. The two infantry divisions were to advance on the flanks of the main attacking forces.

From the start the thrust was not so successful as the Germans expected. The Soviets offered formidable resistance, and the intensity of fighting increased hourly. By the end of the day, German troops had advanced seven to nine kilometers, breaking through the first defense zone and approaching the second defense zone. However, some Soviet strongpoints had been bypassed, causing considerable difficulties for the advancing units.

At this point, General N.F. Vatutin, the Commander of the Voronezh Army Group, being aware of the danger of a German breakthrough, decided to commit to combat the First Tank Army and to deploy it in the area of the second defense zone on 6 July.

On 6 July, despite heavy losses both sides continued to fight with increased ferocity. During the day the Corps advanced four to six kilometers. The German troops assaulted the second defense zone but were unable to break through. By evening, all local reserves of the Soviet Sixth Guard Army and almost all of the Voronezh Army Group general reserves were committed in combat. In this critical situation for the Soviets, General Vatutin decided to shift substantial numbers of units from his Thirty-eighth and Fortieth Armies, deployed in secondary sectors of his front.

On 7 July the mission assigned to the XLVIII Panzer Corps by the Fourth Army was to break through the second defense zone to reach the Psel River and to establish a bridgehead on its northern bank, but the corps was unable to accomplish its mission. It advanced on four to seven kilometers, mostly with its right wing.

On 8 July the Germans expected that they would finally break through the Soviet defenses and that a general Soviet retreat would begin. Instead, the Soviet command ordered several counterattacks in efforts to drive out the penetrating German troops. During the day the XLVIII Panzer Corps advanced only three to five kilometers, and still had not taken all of the second defense zone. A number of centers of resistance (Lukhanino, Rakovo, etc.) which the German forces bypassed, or blocked, were still in Soviet hands, despite intense German efforts to take them.

The Germans had no readily available reserves to commit into the battle at this crucial point. General Vatutin asked GHQ for additional forces, and received one tank corps and one rifle division. These took up defensive positions to the rear of the second defense zone along the line Novyy Poselok-Kalinovka-Orlovka, to halt the German advance toward Oboyan.

The next day (9 July), the Soviets were still holding several important points of their second defense zone. Lukhanino and the hills around it were still in Soviet hands. To the north, in Berezovka, Soviet troops were also holding out, despite heavy German pressure. On the right flank, however, the XLVIII Panzer Corps was more successful, being able to take Pokrovskiy and Krasnaya Polyana. During the day the Corps advanced one to two kilometers.

For the next several days the Germans continued their efforts to break through to Oboyan and then to Kursk. In some places they were able to make slight headway toward the north. On 10 July they advanced from one to three kilometers; on the 11th from two to three. Then on 12 July they were brought to a standstill by counter-attacking Soviet tank and infantry units. On 16 July, a major tank battle took place near the village of Prokhorovka, where the Soviets defeated the main force of the Fourth Panzer Army, compelling the German Command to abandon its plan of surrounding and destroying the Kursk Salient. A general German withdrawal began to the old positions occupied on and before 5 July.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the German XLVIII Panzer Corps broke through the Soviet first defense zone all across its front, advanced over 30 kilometers, and in most areas penetrated the second defense zone, the German attackers were unable to take all the critical strongpoints in and behind that zone. They were halted by strong Soviet counter-attacks short of a complete breakthrough, and were unable to exploit their gains.

The Germans had massed combined arms forces for the attack against fixed defenses which their intelligence sources had located with a high degree of accuracy. However, they failed to anticipate accurately either the strength of the Soviet defense or the rapidity with which Soviet reserves in force could be brought to the battle area. The attack, furthermore, was slowed by significant problems in trying to move heavy tanks across muddy ravines, and the anticipated strength of the attack also was weakened by problems with the new and untried Panther tanks.

The German XLVIII Panzer Corps did not have sufficient reserves available to maintain the momentum of the attack in the sectors where the second defense zone had been penetrated, particularly since it became necessary to use sizable forces to deal with the Soviet positions that had been bypassed. The shortage of reserves is one of two major reasons for the failure to complete the breakthrough. (The other reason is the availability of Soviet reserves in greater strength than the Germans anticipated.) This shortage of German forces also required the use of tanks in missions that were more appropriate for infantry. Also, without adequate preponderance of power the attackers could not disrupt orderly withdrawals by the Soviet defenders, who gained time to bring up counterattack forces.

Similarly, the other elements of Army Group South, performing holding missions to the west of the XLVIII Panzer Corps, were not strong enough to pin down the forces to their front, or to prevent the Soviets from transferring a considerable number of troops (infantry, artillery, antitank and antiaircraft artillery and engineers) from secondary areas to the sector of the main German attack.

Since the salient around Kursk was an obvious target for attack, and the Soviets had constructed very deep fortifications at the base of the salient in expectation of the attack, the Germans were denied the advantage of strategic surprise. The Soviets were prepared to take considerable losses and to withdraw during the initial stages of the offensive, in a classic defensive-offensive. And in reserve they had deployed an entire army group. Had the German forces penetrated the entire depth of the fortified area they would still have had to maintain considerable effective strength to overcome the constantly replenished Soviet defending forces. They did not have resources enough for this.

SCENARIO FOR THE KURSK BATTLE

The Attack of the German XLVIII Panzer Corps, Fourth Panzer Army,
on the Soviet Sixth Guard Army, Voronezh Army Group,
at the Southern Sector of the Kursk Bulge

4-15 July 1943

BACKGROUND

General

In the winter of 1943, Soviet troops pushed out a salient between Orel and Belgorod in the central region of the Eastern Front, west of Kursk. As spring approached, the Soviet Supreme Command became aware that the existence of the salient would provide a temptation to the Germans to cut off and crush Soviet forces defending the bulge. Thus, the Soviets decided to fortify the entire area extensively, meet the German challenge, and after bleeding the advancing German forces white, turn to the counteroffensive.

As the Soviets expected, the German High Command decided that it would be to its advantage to strike at the Kursk bulge. In the north, German Army Group Center was facing the salient with a springboard near Orel. In the south, the salient was covered by Army Group South.

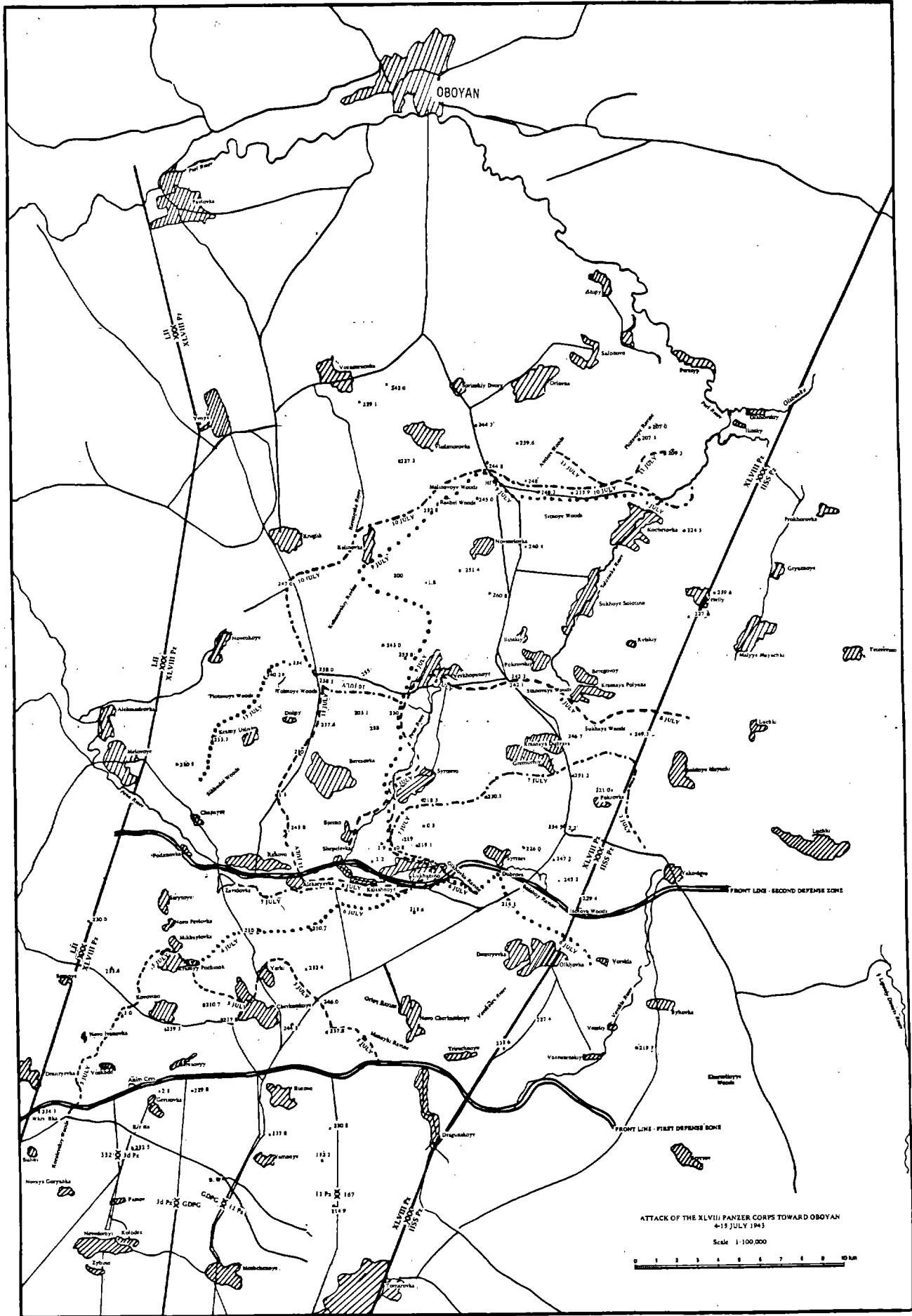
In April the plan for an offensive, code-named Operation Citadel, was completed. It called for launching two converging blows at Kursk, one to the south from Orel and the other from the vicinity of Belgorod toward the north, to encircle and annihilate the Soviet troops in the Kursk salient. Such an operation not only would end German fears that their forces in the Orel and Belgorod-Kharkov areas could be attacked from the flanks, but also could be followed by an offensive east of Kursk toward Moscow, and another to the southeast toward the Don and Volga Rivers.

German Preparations

The Germans prepared carefully for the operation. Special emphasis was laid on the concentration of tank formations and large numbers of aircraft. As a result, the German High Command built up two powerful striking groups. In the north, deployed in the Orel area, were fifteen divisions—eight infantry, six tank, and one motorized—of the Ninth Army of Army Group Center. In the south, deployed north of Kharkov were fourteen divisions—five infantry, eight tank, and one motorized—of the Fourth Panzer Army, and three infantry and three panzer divisions organized as Task Force Kempf of Army Group South. The Second Army of Army Group Center was deployed between these, along the western edge of the Kursk salient, ready to jump off when the encirclement was accomplished.

The XLVIII Panzer Corps was deployed on a 16 kilometer front between Novaya Goryanka and Tomarovka. It included two infantry divisions, two panzer divisions, and a panzer grenadier division to which was attached a regiment of Panther tanks. Attached to the corps were an artillery group and an engineer regiment.

A total of 50 German divisions were massed for Operation Citadel. There were nearly 900,000 men, some 10,000 guns and mortars, and 2,700 tanks, and over 2,000 aircraft. Of these, 62,000 men, about 700 guns and mortars, and 700 tanks were in the XLVIII Panzer Corps.



ATTACK OF THE XLVIII PANZER CORPS TOWARD OBOYAN
 13 JULY 1943

Scale 1:100,000



Soviet Preparations

The Soviet Supreme Command also prepared carefully for the battle. Two army groups were assigned to defend the salient. The Central Army Group defended the northern and northwestern sectors (306 kilometers) of the Kursk salient, and the Voronezh Army Group defended the southern and southwestern sectors (244 kilometers). Together they covered about 13% of the entire Soviet-German front. Each of these army groups consisted of five combined arms armies, one tank army, one air army, two separate tank corps, and one separate rifle corps. They had over 1,337,000 effectives, 19,300 guns and mortars, over 3,300 tanks and self-propelled guns, and 2,650 aircraft.

The defense system also included the Steppe Army Group, deployed behind the Central and Voronezh Army Groups and forming the strategic reserve, increasing the depth of the defense from west to east to some 250 to 300 kilometers. The Steppe Army Group was composed of five all-arms armies, one tank army, one air army, three tank corps, three mechanized corps, and three cavalry corps. There were 573,000 men (449,130 combat troops), 4,230 guns, 4,790 mortars (82 and 120mm), and 1,630 tanks and self-propelled guns. The mission of the Steppe Army Group was to stop the German offensive in the event of a German breakthrough, and, together with the first two army groups, deliver a crushing blow to the German forces in a decisive counter-offensive.

After assessing the situation on his front, and determining the sector where the Germans were most likely to attack, the Commander of the Voronezh Army Group, Army General N.F. Vatutin, came to the conclusion that the German main effort would, in all likelihood, be directed from west of Belgorod toward Oboyan and from Belgorod in the direction of Korocha, all on the army group's left wing. There the Sixth and Seventh Guard Armies held a sector 114 kilometers long. The right wing, a 130-kilometer sector, was defended by the Thirty-eighth and Fortieth Armies. In the second echelon, behind the Sixth and Seventh Guard Armies were the Sixty-ninth Army and First Tank Army. In reserve the Army Group Commander had the XXXV Rifle and II and V Tank Corps. In the 114-kilometer sector where the Germans were expected to strike (46.7% of the total frontage of the Voronezh Army Group), Vatutin concentrated 63% of the group's rifle divisions, 66.2% of its guns and mortars, and 77% of its tanks and self-propelled guns.

The Sixth Guard Army defended its 64-kilometer sector (from Trefilovka to north of Belgorod) with seven rifle divisions, of which four were in the first echelon (most of two of them facing the German XLVIII Panzer Corps), and three in the second. In reserve, the Army Commander had one tank brigade. The average density of defending infantry was 14 to 19 kilometers per division of the first echelon and 18 to 26 kilometers per division of the second echelon. However, taking into consideration the entire depth of the army group defense the average infantry density was 7 to 7.4 kilometers of frontage per division, and, in the most vulnerable sectors, 3 to 5 kilometers per division.

The average density of guns and mortars on the Voronezh Army Group front was 35 per kilometer; the average density of tanks and self-propelled guns was 5 to 7. But in the vulnerable areas of the Sixth Guard Army this density increased to 50 to 125 guns and mortars per kilometer of frontage, and 11 to 17 tanks and self-propelled guns per kilometer.

During the spring and early summer, the Sixth Guard Army built a formidable defense system. The first fortified zone was about five to seven kilometers deep. It consisted of three parallel defense lines, each of which had two or three lines of trenches linked by numerous communication passages. The first line was 1.5 kilometers deep, the second 1.2 to 1.5 kilometers deep, and the third also 1.2 to 1.5 kilometers deep. Each line was separated from the next by 0.5 to 1.0 kilometers. Where the terrain favored it, combat outposts, well fortified, were set up one to two kilometers in front of the first position.

The four divisions of the first echelon occupied the first zone, which was the main battle position. Each division had three regiments in the first two lines and one or two battalions in the third. Deployment such as that in the sector where the

the main German effort was to be expected was unusual. The usual Soviet pattern was to put two regiments in the first two positions and the third regiment in the third. But it was justified by the wide frontage and the Army Commander's desire to strengthen the second echelon.

About 10 to 15 kilometers behind the first zone was the second zone, similarly fortified. It had three lines of defenses and was about five to eight kilometers deep. The mission of the divisions in this second echelon was to stop and destroy any German force which broke through the first zone, and serve as a springboard for counterattacks.

Between the two zones were obstacle centers, each covering an area of about 2 x 5 kilometers. They were tactically placed to cover the most vulnerable areas, and elements assigned to them retained maximum mobility. Similar obstacle centers were built to a depth of 17 or 18 kilometers behind the second defense zone, forming the army's rear defense zone.

The area for which the Sixth Guard Army was responsible and was some 35 to 38 kilometers deep. Supporting the seven rifle divisions and one tank brigade were medium and heavy artillery brigades, tank-destroyer artillery units, multiple-rocket launcher units, and combat engineers.

Beyond the fortified army zone the Voronezh Army Group's area extended to a total depth of 50 to 70 kilometers. This rear zone was also fortified, but not so extensively.

An intricate system of obstacles was constructed throughout the Sixth Guard Army sector. There were about 140 kilometers of antitank ditches, 89,888 antitank and 63,043 antipersonnel mines (some 150 mines per German tank), 110 kilometers of barbed and other wire obstructions, some 1,100 command and observation posts, nearly 4,000 shelters and dugouts, 900 earth and timber pillboxes, and about 500 kilometers of trenches and communication passages.

Of the mines and other explosives installed by the Sixth Guard Army 40% to 50% were laid in a continuous antitank and antipersonnel minefield in front of the first trench of the first defensive zone, 30% to 35% were inside the defensive zones and around the obstacle centers, and 15% to 20% were kept in reserve for the Mobile Engineer Obstacle Detachments to lay during the course of the battle. Antitank minefields were usually at least 100 meters in depth. Mines were laid six to ten meters apart in irregular rows, with 15 to 20 meters between rows.

Realizing that in the coming battle the major German thrust would be delivered by tank formations, the Soviets developed a new concept of antitank warfare, namely that of antitank fortified defense centers. These were constructed in tactically important areas on the most probable axes of tank approaches, at various depths behind the front line. Such centers were usually equipped with four to eight antitank guns, nine to twelve antitank rifles, two to four mortars, a platoon of engineers with mines, and a squad of submachine gunners. Sometimes several tanks and/or self-propelled guns were added.

Another important element of the antitank defense system was the Mobile Engineer Obstacle Detachments at all organizational levels. In rifle regiments the MEODs were composed of from a squad to a platoon of engineers, with a limited number of mines and horses and carts for transport. In rifle divisions, there were two or three engineer platoons with 400 to 600 mines, mostly antitank, and two to five trucks, in corps, one or two engineer companies with over 800 mines, and four to six trucks, in armies, up to an engineer battalion with over 1,000 mines, and six to nine trucks.

Mobile antitank artillery reserves were available to be moved as needed to areas of heaviest armored attack. They consisted of two platoons of 45 76mm guns per rifle regiment, and from a battery to a battalion in a rifle division. In some cases the Sixth Guard Army also had field, antiaircraft, and even heavy artillery, as well as tanks, attached to rifle battalions, forming part of its antitank defense system.

PREPARATION AND ASSESSMENT OF THE OPERATION

The Fourth Panzer Army on 25 April 1943 took over the sector between Belgorod and Krasnopolie, southeast of Sumy, assuming command of the LII Army Corps, the II SS Panzer Corps, and the XLVIII Panzer Corps. Preliminary orders for Operation Citadel were issued by Army Group South on 6 May, and final orders on 27 June. The Fourth Panzer Army was given the mission of pushing out of the area west of Belgorod on a direct route north via Oboyan, then to link up with the Ninth Army, attacking from the north, in the area east of Kursk.

Intensive training and reequipment of the divisions in preparation for Operation Citadel began at the end of April. Both panzer corps, in coordination with the Luftwaffe, conducted a great many exercises. Special emphasis was placed on breaking through a fortified position, overcoming antitank ditches, and attacking fortified emplacements of antitank weapons. Officers and noncoms of all ranks had sand table drills, map exercises, and discussion of terrain problems.

In mid-June the Commander of the Fourth Panzer Army held a map exercise at Army headquarters in Bogodukhov for the corps and division commanders and special weapons commanders. It was based on actual conditions, and its purpose was to simulate the first days of the offensive. As it turned out, the first days followed approximately the course of this map exercise.

While the men were being trained, the panzer divisions were brought up to strength in personnel and materiel.

Colonel General Hermann Hoth, commanding General of the Fourth Panzer Army, evaluated the situation thus: The Soviets had remained generally quiet since the German winter offensives. Only about three or four Soviet divisions were facing the four German infantry divisions in the sector taken over by the Fourth Panzer Army, but the Soviet X Tank Corps was reportedly in the Oboyan area. No changes in the enemy picture in the area close to the front had been detected by the end of June to indicate that the Soviets were planning to attack. On the other hand, it was known that there were considerable reserves east of Kursk. And in mid-June a great deal of traffic had been reported on the Voronezh-Kursk rail line. Hoth had to assume that this meant that the Soviets had realized that the Germans were preparing to attack and were bringing up operational reserves west in order to have them more readily available.

Both because of this known distribution of enemy forces and because of the terrain, Hoth decided not to take his orders literally and advance directly north via Oboyan. Oboyan was in a naturally strong position. The land south of the Psel River about 20 kilometers from the city slopes down north toward the river, and then rises more sharply on the other side to Oboyan, giving the defenders good observation of approaching forces. Moreover, marshy ground on the south side of the river severely restricts the approach route to the river. Crossing at that point would be difficult, and Hoth knew that the Soviet X Tank Corps was in the area. He had to assume also that the Soviets' armored reserves would be thrown into action from the northeast between the Donets River and the Psel River near Prokhorovka, some 50 kilometers northeast of Belgorod. If the German forces spearheading the attack were engaged in a difficult battle for the Psel crossing around Oboyan, the Soviets attacking from the northeast would strike the German flank. Consequently Hoth decided that after breaking through the Soviet defense zones the II SS Panzer Corps, on the right, should not head north to the Psel but should turn off sharply to the northeast to reach Prokhorovka before the Soviets could do so. This plan would have the additional advantage that it would bring the corps closer to Task Force Kempf on its right. After securing the Prokhorovka area and defeating the Soviet tank units the German offensive would proceed in whatever direction seemed best at the time.

Because of these considerations the XLVIII Panzer Corps would not advance north over the Pena River after breaking through the Soviet positions on both sides of Cherkasskoye, but would stick close to the II SS Panzer Corps in order to secure its flank against a Soviet armored attack from the direction of Oboyan. What part it would play in the armored battle anticipated in the Prokhorovka area would be determined at the time.

Hoth was seriously concerned about the adequacy of the forces available to him to carry out his difficult mission. Two panzer corps did not seem sufficient, although the panzer and panzer grenadier divisions were of good quality, and he had been given two battalions, the "Decker Brigade," with 188 of the new Panther tanks, which brought his tank strength to 700. But his infantry strength, Hoth thought, was too weak to protect his flanks. His hopes for the Panthers were not well founded, for not only were most of the personnel of those units freshly trained and without combat experience, the tanks themselves had not been battle-tested, and even before the attack they gave evidence of serious technical defects. As soon as the attack began it was apparent that the brigade would not live up to expectations.

In spite of Hoth's misgivings, and his belief that the excessive delays in launching the attack had lost the Germans the advantage of surprise, he was confident that a breakthrough of the Soviet defense system would be achieved. He also thought that in view of the great number of tanks available to him he could win the anticipated tank battle at Prokhorovka. Whether sufficient force would remain thereafter to proceed to the area east of Kursk would remain to be seen.

Hoth was well aware, and apprehensive, that the Fourth Panzer Army had no reserves for reinforcements. As it turned out Army Group South moved its only available reserve, the XXIV Panzer Corps, into the area west of Kharkov on 12 July, but it was too late. The attack had already halted.

German Intelligence Report

On 28 June 1943, as an enclosure to the order for Operation Citadel, the Fourth Panzer Army provided the following evaluation of the enemy situation:¹²

The Kursk salient is to be regarded in the future as a definite point of main effort for the enemy forces. Heavy railroad traffic observed for a number of weeks on the Kastornoye-Kursk line slackened a week ago, so that we can now assume that there has been a temporary halt in enemy force movements. The number of rifle divisions deployed at the front has been somewhat reduced. The divisions transferred from the front, together with newly arrived rifle divisions, are forming a quickly available reserve about ten to twenty kilometers behind the front. A steady flow of replacements and supplies has arrived for the divisions to bring them up to complement. Some of the civilians compelled to join the Soviet forces during the winter battles have been exchanged for trained replacements. The motorized and armored formations may have received new equipment by now. The points of concentration in the enemy's defense system are south of Oboyan and north of Kursk, areas regarded by the Soviets as particularly vulnerable. Formations on the western front of the salient seem to be weaker.

The enemy seems to have three different groups of reserves available:

- (1) There are ready reserves with a strength of several rifle divisions in every army, close behind the front line.
- (2) There is one tank army north and one south of Kursk. The latter, the First Soviet Tank Army, was recently moved there.
- (3) A strong reserve of mobile formations is in the Oskol area, deep in the rear. The rear is also a main point of concentration for the Second Russian Air Force, whose bases are mostly in the rear.

Reports of Soviet defenses in front of the corps indicate the enemy situation in the attack area remains essentially as shown on the map distributed on 26 May. The second defense zone, built up in the Pena area, behind the first defense zone, will be occupied without delay by the Soviet ready reserve when the German attack comes. There has been further progress in recent weeks in building up the positions by drawing on the entire civilian population for workers. Terrain suitable for tanks has now been fortified by tank ditches and minefields. The entrenched tanks and rocket launchers observed at the beginning of May are still in place. Both on the right and the left the artillery strength has been increased. The Soviets have prepared a large number of alternate emplacements for batteries and tanks, thus assuring them the potential for daily shifts. Besides the strong antitank defense, automatic guns were recently detected on the left on the corps sector. In spite of frequent complaints of poor morale because of inadequate rations, we can count on a strong enemy in combat.

Evaluation of Enemy Intentions

The enemy has completed his preparations for defense against a major attack, which he surely expects. He will try to stop our thrust in depth by bringing up reserves—particularly armored forces—in order to restore the situation again by a counterattack.

There are no indications yet that the enemy is planning an attack. The assembly of strong air forces might be so interpreted, but these forces as yet have not appeared in action. There are no signs whatsoever that the enemy intends to evacuate the first defense zone in the case of attack. On the contrary, we must expect an enduring and also offensively executed defense.

XLVIII CORPS OPERATION ORDER FOR THE OFFENSE

On 28 June 1943 the Commander of the XLVIII Panzer Corps issued the following Operation Order for the attack:

The Enemy

In front of the XLVIII Panzer Corps, the enemy has deployed two rifle divisions in the first defense zone and another rifle division in the second. In addition one tank corps appears to be in or close behind the second defense zone, with another tank corps south of Oboyan.

The enemy deployment indicates that he intends to hold the deep and well built defense positions in the Kursk Salient, and that he will commit the tank forces he had concentrated close to the front in the fight for the first defense zone.

After the breakthrough of the second defense zone, we have to anticipate tank counterattacks, some several tank corps strong, against the entire eastern flank of our force, and counterattacks by some three or four rifle divisions against the western flank.

Objective

The XLVIII Panzer Corps, acting under the Fourth Panzer Army in the Citadel Operation, will attack with the aim of encircling and destroying the enemy in the Kursk salient. Initially the main effort first will be in the sectors of the Gross Deutschland Panzer Grenadier (GDPG) and 3d Panzer Divisions, and later in the sectors of the 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions.

On D-1, without commitment of tanks, the Corps will capture enemy outposts up to the line of hills southeast, north, and west of Butovo and from there to the forest east of Bubny.

On D-Day, after intensive artillery preparation, the Panzer Corps, according to plan, will break into the enemy's first defense zone, west of Cherkasskoye, and then capture the enemy positions on both sides of the Butovo-Dubrova road. After the successful breakthrough of the first defense zone, the Panzer Corps, led by strong tank elements, will push forward without delay, turning to the northeast toward Dubrova. This rapid thrust will prevent the enemy south of Olkhovka from withdrawing to the north, and will support the advance of the II SS Panzer Corps east of the Vorskla River. As the situation develops, every opportunity must be quickly grasped, to break through the second defense line rapidly on both sides of Dubrova.

After capturing the Belgorod-Oboyan road, the Corps will stay ready for further advance against the Psel River in the sector between Olkhovka and Shipy.

Other German Forces

The II SS Panzer Corps: On D-Day, after intensive artillery preparation, the II SS Panzer Corps will break through the first defense zone in the Berezov-Sadelnoye sector. Afterward, the Corps will advance without delay against the second defense zone between Luchki and Yakovlevo. The Corps left flank at the Vorskla River will be covered by one-third of the 167th Infantry Division. After the breakthrough of the second defense zone, the Corps will prepare to advance with its main force south of the Psel River toward the northeast, its right wing proceeding via Prokhorovka.

The LII Army Corps: The LII Army Corps will defend its positions until D+2, when it will attack with its right wing from the Kryukovo area toward Dmitryevka.

Missions of XLVIII Corps Divisions

167th Infantry Division: In the afternoon of D-1 the division will seize the hills southeast of Butovo. On D-Day, the division, concentrating its main effort on the left wing, will join in the attack of the 11th Panzer Division, and roll up from the west the enemy defense positions west of Trirechnoye and Novo Cherkasskoye. There, and later on the Vorskolets River, the division will secure the right flank of the Corps and prevent a breakthrough of the Soviet 67th Guard Rifle Division toward the west.

11th Panzer Division: After seizing the outpost area around Butovo on D-1, the division will be in position on D-Day to break through the enemy defense positions east of Cherkasskoye. As soon as the attack of the GDPG Division north of Cherkasskoye is underway, an order for the advance of the 11th Panzer Division will be given.

Taking advantage of the advance of the GDPG Division, the assault elements of the 11th Panzer Division will penetrate the enemy positions. It is essential for the division to capture the dominant hills east of Cherkasskoye quickly with a concentrated tank attack, and to screen the advance from the Cherkasskoye area. After a successful breakthrough the division will turn toward the northeast, and with tanks in front, will break into the second defense zone east of Dubrova, on the heels of the retreating enemy.

Gross Deutschland Panzer Grenadier Division: In the afternoon of D-1 the division will take the high land east of Butovo. On D-Day, the deeply echeloned division, with a strong left wing, will break through the first defense zone near and east of Berezovyy, and, under screening from Cherkasskoye, will advance to the high land north of the village. Next, headed by a strong armored force, the division will boldly attack to break through the second defense zone. To fulfill this mission, the Corps will attach to the division, after it successfully breaks through the first defense zone, the 10th Panzer Brigade (39th Panzer Regiment, with the 51st and 52d Panzer Battalions) equipped with Panther tanks. These tank forces will be at the disposition of the Corps after 0200 on D-1 in the concentration area north of Moshchenoye.

3d Panzer Division: After taking enemy outposts on D-1, the division will attack the first defense zone near and west of Berezovyy at the same time as the GDPG Division. After the capture of Korovino, the division will advance rapidly to the Pena River, cross it at Zavidovka, and cover the left flank of the Corps in the high land area north and northeast of Dolgiy (Hill 258.5).

332d Infantry Division: After taking the woods east of Bubny on the afternoon of D-1, the division is to protect the left flank of the Corps on D-Day, by capturing the hills east and southeast of Dmitriyevka. To accomplish this, the division will move out at the same time as the 3d Panzer Division. Later, elements of the division will secure the flank in the high land north of Dmitriyevka at the junction with the 3d Panzer Division.

Order of Battle - XLVIII Panzer Corps 4 July 1943

Headquarters Staff

132d Artillery Group

144th Artillery Group

Attachments:

10th Panzer Brigade

39th Panzer Regiment (Panthers)

51st Panzer Battalion

52d Panzer Battalion

122d Artillery Group

70th Artillery Regiment
3d Battalion, 109th Mörser Battalion (210mm howitzer)
101st Heavy Field Artillery Battalion
842d 100mm Gun Battalion (minus one battery)
1st Battalion, 108th Light Field Artillery Regiment (motorized)

515th Engineer Regiment

34th Construction Group
1st Engineer Training Battalion (minus one company)
37th Bridge Construction Battalion (minus one company)
2d Company, 81st Construction Battalion
938th Bridge Column Staff
639th Bridge Column
676th Bridge Column
507th Light Bicycle Road Construction Battalion

Gross Deutschland Panzer Grenadier Division

Gross Deutschland Grenadier Regiment
Gross Deutschland Fusilier Regiment
Gross Deutschland Panzer Regiment
Gross Deutschland Assault Gun Battalion
Gross Deutschland Reconnaissance Battalion
Gross Deutschland Artillery Regiment
Gross Deutschland Engineer Battalion
Gross Deutschland Antitank Artillery Battalion

Attached:

48th Engineer Battalion
81st Construction Battalion (minus three companies)
609th Bridge Column B
841st Bridge Column J

Attached 5 July: 39th Panzer Regiment

3d Panzer Division

3d Panzer Grenadier Regiment
394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment
6th Panzer Regiment
75th Artillery Regiment
3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion
3d Armored Artillery Regiment
543d Antitank Battalion
Scout Car Battalion
Assault Gun Battalion
Engineer Battalion

Attached:

one company, 1st Engineer Training Battalion
one company, 81st Construction Battalion
649th Bridge Column

11th Panzer Division

110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment
111th Panzer Grenadier Regiment
15th Panzer Regiment
911th Assault Gun Battalion
11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion
119th Armored Artillery Regiment
61st Antitank Battalion
209th Engineer Battalion
1st Engineer Training Battalion

Attached:

911th Assault Gun Battalion
two companies, 37th Bridge Construction Battalion
22d Bridge Column B
916th Light AA Battalion

167th Infantry Division

315th Infantry Regiment
331st Infantry Regiment
339th Infantry Regiment
238th Reconnaissance Battalion
Artillery Regiment
Engineer Battalion
Antitank Artillery Battalion

332d Infantry Division

676th Grenadier Regiment
677th Grenadier Regiment
678th Grenadier Regiment
332d Reconnaissance Battalion
Field Replacement Battalion
Artillery Regiment

Attached:

1st Heavy Mortar Regiment
3d Battery, 371st Artillery Battalion (150mm guns)

Boundary Lines

Between II SS Panzer Corps and XLVIII Panzer Corps: Borisovka-Tomarovka-Dragunskoye-Olkhovka-Veseliy-hamlets on the Olshanka Brook (XLVIII Panzer Corps)-Rzhavchyk (25 kilometers east of Oboyan) (II SS Panzer Corps). The boundary line becomes effective at 3900 hours,* D-5.

Between the XLVIII Panzer Corps and LII Army Corps: Grayvoron-Antonovka-Khotmyshk-Oktyabrskaya-Gotnya (towns to the XLVIII Panzer Corps)-Trefilovka (LII)-Dmitryevka (LII)-Melovoye (LII)-Yvnya (XLVIII)-Pavlovka (XLVIII). The boundary line becomes effective at 3300 hours, D-4.

Between 167th Infantry and 11th Panzer Divisions: Tomarovka (167th)-Staraya Glinka (11th)-Hill 214.9-800 meters east of Hill 172.2-Hill 230.8-Hill 237.8 (500

*Times are coded for security.

meters from the road north from Novo Cherkasskoye)-northern outskirts of Olkhovka (167th).

Between the 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions: Moshchenoye (GD)-Yamnoye (11th)-800 meters from the western outskirts of Butovo-Cherkasskoye (11th)-Hill 219.3 - Hill 232.4-500 meters south of Hill 213.6-Syrtsevo (GD)-Gremuchiy (11th)-Pokrovskiy-Novoselovka road at Hill 260.8 (11th)-Hill 248.7-Hill 211.9-Peresyp (11th).

Between the GDPG and 3d Panzer Divisions: Zavod (GD)-Loknya (3d)-railroad three kilometers south of the Gertsovka station-center of Berezovyy-500 meters east of the eastern outskirts of Krasnyy Pochinok-Alekseyevka (GD) along the Upper Pena River.

Between the 3d Panzer and 332d Infantry Divisions: Kryukovo (332d)-Subino (332d)-Nevedomyi-Kolodez road- Gertsovka railroad station up to 1.5 kilometers north of Fastov (3d Panzer)-railroad one kilometer west of Gertsovka station-Voskhod (332d)-Korovino (3d)-Mikhaylovka (3d)-Pena crossing 500 meters north of Zavidovka (3d)-along the course of the Pena River to the northwest. Boundary lines come into effect at 4700 hours, D-3.

Reconnaissance

The Luftwaffe will reconnoiter in the area between Belgorod and the Oskol River from Volokonovka to north of Staryy Oskol-Kursk-Sudcha-Miropolye, with the principal effort directed against the roads and railroads coming from the northeast.

The Sixth Signals Interception Group will cooperate with the XLVIII Panzer Corps.

The divisions will be responsible for reconnaissance in their sectors. For reasons of secrecy, until D-1 all reconnaissance activities will be carried out only by elements of the 167th and 332d Infantry Divisions already deployed in the sector. Intelligence information gathered by the Artillery Observation Battery deployed in the corps sector will be sent in the most expeditious way by the commander of the 122d Artillery Group to the division artillery commanders.

After completing the breakthrough, combat intelligence should determine whether the enemy has taken up defensive positions north of the Psel River and deployed new forces there, or whether his tank forces are proceeding to attack our (German) eastern or western flanks.

It is essential to recognize the enemy retreat movements toward the east or northeast from the Sudsha area as soon as possible.

Air Support

The VIII Air Corps will support the XLVIII Panzer Corps on D-1.

On D-Day, the entire Luftwaffe force in the Army area will first support the attack of the II SS Panzer Corps. After that, at about 3400 (coded time), it is planned that the Luftwaffe will support the XLVIII Panzer Corps.

Requests for air support must be made of the Corps commander at the proper time. Air Liaison officers will be attached to the panzer and the panzer grenadier divisions.

Engineers

Beginning on D-3 the 515th Engineer Regiment with attached army troops will repair and maintain bridges and roads in the Corps sector in the area northeast of the line from Grayvoron along the course of the Grayvoronka and Aleksandrovka Rivers. The Regiment must repair and maintain the Corps supply road Borisovka-Tomarovka-Vysokaya-Oboyan-Kursk for two-lane,60-ton traffic. Existing minefields are to be removed from an area at least 100 meters wide on both sides of the advance routes; remaining minefields are to be marked.

The 48th Engineer Battalion, the 37th Bridge Building Battalion, and the companies from the 1st Engineer Training Battalion and the 81st Construction Battalion attached to the divisions are to be committed in such a way that if necessary they could be pulled out at short notice.

AA Artillery

At present, no additional AA Artillery units will be brought forward. From D-2 until the start of the attack, the main effort of AA defense will be in the Tomarovka-Borisovka valley.

