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MS # B-571

Allendorf, 30 May 1947

BEISSWAENGER, Walter

General Major

31G - 5140 367

Report on Activities

ARKO 485 with LXXV AC (billets Belfort)

from 24 Oct 44 - 15 Nov 44

Appendix:

2 formations

2 maps

Translator: M. Otto

In order of the Historical Division.

Report on activities of

ARKO (Corps Hqu Arty Commander) with LXXXV AC (billets Belfort)

from 24 Oct 44 - 15 Nov 44

The C Hqu Arty Comd 485, coming from other employment, arrived with his staff at Belfort 24 Oct 44.

1. Own artillery situation on 24 Oct 44

(see formation I and Map I) The artillery available to the division under the Corps' command, was very weak. The 159 Div had a light battalion with 3 batteries, 189 Div a light battalion with three batteries, Brigade von Oppen a heavy Heeres Arty Bn with 3 batteries. The light arty bn of the 11 Pz Div, which had up to now been under the Brigade von Oppen, was just being transported to another destination. The antiaircraft arty for ground warfare was tactically subordinated as follows:

2 batteries 8.8 cm to the 159 Div and 2 batteries 8.8 cm to the 189 Div.

Under the Corps' command were:

1) 1314 Light Field Artl Bn (stationery) with 3 batteries, each at nine foreign guns. They were employed in the Vosges position and, according to order of Supreme Command, were only to be committed further from the front, of moved by the Corps.

2) Group of Guns Belfort, with 12 foreign light guns without means of tractive power. The guns in the Vosges position were placed

singly in concealed position, as infantry guns.

3) Observation Bn (72 or 54) partly motorized. This battalion employed the flash ranging section on the heights close west of Belfort. The sound ranging battery was not used for lack of equipment.

The artillery state of training hardly came up to requirements. Because of a shortage of artillerymen, non artillery personnel, for instance members of the Luftwaffe and of the navy coast artillery, had been incorporated. This shortage applied mostly to front experienced officers and radio operators.

The ammunition supply was bad. There was approximately half an issue available for the division artillery, approximately two for the Fortress 1314 Arty Bn, but we could no more expect subsequent supply for the foreign guns. The group of guns Belfort had one issue. Only the antiaircraft batteries had ample ammunition supplies.

II. Events from 24 Oct - 13 Nov.

During the time from 24 Oct to 13 Nov, our own and the enemy infantry activity consisted of reconnaissance and raids only. Enemy artillery activity was always lively, we were opposed by mostly heavy, and numerically far superior, artillery. It had plenty of ammunition and fired well. The impression created was often that of adjustment fire which the enemy was endeavoring to conceal, directed against important objectives. The prearranged fire on road junctions, bridges, etc, in the rear terrain, was especially accurate. It frequently destroyed the poles of permanent lines, which thus could no more be used by us. By

the end of October, the observation battalion had accomplished its mission: to the right, in the wooded terrain, in about a line Champagney--Le Vandray, the sound ranging battery, to the left, in about a line Saulmot--Ecot the flash ranging section. Reconnaissance revealed that particularly heavy artillery was placed before the right wing of the Von Oppen Brigade (later in the 338 Div). It was partly placed far aside, so that an attack did not seem likely in the immediate future. We came to only occasional combat with it, as the necessary ammunition was lacking. A heavy battery had to be drawn forward to Montenois in order to reach the distant enemy batteries. Unfortunately, the observation battalion was transported for other employment on 10 Nov. Thus, valuable means of reconnaissance were lost to the C Hquart Commander. The general impression at the time was, that the enemy had the artillery necessary for a major attack in position, and that its fire was adjusted. The drawing forward of the batteries further in the rear could be accomplished in about two nights.

Our own artillery activity was--in consequence of ammunition shortage--but slight. It was limited to the support of our own and to the repulse of enemy raids and to the battle against living targets specially presenting themselves. On account of their ample supply of ammunition, the subordinate antiaircraft batteries had to execute most of the current firing missions. Because of the shortage of signal equipment, they had no observation posts of their own, their fire was directed by the observation posts of the Heeres artillery. Lack of wire often made it necessary to effect the artillery's fire control on tactical telephone lines, which considerably overloaded these telephone

connections.

Details of Events between 24 Oct and 13 Nov

On 5 Nov the staff of the 338 Div (General major Oschmann) took over the command of the left sector, which had up to now been Oberst von Oppen's. Artillery, which arrived from this division in the course of the next days and was committed: the artillery regimental staff and one light battalion with 3 batteries.

