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II Parachute Corps

Part III, Rhineland.

(15 September 1944 to 21 March 1945).

(Gustav Hoehne)

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Eugen Meindl

F.S. General and  
Comm.Gen of II FS Corps

II FS Corps

Part III: Rheinland

(15 Sep 44 to 21 Mar 45)

Translator: H. Heitman

Eugen Meindl

Allendorf, 31 Mar 1947

General d. Fallschirmtruppe  
u Komm Gen des II Fallsch.Korps

Hist Div Int Encl

Part III: Rheinland

(15 Sep 44 to 21 Mar 45)

Concerns: American History of War

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Prefatory Note:

I refer to my notes prefatory to Part I (Normandy) and Part II (Northern France), contents and reservations of which apply also to Part III. Owing to the even more rapid progress of events in 1945 my recollections of what happened are even more incomplete than with regard to 1944. No records are available.

Translator: H. Heitman

Beginning of September 1944:

During the first half of September 1944 the much depleted staff and heavily battered troops of the 2 FS Corps were stationed in the area around Cologne-Wahn and were to be brought up to full strength both in man-power and matériel. Replacements were assigned by FS AOK. The replacements were untrained, young, willing men, whose average age was 17 to 18 years and who had volunteered for air service in the Luftwaffe, but could not be used in that capacity owing to lack of planes. By middle of September/Corps troops had been brought up to about 60 or 70% of authorized strengths. The forming of cadres for the reactivation of the 3 FS Jaeger Div, which was to be reactivated in the same area and at the same time, proceeded far more slowly. Replacement units that would have been suitable for this purpose had been moved to Holland by FS AOK during the crisis (July/Aug 44) and were therefore no longer available. Recuperated men and dispersed elements of the 3 FS Jager Div arrived at their parent units during this period, but in negligible numbers. The unhappy situation in France and transport difficulties made themselves adversely felt everywhere. But the decisive factor for all reconditionings was the fact that weapons and equipment of all description failed to arrive. Not even enough infantry arms were available for the training of the new recruits.



Middle September 1944:

Then, at the middle of September, came the surprise air-landing by the British at Arnheim and Nijmegen. The II FS Corps which, actually, existed in nothing but name, was alerted and had to be moved by all available means of transport in the direction of Cleve, taking every man who could just manage to carry a gun.

Mission: Together with Corps troops and 3 FS Jaeger Division, II FS Corps had the mission of relieving Corps Headquarters "Feld", which was committed there, and, after arrival of the FS Jaeger Combat Groups which were being formed, to attack the British paratroops landed at Groesbeck, drive them from the east banks of the Maas and to establish contact with an SS Division still holding out at Nijmegen, the designation of which is unknown to me.

In all haste combat groups were formed from men of the administrative and supply services, recuperated men, and dispersed units, within the framework of the 12 Reconnaissance Battalion and the 3 FS Jaeger Division (in process of being activated). The fighting value of these groups had to be regarded as very questionable as the men did not yet know each other and owing also to an almost total lack of all heavy infantry arms.

19 Sep 44

At about 1600 on 19 Sep 44 I arrived at Cleve with the first echelon of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ the combat staff of the II FS Corps. There, at the command post of a Sector Commander I also met the staff of Corps Headquarters "Feld". General Feld had manned the sector between Rhine and Maas with ~~men~~ ~~heavily~~

units hastily collected from all directions and had, for the moment, prevented the enemy extending the area gained by his air-landing. His forces were not equal to meeting a serious, systematic attack and still less so to carrying out an attack themselves as the infantry armament was very poor, heavy armament ~~was~~ practically non-existent, and artillery complement altogether inadequate. For the greater part men and NCO's had no combat experience and were mostly of the very old age classes. Only a few Army replacement battalions, speedily brought up from home stations, had some experience, but their ranks, on the other hand, included many young recruits not yet fully trained. The front when I arrived could not be described as numerically weak, but the ability of the men and the armament reduced it to nothing more than a dummy position, supported, in some measure, by the incomplete, so-called Westwall.

Shortly after me, Gen Feldmarschal Model also arrived at the command post of sub-sector Nord (later 84 J.D.). He had General Feld report to him on the situation and then gave me instructions to take over the sector Rhein - Reichswald - to the Maas at Afferden. Corps Headquarters Feld was released for rearward retrenchment work farther to the South. Roughly, following mission was assigned the 2 FS Corps:

By attacking to drive out the enemy who had landed by air around Groesbeck; to mop up Nijmegen and the east banks of the Maas-Waal canal and to hold these positions in order to prevent enemy landed at Arnheim establishing rear-connections.

I recounted to Gen Feldm Model the strengths and armaments of the hastily

formed combat groups of FS Jaeger <sup>(light infantry)</sup> and reported that their arrival was not to be expected before evening of 20 September. It was fixed that Corps Sector was to be taken over at 1200 on 20 Sep, after arrival of the lower staff and the Corps Communications Battalion.

20 Sep 44

And so, on 20 Sep 44 at 1200, the sector until then held by Corps Headquarters Feld was taken over by 2 FS Corps. It consisted of two sub-sectors: "Nord", from the Rhine to northern section of the Reichs Forest (later 84 Inf Div), and "Sued", the southern half of the Reichs Forest to the Maas, including Afferden (later 19 Inf Div) .

Sketch No 1

In the Groesbeck area enemy held the commanding higher ground and was being reinforced and also supplied by new air-landings. We were not able to prevent this by artillery fire or Luftwaffe. After some time a number of batteries and mortars were assigned us by the Army, but only after air-landings had been completed. Further Army replacement units were also brought forward from home stations, but without adequate armament and lacking equipment and transport facilities.

21 Sep 44

The FS Jaeger Combat Groups that had arrived were committed: half in sector "Nord" and half in sector "Sued". Combat Group Becker was committed in Sector "Nord", opposite Groesbeck by Weiler, Combat Group Herrmann in Sector "Sued" in the southern section of the Reichs forest and north of Gennep.

An attack by Group Becker at the end of the month made north of Groesbeck on Nijmegen carried as far as close to the town but came too late by a few hours, as on that morning the SS Division had been forced out of Nijmegen toward the North. Group Becker had to be retired again, being too strongly outflanked on the south flank by the Groesbeck heights. This fruitless attack nevertheless did some good, as it clearly revealed the strength and the organization in depth of the enemy, and also showed that he was already considerably stronger than we had supposed. Furthermore, it showed us how favorable the terrain was that the enemy held, ~~being~~ having deep depressions, being densely wooded and providing excellent means of camouflage. In addition, enemy had an air-arm that could ~~be~~ go into action whenever desired and which, during the daytime, prevented control of combat and supply by us.