For this purpose, the 11th Panzer Division will deploy the 616th Light AA Battalion in the area around and southwest of Tomarovka. The Panzer Grenadier Division will deploy its AA Battalion around and northeast of Borisovka.

With the beginning of the attack, special attention must be given to the anti-aircraft protection of the tank concentration areas as well as their advance.

To maintain secrecy, only those who must know are to be informed now of the objectives, etc. Directives are to be sent out one at a time, and at the last possible moment. All written orders should include only information which it is absolutely necessary for the recipient to know.

Corps Command Post:

Until D-5, Krasnokutsk. From D-5, Berezovka.

Advance Command Post from D-1, Moshchenoye.

Secrecy regulations were taken into consideration with regard to the content and the distribution list.

Strict camouflage of all movements and preparations including shelters must be maintained. Transgressions should be ruthlessly prosecuted.

Commanding General XLVIII Panzer Corps
von Knobelsdorff, General of Panzer Troops

DAILY OPERATIONS

4 July 1943. D-1

Corps Command Post: Berezovka. Woods south of Moshchenoye.

Weather: Cloudy. Heavy rain in afternoon.

General Situation: The night passed relatively quietly. After midnight Soviet artillery fire was a little stronger than usual in the 332d Infantry Division sector, especially north of Fastov. Front line divisions beat off several small Soviet probing attacks. Both German and Soviet air forces were active.

A Soviet deserter who gave himself up in the 167th Infantry Division sector confirmed the Corps assumptions that there were no major movements of replacements, and that only rotation was taking place in the first echelon Soviet divisions.

0815: Division commanders report troops are concentrated in assembly areas according to plan.

0900: The Corps Commander and advance elements of the Corps staff move to the new Command post south of Moshchenoye.

1430: Division commanders report readiness for the attack.

1455: The Luftwaffe reports its aircraft over the target area.

1500: All-out attack against combat outposts begins.

1515: The 11th Panzer Division's assault guns reach truck and tractor repair station on western outskirts of Butovo.

1535: One battalion of the GDPG Division penetrates the ravine southeast of Gertsovka.

1540: Ju-88s again drop bombs on Germans of the 11th Panzer Division.

1545: A thunderstorm strikes the Korolevskiy Woods.

1600: One battalion of the GDPG Division crosses the railroad track. Soviet artillery fire is intensifying in the 3d Panzer Division sector.

- 1610: The Commander of the GDPG Division reports satisfactory progress. There is only moderate Soviet resistance. The division's two battalions are 600 meters south of Hill 229.8.
- 1615: The 3d Panzer Division crosses the railroad track near Hill 232.5 and takes the hill. The 332d Infantry Division is advancing smoothly. The right battalion is advancing toward the railroad track, the center toward the ravine northeast of Bubny, the left toward the southeastern part of Novaya Goryanka.
- 1630: Corps report to Fourth Panzer Army: Soviet forces were clearly surprised and initially offered slight resistance. Gradual stiffening of resistance is reported in front of the 11th Panzer Division in the Butovo area and in the 3d Panzer Division sector at the Gertsovka railroad station. Corps artillery is firing at Soviet batteries and forces defending antitank ditches north of Berezovyy.
- 1635: 2d Battalion, 110th Regiment, 11th Panzer Division, reached the hill northeast of Butovo. Other elements of the division are engaged in combat inside the village.
- 1640: Heavy Soviet artillery fire is reported on Fastov, Nevedomyi, Zybino.
- 1645: The GDPG Division has taken the hills north and northeast of Hill 229.8. Heavy flanking fire from Hill 2.3 delays the division's advance. One battalion has been ordered to assault and capture the hill. Artillery is displacing forward.
- The 3d Panzer Division has penetrated the Gertsovka railroad station and the depression southeast of Gertsovka, where it is engaged in heavy fighting with the well-entrenched Soviet infantry. Soviet troops offer strong resistance, especially at the railroad station. The division commander reports that the mission to take Gertsovka today will be accomplished, and the division will be ready for tomorrow's attack.
 - The 332d Infantry Division has taken the forest west of the ravine east of Novaya Goryanka. The division is mopping up in the woods.
- 1650: Review of the situation: The attack proceeds as planned. Soviet resistance is strongest on the Corps left flank.
- 1700: The 11th Panzer Division reaches the southeastern outskirts of Butovo. Assault guns which took the truck and tractor station west of Butovo earlier have turned east and are engaged in heavy combat for the town.
- 1705: 11th Panzer Division troops in Butovo are under heavy air attack by a group of German Stukas that should have been attacking Cherkasskoye.
- 1707: The Luftwaffe liaison officer contacts the air group which was attacking Butovo, but the raid is already over.
- 1710: The Corps Commander reports the incident to the Army and requests an immediate inquiry.
- 1720: The Commander of the 3d Panzer Division requests an air raid on the northwestern part of Gertsovka.
- 1730: The VIII Air Corps, ordered to support the 3d Panzer Division in Gertsovka, reports that the mission cannot be flown before 1830.
- 1900: The 3d Panzer Division takes the Gertsovka railroad station and has small units in the southwestern part of Gertsovka. It expects to take the entire village today.
- The VIII Air Corps reports that the Stukas will attack the northwestern part of Gertsovka at 1920.
- 1910: According to a radio intercept, Soviet forces defending Gertsovka were ordered to withdraw toward Voskhod. The information is transmitted immediately to the 3d Panzer Division.

- 1920: Despite a heavy rainstorm the VIII Air Corps attacks targets in the northwestern part of Gertsovka.
- 1925: The GDPG Division, in cooperation with the 3d Panzer Division, takes Hill 2.3.
- 1930: The 332d Division reports heavy fighting for the workers' barracks west of the Gertsovka railroad station and requests additional artillery support. Units are mopping up in Novaya Goryanka and in the forest north of Bubny.
- 1950: The Corps Commander orders the 332d Division Commander to commit one battalion of the attached 1st Heavy Mortar Regiment against the workers' barracks.
- 2210: Corps report to Fourth Panzer Army: essentially the Corps has reached the objectives for D-1. However, in the southern part of Butovo the 11th Panzer Division still has to liquidate several heavily defended positions. The 3d Panzer Division is attacking the part of Gertsovka where the Soviet troops are still entrenched.
- 2230: The 3d Panzer Division captures Gertsovka and is ready for tomorrow's operations

Staff Evaluation of the Situation: Although the attack seems to have been a complete surprise to the Soviets, their infantry, as expected, fought well. Especially heavy resistance was encountered at the southwestern edge of Butovo, in Gertsovka, at the Gertsovka railroad station, and at the workers' barracks. Soviet artillery fire was noticeably weak, and only a few fighter planes showed up.

The corps has stopped its advance for the night and is preparing for tomorrow's assault on the enemy's first defense zone. Because of the possibility that early morning fog may hinder the observation and direction of artillery fire the exact time for the attack has not been set.

Starting at 0700 the VIII Air Corps will support the advancing units, concentrating its main effort on the northwestern flank. In addition strong air attacks will be flown in support of the forward elements of the GDPG Division, especially against Cherkasskoye.

The 39th Panzer Regiment (hereafter called the Panther Brigade, since it was the only regiment in the brigade), composed of two battalions—the 51st and 52d—of Panthers, will concentrate during the night in the depression north of Moshchenoye. It remains temporarily directly under the corps. It will be committed to action according to the combat situation.

Corps losses have been relatively light, although casualties among officers, especially in the GDPG Division, were considerable.

Division Daily Reports - 4 July 1943:

11th Panzer Division. Received 1727. The day has been quiet except for slight machine gun fire. After good dive bomber preparation, the division started out at 1500. The regiment on the right reached the southeast corner of Butovo at 1535. The first elements of the 911th Assault Gun Battalion reached the machine tractor station at the western edge of Butovo at 1515. There is still stubborn resistance in the center and east of the town. At first there was little artillery response from the enemy, who was surprised.

JU-88s dropped bombs on German troops at 1530 and 1540. So far five men have been reported killed and seven wounded. The enemy had moderate ground support and fighter activity with Spitfires.

At 1700 the front line was at Butovo.

332d Infantry Division. Received 1750. The 3d Battalion of the 678th Regiment penetrated into the Korolevskiy Woods from the southeast. The southern part of Novaya Goryanka has been occupied by elements of the Field Replacement Battalion since 1630.

German casualties have been slight. There are 27 prisoners.

The enemy was quiet at first, then became more active. Since 1640 there has been heavy artillery fire on Fastov, Nevedomyi Kolodes, Zybino, and Khoteshk, and automatic weapon fire in the northeast.

Since 1540 German artillery fire has been steady, and there has been air support. The mortar battalion is still not firing. There was a storm over the Korolevskiy Woods at 1545, which put an end to the regular dive bomber attacks.

Front line at 1720: the 2d Battalion of the 677th Regiment is two kilometers west of Gertsovka, south of the railroad line, from where there was considerable enemy resistance at first.

167th Infantry Division. Received 1800. The objective for the day was reached at about 1700. The attack proceeded as scheduled against weak enemy resistance. Only weak artillery and mortar fire was received, most of it on the left flank.

The weather was alternately cloudy and sunny; visibility was good; roads were in good condition.

Three Soviet fighter planes were observed being shot down in air battles over the division sector.

Four or five prisoners have been taken. Details are unavailable.

The front line runs: northern edge of the woods one kilometer west of Dragunskoye-southern edge of the woods two kilometers southwest of Trirechnoye-northern edge of the woods three kilometers east northeast of Butovo and the hills to the west.

3d Panzer Division. Received 1745. The morning was quiet. At 1500 the reinforced Panzer Grenadier Regiment and the 394th Regiment moved out to attack the southwestern part of Gertsovka and the railroad bypass. Point 232.5 was captured. Fighting for the railroad station near Gertsovka is now proceeding.

According to the latest reports, the right flank is advancing north of the railroad line and toward the eastern and southeastern parts of Gertsovka, and has penetrated the enemy's defense positions there.

Some dive bombers supported the German attack with good effect. There was no Soviet air activity.

The condition of the roads is good.

Gross Deutschland Panzer Grenadier Division. Received 1750. Falling in at 1500 the 3d Battalion of the Grenadier Regiment, committed in the division's right sector, reached its objective for the day in the face of only slight enemy resistance. The adjoining 1st and 3d Battalions of the Fusilier Regiment, which started out just before 1530, advanced well at first without encountering any substantial resistance. On Hill 229.8 resistance increased. The attacking battalions suffered losses to flanking fire from artillery and rockets coming from the west and northwest. Hill 229.8 was captured with help from well-positioned German artillery fire.

Contact was established with the unit on the right 400 meters northwest of the northwest edge of Butovo, and with the unit on the left at Point 2.3.

Three enemy planes (Rata) made a low-level attack on the 3d Battalion of the Grenadier Regiment. The Luftwaffe gave effective close support to both rifle battalions.

Roads were at times unpassable by wheeled vehicles because of rainstorms.

Non-committed elements are being brought forward at night into the area near and north of Moshchenoye. The front line is to be extended during the night, and the ordered attack will be carried out.

Three prisoners, one heavy and one light machine gun, and a good deal of ammunition have been captured.

Front line: 200 meters north of the roadway from the northwest edge of Butovo to the west up to gridline 98—500 meters northeast and north of 229.8—300 meters north of point 2.0-2.3.

5 July 1943. D-Day

Corps Command Post: Woods south of Moshchenoye.

Weather: Clear, sunny.

Roads: Muddy after yesterday's rain.

General Situation: Soviet artillery concentrations and mortar fire were directed against the entire corps sector during the night. The 167th Infantry Division repelled numerous attacks, mainly against its left wing. In the 11th Panzer Division sector, three Soviet tanks attempted to break into the newly won positions but were beaten off. The GDPG Division has consolidated its positions. At about 0320 the 3d Panzer Division finished mopping up in Gertsovka. The situation in the 332d Infantry Division sector was most difficult. The division had to repel many Soviet counter-attacks on the workers' barracks, all supported by artillery and heavy weapons. The barracks changed hands several times. At sunrise the situation was not yet clear. Corps and division artillery helped to repel the Soviet attacks and fired effective counterfire. Soviet aircraft were very active, striking the divisions' forward positions and their concentration areas.

- 0300: The Corps Artillery commander reports there is no fog, and the weather is fine for artillery preparation.
- 0310: The Corps Commander directs artillery to fire for registration.
- 0330: Division chiefs of staff brief the Corps Commander on the state of readiness.
- The 167th Infantry Division and 11th Panzer Division, scheduled to attack later, have no problems and will be ready on time.
 - The GDPG Division is ready for the attack.
 - The 3d Panzer Division reports that the road between Fastov and Gertsovka is heavily mined. This caused delay in moving up heavy weapons. However, in spite of difficulties the division expects to be ready by 0500.
 - The 332d Infantry Division, because of the very bad roads, has had problems bringing up its artillery and heavy weapons. The division will not be able to advance until Soviet resistance at the workers' barracks is broken.
- 0345: The Corps Commander decides to attack with the GDPG and 3d Panzer Divisions at 0500. The 167th Infantry and 11th Panzer Divisions will be ready to jump off at 0700. The time of advance of the 332d Infantry Division will depend on the situation at the workers' barracks. He sends orders to the division commanders and reports his situation and decision to the Army.
- 0420: The Corps Commander orders commencement of the artillery preparation. Intermittent artillery concentrations lasting five to ten minutes begin.
- 0440: Word is received from the II SS Panzer Corps on the right that it attacked at 0430 and is advancing with heavy air support.
- 0445: Air reconnaissance reports that there are no major Soviet troop movements or other unusual preparations within ten kilometers of the front.
- 0500: The GDPG Division and 3d Panzer Division jump off. Because not all the 3d Panzer Division artillery is ready, only part of it supports the attack. Soviet positions are all strongly occupied, and the troops offer stubborn resistance.
- 0520: The 11th Panzer Division requests more combat engineers, to clear the heavily mined area around Butovo.
- 0525: Two engineer companies of the 1st Engineer Training Battalion, all the corps had in reserve, are temporarily attached to the 11th Panzer Division.
- 0530: Infantry units and an advance panzer group of the GDPG Division reach the antitank ditch and ravine east of Berezovyy. In front of the ravine

- the Soviets have laid deep minefields and barbed wire. The division may have difficulty crossing the ravine and ditch because they are full of water. The panzer regiment of the division has already lost a considerable number of tanks in the minefields northeast of Hill 229.8.
- 0600: The Corps Commander arrives at the 3d Panzer Division Command Post. The panzer regiment of the division, having been bogged down and held up for an hour, finally reaches Gertsovka.
- 0630: The right battalion of the 394th Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division attacks without waiting for the tanks. The attack is going smoothly, but the division has not yet reached the Soviet first defense zone.
- 0635: The 332d Infantry Division has not yet started to advance. The situation at the workers' barracks is still tense. Soviet artillery in the area around Dmitryevka is laying very heavy fire on the division. The division's artillery is in position. Elements of the 1st Heavy Mortar Regiment, attached to the division, are near Zybino but not yet in firing positions.
- 0640: The Corps Commander orders the commander of the 1st Heavy Mortar Regiment to advance quickly, and support the advance of the 332d Infantry Division.
- The infantry elements of the GDPG Division, which have crossed the ravine east of Berezovyy, penetrate into the southern part of Cherkasskoye.
 - According to an unconfirmed report, units of the Fusilier Regiment have apparently crossed the ravine too. The advance panzer group is still at the crossing.
- 0645: The Corps Commander decides to commit the 11th Panzer and 167th Infantry Divisions. The Chief of Staff orders them to be ready to attack at 0730.
- Order to the Panther Regiment and GSPG Division: As of 0640 the Panther Regiment (currently concentrated in the depression north of Moshchenoye) is attached to the GDPG Division. It is to be committed to combat only after the division's Panzer Regiment has crossed the ravine at Berezovyy. This is expected to be around 0730.
- 0655: The GDPG Division reports that the advance of the Panzer Regiment across the boggy and heavily mined ravine at Berezovyy gets more and more difficult. Apparently only some infantry units have been able to cross and are advancing toward Cherkasskoye. The earlier report about entering the southern part of Cherkasskoye was inaccurate. The division commander thinks the town will be relatively weakly defended.
- 0700: No situation report has been received from the 3d Panzer Division. The division has had considerable problems because the bridges at Gertsovka were destroyed by the retreating Soviet troops, and because of the extremely heavy artillery and mortar fire directed at the village and the hills to the east.
- 0705: The entire corps sector is under heavy attack by Soviet Il-2 ground attack planes and bombers.
- 0710: The Army Chief of Staff informs the Corps: The II SS Panzer Corps, on the right of the XLVIII Panzer Corps, in spite of strong Soviet resistance has broken into the first defense zone. Task Force Kempf is making good progress also. However, it is having difficulty trying to cross the Donets River because the bridges are under constant heavy artillery fire. A sudden, swift breakthrough of the deeply echeloned Soviet defense system can hardly be expected. Air reconnaissance has not detected the introduction of Soviet reserves.
- 0715: The 332d Infantry Division finally takes and consolidates the workers' barracks and prepares for further advance. The Corps Commander orders the division commander to accelerate his drive in order not to leave the left flank of the 3d Panzer Division unprotected during its advance to the Pena River.

- 0720: The 11th Panzer and 167th Infantry Divisions are ordered to attack at 0730.
- 0730: The 11th Panzer and 167th Infantry Divisions attack. Both come under heavy air attack and ask for air support.
- 0800: The Panther Regiment moves out of its concentration area in the depression north of Moshchenoye and heads toward Berezovyy.
- 0815: The Panther Regiment crosses the railroad track.
- 0820: The Corps Commander expects that with the commitment of 160 new Panther tanks the GDPG Division will quickly break through the Soviet defenses and capture the ground to the north.
- 0825: The 2d Battalion, 3d Regiment, of the 3d Panzer Division, and an advance group of tanks, reach the area about 800 meters west of Berezovyy. The 1st Battalion, 394th Regiment, is advancing over the animal burial mound.
- The 2d Battalion, 394th Regiment, is cleaning out Gertsovka. The division is under heavy artillery and mortar fire from north of Gertsovka. It will have to regroup before continuing to advance.
- 0900: The 332d Infantry Division starts to advance toward Voskhod.
- The left wing of the 167th Infantry Division crosses the ravine south of Hill 237.8. Two battalions of the 11th Panzer Division are advancing abreast toward the antitank ditches along the road south of the fork south of Cherkasskoye. There is only weak Soviet resistance in the woods east of the road. Soviet infantry units are resisting fiercely in front of the attacking battalions, but there are unconfirmed reports that some Soviet units are withdrawing.
- 0945: Only a few tanks of the GDPG Division have been able to cross the muddy, mined ravine at Berezovyy. One Tiger tank broke down in the middle of the ravine and halted the entire crossing movement. Engineers are working feverishly to construct a new crossing, but the construction material sinks in the deep mud. The Panther Regiment is still south of Hill 229.8. The division reports that the crossing will take more time than anticipated.
- 0950: Soviet air forces repeatedly attack the large concentrations of tanks and infantry near the crossing at Berezovyy. There are heavy losses, especially among the officers. GDPG Division's Command Post received a direct hit, killing the adjutant of the grenadier regiment and two other officers.
- 0955: Despite heavy Soviet fire, the hills west of Hill 237.8 are held by the grenadier regiment of the GDPG Division.
- The 3d Panzer Division is pinned down under heavy artillery and mortar fire.
 - Corps and Army artillery are keeping Korovino and the hills south of it under constant fire.
- 0957: The Corps Artillery Commander urgently requests the Army for air artillery observers and fighter escort.
- 1000: The 11th Panzer Division is advancing slowly. Crossing of the antitank ditches south of Cherkasskoye presents many difficulties. All the roads are clogged with troops. The 2d Battalion of the 110th Regiment is attempting to advance east of the forest and south of Hill 244.5.
- The left wing and center of the 167th Infantry Division cross the ravine west of Trirechnoye and in spite of strong Soviet resistance advance toward the north and northeast.
- 1005: The first tanks of the GDPG Division are finally advancing across the ravine at Berezovyy.
- 1015: The 676th Grenadier Regiment, 332d Infantry Division, attacks toward the railroad station near Gertsovka.

- 1030: The Corps Commander, at the 11th Panzer Division's command post, discusses with his Chief of Staff at Corps Headquarters the problem of moving the tanks of the GDFG Division across the ravine. The Commander thinks that, if it does not soon become possible to cross the ravine with tanks, thought should be given as to whether both panzer regiments should be shifted to the right and try to break through near Cherkasskoye. The Chief of Staff comments that Cherkasskoye has a well-prepared system of defense and may require a totally new offensive plan. He reports that the GDFG Division Commander and the Army Staff doubt the wisdom of shifting the panzer regiments and giving them a new mission. The division commander believes that a breach has already been made in the Soviet defenses and it would be advisable to wait until two crossings can be built. They should be completed soon.
- The Army Commander orders the 332d Infantry Division transferred to the LII Army Corps as of 1200 6 July. This is in effect a boundary shift.
 - The Corps Commander fears that under separate command the division may not follow the advance of the 3d Panzer Division closely, and that therefore the 3d Panzer Division may have problems securing its left flank.
- 1050: The Corps asks the 332d Infantry Division for a situation report. It is known that the division jumped off at 0900, but there have been no reports on its progress.
- 1100: The 11th Panzer Division reports better progress. The SPW (Scout Car) Battalion's tanks have crossed the antitank ditch and reached the area south of Hill 237.8. This raises again the question of the advisability of shifting the GDFG Division to the east. However, in view of the reports that the crossing at Berezovyy will be ready at any moment, the Corps Commander decides to postpone the decision and wait to see what develops.
- 1105: The GDFG Division reports that two crossings are ready and ten tanks are across the ravine. Soviet forces to the north are counterattacking the units of the Grenadier and Fusilier Regiments which are across. Colonel Khassnitz, Commander of the Fusilier Regiment, and the commander of the 1st Battalion of the Panzer Regiment are severely wounded.
- 1115: The 3d Panzer Division takes the western part of Berezovyy. The division's tanks, on a broad front, reach the stream north of the town. No crossing is found. The infantry is engaged in heavy combat. Moreover Soviet units are still attacking the division's left flank.
- 1125: The 332d Infantry Division reports very slow progress. The Corps Commander orders the division commander to attack vigorously and speed up the advance toward Voskhod and the hills southwest of it. The 676th Regiment is ordered to secure the left flank of the 3d Panzer Division.
- 1130: The 11th Panzer Division reports that the 2d Battalion of the 11th Regiment is one kilometer west of Hill 237.8. To the north and from the direction of Cherkasskoye the Soviets are offering strong resistance. The division intends to move the Panzer Regiment in behind the 11th Regiment. The 2d Battalion is engaged in heavy fighting for Hill 237.8. The division requests artillery fire on Yarki and the high land around Hill 232.4, where a concentration of Soviet forces has been reported.
- 1155: Lt. General Schäfer, Commander of the 332d Infantry Division, is wounded by a mine fragment. The Corps Commander orders the Artillery Regiment Commander by phone to assume command of the division.
- 1210: One panzer battalion of the GDFG Division has crossed the ravine at Berezovyy and is advancing toward Hill 210.7.
- 1215: Hill 237.8 is taken by the 11th Panzer Division.
- 1300: Infantry elements of the 3d Panzer Division cross the stream west of Berezovyy on a wide front, and advance to the southern slopes of Hill 239.3. A crossing for the tanks is being built. The division is worried

- about the security of its left flank. The commander thinks it is high time to move up the Reconnaissance Battalion of the 332d Infantry Division to protect it.
- 1315: Report of Corps Operations Officer to Corps Chief of Staff: Hopes that the tanks of the GDPG Division would soon cross the ravine at Berezovyy have failed. The crossing is blocked again by a broken-down tank. As of 1300 only 15 tanks, none of them Panthers, are on the northern side of the ravine. In spite of these difficulties the GDPG Division requests that no orders be given the division to regroup. The division asks permission to wait until the crossing is repaired and then proceed according to plan.
- 1325: The Corps Commander informs the commander of the GDPG Division that he accepts his view. After the crossing is made the division should advance as planned. However, in view of the apparently better situation in the 3d Panzer Division sector, the Corps Commander orders the GDPG Division Commander to find out whether it would be possible for the tank elements of his division to follow behind the Panzer Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division.
- 1333: The Commander of the 11th Panzer Division thinks that the Panther Regiment of the GDPG Division could use the road northeast of Butovo. He reports that according to a Soviet deserter that road was used by the Soviets as a supply route and was not mined. The Corps Commander orders him to verify this information, and to make sure that the Panthers could have a clear way in case they have to be moved there.
- 1335: Reconnaissance units of the GDPG Division reconnoitering to the east of Berezovyy in search of a way to bypass the ravine find the area heavily mined. Engineers are sent to clear the minefields.
- The reconnaissance battalion of the 332d Infantry Division is moving up on the division's left flank. The division has lost communications with the 676th Regiment and does not know whether or not it is advancing.
 - The 677th Regiment has lost three tanks in an enemy counterattack at the workers' barracks.
- 1345: The 11th Panzer Division reaches the road between Butovo and Cherkasskoye, near Hill 244.5, and turns west. On the right, after a fierce fight, the division captures Hill 237.8.
- 1400: The tanks of the 3d Panzer Division, followed by the SPW (scout car) Battalion, cross the stream west of Berezovyy. The division questions the concept of moving the Panthers of the GDPG Division in behind the Panzer Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division. Such a move would block further advance of some elements of the 3d Panzer Division, particularly its heavy weapons.
- 1405: The Corps still has no report about the situation of the Reconnaissance Battalion of the 332d Division. It is apparent that the battalion has not entered combat. The Corps again orders the 332d Infantry Division to speed up the commitment of the battalion.
- 1500: The Army Commander arrives at the Corps Command Post and is briefed by the Corps Commander and Chief of Staff.
- Two battalions of the 15th Panzer Regiment, 11th Panzer Division, take Hill 244.5.
- 1520: The 332d Reconnaissance Battalion crosses the railroad at H.P. Gertsovka.
- 1600: Situation report: The right wing of the 167th Infantry Division has reached the antitank ditch one kilometer south of the Manayki Ravine. The left wing has reached Hill 237.8 and turned toward the northeast.
- The 11th Panzer Division is engaged in combat with eight Soviet tanks south of Hill 244.5. Air reconnaissance reports that five tanks are burning. At the western outskirts of Cherkasskoye the division is involved in a fierce fight with about 20 Soviet tanks.

- The GDPG Division has 30 Panthers, 15 Panzer Mk. IVs, four infantry battalions and one antitank unit across the ravine at Berezovyy. The tanks are advancing toward the northwestern corner of Cherkasskoye. The division is under heavy artillery and antitank fire. Most of the area is heavily mined. It will take the entire night for all of the tanks and other vehicles of the division to cross the ravine. The Army Commander is of the opinion that in spite of the slowness of the crossing operation the division should stick to its original plan and should not be moved through the sectors of the neighboring divisions.
 - One infantry regiment of the 3d Panzer Division is at the southeastern edge of Korovino. Its tank elements and one infantry battalion have entered the northwestern part of the town.
 - The 332d Infantry Division's right wing—the 676th Regiment and the Reconnaissance Battalion—are advancing toward Voskhod. The left wing has recently passed through the workers' barracks.
- 1620: The GDPG Division's crossing at Berezovyy is blocked again. Heavy Soviet counterattacks and bombing continue in the GDPG Division sector. Four grenadier battalions and elements of the Fusilier Regiment are engaged in a heavy defensive battle on both sides of the animal burial mound.
- 1625: After a brief analysis of the situation in the GDPG Division sector, the Corps Commander decides that the division's tanks cannot undertake the thrust planned for today. It will be postponed until tomorrow, when it is hoped that the crossing will be completed. The Corps must satisfy itself with only a limited success.
- 1645: The XLVIII Panzer Corps reports its orders to the Army: The 167th Infantry Division is to stop and secure its positions from attack from the northeast.
- The 11th Panzer Division is to advance north against the eastern and southern parts of Cherkasskoye and capture the town.
 - The GDPG Division is to attack Hill 210.7. If the attack does not succeed, the division is to enter the northwestern part of Cherkasskoye.
 - The 3d Panzer Division will take Korovino.
 - The 332d Infantry Division is to take Voskhod, move the Reconnaissance Battalion up behind the 3d Panzer Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division, and secure the western flank of the corps.
- 1655: Army orders to Corps: Corps directives are approved. Although the 332d Infantry Division is to be attached administratively to the LII Army Corps after noon on 6 July, it will continue under operational control of the XLVIII Panzer Corps as necessary. No new operational orders are issued for 6 July. The existing orders remain in force.
- 1700: Preliminary instructions are sent to the divisions.
- 1705: The Corps Artillery Commander reports that the 122d Artillery Group is displacing its 100mm gun battalion (842d Gun Battalion) and its heavy howitzer battalion to the area of Hill 237.8, north of Yamnoye. The light howitzer battalion remains in place temporarily.
- The Corps Commander orders the corps artillery to support the advance of the 11th Panzer Division and the GDPG Division and to destroy Soviet artillery on the western flank.
- 1709: The Army informs the Corps about the situation on the right, the II SS Panzer Corps sector: After initial difficulties the advance is making good progress. The SS Das Reich Division is on the northern edge of the Zhuravlinyy Woods. The SS Adolf Hitler Division has reached the southern outskirts of Bykovka. The SS T (Totenkopf) Division is advancing north from Berezov.
- 1715: Air reconnaissance reports no major Soviet troop movements toward the combat area. New batteries were sighted near Rakovo on the Pena River.
- 1730: The 11th Panzer Division reports that because of heavy Soviet counterattacks supported by tanks from the north the capture of southern

- Cherkasskoye seems to be out of the question at present.
- 1735: The GDPG Division's tanks crossing at Berezovyy are stuck in the mud again.
- 1745: The Commander of the GDPG Division asks the Corps Commander for permission to advance toward the road from Butovo to Hill 237.8 and then proceed on the road to Cherkasskoye, with one tank battalion and the engineers of the GD Assault Gun Battalion and the GD Artillery. This is in the 11th Panzer Division sector. If permission is given it will be very important that the 11th Panzer Division take the southern part of Cherkasskoye. Elements of the GDPG Division which are north of the crossing at Berezovyy are advancing north from the area of the animal burial mound. The Corps Commander grants the request.
- 1755: The 3d Panzer Division reports that Soviet forces are still holding stubbornly in Korovino, but in the last hour or so the defense has seemed to grow weaker and the defenders seem to have started to disengage. Some Soviet artillery and heavy weapons have been withdrawn. Troops have been sighted withdrawing toward the northwest. The division has committed three battalions supported by tanks in the battle for Korovino and expect to take it in the next few hours. The division expects to capture a bridgehead near Krasnyy Pochinok also.
- 1758: The Commander, 394th Regiment, 3d Panzer Division, Colonel Pape, has been wounded and evacuated to the hospital.
- 1800: The 11th Panzer Division takes Hill 244.5. The division is fighting for Hill 246.0. Soviets are counterattacking from the northwest. In this tank battle Hill 246.0 has changed hands several times. Elements of the division are in heavy combat, approaching the eastern edge of Cherkasskoye.
- The 167th Infantry Division is under counterattack by about 600 Soviet troops with submachine guns and machine guns toward the hills southeast of Hill 246.0.
- 1810: The Corps Commander reprimands the Commander of the 332d Infantry Division for having sent in no situation reports and orders him to take Voskhod today, using the division's artillery and mortars to support the attack. He demands that a situation report be sent immediately.
- 2020: The 3d Panzer Division takes Korovino.
- The situation on the right wing—167th Infantry and 3d Panzer Divisions—remains unchanged.
 - The GDPG Division has captured the northwestern part of Cherkasskoye. Its panzer regiment is in Yarki. Other elements of the division are attacking Hill 237.8. The engineers are clearing mines from the road in preparation for the advance of the rest of the tanks tomorrow.
 - The 3d Panzer Division's panzer regiment is advancing toward Krasnyy Pochinok to capture a bridgehead there. The Soviets are executing an organized withdrawal, covered by strong rearguards, who are fighting stubbornly.
 - The 332d Infantry Division's reconnaissance battalion has made contact with the 676th Infantry Regiment southwest of Korovino. The division is under heavy artillery fire. There is no sign of a Soviet withdrawal.
- 2045: The 332d Infantry Division is ordered to secure the western flank of the Corps on 6 July along the line: Point 1.0-Korovino-workers' barracks-western outskirts of Bubny. The 676th Infantry Regiment is to take Voskhod and the hills north and southwest of it. The reconnaissance battalion is to secure the line from Point 1.0 west of Korovino to Voskhod. As the LII Army Corps advances, the division is to bring its remaining units behind the 3d Panzer Division and secure the line from Hill 230.0 to Setnoye. The Army orders the 1st Battery of the 108th Light Field Artillery Battalion taken from the Corps and attached to the 332d Division.

- 2050: The Corps Chief of Staff confirms that on the 6th combat operations essentially will follow the old operational order. The exact time of attack will depend on the situation in the GDPG Division and 11th Panzer Division sectors. It is still not certain that the corps will have air support.
- 2100: The 11th Panzer Division's tanks take Hill 246.0. The 1st Battalion, 110th Regiment, has penetrated into Cherkasskoye from the east and is engaged in heavy street fighting.
- 2105: The GDPG Division, having taken Yarki in fierce fighting, attacks Cherkasskoye from the west. Most of the city is in German hands. The 332d Infantry Division takes Voskhod. The reconnaissance battalion is at Hill 1.0, west of Korovino.
- 2115: The 3d Panzer Division's main force is securing Korovino. The Panzer Group has been engaged in heavy combat for Krasnyy Pochinok and has just taken it. The tanks have broken through the Soviet positions and captured the bridge northwest of the town. The bridge is only slightly damaged and will be repaired during the night.
- 2300: Summary: The day has been one of extremely heavy fighting. In spite of extremely strong Soviet resistance the Corps has broken through several kilometers of heavily mined, strongly fortified enemy positions in very difficult terrain. German troops all along the Corps front have broken through the front of the first defense zone and are fighting within that zone as they try to advance toward the second. German units have inflicted many casualties on the Soviets and destroyed many tanks that had been dug in and used as immobile firing points. Despite heavy artillery fire and repeated air attacks German casualties were not excessive.
- Corps orders for 6 July: Essentially the old orders will be followed. The Corps will attack the second Soviet defense line, on the Pena River. Jumping off time will be not before 0600 and will be given later. The boundary between the GDPG Division and the 11th Panzer Division is to follow the road from Cherkasskoye to Dubrova to Hill 260.8, the road being in the 11th Panzer Division sector. Tank units of the GDPG Division which are still south of the crossing at Berezovyy are to advance through the 11th Panzer Division sector on the road from Butovo to Hill 240.0. Both divisions are to mop up in Cherkasskoye. The 11th Panzer Division is to clear the minefields south of the town.

Division Daily Reports - 5 July 1943:

11th Panzer Division. Received at 1740. The 2d Battalion, 110th Regiment, and 911th Assault Gun Battalion jumped off at 0730. They reached the tank ditch east of the woods north of Butovo at 0919 and crossed on a broad front under fire from Soviet antitank guns, mortars, artillery, and automatic guns. Hill 237.8 was in German hands by 1215.

The 2d Battalion, 11th Regiment, and 8th Company of the 15th Panzer Regiment went around the woods and at about 1500 captured Hill 244.5. The attack bogged down there in the face of a flanking attack of about ten or fifteen tanks from the north northwest. The enemy also counterattacked from the northeast via Hill 246.0.

The weather was sunny. Roads dried out in the course of the day.

Both German and Soviet air forces have been very active. In the morning the enemy air force was superior, attacking with dive bombers (Stukas), fighters, fighter-bombers, and bombers. Both sides suffered losses. Four enemy planes (Pe-2 and Boston) were shot down by the 277th Army Battalion and the 616th Motorized AA Battalion. From seven to ten more enemy planes were observed shot down by German fighters.

Two hundred and fifteen prisoners were taken. Three 70mm antitank guns, one 47mm antitank gun, one antitank rifle, and four heavy machine guns were captured.

Front line at 1700: Hill 237.8-Hill 244.5-southern edge of the woods north of Butovo-machine tractor station in the woods west of Butovo.

The division is ordered to clear out Cherkasskoye and the fortified positions there, then make a further advance to the northeast.

332d Infantry Division. Received at 1830. At 0930 after preparation fire from artillery and medium mortars, the 2d Battalion, 677th Grenadier Regiment, and the 678th Grenadier Regiment's right battalion attacked enemy positions north and northwest of the Bubny Forest, near Hill 234.3. On the right the forces of the 677th Grenadier Regiment advanced to the tank ditch northeast of the northern Bubny Forest. The attack on the left, by the 1st Battalion of the 678th Grenadier Regiment, bogged down under heavy fire from Hill 234.3 just north of the railroad tracks. The 677th Grenadier Regiment has been ordered to dig in where it is. New regimental headquarters are on the hill one kilometer southwest of the bend in the rail line north of Bubny Forest.

The 676th Grenadier Regiment moved out at 1015 via the railroad station near Gertsovka. At 1530 it reported its attack on Voskhod was making slow progress. There was heavy enemy fire from positions in the first defense zone southwest of Voskhod. The regiment has been ordered under all circumstances to take Voskhod and the enemy positions southwest of it in order to protect the left flank of the 3d Panzer Division.

At 1520 the 332d Reconnaissance Battalion crossed the railroad track at the railroad station near Gertsovka, its mission to advance via Gertsovka behind the left flank of the 3d Panzer Division in the direction of Korovino. After the 3d Panzer Division takes Korovino, the Reconnaissance Battalion is to capture Hill 1.0 one kilometer northwest of the town and establish contact to the south with the right flank of the 676th Grenadier Regiment.

Soviet positions around Dmitriyevka are heavily fortified, especially with mortars and antitank weapon emplacements. In the course of the day the Soviets counter-attacked several times, using single tanks, from the area around Bubny and Dmitriyevka against the right flank of the 678th Regiment. Three Soviet tanks were destroyed by artillery fire or put out of commission.

There was considerable enemy artillery activity, especially in the forenoon. Enemy air activity was heavy during the entire day.

The 678th Grenadier Regiment is digging in on the northwest and western edge of the Bubny Forest. The 1st Battalion of the 678th is on the northern edge of Novaya Goryanka, facing the enemy on the south edge of the Bubny Forest. The division plans to take out most of this battalion during the night, leaving guard troops in the present position, and then will use this battalion on 6 July to attack through the woods to the northeast to destroy the enemy forces there. There is about one Soviet company with heavy machine guns.