On 7 Nov the Corps sector was widened to the right up to Chateau--Lambert. The arty regt employed in this sector was directly subordinated to the corps. The advance command of the 1525 Heavy Fortress Arty Batl (stationary) which had arrived simultaneously, was ordered to emplace the battery on the Belchen mountain. The bn was directed to cooperate with the infantry regiment stationed in this sector. The bringing forward of elements of this battalion from the Vosgos position further to the west was--according to orders from the supreme command--only poscible when they had been rendered mobile by the Corps. The French major attack, expected on 9 Nov, did not take place.

The withdrawal of the observation battalion and its transport began on 10 Nov. Arko 485 received the communication that he would be transferred with the Corps staff on 15 Nov for other employment.

The relief for ARKO arrived on 12 Nov.

Weather conditions: from 6 Nov, much rain, from 9 Nov, snow and rain.

III. The position of our Own Artillery on 14 Nov 44 0800 hours (see formation II and Map II.)

The infantry regiment, newly subordinated to the Corps on the right wing on 7 Nov, had to receive artillery support from the right adjacent unit (IV Luftwaffen Field Corps) and from the left adjacent unit (159 Div). as the 1525 Heavy Fortress Art Batl which was being brought up, was not yet ready for action.

The 159 Div had been reinforced during recent weeks by one artillery regimental staff (without headquarters battery), One battalion headquarters (without headquarters battery), 2 light batteries, 1 platoon heavy field howitzers, 18 (motorized) and two platoons of the Fortress 1514 Arty Ban with 6 guns.

The 169 Div had been reinforced by the tactical subordination of a further antiaircraft battery.

The artillery regimental staff and one light battalion with three batteries had arrived from the 338 Div and were led into position. Besides this, the division had been reinforced by one battery 1514 Fortress Arty Bn with 9 guns (committed in three platoons). The Fortress Arty Bn 1514 was under the command of the Fortress Brigade von Oppen, with the exception of the advanced elements, which were subordinated to the respective divisions.

Three guns of the group of guns Belfort were still employed as infantry guns in the Vosges position. The remaining nine were formed into two batteries, subordinated to the 1514 Fortress Arty Bn and committed in the Vosges position near Belfort. A shortage of signal

equipment made it necessary for the observation posts of the 1314 Fortress Arty Bn to take over the observation for them. The Observation Bn (72 or 54) was withdrawn and transported on 10 Nov.

The standard of training had so far improved through lectures, assignment of a few officers from replacement stations, and incorporation of specialists who had been discovered in collection points for stragglers, that it could be considered adequate.

About one issue of ammunition was available and a little more for the antiaircraft batteries. In spite of assignments of radio equipment and field wire, the demand for these means of signal communication remained great.

IV. Events on 14 Nov 1944

At 1115 began the enemy barrage fire on the forward positions far into the rear terrain where the 189 and 338 Div were placed. Since the telephone lines were quickly destroyed and the reconnaissance organs of ARKO, the observation battalion, had been transported away, it was only possible to gain a comparatively clear picture of the course taken by the enemy attack, late in the afternoon. Preparatory fire now reached from the right of Granges La Ville, where the 189 Div was, to the left, up to approximately ECOT (centre of the 338 Div). The attack itself began at about 1300 hours. It only struck the division on the extreme left wing and was repelled. Adjacent to the left, an enemy penetration succeeded on the right wing of the 338 Div, which by evening had gained a width of three km and a depth of three km.

General Ltn Schack, who had already relieved the commanding general, happened to be at the enemy point of attack with the commander of the 338 Div, when the drumfire started. The Div Commander was killed in action.

As a countermeasure taken by the Corps, one infantry regiment was withdrawn from the Corps sector which had not been attacked, and marched to the region south of Hericourt.

The commander of the 1314 Fortress Arty Bn, with the mobile elements of his battalion (approximately nine guns) and one platoon heavy field howitzers 18 mot (of the 159 Div), was assigned for the artillery support of these units.

The night passed quietly as regards artillery fire. The handing-over to the successor, who had been present since 12 Nov, was concluded in the morning of the 15. The staff was entrained in the course of the day.

Signed: Walter Beisswaenger

Formation I

Formation of the LXXXV Corps' Artillery

on 24 Oct 1944

Directly Subordinated to ARKO: I 1314 Field Arty (3 batteries each at 9 light foreign guns); group of guns Belfort (12 light foreign guns); Observation Bn (72 or 54) (partly motorized).