October 44

During October we worked at high pressure improving and developing our position. The North sector suffered considerably from underground and flood waters. The Army battalions were combined to form regiments and appropriately re-grouped. OKW approval was request<sup>ed</sup> for the forming of two infantry divisions from the re-grouped regiments, so that the unist should at last be issued an authorized and a field equipment. Over-age men were combined in constructional battalions and withdrawn from the front line, being replaced by younger age-classes. Thus, toward the end of the month the 84 Inf Div came into being in the norther sector (Rhane to middle of Reichs Forest), commanded by Gen Fiebig,

and the 190 Inf Div, commanded by Genltn Hammer, in the southern sector (middle of Reichs forest to and including Afferden Maas). The corresponding FS Jaeger Combat Groups remained in position with each division. The sole reserve was FS Jaeger Reconnaissance Battalion 12 in the area south of Cleve, which was still in process of activation and training. With intense industry and devotion all officers and NCO's applied themselves not alone to the work of entrenchment but also to the training of the as yet untrained young recruits. The only ray of light the situation afforded was the sight of how the combat capacity of the divisions was growing and increasing from day to day, particularly as the number of guns had also increased considerably. The ammunition supply was always low and in no wise appropriate to a major engagement, which was to be expected. After fighting ceased at Arnheim, enemy pressure against our forces on the west bank of the Maas (area Hertogenbosch and to the south east of that town) increased automatically. Enemy was striving, by pushing back these forces, to attain a more secure and better connection with Nijmegen. Our weak forces in position there ( west of the Maas ) were not able to resist the severe pressure. We, (the 2 FS Corps) on the east bank of the Maas, on the other hand, were also not able to eject the enemy forces in position at Nijmegen and Groesbeck. Despite this, toward the middle or end of November 44, the 2 FS Corps was ordered by Gen Feldm Model to attack the enemy forces opposite the Reichs forest and force them across the Maas-Waal canal. To carry out this order I demanded for the attack further two Inf Div and one Pz Div and a corresponding supply of ammunition.

November 44

The divisions demanded for the attack by the 2 FS Corps on the Maas-Waal canal failed to arrive. Also there was no considerable increase in the supply of ammunition. The attack had to be carried out nevertheless, with inadequate means, and was repulsed. Gen Feldm Model was with me personally at my command post ( a Westwall bunker in the Reichs forest ) and was astonished at the strong defense put up by the enemy with artillery and heavy arms. Gen Feldm M could not or would not concur with my conclusions, drawn from the existing situation, namely, that the enemy would launch his major attack on the Rhine at this point. I also stated that whoever had possession of the <sup>Reichsforest</sup> Westwall would be master of the west banks of the Rhine because from here the entire Westwall could be outflanked and rolled up.

As enemy progressed on the west banks of the Maas, a number of FS Battalions under Generallt Erdmann returned to the east bank via Venlo, for commitment on the Maas. They were placed under command of the 2 FS Corps and in December were combined with a number of other FS battalions to form the 7 FS Jaeger Division under Gen Erdmann.

December 44

Toward the beginning of December the 180 Inf Div (Gen Klosterkaemper) was also forced to retire from the west banks with a number of FS Jaeger units and was committed on the Maas near Venlo - Roermond to about as far as

Maasbracht adjoining the 7 FS Jaeger Division. By order of Gen Feldm Model I now had to relieve Corps Headquarters LXXXVI (Gen v Obstfelder) until then west of the Maas, and , with the 2 FS Corps, take over the Afferden - Venlo - Roermond - Maasbracht sector on the Maas . General v Obstfelder took over my old section in the Reichs forest. About a fortnight later he was relieved by Gen Straube, Gen Inf.

Staff Headquarters of 2 FS Corps was in the new sector at St. Hubert/ Kempen. Feldmarschal Model still expected an enemy thrust at Muenchen-Gladbach via Heinsberg.

#### Sketch No 2

In the new Maas Sector the 2 FS Corps controlled: 7 FS Jaeger Division, 180 Inf Div and about four or five FS Jaeger Combat Groups (on both sides and south of Roermond). Subsequent to these combat groups being brought up to strength at Roermond, they were combined toward end of December and in January to form the 8 FS Jaeger Div under Gen Vadehn, the activation of which division, however, only made slow progress owing to lack of heavy weapons. During this period 2 FS Corps was detached by Army Gen Felán, Model to the FS AOK General Schless. The 7 FS Jaeger Div was also extracted from the Maas front at this time and, at first, transferred back to Army reserve for training. In place of this division, Corps was assigned the 190 Inf Div, which, accordingly, was transferred south. By order of Gen Oberst Student ~~the~~ Combat Group Herrmann was also extracted from the Maas front and detached for other duties. After withdrawal of these FS units, the 190 Inf Div and the 180 Inf Div, together with the 8 FS Jaeger Div, which was being formed, had to extend their front accordingly to as far as the Maas. It had been impossible to talk of a connected line of defense before, and now one could describe the defense

system as a number of strongpoints along the Maas at particular danger points, which could, however be eliminated whenever desired by the expenditure of a sufficient quantity of ammunition. Corps Reconnaissance Battalion 12 was now held in reserve in the southern section of the Elmpter forest. It was thought that the lack of man-power could be made up for by further developing the Westwall in our rear and by constructing oblique defense lines and covering positions. The terrain was alive with innumerable men and constructional staffs, drunk with the sight of multi-coloured maps and with unheard of figures showing the quantities of ground handled. Nobody was able to say, however, who was to man all these positions.

The start of the Ardennes offensive detracted enemy forces from our front, but the breathing spell was only brief.

#### January 1945

The FS Jaeger Units in position on both sides of Roermond were reorganized by the middle of January to form the 8 FS Jaeger Div under Gen Vadehn. Minor operations undertaken by us across the Mass had the object of preventing enemy withdrawing further forces from our front for transference to the Ardennes front. We met with very little success, however. We found the west banks to be comparatively weakly manned, but were too weak ourselves to take any decisive action on the west banks. When the Ardennes offensive slackened down we were able to observe enemy movements of mobile units in a northerly direction. This and the undiminished use of the air fleets against our rear connections were the first indications showing that enemy had in no way



changed his intention of attacking in our sector. Attacks by enemy on the front of our left, southern, neighbor, directed toward Heinsberg, were originally regarded as an indication of a coming offensive move toward Muenchen-Gladbach, as expected by Gen Feldm Model. The moment enemy had reached the Roer, however, quiet reigned.