167th Infantry Division. Received at 1750. Starting out before 0800, the left wing, with units from the regiment on the right, attacked the Soviet first defense zone against stubborn resistance. There was much harassing fire from artillery and mortars, as well as automatic gunfire, especially from the area Trirechnoye-Novo Cherkasskoye-and to the east.

During the afternoon the enemy made several air attacks, dropping bombs on the left half of the division. The division's antiaircraft company shot down two planes.

The weather was generally good; it became unsettled toward evening. The roads were in good condition.

The objective by evening is to attain the line northeast of the edge of the woods one kilometer west of Dragunskoye and the system of ditches northwest of there.

Front line: From the northeast corner of the woods one kilometer west of Dragunskoye-northeast outlet of the ravine northeast of Butovo-Hill 237.8.

3d Panzer Division. Received at 1950. The division moved out at 0500, at first without tanks, which were unable to follow because of minefields and poor road conditions. The division advanced from Hill 2.3 to Berezovyy, which it captured in spite of heavy fire from sharpshooters. At 1115 it proceeded through the Berezovyy area, with tanks providing fire support. Advancing on a broad front, the

division took Hill 239.3. The tanks were considerably delayed in following by difficulty in crossing the swampy land around Berezovyy. Enemy resistance increased at the eastern edge of Korovino. Soviet counterattacks from Korovino with tank support were repulsed.

The 2d Battalion, 3d Regiment, and 1st Battalion, 394th Regiment, entered the southern part of Korovino. After displacing the artillery forward and preparing the tanks, the leading battalions and the tanks started to occupy Korovino at 1745. Now there is heavy fighting there.

The 2d Battalion, 394th Regiment, was released by the attack of the unit on its left against Voskhod. The battalion was moved up on the left wing and is currently attacking the hilly land, which is considerably fortified, west southwest of Korovino.

Most of the Soviet forces are retreating north northeast in an orderly fashion. They are covering their retreat with tanks, and strong rearguards are fighting stubbornly.

There was considerable enemy air activity with bombers and fighter-bombers throughout the day. German fighter defense was strong. Many planes were observed shot down.

The weather was cloudy. Road conditions were good.

After capturing Korovino the armored group will strike toward Krassny Pochinok in order to build a bridgehead there.

Gross Deutschland Panzer Grenadier Division. Received at 1700. With the entire GD Panzer Regiment committed, the division advanced north at 0500 from the position gained on 4 July. Despite stubborn resistance ground was quickly gained. Since the area east of Berezovyy was impassible for tanks because of the swampy conditions, the dismounted infantry attacked without tanks, but with support of all the heavier weapons. They captured the hilly land between 237.8 and 239.3 from a well dug-in enemy and successfully fended off a counterattack from the north and another from the Kolchoz area, at the western edge of Cherkasskoye. Preliminary reports indicate that seven enemy tanks were destroyed in this action. Strong flanking fire from Cherkasskoye and Korovino made it impossible to advance further without tanks.

After crossing places were constructed, about 40 tanks crossed, with two battalions of grenadiers, followed on the left by two rifle battalions. They are to attack the northern part of Cherkasskoye, beginning at 1700, and first taking Hill 210.7.

Final, supplementary report, received at 0117 on 6 July: At 1730 the 2d Battalion, Grenadier Regiment, advanced from the machine tractor station west of Butovo to Point 237.8, southwest of Cherkasskoye. There contact was made with the 3d Battalion, Grenadier Regiment. Two kilometers south of Point 237.8 the road and open land are heavily mined, and there is a barbed wire entanglement.

Elements of the von Lauchert Panzer Regiment, with the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment, attached, pushed through the northwest part of Cherkasskoye. The grenadier regiment assaulted and captured an enemy battery there. Advancing to the east, they captured Yarki against strong resistance, encountered especially in the area of Point 232.4. Yarki and the northwest part of Cherkasskoye are firmly in German hands.

The Fusilier Regiment reached the hilly area east southeast of Krasnyy Pochinok. The division had substantial casualties, especially of officers, because the infantry attack had to be made without armored support because of the unfavorable terrain. Casualties were also caused by unexpected minefields, many of them more than 100 meters deep, that had to be crossed.

There was strong enemy air activity, with bombing and strafing attacks, continuing for awhile after dusk. Division units shot down seven enemy planes, although they have not yet been fully confirmed.

About 60 prisoners, seven tanks, one battery, ten 76.2mm guns, and four antitank guns, were captured. The GD Engineer Battalion removed 46 box mines.

The GD Panzer Regiment reports the following tanks operational: 4 Mk II, one Mk III short, 11 Mk III long, 6 Mk IV short, 45 Mk IV long, 3 Mk VI. So far the 39th Regiment has reported only three total losses. Twenty-nine assault guns are operational. The GD Panzer Regiment lost 5 assault guns and about 20 tanks as a result of mines.

Roads are good.

The attack will continue tomorrow.

Front line: Machine tractor station-Point 237.8-northwest part of Cherkasskoye-Yarki. Terrain just south of the stream east of Krasnyy Pochinok.

6 July 1943

Corps Command Post: Woods south of Moshchenoye.

Weather: light rain during the night; early clouds; later clearing.

0545: General situation: The 11th Panzer Division has not quite finished mopping up the southern part of Cherkasskoye, where several pockets of resistance are still opposing the advance of the division. The division is holding a line running from Hill 244.5 to the southern outskirts of Cherkasskoye. Several flame-throwing tanks have pushed their way through the town, and no more strong resistance is anticipated. Southeast of Cherkasskoye, Soviet troops have entered the woods again, making it very difficult to clear the mines from the road.

In the GDPG Division sector the night was quiet. Just before 0430 the 3d Battalion of the Grenadier Regiment took the western part of Cherkasskoye. Those tank and infantry elements which succeeded in crossing the ravine yesterday captured Yarki after a fierce battle and are standing on the eastern edge of the village, ready for further attack. The panzer battalion commanded by Colonel von Lauchert, which moved against strongly defended Hill 232.4 in the evening, was withdrawn to Yarki. The main force of the panzer brigade, which was to advance to Hill 237.8 via the road leading from Butovo, could not reach its destination because a bridge had collapsed. There is no other way but to permit the rest of the division to advance toward the northeast through Butovo in the 11th Panzer Division sector. However, this will have to wait until the road from Butovo is cleared of mines.

The engineers of the 11th Panzer Division are clearing the road, working from the northwest, while the engineers of the GDPG Division are working their way from the south. The tanks move up as the mines are removed. The Panther Brigade will not be in position ready to attack before 0630. Its advance detachment reached the fork southeast of Cherkasskoye at 0500. Since the crossing at Berezovyy is completely covered with mud, the commitment of the entire tank force of the Corps depends entirely on the speed of the mine clearing.

As of 0500 two battalions of the 3d Panzer Division were near Korovino, facing west. During the night the tank group established a weak bridgehead north of Krasnyy Pochinok, encountering only slight Soviet resistance. According to reconnaissance reports there are no Soviet forces in Mikhaylovka and Novo Pavlovka. Apparently the Soviets have withdrawn to the hills along the Pena River. Since the Soviet forces west of Korovino are still strong, the further advance of the 3d Panzer Division depends on the advance to the north of the right wing of the 332d Infantry Division.

The 332d Infantry Division had a relatively quiet night. As ordered, the reconnaissance battalion is remaining in line up to Point 1.0.

0610: The Commander of the 332d Infantry Division is ordered to expand the sectors of his two infantry regiments to the north to include the present sector of the reconnaissance battalion. The reconnaissance battalion will regroup and move behind the 3d Panzer Division, ready to follow it.

0715: The 11th Panzer Division has cleared the road from Butovo to the northeast of mines, and the tanks of the GDPG Division are already using it.

0720: The Corps Commander orders the attack for 0830. Orders are sent to the divisions and reported to the Commander of the Fourth Panzer Army.

- 0730: Corps Artillery is in position in the area north of Yamnoye, ready to fire toward the north and northeast.
- 0740: There is friction between the 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions with regard to road precedence. The Corps Commander orders the GDPG Division to take the road northeast from Butovo, west of the woods, while the 11th Panzer Division advances east of the woods.
- 0750: All of the engineer units of the 11th Panzer Division have been moved forward and are in the first echelon. However, the roads in the rear need more repairs. The Corps Engineer Officer agrees to clear the rest of the mines from the road and build a two lane road between Butovo and Cherkasskoye.
- 0830: The 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions start to advance from the line Hill 246.0 to Hill 232.4, in accordance with orders.
 -The 3d Panzer Division moves out according to schedule and advances to the north.
- 0835: Air reconnaissance reports Soviet vehicles moving between Podimovka and Zavidovka. The Corps Commander orders that they be taken under artillery fire.
 -The Fourth Panzer Army Chief of Staff informs the Corps that the 167th Infantry Division will remain attached to the XLVIII Panzer Corps. After reaching Olkhovka, the division, by a concentrated attack from north and southwest, will take the remaining Soviet positions in the pocket between the Vorskla and Vorskolez Rivers at the junction between the XLVIII Panzer and II SS Panzer Corps. For this purpose the 315th Infantry Regiment has been returned to the division and will advance from the southeast.
- 0840: Cherkasskoye has been mopped up by 11th Panzer Division troops.
- 0920: The first tanks of the 3d Panzer Division penetrate into Zavidovka. The town is lightly defended, but strong Soviet forces are deployed along the north bank of the Pena River.
- 0930: The advance of the 11th Panzer Division at Hill 246.0 is making good progress. However, the division commander expects that the area between Hill 246.0 and Dubrova is heavily mined and it will be necessary to commit a large group of engineers.
- 0935: There is no report from the GDPG Division, but the corps liaison officer reports by radio that the division's lead tanks have been counterattacked by Soviet tanks in the area two kilometers northeast of Hill 246.0. Involved are the units of Colonel Strachwitz's panzer regiment (the GDPG regiment) which had advanced through Yarki. There is still no contact with the Panther Brigade and the rest of the armored force. Colonel Strachwitz, now Commander of the GD Panzer Regiment, is urging attack and asks for immediate orders from the division putting all forces under his command, since he has no contact with the Panther Brigade.
- 1000: The 3d Panzer Division has encountered difficulties in crossing the stream near Krasnyy Pochinok, because the bridge has collapsed. Engineer troops are being brought in to build a new bridge. The division is under heavy flanking fire from Dmitriyevka.
- 1005: The Army reports that the II SS Panzer Corps is advancing more rapidly today than yesterday. Because of this the Army Commander considers it very important that the GDPG and 11th Panzer Divisions reach the road fork at Hill 254.5 near Dubrova as quickly as possible, so that the flank of the II SS Panzer Corps will not be exposed.
- 1010: The right wing regiment of the 167th Infantry Division is in front of Trirechnoye, and its left regiment is advancing toward Novo Cherkasskoye.
- 1025: The GDPG Division reports that it still has no contact with the Panther Brigade, and it is not clear whether the brigade has entered combat. The division has issued immediate attack orders to Strachwitz's panzer

- regiment. The advance elements of the regiment are under heavy flanking artillery fire from Alekseyevka.
- The Corps Chief of Staff informs the GDPG Division that it is imperative to take Alekseyevka and then Lukhanino.
- 1030: The Army Commander and the Commander of the VIII Air Corps arrive at the Corps Command Post. After orientation by the Corps Commander and Chief of Staff the Army Commander repeats his order to break through the Soviet defense positions, with the main effort south of Dubrova. Lukhanino must be taken by units of the GDPG Division. For the time being Alekseyevka should not be attacked.
- 1045: The 3d Panzer Division is ordered to secure a crossing near Zavidovka as soon as possible and to build a bridge there during the night. Next the division will advance toward Rakovo.
- The Corps is trying to get the 332d Reconnaissance Battalion to move to the hill near Krasnyy Pochinok.
- 1050: The 3d Panzer Division reports an increase of artillery, antitank, and AA fire from the hills north of the Pena River. The division is also under flanking fire from Soviets on Hill 210.3.
- 1055: Hill 210.3 is reported to be in the hands of the reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division. However, there seems to be confusion with Hill 210.7, and the Chief of Staff orders the division at all events to take Hill 210.3. Recent reports of the leading tank elements are unclear.
- 1105: The 11th Panzer Division's tank units are engaged with Soviet tanks in the northwestern part of the Orlov Ravine. The division's reconnaissance battalion has crossed the patch of woods south of the ravine.
- 1130: A Soviet counterattack on the GDPG Division elements in the area south-east of Hill 210.7 has been beaten off. There is no information about the whereabouts of the leading tank elements. Strachwitz's tanks attacked at 1100.
- 1200: The 332d Infantry Division is transferred to the LII Army Corps. The leading tank elements of the 3d Panzer Division, in the Zavidovka area, have expended all their ammunition and have to withdraw to the south. In the opinion of the division, the crossing of the river requires entirely new preparation. The division's units are still widely separated.
- The Corps orders that, without consideration for the flanks, all forces assemble to form a bridgehead and that the reconnaissance battalion proceed to attack Hill 210.3.
 - The Army reports that the right wing of the LII Corps is advancing through Bubny toward Dmitriyevka. This move will relieve the left flank of the 332d Infantry Division so that the division will be able to advance north. The division is ordered to advance to Krasnyy Pochinok and relieve units of the 3d Panzer Division in Korovino.
- 1205: The Corps Commander orders the 3d Panzer Division immediately to start building a bridgehead across the Pena with all available forces, disregarding the situation on the division's flanks. The Corps informs the division that the reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division is attacking Hill 210.3.
- 1208: Reconnaissance elements of the 3d Panzer Division report that Soviet defense positions on both sides of Rakovo are extremely strong. In addition to various engineer obstacles, dug-in tanks (heavy KV and T-34) and heavy artillery fire prevent movement across the open space south of the river. The banks of the Pena River and the valley near Krasnyy Pochinok are flooded and marshy. Soviet defenses along the Pena River appear to be stronger than those the division broke through yesterday.
- The Division Commander believes that the division will not be ready in time for tomorrow's assault, because the commitment of the 332d Infantry Division is so slow. In addition, because of the marshes it may become necessary to move the division across the bridge at Yarki. Crossing of

- the Pena River and capturing a bridgehead must be done in one stroke with strong fire support from the Corps and Army artillery. If not, the division may be badly cut up in front of Zavidovka by Soviet fire.
- 1215: The 676th Regiment of the 332d Infantry Division is proceeding toward Korovino, repelling strong Soviet counterattacks from Dmitriyevka against the division's flank. Prisoners report that a new Soviet formation, the 90th Rifle Division, has been committed to the battle.
- 1230: The 11th Panzer Division reaches the crossroad southwest of Dubrova. The reconnaissance battalion takes the northern part of Novo Cherkasskoye. It faces deeply echeloned antitank ditches and minefields.
- 1300: The 167th Division reaches the eastern portions of Trirechnoye and Novo Cherkasskoye. The 315th Grenadier Regiment is reattached to the 167th Division.
- 1330: The panzer regiment of the GDPG Division reaches Hill 254.5 at the crossroad leading to Yakovlevo, and the tanks turn northwest toward Hill 230.1. If this report is correct it would mean that the second defense zone has been broken through and the road to the north is open. The Chief of Staff asks whether there could be doubts as to the reliability of the regiment's report. The Division Commander says the report was clear, but he has asked for confirmation.
- Advance elements of the 11th Panzer Division reach minefields at the road fork 1.5 km. northeast of 246.0.
- 1350: Forward elements of the panzer regiment of the GDPG Division are advancing along the road and have reached the Bolshoy Ravine. The Panther units are advancing on the left flank, but their exact location is unknown. It is assumed that they are near Hill 254.5.
- 1400: The Corps Chief of Staff reports the situation in the GDPG Division to the Army Commander, who at the time is at the 167th Infantry Division command post. The Army Commander, through his chief of staff, orders the II SS Panzer Corps to be ready to advance to the northeast. The XLVIII Panzer Corps will continue to advance toward the Psel River. The Army Commander is of the opinion that the 3d Panzer Division should not stay inactive through the rest of the day. The Corps Chief of Staff recommends to the Army Commander that while securing the flank toward Zavidovka the division should regroup and move through Yarki, Lukhanino, and Syrtsevo, and attack Verkhopenoye. Basically the Army Commander agrees, but until early morning the situation will not really be clear.
- 1415: The Corps Chief of Staff orders the 3d Panzer Division to regroup and concentrate south of the Pena River. The protection of the flank from Zavidovka will be assigned to the 332d Infantry Division. However, until the division arrives the 3d Panzer Division must leave strong forces in the Krasnyy Pochinok area. The Corps Artillery Commander will make all necessary arrangements to put artillery concentrations on the northern bank of the Pena River, especially at Rakovo.
- 1420: The Corps orders the Artillery Commander to displace artillery to the Butovo or Cherkasskoye area, to be able to shell the northern bank of the Pena River, with the main effort in the Rakovo area.
- 1455: The Corps receives the Fourth Panzer Army order confirming that the 315th Infantry Regiment is to return immediately to the control of the 167th Infantry Division. The division will use this regiment to move out of the bridgehead at Voznesenskiy north toward Dmitriyevka and Olkhovka, turn some units to the west, and then mop up Soviet troops encircled in the pocket between the Vorskla, Vorsklets, and Dreyetsk Rivers. The Army Commander, who is at division headquarters, has already given the order to the division commander. The division has passed through Novo Cherkasskoye and is advancing toward Olkhovka and Dmitriyevka.
- 1500: In front of the right wing regiment of the 167th Infantry Division Soviet troops are withdrawing from the area of Hill 233.6 toward Olkhovka.

- Dragunskoye is being mopped up. The 315th Regiment has entered Dragunskoye from the south. The Division Commander hopes to clear up the pocket today and by tomorrow be ready for a new mission in the Dmitriyevka-Olkhovka area.
- The Corps liaison officer the the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division reports that the attempt to break through the Soviet positions near Dubrova was unsuccessful, and the previous report that Hill 254.5 on the road to Yakovlevo was reached is erroneous. The Panthers are still south of the Soviet positions.
 - The 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions are both still engaged in heavy combat for the trenches and antitank ditches two kilometers southwest of Dubrova, and for the hills around the town. The reconnaissance battalion of the 11th Panzer Division has apparently passed through Dmitriyevka and is advancing to the northeast. In front of the antitank ditches the engineers, under heavy small arms and antitank fire, are clearing the terrain of mines. The GDPG Division remains under flanking fire and heavy pressure from Lukhanino.
- 1510: The Corps Commander reports to the Army the error about Hill 254.5.
- 1512: The Army informs the Corps that the II SS Panzer Corps is engaged in heavy combat near Yakovlevo and Luchki. Its right wing is under heavy counterattack by strong Soviet tank elements. In view of this it is not expected that the II SS Panzer Corps will continue to advance north today. Both corps are at approximately the same line, and luckily the mistaken report about Hill 254.5 will not have serious consequences.
- 1615: Colonel Deckert, Commander of the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division, who is at the division command post, is having difficulties in commanding the brigade because his staff has not yet arrived. The Corps Commander decides that as of 1625 command of the Panther Brigade will be given to Colonel Strachwitz, Commander of the GD Panzer Regiment. The Corps expects tighter control over the armor. Colonel Decker, until the arrival of his staff, will be at the disposal of the Corps.
- 1640: Lead tanks of the 11th Panzer Division take Hill 241.1.
- 1700: The 315th Infantry Regiment of the 167th Infantry Division is approaching Olkhovka. To intercept a retreating Soviet force of regimental strength, one battalion has turned toward the road leading from Dragunskoye to Olkhovka. To the south, the 331st Infantry Regiment is mopping up Trirechnoye. One of its battalions is advancing toward the northeast. The 339th Infantry Regiment is deployed on both sides of the road to Dmitriyevka.
- 1715: The reconnaissance battalion of the 11th Panzer Division has reached the northwestern edge of Dmitriyevka, and has taken the antitank artillery positions in the woods northwest of Dmitriyevka. The main force of the division had broken through the minefields and the first trenches of the second Soviet defense zone and is advancing toward the woods south of Dubrova. The division, after crossing the first antitank ditches, has requested air support in front of its forward elements.
- The GDPG Division's panzer regiment is advancing west of Dubrova. On the left the Panther Regiment is securing the flank against the Soviet forces deployed along the Pena River to the north. The 2d Battalion of the Fusilier Regiment has turned toward Lukhanino and is close to its southern edge. Another battalion of that regiment has captured Hill 210.3 and eliminated the flanking fire that was hitting the 3d Panzer Division. The reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division is advancing toward Alekseyevka.
 - The tank elements of the 3d Panzer Division are some two kilometers south of Zavidovka. The main body is concentrated north of the line Yarki-Krasnyy Pochinok, ready to cross the stream behind the GDPG Division either near Lukhanino or at Alekseyevka.

- 1810: The Commander of the GDPG Division confirms earlier reports that the division, having overcome extremely heavily mined barbed wire obstacles and antitank ditches in the Olkhovka and Bolshoy ravines, is attacking Dubrova. The fighting is very intensive.
- 1820: Air reconnaissance reports about 50 or 60 Soviet tanks in front of the leading tank elements of the Corps, one kilometer southwest of Dubrova. Soviet tanks and motorized troops have been sighted north of the Pena River.
- 1830: The mission for tomorrow for the 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions remains the same as for today. The mission of the 3d Panzer Division, depending on the situation, is to cross the stream near Alekseyevka or behind the GDPG Division at Lukhanino, and advance toward the high ground north of Dolgiy. The threat to the flanks from the east will be eliminated by the advance of the GDPG Division through Lukhanino toward Verkhopenoye.
- The Corps Commander believes that this advance will be possible after the 332d Infantry Division on the left captures Zavidovka. If this happens, a crossing near Alekseyevka is being planned. However, it will not be an easy operation. The 3d Panzer Division is to reconnoiter the roads through Lukhanino.
- 1910: The GDPG Division is involved in heavy fighting with Soviet antitank units south of Syrtzev. The division has suffered heavy casualties.
- The Panzer regiment of the 11th Panzer Division is advancing very slowly near Hill 241.1 because of strong antitank fire. The reconnaissance battalion is attacking Soviet positions on the hill from the south.
- 2100: The GDPG Division reaches the eastern outskirts of Dubrova. It is reported that there are 48 Soviet tanks in the forest southeast of Dubrova. The panzer brigade will still make the breakthrough today. However, the nature of the terrain makes encirclement of the enemy west of Syrtzev impossible. The tanks are short of ammunition. The fusiliers will build a bridgehead on the northern bank of the Pena near Lukhanino.
- The Corps Commander orders all available units of the GDPG Division to move to the bridgehead. If possible the panzer units from Syrtzev should also be moved there. The 3d Panzer Division will also advance through Lukhanino behind the GDPG Division.
- 2110: The reconnaissance battalion of the 11th Panzer Division is ordered to encircle the Izotova Woods from the south to approach the Soviet positions from the rear.
- Summary: The Corps has made good progress through the Soviet first defense zone, and is preparing to attack the second defense zone. Both the 11th Panzer Division and the GDPG Division have penetrated the minefields and antitank ditches in the front part of the second defense zone.
- 2200: The Corps Commander reports to the Army Commander: The 167th Infantry Division fought especially well today, capturing Dmitriyevka and Olkhovka, and is mopping up the triangle against considerable Soviet resistance.
- The division has been ordered to concentrate a strong force near Olkhovka by 0800 tomorrow and be ready either to advance to the north or to move to the left flank of the Corps to protect it near Lukhanino. The Army Commander is of the opinion that the division should be committed toward Yakovlevo. Missions of other divisions remain unchanged.
 - The Army Commander promises air support for the expected heavy fighting tomorrow.
 - The dogged resistance of the Soviet forces, combined with the introduction of tank and troop reinforcements from the north and northwest, as well as the constant counterattacks, show that along the Pena River the enemy will strongly resist the Corps advance toward the Psel River. Major tank battles should be expected.
 - The VIII Air Corps reports that it will support tomorrow's attack with strikes against Dubrova, and against the hill north of Lukhanino and Gremuchiy.

- 2230: Corps orders: The overall objective is the Psel River.
- If the attack in the Dubrova area turns out to be too difficult, the 11th Panzer Division will advance through Olkhovka.
 - The GDPG Division, after taking the the Soviet positions near Dubrova, and exploiting the bridgehead at Lukhanino, will attack toward Syrtsevo and Verkhopenoye to the Psel River, where it will capture the crossing near Shipy.
 - The 3d Panzer Division will advance behind the GDPG Division, crossing the Pena near Lukhanino, and then attack toward Berezovka and Dolgiy. There it will secure the western flank of the Corps and destroy Soviet forces deployed between Lukhanino and Rakovo, north of the Pena River.
 - The 167th Infantry Division, after mopping up the area between the Vorskla and the Vorskolets Rivers, will concentrate in the Olkhovka area, ready for further commitments.
- 2350: The Commander of the GDPG Division reports that the previous report that a bridgehead at Lukhanino was taken was erroneous. Only the southern part of the town was captured. The Corps Commander decides that in spite of this the 3d Panzer Division should still concentrate behind the GDPD Division so that after it crosses the Pena the 3d will follow.
- 2355: The Corps informs the 3d Panzer Division about the latest situation at Lukhanino.
- 0015: The new Army Operations Order contains no new tasks. The Army Commander is of the opinion that after the breakthrough of the second defense zone the Corps should advance without delay toward Kursk and the area to the east.

Division Daily Reports - 6 July 1943:

11th Panzer Division. Received 1910. One reinforced regiment started out at 0315 to clear the Butovo road north to 246.0 and to complete the mopping up of Cherkasskoye. The enemy, thoroughly shaken, offered little resistance. The road was clear of mines by 0630, and Cherkasskoye was finally cleaned out at 0840.

The division's armored group started out at 0830 to continue the attack via 246.0 against the enemy's second defense zone. After removing minefields and crossing the antitank ditch, the Panzer Regiment encountered Soviet antitank units at the road fork 1.5 kilometers northeast of 246.0. At 1330 advance elements had reached the mine barrier on the road three kilometers southwest of Dubrova. There they met strong enemy resistance from positions around Hill 241.1. Under strong enemy artillery and antitank fire the crossing was forced, and at 1640 the lead tanks took Hill 241.1.

The 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, on the right, meeting little Soviet resistance, pressed on via Novo Cherkasskoye and Dmitriyevka. After overcoming strong antitank and artillery positions about two kilometers south of Hill 241.1, by circling from the south, the battalion opened the crossing over the antitank ditch for the Panzer Regiment. The attack is still in progress.

The 110th and 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiments, mounted, are being brought up to the armored group.

(Contact was temporarily lost. The rest of the report was received at 1945.)

There was moderate air activity on both sides. The Army AA Battalion and 616th Motorized AA Battalion shot down three more planes on 5 July, and two were shot down by infantry weapons.

Roads are passable.

Beginning at 1300 on 6 July division headquarters are at the southeast corner of the northern woods southeast of Cherkasskoye.

Tank status: 12 flame tanks, 41 Mk III long, 23 Mk IV long, 7 Mk III short, 1 Mk IV short. 22 guns have been lost, including howitzers. Also lost are 5 towed heavy antitank guns and 12 self-propelled heavy antitank guns.

The following men and materiel have been reported captured:

- 381 men, including 3 officers and 5 deserters
- 2 T-34 tanks
- 7 guns
- 6 antitank guns
- 2 heavy mortars
- 3 medium mortars
- 2 light mortars
- 26 antitank rifles
- 25 grenade launchers
- 5 sharpshooter rifles
- 126 submachine guns
- 350-450 rifles
- 17 heavy machine guns with 10 boxes of ammunition
- 12 light machine guns
- various kinds of ammunition

167th Infantry Division. Received at 1805. The division jumped off at 0830. Stubborn resistance was encountered at first on the left and center, but units broke through the enemy positions northeast of 237.8 and west of Trirechnoye and Novo Cherkasskoye, reaching east of Trirechnoye and Novo Cherkasskoye at about 1300.

In the late forenoon the enemy started to withdraw to the northeast. At about 1330, after the 315th Grenadier Regiment had been reattached, the division began to clear out the area Vosnesenskiy-0lkhovka-Novo Cherkasskoye-Dragunskoye, and a strong detachment was sent toward 0lkhovka-Dmitriyevka.

So far 320 prisoners have been reported, including 10 officers, one of them a battalion commander.

Status as of 1700: One battalion of the 315th Grenadier Regiment is holding the area of the road fork south of Okhovka, one battalion is on the right flank at Point 219.7 advancing southwest, and the third battalion is in Dragunskoye, moving northeast. The 238th Reconnaissance Battalion has penetrated into Dragunskoye and is advancing northeast. One battalion of the 331st Grenadier Regiment is advancing southwest from Trirechnoye, another is proceeding from the Trirechnoye area to the wooded ravine north of Point 227.4.

3d Panzer Division. Received at 1900. The armored group, soon after preparing the crossing east of Krasnyy Pochinok, made a surprise attack early on 6 July on Zavidovka, which was well fortified. After the leading elements had already penetrated, strong defensive fire began from all sides, from artillery, antitank guns, and dug-in tanks (T-34 and KW 1). It was especially intense from the north bank of the Pena River and from Podimovka, and German artillery could not begin to silence it. Since there was no place in the town out of the enemy vision, and the town could be held only by suffering heavy casualties, when ammunition started to run low the armored group moved out of Zavidovka, after destroying one T-34, one US tank, and seven antitank guns.

An enemy counterattack in battalion strength from Sarytoye via Novo Pavlovka toward Krasnyy Pochinok was driven off. All day there was enemy heavy artillery (180mm) fire from the area of Mikhaylovka-Krasnyy Pochinok-Korovino, especially from around Rakovo and Chapayev, as well as mortar and light artillery fire from the area of Point 233.6-Setnoye-Novo Ivanovka.

Reconnaissance reports indicate many Soviet troops in Alexeyevka with many antitank guns, entrenchments north of the bridge at Zavidovka, at least ten battery positions north of Rakovo and east of Chapayev, and considerable vehicular traffic, motorized and animal-drawn, in both directions on the Rakovo-Chapayev road and at Podimovka. Soviet tanks are firing from Podimovka.

The Soviets seem to be withdrawing according to plan behind the Pena River, building up a defensive position with strong forces, and awaiting the division attack.

There were many Soviet bombing and strafing attacks over the entire division area throughout the day. German fighters were fewer than yesterday. The division's 20mm AA guns destroyed four Soviet planes on 5 and 6 July.

In accordance with the Corps order the division is concentrating in the Yarki-Krasnyy Pochinok area in order to respond to the directive to push forward to the north or northeast. The 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment is to be relieved at Korovino by the advance of the units on its left (332d?) and brought forward.

Tank losses include: 2 Mk III long, 1 III/IV, 1 IV long.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. Received at 1755. After crossing the first antitank ditch southeast of Lukhanino, the Panther Brigade, followed by the Grenadier Regiment and 3/4 of the Artillery Regiment, advanced toward the second antitank ditch. Encountering heavy resistance and artillery fire they proceeded to one kilometer north of Hill 241.1. The Fusilier Regiment, attacking from Point 213.6 toward Luchanino-Kalaschnoye, reached the eastern edge of Luchanino and 500 meters south of Kalaschnoye by 1710. After reaching Point 210.3, the Reconnaissance Battalion is attacking Alekseyevka.

Final report, received 0450 7 July: The 3d Battalion, Grenadier Regiment, moved out at 0230 toward the western part of Cherkasskoye, and after intense fighting captured it just before 0430. In the meantime most of the Panther Brigade had reached the area north of Yarki. The Grenadier Regiment also assembled in the Yarki area and with the Panther Brigade and attached engineers and artillery attacked toward the northeast at 1130. The attack made good progress as far as the first antitank ditch at the road fork southeast of Lukhanino. Overcoming resistance there, the attack proceeded to the second antitank ditch, south of Dubrova. After brief artillery preparation, the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment, began the assault of the second antitank ditch. Intense enemy fire made the attack very difficult. After several hours of fighting the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment, forced a crossing, formed a bridgehead, and dug in 500 meters east of Dubrova for the night.

The Fusilier Regiment, with the Assault Gun Battalion attached, moved out at 0330 to attack Kalaschnoye and Lukhanino. The regiment forced its way into Lukhanino, occupying the southern part, but was unable to reach the northern part because of heavy fire from the hills north of Lukhanino.

The Reconnaissance Battalion advanced to the ridge line 210.3 to 210.7 and conducted reconnaissance against Alekseyevka.

There was strong enemy air activity over the entire combat area, especially at the bridge east of Berezovyy. Bombs and strafing attacks did little damage.

The roads are in good condition.

Front line: bridgehead east of Dubrova-southern part of Lukhanino-ridge 210.3-210.7. Division headquarters are in the woods south of Yarki.

Losses of the GD Panzer Regiment include 1 Mk III short, 8 Mk III, 1 Mk IV long, 1 VI, 12 flame tanks, and 4 Mk II.

Tomorrow the attack will continue from Dubrova toward Verkhopenoye and the attack on the northern part of Lukhanino as well.

7 July 1943

Corps Command Post: Woods south of Moshchenoye; later woods north of Butovo.
Weather: sunny and clear.

0600: General situation: The tanks and forward infantry elements of the panzer brigade of the GDPG Division, commanded by Colonel Strachwitz, have overcome the antitank ditches near Dubrova and, after refueling, are ready for further advance. A new Soviet rifle division, the 19th Rifle Division, has been reported. Its total strength is unknown, but each of its battalions is about 400 men strong and composed mainly of Russians. The rest are Uzbeks, Tatars, Kazakhs, and Mongols, all older men.

At dawn the Panther Brigade reported heavy artillery, antitank, and rocket fire directed against the elements which had crossed the antitank ditches. The brigade

urgently requested air support. The request was transmitted to the VIII Air Corps at 0550.

The 167th Infantry Division is still mopping up Soviet defense positions three kilometers southeast of Trirechnoye. The main body of the division (about 2/3 of it) is in the assembly area near Dmitriyevka and Olkhovka.

The 11th Panzer Division jumped off at 0300. The 2d Battalion of the 110th Regiment took Hill 245.2 at 0440 and the reinforced 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion and 1st Panzer Battalion took Hill 229.4 just before 0700. The panzer regiment is advancing south of the forest because the terrain immediately south of the road is impassable.

The GDPG Division is still southwest of Hill 254.5, which is defended by strong antitank elements. Bombers will attack the hill at 0700.

No crossing near Lukhanino has yet been accomplished. On the northern bank of the Pena River the Soviets have prepared very strong positions, including minefields, antitank ditches, barbed wire, etc. During the night the sound of tank engines was heard in that area.

Since 0400 the 3d Panzer Division has been moving toward Lukhanino in four columns. The panzer group has just reached the area south of Alekseyevka.

Corps Artillery took up firing positions at about 0400 south of the road fork east of Hill 246.0. Its main effort is directed against the hills north of the Pena River.

The heavy losses of Panthers are not the result of Soviet artillery fire (up to the present time only two Panthers have been pierced), but are due to "infantile sickness" ("bugs" in American parlance) of the new and untested machines.

0630: The GDPG Division is under extraordinarily heavy shelling, and Soviet forces are counterattacking on both sides of the road near Dubrova. According to unconfirmed reports the grenadier regiments of the division have built a bridgehead of some 800 meters around Dubrova. Their area is under fierce attack by Soviet tanks from the east. The division hopes that the bomber attack scheduled for 0700 will ease the situation. At 0800 the Strachwitz Panzer Brigade will assault Hill 254.5, which is still heavily defended by the Soviets.

0705: The Corps Commander orders the Commander of the 167th Infantry Division to be ready to advance with one regiment from Olkhovka through the Solova Woods toward the northeast to the road fork east of Dubrova, to help open the highway.

0715: The reconnaissance battalion of the 11th Panzer Division takes Hill 229.4 and continues toward the north.

0720: Since the breakthrough at the Belgorod-Oboyan highway can be taken for granted, the Fusilier Regiment of the GDPG Division is to be attached immediately to the 3d Panzer Division and ordered to take the crossing at Lukhanino. After crossing the stream, the 3d Panzer Division will advance west against the Soviet defense position along the river bank, and the Fusilier Regiment will push to the east.

- The Commander of the 3d Panzer Division reports that it will not be ready to attack before noon. The Corps Commander orders that crossing preparations must be completed by noon.

0725: The panzer regiment of the 11th Panzer Division, whose forward elements are east of Dubrova, is advancing northward in the area east of the highway. The 11th Regiment is following the reconnaissance battalion, which has advanced north from Hill 229.4.

0730: Air Reconnaissance reports that the leading tank elements of the GDPG Division west of Hill 254.5 are engaged with entrenched Soviet troops east of Gremuchiy. Heavy Soviet artillery fire is coming from the forest east of Gremuchiy. German forces are at the southern edge of Syrtsevo.