Artillery of the 159 Div: 1 light arty bn (3 batteries each with 3 light field howitzers 16) Tactically subordinated 2 antiaircraft batteries 8.8 cm (8 guns).

Artillery of the 189 Div:

1 light Arty Bn (2 batteries each with 3 light field howitzers 18);

(1 battery with light field howitzers 16).

tactically subordinated: 2 antiaircraft batteries 8.8 cm (8 guns).

Brigade von Oppen: 993 Heavy Howitzer Artl Btl (3 batteries with 15.2 Russian cannon howitzers).

Signed: Walter Beisswaenger

Generalmajor

Formation II

Formation of the LXXXV AC's Artillery

on 14 Nov 1944, 0800 hrs

ARKO 485: No direct subordinations.

Artillery of the infantry regiment undet the Corps' command on the right wing: heavy 1525 Field Arty Bn (3 batteries) - on the approach march.

Artillery of the 159 Div:

Artillery Regimental Staff 1059 (without staff battery);

I 1059 Bn (3 batteries light field howitzer 16);

II 1059 Bn (without staff battery) with two batteries light field howitzer 16;

1 platoon heavy field howitzer 18 (mot)

2 platoons 1314 Fortress Arty Bn (6 guns);

Tactically subordinated: two antiaircraft batteries 8.8 (8 guns).

Artillery of the 189 div

1 light Arty bn (2 batteries with each 3 light field howitzers 18,
1 battery with light field how. 16),

Tactically subordinated: 3 antiaircraft batteries 8.8

Artillery of the 338 Div:

Arty Regtl Staff (?);

I Bn Arty Rgt (?) 3 batteries light field how 18);

Heavy 993 Heeres Arty Bn (3 batteries with 15.2 Russian cannon howitzers);

1 battery 1314 Fortress Arty Bn (with 9 guns).

Artillery of the Fortress Brigade von Oppen:

1314 Fortress Arty Bn (1 battery with 9 guns, 1 platoon at 3 guns; besides, from group Belfort 1 battery at 5 guns and 1 battery at 4 guns).

Signed: Walter Beisswaenger
Generalmajor.

MS # B-571 Map 1

Artillery of the LXXXV AC

on 24 Oct 1944

Champagney

159 Div

Field Artl Btl 13/14

LXXXV AC

Belfort

Levaodray

189 Div

Observation Btl
from 30 Oct - 10 Nov.

Saulnot

Brigade von Oppen

Montenois

Heavy 993 Arty Bn 993

Ecot

Switzerland

1: 100.000.

France: Geradnier Lure Sheet 15H and 15J

Signed: Walter Beisswaenger
Generalmajor.

MS # B-571 Map II

Artillery of the LXXXV AC
on 14 Nov 44, 0800 hrs.

Chateau-Lambert

Inf Rgt (?)

1525 Field Arty Battalion

on the approach north

1059 Ary Rgt

159 Div

Artillery

1314 Field Ary Bn

LXXXV

Belfort

Group of guns Belfort

189 Div

Hericourt

Granges La Ville

338 Div

Arty Rgt (?)

993 Howitzer Arty Bn

I/Arty Rgt (?)

Ecot

Switzerland

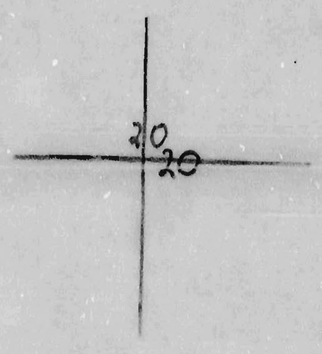
France: 1:100.000 Sheet 15 H & 15 J

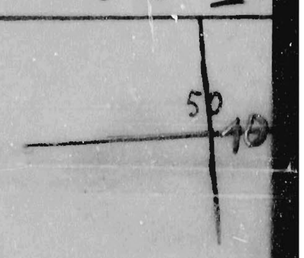
Signed: Walter Beisswaenger
Generalmajor