February 1945

On 7 Feb attacks by the enemy air force on the towns in the rear supply area continued and increased in intensity. Increased action by fighter-bombers almost entirely prevented all traffic and supply service in daytime. It was "in the air" that something big was impending. On this day I was ordered to appear at the command post of the FS Army at Xanten, to discuss the situation with General Schlemm. Gen Oberst Blaskowitz, our Commander in Chief was present. It was assumed as certain that enemy would attack, the question being: when and where? A thrust toward Muenchen-Gladbach continued to play the main role in all deliberations. From my knowledge of the local features I clung to my former assumption, namely that a thrust would come at Groesbeck--Reichs Forest--Cleve, as such a thrust would enable enemy to gain the Rhine soonest and would lead into our open north flank.

8 February 45

The day started with heavy artillery fire along the whole front, but particularly intense on the front of our north neighbor, the LXXXVI AK, Gen Straube, the fire being directed particularly on the Reichs Forest and Cleve.

In the evening already the 655th Mobile Anti-tank Gun Battalion (Hetzer Battalion) stationed in the rear of the left wing and assigned to our Corps as reserve, was detached and transferred in the direction of Reichswald for use in the sector of Corps Headquarters Straube.

10 February

On 10 Feb 45 enemy was in the possession of the enemy so that all doubts as to his main point of effort were dispelled.

The right wing of the Corps, namely the 190 Inf Div had to be taken from the Maas and wheeled around to face north, against the Reichs Forest. Along the Maas front also the few <sup>local</sup> reserves held there had to be transferred to the rear of the north wing of the 190 Inf Div. The enemy did not press across the Maas on our front. It was only noticeable that he had very strong artillery forces which were very active. His pressure through the Reichs forest and from Cleve in southeasterly and southerly direction became ever increasingly heavy. New forces coming from south were assigned to the FS Army (Schlemm) and committed south and east of Cleve, extending the line held by LXXXVI AK (Straube).

18 February

On 18 Feb, discussion of situation at command post of FS AOK Schlemm at Xanten with Gen Oberst Blaskowitz. I received instructions, with the ~~8~~ FS Corps to take over sector Goch together with the 84 Inf Div and the 7 FS Jaeger Div which had again been brought forward from the South (from where is unknown to me). For this purpose the 8 FS Jaeg Div was to be relieved by echelons on the Maas and also transferred to Goch. On the Maas (St Hubert) the staff of ~~8~~ FS Corps was to be relieved by a Corps staff Gen Kuehlwein.

In the meanwhile Gen Kuehlwein himself had arrived at St Hubert, but the lower staff echelons were still missing so that parts of the staff of II FS Corps had to remain behind at St Hubert near Kempen on 19 Feb, whereas I proceeded in direction of Goch early on 19 Feb together with the combat command. I considered it important that the 8 FS Jaeg Div <sup>in its entirety</sup> /should, as soon as possible, be in position on the Goch front, and not only parts of it. This was not carried out fully however, on account of the rapid march of events.

19 Feb 45

On 19 Feb, in the forenoon, I arrived at Sonsbeck with Gen Staff of the 2 FS Corps and took over the sector east and west of Goch, with front facing north, with the 84th Infantry Div. Fiebig on the right and 7 FS Jaeg Div (Erdmann) on the left. East of the II FS Corps, Corps Headquarters Pz Corps XXXXVII (Gen v Guetwitz) was in command, west of us the LXXXVI AK (Gen Straube).

### Sketch 3

Admittedly the divisions controlled by me had learned a lot through fighting since their last assignment, but when taken over on 19 February had been much weakened by losses. Further considerable losses were suffered during the days of major battle around Goch daily without any possibility of any appreciable numbers of "trained" replacement being provided. The tactics employed by the enemy were the same as those known to us already from the Normandy. After the usual barrage fire with guns of all calibers, the attack with tanks generally took place at some point in the afternoon. The im-

portant thing for us was to recognize that point in time and to cover it with our own combined artillery. We had no bomber-fighter planes and no bombing fleets at our disposal with which to strangle an already started attack. An added great difficulty was that then already munitions for the heavy weapons and the artillery were in scanty supply, which means that we were not able to conduct the artillery fight as it should have been conducted in an ordered, tactically proper defense. We had to let many a paying objective pass without firing on it simply because <sup>there were</sup> still more important objectives to be fired at. Such reasons, however, are not good enough for the light infantryman exposed in the foremost line, and this was particularly so in our case as these men had always been told by false propaganda that we had everything required for the battle. In the face of such impressions their fighting morale naturally had to weaken day by day. It is true that during the latter part of February our artillery achieved fine defense successes, but when each and every round of artillery ammunition had to be accounted and answered for and when regular and safe supply failed, the light infantrymen (Jaeger) alone could no longer prevent the advance of the tanks. Even the Pz Corps to the right of us was paralyzed by the enemy air force so that I had to give up the last reserves of the FS Corps, the FS Jaeg Reconnaissance Battalion 12, and transfer it to Kappeln to support a Pz division. This Battalion stopped a breakthrough, but at what a cost!!

The heavy days of battle during the latter part of February reduced our strength to far less than 50% of authorized strength. It was not at all surprising that losses were particularly heavy in the case of the young re-

recruits who, with the best intentions, went under fire for the first time and suffered especially heavily on account of their insufficient training. It is also small wonder that the nerves of these young recruits were not equal to the barrage fire they came under. The numbers of the old, experienced front soldiers also decreased daily (though not at the same rate), so that the young recruits lacked any examples and also had no one to instruct them in the right way to act. Is there any other explanation for the fact that often one and the same unit included a considerable number of heroic fighters, side by side with slackers, deserters and even cases of cowardly behaviour caused by moral breakdown? The more our own fighting power melted away, the more the crushing weight of the enemy's material made itself felt ~~and~~ actually and in its effects on the morale of the men. Despite heroic resistance by individual sectors, some part of the front was lost daily, so that towards the end of the month the defense had, under stress of circumstances, developed ever more rapidly into delaying actions. No matter how many orders to "hold out" were given, lacking the necessary support in the form of reserves and munitions they could not prevent such developments. The front became exhausted at an even faster rate than had been the case in the Normandy.

#### March 1945

The concentric pressure by the enemy against the bridges at Metz became ever more clearly defined. There was a Hitler directive in force forbidding any man of the fighting front to retire across the Rhine and dire punishment was threatened for anyone doing so.

On March 3 the 2nd FH Corps had to take over the sector of the LEMVI AB in

addition to its own. This sector consisted of the 190 Inf Div (Gen Hammer) which division was known to me, and elements of the 8 FS Jaeg Div (Gen Vadehn). The Americans were advancing rapidly from south to north via Heinberg - Muenchen-Gladbach - Suechteln in the direction of Kempen and were seriously threatening our south flank.