- 0735: Corps requests that the scheduled air strike include also the forest east of Gremuchiy and the artillery and tank concentrations northeast of Hill 251.2.
- 0750: The 167th Infantry Division is ordered to have one regiment attack Soviet positions two kilometers southwest of Pokrovka.
- 0900: The 167th Infantry Division starts its advance from Olkhovka toward the northeast.
- The main force of the 11th Panzer Division is heavily engaged against Soviet troops at the road fork near Hill 245.2.
 - The 3d Panzer Division is readying itself for the advance through Lukhanino.
 - The main force of the VIII Air Corps is supporting the forward elements of the XLVIII Panzer Corps.
- 0915: Army orders: The most important mission for the XLVIII Panzer Corps is to make contact with the II SS Panzer Corps to prevent a possible Soviet counterattack against the II SS Panzer Corps from the northwest.
- The 3d Panzer Division should not advance farther than Hill 258.5, five kilometers north of Berezovka.
 - The 167th Infantry Division, by 0200 on 8 July, should have advance elements of a reinforced battalion at the Vorskla River and across it near Veseliy, Vorskla, and Pokrovka. After crossing the Vorskla, the division will be transferred from the XLVIII Panzer Corps and take over the protection of the eastern flank of the Panzer Army.
 - The LII Corps will continue to advance toward the Pena River.
- 0930: One battalion of the panzer regiment of the 11th Panzer Division, advancing toward the north, crosses the minefield near Hill 245.2.
- 1000: The Panther Brigade under Colonel Strachwitz jumped off according to schedule and at present is some 500 meters south of the road fork near Hill 254.5. Ten tanks are on the hills north of Syrtsev. Dubrova is in German hands. Syrtsevo is defended by a strong Soviet force.
- 1115: The GD Panzer Brigade reaches Point 230.1.
- 1140: The displacement of the artillery of the 3d Panzer Division is not yet completed. The division will be ready to attack at 1300. The Corps Commander has ordered all three of the battalions of the 70th Artillery Regiment attached to the division.
- The GDPG Division will support the attack of the 3d Panzer Division by turning toward the northwest. Both attacks will take place at the same time. Corresponding orders have already been sent to the GDPG Division.
- 1145: The Corps moves its command post to the woods north of Butovo.
- 1220: The Army Commander reports that toward noon the situation changed substantially. Strong Soviet tank units from the vicinity of Oboyan to the northwest attacked the left flank of the II SS Panzer Corps in the sector between Luchki and Pokrovka. Because of this the XLVIII Panzer Corps must accelerate its attacks on both sides of Gremuchiy and toward Verkhopenoye and hit the flank of the Soviet tanks so that they cannot withdraw toward Oboyan. To this end the 11th Panzer Division will continue to advance as planned toward the hills east of Gremuchiy.
- The GDPG Division must effect a crossing at Lukhanino from the northeast and then attack the hills southwest of Gremuchiy. Soviet positions near Gremuchiy should be taken by double envelopment.
 - The Corps Commander reports the situation to the Army Commander, who agrees with his evaluation and decisions.
- 1300: The reinforced 339th Grenadier Regiment of the 167th Infantry Division captures hills north of the road from Yakovlevo to 254.5.
- 1320: The GDPG Division's Chief of Staff expresses surprise that the Corps has not received an earlier report about the capture of Hill 230.1 in which

it was stated that at 1145 the division reached Hill 230.1, east of Syrtsevo. The tanks are advancing toward Hill 218.5. Syrtsevo is afire. Elements of the division have turned toward Lukhanino and are advancing along the Olkhovka Ravine. The turn toward Lukhanino should assist the advance of the 3d Panzer Division.

- 1330: The Chief of Staff of the VIII Air Corps promises strong air cover in the area of Lukhanino and Alekseyevka, in support of the 3d Panzer Division. The division must report the exact time of the start of the attack.
- 1400: The VIII Air Corps will heed the Corps request and support the attack of the 11th Panzer Division by striking Gremuchiy and the forest to the east. However, the operation cannot be undertaken before 1730.
- 1420: The 3d Panzer Division will attack at 1430. Strong artillery preparation is in progress.
- 1430: The 3d Panzer Division attacks across the area near Lukhanino.
- 1530: The 339th Infantry Regiment of the 167th Infantry Division reaches the road north of the Markova Woods and is mopping up the Soviet troops remaining in its sector. At this point the division has to stop, regroup, and prepare for the forthcoming move during the night to the eastern flank of the Panzer Army.
- 1600: A day of extraordinarily fierce fighting by the GDPG Division is nearing the end. The panzer brigade has destroyed 30 Soviet tanks. Air reconnaissance confirms that the Soviets are withdrawing.
- 1602: Soviet forces about one battalion strong in front of the panzer regiment of the 11th Panzer Division are abandoning their positions southeast of Gremuchiy and fleeing. The Corps Commander orders the division to pursue them immediately.
- 1610: The 3d Panzer Division has not yet reached the crossing at Lukhanino.
- 1615: The Corps Commander, in the strongest terms, orders the 3d Panzer Division to capture the crossing. The GDPG Division is ordered to cross the river without waiting for the 3d Panzer Division and turn toward Verkhopenoye.
- 1625: The VIII Air Corps is requested to attack the retreating Soviet troops with all available planes, making its main effort on the highway leading north from Gremuchiy.
- 1630: The 3d Panzer Division is engaged in fierce combat in the Lukhanino area.
- One battalion of the attached GDPG Fusilier Regiment and several self-propelled guns have crossed the stream. In the Olkhovaya Ravine Soviet troops offer only modest resistance. At the river, and to the north of it, the division is under heavy artillery and mortar fire.
- 1640: The GDPG Division takes Syrtsevo and is engaged in heavy fighting east of it, where Soviet resistance is very strong.
- As of today the Corps has destroyed 50 Soviet tanks, taken about 3,000 prisoners, and captured much booty.
- 1645: The forward elements of the panzer regiment (one panzer battalion and one grenadier battalion) of the 11th Panzer Division are close to the southern outskirts of Krasnaya Dubrava in the area of Hill 251.2, having broken through the Soviet position southeast of Gremuchiy.
- Tanks of the GDPG Division are in combat with 29 Soviet tanks one kilometer southeast of 218.5, at the eastern edge of Syrtsevo.
- 1710: A battalion of the 167th Infantry Division takes the hill at the southwest outskirts of Pokrovka. The other battalions of that regiment are in the woods south of Pokrovka. The two other regiments are in the concentration area near Vorskla and Veselyy.

- 1715: The 11th Panzer Division is engaged in heavy combat for the Soviet positions southeast of Gremuchiy. The panzer regiment is attacking Soviet tanks south of Point 2.2 at the road fork. The rest of the division follows, echeloned to the right rear.
- 1725: The GDPG Division is heavily engaged against 29 Soviet tanks south of Syrtsevo.
- 1820: Situation Summary: The impression that the Soviets are withdrawing from the Psel sector is not confirmed. According to reports received from the Commander of the 11th Panzer Division, who is near Hill 251.2 southeast of Krasnaya Dubrava, 53 Soviet tanks were observed two kilometers north of Pokrovskiy, moving slowly south. Soviet advance tank elements are approaching the Stanovaya Woods. The VIII Air Corps has promised to attack the tank force with two bomber groups shortly before dark.
- Soviet resistance in front of the GDPG Division north of Hill 230.1 has stiffened. For the first time the Soviets have committed 122mm self-propelled guns built on T-34 chassis.
 - Panther losses, especially because of technical breakdown, are extraordinarily high. So far 76 have been lost.
- 1900: The panzer regiment of the 11th Panzer Division is some 500 meters north of Hill 251.2, facing a tank barrier which runs along both sides of the highway near Krasnaya Dubrava. Behind the barrier are 12 tanks, the forward elements of a tank force which is coming from the north.
- 1910: The GDPG Division is still engaged in heavy combat with some 30 Soviet tanks north of Hill 230.7, and with 20 tanks south of Syrtsevo. These are elements of the Soviet VI Tank Corps.
- 1915: The 3d Panzer Division finally crosses the stream near Lukhanino and is advancing toward the north. It is very difficult for the tank units to cross because the terrain is heavily mined. The crossing is under Soviet flanking fire from the hills north of Lukhanino. On the division's left flank, its reconnaissance battalion has been relieved by elements of the LII Army Corps. The reconnaissance battalion may try to cross the Pena River near Alekseyevka, because it appears that Soviet troops have abandoned the position.
- 1928: Army Orders: No new operations order for tomorrow will be issued. The Corps should continue to advance to the north in close contact with the II SS Panzer Corps. The tank battle must be fought out. It is possible that in the next few days the Soviets will introduce their reserves.
- 1930: The Army reports that the II SS Panzer Corps has captured a Soviet map showing the deployment of Soviet formations. Facing the Fourth Panzer Army are the Soviet VI Tank Corps, the III Mechanized Corps, one tank brigade, and five independent tank regiments. All of these units are under the Soviet First Tank Army.
- 2000: According to reports verified by the Army Command the Soviet V and VI Tank Corps of the First Tank Army are advancing south on both sides of the highway from Oboyan to Yakovlevo. The II Guard Tank Corps, which crossed the Lipoviy Donets River and advanced toward the west, was thrown back across the river. The Fourth Panzer Army Commander is of the opinion that the Soviet tank forces should not be attacked frontally, but should be double enveloped by the XLVIII Panzer and the II SS Panzer Corps and then destroyed. To achieve the destruction of Soviet tank formations the II SS Panzer Corps will turn west.
- The Army Commander orders the XLVIII Panzer Corps Commander to leave one regiment of the 167th Infantry Division in place to protect the Corps flank near Pokrovka, to organize a defensive line south of Gremuchiy, and to commit the GDPG, the 11th Panzer, and the 3d Panzer Division toward the west, to encircle the Soviet forces west of the Pena River if possible and not permit them to retreat toward Oboyan.

- 2015: The Corps orders the 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions to commence construction of a defense line from the outskirts of Pokrovka to the Sukhaya Woods to Krasnaya Dubrava. The mission of the 3d Panzer Division is not changed significantly. The division will attack northward in close contact with the GDPG Division, which is advancing to the north in the area east of Syrtsevo. The reconnaissance battalion of the 3d Panzer Division will take over screening of the flank north of Alekseyavka.
- 2030: Two battalions of the 394th Infantry Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division are on the northern bank of the Pena River near Point 0.8 northwest of Lukhanino. A bridge is being built to move the tanks across the river.
- 2040: Army Orders: The II SS Panzer Corps will start its advance immediately so that it will cut off the attacking elements of the Soviet V Tank Corps from its rear echelon and push them toward the west.
- The XLVIII Panzer Corps will break through the Soviet defenses near Syrtsevo, and by attacking to the north will prevent the withdrawal of Soviet troops to Oboyan. The 3d Panzer Division, after breaking through Soviet positions on the Pena River east of Berezovka, will attack to the north. The 167th Infantry Division, minus one regiment, is being attached to the II SS Panzer Corps to relieve the SS Grenadier Division "Totenkopf" at the Lipoviy Donets River.
 - The LII Army Corps, with its right wing at the hills southwest of Zavidovka, will protect the left flank of the Fourth Panzer Army. The 332d Infantry Division will prepare to capture the crossing over the Pena River near Zavidovka on 9 July and then capture the highlands north of Zavidovka.
- 2200: Corps Order: The 339th Infantry Regiment and elements of the 11th Panzer Division will construct a defense line from Pokrovka to the river west of Gremuchiy.
- The panzer group of the 11th Panzer Division will concentrate on the highlands northwest of Gremuchiy, ready to attack to the north as soon as the GDPG Division reaches the same line.
 - The GDPG Division, supported by most of the Corps artillery, will break through Soviet defenses in the area northeast of Syrtsevo, and will advance toward Verkhopenoye and the highway west of Pokrovskiy.
 - The 3d Panzer Division will cross the river near Lukhanino and Alekseyevka and attack north in the sector between the Pena River and Berezovka, west of Verkhopenoy.
 - The VIII Air Corps will support the advance with bombing attacks north of the road that leads from Syrtsev toward the east. There is still fighting going on south of the line, and because the opposing forces are close to each other bombing there is impossible.
- 2250: The Army orders the 35th Construction Group to leave the Corps as of 2330 and return to the Army for further assignment.
- 2310: The 3d Panzer Division report fierce Soviet resistance in the northern part of Lukhanino. Repeated Soviet air attacks on the southern part of the town are hampering construction of the bridge.
- 2400: The Corps issues its operations order for tomorrow's attack. The following artillery units are attached to the GDPG Division: 70th Artillery Regimental Staff, 109th Mörser Battalion (210mm howitzer), and 842d Heavy Gun Battalion. The 101st Heavy Field Howitzer Battalion is attached to the 3d Panzer Division.
- A day of extremely heavy fighting has come to an end. Soviet casualties were very high, and our own were not inconsiderable. East of Lukhanino German troops have broken through the second defense zone. It is now obvious that the Soviets had prepared a deeply echeloned defense system which they are defending stubbornly. South of the Psel River they have already committed their reserves, the First Tank Army. It is hoped that tomorrow, if the encirclement operation succeeds and the Soviet Tank Army is destroyed, the Corps, in its advance to and across the Psel River, will not meet any more strong Soviet reserve forces.

Division Daily Reports - 7 July 1943:

11th Panzer Division. Received 1830. The division continued its assault on the Soviet second defense zone. Strong resistance in the Dubrova woods forced the division to turn right and bypass them. Early in the morning the reinforced 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion and 1st Panzer Battalion attacked a strong enemy position, including tanks and antitank guns, at Hill 229.4, capturing it just before 0700. The 110th and 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiments followed.

At 1130 the 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, striking northeast, captured Hill 240.1 against strong resistance from positions at 254.5 and southeast of the hill.

Elements of the 1st Battalion, 110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, which had pushed through the woods southwest of Dubrova yesterday evening, took the south slope of Hill 245.2 at 0440. One battalion of the Panzer Regiment followed, reaching Hill 245.2 at 0830, after crossing a minefield. Attacks on the positions on the road southeast of Hill 254.5 in coordination with the units on the right made slow progress. After breaking through strongly defended positions north of the road and pushing back enemy tanks west and northwest of Pokrovka, one panzer battalion and one grenadier battalion broke through the enemy position southeast of Gremuchiy at Hill 251.2 at 1645. One panzer battalion, with a grenadier battalion echeloned on the right, is at about 221.0. The attack is continuing.

Many animal-drawn vehicles, heavy machine guns, and bunkers have been destroyed. There are 153 prisoners.

German air activity was vigorous; there was some Soviet bombing and strafing.

Roads are in good condition.

Division headquarters since 0700 are at the northeast edge of the woods northwest of Dmitryevka.

The following were taken: 9 guns; 15 antitank guns, 12 mortars; 1 prime mover with a 122mm gun; 13 antitank rifles; 13 heavy machine guns, 18 light machine guns; 90 rifles; 40 submachine guns.

3d Panzer Division: After assembling in the area south of Lukhanino and after strong artillery preparation, the division started out at 1430 to attack toward Lukhanino. At 1700 the attack had made steady but slow progress.

Gross Deutschland PG Division: Advancing from the bridgehead northeast of Dubrova, the Panther Brigade pressed forward against stiff resistance and under strong antitank and artillery fire, proceeding via 254.5 to Point 230.1, which it reached at 1115. South of Point 230.1 there are many minefields. The Grenadier Regiment, facing strong defenses at Syrtsev, is fighting its way to the west in order to accelerate the advance of the 3d Panzer Division and the tanks north of that point which are attacking to the west. One Soviet infantry attack supported by 126mm assault guns was driven off north of Syrtsev at about noon.

Heavy tank battles are continuing south of Point 230.1 and Syrtsevo. German tanks are greatly hindered by extensive minefields. According to preliminary estimates 30-40 enemy tanks have been destroyed.

At 1700 German tanks were engaged in combat with 29 Soviet tanks one kilometer southeast of Point 218.5 on the eastern edge of Syrtsevo.

The GD Grenadier Regiment is on the left with its leading elements at the eastern edge of the woods northeast of Lukhanino engaged in violent combat. The Reconnaissance Battalion, reinforced by the Assault Gun Battalion, is advancing toward Syrtsevo.

167th Infantry Division. Received at 1810: Clearing of the Vorskla-Vorskolets triangle was completed early in the morning. At 1300 the reinforced 339th Grenadier Regiment captured the hills north of the road from Yakovlevo to Hill 254.5 with slight resistance.

Both of the other regiments are concentrating to move into the prescribed sectors in the Vorskla area.

Between 5 and 7 July 1,437 prisoners were taken and a large amount of booty.
Division headquarters are at Olkhovka.

8 July 1943

Corps Command Post: one kilometer north of Butovo.
Weather: clear, sunny, light shower in the afternoon.

General situation: Shortly after midnight the crossing near Lukhanino, where the 3d Panzer Division was building a bridge, was attacked several times by Soviet aircraft. The unfinished bridge was destroyed. Soviet resistance in the northern part of Lukhanino is stiffening, and the division is taking more casualties. The division has requested permission to move its tank units, heavy weapons, and the rest of the panzer grenadier regiment through Dubrova toward Point 0.8, three kilometers northeast of Lukhanino, while work on the bridge near Lukhanino continues. This request, which was sent at 0040, was not received by the Corps until 0255 because of a cipher mixup. At 0300 the Corps agreed to the request and permitted the division to regroup. Since speed is essential, regrouping started immediately. Since the main body of the GSPG Division had already crossed the stream near Dubrova, the regrouping will take less time than yesterday's unsuccessful attempts to break through the defenses near Lukhanino. At 0400 the panzer group of the 3d Panzer Division was already near the southern edge of Dubrova.

The 167th Infantry Division is south of Pokrovka, ready to mop up the area, where, according to unconfirmed reports, some Soviet troops have infiltrated. The division will start the operation at 0700.

The 11th Panzer Division is about to finish the construction of the defensive line as ordered. Near Krasnaya Dubrava Soviet resistance is only slight. The reconnaissance battalion met up with some Soviet troops in Pokrovka and forced them back. The panzer group is west of Hill 251.2, ready to jump off toward the north northwest. It is reported that Gremuchiy has been abandoned by the Soviets.

In front of the GDPG Division, Soviet forces, including tanks, antitank guns, and mortars, are occupying the ravine southeast of Syrtsevo. The division advanced from a line southwest from 230.1 toward the northern part of Syrtsevo. The fusilier regiment, which has returned to the division, is attacking Syrtsevo from the woods north of the Olkhovka Ravine, while the grenadier regiment and the reconnaissance battalion are advancing to the north close to the western edge of Gremuchiy. Deployed between the two regiments, the panzer brigade is fighting a bitter battle with strong Soviet forces southeast of Syrtsevo.

The Soviet Air Force is very active in the Corps sector.

Starting at 0700 the VIII Air Corps will support the Corps advance with strong air attacks in front of the GDPG Division, especially in the Syrtsevo and Verkhopenoye areas.

The II SS Panzer Corps, on the right, will jump off at 0800 from the Teterevino area, and will advance through Gryaznoye and Kochetovka in the direction of Novoselovka, where it will seek to establish contact with the XLVIII Panzer Corps.

0600: Despite strong Soviet pressure, elements of the 394th Grenadier Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division are holding the hills one kilometer north of Lukhanino.

0630: After an uneventful advance through Dubrova the 3d Panzer Division, minus the 394th Grenadier Regiment, jumped off from Hill 0.8 in a northerly direction. The 1st Battalion of the 3d Rifle Regiment is following the tanks, to mop up the western part of Lukhanino and the area north of the town and on the northern bank of the Pena River. The division's reconnaissance battalion is concentrated south of Alekseyevka, ready to attack across the Pena River toward Shepelevka.

0645: Soviet resistance in front of the GDPG Division is weakening. The situation in Syrtsevo is still not clear. At least part of the place is still in Soviet hands. Verkhopenoye has been in German control since last night. One company of the grenadier regiment is in the northern part of

- the town. The division commander reports that neither Syrtsevo nor Verkhopenoye should be attacked by the Luftwaffe.
- The Corps cannot understand how the grenadier regiment was able to penetrate Verkhopenoye so quickly, since only yesterday it was stubbornly defended. He will recall the air strike, especially since an intercepted message of the grenadier regiment confirmed the report.
- 0730: It is reported that the grenadier regiment mistook Gremuchiy for Verkhopenoye. The regiment is in Gremuchiy. Syrtsevo and Verkhopenoye are still occupied by strong Soviet forces, including many tanks. It is too late to divert the Luftwaffe to those targets, and the much-needed air support is lost.
- 0740: The Corps Chief of Staff instructs the Operations Officer of the GDPG Division to verify all important reports first, before they are sent to the Corps. It is better to report late than to send early unconfirmed and inaccurate reports.
- 0900: The 3d Panzer Division, while advancing north from Point 0.8, encounters strong Soviet tank forces.
- The panzer brigade of the GDPG Division is still engaged in heavy combat with strong Soviet forces southeast of Syrtsevo. The division plans to take Syrtsevo by encirclement from the north with its grenadier regiment. Its panzer brigade will then advance toward Verkhopenoye.
 - The 11th Panzer Division, after mopping up Pokrovka, has taken a defensive position facing a very strong Soviet force, including some 20 to 30 tanks. Isolated Soviet attacks have been beaten off. The panzer group of the division is ready to advance as soon as the GDPG Division gains ground. To the right, near Bolshiye Mayachki, the division has established contact with the II SS Panzer Corps. The assault group of the II SS Panzer Corps, which with the SS Adolf Hitler Division attacked in the Veseliy-Gryaznoye area, has encountered strong Soviet tank forces. Some 50 to 100 additional Soviet tanks are moving into this area.
- 0930: In view of the latest Corps report, the Army Commander suggests by phone that the 11th Panzer Division should start to advance immediately. He asks whether the division can be diverted toward Gryaznoye to help the II SS Panzer Corps to cross the river. To this end one regiment of the SS Adolf Hitler Division and its reconnaissance battalion will advance from the south through Malye Mayachki.
- 1000: The Corps Commander has gone to the front and cannot be reached. So the Chief of Staff briefs the Army Commander on the situation by phone:
- The Corps is facing two strong Soviet tank groups. The first group, about 30 to 40 tanks, is in the Krasnaya Polyana area, and the second, even stronger, is deployed around Syrtsevo, where the GDPG Division is at present attacking.
 - Because of these Soviet forces, the 11th Panzer Division cannot advance alone toward Gryaznoye. The Corps suggests that the 339th Infantry Regiment of the 167th Infantry Division take up defensive positions from the northern outskirts of Pokrovka to the highway near Krasnaya Dubrava.
 - The panzer group of the 11th Panzer Division would then break through northwest of Gremuchiy toward Hill 242.1, on the highway just west of the Stanovaya Woods, while at the same time the division's infantry moves along both sides of the highway.
 - After reaching Hill 242.1, the GDPG Division will either advance from the area east of Verkhopenoye toward the north or turn northeast and take up defensive positions along the river near Beregovoy. Thus the assault group of the Corps will remain together, and the task of pinning down the Soviet tank forces in front of the II SS Panzer Corps will be accomplished. Both possibilities, i.e., advance to the north or turn to the northeast, remain open.
 - The Army Commander agrees with the Corps suggestion.
- 1040: Telephone communication with the 11th Panzer Division is disrupted. So the Corps Chief of Staff sends the following order by radio and via the

- administrative officer. The 11th Panzer Division is to widen its defense positions along the highway as far as Hill 242.1. The division's panzer group is to prepare for further attack, the direction of the attack to be given later.
- 1100: Telephone communication with the 11th Panzer Division has been restored. The Corps Commander, who at that time was at the division's command post, was briefed by the Corps Operations Officer about the situation and approved the order issued by the Chief of Staff.
- 1115: The 11th Panzer Division reports large Soviet columns moving south on the highway near Hill 260.8.
- 1120: The 11th Panzer Division intends to advance along the highway toward Hill 242.1. An advance west of Gremuchiy would be difficult because of the terrain. The Chief of Staff approves. The division will move out at 1200.
- 1130: The assault group on the right of the GDPG Division has made good progress. Advancing east of Syrtsevo the panzer brigade has taken the Machine and Tractor Station (MTS) near the western edge of Verkhopenoye. North of there the panzer brigade is engaged in heavy combat with Soviet tanks which came from the northwest. Movements of the panzer brigade are greatly hindered by flanking fire from the hills west of Verkhopenoye. The 2d Battalion of the grenadier regiment is two kilometers southeast of Verkhopenoye and is advancing toward the MTS. The interrogation of prisoners has revealed that the Soviet VI Tank Corps is deployed on the west bank of the Pena River.
- The Fusilier Regiment of the GDPG Division, which is again attached to the 3d Panzer Division, is attacking Syrtsevo from the south. The division's panzer group is concentrated northeast of Lukhanino and plans to attack to the north at 1200. As soon as the division crosses the Pena River at Syrtsevo it will protect the flank of the GDPG Division. North of Alekseyevka a concentration of vehicles and multiple rocket launchers was sighted.
 - Some 20 Soviet tanks with AA artillery units are counterattacking from Syrtsevo toward the east.
- 1140: The Luftwaffe, whose planes are over Syrtsevo, reports that Soviet forces on the west bank of the Pena River have been reinforced.
- 1205: The 339th Infantry Regiment of the 167th Infantry Division, which is attached to the 11th Panzer Division, has mopped up Pokrovka and is attacking in the direction of Hill 249.3. The regiment has relieved those elements of the 11th Panzer Division which had taken up defensive positions in the area of Hill 246.7. This means that for all practical purposes the entire 11th Panzer Division is free to carry out its offensive mission.
- 1210: Since the Grenadier Division is no longer on the same "level" as the 11th Panzer Division in and east of Verkhopenoye, and since Soviet pressure against the left wing of the II SS Panzer Corps has decreased, there is no longer need for the GDPG Division to take up a defensive posture after reaching Hill 242.1. Therefore, the Corps Commander decides to stick to the old plans and have both the 11th Panzer and the GDPG Grenadier Division attack to the north toward the Psel River, with the right wing attacking toward Kochetovka and the left toward Shipy.
- 1220: The Chief of Staff of the Corps reports the assessment of the situation and the decision taken by the Corps Commander to the Army Commander, who agrees with the evaluation and decision.
- 1225: The 11th Panzer Division is ordered to advance from Hill 242.1 toward Pokrovskiy and Ilinskiy.
- 1245: The 3d Panzer Division starts its attack on Syrtsevo. According to intelligence reports the Soviet tanks now in the town arrived from the

Kursk area only yesterday. It appears that in order to prevent the further advance of the Corps to the north, the Soviets intend to hold the north bank of the Pena at all costs and in this way threaten the flank of the attacking units. In view of this the division's advance may prove to be very difficult, and it remains questionable whether, with only a few heavy tanks, it will be able to assist the GDPG Division, which is engaged in fierce fighting at Verkhopenoye.

- 1300: The advance of the 11th Panzer Division toward the north on both sides of the highway is proceeding according to plan. The 110th Regiment is advancing to the left of the road, while the 111th Regiment is to the right of it. The reconnaissance battalion and the 339th Infantry Regiment are following behind across the ravine toward Krasnaya Polyana, echeloned to the right.
- 1400: The 3d Panzer Division takes Hill 218.5, close to the southern edge of Syrtsevo. The 1st Battalion of the 3d Rifle Regiment penetrates the eastern edge of Lukhanino. The reconnaissance battalion is deployed south of Lukhanino. Its mission is to penetrate into Lukhanino from the south and then work north to capture the whole village. The division has left screening units near Alekseyevka.
- 1410: The GDPG Division is still engaged in heavy combat at, and east of, the MTS. Soviet tanks, which had been advancing against the forward elements of the division, stopped their attack immediately after the Soviets observed the attack of the 11th Panzer Division from Hill 242.1 toward the north.
- The divisions of the II SS Panzer Corps which are advancing from the east are encountering strong Soviet tank forces everywhere. Near Terevino and Kalinin, the right flank of the II SS Panzer Corps was viciously attacked by elements of the Soviet II Tank Corps which, after crossing the Lipoviy Donets River, is pushing toward the west. In spite of the Soviet counterattacks the II SS Panzer Corps intends to advance west through Veseliy in order to meet the 11th Panzer Division and to destroy the Soviet tank forces which are between them.
- 1800: A counterattack of some 40 Soviet tanks advancing from Pokrovskiy toward the southwest is stopped by the 11th Panzer Division.
- The 3d Panzer Division succeeds in breaking into Syrtsevo.
- 1805: Situation Summary: During the entire afternoon the 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions have been engaged in extraordinarily severe tank battles in the area east of Verkhopenoye. Neither division has gained any ground.
- The GDPG Division has suffered considerable losses from the very heavy flanking fire from the west bank of the Pena River. About 25 Soviet tanks have been observed in that area, coming up from the west. Intercepted Soviet radio communications confirm earlier reports that the Soviets have decided to hold the west bank of the Pena at all costs, to prevent German troops from crossing the river.
 - The 11th Panzer Division is engaged in a tank battle north of Hill 242.1. The 3d Panzer Division is involved in intensive house-to-house fighting in Syrtsevo. Strong antitank and tank fire from the west bank of the Pena is preventing the division from crossing. In Lukhanino also the attack has bogged down. Facing heavy infantry, mortar, and antitank fire the 3d Rifle Regiment is only slowly penetrating Soviet defense positions on the north bank of the river there.
 - During the afternoon one Stuka group and two bomber wings have been in the air constantly, supporting combat activities of the Corps.
 - The II SS Panzer Corps reports that about 110 Soviet tanks are advancing south across the Psel River bend. The reconnaissance battalion of the SS Adolf Hitler Panzer Division, deployed in that sector, has had to be withdrawn. The advance of the II SS Panzer Corps to the west to make contact with the 11th Panzer Division has been postponed. After destroying Soviet tank forces near Veseliy, the SS Adolf Hitler Panzer Division will withdraw its panzer group to Luchki.

- The LII Army Corps has been attacked deep in its flank on a broad front by Soviet tanks. Because of this the crossing of the Pena River near Zavidovka by the Corps and the possibility of advancing to the north, as planned for tomorrow, is under question. Consideration must also be taken of the fact that Soviet troops have constructed very strong defense positions in this area.
- 1810: The Army Commander sends the following summary: While the XLVIII Panzer Corps has been slowly fighting its way north, step by step, the introduction by the Soviets of a strong tank force on the western flank of the Panzer Army has created a totally new situation. Yesterday's plan to encircle the units of the Soviet First Tank Army has turned out to be only partially feasible. However, in spite of difficulties, the II SS Panzer Corps has been able to push a strong Soviet tank force toward the sector of the XLVIII Panzer Corps, where it has been contained and repulsed by the 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions. The new threat to the western flank of the army, and the continuing threat to the eastern flank, call for regrouping of the army in order to destroy the Soviet motorized and tank units deployed west of the Pena River.
- During the day the Soviet First Tank Army attacked the forward elements of the Fourth Panzer Army. Its II and V Guard Tank Corps attacked from the east, the III Mechanized Corps attacked from the north, and the VI Guard Tank Corps attacked from the north and west. All the Soviet attacks have been beaten off, and the III Mechanized Corps is considerably weakened.
 - While protecting its eastern flank, the Fourth Panzer Army intends to destroy the remnants of the Soviet III Mechanized Corps in the area northwest of Beregovoy. At the same time, the army is preparing to envelop the Soviet VI Guard Tank Corps on the western bank of the Pena River by striking from the north.
 - The II SS Panzer Corps by assembling all its elements will take the east bank of the Salutinka River on both sides of Kochetovka.
 - The right wing of the XLVIII Panzer Corps will attack north in strength along both sides of the Yakovlevo-Oboyan highway. It will occupy the ridge north of Novoselovka, between Kochetovka and the road fork at Hf, pushing the Soviet tank forces deployed there back toward the Psel River. The Corps will prepare to turn west in order to encircle and destroy the Soviet VI Tank Corps on the western bank of the Pena River.
 - The LII Army Corps, after crossing the river near Zavidovka, will cooperate with the XLVIII Panzer Corps in its encirclement operation, by attacking toward the north.
 - The final orders for the Corps must wait until the situation at the end of the day is reported.
- 1830: Elements of the 3d Panzer Division, advancing from the south, have reached the school in Syrtsevo.
- 2130: The situation is clear enough for the Corps Commander to report to the Army Commander: The II SS Panzer Corps on the XLVIII Corp's right has taken Rylskiy and is advancing toward Beregovoy, with the aim of making contact with the 339th Infantry Regiment of the 167th Infantry Division, which is advancing from the south, and is now south of Krasnaya Polyana.
- Close by, to the west, on the northern edge of the Stanovaya Woods, is the main body of the 11th Panzer Division. The division's panzer group is west of Pokrovskiy. The division is facing strong antitank fire and antitank obstacles on the hills west of Ilinskiy.
 - The GDPG Division, which has penetrated the center of Verkhopenoye from the south, is under heavy flanking fire from the hills west of Ilinskiy and from the west bank of the Pena River. Further attack against the northern part of Verkhopenoye had to be postponed until this flanking fire is eliminated by the 11th Panzer Division. On the left, the division's Fusilier Regiment has captured the northern part of Syrtsevo.
 - The attack of the 3d Panzer Division on the western part of Lukhanino has reached the wooded area nearby. The divisions' tanks, with one

battalion of infantry, are assaulting Point 1.2, north of the western part of Lukhanino. There is no change reported in the situation of the portions of the 3d Panzer Division in Syrtsevo.

- The Corps suggests that tomorrow's attack be divided in two phases:
Phase 1. The 11th Panzer and GDPG Divisions will attack north along both sides of the highway to the road fork at HF, starting at 0400. The immediate objective for the 11th Panzer Division will be to capture the hills near Ilinskiy, for the GDPG Division to capture the northern part of Verkhopenoye, and for the 3d Panzer Division to mop up the northwestern and western part of Lukhanino up to the river, near Shepelevka.
Phase 2. After reaching the hills on both sides of Ilinskiy, the 11th Panzer Division will take up a defensive posture there. The GDPG Division, with the panzer regiment of the 11th Panzer Division, will turn to the west, in order to reach the highlands north of Dolgiy, where contact will be made with the 332d Infantry Division of the LII Army Corps, which should have crossed the river at Zavidovka.
- The 3d Panzer Division will take over the Pena River sector from Shepelevka to Verkhopenoye, inclusive, from the GDPG Division. Its panzer regiment will stay ready to cross the river at Syrtsevo and attack toward Berezovka.
- Whether Phase 2 will be carried out in the morning remains uncertain, since during Phase 1 the 11th Panzer and GDPG Division have a very difficult mission of breaking strong Soviet resistance. The 3d Panzer Division has a difficult task also. In addition to taking over the Pena River sector from the GDPG Division in full view of the enemy on the hills north and west of the river, it must regroup from a defensive to an offensive posture and capture the crossing.
- The Army Commander, in response, while approving the Corps plan, cautions the Corps Commander not to act rashly and stresses that by no means is the Army demanding that the turn be made early in the morning. The most important task is to gain ground to the north. If the 11th Panzer Division is unable to carry out its advance to Novoselovka alone, the GDPG Division will have to help out.

2220: The Corps Chief of Staff briefs the division commanders orally about the decisions taken by the Corps Commander and approved by the Army Commander.

0010: Orders are sent to the divisions. The Corps has limited the first day's objective to reaching the line from Hill 235.9 northwest of Kochetovka to Hill 248 north of HF, and to Hill 232.8. The line should be secured by strong mobile elements. Jump off time for the first objectives (11th Panzer Division, the highlands near Ilinskiy; GDPG Division the northern edge of Verkhopenoye) is 0400. The next attack will be ordered by the Corps when both divisions are at the same level. The Corps artillery, under the command of the 122d Artillery Group, will take up firing positions in the area east of Syrtsevo, in such locations that it will support the advance of the Corps to the north as well as the sector of the 3d Panzer Division in its attack to the west or northwest.

- The VIII Air Corps will fly concentrated sorties in front of the forward elements and the western flank.

0015: Intelligence bulletin: In the evening air reconnaissance reported large concentrations of Soviet tanks deep on the eastern flank of the II SS Panzer Corps, in front of the II SS Panzer Corps and XLVIII Panzer Corps, and at the western flank, in front of the LII Army Corps near Dmitryevka.

- The XLVIII Panzer Corps is facing some 30 to 40 tanks directly in front of it, 80 tanks northwest of Verkhopenoye, and 35 tanks near Syrtsevo. Near Dmitryevka and along the flank of the LII Army Corps about 50 Soviet tanks have been reported.
- The heavy concentration of Soviet forces on the German flanks means that the Soviet Command plans to encircle the entire German spearhead of Operation Citadel.

Division Daily Reports - 8 July 1943

11th Panzer Division. Received 2100. The 338th Grenadier Regiment took Pokrovka and the area north of Bol. Mayatschi-Hill 246.7 east of Krassnaya Dubrava without resistance, thus releasing the 2d Battalion, 110th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, and armored units of the 11th Panzer Grenadier Regiment.

At about 1215 the division started north via Hill 246.7 thus: the 15th Panzer Regiment with the attached 911th Assault Gun Battalion, 1st Battalion of the 119th Armored Artillery Regiment, and the 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion echeloned to the rear on the right. The 110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment (minus the 1st Battalion) and the 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiment were to be brought up on the road. The 339th Grenadier Regiment was behind the 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion.

At first the attack made good progress, but it was pinned down at Hill 244.1 by about 30-40 Soviet tanks. The 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was assigned to screen against enemy tanks at Krassnaya Polyana on a line from Hill 246.7 to the southeast peak in the Stanovaya area.

Reconnaissance was ordered to determine whether it would be possible to bypass the area by circling to the right just east of Pokrovkiy. The 2d Battalion, 110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, is committed to take the Stanovaya Forest area.

The 339th Grenadier Regiment is advancing from the Suchaya Forest to Krasnaya Polyana, where there are weak Soviet infantry and tank forces. The regiment, reinforced by an artillery battalion and elements of an antitank battalion, is attached to the division.

Soviet TB 3 and TW 7 aircraft—nuisance raiders—bombed, with big bombs, and strafed artillery positions, vehicles, and roads all night. Moderate air activity continued in the morning, and in the afternoon it increased, with both bombing and strafing.

The roads are in good condition.

German bombers, fighter-bombers, and fighters flew many sorties.

Division headquarters since 1400 have been in the midst of the woods northeast of Point 254.5.

Nine tanks, 6 antitank guns, 3 mortars, 25 light machine guns, 9 antitank rifles, 14 submachine guns, 65 rifles, and 59 prisoners have been captured. Five planes were shot down. For 7 July the numbers are 31 tanks, 11 antitank guns, 5 mortars, 18 light machine guns, 13 heavy machine guns, 9 antitank rifles, 40 submachine guns, 90 rifles, 2 guns, 3 vehicles, and 19 prisoners. Soviet dead number 150.

3d Panzer Division. Because of Soviet tank attacks the attached GD Fusilier Regiment and 394th Grenadier Regiment evacuated Hill 0.8 in the night of 7/8 July, taking up a defensive position southeast of it. At 0340 the division struck through Dubrova and prepared to attack in the area west of 226.0. After artillery preparation the armored group assaulted Hill 0.8. Because of strong artillery and tank fire the attack proceeded very slowly. Counterattacking tanks were repulsed with many losses of Soviet men and materiel. With outstanding air support, the armored group succeeded in penetrating Syrtsevo before 1000 in spite of violent Soviet tank and antitank fire from Hill 0.8 and artillery and tank fire from the dominant hilly terrain west of the Pena River. An intense battle is still in progress there and in Lukhanino as well.