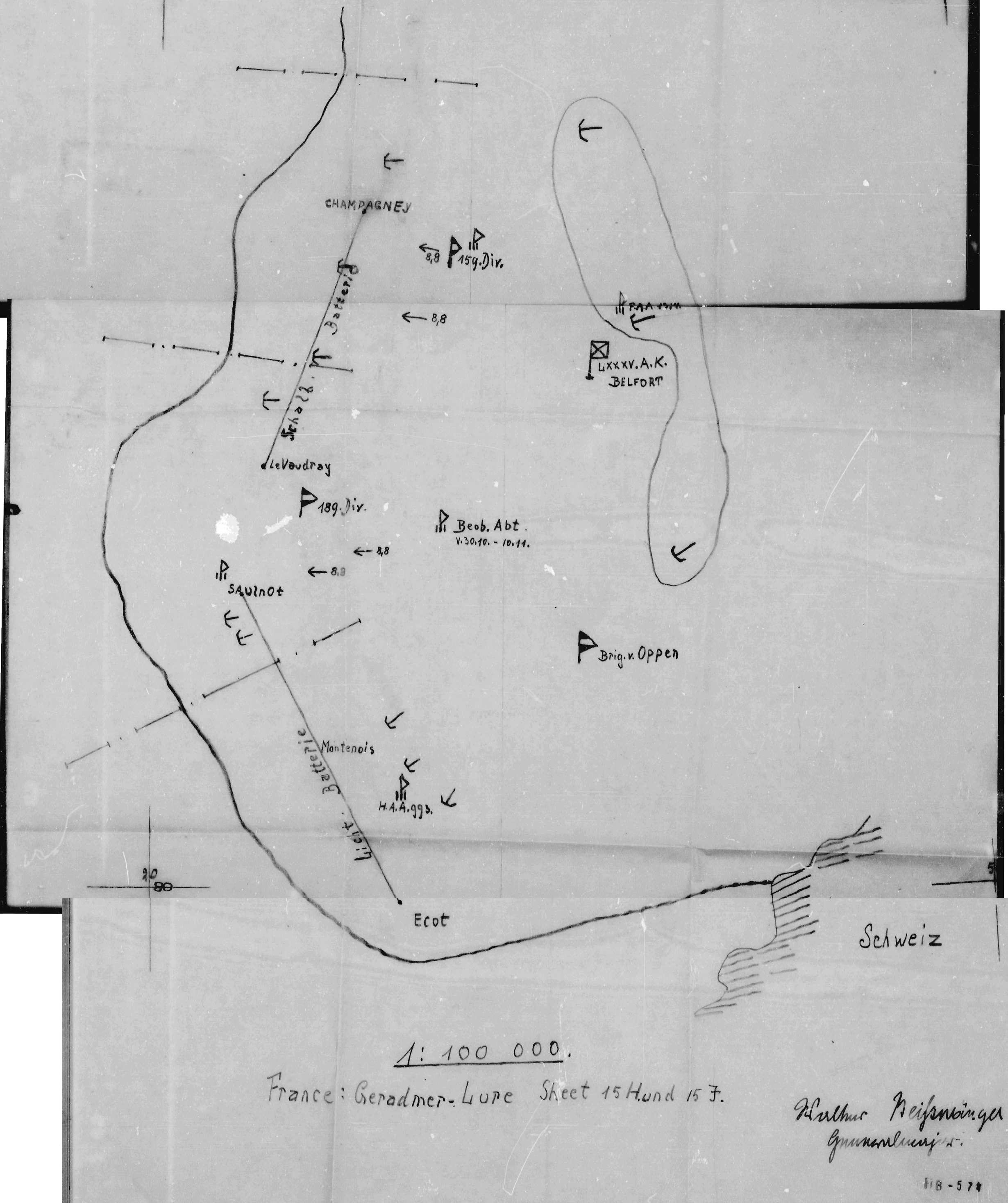
REGISTERED
DATE: 3 JUN 1947
BY :

Artillerie des LXXXV. A.K.

am 24.10.44.







1: 100 000.

France: Geradmer-Lure Sheet 15 H und 15 J.

Kurt Weisenberger
Gefreiter

118 - 574

Artillerie des LXXXV. A.K.

am 14. 11. 44. 8⁰⁰.

Pause II.

Chateau-Lambert

3.R.(?)

F.A.A. 1525 im Anmarsch

2 0 20

5 0 10

Artillerie

AR. 1059.
159. Div.

F.A.A. 1314.

LXXXV.

BELFORT

V.B.B. Belfort

189. Div.

HERICOURT

8,8

8,8

8,8

Granges-la-Ville

V. 1314

338. Div.

AR(?)

HAA. 993

V. 1314

Pi. /AR(?)

2 0 80

Ecot

5 0 10

Schweiz

France: 1:100 000 Sheet 15 H und 15 J.

Walter Beispiel
Sammlung