#### Sketch 4

Corps Command Post was still at Sonsbeck. In view of the threat to our south flank command post was moved to Hoerstgen after orders for the next few days had been issued the old divisions ( 84 Inf Div and 7 FS Jaeg Div ). The very youngest replacements for the 7 FS Jaeg Div were at Hoerstgen at the time . They were as yet inadequately armed, had no front training and were under command of the regimental commander of the 20 FS Jaeger Regt and a small cadre of trainers. Thus there was at least some slight local protection, which was very soon to make itself effectively felt. It was unknown what else there might be in the vicinity.

4 Mar 45

At 0100 on 4 Mar I heard through my open window the well-known sounds of an enemy machine gun from a southerly direction. I alerted the staff and had the commander of FS Jaeger Regt 20 called to me. He was given orders to defend Hoerstgen, to block the road Hoerstgen to Sevelen, to reconnaissance toward Sevelen, Rheurdt and Camp and to establish contact with the 190 Inf Div via Geldern. It was of importance to ascertain whether any of our units were in the intervening area in a southerly direction. In the same night the vehicles were sent back to Saalhof, in the vicinity of

which was the intended new site of the command post. All secret documents etc were burned here.

FS Jaeger Regt discovered that a number of enemy reconnaissance tanks or scout cars had felt their way forward, but had retired again after being fired on.

At daybreak we retired our command post. The 190 Inf Div, retiring from Geldern was intercepted by me and ordered to form a new defense front along the west outskirts of Boerminghardt -- via Camperbruch -- following the canal to Reinberg. Elements of the 8 FS Jaeg Div were committed on the left, south wing. Contact was to be established with neighbor corps in Rheinberg itself, but only <sup>a few</sup> dispersed units were found there.

I cannot remember the name of the corps.

Command post of the 2 FS Corps was transferred to Westermann's farm, north of Alspray, relieving staff of Pz Corps XXXVII (Gen v Luetwitz) there, that staff transferring to Pevich on Rhine.

The great battle on the north front continued unabated in intensity. Two focus-points had developed: in the direction of Xanten (XXXXVII Pz Corps) and from Weeze to Kevelar (7 FS Jaeg Div). Our space within the "bridge-head Wesel" became ever more and more contracted. Again and again the defense lines along the main roads were broken through by armor spearheads; our ammunition supplies had melted away and there was no opportunity of replenishing them as for days past already, all traffic across the Rhine had been impossible or the possible volume so small as to be negligible.

6 March 45

On 6 Mar 2 FS Corps received the order to take over the sector here-

tofore held by Pz Corps XXXXVII (Gen v Luetwitz) together with the divisions committed there. Staff of Pz Corps XXXXVII was retired across the Rhine. Staff of FS AOK Schlessen also transferred across the Rhine toward the East on the same day. Hence all units herded together in the Bridgehead were controlled by the V FS Corps as "Commander of the Bridgehead" Mesel. Pressure by the British became particularly strong against the 6 FS Jaeg Div (Flocher) on both sides of the road to Alpen, and by the Americans operating from Rheinberg in a northerly direction against elements of the 8 FS Jaeg Division and remnants of the 116 Pz Div who held out excellently against the strong enemy. Corps Command Post was transferred to Ferrich.

7 Mar 45

Xanten was lost in the evening. Pressure at the enemy focus-points became ever heavier and our area ever more contracted. . . Serious lack of ammunition for artillery and mortars. . . No supply coming forward. . . Concentric fire by enemy artillery into bridgehead, enemy being in possession of the heights which gave him an insight into the positions right up to the Rhine. . . The only traffic possible within the bridgehead was by motorcycle with sidecar during firing pauses. Improvised means of communication rendered extremely difficult in the daytime as telephone connections could not be maintained. . . But worst of all was the effect of the flame throwing tanks on the morale of our infantrymen who felt themselves powerless against this weapon.

8 Mar 45 (Sketch 5)

Particularly heavy attacks against the 7 FS Jaeg Div (middle sector)



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and against the 16 Pz Div (left wing). Toward evening also against the 6 FS Jaeg Div with elements of the 84 and 180 Inf Div, and against the 190 Inf Div between the 7 and 8 FS Jaeg Div. Despite tenacious resistance by the over-tired, illequipped front, the enemy gained ground in all focus-points. The 6 and 7 FS Jaeg Div and the remnants of the 116 Pz Div held out particularly well in this defense action. Returning to staff headquarters in the evening after having gained a clear insight into the situation at the individual divisions I reported the altogether hopeless position to the Army, and proposed abandonment of the bridgehead during the night of 9 Mar at latest. For this purpose I requested that I be given an answer in the affirmative or negative by 1700 on 9 Mar as it would be impossible to get the order through later than that, and also an orderly retirement across the Rhine could then no longer be vouched for. Demolition of the two bridges at Wesel, a railway and a road bridge, (for which demolition I was held personally responsible in terms of Hitler directive) would be impossible later, as the crossing of these bridges was already rendered impossible and the demolition preparations destroyed by enemy artillery fire. If the order were to come too late, as had always been the case with orders of this nature, it would be impossible to retire any considerable forces to the east banks of the Rhine for the purpose of preventing an early crossing of the Rhine by the enemy. I pointed out that I considered it senseless sacrifice to hold out longer than to the 9 March. Late that evening the repeated Army order arrived: proposals rejected, hold out. I warned and again requested that 1700 on 9 Mar be set as the latest

and despite the imminent threat of a court-martial again suggested the abandonment. The troops knew nothing of this.

9 Mar 1945

Enemy attacked Birten and Alpen. Birten lost, enemy continued attack in direction of the big road crossing northeast of Alpen. Americans attacked Ossenberg. Heavy artillery fire on roads and assembly areas. Also fire by a number of light batteries. Roadbridge Wesel twice interrupted by bombardment. I sent <sup>current</sup> ~~running~~ reports on situation together with losses to the Army. In the morning I again requested abandonment and called 1700 hours back to mind.

As a preparatory measure I ordered two special missions staff officers from each division to come in to Staff Headquarters at 1400 by motorcycle to receive orders. Together with Chief I prepared abandonment order with exact timetable and consulted commander of engineers about the traffic at the intended crossing points by ferries, assault boats etc. At 1700 all plans were ready and all that was wanting was the redeeming assent. At 1800 I made the last exact report of the evening. Hitler had not yet decided. Negotiations were taking place. At last, about 1900, consent - i.e. the order to abandon, arrived. At 1905 the special missions staff officers were going to leave by different roads to the respective divisional artillery and combat groups, having instructions to report personally the passing on of the order.

At 2000 already those units nearest the bridges were on their way. Unfortunately the railway bridge soon became useless for heavy traffic, which accordingly, had to be redirected. Without interruption the rear services and artillery retired

throughout the night without any friction worth mentioning, whilst light equipment and infantry crossed simultaneously at three ferry points and by assault boats. These comprised the still considerable remnants of six infantry divisions and two Panzer divisions together with Corps troops.