The Soviet commitment of large armored formations to counterattack German armored units confirms the assumption that the enemy wishes under all circumstances to restore the front line of its second defense zone.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. Received 0230. The Panther Brigade with a battalion of the Grenadier Regiment attacked Verkhopenoye. In spite of strong enemy defenses on the west bank of the Pena River, with dug-in artillery, tanks, and antitank guns, the attack made good progress from the east into the center of the town. The rest of the Grenadier Regiment, with the Antitank Battalion and the reinforced Reconnaissance Battalion attached, attacked the northern part of Verkhopenoye via Gremutchy. The Reconnaissance Battalion, reinforced by the Assault

Gun Battalion, was hindered from advancing west by intense enemy tank counterattacks from the northeast. The battalion was also screening the road from Hill 242.3 to Verkhopenoye in constant combat with many Soviet tanks. There was strong artillery fire from the northeast, north, and west on the right flank of the Grenadier Regiment, attacking from the southeast. This attack moved well as far as the eastern edge of the town but bogged down 50 meters outside it in the face of sudden defensive fire from many heavy guns and superior artillery. A Soviet counterattack with tanks, and darkness, put an end to the battle, both sides having suffered heavy casualties.

In the day's battles the Panther Brigade and the Assault Gun Battalion, according to reports, destroyed 40 Soviet tanks, with not inconsiderable losses of their own.

The Fusilier Regiment, attached again to the division, and the 1st Battalion of the Grenadier Regiment, cooperating with the Panzer Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division, captured Syrtsevo.

Since 0700 on 8 July, division headquarters has been in the woods west of Dubrova.

Roads are in good condition.

Front line: Road at 242.1- Verkhopenoye - southern part of Verkhopenoye-east of the Pena River-northern part of Syrtsevo.

Tomorrow the division will mop up the eastern part of Verkhopenoye in accordance with the Corps order.

9 July 1943

Corps Command Post: one kilometer north of Butovo. Afternoon: woods two kilometers north of Olkhovka.

Weather: clear, sunny, light. Showers in the afternoon.

General Situation: The 11th Panzer Division and GDFG Division had a quiet night. Units deployed in the southern part of Verkhopenoye reported some medium to heavy artillery fire.

During the night the 3d Panzer Division was engaged in hard house-to-house combat in Syrtsevo, where the enemy still holds the southern part, and at Lukhanino, where the enemy frequently comes up to the river bank. Hills 1.9 and 219 north of Lukhanino are held by a strong enemy force, which the panzer group is attacking. The 3d Rifle Regiment is in the eastern part of the town, close to the western edge of the woods, south of Hill 219.1. On the southern bank of the river, the 39th Engineer Battalion is securing the flank toward Kalashnoye, still occupied by the enemy. During the night the Soviet Air Force violently bombed the Syrtsevo-Dubrova area.

0400: The 11th Panzer Division jumps off toward the Ilinskiy Hill.

0500: The 11th Panzer Division, after crossing a minefield just south of the road junction at Ilinskiy, is progressing toward the high ground around 260.8. Advancing toward Pokrovskiy, the 110th Regiment is facing weak resistance. The 339th Regiment is advancing toward Krasnaya Polyana.

0530: The 11th Panzer Division reaches the road junction at Ilinskiy.

0630: There is still no report from the GDFG Division of the capture of the northern part of Verkhopenoye. The division was not ready to attack on time and its start was delayed until 0530. According to an intercepted radio message the panther brigade does not plan to jump off until 0800. The division failed to inform the Corps of the delay in the start. As a result, the 11th Panzer Division, facing the enemy tank front alone, is prevented from further advance.

- The Corps Commander strongly deplores the omission of such an important report and demands an immediate report on which forces are involved, and when the advance started.

0645: The 11th Panzer Division reaches its first objective. Ilinskiy Hill is free of the enemy. The tanks, on the south slope, are unable to push north since strong enemy tank forces are on Hill 260.8 and their fire

controls the road. New types of antitank weapons or assault guns have already destroyed two German tanks. The field command reports that they went completely to pieces when they were hit.

- 0700: The GDPG Division is engaged in a fierce battle with Soviet tanks and antitank weapons south of the road leading east from Verkhopenoye. The panzer battalion jumped off from the machine tractor station, supported by assault guns, and advanced toward the northern section of Verkhopenoye. Because of heavy flanking attacks from the west the attack is making little headway.
- 0720: Tanks of the panther brigade of the GDPG Division are still at their starting point.
- The 11th Panzer Division reports that some units of the GD Rifle Regiment of the GDPG Division, echeloned deeply on the road to the rear, are at the same level as forward elements of the 11th Panzer Division, northwest of Ilinskiy.
- 0730: The Corps Commander telephones an order to the Commander of the 11th Panzer Division to continue the attack on Hill 260.8 together with those units of the GDPG Division which are not tied down in the northern part of Verkhopenoye. After heavy artillery preparation and dive bomber attacks, the attack is to begin at 0815.
- It is impossible to carry out the Corps plan to defer clearing out the northern part of Verkhopenoye for the 3d Panzer Division, because the panzer brigade has already penetrated into the northern section of the town.
- 0800: The Commander of the VIII Air Corps is at Corps Headquarters and promises all-out support for the attacking forces from 0830 on.
- The attack by the reinforced 2d Battalion of the Grenadier Regiment on the northern part of Verkhopenoye was cancelled because of strong enemy resistance.
- 0830: Strong formations of aircraft make a well-placed attack on enemy tanks at Hill 260.8. Twelve tanks are set afire. It is to be expected that the joint attack will now get through.
- 0840: The reconnaissance battalion and the assault guns of the GDPG Division have reached the road from Verkhopenoye to 242.1 on the highway. The panther brigade has penetrated into the northern part of Verkhopenoye. It has been ordered to move all of its tanks not already committed there toward Hill 260.8 immediately.
- The 338th Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division has captured Krasnaya Polyana and Beregovoy. The 2d Battalion of the 110th Regiment has pushed through Pokrovskiy.
- Some enemy tanks in front of the GDPG Division at the machine tractor station have withdrawn toward the northeast and are trying to envelop the advancing elements of the 11th Panzer Division from the left. The GDPG Division has been informed of this and will pursue the enemy with tanks.
- 0850: Report from Army Commander: The enemy confronting the LII Army Corps began attacking its west flank with strong armored forces at nightfall, making penetrations at Voskhod and to the south. It is time to gain ground to the north in order to seize the enemy highways leading southwest via Oboyan.
- The II SS Panzer Corps destroyed about 250 enemy tanks yesterday in its various sectors. Fortunately the Soviets always attacked in small groups, making it possible to apply a mobile defense. The II and V Guard Tank Corps must be rather badly off as a result. The SS Corps, after regrouping, plans to attack again at 1000.
- 0900: The 3d Panzer Division is still engaged in heavy combat on the east bank of the Pena River. Syrtsevo has been almost entirely cleared. On the west bank east of Berezovka, on the high land at 210, over 30 Soviet tanks have taken a firing position. In addition there is heavy artillery and multiple rocket fire from this area. Heavy fighting is also under

way around the western part of Lukhanino. The enemy has brought into the dense, concealing grain fields a special unit equipped only with submachine guns. Fighting individually they are causing many German casualties. Two-thirds of the area has been captured by German troops. The weak panzer forces of the German division are in combat on the high land at Point 0.3, between Lukhanino and Syrtsevo. In the face of heavy fire, construction of the bridge at Lukhanino is making no progress.

- 0910: The panzer group of the 11th Panzer Division has reached the woods just southeast of Hill 260.8.
- The panzer units of the GDPG Division, advancing toward Hill 260.8, are not making any real progress through the open terrain west of the road because of the strong enemy tank force. It is impossible to turn to the left because of the danger of flanking from the northern part of Verkhopenoye and the wooded gorge leading southwest from Hill 260.8.
 - The 11th Panzer Division is also unable to make a frontal attack on Hill 260.8. Captain Zachariae Lingenthal, commanding the lead battalion of the panzer regiment, decided to swing east through the woods southeast of Hill 260.8 and envelop the enemy tank forces from the flank. The surprise attack was successful, and, after many enemy tanks have been destroyed, the enemy resistance is beginning to falter, and tanks are withdrawing to the north.
- 0930: The GDPG Division's armored attack gets underway and both panzer regiments move briskly toward Hill 260.8. The GD Grenadiers' attack in the northern part of Verkhopenoye has come to a halt just southwest of the windmill. The division reports that it cannot attack further in view of the strong force flanking it from the west. It has cancelled the attack and is using one battalion and heavy weapons to secure the west flank of the division until the reconnaissance battalion of the 3d Panzer Division, already on the way just east of Verkhopenoye, arrives to relieve it. The view of the division is that it must finally get out of the Verkhopenoye-Syrtsevo "hole" in order to be able to continue the attack to the north effectively. The Corps Commander concurs with this decision, since the enemy situation is bound to become untenable in Verkhopenoye when the GDPG Division turns off to the west later.
- 0945: The Army Commander arrives at Corps Headquarters, where he is informed by the Corps Commander that despite the heavy battles the offensive spirit of the troops is still unbroken. However, as a result of the four days of hard fighting the physical strength of the men has been somewhat affected. The Army Commander warns against overtiring the troops and orders that the start of the attack should not be made too early in the morning during the days to come so that the troops can have some rest at night.
- 1000: The Corps's lead tanks have captured Hill 260.8. The Luftwaffe, having provided outstanding support for the attack, will now direct its main effort against some 40 tanks dug in just south of Novoselovka. Another dive bomber formation is flying toward the Berezovka area in order to stave off the threatened flanking of the Corps west flank.
- 1130: Enemy situation: The enemy is apparently beginning to weaken. The Luftwaffe reports movements toward the north behind the Corps front. The GDPG Division has the same impression of Soviet withdrawal from the west bank of the Pena River west of the center of Verkhopenoye. Enemy tanks, artillery, and scout cars are observed moving toward the west. South of Novoselovka an enemy formation of some 40 tanks seems to be covering the retreat and is preventing the GD Panther Brigade from pushing to the north.
- The reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division, with the assault guns, is advancing on Hill 251.4 southwest of Novoselovka.
- 1200: The 11th Panzer Division, advancing east of the road near Hill 240.4, encounters ten enemy tanks. More Soviet tanks have been observed in the Sitnoye Woods. There are 15 enemy tanks on the road just northwest of

- there, north of Hill 248.3. According to a reconnaissance report, there are tanks and motor vehicles concentrated at the Hf road fork. The enemy apparently is organizing his main defense position on the dominating high ground on both sides of the road fork.
- The attack of the 3d Panzer Division is still delayed because a minefield on the banks of the Pena has to be cleared. The division's reconnaissance battalion is approaching Verkhopenoye.
- 1300: The GD Panzer Regiment, advancing at a good pace, has broken Soviet resistance at Novoselovka and captured the town, destroying many tanks. The regiment is now advancing north.
- 1330: The GD Reconnaissance Battalion, just south of Hill 251.4, observes 20 enemy tanks moving into the northern part of Verkhopenoye, where the battalion can expect to face strong resistance.
- Luftwaffe planes are sent to attack the northern part of Verkhopenoye. Units of the SS Totenkopf Division of the II SS Panzer Corps have crossed the ravine west of Veseliy. In front of them are 70 enemy tanks.
 - The 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division has reached the southwestern edge of Sukhoye Solotino and is advancing toward the east-west road. Some Soviet tanks have been seen north of the center of the town. The Panzer Regiment is to the west, advancing toward the Sitnoye Woods..
- 1340: The reinforced GD Reconnaissance Battalion captures Hill 251.4.
- 1400: The Panzer Brigade reaches the road fork three kilometers north of Novoselovka.
- 1420: The 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division drives Soviet defenders from their position and the church at Sukhoye Solotino. The Corps seems to be attaining today's objective early.
- 1445: A report arrives from the commander of the 394th Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division that he has observed a Soviet combined arms column heading north on the main road west of Berezovka. The strength of the retreating force is about a regiment. The withdrawal is covered by tanks. Air reconnaissance is diverted from the Corps front to the sector at once. The VIII Air Corps is notified.
- 1450: The Corps Commander orders the GDPG Division to turn off immediately to the southwest toward the road fork at 258.5. The objective is Dolgiy and the hills north of it, in order to cut off the withdrawing enemy forces.
- The 11th Panzer Division will advance further north and screen the turn by the Corps along the road between the Salotinka River and the highway at Hf.
- 1500: After the Corps Commander briefs the Army Commander on the changed situation, the latter agrees with the Corps plan and orders the 3d Panzer Division to speed up so that the operation can take place. The Corps Commander goes to the 3d Panzer Division, which is still deployed between Lukhanino and Syrtsevo, in order to direct a concentrated attack by the entire force.
- Communications are operating splendidly at this important moment.
- 1505: The 11th Panzer Division gets the order to seize and hold the line from Point 227.0 just north of Kochetovka-235.9-248.3-road fork Hf-232.8.
- The VIII Air Corps sends out a bomber formation against the retreating enemy.
 - The Corps requests the Army to leave the 339th Regiment of the 167th Infantry Division with the Corps to protect its north flank.
- 1530: The Army decides to leave the 339th Regiment at the disposal of the Army in its previous sector on 10 July.
- The LII Army Corps is asked to expedite preparations for the crossing at Zavidovka. However, the Corps is still heavily tied down on its west flank.

- 1540: The 110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division reaches the southwest corner of the Sitnoye Woods.
- 1545: The report of the 3d Panzer Division is confirmed by air reconnaissance. The Soviet combined arms columns, about three kilometers in length, are about three kilometers north of the Tolstoye Woods, with the front facing north. It is imperative for the GDPG Division to get to the road, since otherwise there is danger that the enemy will escape.
- The panzer brigade of the GDPG Division has reached Hill 244.8 north of Hf at the road fork.
 - The II SS Panzer Corps is advancing from Hill 224.5 toward Kochetovka, where the enemy forces are strong. From the battlefield a combat unit reports a rapid movement of heavy antitank weapons on the road from Sukhoye Solotino to the west. The panzer group of the 11th Panzer Division, which reached the road east of Hf at the same time, turns to the east, attacks and captures the antitank guns.
 - The Army Commander, speaking from SS Panzer Corps Headquarters, congratulates the Corps on the day's success. The Chief of Staff again asks permission to commit the 339th Regiment with the 11th Panzer Division to the north. The Army Commander refuses, because another mission is planned for the regiment, and it should not be too far away from its division.
- 1555: 11th Panzer Division units reach the road fork 500 meters southeast of 244.5.
- 1600: The GD Panther Brigade is ordered to advance via Novoselovka south of Kalinovka toward Hill 258.5. The reconnaissance battalion will advance from Hill 251.4 toward Dolgiy. The fusilier regiment will take up an all around (hedgehog) defense with its front facing northwest, its right wing at Novoselovka, and its left wing at Hill 251.4. The grenadier regiment will organize a hedgehog defense on the hill just southeast of Kalinovka and will cover the thrust to the northwest. The artillery regiment will support the defense of the fusilier and grenadier regiments and prevent a breakout of the numerous Soviet troops from the northern part of Verkhopenoye to Hill 260.8. The success of the operation depends greatly on the 11th Panzer Division's taking over the defense positions up to Hill 232.8 as soon as possible, thus freeing the bulk of the GDPG Division.
- The Chief of Staff points out that the reconnaissance battalion must be thrown against Hill 258.5 as quickly as possible, since it represents the most mobile force of the division.
- 1620: The 3d Panzer Division captures Hills 1.9 and 219 north of Lukhanino. Between Syrtsevo and Lukhanino, one battalion had crossed the river and penetrated into the ravine. The western part of Lukhanino is still occupied by the enemy. The battles result in heavy casualties. There are still about 40 enemy tanks in front of the division.
- The Army presses for early clearing up of the river triangle north of Lukhanino and for the panzer group to be ready for the thrust to the northwest.
- 1635: The Corps has moved its command post to a wooded area two kilometers north of Olkhovka.
- 1815: The GD Panther Brigade has not yet turned southwest because 200 enemy tanks are advancing from the north to Hill 244.8 at the road fork. Their lead tanks attacked the hill at 1735. In view of this threat, it would be impossible to turn even a few elements southwest, particularly since no units of the 11th Panzer Division have yet arrived to relieve the GDPG Division.
- The 11th Panzer Division is ordered to relieve the GD Panther Regiment with all speed.
 - The reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division is in combat with 15 enemy tanks attacking from Hill 232.8.
- 1910: The Corps Commander briefs the Army Commander and hopes that after the reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division repulses the attack the

- division can still reach the road at Kruglik.
- Enemy situation: Most of the Soviet III Mechanized Corps seems to have withdrawn to the north in the face of the Corps attack. The main force of the Soviet VI Tank Corps is believed to be at Kruglik and Kalinovka. It has not been destroyed.
 - The XLVIII Panzer Corps intends to advance further southwest in order to clear the crossing for the 332d Infantry Division. The 11th Panzer Division is to advance further north and, depending on the situation, reach Orlovka or the Psel River.
 - The Army Commander reveals the prospect that the 167th Infantry Division may possibly be transferred to the Army's west wing tomorrow.
- 1945: The GDPG Division reports that relief by the 11th Panzer Division apparently is now underway. The division believes that a Soviet tank brigade with at least 30 tanks is on the west bank of the river at Verkhopenoye.
- 2000: Army order: While screening from the elevation of Oboyan, the XLVIII Panzer Corps is to destroy the Soviet VI Guard Tank Corps on the west bank of the Pena. For this purpose the Corps will continue the enveloping maneuver from the Novoselovka area toward the southwest, and at the same time will reconnoiter toward the Psel River in the Ilinskiy/Shipy sector.
- The LII Army Corps will stay ready to cross the Pena in the Alekseyevka-Zavidovka sector on special army order.
 - The II SS Panzer Corps will advance toward Kochetovka and tomorrow will seize the banks of the Psel River.
- 2045: The divisions get their preliminary missions: The GDPG Division is to destroy the enemy forces at Verkhopenoye and capture the high land east of Berezovka. One unit, after destroying the enemy artillery group at Berezovka, is to clear the crossing at Rokovo. After the tanks have passed through, the grenadiers are to mop up Berezovka.
- The 3d Panzer Division, which is still pinned down south of Syrtsevo and in Lukhanino in heavy mopping up operations that are causing many casualties, will make the breakthrough across the Pena tomorrow, if the GD tank attack is successful. It appears that Syrtsevo offers the best possibility for a crossing. The attack will begin at 0800.
 - The 11th Panzer Division has the clear mission of screening to the north.
- 2100: Relief of the GD Panther Brigade has been delayed because the panzer regiment of the 11th Panzer Division was ordered by the division commander to turn toward the east flank toward Sukhoje Solotino, where enemy forces, evidently driven by the SS, were moving in. The Corps Chief of Staff cannot understand why an entire panzer regiment must be moved against this group. There seems to have been a misunderstanding in the transmittal of orders. The 11th Panzer Division's 111th Rifle Regiment is deployed between 248.3 and Hf, and the 110th Rifle Regiment is between Hf and the gorge at Malinovoye Woods. However, up to now only one battalion from each regiment has arrived at this line, and they are beginning to relieve the GD. The reconnaissance battalion is still advancing from Hill 232.8 to the Kurasovka River.
- The Corps Commander points out that the division absolutely must move to the right (east) and reach the Salotinka River. Since the panzer regiment of the Division will be left alone, the division must screen the area between the Salotinka and Kurasovka Rivers. The division commander does not believe that there are 200 enemy tanks in front of the northern sector.
- 2145: The 3d Panzer Division relieves the units of the GDPG Division still securing both sides of Verkhopenoye up to the woods just to the north. The 3d Reconnaissance Battalion is in the northern part of Verkhopenoye. Syrtsevo, with the exception of the southern part, has been cleared of enemy troops, and the western outskirts of Lukhanino have been reached.
- 2200: Because of the delayed relief, the GDPD Division has not yet started toward the southwest. The Army is informed that the panzer group will

advance tomorrow from the area west of Verkhopenoye via Hill 258.5 to the hill north of Rakovo.

- the 3d Panzer Division will attack toward Berezovka.
- The LII Army Corps must make the crossing at Zavidovka in order to cover the left flank.

2400: Operations orders for 10 July are sent to the divisions.

- Situation summary: An eventful day for the corps is ending. In hard tank battles, thanks to flexible decisions, the superiority of German command and materiel has been proved again. German tank losses have been relatively minor. The GDPG Division has destroyed 66 tanks, and the 11th Panzer Division 35 tanks. There are still no reports from the 3d Panzer Division, but there too the number of captured guns, heavy weapons, and prisoners is very high.

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11th Panzer Division. Received 2045. At 0400 the division attacked the road fork and hill at Ilinskiy. With help from a series of air support sorties, the first objective was reached at 0530. After reassembling, the division moved on at 0830 toward the road fork at 260.8. With the enemy withdrawing slowly, the armored group reached the fork at 0925. After committing the 110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment on the right at 1325, the forces again moved north, reaching the road fork 500 meters southeast of Hill 244.5 at 1555.

The 110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment reached the southwest corner of the Sitnoye Woods at 1540. The 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, on the west bank of the Salotinka attacking northeast, threw the enemy back from a fortified position and a church at Suk. Solotino at 1420 and is now advancing with the 110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment on a broad front to the north. The division objective may be reached by evening. Enemy rearguards are resisting vigorously.

Repeated dive bomber and bomber sorties provided effective support. The Soviets provided more ground support and had more fighter planes.

There was rain in the evening, but the roads are still passable for vehicles.

The reinforced 339th Grenadier Regiment is attached directly to the Corps.

Ten prisoners were taken, two planes shot down, and 1 T34, 3 antitank guns, 17 antitank rifles, and 3 truckloads of ammunition were captured. On 8 July 28 prisoners, 6 tanks, 6 guns, 2 light machine guns, and 2 submachine guns were captured.

3d Panzer Division. The 3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion reached the area southeast of Verkhopenoye just before 0700. Since the Gross Deutschland PG Division was still attacking north of Verkhopenoye and the Soviets completely controlled the land east of the Pena area with artillery fire, units of the GDPG Division could not be released during the day. The relief cannot begin until dusk. All day there was heavy artillery and tank fire around Syrtsevo and to the south.

At 1200 the armored group started out as scheduled, making a prepared attack on Hills 0.9 and 219.1. Moving slowly, blocked by minefields, and under fire from anti-tank rifles and observed artillery fire, against stubborn resistance the troops captured both hills. Meanwhile the attack of the 2d Battalion, 3d Grenadier Regiment, continued up to the western boundary, against the system of ditches north of Lukhano.

There were many Soviet casualties. So far 150 prisoners have been taken. Soviet counterattacks were directly against the depression north and south of Syrtsevo, supported by fire from the west bank. Soviet troops have succeeded in entering the depression south of Syrtsevo, and a panzer and scout car company has been committed to clear them out. The battle is still in progress.

The division objective is to hold on to the territory that has been gained and dig in at Hill 0.8.

Tank situation: 4 Mk II, 3 Mk III short, 15 Mk III long, 16 Mk IV short, 8 Mk IV long, 4 command cars, 2 assault guns.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. Received 1820. After artillery preparation the reinforced 2d Battalion of the Grenadier Regiment moved in to clean out the northern part of Verkhopenoye. After initial success, the regiment encountered strong defensive fire from enemy tanks in the northern part. Because of this and strong flanking fire from the western part of the town, the attack proceeded very slowly and with difficulty. At about 0800, with the concurrence of the Corps Command, the attack was cancelled and the artillery released to support the division's main forces in their attack to the north.

After the leading tanks had broken through violent resistance, especially from enemy tanks on the southern edge of the wooded area southwest of Hill 260.8, they reached that hill at about 1000, with the infantry following. The continuing attack met with two very strong obstacles south of Novoselovka—dug-in tanks—and strong Soviet counterattacks from the northwest and northeast hit the advancing Panther Brigade at the same time.

Novoselovka was taken at about 1300, and, as soon as the infantry came up, the attack began on the objective in today's order, the road fork three kilometers north of Novoselovka. This was reached before 1400 without much Soviet resistance, and the advance continued to Point 244.8.

The reinforced Reconnaissance Battalion, taking advantage of the success of the tanks at Hill 260.8, attacked Hill 251.4. At 1340, the hill was taken, although enemy tanks put up a strong defense. Elements of the Reconnaissance Battalion attacked Point +1.8. At 1400 the battalion was on the line between 251.4 and +1.8 and had undertaken reconnaissance toward Hill 232.8.

At 1500 the division received the Corps order to turn southwest and advance against the road fork at Point 258.5 west of Verkhopenoye in order to block Soviet units withdrawing there. The division immediately redirected the Panther Brigade and the reinforced Reconnaissance Battalion toward Hill 258.5, with the mission of preventing the enemy from getting away to the north and of destroying enemy units still holding west of Verkhopenoye.

The battle is still in progress.

Until the 11th Panzer Division arrives to relieve it the Fusilier Regiment is screening on the line from the road-northern edge of Novoselovka-Hill 251.4 toward the northeast, north, and northwest, and is holding Hill 244.8 until relieved by the 11th Panzer Division.

The Grenadier Regiment is to take up a defensive position on the hills east of Kalinovka, with its left at Point +1.8 and its front toward the west and southwest.

Just before dawn there was some slight Soviet air activity, including bombing and strafing attacks, mainly against the leading attack forces and on the road. The German Luftwaffe supported the advance of the German troops with very effective repeated sorties.

The 16th Company (?) of the Grenadier Regiment shot down five Soviet planes that were making a strafing attack and thus increased the total number of planes shot down by the 4th Battalion of the Grenadier Regiment to nine since 5 July.

The roads are in good condition.

10 July 1943

Corps Command Post: forest two kilometers north of Olkhovka.
Weather: cloudy, windy, rain in the afternoon.

0255: General Situation: Word is received that the Panzer Group of the 11th Panzer Division is not, as assumed, at Hill 244.8, north of Hf. Strong enemy forces occupy the high ground and are in an absolutely dominant position. Any oblique movement by the division to lengthen the defense front to east and west will meet with heavy fire from there. An attack on the hill might clear up the situation. However, in view of the strong Soviet forces an attack could scarcely get under way.

0330: The GDPG Division attacks toward Hill 258.5.

- 0355: A Soviet infantry battalion and about ten tanks attack south toward Hill 244.8. The attack is repulsed, but relief of the GDPG Division is postponed. At the same time enemy tanks from the direction of Kruglik attack the left wing of the Grenadier Regiment at the Kurasovka Ravine near Kalinovka. Enemy forces are still holding Hill 232.8. Because of the above situation only the panther brigade is able to turn toward the southwest. Southwest of Novoselovka the brigade encounters enemy tanks.
- The 11th Panzer Division has fought off enemy attacks against the road fork southeast of Hill 244.8 and to the west of it. In front of the division enemy forces have moved in close to the edge of the woods to the north of the defense position.
 - The 111th Rifle Regiment is east of the road from Hill 248.3 to the road fork Hf. In the Sitnoye Woods the 2d Battalion is preparing to lengthen the defense front positions toward the west as far as the Salotinka River. The 2d Battalion of the 110th Regiment is west of the road on the hills northwest of Novoselovka, approximately up to the Malinovoye Woods. At Novoselovka the reconnaissance battalion is getting ready to move against Hill 232.8. All night strong enemy air attacks on both sides of the road and on Novoselovka have disrupted troop movements.
 - The GD Reconnaissance Battalion, still pinned down south of Hill 232.8, is waiting to be relieved by the 11th Reconnaissance Battalion. The grenadier units of the division have penetrated into the southern part of Kalinovka. The enemy is still holding the northern part.
- 0625: Grenadier units of the GDPG Division beat off a Soviet attack in battalion strength, supported by about 20 tanks, on the southern part of Kalinovka.
- 0700: Moving along the Kubasovskiy Ravine the grenadier regiment begins the attack to the southwest. The panzer brigade has already destroyed seven tanks north of Hill 243.0 and hopes to gain ground soon to the southwest. The objective is Hill 258.5. Colonel Strachwitz, Commander of the panther brigade, injured his arm on a tank gun and has to be evacuated. The Corps immediately dispatches Colonel Decker to take over the brigade.
- 0800: In the 3d Panzer Division sector, the southern part of Syrtsevo is still held by the enemy. During the night several attacks in company strength were repulsed there. It was quiet in the Lukhanino area. At dawn enemy forces in individual groups were withdrawing from the north to the west bank of the Pena. Corps artillery is committed against this withdrawal. Alekseyevka is reported free of enemy forces.
- The main point of enemy effort right now seems to be at Verkhopenoye and west of it, and in the Berezovka area. Soviet fire from the hills east of Berezovka will make today's crossing at Syrtsevo also problematic. Ground reconnaissance by the 3d Reconnaissance Battalion found the bridge at Verkhopenoye still intact. A T34 tank preparing to cross the bridge toward the east was destroyed. This means that the bridge can handle tanks.
 - The 3d Panzer Division proposes that its reconnaissance battalion, after the attack by the GDPG Division is successful, build a bridgehead west of Verkhopenoye. Then the Panzer Group, thrusting toward Dubrava, should be brought forward and moved across the river at Verkhopenoye. Then, in close contact with the GDPG Division, an advance should be made along the Pena Hills to the high land east of Berezovka.
 - The Corps Commander approves this proposal and orders that the shift of the panzer units to Verkhopenoye be speeded up.
- 0815: The Army Commander, responding to the pleas of the Corps, agrees to send one 150mm gun battery (3d Battery, 731st Artillery Regiment) to the 11th Panzer Division in order to shell the Oboyan bridge.
- 0900: The GDPG Division is gaining little ground. A tank battle is raging around Hill 243.0. More than 20 enemy tanks have been destroyed. The reconnaissance battalion and the grenadier regiment are engaged in a fierce infantry and tank battle in the Kalinovka area. The GDPG Division

reports that it is impossible to advance further toward the southwest as long as flanking fire from Hill 232.8 and Kalinovka is not eliminated.

- 1000: The 11th Panzer Division, with little resistance on its right wing, reaches the Salotinka River. There are still enemy forces in the northern part of Salotinka. As yet there is no contact with the II SS Panzer Corps. (According to information received from the Army and the II SS Panzer Corps the latter plans to start out at 1000 to cross the Psel at Veseliy-Olkhovskiy. Reconnaissance has observed strong enemy forces on the north bank of the Psel. The 339th Grenadier Regiment of the 167th Infantry Division is reunited with its division and ordered to relieve those units of the SS "Das Reich" Division which were committed on the right wing of the II SS Panzer Corps.)
- The enemy is reinforcing his troops in front of the left wing of the 11th Panzer Division on both sides of the highway at Malinovoye Woods, and at Hill 232.8. The attention of the division is called to the importance of capturing Hill 232.8 rapidly so that the reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division will be free to make a push to Hill 258.5 after mopping up Kalinovka.
 - The 3d Panzer Division is regrouping. Ten to fifteen enemy tanks are still dug in on the west bank at Verkhopenoye. On the left wing of the division the infantry are holding the same position. In the Berezovka area there are still strong enemy forces. Only southwest of Spitsin, at Shepelovka and Rakovo, is the enemy withdrawal continuing.
 - In yesterday's heavy battles in the area of Syrtsevo and Lukhanino the 3d Panzer Division destroyed about five enemy battalions and a great many weapons. At least 450 Soviet dead have been counted. Fourteen German tanks were lost. According to a deserter Soviet units deployed on the west bank of the Pena were ordered to withdraw to a well prepared defense position 40 kilometers northwest of the Pena River. This agrees with the testimony of a lieutenant colonel captured by the 11th Panzer Division who maintains that there is a well prepared defense position on the Psel River west of Oboyan. This officer also made the interesting remark that the Soviets expected a German attack this year from Orel toward the southeast and Belgorod toward the northeast. A thrust from south to north against Kursk was also considered, but it seemed to the Russian Command to be too confined an area.
- 1030: The GDPG Division reports that the 11th Reconnaissance Battalion is still in the depression just west of Novoselovka, unable to advance further toward Hill 232.8 because of heavy fire. The Soviets have reinforced their position on the hill with seven tanks and some multiple rocket launchers.
- 1035: The 11th Panzer Division is ordered to commit the Panzer Regiment again if necessary to take Hill 232.8.
- 1130: Colonel General Guderian, Inspector General of Panzer Troops, arrives at the Corps Command Post. The liaison officers sent from the Army High Command to the Panther Regiment and the Corps Chief of Staff discuss their previous experience with the Mark V (Panther) tank. Apart from technical "infantile diseases," the tank has proved its worth. The high losses can be attributed mainly to the fact that the training level of the crews leaves very much to be desired. Prior experience has confirmed that when men are sent to Germany for retraining on the new tanks the divisions, following a short-sighted personnel policy, for the most part get rid of their unwanted soldiers (as in all armies). Even if this procedure is comprehensible in view of the difficult winter battles, the bad results are now manifest in the way the crews are caring for these very valuable tanks.
- Another serious problem with the Panther Regiment is the fact that there has been no unit training for the crews. Before commitment there was almost no training in battalion formation, and radio communications were scarcely practiced. Radio silence in the assembly area for Operation

- Citadel, and the delayed arrival of the battalions, ruled out exercises of this type before commitment.
- General Guderian goes next to the front to check personally on the reasons for the many technical breakdowns and the alleged success of new types of Russian weapons (122mm assault guns). He finds that the front armor of the tanks fully meets requirements. The side armor is somewhat too light to take fire from heavy antitank weapons. Work is being done to eliminate these defects. The Panther gun is a complete success and even at the greatest distance fires with maximum accuracy and with excellent penetration.
 - The Corps Chief of Staff exchanges views by phone with his counterpart with the II SS Panzer Corps. They agree that there are many Soviet armored units, equipped with numerous tanks, which have not yet been committed in a major, decisive attack. For the most part the enemy has attacked in small groups of 20-30 tanks. The reason may be the poor combat efficiency of the Soviet infantry, which is made up mainly of very old or very young men. Since there are almost no middle aged men the enemy is compelled to fritter away his tanks piecemeal to support the morale of his infantry.
- 1150: New Soviet formations have arrived in front of the Corps from the Sumy area to the southwest. These include the 309th Rifle Division and the 192d, 180th, and 122d Tank Brigades. Intelligence reports that still more formations are supposed to arrive from operational reserves to the east. The II Soviet Tank Corps, which attacked the east flank of the II SS Panzer Corps, came from the area of Kupyansk.
- 1200: No change in the situation in the 11th and 3d Panzer Divisions.
- The GDPG Division reports from Kalinovka and the hills to the northwest that 40-50 enemy tanks are heading south. The division requests Luftwaffe sorties, but unfortunately they cannot be expected today because they are committed to support the II SS Panzer Corps attack across the Psel.
 - The Corps would still like to hold back from committing the panzer regiment of the 11th Panzer Division since there may still be heavy Soviet attacks against the division.
- 1230: The Chief of Staff believes it necessary to risk covering the northwest flank with antitank weapons while using the panzer units to destroy the enemy on the west bank of the Pena. Thus it is not necessary to cling rigidly to Hill 258.5, but perhaps rather to turn from 245.0 southwest and advance south of the Kolhoz Verkhopenoye. To reinforce this attack the Chief of Staff suggests to the Corps Commander that the Panzer Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division be moved to the north around the southern part of Novoselovka. This would mean abandoning the plan for what would certainly be a difficult crossing at Verkhopenoye and rolling up the west bank of the Pena with the GDPG Division.
- 1250: Concurring in this proposal the Corps Commander orders the 3d Panzer Division to advance across the highway, passing south of Verkhopenoye toward the ridge to the south. After a discussion with the GDPG Division Commander, he assigns the division the mission of mopping up the west bank at Verkhopenoye.
- 1300: The panzer brigade of the GDPG Division starts toward Hill 258.5.
- 1320: The panzer regiment of the 3d Panzer Division starts out in the direction of Novoselovka, and one artillery battalion displaces to the area southeast of Verkhopenoye. With the panzer regiment are the motor vehicles and scout cars belonging to the reconnaissance battalion. The regiment has only four Mark IV (long) tanks available. The reconnaissance battalion, advancing through Verkhopenoye, will join the attack when the tanks arrive.
- It has been observed that the fusilier regiment of the GDPG Division, in its advance to the south, has supposedly reached Point 1.3 just west of

- the northern part of Verkhopenoye. It is said to be engaged in combat with six Soviet tanks.
- The panzer brigade of the GDPG Division is two kilometers west of 243.0, engaged in hard combat with tanks and antitank guns from the north and west.
- 1330: The 11th Panzer Division, after building defense positions along the line Hill 227.0-Hill 235.9-Hill 248.3-Hf, launches an attack on Hill 232.8.
- 1400: The battle being fought by the GDPG Division is considerably harder than at first thought. New Soviet tanks keep rolling in from the north and northwest. A report from Kruglik states that 35 or 40 tanks are on their way to Hill 258.5. The division believes it may become necessary to turn the tanks of the 3d Panzer Division west toward Hill 258.5 also. The Corps is reserving this decision for itself.
- 1425: The VIII Air Corps is again asked for air support. Its Commander promises to provide priority support to Hill 258.5 and Kruglik as soon as the weather permits.
- 1600: The reconnaissance battalion of the 11th Panzer Division reaches the southern slope of Hill 232.8. On the left the division has already made contact with the grenadier regiment of the GDPG Division at Kalinovka. German tanks are arriving at the north sector of the division. The division is ordered to advance with the tanks today, when the situation permits, to take Hills 244.8 and 248.3, in order to seize jump off positions for the later advance of the Corps toward the Psel River.
- 1610: The lead tanks of the 3d Panzer Division cross the road from Verkhopenoye to Hill 258.5. The regrouping of the division has proved to be worthwhile.
- 1630: The reconnaissance battalion of the 3d Panzer Division is ordered to advance immediately. The impression is that the enemy is beginning to fall back west of Verkhopenoye. Enemy tanks are withdrawing to the west.
- In the GDPG Division sector, fierce fighting continues in the Kalinovka area and northeast of Hill 258.5. The Fusilier Regiment, mounted, is advancing with the reconnaissance battalion of the panzer brigade.
- 1645: The VIII Air Corps can send a group over the battle area at 1800. Since the position of the German troops around 258.5 is not clear, the target will be the area north of Rakovo and Berezovka. The good Stuka group will hit targets beyond the forest in front of the lead tanks.
- 1700: The Corps Commander briefs the Army Command on the favorable course of the tank battle. It is becoming urgently necessary to move elements of the LII Army Corps across the Pena to the north, so that they will secure the flank up to Kalinovka.
- The Army Commander thinks that the LII Army Corps can at best advance to Hill 258.5. No noticeable enemy pullback can be discerned in front of its west front, which is getting longer and longer.
 - The Corps Commander points out that the Corps must be freed as soon as possible for the further thrust across the Psel.
 - The Army Commander thinks it necessary for the 11th Panzer Division and the GDPG Division to be relieved, but for the time being the 3d Panzer Division will have to remain south of the Psel to cover against Oboyan and enemy forces south of there. It will not be easy to regroup from the operation in the southwest for the renewed thrust to the north.
- 1720: 11th Panzer Division reconnaissance from Hill 227.0 to the north and northeast discloses only weak enemy elements occupying Hills 209.3 and 207.3. These forces were partially destroyed. According to POWs there is still one more position built up behind the hills. On the north bank of the Psel heavy traffic is detected, moving south toward the sector. Except for artillery fire from Safonovka, there is essentially no enemy activity south of the Psel.