10 March 45

In the night of 10 Mar combat echelon of the staff of 2 F3 Corps recrossed the Rhine after the main body of the forces had reached the eastern banks and rearguard units had received their instructions to hold out for a further twentyfour hours and mislead enemy to believe that the old line was still manned. The weather was favorable to our retiring movement. In the morning of 10 Mar there was a light rain and ground fog so that the ferry service was also able to operate throughout the day. About 0500 the road bridge was blasted, the railway bridge having been rendered useless, for any but pedestrian traffic, by enemy artillery fire. At 1200 everything had been retired with the exception of the rearguard.

On the east banks F3 Corps was assigned the sector extending approximately from two kilometers south of Bislich to about three kilometers southeast of Emmerich.

Sketch 6

Covering positions were immediately set up at the threatened crossing points. So far as not already exploded, the entire artillery went into position distributed along the sector. But the most important work for all units was that of reorganizing, of resting the combat troops and replenishing supply of weapons, munitions and other equipment.

On the west banks of the Rhine our retirement had remained concealed from

the enemy. His artillery fire continued directed at our old lines. The weather being unfavorable for flying air reconnaissance in the rear areas east of the Rhine was also not carried out.

During the night of the 10 Mar the rearguard units were brought across by the tireless assault boats without any interruption by the enemy. On 12 Mar Staff of 2 FS Corps (1 Echelon) transferred command post from east of Bislich to a farm three or four kilometers southeast of Bocholt, where staff of XXXXVII Pz Corps (Gen v Luetwitz) had been until then. Pz Corps XXXVII moved south. Where to is unknown to me.

12 Mar to 21 Mar 45 Sketch 6

Fortification works replenishing units with personnel and equipment. Training of recruits. Reconnaissance battalion 12 and Assault Gun Brigade 12 in reserve for reconditioning and replenishing, but heavy equipment arrived only in negligible quantities.

Weeresgruppe and Army expected an early <sup>major</sup> attack across the Rhine. Emmerich and Rees, opposite Xanten and Wesel respectively, were mentioned as probable focus-points for a crossing. The beginning of the offensive was apparently delayed by flood-waters of the Rhine, perhaps also by supply difficulties. The troops themselves expected it daily without in any way becoming excited. The bad position in the East and the defenseless <sup>state</sup> of their homeland had a far more depressing effect on the spirits of the troops during this period, as daily the mighty air fleets flew uninterrupted into our homeland.

Signed: Eugen Weindl

Arnhem

Naal

Nijmegen  
P.S.

Situation end Sep 1944

\*Reichswald\* I FD Corps  
(Reichs forest)

Airlanding by enemy

Emmerich

St.

Cleve

Reichswald

Calcar

190  
Goch

II. Kappeln

Afferden

? ?

Heeze

*Moort*

1: 250000

Signed: Weindl

Reichs-  
wald

190 Inf Div  
Goch

Afferden

Middle December

2 FS Corps

Position begin Dec 44

Geldern

1: 250000

Signed: Meindl

180

Venlo

Kempen

Suechteln

Hermann

8 (from Jan 45)

Roermond

Recon Bat 12  
(Corps Reserve)

Muenchen-  
Gladbach

Huebner

Maasbracht

Karken

Heinsberg

Maastrich

Reichswald

Goch

Keppeln

XXXXVII

Uden

Xanten

190 Inf Div

*MARS*

Weeze

7

Kervenheim

84

Sonstbeck

LXXVII

Kevelar

2 FS Corps: Situation on 19 Feb 45

both sides of Goch

1: 100000

Geldern

Signed: Meindl

Goch

3 Mar  
LXXXXVI

Xanten

Wesol

about 25 Feb 45

4 Mar  
XXXXVII

Weeze

II (until 3 Mar)

about 28 Feb 45

Sonsbeck

*about 3 Feb 45*

Kevelar

XXXXVII

190  
Geldern

Rheinberg

Maas

Horstgen

Sevelen

7  
Rheurd

Americans

2 FS Corps took over sector of  
LXXXXVI AK on 3 Mar 45

1: 100000

Signed: Meindl



2 FS Corps: Situation on 8 Mar 45

1:100000

Signed: Meindl

Elements of artillery and Army artillery

Xanten

Wesel

II

6 FS Jaeg Div

180 Inf Div

84 Inf Div

Pz units  
of XXXXVII AK

Boeninghardt

8 FS Jaeg Div

( 2/3 )