- 1740: The Corps orders the 11th Panzer Division to attack with strong forward units toward Hill 207.3 and southeast of it to forestall a Soviet advance.
- 1750: The attack on the high ground at 244.8 can no longer be executed today. The tank battle of the 3d Panzer and GDPG Divisions is approaching its climax. Twelve Soviet antitank guns are pushing forward from Berezovka to the northeast toward the lead tanks of the 3d Panzer Division. Corps artillery is firing at them with mortars. Two bombing groups from the Air Corps are approaching the concentration of tanks at Berezovka.
- 1800: In its thrust on Hill 258.5 the GDPG Division runs into heavy flank fire from tanks, antitank guns, and artillery from the Tolstoye Woods just west of Hill 258.5.
- 1845: The panzer brigade of the GDPG Division captures dominant Hill 258.5, after destroying five enemy tanks. The brigade is organizing an all-around defense just north of the hill. Up to now, in this area alone, the GDPG Division has destroyed 49 tanks, and according to reports, the 3d Panzer Division has destroyed five tanks. Because of the heavy combat, the number of tanks in the GDPG Division has declined sharply. There are only six Panthers, three Tigers, and about eleven Mark III and Mark IV (long) tanks still operational.
- 1930: The Corps Commander briefs the Army Commander on the objectives for tomorrow. Apparently strong units of the Soviet III Mechanized Corps were pulled back to protect the Psel River. The Soviet VI Tank Corps has been hit hard, but not yet destroyed. Its main force is concentrated around Kruglik and Kalinovka. The Corps must reckon with further attacks against its flank, since the enemy wants to block the Psel crossing.
- The Corps intends to leave the mopping up in the Pena salient solely to the 3d Panzer Division and to open up crossings for the LII Army Corps. The 11th Panzer Division and the units of the GDPG Division which are relieved will thrust toward the Psel. Whether the 3d Panzer Division can handle its task alone depends on today's outcome. In any case strong units of the GDPG Division will have to remain in the area of Kalinovka and south of it. In view of this, the Army Commander thinks an advance tomorrow by the 11th Panzer Division as far as the hill at Orlovka will suffice.
 - The Corps mission for 11 July is to open the Pena crossings on both sides of Rakovo, and to concentrate all the relieved units of the GDPG Division to prepare for the attack across the Psel.
 - After relief by the 332d Infantry Division of the LII Army Corps, the 3d Panzer Division is to prepare the attack into the area around Voznesenovka in order to protect the Corps west flank.
- 2000: There is no basic change in the situation.
- South of the road from Verkhopenove to Hill 258.5 the lead tanks of the 3d Panzer Division are held up by heavy flank fire from the wooded area southeast of 258.5. The reconnaissance battalion, following the tanks to reinforce the infantry, has crossed the road. In front of the division's left wing strong enemy forces continue to occupy the area around Berezovka. This wing will not be able to make a frontal attack until the panzer regiment eliminates the flanking fire and gains ground to the south.
 - The GDPG Division's panzer brigade, in its all-around defense positions north of Hill 258.5, is taking extremely heavy fire from the Tolstoye Woods, where some 50 enemy tanks are said to be hidden. The Grenadier Regiment is deployed to the north and northwest against Kalinovka and along the Kubasovskiy Ravine. The reconnaissance battalion has turned toward the northwest and captured Hill 247.0 on the road to Kruglik. Twenty-five enemy tanks have withdrawn from the Kubasovskiy Ravine to Kruglik, blocking the enemy's main road.

- 2130: It is already obvious that the 3d Panzer Division will not be able to master the situation in the Pena salient alone tomorrow. No further gain of territory to the south and southwest is to be expected today. However, the possibility still exists that the enemy situation may change basically during the night. Hence the Corps intends either to assemble the relieved units of the GDPG Division at Novoselovka for a thrust to the north, or to advance further south on both sides of Berezovka to Hill 243.8 north of Rakovo.
- The Army Commander decides on the latter solution. The 332d Infantry Division of the LII Army Corps will thrust forward as planned at Rakovo-Zavidovka.
- 2145: After preliminary telephone calls, orders are sent out: The 3d and GDPG Divisions are to push south toward 243.8, starting at 0600.
- The 11th Panzer Division is to attack the high ground at 244.3, south of Orlovka. It will send out strong reconnaissance units toward the Psel in the Ilinskiy-Shipy sector. Starting time will be 0800, after thorough artillery preparation.
- 2230: The 11th Panzer Division points out that 40 or 50 enemy tanks are confronting the division on the hills. Since it is not possible to maneuver to right or left, the only attack that can be made is frontal. This necessarily will entail many casualties, in view of the enemy's clear field of fire. The attack offers no promise of success without very strong Luftwaffe support.
- 2245: The Corps makes the following requests for air support from the VIII Air Corps:
1. Between 0545 and 0600, area north of Berezovka. Last bomb at 0600.
 2. Before 0800, strong attacks against positions at 244.3 and 244.8. If possible, over target at 0745. Last bomb at 0800.
- The Artillery Commander gets the order to put heavy harassing fire on the woods southwest and west of 258.5, as well as in the Berezovka area. For tomorrow's attacks, the army artillery is to be able to provide equal support in both directions of attack.

Division Daily Reports - 10 July 1943

11th Panzer Division. Received 1740. Reorganization and expansion of positions to the east were delayed by a new Soviet infantry battalion with tank support which was brought into positions on both sides of Hill 244.8. At 1200 the 11th Panzer Grenadier Regiment captured positions at the church at Kochetovka and Points 227.0, 235.9, and 248.3 against slight Soviet resistance.

(Contact was broken by a bombing attack)

Continuation received at 2030: At 1330 the 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, reinforced by a tank battalion and an antitank battalion, moved out after taking Hill 232.8. At 1530 the line from 1.5 kilometers northeast of Hill 232.8, adjoining the 110th Panzer Grenadier Regiment-Hill 232.8-northern edge of Kalinovka was in German hands. Reconnaissance to the northeast toward the Psel River revealed weak infantry units on the line between Hills 209.3 and 207.3, in positions on the reverse slope. Pechetovka is heavily mined. Artillery fire is coming from Safonovo. There is much traffic on the east bank of the Psel River, most of it moving south. At 1430 16 Soviet tanks were observed moving south from the Psel.

There was slight air activity on both sides. The Soviet planes were mostly Il-20. For the first time Hurricanes were seen. Four of the Il-20 were shot down by the 616th AA Battalion and the 217th Army AA Battalion.

The roads are in good condition.

Front line: Church at Kochetovka-227.0-235.9-248.3-road fork 1.5 kilometers southwest of 244.8-hill south of the Malinovoye Woods-232.8-northern edge of Kalinovka.

One T34 and one antitank gun have been reported captured or destroyed.

Follow-up report for 9 July: 22 prisoners, 1 aircraft shot down by the 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 17 tanks, 21 antitank guns, 1 mortar, 2 antitank rifles, 4 light machine guns, 1 heavy machine gun, 10 trucks, and 1 battery commander's telescope captured or destroyed.

3d Panzer Division. Received 1810. The armored group in the forenoon assembled in the area east of Verkhopenoye to bypass Verkhopenoye if the encircling attack by the GDPG Division was successful. At Corps orders the armored group at 1300 was committed to proceed north of Verkhopenoye in order to join the GDPG Division in an attack from Hill 243.0 to the south toward Berezovka. Starting at 1500 the attack swiftly gained ground to the south. At present the group is engaged in battle with Soviet infantry and antitank forces around Hill 230. It is getting flanking fire from the woods 1 kilometer west of Point 203.1. The 3d Armored Artillery Regiment is currently clearing out the western part of Verkhopenoye, where the Soviets are still resisting, particularly in the southwestern section.

There has been no change in the Soviet forces in front of the 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment. No withdrawals have been detected. At about 1730 there was Soviet fire, especially mortar fire, from Spitsin, and slight withdrawal movements of Soviet infantry were noted.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. At 0330 the division moved out toward the objective designated for today, Hill 258.5. The Panther Brigade went first, since the rifle regiments were pinned down in the defense positions they had established yesterday by strong Soviet counterattacks with tank support. Repeated attacks from the Kalinovka area and the hills to the northeast of there were successfully repulsed by the reinforced Grenadier Regiment, with support from the reinforced Reconnaissance Battalion.

Shortly after starting out, the lead tanks encountered strong Soviet tank forces at Point 243.0. In spite of intense flanking fire from the northeast and the southwest they attacked these forces without delay. The Fusilier Regiment, assigned to support the Panther Brigade, was unable to follow at first because the ground had been softened by rain; it was subsequently held up by strong Soviet forces which appeared in the rear of the Panther Brigade, and by intense artillery and rocket fire. It was not until the Panzer Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division was committed as ordered by the Corps command against Point 232.8, thus releasing pressure, that the regiment, on the division left, could move out to the southwest. This also released the Reconnaissance Battalion, which had been committed to counterattacks against Kalinovka. The battalion was transferred by the Panther Brigade, which was reinforced by the Fusilier Regiment, to the attack on the road. In long battles, which inflicted many losses on the enemy, both attack groups reached their objectives late in the afternoon. The reinforced Reconnaissance Battalion is to block the road at 247.0 and the Panther Brigade at Point 258.0.

All day and especially last night there was considerable Soviet air activity, with bombing and strafing which inflicted many casualties on the division. German aircraft supported the attacks of the Panther Brigade.

Rain temporarily limited the progress of wheeled vehicles on roads and fields.

Front line: Hill 247.0-258.5.

The division will continue the attack to the southwest.

11 July 1943

Corps Command Post: woods two kilometers north of Olkhovka
Weather: overcast, cool, scattered showers.

General Situation: The night was generally quiet in the entire Corps area. The night rains left the roads very muddy, hampering tank movement. The weather does not permit any Luftwaffe sorties.

0300: Numerous enemy tanks attack west of the road to the south over Hill 244.8. The attack is fended off, and three enemy tanks are destroyed. Hill 207.8, three kilometers southwest of Peresyp, was captured by elements of the 11th Panzer Division without enemy resistance.

- 0540: Advance units of the GDPG Division occupy Hill 237.6 at the highway southeast of the Tolstoye Woods.
- 0600: Main force of the GDPG Division attacks. A secondary attack from the woods southeast of 258.5 has been repulsed.
- The armored group and the 3d Armored Artillery Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division attack, met by fierce resistance. Reconnaissance across the river toward Berezovka reports strong Soviet forces deployed there. The GDPG Division has the impression that enemy forces west of Berezovka have withdrawn to the west and northwest.
 - The 11th Panzer Division waits for the weather to clear up. Its commander considers frontal attack against the hill position, saturated with tanks and antitank guns, too risky without air support. The attack plan calls for the 110th Regiment to advance on both sides of the road against 244.8 and then against 244.3. The first objective of the attack for the tanks and the 11th Regiment is 239.6.
- 0700: Enemy forces in battalion strength launch an attack on 232.8 on the left wing of the 11th Panzer Division from the north and from the Kalinovka area. A temporary penetration that also touched the right wing of the Grenadier Regiment of the GDPG Division, flanking it from the rear, was liquidated by a counterattack by elements of the two divisions. Strong enemy pressure on the front of the GDPG Division at Kalinovka continues.
- 0800: The 394th Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division crosses west over the Pena River at Syrtsevo. Its left wing attacks from Lukhanino against Shepelovka, forcing the enemy to retreat.
- After strong artillery and rocket preparation Soviet units, including tanks, take Hill 207.3. The 2d Battalion, 11th Panzer Division, is driven back, suffering heavy losses.
 - The 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion drives off a Soviet battalion attacking from Kalinovka.
- 0900: The Fusilier Regiment of the GD Panzer Brigade gains ground to the south. Hill 237.6 has been captured in spite of strong Soviet resistance. The brigade's tanks are in front of a large minefield, about one kilometer south of Hill 237.6. The division is one and a half kilometers south of contour line 230.
- 0910: The 3d Panzer Division captures the eastern part of Berezovka after a hard battle. The division's tanks coming from the north are near the church at Berezovka, advancing in the direction of Spitsin.
- 0915: The GDPG Division has cleared the minefield south of 237.6, and its lead units have reached Point 1.5 west of Berezovka. The division is firing at the enemy fleeing west from Berezovka.
- A heavy minefield is delaying a further thrust over Hill 243.8 toward Rakovo. Strong enemy forces are occupying the ravines south of Berezovka, holding on stubbornly there and in the western part of Berezovka in well constructed emplacements. The advance of the GDPG Division from the area of Krasny Usliv and Hill 233.3 is hampered by flanking artillery fire from the west. About noon the 3d Panzer Grenadier Regiment expects to start mopping up Berezovka. Soviet resistance is increasing in the Tolstoye Woods west of 258.5. Units of the Fusilier Regiment of the GDPG Division have to protect supply traffic. There are not enough forces to clear out the wooded area.
- 0920: It becomes apparent at this time that the Panzer Corps on the whole has failed to accomplish the expected encirclement, even though strong enemy forces have already been destroyed in the Berezovka area. Something might still be achieved by clearing up the bend of the Pena River. Most of the Soviet corps seems to have withdrawn to the west and northwest.
- 0930: The 11th Panzer Division is failing to make headway in the mud. Tanks are sliding off at inclines of 10°. After the weather improves later in the morning a new attack is to begin at 1100. In the meantime Hill 207.0,

on the right wing, captured the day before by a company of the 2d Battalion of the 11th Regiment, has been lost again. In an irresponsible manner, the assault guns assigned there for tank security all withdrew to the rear at the same time in order to get ammunition, and Soviet infantry and tanks drove the German infantry from the hill. With great difficulty the German forces have occupied a road position just south of the hill.

- 1100: The 11th Panzer Division launches an attack against Hill 244.8. Because of heavy cloud cover, promised dive bomber support is unavailable. The start of the attack is hesitant and uninspired, the artillery preparation completely inadequate. Because of the heavy antitank fire the tanks gained no ground on either side of Hill 244.8 and are firing from a long distance.
- The Chief of Staff, arriving at the front to observe the attack, expresses his displeasure to the division commander over the inadequate preparation for the attack, and demands a new attack, with the concentrated effort of the entire artillery and armored force of the division.
 - Believing that the attack cannot succeed without sufficient dive bomber support, the division commander proposes that the GDPG Division join on 12 July in an attack to capture the hills on the road.
- 1500: The 332d Infantry Division (LII Army Corps), having failed to make a crossing at Rakovo in the face of strong resistance, crosses at Alekseyevka and establishes contact with the forward tank elements of the GDPG Division at 243.8.
- 1610: The extremely difficult mopping up operations of the 3d Panzer and GDPG Divisions in the Berezovka area are finally completed. They used Panthers and shock troops to capture the bunkers on the southern edge of Berezovka, whose defenders offered fierce resistance to the last. Elements of both divisions joined in hard house-to-house combat in the western part of the village. The Panzer Regiment of the GDPG Division has captured Hill 243.8 and barely cleared the minefield south of it. Combat reconnaissance toward Chapayev is in progress.
- 1630: The Reconnaissance Battalion of the 11th Panzer Division destroys three Soviet scout cars, apparently lost. The passengers include several senior Soviet officers, among them the deputy commanding general of the X Guard Tank Corps. The battalion captures important maps. Captured documents and interrogations reveal that the X Guard Tank Corps has three tank brigades and one mechanized brigade approaching in the area west of the highway. The formation's objective is to strike the flank of the German thrust toward Verkhopenoye. This increases the importance of defense of the corps flank. Everything depends on making contact with the LII Army Corps as soon as possible and on completing the mopping up operation in the Berezovka area, thus freeing as strong elements as possible of the GDPG Division and the bulk of the 3d Panzer Division for commitment to the north and northwest.
- 1700: The 11th Panzer Division (parts of the 110th and 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiments, most of the Panzer Regiment, and the Assault Gun Battalion) jumps off for the planned attack and, advancing rapidly, reached the edge of the woods just north of Hill 235.9 and the center of the woods north of Hill 248.3.
- 1800: After extremely hard battles, the left flank of the corps has cleared out the area of Berezovka and south to the Pena Hills. Contact has been reestablished with the 332d Infantry Division, and preparations are beginning for the relief of units of the 3d Panzer Division.
- The numbers of prisoners, known enemy dead, and captured equipment are surprisingly high. The ravines south of Berezovka are filled with corpses and many weapons. According to available reports, the Soviets suffered the following casualties in the course of the encirclement operation west of the Pena River, in the Verkhopenoye-Berezovka area:

4,800 POWs and deserters
 1,371 known dead
 173 tanks
 18 guns
 74 antitank guns
 118 mortars
 273 machine guns
 147 submachine guns
 20 airplanes.

These victories were won against hard-fighting opponents, who in some cases preferred self-destruction to being captured alive. It is believed that a tank brigade of the III Mechanized Corps and another tank brigade of the VI Tank Corps, as well as numerous infantry units, have been destroyed.

- 1830: The evening situation reveals that the woods on both sides of the road near points 258.5 and 237.6, especially the Tolstoye Woods, are still thoroughly occupied by the enemy. There is firing from all sides, some of it from antitank guns and mortars. Many Soviet tanks are continuing to attack the Reconnaissance Battalion of the GDPG Division at 247.0 south of Kruglik. The GD Grenadier Regiment of the GDPG Division is defending against strong enemy forces at Kalinovka.
- 2000: Corps orders: Units of the GDPG Division are to clear out the Tolstoye Woods tonight. The 3d Panzer Division is to clear out the woods east of the road.
- The Corps objective for 12 July is to advance north and northwest with its two panzer and one panzer grenadier divisions, after the 3d Panzer Division has been relieved by the 332d Infantry Division in the Berezovka area. The Army will order the 332d Infantry Division to take over the sector up to Hill 258.5.
 - The commander of the LII Army Corps, in view of the relentless, heavy enemy pressure on his western flank, does not believe that he can move strong forces to Hill 258.5. This will result in a temporary gap, protected only by reconnaissance, that can be endured in view of today's victory.
- 2015: The GDPG Division commander doubts whether the dense Tolstoye Woods can be cleared out tonight.
- 2030: The Army advises the Corps that the Soviet X Guard Tank Corps is still deployed on its left flank; however, the Corps thinks this force can be enveloped in tomorrow's attack. Because of the necessary regrouping and relief the advance cannot be started before 1500 tomorrow. The Army stresses the need for careful preparation of the attack against the Psel. It is possible that units of the II SS Panzer Corps also may be turned to the northwest.
- 2110: Army orders: In line with the Corps proposal, the XLVIII Panzer Corps is to push the Soviet X Guard Tank Corps back over the Psel River with a strong attack on the left toward the highlands around Voznesovka. Then the Corps will turn to the northeast and prepare for the scheduled attack across the Psel.
- 2330: Corps orders: Upon completing the enveloping maneuver in the Berezovka area, the XLVIII Panzer Corps will push the Soviet X Guard Tank Corps back to the north and northeast. The three panzer divisions will advance to the line Orlovka-Sorinskiy Dvory-229.1-Kurasovka River. This will be the line of departure for continuing operations to the northeast across the Psel River.
- The time of the attack is tentatively set at 1500, with the 11th Panzer Division on the right, the GDPG Division in the center, and the 3d Panzer Division on the left. The division boundaries are:
 - Between the 11th Panzer Division and the GDPG Division: from the road fork at Point 260.8 to the bend in the road one kilometer northwest of the Sitnoye Woods, then to the western outskirts of Orlovka.

- Between the GDPG Division and the 3d Panzer Division: from the Pena River to the pond six kilometers northwest of Novoselovka, to the unnamed ravine running north to the eastern outskirts of Vladimirovka, then to the road fork 2.5 kilometers northwest of Sorinskiy Dvory.
- Between the XLVIII Panzer Corps and the LII Army Corps the boundary is to follow the course of the Pena River north to the northern edge of Verkhopenoye and then to the northern edge of Novenkoye.
- Missions:
 - The 11th Panzer Division will attack north from the area taken on 11 July and take Orlovka and the high ground southwest of it.
 - The GDPG Division will finish mopping up the Berezovka area. After concentrating in the Novoselovka area and north of it, and relieving those units of the 11th Panzer Division deployed on both sides of the road, the division will attack to the north across Hills 244.8 and 244.3, to the northern edge of Sorinskiye Dvory. Units of the division deployed at Point 247.0 and Kalinovka are to be relieved by the 3d Panzer Division.
 - The 3d Panzer Division will complete the mopping up around Berezovka, and after relieving the units of the GDPG Division and concentrating east of Kalinovka it will attack to the north. After capturing Vladimirovka, the division will advance across Hill 227.2 and take the high land at 242.0. Then the division will take over the defense of the western flank of the Corps on the high land southeast of Kruglik. The division will maintain contact with the northern wing of the 332d Infantry Division at Hill 258.5.
 - Army artillery will support the GDPG Division with counterbattery fire against enemy artillery on the commanding hills on both sides of the highway. Fire on the Kruglik area is to cover the 3d Panzer Division from Soviet attack from the west. One mortar battery will be attached to the 3d Panzer Division.

Division Daily Reports - 11 July 1943

11th Panzer Division. After very heavy artillery and rocket preparation from positions on the north bank of the Psel River, Soviet units with tank support seized Hill 207.3 at about 0800. Units of the 2d Battalion, 111th Regiment, committed there were thrown back, suffering heavy casualties, to the line extending three kilometers west of Hill 209.3.

At dawn two enemy attacks, one in battalion strength, the other supported by a number of tanks, were repulsed in front of the center of the division sector. The Soviets lost two tanks. At about 0500 and 0600 two Soviet attacks in company and battalion strength from the north and northeast against the Armored Reconnaissance Battalion at Hill 232.8 were repulsed. Another attack at 0800 in battalion strength from Kalinovka on the battalion's left flank also was driven off.

Three armored scout cars, in one of which the deputy commander of the Soviet X Guard Tank Corps was riding, were destroyed at Hill 232.8, and valuable cartographic material was captured.

Since 1700 units of the 110th and 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiments, most of the Panzer Regiment, and the Assault Gun Battalion have been attacking the woods north of 235.9 and 248.3 in order to take Hill 239.6 and the area to the east.

The enemy was reinforced yesterday and today by constant deliveries of tanks, heavy weapons, and motorized infantry, brought from the northeast. About 50 Soviet tanks have been observed. The X Guard Tank Corps was identified again. Reports from reconnaissance planes indicate shifts of Soviet forces during the afternoon to the west and southwest. Soviet counterattacks on the western flank of the division are to be anticipated.

There was slight air activity on both sides, the Soviets using mostly Il-2s.

Front Line: 209.3-2.5 kilometers to the west, otherwise unchanged.

On hand are: 5 flame thrower tanks, 28 Mk III long, 13 Mk IV long, 2 Mk III short, 1 command car, 4 medium field howitzers.

Five prisoners and four T34s were captured and one shot out of commission. Follow-up reports: 8 July - 5 T34s captured or destroyed by the Panzer Regiment; 9 July - 1 T34, 1 88mm AA gun, 4 antitank rifles, and 1 truck captured or destroyed; 10 July - 3 tanks, 1 AA gun, 1 AA/AT gun, 19 AT guns, 6 guns, 1 automatic gun, 4 mortars, 18 antitank rifles, 137 rifles, 1 Russian scout car, 6 passenger cars, and 52 prisoners. 200 mines removed by engineer troops.

3d Panzer Division. Received 1730. The armored group and the 3d Armored Artillery Regiment moved out from the hilly area at 230 at 0600 on a broad front to attack Berezovka. After overcoming very stiff resistance, especially in the low places northeast of Berezovka, and after crossing a minefield the forces took Berezovka in a rapid assault. At about 0800 the 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment also attacked from the east bank of the Pena River at Syrtsevo. In cooperation with the tanks, the regiment cleared out the river bend between Syrtsevo, Spitsin, and Berezovka in the face of increasing Soviet resistance and then took the western part of Berezovka and Hill 243.8. A further attack to the south bogged down in front of a large minefield between Hill 243.8 and the woods northeast of Chapayev. So far 500 mines have been removed.

Soviet resistance in today's battles was some of the strongest encountered. At Berezovka some of the Soviets committed suicide or blew themselves up. They suffered especially heavy casualties from artillery and tank fire. So far we have counted about 500 dead and have brought in 1,700 prisoners. The amount of weapons, equipment, and ammunition left behind cannot yet be reported.

After clearing the rear of stragglers and displacing the artillery, we are to take up positions on the line between Chapayev and Kalinovskiy. By 1900 the 332d Infantry Division will move into line at Point 1.5 southwest of Berezovka. Panzer situation, morning of 11 July: 3 Mk II, 3 Mk III short, 10 Mk III long, 10 Mk III/IV, 7 Mk IV long, 5 command cars, 12 antitank guns, 12 antitank 75mm self-propelled guns, 6 75mm tractor-drawn guns, 3 captured 76.2mm tractor-drawn guns, 2 assault guns, not operational.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. Just after sunrise Soviet tanks and infantry attacked the positions of the Grenadier Regiment from the north and west. The attacks were repulsed. The GD Assault Gun Battalion attacked Soviet tanks observed at Kalinovka, destroying 7 T34s. Starting at 0600 the Panther Brigade pushed south from Hill 258.5 and inflicted heavy casualties on Soviet troops retreating west from Berezovka. The brigade ran into the first minefield on Hill 237.6. After clearing a passage through it at Point 1.5, the brigade encountered another, making it temporarily impossible to proceed. After clearing a way through that one the brigade reached Hill 243.8 toward evening. The Fusilier Regiment, following the Panther Brigade, cleared Soviet troops from the area on both sides of the highway and the western part of Berezovka.

The roads are in good condition.

Operational are 30 Mk III and IV tanks, 30 Panthers, and 26 assault guns.

On 10 July the following were captured or destroyed: 64 T34 and Mk I tanks, 48 antitank guns, 1 automatic gun, 1 battery, 12 antitank rifles, and 10 trucks. Two Il-2s were destroyed on 9 July.

The division, except for the reinforced Grenadier Regiment, is being pulled out in order to prepare to continue the attack to the northeast.

12 July 1943

Corps Command Post: woods two kilometers north of Olkhovka.

Weather: overcast, intermittent showers.

0800: General Situation: The night was quiet. During the early morning hours enemy groups of battalion strength attacked the right and left wings of the 11th Panzer Division at Hills 207.5 and 232.8. Both attacks were repulsed by assault guns. Another attack in battalion strength on both sides of the highway at 244.8 has just been beaten off.

The regrouping of the GDPG and 3d Panzer Divisions is taking place as scheduled. The 3d Reconnaissance Battalion has relieved the GD Reconnaissance Battalion at 247.0

on the highway. The 394th Infantry Regiment is replacing the GD Fusilier Regiment and then together with the reconnaissance battalion will take over defense of the flank from the west. The 3d Rifle Regiment, with tanks, will lead the thrust to the northwest. One task force will advance west of Kalinovka to Hill 227.2, while another pushes toward Vladimirovka. This attack must be closely coordinated with the advance of the GDPG Division because strong Soviet resistance is anticipated. The GDPG Division will attack north on both sides of the highway in close proximity to the 11th Panzer Division, whose main effort will be on its left flank. Artillery preparation fire one hour before the start of the attack will be directed by division artillery supported by army artillery at identified artillery positions and infantry concentrations. Five minutes before the attack begins the entire Corps artillery will concentrate its fire in front of one division; then it will concentrate in front of the other. The attack of the grenadiers will be scheduled for this time period.

- 0810: The GD Grenadier Regiment drives off a Soviet attack from the Kalinovka area.
- 0930: The Army Commander, arriving at Corps headquarters, concurs with the Corps attack schedule but points out the necessity of organizing a strong defense on the left wing of the 3d Panzer Division, because powerful Soviet forces believed to be concentrated in the Kruglik area will surely attack the flank of the Corps. For this purpose the 394th Rifle Regiment should be moved farther north. The Army Commander thinks that the 332d Infantry Division's attack will suffice to shield the deep flank of the Corps, and a temporary weakening of this area can be tolerated.
- 0955: The Army Commander accompanies the Corps Commander to a briefing in the 11th Panzer Division attack area.
- 1000: The relief of the GD Grenadier Regiment and the 3d Panzer Division by the infantrymen of the 332d Division is proceeding very slowly. Enemy forces are constantly reinforcing their units in Novenkoye and Kruglik. — The 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, at Hill 247.0, also reports increased enemy pressure. At present an enemy attack is underway against the hill. However, the battalion is reinforced with self-propelled guns and will master the situation. The Commander of the 3d Panzer Division suggests leaving the Fusilier Regiment of the GDPG Division in the Tolstoye Woods until relief of the infantry in the south has been completed, and the 394th Infantry Regiment can again be moved north.
- 1015: The fusiliers are urgently needed for the GDPG Division's attack, and the Chief of Staff decides to follow the instructions of the Army Commander in Chief and leave the protection of the flank to the attack by the 332d Infantry Division. The 3d Panzer Division will shift its main effort to the area on both sides of 247.0. Relief of the 11th Reconnaissance Battalion at 232.8 by the GD Reconnaissance Battalion also creates difficulties since the hill is under heavy fire. Enemy tanks have been reported in the woods northeast of the hill.
- 1055: A Soviet force in regimental strength attacks the 11th Panzer Division along the Plotavoye Ravine, through the woods toward Hill 235.9. The Soviets have also penetrated the eastern part of the woods west of there and enveloped the 2d Battalion of the 11th Regiment from the rear. In addition the enemy has apparently penetrated in the Salotinka River area on the border between the 11th Panzer and the SS Totenkopf Division on its right. Screening elements of the SS units are still at 209.3, maintaining contact with their own advanced position at 207.3.
- 1130: The situation in the woods in the 11th Panzer Division sector has deteriorated so badly that the Panzer Regiment is ordered to counterattack. Corps Artillery is ordered to fire all its guns to stop the enemy attack. This attack seems to be connected with strong Soviet attacks across the Psel River against the front of the II SS Panzer Corps. Enemy concentration and preparations are also beginning to menace the left wing of the Corps.

- 1215: The Army, briefed on this situation, agrees to exert pressure on the LII Army Corps so that the 332d Infantry Division will occupy territory to the north.
- 1255: The 3d Panzer Division reports that 17 Soviet tanks have reached Hill 258.5, and more tanks, with motorized infantry, are on the way from Novenkoye. The Corps Commander orders the division to use antitank weapons and units of the 394th Regiment to hold Hills 285.5 and 247.0 as a left cornerstone for the Corps.
- The Corps Commander's suggestion to his staff that the German line be withdrawn behind the ravines west of Verkhopenoye for the sake of the thrust to the north seems too risky to the Chief of Staff, since possession of commanding Hill 258.5 would afford the enemy an opportunity to make a dangerous thrust into the deep flank and the rear supply routes of the Corps. Also, the 332d Infantry Division, judged by previous experience, will not be able to retake the hill in an attack.
 - The only withdrawal approved is that of the 3d Reconnaissance Battalion, which is in the area of Hill 247.0, under fire from the rear from enemy tanks deployed in the Tolstoye Woods. This battalion will move behind Kubasovskiy, since Hill 247.0 does not appear to be necessary for the defense of the Corps flank. The Army reports that the 332d Division is already north of Berezovka, heading north. It is hoped that units of the 394th Infantry Regiment can hold Hill 258.5 until elements of the 332d Infantry Division arrive.
- 1330: On the whole, the picture emerges in the view of the Corps Staff that we are preparing for an attack against an opponent who at the same time is getting ready to launch a broad attack himself on the entire front of the II SS Panzer Corps and the XLVIII Panzer Corps.
- The Corps Commander sticks to his decision to attack at 1500. He wants to inflict a decisive defeat on this enemy who is planning to take the offensive against our thrust to the Psel River.
- 1350: Corps order to all: attack will begin at 1500.
- 1430: Some 40 Soviet tanks take Hill 258.5 and advance east. A battalion of the 394th Rifle Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division is quickly dispatched to the area, but it is surprised while getting into position and its position is penetrated. Verkhopenoye and the hills to the west are already under tank fire. All that is left is a small AA barrier. At this decisive moment radio communications with the 3d Panzer Division are broken. The division commander, Generalleutnant Westhofen, recognizing the great threat to the Corps's rear communications line, decides on his own to abandon the planned attack to the north and turns his division to the west and southwest. The Panzer Regiment attacks the enemy forces advancing to the east.
- 1445: Communications with the 3d Panzer Division are reestablished. The Corps Commander endorses the decision made by the commander of the 3d Panzer Division and cancels the entire Corps attack to the north, diverting the GDPG Division's panzer brigade to advance on Hill 258.5.
- The Army Commander, receiving a report on this decision, concurs fully that the Corps must first secure its positions in the rear before it can advance further to the north.
- 1450: Corps orders: The GDPG Division will send the panzer brigade southwest immediately, in the direction of Hill 258.5.
- The 3d Panzer Division is to pull out all units scheduled to be relieved and commit them northwest of Verkhopenoye for a frontal thrust against 255.8. In the course of the night the GDPG Division is to take over the sector from the ravine west of the Malinovoye Woods to south of Kalinovka. Starting now it will begin advancing its tanks in an enveloping maneuver toward Hill 258.5. Another task force of the GDPG Division is to be ready to follow the Panzer brigade.
- 1500: The 11th Panzer Division is alerted that the attack to the north at 1500 has been called off.

- 1515: The 11th Panzer Division is ordered to shift to defense in the sector now held.
- Heavy enemy concentrations are reported at Kalinovka.
- 1530: The 11th Panzer Division commander asks permission to retreat to the old defense line 227.0-235.9-248.3 in order to organize a better defense. The Corps Commander agrees.
- The Corps formations which have been thoroughly mixed up by the reliefs that have been planned, have to be put in order, and this will take some time.
 - The Commander of the 122d Artillery Group is ordered to support the defense of the northern sector with one gun battalion and a mortar battery and to commit the light field howitzer battalion and a mortar battery to the west, in support of the 3d Panzer Division.
 - The reinforced Panther Brigade attacks from Novoselovka toward Verkhopenoye.
- 1600: The LII Corps announces that the enemy is attacking the entire Corps front. The 332d Infantry Division, which was supposed to head north, apparently has been pinned down in front and on its flank. Berezovka is still in German hands. The reconnaissance battalion of the 332d Infantry Division is still at 237.6, on the road north of Berezovka. The enemy is advancing west of there with tanks and strong infantry forces via Dolgiy toward Chapayev-Rakovo. South of the Pena, at Mikhaylovka, Soviet infantry have made a breakthrough. At the western edge of Cherkasskoye the 332d Infantry Division is taking up defense positions. Soviet forces have broken through GD Grenadier Regiment positions 2.5 kilometers northwest of Verkhopenoye.
- Field Marshal von Manstein, Commander of Army Group South, arrives at Corps headquarters and, after a briefing, drives on into the area of the tank battles of the past few days.
- 1700: Soviet tanks and infantry attack the 1st Battalion of the GD Grenadier Regiment on both sides of the north-south road.
- 1720: The Army is informed that reorganization of the formations will not permit any more major operations today. The Corps plans to stop the enemy advance today and to push ahead tomorrow with strong forces along the front of the 332d Infantry Division in the direction of Chapayev.
- 1745: The Army points out the danger that the enemy, who is strongly attacking the northern front of the II SS Panzer Corps, will try to penetrate into the Salotinka River area at Kochetovka. The 11th Panzer Division is to seek close contact with the SS Totenkopf Division, which will receive similar instructions.
- 1845: The right wing of the 11th Panzer Division is withdrawn from Hill 207.6. In the center eleven Soviet tanks are attacking toward 235.9. The situation there has not been fully clarified as yet. An attempt is being made to mine the area in front of the German defense very thoroughly.
- The Soviets are attacking the GDPG Division on both sides of the highway with 35 tanks, making it necessary to send a panzer company to the area. Simultaneous attacks by 15 enemy tanks on the left wing of the division at Kalinovka resulted in a penetration as far as Hill 237.3. Most of the Panzer Brigade and the division's assault guns were diverted toward Hill 258.5.
 - The tanks of the 3d Panzer Division are attacking along the road toward Hill 258.5. The 394th Infantry Regiment has shifted to defense on both sides of the road. However, some of its units have penetrated into the woods southeast of 258.5, already occupied by the Soviets. North of the road, units of the 3d Infantry Regiment and the reconnaissance battalion are taking up defensive positions, with the front toward the northwest. The situation there is not serious.
- 1855: The Army Commander agrees to the attachment to the Corps of the 332d Infantry Division, except for two battalions, on the north bank of the

- Pena. This is to insure a unified combat command.
- Luftwaffe support is promised for the forenoon. In the afternoon Luftwaffe units will be at the disposal of the II SS Panzer Corps.
 - The Army stresses the importance of starting the attack early.
 - The Army objective for tomorrow is to continue the battle for expansion on the flanks, while holding firm to the line obtained at the front. The XLVIII will hold its positions on both sides of the Novoselovka-Oboyan road, continuing its attack against the tank forces in the Kruglik-Novenkoye area, so as finally to defeat the enemy on 13 July.
- 2030: The Panther Brigade is attacking Hill 258.5 and the woods west of it.
- 2100: The situation in all three divisions has somewhat eased. The confusion in the formations and the problems of command relationships which had developed out of the change from preparation for attack to defense, and the regrouping for tomorrow's attack, has been eliminated to some extent.
- The front line of the 11th Panzer Division has been withdrawn to the road. The Soviet tanks' attack on 235.9 has been repulsed. In collaboration with units of the GDPG Division, the 11th Panzer Division has halted the enemy tank attack on both sides of the highway. Early tomorrow morning the division's reconnaissance battalion is to move to the right wing in order to prevent the enemy from breaking through at the junction with the SS Totenkopf Division.
 - The GDPG Division has liquidated the penetration at Kalinovka, destroying 12 Soviet tanks at this place alone. Units on the left wing of the grandier regiment have suffered many casualties.
 - The 3d Panzer Division is still east of the woods southeast of 258.5, caught in heavy tank and antitank fire. The tanks have withdrawn to the defense line. The division expects more attacks in the direction of Verkhopenoye.
 - The 332d Infantry Division has essentially cleared up its sector. Only south of the Pena and at Chapayev is the situation still somewhat unclear.
- 2400: Corps orders: On 13 July, the XLVIII Panzer Corps will defend the line on its northern front and destroy the armored forces opposite its western front by an enveloping attack to begin at 0600.
- Missions:
- The 11th Panzer Division will prepare to defend the line established during the evening of 12 July. Close contact is to be maintained with the left flank of the II SS Panzer Corps.
 - A task force of the GDPG Division will cross the Kalinovka-Contour Line 255 line two kilometers west of Verkhopenoye at 0600, and together with the panzer group of the 3d Panzer Division will destroy the enemy tanks at 258.5. The panzer group will advance without delay through the Tolstoye Woods toward Chapayev, circling north via 233.3 and 230.9. The objective there is to destroy the enemy and to enable the 332d Infantry Division to advance and take up defensive positions on the line 240.2-233.3-230.9. At the same time the division must protect itself from forces in the unnamed ravine south of Vladimirovka to the southern edge of Kalinovka and screen the ravine and the northeast edge of the Tolstoye Woods.
 - The panzer group of the 3d Panzer Division, jumping off at 0600, will cross Contour Line 255 two and a half kilometers west of Verkhopenoye to the west, then advance to Hill 258.5 in order to destroy enemy tanks there, coordinating the attack with the GDPG Division's panzer group. The 3d Panzer Division will also destroy enemy forces in the woods southeast of Hill 258.5 and in the Tolstoye Woods by double envelopment. Subsequently the panzer group will forge ahead, encircling the Tolstoye Woods, south toward Krasniy Usliv.
 - The 332d Infantry Division, whose units north of the Pena are attached to the Corps, is to join the 3d Panzer and GDPG Divisions in their attack as soon as their armored thrust succeeds. The division is to mop

up the woods on both sides of Usliv and then reach Line 240.2-233.3-203.9, where it will take up a defensive posture. As soon as the line is reached mines should be laid in front of it as rapidly as possible. -Most of the Army artillery will support the GDPG and 3d Panzer Divisions; some units are to support the defense of the northern sector.

Division Daily Reports - 12 July

11th Panzer Division. Received 2250. All night Soviet tanks and infantry moved closer and closer to the main line of resistance on the entire front. At about 0430 the Soviets attacked the left flank and at 0500 the right flank, at Point 207.3, through the ravines that run south and southwest. Both attacks were in battalion strength, with tank support. At about the same time, approximately two companies of Soviet troops attacked from the woods east of Hill 244.8 against the center of the division sector. The attacks were repulsed, partially by a counterattack with assault guns. After adding reinforcements from the north, Soviet forces in regimental strength, with several tanks, again attacked the right flank. These forces succeeded in taking Hill 209.3 and the woods north of 235.9, and penetrating into the woods to the west. A counterattack by the Panzer Regiment and the 11th Panzer Grenadier Regiment reestablished approximately the original line at 1345.

At 1500 the division was ready to attack Hill 239.6 and the northern part of the woods to the east. Because of the enemy situation only some elements of the 1st Battalion, 110th Regiment, could accomplish regrouping and relief. It was impossible in the Armored Reconnaissance Battalion until after dark.

At 1500 the division received the order not to attack but to hold its line. Regrouping is in progress. Attacks have been made continually on the entire front, each supported by 10-15 tanks.

There was some German air activity but more Soviet, including some dive bomber attacks. One Il-2 was shot down.

The 15th Panzer Regiment was shifted after dark into the area east of Novoselovka. The 91th Assault Gun Battalion has been moved to the eastern edge of the woods south of Hill 235.2.

Tank status: 5 flame thrower tanks, 23 III long, 11 IV short, 1 III short, 6 medium howitzers. Also 22 assault guns, including 7 howitzers, 5 heavy AT guns, SP, and 3 towed heavy antitank guns.

So far 22 prisoners have been reported and one T34 destroyed by a magnetic antitank hollow charge.

Follow-up for 11 July: 1 tank, 3 vehicles, 1 gun, 2 antitank guns.

3d Panzer Division. During the course of the forenoon, troop units moved into their assembly areas as ordered. Elements of the division deployed in the area west of Berezovka had to leave there without awaiting relief by the 332d Infantry Division. During the forenoon there were a number of Soviet counterattacks in battalion strength, each supported by 6-8 tanks. Coming from the west and north, and directed at the 3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, dug in at Point 247.0, these attacks were repulsed. Two tanks were destroyed.

All morning strong Soviet infantry and armored force movements were observed in the area of Kruglik and Novenkoye and the surrounding woods. Just before 1200 17 Soviet tanks crossed the unoccupied Hill 258.5, soon followed by another group of 20 tanks, with mounted infantry and guns. From there they proceeded east toward Verkhopenoye. Elements of the 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and the 543d Antitank Battalion quickly set up an armored defense front and cut off the advance one kilometer east of Hill 255.

The 3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, attacked on Hill 247.0 at the same time from north and west, and under intense artillery and tank fire, part of it from 258.5 in the rear, withdrew east via the Kubasovskiy Ravine. To screen this movement elements of the 3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion joined the attack at Hill 255, and self-propelled antitank units destroyed five T34 tanks. The other

units of the 3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, under direct fire from enemy tanks, withdrew to the northwest edge of Verkhopenoye. The 2d Battalion, 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, thrown in against the enemy infantry, halted them after a fierce battle at the eastern edge of the woods southeast of Hill 255. Elements of this battalion were cut off by Soviet tank attacks from the woods and scattered. Elements of the Antitank Battalion were also involved there.

Upon receipt of the Corps order all available division units were moved from the assembly area back to the area of Verkhopenoye. After brief preparation, the 1st Battalion, 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, and 1st Battalion, 3d Regiment, together with the 2d Battalion, 6th Panzer Regiment, and supported by the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 75th Artillery Regiment, now ready for action, advanced toward 258.5. In a stubborn battle with enemy tanks and infantry, in which three German tanks and six Soviet T34s were lost, they reached the western edge of the woods south of Hill 255 and the area on both sides of the road one kilometer west of Hill 255. The enemy has received reinforcements, including 18 tanks, making the battle very difficult. At the moment it is going on without any slackening.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. During the night and in the early hours of the morning the division was withdrawn, except for the reinforced Grenadier Regiment, which prepared to attack to the north in the Novoselovka area. Except for the 1st Battalion, which was committed in the division's attack sector in the main line of resistance, the regiment remained in its previous positions east and southeast of Kalinovka. At about 0800 the Grenadier Regiment fended off an attack from the Kalinovka area. Soviet tank attacks on the left flank of the 1st Battalion of the Grenadier Regiment were repulsed. Shortly before the starting time the attack ordered by the Corps command for 1500 was cancelled, since Soviet forces had broken through the defenses of the 3d Panzer Division near Hill 258.5 at Verkhopenoye. At 1530, heavy enemy concentrations appeared at Kalinovka. At 1600, advancing from this area with tanks, Soviet forces broke through the positions of the Grenadier Regiment around Point 1.8, 2.5 kilometers northwest of Verkhopenoye. The Assault Gun Battalion was committed against them. The battle is still in progress. At 1700 enemy tanks and infantry attacked the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment, on both sides of the north-south road. The battle is still going on.

There has been considerable enemy air activity, with bombing and strafing. German fighters have been committed against them.

Tanks: 20 Mk III and IV, 2 VI, 25 Panthers. Also 24 assault guns, about 17 heavy 75mm antitank guns, SP, 20 heavy towed antitank guns.

Captured or destroyed were 30 Soviet tanks, 40 guns, 1 battery of 52mm guns, a AA/AT gun, many machine guns and hand weapons. One plane was shot down yesterday.

Rain has been intermittent. Roads are passable.

The division plans to defend against the enemy attacks and restore the situation.

Additional report, received 0030, 13 July: At about 1700 a stubborn attack by 17 Soviet tanks and strong infantry forces along the road to Oboyan created a very difficult situation for the 1st Battalion, Grenadier Regiment. In a long, intense battle with many casualties, the Soviets were driven back. During the battle, tanks brought up from the 11th Panzer Division and the GD Panzer Regiment destroyed most of the attacking Soviet tanks. Enemy forces attacking from Kalinovka broke through between the right flank of the Grenadier Regiment and the 11th Reconnaissance Battalion, Grenadier Regiment. Supported by the GD Assault Gun Battalion, the battalion threw the enemy back to the north and held its own positions. At the same time, the enemy succeeded in breaking through the left flank of the regiment with tanks, so that the 2d Battalion, Grenadier Regiment, had to be withdrawn to the east side of Kubasovskiy Ravine. Elements of the Panther Brigade also threw the enemy back to the north there. Subsequently the Brigade continued the attack to the southwest as ordered, and at 2030 was attacking Hill 258.5 and the woods to the west.

During the evening the Fusilier Regiment relieved the Grenadier Regiment on the right wing, closing up to the 11th Reconnaissance Battalion, and established contact with the left wing of the 11th Panzer Division. On the division's left wing contact is still being sought with the right wing of the 3d Panzer Division.

Front line: south of the Rachel Woods northeast of Hill 232.8-the area just south of 232.8-eastern edge of Rachel two kilometers southwest of Point 1.8.

13 July 1943

Corps Command Post: two kilometers north of Olkhovka.
Weather: overcast, some light showers.

General Situation: The 11th Panzer Division had a quiet night. In front of Hill 244.8 Soviet forces were reinforced by about 400 infantrymen.

The Panzer Brigade of the GDPG Division regrouped during the night and since 0600 has been in combat with enemy tanks and antitank guns just northeast of Hill 258.5. The division has been under heavy artillery fire directed at its defensive positions at Kalinovka since 0415.

The 3d Panzer Division attacked on schedule at 0600 and penetrated into the woods southeast of 258.5.

The 332d Infantry Division fought off a Soviet attack on Berezovka during the night. Repeated enemy thrusts, between 0200 and 0400, against Point 1.5 southwest of Berezovka, and against the western and northwestern parts of Rakovo, were repulsed. Since 0400 several hundred enemy troops have been emerging from the woods east, northwest, and west of Hill 237.6. They are attacking toward Berezovka and the highway west of there. Zavidovka, south of the Pena River, is under attack. Soviet concentrations have been reported in the Chapayev-Rakovo area.

During the night the Tolstoye Woods and the woods to the southeast have become filled with Soviet troops.

A dispute has developed between the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division and the panzer regiment of the 3d Panzer Division. Both claim to have gone on the attack and to be fighting alone against heavy antitank forces and 100 enemy tanks, which are delivering destructive fire on the attackers from the Tolstoye Woods.

0645: The Corps observer, accompanying the panzer group in an armored troop carrier, reports that the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division has not yet started to attack. However, the division had already destroyed eight enemy tanks before 0400 between Hill 258.5 and the Tolstoye Woods. But then it had to withdraw about one kilometer to the northwest because of extremely heavy defensive fire from the Tolstoye Woods.

- According to a report from the Panther Brigade Commander to the division there is no way the attack can be made as planned. The Soviets have taken up favorable positions, and are waiting for the German tanks to attack where they can be destroyed one by one. The woods are so full of infantry, antitank weapons, and tanks that a successful attack will be possible only after a massive artillery barrage and dive bomber attack.
- The 3d Panzer Division, which has combed the woods southeast of Hill 258.5, is having the same experience and is bogged down under especially heavy fire from the western edge of the Tolstoye Woods.
- An urgent request is sent to the VIII Air Corps to dispatch strong air formations over the forest, where there is a large concentration of enemy tanks and antitank weapons. The Commanding General of the VIII Air Corps promises support, but only after the clouds break, for at present no air activity is possible.

0740: The 11th Panzer Division reports that a reconnaissance patrol sent earlier from its right flank still reports no contact with the SS Totenkopf Division. The Corps Commander responds that the mission was clearly assigned to the division to establish such contact, and demands that it be done immediately, so that the Soviets cannot advance from the northern part of Kochetovka along the boundary between the two divisions.

- An enemy attack in regimental strength is under way at 227.0. The panzer group of the 11th Panzer Division is at the highway, engaged in combat with enemy tanks. The assault guns are assembled for counterattack in the woods south of Hill 235.9.

- 0840: The 3d Panzer Division is still pinned down east of the Tolstoye Woods and is urging an attack on the woods. On the left the 394th Infantry Regiment has crossed the wooded area east of the road and established contact with the 332d Reconnaissance Battalion at 237.6. From the direction of Dolgiy two Soviet battalions with some tanks are attacking the right wing of the battalion and the 677th Regiment deployed on its left.
- 0900: The Soviet attack on the 677th Regiment and the right wing of the reconnaissance battalion of the 3d Panzer Division reaches the northwest edge of Berezovka.
- In a telephone report to the Army, the Chief of Staff of the Corps evaluates the situation as follows: The Soviets assembled strong armored forces with considerable amounts of infantry in the Tolstoye Woods, apparently in order to capture Verkhopenoye. They have run into our strong panzer troops and are now trying to swing south and take Berezovka. Since the woods cannot be approached from the front, reconnaissance is under way to find out whether the woods can be taken by a double enveloping attack. For this purpose the tanks of the 3d Panzer Division would have to be assembled via Berezovka and brought up to the woods from the south, while at the same time the GDPG Division would envelop from the north.
 - The Army points out the urgency of dispensing with this enemy today, stressing that he must not be allowed to take Berezovka. On the right wing of the 11th Panzer Division, where German troops threw back an attack on Hill 227.0, the line with the II SS Panzer Corps must not be broken.
- 0945: The 3d Panzer Division gets the order to screen on both sides of the road with elements of the 3d Security Regiment and antitank units. The Panzer Regiment is to regroup and advance to the south via 237.0, with the mission of attacking the flank of the enemy forces advancing toward Berezovka. Later the armored group is to envelop the Tolstoye Woods from the south.
- 1000: The 3d Panzer Division reports that it is impossible to send tanks past Dolgiy by the edge of the woods via Hill 237.6. At least 17 Soviet tanks deployed in the woods are covering the road with fire. Twelve tanks with infantry have penetrated into the northwestern part of Berezovka. The division commander considers it absolutely necessary that the GDPG Division cut off the approach roads from Kruglik and Novenkoye for the enemy by an attack to the west, to prevent the enemy from receiving reinforcements.
- In view of the above the Corps withdraws the order for regrouping of the tanks. However, contact must be made by the 3d Reconnaissance Battalion with the right wing of the 2d Battalion of the 677th Infantry Regiment of the 332d Infantry Division, which is fighting in Berezovka.
- 1010: Hill 227.0 is again firmly in German hands, and a new enemy counterattack has been repulsed. Concentrations of Soviet troops are reported in the woods north of 248.3.
- The GDPG Division is slowly approaching Hill 258.5. The division is scouting the northern portion of the Tolstoye Woods.
- 1030: Reconnaissance by the GDPG Division shows that the northern envelopment of the woods is impossible as long as Soviet forces remain in the woods. These forces include around 100 tanks, one infantry regiment, 10 multiple rocket launchers, and numerous antitank weapons. The division suggests leaving one reinforced tank company northeast of 258.5, and a few tanks from the 3d Panzer Division at the road near contour line 255 in order to prevent a breakthrough to Verkhopenoye. The Corps directs that the Panzer Brigade of the GDPG Division move southeast of the forest via Berezovka. After concentrating behind the 332d Infantry Division it is to attack from the area between Berezovka and Chapayev to the north or northwest. The panzer regiment of the 3d Panzer Division will have to

- retake Hill 237.5 and join in the attack as soon as possible. This attack will help the 332d Infantry Division in its advance.
- 1050: Since the commander of the 3d Panzer Division also considers this attack advisable and the bridge at Berezovka is sturdy enough, the Corps issues an order along these lines. The 3d Panzer Division and 332d Infantry Division are instructed that the approach of the GDPG Division from the area 1.5 kilometers southwest of Berezovka can be anticipated at about 1500. The 332d Infantry Division is instructed to support the armored thrust with infantry forces.
- 1200: The Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division acknowledges receipt of the order for regrouping.
- Soviet troops with tanks break through 11th Panzer Division defenses east of the highway.
- 1230: The Army Commander arrives at the command post and approves the Corps order.
- 1300: In the 11th Panzer Division sector the Russians are attacking the defense position steadily with strong infantry forces. Small penetrations are being liquidated by assault guns and tanks. The men are exhausted, and because of their small numbers they can scarcely prevent the Soviet troops from infiltrating in the ravines. Because of the bad weather the Luftwaffe can give little support, and only with light planes.
- 1400: The Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division has not yet passed Verkhopenoye. It is requiring a disproportionate time for preparation. The brigade commander, Colonel Decker, is told that speed is essential. However, it is impossible to count on their starting before 1600.
- The 332d Infantry Division reports that the enemy in more than battalion strength is infiltrating into the wooded areas north and northwest of Berezovka. An attack by this force on the northern part of Berezovka must be expected. The division can do little there since it is tied down to a great degree in its western sector.
- 1430: The commander of the 3d Panzer Division points out the difficulties caused by the late start of the GD's Panther Brigade. Those enemy soldiers who infiltrated into the woods north of Berezovka will greatly delay the advance of the tanks toward Hill 237.6. There is danger that the GD thrust will come so late that the 3d Panzer Division will still be engaged in forest combat at nightfall.
- The Corps Commander will adhere to the order for the advance through Dolgiy, since the western flank absolutely must be relieved today.
- 1530: Three Soviet infantry battalions with four tanks are attacking Berezovka. The reconnaissance battalion and the panzer regiment of the 3d Panzer Division beat off the attacks, driving the enemy, who has suffered heavy casualties, across the road into the Tolstoye Woods. The German tanks pursue.
- 1600: Interrogations of deserters reveal that the main force of the Soviet X Guard Tank Corps is in the Novenkoye and Tolstoye Woods area, preparing to attack Verkhopenoye. The Corps has over 100 tanks. Another concentration of tanks appears to be south of Orlovka in front of the 11th Panzer Division, where around 60 tanks are ready for an attack to the south. In addition, the Soviet 309th Rifle Division has been identified there also.
- Contact has been made with SS Totenkopf Division on the eastern bank of the Salotinka River.
 - A Soviet battalion with three tanks attacks Hill 235.9.
- 1625: The Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division, having been requested by the 332d Infantry Division to help resist the attack on Berezovka, arrives there. The attack is over. The brigade assembles in the center of Berezovka and prepares one battalion for a limited objective attack in

- order to make it possible for the 332d Infantry Division to regain its position. Rain further delays the brigade advance.
- 1700: The Soviets launch an attack on the 11th Panzer Division. On the right about one regiment without tanks is attacking 227.0. In the center, one battalion with three tanks is attacking 235.9. On the left at least one battalion with 11 tanks is attacking 248.3. The main effort is directed against the panzer regiment deployed in the northern part of the Sitnoye Woods, and has already destroyed four tanks. The division believes it can handle the situation even though the burdens of eight days of uninterrupted combat have seriously impaired the effectiveness of the troops.
- 1800: The tanks of the 3d Panzer Division capture Hill 237.6 in a flank thrust that totally surprised the enemy. The danger to Berezovka is over.
- 1850: The Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division still has not started its attack, in spite of urging by the Corps for an early attack. The brigade commander says the delay was caused by the slow dispatch of orders and the necessity to mop up in the area north of Berezovka.
- Briefed on the success of the 3d Panzer Division, the Corps demands that the attack by the Panther Brigade must now finally begin. However, the brigade does not think this will be possible before 1930. This means the attack would come at night and the Soviets would receive advance warning of our intentions.
 - The Chief of Staff emphasizes that a well prepared plan can be vitiated by unnecessary delays. After checking with the Corps Commander he cancels further attack for today. However, all units are ordered that they must attack tomorrow morning as soon as there is enough light to shoot a rifle.
 - At the request of the 332d Infantry Division an additional tank company will be committed today in the direction of Chapayev in order to close the gap between the 3d and 2d Battalions of the 678th Infantry Regiment in the sector between Chapayev and Rakovo.
- 1900: The Army Commander is briefed on Corps objectives for 14 July:
The GDPG Division's panzer brigade will attack at 0400 from Point 1.5 and advance toward the high ground at 240.2 west of the Tolstoye Woods.
- The 3d Panzer Division will advance from 237.6 via Dolgiy to the same hill. Infantry elements of the division will comb through the Tolstoye Woods from east to west, with support of the GD Assault Gun Battalion and the panzer company presently deployed at 258.5. The task of this group is to prevent the enemy from withdrawing north from the Tolstoye Woods. Corps artillery will suppress the Soviets at Hill 247.0. Enemy flanking fire has continued from there all day.
 - The 332d Infantry Division will join the attack of the Panther Brigade, to reach the edge of the woods north of Krasniy Usliv, and establish command outposts on Hills 233.3 and 240.2. The division's mortar regiment will direct its main effort at the Tolstoye Woods.
 - The Army Commander approves, stressing again, however, that the attack must take place tomorrow whatever happens, after the most thorough preparation, in close cooperation with the Luftwaffe and the artillery, and without regard for the strength of the enemy. In this way the loss of one offensive day can be regained.
- 1930: The 11th Panzer Division has attained an absolute success in its defensive battle. Along the entire front, the enemy attack has collapsed. Separate penetrations are still being mopped up.
- 1945: The Soviets reattack with 500 infantrymen and a few tanks east of the highway. The 11th Panzer Division repulses this attack also. The division's losses are substantial; companies have grown very thin. It is now necessary to use the field replacement battalion. More enemy tanks are approaching from the area south of Orlovka, and the division expects more heavy fighting tomorrow.
- 2000: The left wing of the GDPG Division, deployed at 200, southeast of Kalinovka, is enveloped by some 500 Russian troops attacking through the

- Kubasovski Gorge. There is no contact with the 3d Panzer Division. One assault gun battery is committed there.
- The 3d Panzer Division has already sent one company of the 3d Rifle Regiment ahead to Hill 243.0.
 - Combat activity is also reviving in Berezovka. The enemy has made an advance through the woods again, and the panzer brigade of the GDPG Division is fighting there. Nevertheless the start of the attack on the dot of 0400 is assured.
 - The gap at Chapayev could not be closed because the tanks ran into mines, with a loss of two tanks. It is not possible to accede to the request to leave the panzer company with the 687th Regiment tomorrow as well.
- 2015: The division operations officers are instructed by the Corps to make the most thorough preparation, especially of artillery, for tomorrow's attack.
- 2215: Orders are sent to the divisions. The XLVIII Panzer Corps order for 14 July calls for the Corps to defend its northern front, and destroy the enemy's armored forces on its western front with an enveloping attack beginning at 0400.
- Missions:
 - 11th Panzer Division unchanged.
 - The armored assault group of the GDPG Division, in close cooperation with the 332d Infantry Division, is to advance from its concentration area at Point 1.5 via Hill 233.3 to Hill 240.2. The assault gun battalion and the armored company remaining in the area of Hill 220 are to join the attack of the two panzer grenadier regiments of the 3d Panzer Division, coming from the east, and destroy the enemy in the Tolstoye Woods. At the same time, while maintaining the defense of its present sector, the division has the task of eliminating by fire the anticipated enemy pressure from Hill 247.0
 - The armored assault group of the 3d Panzer Division, on special order from the Corps, after the attack of the GDPG Division's armored assault group is successful will advance via Dolgiy, passing west of the Tolstoye Woods to 240.2 and the northern edge of the woods, in order to destroy the enemy in there. It will coordinate with both panzer grenadier regiments and the assault gun battalion and panzer company advancing on the right.
 - The 332d Infantry Division, advancing with the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division, will clear the woods west of Berezovka and reach the line 240.2-Krasniy Usliv-Sikhudol Woods-Chapayev, and take up defensive positions there. Mines are to be laid quickly in front of the new line. It is particularly important that the division artillery, including the mortar regiment, support the attack of the armored group, and direct especially intensive fire at the Tolstoye Woods.
 - The bulk of the Army Artillery will support the defense of the northern front, while some units support the attack of the 3d Panzer Division.
 - Boundaries:
 - Between the GDPG Division and the 3d Panzer Division: the farm on the western edge of northern Verkhopenoye-243.0-2-2, two and one half kilometers northeast of 258.5-school 500 meters north of the Tolstoye Woods -Novenkoye bridge.
 - Between the 3d Panzer Division and the 332d Infantry Division: northern edge of Syrtsevo-Hill 237.6 (3d Panzer Division)-Dolgiy (332d Infantry Division)-southern edge of Novenkoye.
- 2250: At the order of the Army, the 81st Construction Battalion must be released to the Army. This battalion performed outstanding service to the Corps in the preparations for Citadel.
- 2300: Assessment: Because of the Panzer Brigade's delay in attacking, the day was not a fully successful one. Tomorrow will be required to clear up the Corps western flank. However, many casualties were inflicted on

the enemy in the defensive battles of the 11th Panzer Division and the successful attack of the 3d Panzer Division.

- Today alone 39 Soviet tanks have been destroyed. The enemy's major effort to prevent the advance of the Panzer Army toward and across the Psel River continues to be as strong as ever. While previously Soviet attacks were limited to local breakthrough attempts by tank formations, recently strong infantry forces have appeared as well. They have come up on foot from the area west of the Oskol area as well as from the west.

Division Daily Reports - 13 July

11th Panzer Division. Received 1740. During the entire day, after heavy artillery and rocket preparation, the enemy made many attacks on division positions at various times and places. At 0730 approximately one regiment attacked from the northeast against 227.0, and temporarily captured it. A counterattack supported by assault guns threw the Soviet troops back to the northeast. At 1200, a Soviet regiment with a few tanks succeeded in breaking into the main line of resistance east of the highway. The Panzer Regiment and the Antiaircraft Company cleared out this penetration. After several weaker probes, at 1600 an attack in battalion strength with three tanks was made on Hill 235.9. In all of these attacks Soviet casualties were heavy.

At 1700 there was a tank-supported attack on the entire front, with the main effort apparently toward Hill 248.7. The battle is continuing.

There was little air activity on either side, the only German planes were fighters. Deserters report that the enemy has become steadily stronger. In view of this, the attacks during the morning using only a few tanks are to be evaluated as strong, powerful reconnaissance.

The roads are in good condition.

Tank status: 5 flame thrower tanks, 32 Mk III long, 13 Mk IV long, 1 Mk III short, 4 command cars, 14 assault guns, including 4 howitzers. Also operational are 5 heavy self-propelled guns and 3 towed.

There have been 22 prisoners and deserters, 60 enemy killed, and 19 light machine guns, 12 heavy machine guns, 15 antitank rifles, 10 mortars, 6 submachine guns, 1 infantry gun, 2 antitank guns, 6 guns with crews, and 1 prime mover, captured or destroyed.

3d Panzer Division. Received 1800. The armored group and the 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment fell in at 0600 to attack Hill 258.5. Advancing rapidly, the 394th reached the western edge of the great forest south of 258.5, throwing the enemy infantry back to the west. Because the scheduled attack of the GD Panther Brigade failed to take place, the 3d Panzer Division attack bogged down in front of Hill 258.5 under concentrated Soviet artillery, tank, and antitank fire from the woods west of Hill 258.5.

Off and on during the morning the enemy received reinforcements of tanks and infantry in the Tolstoye District and the area to the south. Several Soviet attacks supported by tanks were made on the units on our left (332d Infantry Division) at Point 237.6 and the northwest edge of Berezovka. They were effectively repulsed by German artillery fire. The 3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion was committed to close the gap between the left flank and the 332d Infantry Division units to our left in the area from the southern edge of the woods to the northeast edge of Berezovka. All day there was strong Soviet mortar, artillery, and tank fire in the entire division area. With a high expenditure of ammunition, German artillery attacked Soviet troop and tank concentrations in and around the Tolstoye Woods. In accordance with Corps orders the division was reorganized. The armored group reached the area northeast of the western part of Berezovka in order first to advance from there toward 237.6 and then in the further course of the attack move on via Dolgiy to 240.2 after the attack by the GD Panther Brigade is effective. The 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment and the 3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion will join the attack of the armored units to clear out the woods.

The enemy has assembled a force of over 60 tanks in the Tolstoye Woods and the area south of it for an attack on the Corps flank.

There was less enemy air activity than yesterday, but considerable German fighter activity. Several sorties of bombers and fighter bombers were flown over the Tolstoye Woods.

332d Infantry Division. Received 1825. During the day many enemy attacks in up to battalion strength were made, from the woods north of Berezovka on Berezovka, from the woods north of Hill 1.5 against Hill 1.5, and from the Sikhudol Woods area against the woods east of Chapayev. All the attacks were repulsed with heavy enemy casualties. About 30 tanks were observed in the area north of Berezovka, as well as several rocket launchers and one heavy and two light artillery batteries.

The 2d Battalion, 678th Grenadier Regiment, was engaged in intense trench combat with stubborn enemy troops dug in 500 meters northwest of Zavidovka on both sides of the Chepetovka-Chapayev road.

The 1st Battalion, 678th Grenadier Regiment, was badly mauled by an enemy tank-supported attack on 12 July. It now has only one officer and 30 men fit for combat.

There are about a division and a half of enemy troops with around 69 tanks trying to break through to the east.

The division intends to use the 332d Reconnaissance Battalion and the 677th Grenadier Regiment on its right, to launch an attack together with the XLVIII Panzer Corps, to clear out the woods east of Berezovka, and to hold the general line 240.2-northwest edge of the woods east of Chapayev.

There were heavy clouds and rain showers all day. The roads were slippery but not muddy. Traffic was slightly hindered.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. Received 1845. Except for slight activity by assault troops, the Soviets were quiet in the sector of the Fusilier Regiment during the morning. At 1530 an attack by two enemy companies from the north was successfully repulsed by artillery, causing many enemy casualties. A number of Soviet attacks in company strength from the west and northwest on the positions of the Grenadier Regiment were all driven off. Beginning just after sunrise the Panther Brigade fought an intense battle with a greatly superior enemy force at Hill 258.5 and in the woods to the west. Since a further attack from the northeast against the Soviet position seems hopeless, the Brigade has changed direction to proceed via Berezovka-Point 1.5-233.3-240.2 from the west and southwest in order to force a penetration of the strongly occupied woods west of 258.5.

There were intermittent clouds during the day.

The division has 8 Mk III long tanks, 12 flamethrower tanks, 13 Mk IV short, 19 Mk IV long, 8 Mk VI, 43 Panthers, and 25 assault guns.

Nineteen Soviet tanks were captured or destroyed.

14 July 1943

Corps Command Post: woods two kilometers north of Otkhova.

Weather: partially cloudy, heavy rainfall toward evening.

General Situation: In general the night was quiet. In the 11th Panzer Division sector, enemy attacks stopped during the night.

Southeast of Kalinovka, on the left wing of the GDPG Division defense front, at the junction between the 2d Battalion of the grenadier regiment and the engineer battalion, a Soviet infantry attack was repulsed with the support of seven tanks.

The 3d Panzer Division, concentrated in the area of Hill 237.6, is ready to advance toward Dolgiy as soon as the GDPG Division's Panther Brigade reaches Hill 233.3 and points to the north.

Along the entire front of the 332d Infantry Division the enemy infiltrated closer to the division's positions during the night. Small enemy elements infiltrated into the woods east of Chapayev. Judging from the sound of motors and treads, enemy tanks are getting into position.

0400: The panzer brigade of the GDPG Division jumps off punctually, together

- with the 677th Infantry Regiment of the 332d Infantry Division, from Point 1.5 southwest of Berezovka toward Hill 233.3. Strong Luftwaffe strikes at Krasniy Usliv are bringing good results. However, the brigade is advancing slowly because of heavy flanking fire from north and south.
- The reconnaissance battalion of the 3d Panzer Division starts mopping up the woods just east of 237.6.
- 0550: The commander of the GDPG Division Panther Brigade again requests a dive bomber strike at the woods south of Hill 233.3 and at Krasniy Usliv.
- 0600: The Panther Brigade reports that the lead tanks are approaching Hill 233.3. At the last moment the dive bombers can be diverted to Dolgiy and the woods south of it before the 3d Panzer Division concentrates.
- The 3d Panzer Division receives the order to start the attack on Dolgiy as soon as the last bomb falls at 0715.
- 0715: Two groups of dive bombers reach the target area. The VIII Air Corps agrees to make another dive bomber sortie at 0815, on the Tolstoye Woods and the woods northeast of there. Alternate target is Novenkoye.
- 0720: The GD Panther Brigade, with the 647th Grenadier Regiment, 332d Reconnaissance Battalion, 3d Company of the 332d Engineer Battalion and a platoon of the 332d Antitank Battalion attached, captures Hill 233.3 and is engaged in combat with artillery and tanks north of the hill. The Panther Brigade is holding in order to have the infantry catch up. Combat reconnaissance begins against Hill 240.2. The attacking troops are under strong flanking pressure from the edge of the woods. Again the Panther Brigade requests Luftwaffe support against the western and northwestern edge of the Tolstoye Woods. Both dive bomber groups are redirected from the air by Stuka command.
- 0800: The panzer elements of the 3d Panzer Division have run into a minefield surrounding the wooded area. Two tanks have broken down. The division is now trying to bypass the minefield to the southwest.
- 0815: The Luftwaffe is over the Tolstoye Woods targets exactly on schedule. The VIII Air Corps promises a further dive bomber sortie between 1030 and 1100. The Corps intends to coordinate this sortie with the infantry attack by the 3d Panzer Division against the eastern edge of the Tolstoye Woods.
- 0835: The Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division reports that the enemy is withdrawing from the Tolstoye Woods toward Novenkoye. The brigade is still fighting enemy tanks.
- 0840: Orders are sent to the GDPG Division and the 3d Panzer Division to start attacking on the entire front. The Panther Brigade is to push ahead at once without awaiting the arrival of the infantry.
- 0920: The Panther Brigade is 1.5 kilometers northwest of Krasniy Usliv, advancing to the northeast. Aerial reconnaissance has confirmed strong Soviet concentrations at Novenkoye.
- At Corps headquarters, the Commander of the VIII Air Corps is redirecting the 1000 dive bomber sortie to Novenkoye.
- 1000: While the attack has been proceeding with drill field precision, enemy resistance has begun to intensify considerably. Many enemy tanks have advanced southeast from Novenkoye. A violent tank battle is taking place in the area between the Tolstoye and Plotavoye Woods. The Panther Brigade is having a difficult time holding the ridge between the woods. Flanked on the east by artillery, antitank, tank, and multiple rocket launchers from the Tolstoye Woods, and attacked from the west by enemy tanks, the brigade is fighting its way ahead slowly meter by meter toward the commanding Hill 240.2.
- The 677th Grenadier Regiment of the 332d Infantry Division has captured Krasny Usliv and the woods southeast of it.

- On the left wing at Chapayev, the enemy is pressing against the gap between the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 678th Infantry Regiment. This gap must be blocked by fire and its mopping up postponed.
- 1030: The grenadiers of the 3d Panzer Division have penetrated into the eastern edge of the Tolstoye Woods. The enemy there is offering extremely stiff resistance. Grenadiers of the 677th Regiment also are meeting violent resistance in the woods south of Dolgiy.
- The tanks of the 3d Panzer Division reach the southwestern edge of the Tolstoye Woods just west of Dolgiy. There too resistance is stubborn.
 - The Commander of the 3d Panzer Division believes that in view of our encirclement objective the resistance in itself is welcome, because of the possibility that a larger enemy force may be trapped and destroyed.
- 1100: Artillery fire from the Tolstoye Woods is slackening. Possibly the enemy is softening up.
- The northern armored group of the GDPG Division is engaged in a tank battle north of Hill 285.5, screening the northern edges of the Tolstoye Woods in order to prevent the enemy from escaping. It is becoming urgently necessary to bring up infantry units also to the western edge of the Tolstoye Woods.
- 1105: The 332d Infantry Division is ordered by the Corps to release immediately infantry forces that are following the tanks. The division's reconnaissance battalion already has orders to follow, mounted on tanks. While in the west the enemy is trying to escape a possible encirclement by counterattacking with tanks, a new Soviet attack is in preparation at the north front of the Corps in front of the 11th Panzer Division. Air reconnaissance and ground observation report strong, motorized and animal-drawn vehicular movements from the Orlovka area and on both sides of the highway to the south. Between the two finger-shaped wooded areas on both sides of Hill 239.6, 20 enemy tanks have been sighted. This concentration is being shelled by mortars. A probing attack south of the hill was repulsed by artillery fire.
- 1110: Strong enemy forces launch an attack on a broad front from the Corps right wing to the highway and on to the west. According to reliable reports, five fully combat-ready and two battle-weary rifle divisions and four tank brigades are facing the 11th Panzer Division and the right wing of the GDPG Division. After heavy artillery and rocket preparation, the enemy is making repeated attacks on the road positions. Thanks to the well-placed artillery fire of the Corps and the division artillery, and the outstanding defense of the thinly occupied infantry positions, the enemy is being stopped again and again before he reaches the German defense line. Minor local penetrations are being cleared up by rapid attacks by the panzer regiment and the assault gun battalion.
- 1200: The enemy attacks also are shifting westward. West of the highway the 11th Panzer Division is under attack by 30 tanks and 3,000 infantrymen. Strong infantry attacks are coming from the Kalinovka Ravine, supported by a few tanks, against the grenadier regiment of the GDPG Division and the engineers.
- The low cloud ceiling over the combat area permits no further air support.
- 1230: The Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division is still held up by heavy flanking fire from both sides and hopes that the 3d Panzer Division's attack through the woods will be successful. The assault gun group of the division's reconnaissance battalion is being hit by strong flanking fire from the Kubasovskiy Ravine and Hill 247.0.
- 1245: A Soviet force, of regiment strength attacks southeast from the Tolstoye Woods with six tanks and threatens the hard-fighting 1st Battalion of the 394th Regiment with encirclement. The 2d Battalion of the 394th, which has reached the southeast end of the Tolstoye Woods, is being diverted to the north in order to assist the 1st Battalion. Since the

division's tanks near Dolgiy are not advancing because of the difficult terrain, the Corps orders the division to investigate the possibility of moving them via Krasniy Usliv to support the attack by the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division on 240.2.