Rhein

7 FS Jaeg Div

Alpen

190 Inf Div 116 Pz Div

Elements 8 FS Jaeg Div

on 8 Mar 45

on about 6 Mar

Americans

Geldern

2 PS Corps on 12 to 21 Mar 45

1: 25000

Weindl

Emmerich

6 PS Jaeg Div

Cleve

*I*

8 PS Jaeg Div

Rees

7 PS Jaeg Div

Bielich

Ianten

*Handwritten mark*

Heesl

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page 4

REGISTERED

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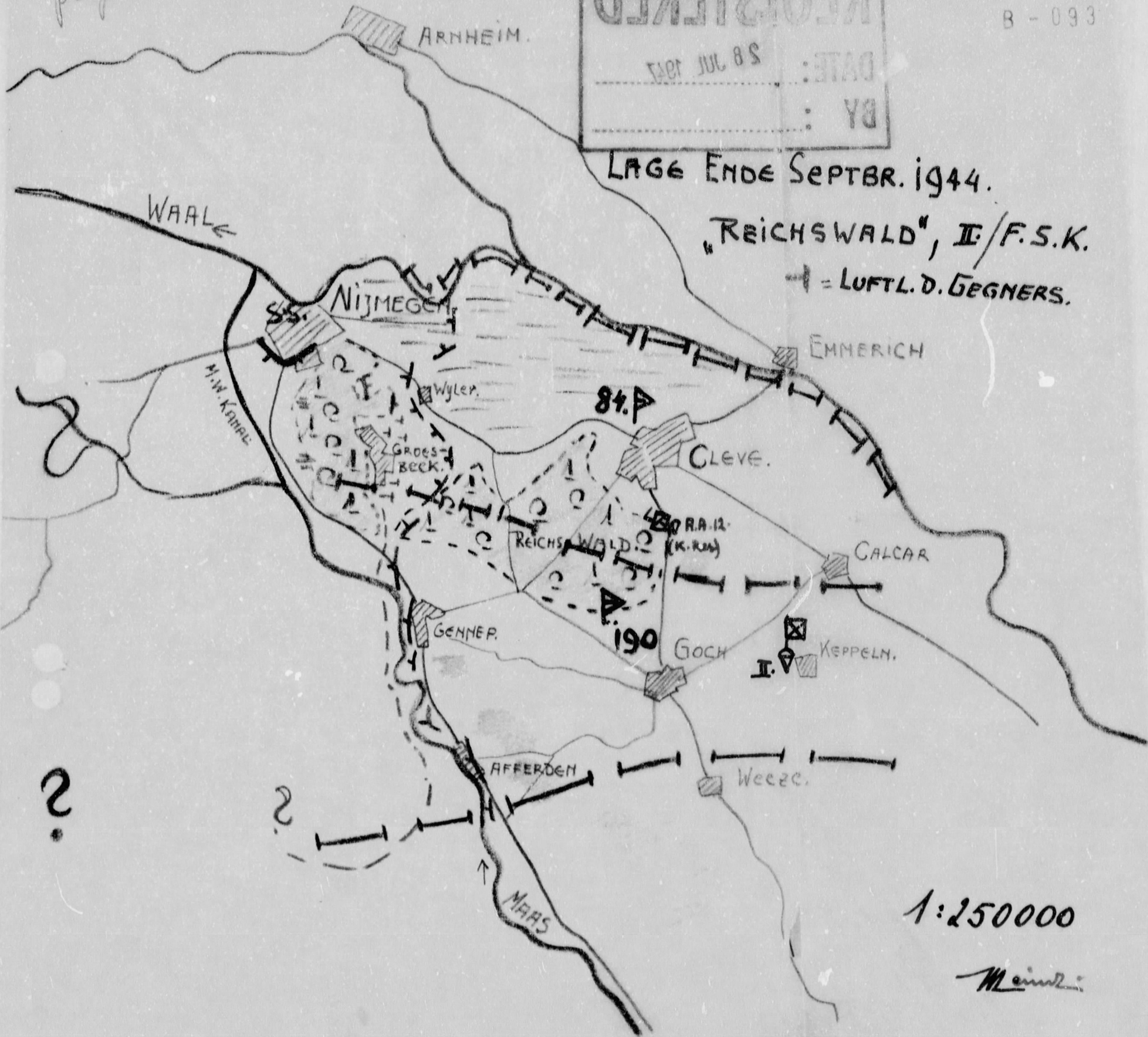
B - 093

DATE: 28 JUL 1944  
BY:

LAGE ENDE SEPTBR. 1944.

"REICHSWALD", II./F.S.K.

→ = LUFTL. D. GEGNERS.



?

?

1:250000

Meinl

No. 2.

II./F.S.K.

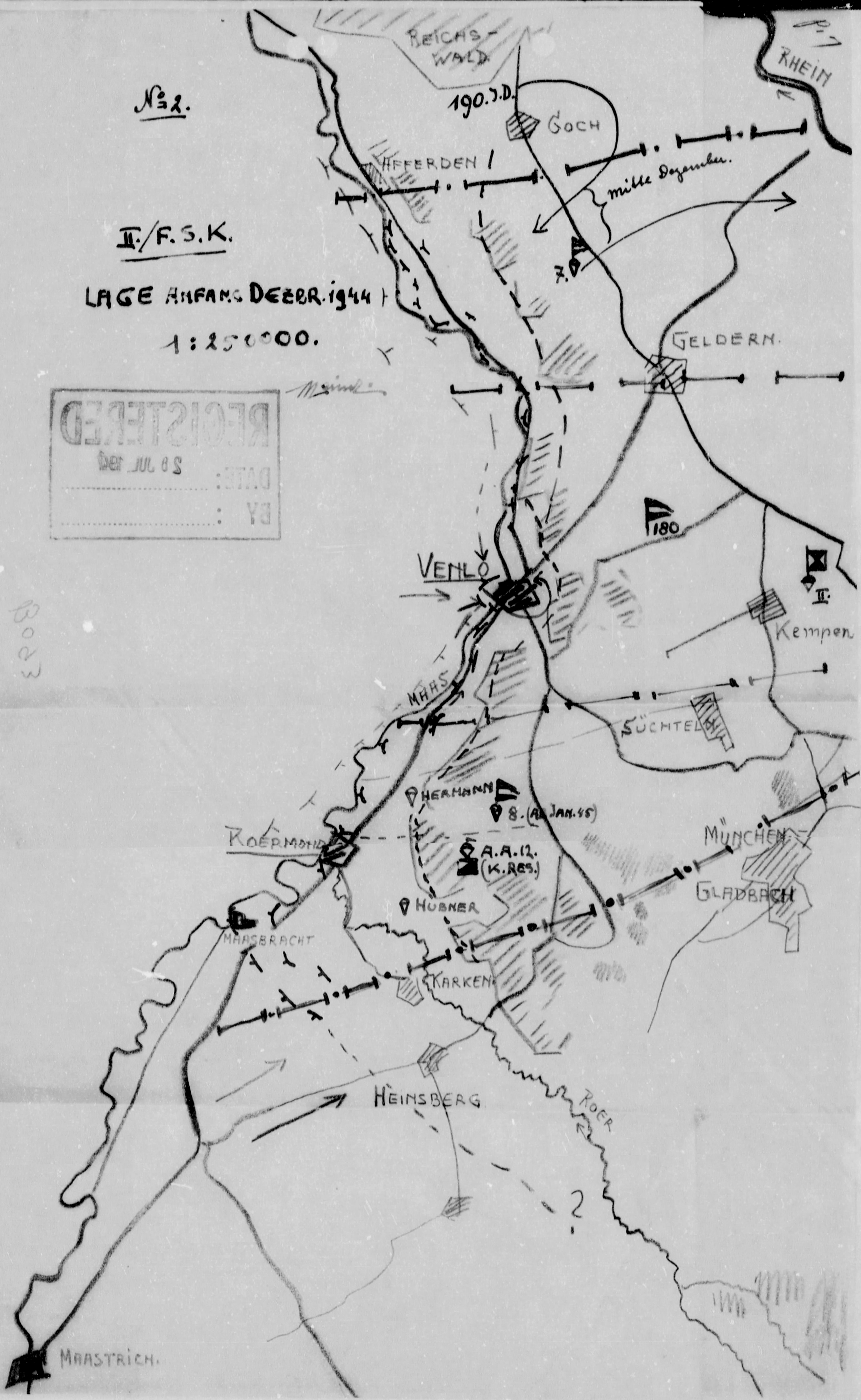
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 BY:

3023

B-993

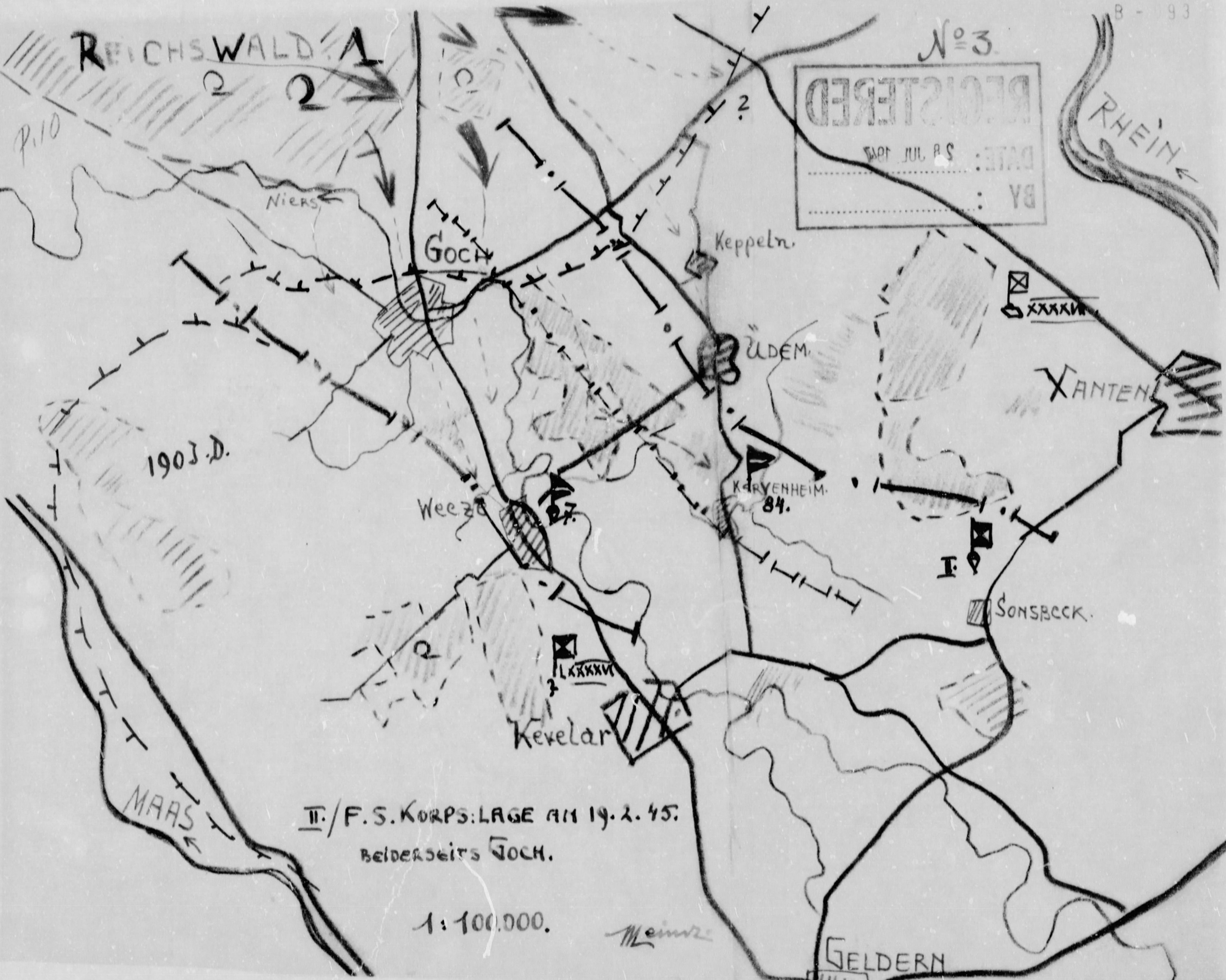


Nº 3.

REGISTERED  
 DATE: 28 JUL 1945  
 BY: \_\_\_\_\_

REICHSWALD. 1

P. 10



1903.D.

II. / F.S. KORPS: LAGE AM 19.2.45.  
 BEIDERSEITS GOCH.

1:100.000.

Meinor

GELDERN

Page 12

B-093 No 4.

II./F.S.K. AM 3. III. 45, ÜBERNIMMT DEN ABSCHNITT DES LXXXVI A.K.

1:100000.

3. III.

LXXXVI.

20.2.

GOCH

ANTE

WESEL

ETWA 25.2.45

WEEZE

ETWA 28.2.45

4. III.  
LXXXVII.

KEVELAR

II. (Bis 3. III.)  
SOMSBECK.

RHEIN

ETWA 3. III. 45

LXXXVII.

RHEIN-  
BERG.

MARS

190

GELDERN.

190

II.  
HORSTGEN

Sevelen

AM.