- 1330: The GDPG Division reports a strong enemy attack underway, with 15 tanks so far, from Hill 258.5 toward Verkhopenoye. The reconnaissance battalion is striking this force, which is advancing in conjunction with the attack on the 3d Panzer Division, in the flank. Hence at the moment the battalion is unable to advance toward the northern edge of the Tolstoye Woods.
- The Soviet attack on the 11th Panzer Division again increases in intensity. The enemy, continually receiving reinforcements of tanks and artillery, is trying to penetrate the bridgehead on the Sałotinka River at Kochetovka, in the sector of the reconnaissance battalion. Concentrations are being observed in the Antlers Woods north of Hill 248.3. There is heavy artillery fire on both sides of the highway. The division's infantry strength is thinning out considerably.
 - Ammunition for the Army artillery is beginning to run short because of the rapid expenditure.
- 1345: To the urgent requests of the 11th Panzer Division for infantry reinforcements the Corps can only respond with the promise of two more companies from the 1st Engineer Training Battalion. They are alerted immediately and will be brought up to the division. As far as range permits, the artillery of the GDPG Division will have to help out.
- 1400: Soviet air attacks drop eight bombs east of Alexeyevka.
- 1435: The 677th Grenadier Regiment of the 332d Infantry Division occupies the position on the right of the gap in the woods northwest of Dolgiy.
- 1520: The 332d Reconnaissance Battalion reaches Hill 240.2.
- 1700: Two German dive bombers attack the northern part of the Tolstoye Woods.
- Situation report prepared for the Fourth Panzer Army by the Corps:
 - The 332d Infantry Division is deployed between the western edge of the Dolgiy Woods above Krasniy Usliv-Sikhudol Woods and the western edge of the woods east of Chapayev.
 - The Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division is still in combat south of Hill 240.2.
 - The armored group of the 3d Panzer Division has captured Dolgiy. Advancing from the southwest tip of the woods, it is in the act of joining up with the Panther Brigade. The counterattack by the 394th Regiment and the reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division against enemy forces which have broken through east of the woods is still in progress.
 - The 11th Panzer Division has successfully beaten off all the repeated attacks by the 13th, 96th, 6th, and 51st Guard Rifle Divisions, the 309th and 204th Rifle Divisions, and the 180th and 86th Tank Brigades. However, the enemy keeps coming back with new forces, despite heavy casualties. He is attacking with a tenacity not previously shown.
 - The serious ammunition shortage has been reported to the Army.
 - The Corps objective is to clear up the situation at Hill 258.5 and to take Hill 240.2 with the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division and the tanks of the 3d Panzer Division. The defense positions are so organized that the 332d Reconnaissance Battalion, deployed at the western edge of the woods near Hill 240.2, will join up to the south with the 677th Regiment at Krasniy Usliv. The motorized and armored forces of the Corps would then be ready once more to concentrate behind the northern front of the Corps.
 - In coordination with the plan of attack by the 3d Panzer Division on Hill 240.2, the assault gun battalion of the GDPG Division will come from the northeast to hold down the enemy tanks. The 1st Battalion of the 394th Regiment is to advance from the east, and the 2d Battalion from the south through the woods, while the reconnaissance battalion attacks north from the southeast.

- 1720: Ground and air observation units detect motorized movements including tanks toward Chapayev from the direction of Aleksandrovka-Melovoye.
- The 332d Infantry Division is concerned, since it wanted to start out at 1800 to close the gap at Chapayev. Luftwaffe reconnaissance reports a total of 30 to 35 tanks in the Melovoye-Chapayev area. Dive bombers, back in the air since 1700, can no longer be diverted there. Daylight is inadequate for another sortie.
- 1730: The 3d Panzer Division again starts to attack along its entire front. It is receiving heavy fire from the woods.
- In spite of this the Corps requests the armored forces to remain on the west side of the woods until the 3d Panzer Division attack has gained ground and the reconnaissance battalion of the 332d Infantry Division has come up.
 - The GDPG Division suggests leaving the panzer regiment of the 3d Panzer Division there and having the Panther Brigade push through to meet the division via the forest northwest of the Tolstoye Woods, in order to be able to deliver supplies.
- 1750: The GDPG Division reports that its panzer brigade has taken Hill 240.2 after a hard battle. The brigade is widely spread out with only 20 tanks remaining in line. Supply routes are not secure, and the tanks have expended almost all their ammunition.
- 1800: Corps orders: The scout car battalion and panzer regiment of the 3d Panzer Division, with the reconnaissance battalion attached from the 332d Infantry Division, is to block the Tolstoye Woods from the northwest.
- The Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division is to block the northern edge of the woods, while the reconnaissance battalion blocks the northeastern corner, north of Hill 258.5.
 - At night the 3d Panzer Division is to come through the forest from the east. The enemy must be prevented from breaking out.
- 1815: The 3d Panzer Division, upon receiving this order, reports that the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division has already withdrawn south from Hill 240.2. The reconnaissance battalion has not yet arrived.
- The Corps is attempting to clarify the matter.
- 1900: The 332d Reconnaissance Battalion has taken Hill 240.2, and the GD Reconnaissance Battalion, after hard fighting, has taken Hill 258.5 from Soviet infantry and tanks.
- The Panther Brigade has not yet reached the northwest edge of the Tolstoye Woods. Its whereabouts is unknown.
- 2000: Army orders: The 1st Heavy Mortar Regiment, from the LII Army Corps, will be attached to the 11th Panzer Division for tomorrow's advance.
- On 15 July at 1800 the 332d Infantry Division will leave the Corps. At the same time the new boundary— from mid-Verkhopenoye to the road fork at Hill 258.5 to the tips of the woods east of Novenkoye—will be in effect.
 - According to the Corps Staff evaluation it is doubtful whether the Corps will be able to concentrate an assault group behind the 11th Panzer Division tomorrow morning, since all the Corps forces will still be engaged in destroying the strong enemy forces in the Tolstoye Woods.
- 2120: The advance of the Panther Brigade to the forest northwest of the Tolstoye Woods has failed because of heavy fire from 30 Soviet tanks from the Mulde just east of Novenkoye and flanking fire from the Tolstoye Woods. There is a gap in the encirclement between the small wooded area and 240.2, where the panzer regiment of the 3d Panzer Division is deployed. Without waiting for division orders, the commander of the Panther Brigade has moved his brigade to Hill 237.6 north of Berezovka, in order to replenish his tanks with fuel and ammunition. He had to make this independent decision because of the complete physical exhaustion of the

crews, especially drivers and radiomen, who have been in action constantly for ten days. Today's losses can be attributed in part to the fact that drivers and radio operators fell asleep during the battle. Because of decreased combat alertness, five tanks were knocked out one after another by enemy fire in the evening hours. The brigade still has 18 operational tanks.

-After urgent representations of this condition by the brigade and division commanders the Corps has to take note. Unfortunately, the gap in the encirclement will permit the Russians to try to break out during the night.

2135: One battalion of the 3d Panzer Division has reached the northwest corner of the Tolstoye Woods. The woods are encircled on the west, south, and east. However, the gap in the north can no longer be closed. According to testimony of prisoners, the staff of the Soviet X Tank Corps and most of the troops are in the woods. Heavy breakout battles are to be expected at night.

2140: The 332d Infantry Division is still trying to close the gap at Chapayev.

2145: The Army Commander, commending the Corps, expresses the hope that the battle weary panzer regiments will be able to have a day of rest tomorrow or the day after.

2200: Corps instructions: The enemy forces in the Tolstoye Woods are to be destroyed. The 11th Panzer Division is holding the northern sector. The GDPG Division will defend its sector and block the northern edge of the Tolstoye Woods by establishing contact with the 3d Panzer Division at 258.5 and the woods northwest of Tolstoye. The 332d Reconnaissance Battalion, attached to the 3d Panzer Division, is to close the encirclement and, after heavy artillery preparation, attack early and destroy the enemy in the Tolstoye Woods. The 332d Infantry Division, after liquidating the enemy penetration southeast of Chapayev, is to take up defensive positions. During the night the artillery is to cover the Tolstoye Woods with heavy fire, and tomorrow it will support the attack. It must be ready at any time to lay "annihilating" fire in front of the northern front of the 11th Panzer Division.

-The II SS Panzer Corps on the right has built a bridgehead today over the Psel River. The bridgehead and the eastern sector of the corps have been subjected to heavy attacks. The enemy offered strong resistance to the corps push to the east into the area south of Prokhorovka. The corps objective for tomorrow is to establish contact with Task Force Kempf by destroying the enemy in the area south of Prokhorovka.

-A very difficult day of combat has passed. The XLVIII Panzer Corps success is evidenced by the destruction of 65 enemy tanks and the capture of 50 guns, antitank guns, and mortars, as well as a great number of infantry and hand weapons of all types. One thousand one hundred prisoners also were taken.

Division Daily Reports - 14 July 1943

11th Panzer Division. Received 1735. For 48 hours the division has been engaged in the most difficult defensive battle against 5 full divisions, 2 battered divisions, and 4 armored brigades. In constant new attacks since early morning the Soviets have been striking against the German positions in great strength, after strong artillery and rocket preparation, and with tank support. Their artillery has been strongly reinforced. Some of the enemy was pinned down before the main line of resistance by well-placed artillery fire. Some temporary penetrations have been thrown back by a counterattack with tank and assault gun support. Artillery fire has broken up many attempts to attack in the assembly stage.

There was increasing Soviet air activity during the afternoon, and slight German air activity. The 277th Army AA Battalion, and the GD AA Battalion, shot down one Il-2 plane.

The 1st Motorized Engineer Instruction Battalion, minus one company, was attached to the division.

Tanks and assault guns have been constantly committed as mobile reserves.

The roads are in good condition.

Operational are 3 flame throwers, 24 Mk III long, 12 Mk IV long, 2 Mk III short, 2 command cars, 6 medium field howitzers, 17 guns, including 5 howitzers, 5 self-propelled heavy antitank guns, 3 towed antitank guns.

The following have been captured or destroyed: 21 tanks, 14 antitank guns, 1 gun, 2 infantry guns, 4 heavy mortars, 11 light mortars, 16 antitank rifles, 42 heavy machine guns, 23 light machine guns, 2 submachine guns, 1 armored scout car, 1 vehicle. There are 107 prisoners, and 150 killed.

Follow-up report, 13 July: captured or destroyed: 13 tanks, 2 antitank rifles, 1 heavy mortar, 2 machine guns, 1 light machine gun, 1 vehicle, 21 prisoners, 200 enemy dead.

3d Panzer Division. Received 2245. During the first morning hours the woods east and northeast of 237.6 were cleared out in the face of stubborn enemy resistance. The armored group set out for the Dolgiy Woods at 0715 from 237.6, very slowly at first because of a broad and deep minefield. After clearing a path through it, the group encountered enemy tanks at the southern edge of the Tolstoye Woods. After destroying 3 T34s, the 3d Armored Reconnaissance Battalion succeeded in penetrating the Dolgiy Woods under protection of German tanks. The battalion captured the town of Dolgiy and established contact with elements of the 332d Infantry Division at the western edge of the woods.

While the 394th Panzer Regiment was regrouping for the attack on the Tolstoye Woods, the Soviets counterattacked from the woods via Hill 258.5 toward the western part of the hunting preserve. These attacks were made by tanks and infantry in regimental strength. With about one battalion of infantry the enemy managed to infiltrate the hunting woods behind the German line. The 1st Battalion, 394th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, assembled at the rear and cleared out the woods, destroying four disabled Soviet tanks south of Ridge 254. Elements of the armored group were diverted to oppose the Soviet tanks at 258.5 and in this battle destroyed 17 enemy tanks.

Meanwhile most of the armored units linked up with the GD Panther Brigade south of Hill 240.2. Further combat there was coordinated with the GD Panther Brigade, which withdrew from Hill 240.2, temporarily in its possession. The 2d Battalion, 3d Panzer Grenadier Regiment, dug in on the east-west road at 255, came under heavy artillery, antitank, and tank fire all day, especially from the northeast edge of the Tolstoye Woods. The tank company attached there successfully fended off Soviet tank attacks from the northwest. After regrouping again, in a coordinated attack with elements of the GDPG Division, and with an artillery preparation, the group took Hill 258.5, and reached the northwest edge of the Tolstoye Woods.

There were attacks all day by enemy bombers and dive bombers, each with 15 to 20 planes, in the entire division sector.

332d Infantry Division. Received 1820. The 10th Panzer Brigade, with the 647th Grenadier Regiment, 332d Reconnaissance Battalion, 3d Battalion of the 332d Engineer Regiment, and a platoon of the 332d Antitank Battalion, left the area around 1.5, two kilometers southwest of Berezovka, and took Hill 233.3 at 0730. Before 0900 about 1,000 enemy troops were driven out of the woods west of Berezovka-Krasny Usliv and the woods east of Krasny Usliv. Strong resistance was encountered in the woods south of Dolgiy. After commitment of the 3d Panzer Division from the northeast it was broken up by dive bombers and massed artillery fire from elements of the 677th Grenadier Regiment from the southwest. There were groups of deserters. At 1435, the 677th Grenadier Regiment completed occupation of the line assigned, the right edge of the gap in the woods northwest of Dolgiy. It is now digging in.

Enemy defenses of the Tolstoye area, not yet broken, considerably hampered the advance of the Reconnaissance Battalion toward Hill 240.2, but the battalion reached that hill at 1520. At 1700 there were two dive bomber attacks on the northern part of the Tolstoye Woods. So far about 450 prisoners have been taken, and a lot of booty, including antitank guns and many automatic weapons.

At 0635 elements of the 678th Grenadier Regiment cleared enemy troops out of sections of trench west of Rakovo. Five Soviets were killed, and twelve antitank rifles were captured.

There was considerable reconnaissance and bombing activity by the Luftwaffe. Soviet aircraft were active in the afternoon. At 1400 eight bombs were dropped east of Alexeyevka. One Ju-88 and one Ju-87 were shot down by enemy antiaircraft during support attacks in the area around Krasny Usliv.

Roads have improved since yesterday. There was no rain.

During the battle two light mortar battalions and one medium mortar battalion were displaced forward into the area west of Berezovka.

Before the day is over elements of the 678th Grenadier Regiment, supported by one heavy and one light artillery battalion, and with collaboration from units of the 255th Infantry Division, are to clear out the gap north of western Rakovo. The division will dig in on its new line.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. During the forenoon strong enemy forces with tanks were detected in front of the sector occupied by the Fusilier Regiment. They were successfully attacked with artillery and heavy infantry weapons. Since the early morning several Soviet attacks with tank support against the center of the Grenadier Regiment have been repulsed. Current reports indicate that three enemy tanks were destroyed.

In order to facilitate the attack of the Panther Brigade, the reinforced Reconnaissance Battalion was committed to attack from the left of the division sector toward the northwest corner of the Tolstoye Woods. The battalion was unable to advance in the face of heavy tank, antitank, and artillery fire from the objective area, and from the area of Kruglik and Novenkoye. Many Soviet tanks attacked Verkhopenoye from Hill 258.5, penetrating the flank of the Reconnaissance Battalion from the northeast. After an initial good start, the Panther Brigade ran into such strong flanking fire from the Tolstoye Woods and Novenkoye at Hill 240.2 that it halted for the time being in order to await the outcome of the attack by the 3d Panzer Division against Dolgiy and to link up with the tanks of the 3d Panzer Division.

Several Soviet armored attacks were repulsed, and about 15 Soviet tanks were reported destroyed.

There was considerable Soviet air activity, bombing and strafing. The Luftwaffe flew a number of dive bomber and bomber sorties in support of the Panther Brigade.

The roads are in good condition.

Front line is 500 meters south of 240.2.

Tank situation: Operable are 8 Mk III long, 9 flame thrower tanks, 3 Mk IV short, 18 Mk IV long, and 36 Panthers. On 13 July an additional 6 Soviet tanks and 4 antitank guns were captured or destroyed.

Final report, received 0030 15 July: After hard fighting the reinforced Reconnaissance Battalion succeeded in capturing Hill 258.5 late in the afternoon. Supported by tank elements of the Reconnaissance Battalion, the 3d Panzer Grenadier Regiment occupied the northern edge of the Tolstoye Woods. Elements of the battalion have dug in west of the road opposite the Tolstoye Woods.

The 2d Battalion of the Fusilier Regiment captured the western side of the enemy-occupied Kubasovskiy Ravine and advanced north to Point 240. It is impossible to advance from the ravine 3.5 kilometers east of Novenkoye because of strong Soviet defenses in the patch of woods and strong flanking fire from Novenkoye. Elements of the Reconnaissance Battalion are deployed as ready reserves northeast of Point 258.5. The Panther Brigade, after having been relieved by the 3d Panzer Division at 240.5, is assembling in the southern part of the Kubasovskiy Ravine.

15 July 1943

Corps Command Post: two kilometers north of Olkhovka
Weather: overcast, rain, wet roads

General Situation: Storms brought heavy rains during the previous night, becoming a steady downpour toward morning. Almost all movement by motorized forces is impossible.

In the 11th Panzer Division sector a final enemy attack from the north shortly before 2300 was fended off. The rest of the night was quiet.

Elements of the GDPG Division are standing east of the woods northwest of the Tolstoye Woods, and the division has made contact with the 3d Panzer Division at 240.2. There are very strong enemy forces in Novenkoye, and they are directing heavy fire at the division. At about 0300 enemy concentrations were detected in the Kalinovka area.

0400: The strong assault troops of the 332d Infantry Division, with heavy artillery support, start to penetrate the woods two kilometers northwest of Rakovo from the southeast. Their objective is to close the gap between the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 678th Regiment.

0530: The 394th Regiment of the 3d Panzer Division penetrates the Tolstoye Woods from the east. The reconnaissance battalion penetrates from the south. It confirms the impression that during the night the enemy evacuated its forces from the forest and retreated to Novenkoye through the gap north of 240.2. The final success of the encirclement is therefore made problematical by yesterday's withdrawal of the Panther Brigade of the GDPG Division, which is considered by the Corps Commander to have been inexcusable.

0630: The attack of the 332d Infantry Division's assault troops is bogged down at the tenaciously defended Soviet position in the woods.

0730: Bad road conditions are hampering all movement, including the enemy's. The entire Corps military police detachment is assigned to block the most important supply road and to route supply traffic on side roads.

- Rain and mud are greatly hampering efforts by the 3d Panzer Division to clear out the Tolstoye Woods.
- After initial violent resistance from scattered enemy units, the 394th Regiment is advancing northwest without undue resistance.
- The reconnaissance battalion of the GDPG Division has found the northern part of the woods free of the enemy. Nor do patrols from the 332d Reconnaissance Battalion, probing the woods from west to east, make any enemy contact. According to POW testimony, the enemy has withdrawn to a strong defense position both sides of Novenkoye, leaving small screening detachments at the small wooded area northwest of the Tolstoye Woods. There are many Soviet tanks in that wooded area. Ground reconnaissance has also revealed strong enemy forces at Novenkoye.

0930: The Corps Commander points out to the Army that drawing the boundary north of the Tolstoye Woods confronts the 332d Infantry Division with tasks that are too difficult. Since the Army cannot promise to bring up the 676th Regiment of the 332d Infantry Division, which is still committed south of the Pena River, the Corps Commander proposes that after the mopping up is completed, screening of the Tolstoye Woods from the west be left to the 3d Panzer Division, which is to relieve those units of the GDPG Division still committed in the area from Hill 240.2 to the southern outskirts of Kalinovka. The main line of resistance is to run from Hill 240.2 past the barn at the southeast edge of the small wooded area northwest of the Tolstoye Woods, to the Kubasovskiy Ravine.

1030: The GDPG Division gets the order to expand and straighten its positions so that it will turn over a standard defensive line to the 3d Panzer Division. The GDPG Division will then commit its main forces to support the defensive effort of the 11th Panzer Division.

- 1130: The 3d Panzer Division reports that the Tolstoye Woods have been cleared out except for a few pockets of resistance. The 394th Regiment, at the western and northwestern corner of the woods, has made contact with the 3d Reconnaissance Battalion. The division is ordered to prepare to relieve the GDPG Division up to the southern edge of Kalinovka at nightfall.
- 1200: The Army concurs with the Corps objective, but calls for a change in the entire direction of the operation. The XLVIII Panzer Corps is to advance its right wing close to the Psel, with its front directed toward the west. Definitive orders will follow.
- 1430: Situation report:
- On the whole the day is quiet.
 - In the 11th Panzer Division sector the enemy has apparently postponed further attacks for the time being, having suffered extremely high casualties yesterday because of the division's tenacious defensive battle. Besides shock troop probings in the area of Hill 227.0 and increasing mortar and artillery fire, there are no special combat actions.
 - The GDPG Division fends off weak enemy units trying to feel their way forward against the front of the fusilier regiment. The von Wietersheim battalion of the Panther Brigade, which is deployed at the small wooded area northwest of the Tolstoye Woods in order to screen against Novenkoye, in a spirited attack on a Soviet armored force in a ravine east of Novenkoye, destroyed 16 enemy tanks in a few minutes. The Soviets were taken by surprise while the crews were out of the tanks. In this master stroke, only one tank was seriously damaged, and that could be towed away. An enemy tank thrust against the hill at the small wooded area northwest of the Tolstoye Woods has been fended off by the GD Reconnaissance Battalion, and five T34 tanks have been destroyed. Thus the division, despite bad weather and without major movements, has achieved a tactical victory.
 - The 3d Panzer Division has destroyed three more enemy tanks on Hill 240.2. The Tolstoye Woods is fully occupied, although a few insignificant enemy pockets still remain in the dense forest.
 - The reconnaissance battalion of the 332d Infantry Division is positioned south of Hill 240.2. A new thrust by the 678th Regiment has closed the gap at Chapayev. The two battalions have again established contact east of Chapayev.
- 1430: The Corps issues the order for regrouping. The 11th Panzer Division will hold the northern sector as before. The GDPG Division is to be relieved up to the southern part of Kalinovka by the 3d Panzer Division. The division will assemble its relieved units in the area south of Novoselovka. The transfer of command will take place at 0500 on 16 July. Regrouping will begin at dusk.
- The 48th Engineer Battalion will leave the GDPG Division and again be attached directly to the 515th Engineer Regimental Staff. Its mission will be to mine the area at the northwestern corner of the Tolstoye Woods up to the Berezovka-Kruglik road.
 - The 144th Artillery Group with the 1st Battalion of the 101st Regiment and the 109th Mortar Battery again attached, will support Corps defense in both the northern and western sectors.
- 1500: The 332d Infantry Division reverts to the command of the LII Army Corps.
- 1855: The Army Chief of Staff asks whether, in view of an altered Army objective, the movement of the relieved units of the GDPG Division can still be redirected to the area Syrtsevo-Berezovka-Alekseyevka-Lukhanino.
- 1910: Orders are sent to the GDPG Division. The division plans to move the Panther Brigade to Berezovka. Since prevailing road conditions make night marches too difficult, the Corps permits the rear units to start out in small groups during daylight hours.

- Bridge building troops are assigned to the bridges over the Pena at Syrtsevo, Lukhanino, and Alekseyevka.
 - The Army Commander will bring final instructions on the altered operations on the 16th.
- 2015: There is no change in the situation. On the right wing of the 11th Panzer Division one assault group has achieved a considerable success. Many heavy weapons have been captured and the enemy has suffered many serious casualties.
- In the Tolstoye Woods the 3d Panzer Division has captured many weapons and valuable materiel left by the enemy when they withdrew during the night. Inventory is still proceeding.
 - The second envelopment and encircling battle in front of the western flank of the Corps, according to preliminary reports, yielded the following enemy casualties and captured booty:
 - 2,569 prisoners
 - 1,230 dead
 - 148 tanks
 - 32 guns
 - 103 antitank guns
 - 57 mortars
 - 289 machine guns
 - 184 submachine guns
 - 164 antitank rifles
 - 13 trucks
 - 2 tractors
 - 2 airplanes.
 - The 11th Panzer Division, subjected to the heaviest attacks, also captured or destroyed the following:
 - 153 prisoners
 - 685 enemy dead
 - 36 tanks
 - 7 guns
 - 25 antitank guns
 - 26 mortars
 - 117 machine guns
 - 14 submachine guns
 - 45 antitank rifles
 - 5 vehicles
 - 1 tractor
 - 6 infantry guns
 - 2 armored scout cars.
 - Since the beginning of the battle, the Corps has destroyed 559 Soviet tanks and captured 11,762 prisoners.
- 2030: The Commander of the Panzer Army issues a preliminary order directing the Commander of the XLVIII Panzer Corps to stop the offensive and be ready to withdraw southward to the lines held on 4 July. The withdrawal order was prompted by the difficult situation at the right flank of the Panzer Army, where the Soviets have committed fresh reserves, including one tank army, one combined arms army, and several tank and rifle corps. These troops have met the main forces of the II SS Panzer Corps and elements of the Task Force Kempf in a major tank battle at Prokhorovka and turned them back. Detailed orders will follow.

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11th Panzer Division. Received 1750. The enemy was quieter than yesterday, presumably as a result of casualties suffered during the last few days. However, artillery and automatic gun fire increased, particularly on the right flank. German assault troops, proving toward the positions around 227.0 just before 0430, were driven back. At about 1430 Soviet troops preparing to attack the center of the division sector were dispersed by artillery fire. Artillery repeatedly and effectively broke up observed Soviet movements.

There was little air activity on either side.

The roads are muddy, passable only by overland vehicles.

The 1st Heavy Mortar Regiment (minus one battalion) was attached to the division, the first units arriving in the Ilinskiy area by evening.

Operational are 3 flame thrower tanks, 11 Mk III long, 13 Mk IV short, 2 Mk III short, 2 command cars, 2 medium field howitzers, 13 assault guns, 6 howitzers, 7 self-propelled heavy antitank guns, and 4 heavy towed antitank guns. Captured or destroyed were 43 prisoners and deserters, 6 light machine guns, 8 submachine guns, and 8 rifles. Follow-up on 14 July: 5 T34s, 8 76.2mm antitank guns, and 3 anti-tank rifles captured or destroyed.

One German officer and 15 men of the 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiment were captured yesterday, some of them wounded. Two men of the 11th Armored Reconnaissance Battalion were killed. The Soviets have the bodies.

3d Panzer Division. Received 1735. The division moved out at 0630 to clear out the Tolstoye Woods. The woods were crossed with little enemy resistance, but with some delay caused by the impenetrable thicket. The western edge of the wooded area was reached at about 0900. With the GDPG Division and the 332d Infantry Division the 3d dug in at the edge of the woods.

Yesterday the Soviets had suffered heavy casualties in these woods from German artillery fire and dive bomber attacks. A count is still being made of weapons and gear left behind. Some Soviet troops are still scattered in the thicket. West of the Tolstoye Woods the armored group engaged in several battles on Hill 240.2. Three enemy tanks were destroyed. Soviet tanks are occupying the hill and the barn north of Tolstoye.

All day there was heavy Soviet artillery fire on the defense line and the edge of the woods.

The Soviets are building up a new defense line west of Novenkoye. Leaving behind strong rearguards with tanks, the main Soviet forces have moved back along the left behind the Novenkoye sector. From this new base defense line Soviet tank and infantry probes were made against the German defense line.

332d Infantry Division. Because of heavy losses on the preceding days, the Soviets were unable to continue their attacks, but they still tried to advance to the German line at 240.2 and 230.9. Tank forces moved up to Chapayev yesterday have evidently been shifted northwest because of the intense German fire on the patch of woods three kilometers west of 243.8 and on Chapayev. Soviet and German tanks were in combat at 1300. The Tolstoye Woods are still being mopped up.

The clearing out and closing of the gap north to northwest of Rakovo was begun on 14 July at 1950 and completed in the morning of 15 July. An enemy probe with 300 men and one tank at 230.9 toward the Sickudol area was halted by artillery fire.

There has been harassing Soviet fire, especially on 243.8. One automatic gun from the area two kilometers north of Chapayev has fired on German positions northwest of Rakovo.

German artillery successfully attacked heavy weapons, troop concentrations, and at 1145 a column of about 200 men on the road from Melovoye to Chapayev. Fire has been placed on rocket launchers in the Plotovaya area and southeast of Melovoye.

There was no Soviet air activity. Some German planes flew reconnaissance missions in the afternoon.

There was heavy rain in the morning, clearing up after 1100. Some rain fell in the afternoon. The roads are considerably softened up. It is not possible to move heavy artillery. Supply movements are greatly hindered.

The 3d Battalion, 676th Grenadier Regiment, is in reserve at Rakovo. The 2d Battalion, 677th Grenadier Regiment, is in reserve in the eastern part of the woods west of Berezovka. The Reconnaissance Battalion is being taken out of the front lines and relieved by elements of the 3d Panzer Division and the 677th Grenadier Regiment. The battalion will be shifted to the northwest portion of Berezovka at the disposal

of the division. The attachment of the 1st Heavy Mortar Regiment was cancelled early on 15 July.

Headquarters of the 677th Grenadier Regiment are west of Berezovka.

The mission of the division is to establish a main line of resistance.

Gross Deutschland PG Division. Received 1715. The day has passed quietly in the sectors of the Fusilier and Grenadier Regiments. One enemy attack from the patch of woods west of Sch. against the highway was repulsed by the reinforced Reconnaissance Battalion, and in a counterattack five enemy tanks were destroyed. A small attack by the Panther Brigade into the depression southwest of Novenkoye led to the destruction of 16 enemy tanks, with only one Mk IV lost by the Germans. Reconnaissance reveals that the wooded area west of Sch. is very heavily occupied by tanks and infantry.

Heavy rains make travel difficult for wheeled vehicles.

Operational on 14 July were 1 Mk II, 6 Mk III long, 4 Mk III flame throwers, 4 Mk IV short, 11 Mk IV long, 20 Panthers, and 5 Tigers. There were 7 total losses. Also operational were 23 assault guns, 15 75mm guns, 20 65mm towed guns. One Il-2 aircraft, 42 tanks, and 50 guns of various types were destroyed or captured.

NOTES

1. HERO, *A Survey of "Quick Wins" in Modern War* (Dunn Loring, Va., 1975).
2. For a description of the Quantified Judgment Model and an explanation of terms and their calculations see the HERO Monograph, *The Quantified Judgment Method of Analysis of Historical Combat Data* (Dunn Loring, Va., 1975).
3. Heinz Guderian, *Panzer Leader* (New York, n.d.), p. 110.
4. In his memoirs, Marshal of the Soviet Union Bagramyan points out that on the eve of war (May 1941) the Kiev Special Military District, had only a little more than 100 modern planes. From this it is estimated that the total number of aircraft in the Southwestern Army Group was, at the start of the war, about 1,000. Bagramyan, *Tak Nachinalas Voyna* (Kiev, 1975), pp. 60-61.
5. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 8 (Moscow, 1973).
6. The Fifth Air Army had 240 fighter planes, 181 fighter-bombers, and 126 bombers. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 7 (Moscow, 1968).
7. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 8 (Moscow) 1973.
8. *Ibid.*
9. T. Dodson Stamps and Vincent J. Esposito, eds., *A Military History of World War II*, Vol. I: *Operations in the European Theaters* (West Point, New York, 1953), p. 414.
10. S.S. Lotolsky, et al., *The Soviet Army* (Moscow, 1971), p. 284.
11. S.P. Ivanov, *The Initial Period of the War* (Moscow, 1974), p. 286.
12. Kiril Meretskoy, *Serving the People* (Moscow, 1970), p. 426.
13. *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*, No. 6 (Moscow, 1975), p. 56.
14. Translated from German records.

APPENDIX

CONSIDERATIONS FOR TACTICAL NUCLEAR WARFARE

Each of the fourteen breakthrough operations was examined to ascertain the opportunities, or possibilities, for employment of tactical nuclear weapons, had such weapons been available to the opposing commanders at the time of the operation. It must be emphasized that this is a completely arbitrary extrapolation from historical data, and that the tactics and deployments upon which this extrapolation is based did not reflect contemplation of the employment of any such weapons of mass destruction. Yet, so long as this fact is borne in mind, the extrapolation is believed to be reasonable, if the following assumptions are also applied to this purely hypothetical examination:

1. If the attacker had reason to expect early success with conventional forces he would be unlikely to employ tactical nuclear weapons;
2. Employment must strongly favor the employer's objective;
3. Tactical nuclear weapons would not be used lightly or capriciously merely because there were opportunities;
4. The employment considered would be the first use by either side in this particular campaign (without prejudging whether or not they might have been used earlier elsewhere during this war);
5. Other than recognizing the likelihood that first use would almost certainly be followed by the opponent's employment of tactical nuclear weapons, considerations of strategic or tactical deterrence were not addressed;
6. Deployments of troops and weapons were not changed, although it is probable that with tactical nuclear weapons available troops would be more widely dispersed.

The reader is further cautioned that the analytical effort herein reflected has been limited to consideration of breakthrough operations. Nuclear weapons employment may have different considerations or potential impact on other types of military operations.

It is obvious from the narratives that, regardless of the care with which offensive and defensive plans may have been prepared, there is great confusion among the opposing forces shortly after a major penetration attack is initiated, and this confusion increases—particularly in the defending forces—as the attack proceeds and gains momentum. The more rapid the movement of the attacker, the less opportunity either side will have to acquire targets of opportunity which will remain in place long enough and which will be substantial enough to warrant firing a nuclear weapon.

Thus, in areas where the defenses are strong, and succeed in imposing any significant delay upon the attacker, the opportunities for both sides to use tactical nuclear weapons against targets other than fixed command and control centers and supply depots will be better than in a fast-moving situation. There are two reasons for this. In the first place, greater concentrations of force will be required to achieve objectives, particularly on the part of the attacker, and second, both sides will have both time and opportunity to ascertain major hostile concentrations, which are not likely to move rapidly. Under these circumstances, with his defenses holding relatively well, the opportunity is better for the defender.

In a more rapidly moving situation, either because the defensive and offensive concentrations are not sufficiently great to inhibit maneuver, or because the attacker has begun to achieve his penetration (or both), the difficulties will increase for both sides, but relatively, the attacker—since he has the initiative, and since his troop movements are to some extent conforming to a prior plan—will have a better opportunity than the defender, who will have great difficulty not only in knowing where prospective targets are, but also in knowing where his own forces are.

opportunity than the defender, who will have great difficulty not only in knowing where prospective targets are, but also in knowing where his own forces are.

Where the attacker has the advantage of surprise, his relatively better opportunities will be further enhanced, since he will be able to conform more closely to plan, while the defender will be more confused and disrupted. If the attacker had reason to anticipate difficulty in achieving his objective, he might well use tactical nuclear weapons either to cause the initial surprise or to reinforce it.

With these assumptions and considerations in mind, the possibility that either or both sides might employ tactical nuclear weapons was examined under two general circumstances: (a) at the outset of a breakthrough attack, and (b) during the breakthrough or during exploitation. The evaluations are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. NUCLEAR POSSIBILITIES

	Attacker		Defender	
	At Outset	During/After	At Outset	During/After
Megiddo			x	x
Flanders	x			x
Ukraine				x
Malaya			x	x
Leningrad	x	x	x	x
Kursk	x	x	x	x
Belgorod-Kharkov		x	x	x
Cobra	x		x	x
Manchuria	x			x
North Korea				x
Sinai				
Rafah				x
Abu Ageila				x
Syria				
Qala	x		x	x
Tel Fahar	x		x	x
Totals	7	3	8	14

It was found that use of tactical nuclear weapons by the attacker would have been possible or likely in seven of the fourteen cases. These were all instances in which the defender was in a strong position, and in which the attacker might have had grounds for considerable uncertainty as to prompt achievement of a breakthrough.

In only three instances would the attacker have been likely to use tactical nuclear weapons in the breakthrough or exploitation phases. These were all instances on the Russian Front, in which strong defenses had severely impeded the momentum of the attack, and complete success was still in doubt.

There were eight instances in which the defender was deemed likely to employ tactical nuclear weapons—five of these being examples in which use at the outset by the attacker also was considered likely. All eight of these were instances in which the defender, even if surprised, had some information of the concentration of attacking forces in preparation for an offensive, and had reason to have concern for his ability to stop such an attack.

It was deemed likely that the defender would have employed available tactical nuclear weapons in all 14 of the breakthrough examples. In each instance it was felt that, as the possibility of breakthrough and defeat became imminent, the stakes would have appeared high enough to the defending commander for him to employ such weapons as a desperate effort to halt the attacker and prevent him from successful exploitation.

On the basis of the above analysis, the following specific implications have been drawn:

Defense Implications

A. Use of tactical nuclear weapons to plug a breakthrough will be extremely difficult because of the problems of target acquisition;

B. Thus, contingency pre-planning for the use of tactical nuclear weapons will be essential if they are to be employed effectively; for instance:

1. Pre-planned tactical nuclear fires should be ready on call beyond the FEBA, before penetration, or possibly to block reinforcements; and behind the FEBA at likely points of potential hostile concentration in the event a breakthrough has begun;

2. There will need to be withdrawal SOPs, related to the contingencies in which fires are planned behind the FEBA, to help withdrawing units to avoid being in target areas for pre-planned nuclear concentrations.

C. If the Defender fires first, he must recognize that the attacker will be prepared to fire, and that in such event, forces deployed in the first echelon on both sides of the FEBA are unlikely to survive as effective units;

D. In extremis, the defender is likely to employ tactical nuclear weapons, despite the other implications of such use.

Offense Implications

A. Plans should estimate time and place of likely defense fires of tactical nuclear weapons, for at least two reasons:

1. In order to be able to pre-empt, and
2. To avoid creating targets;

B. Doctrine should consider fully all implications of three major choices in use of tactical nuclear weapons in the attack:

1. Use early, to facilitate breakthrough,
2. Use later, if conventional breakthrough efforts fail, and/or
3. Use for destruction and disruption in exploitation;

C. If surprise is achieved in the employment of tactical nuclear weapons, the attacker may be able to inhibit effective retaliation.