RHEURDT

REPRODUCED  
JUL 8 8  
BY

Page 14

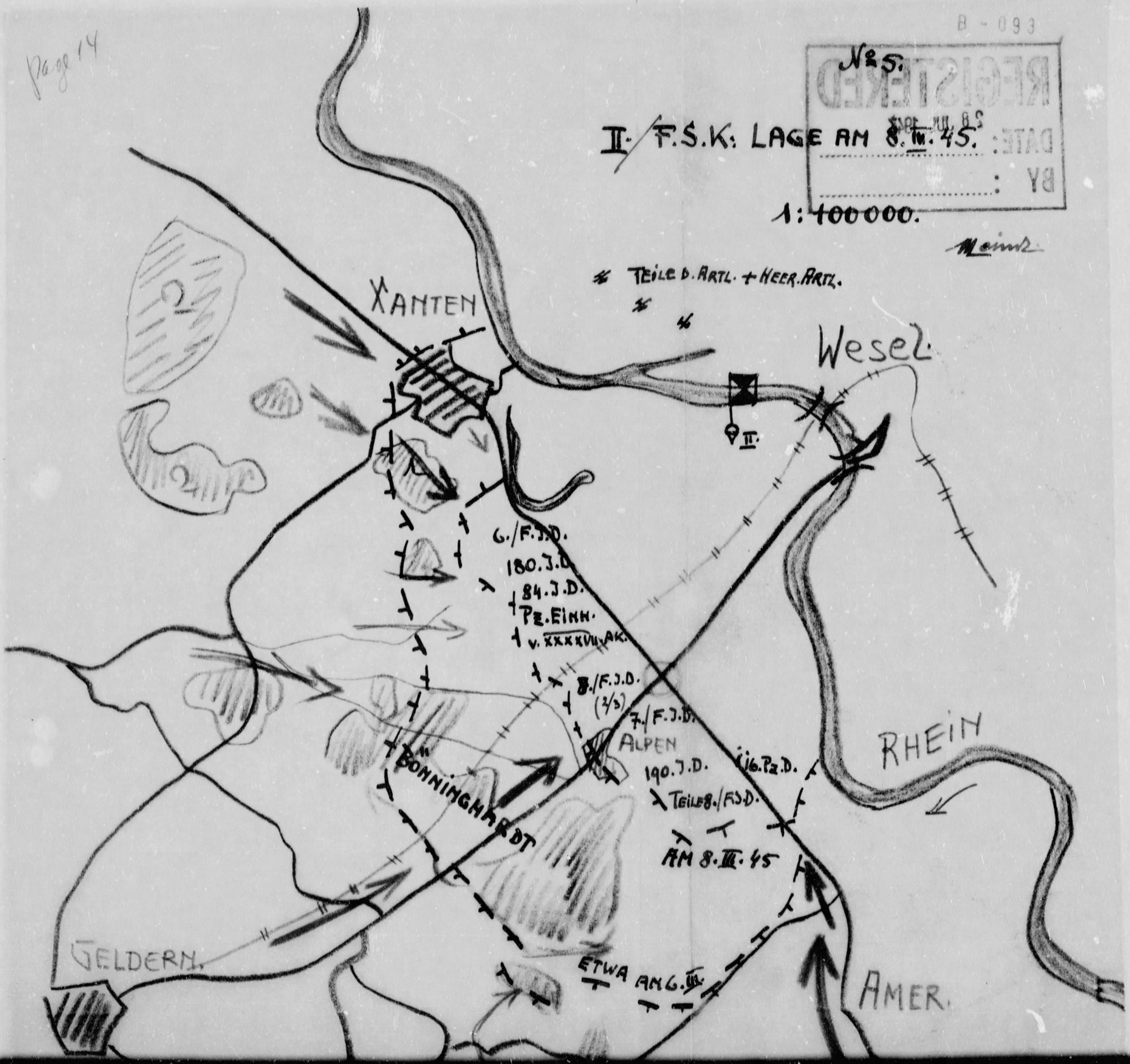
REGISTRIERT  
 № 5.  
 DATE: AM 8. III. 45.  
 BY: \_\_\_\_\_  
 1: 100000.

II. F.S.K. LAGE AM 8. III. 45.

1: 100000.

Meinl

\* TEILE D. ARTL. + HEER. ARTL.



XANTEN

Wesel

RHEIN

AMER.

GELDERN

BONNINGHARDT

ALPEN

AM 8. III. 45

6./F.J.D.  
 180.J.D.  
 84.J.D.  
 Pz.EINH.  
 v. XXXVII AK.

8./F.J.D. (2/3)

7./F.J.D.

190.J.D.

16.Pz.D.

Teile 8./F.S.D.

ETWA AM 6. III.



page 15'

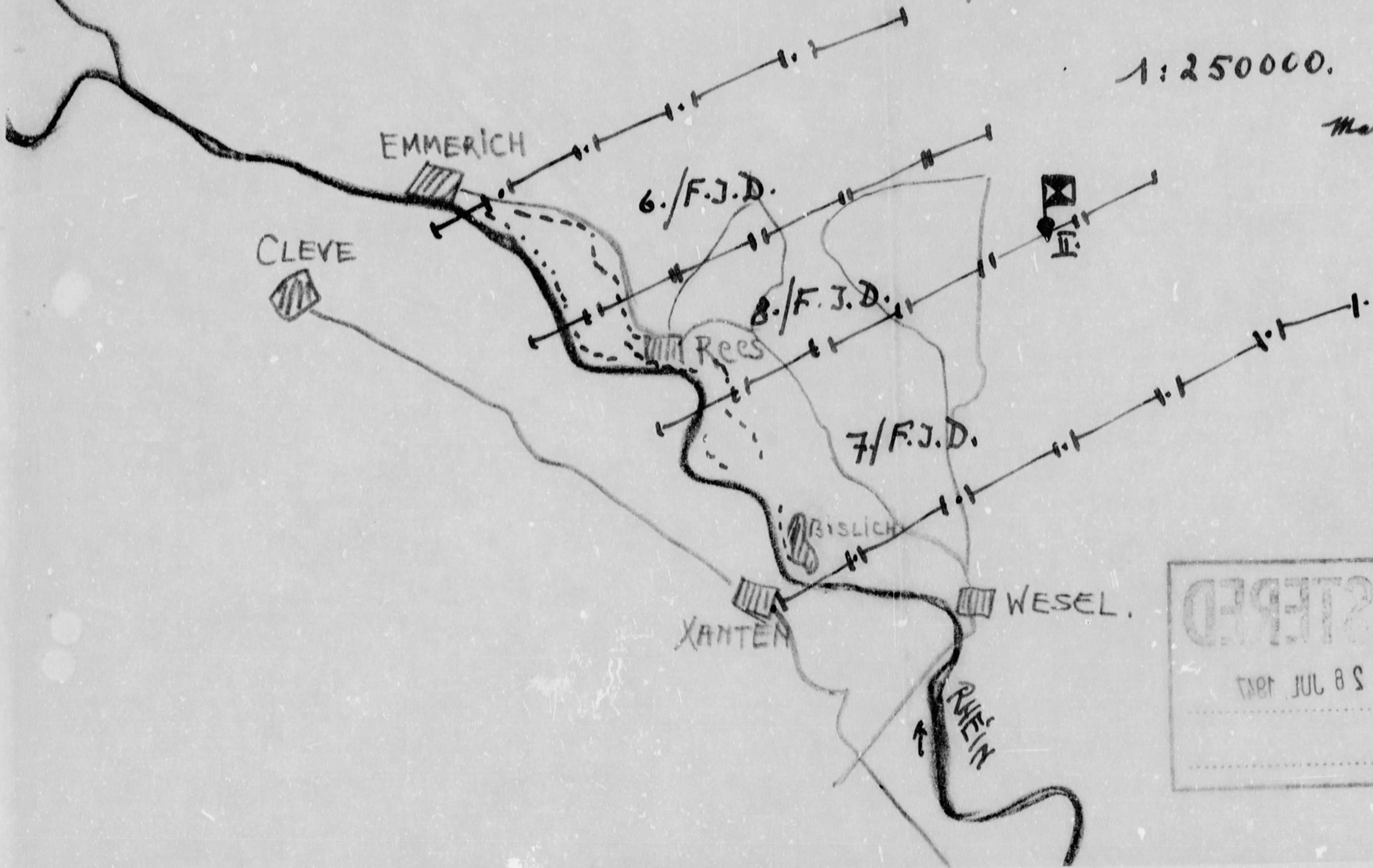
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B - 093

II./F.S.K. AM 12.III. - 21.III.45.

1:250000.

Meinr



REGISTERED  
 DATE: 28 JUL 1945  
 BY: \_\_\_\_\_