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REPORT NO. 32
HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)

ARMY HEADQUARTERS

2 Nov 50

THE CONCLUDING PHASE OF OPERATIONS
BY THE FIRST CDN ARMY

PART I

The Operations of First
Cdn Army, 2-11 Apr 45

AMENDMENT NO. 1

CANCELLED
RESTRICTED
DECLASSIFIED
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BY ape FOR DHIST NDHQ
DATE: NOV 10 1986

1. Page 16, para 38, line 7, after Bde delete under command
2. Page 18, para 43, line 3, after 28 Mar 45, insert but which had reverted to command of 5 Cdn Armd Div at 0900 hrs 31 Mar 45,
3. Appendix "C", Map, Operation "DESTROYER", in title delete under command

G. W. Nicholson Lt. Col.
for (C.P. Stacey) Colonel
Director Historical Section

DECLASSIFIED

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10 Dec 49

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PART I

The Operations of First
Cdn Army, 2-11 Apr 45

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RESTRICTED

R E P O R T NO. 32
HISTORICAL SECTION (G.S.)
ARMY HEADQUARTERS

10 Dec 49

The concluding phase of
operations by the First
Canadian Army 2 Apr - 5 May 45

Part I: The Operations of First
Cdn Army, 2-11 Apr 45

Reference Maps: G.S.G.S. 2541, Holland, 1:100,000
Sheets 1A, 2A, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

G.S.G.S. 4416, Germany, 1:100,000
Sheets L1, L2, L3, M1, M2, M3, N1,
N2, P1, Q1, and all corresponding
maps of scales 1:25,000 and 1:50,000.

1. This narrative continues the series of official reports dealing with the operations of the First Canadian Army in North-West Europe. It describes the last phase of the campaign from 2 Apr 45, at which time General H.D.G. Crerar's Headquarters assumed control of Canadian operations east of the Rhine, to the signing of the instrument of surrender by plenipotentiaries of the German High Command at Field Marshal Montgomery's Tactical Headquarters on 4 May, resulting in the cease fire order which became effective at 0800 hours on the following day. This report is a direct sequel to Report No. 19 and is written with particular reference to the operations and activities of the divisions under Lt-Gen G.G. Simonds' command. There is no break in chronology. The maps (G.S.G.S. Sheets) which especially apply to the various parts of the narrative are noted with the section headings throughout the report. Appendices "A" to "G" are attached to this Report and cover the operations described.

THE SITUATION OF FIRST CDN ARMY, 2 APR 45

2. On the morning of 2 Apr 45, the Army Commander addressed a group of War Correspondents at his Headquarters and summed up for them the story of the attachment of 2 Cdn Corps to Second Army and its subsequent return to his own command.

Last night the 2 Cdn Corps which up to that time had formed part of Second Army, returned to my command. The reason for this detachment of 2 Cdn Corps for the Rhine crossing was the same basically as put many British formations under my command in "Veritable" and at the outset of that operation put 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs under command of 30 Brit Corps,

i.e., the influence of terrain or topography and that of availability of communications on the grouping of forces. Until 2 Cdn Corps could clear Emmerich, having worked downstream from Rees, and until Canadian Army could then bridge and establish its own trans-Rhine communications at Emmerich, I could not effectively maintain or command 2 Cdn Corps. The bridge and its approaches were completed at 2100 hrs yesterday evening, thirty-two hours after the word "go" was given to the chief engineer, a highly creditable job of work. Another bridge should be completed by tomorrow.

(W.D., G.O.C.-in-C., First Cdn Army, April 1945: Appx "A", Remarks to Warcos, 2 Apr 45)

3. Of the tasks which lay ahead General Crerar explained that his main and most immediate responsibility was to secure the line Almelo - Deventer. Thereafter he must force the Ijssel river from the east and clear as far west as the line Apeldoorn - Otterloo - Renkum so that the very important road and railway communications of Nijmegen, Arnhem, Zutphen, and Hengelo might be developed and used. As the G.O.C.-in-C. pointed out, this operation, away from Berlin instead of towards it, might seem a strange one, but upon its success would depend the Army Group's future progress into Germany proper, for the communication and maintenance possibilities that these centres afforded were essential to Field Marshal Montgomery's intentions. (Ibid). While Lt-Gen Simonds' 2 Cdn Corps attacked westwards across the Ijssel along the Deventer - Zutphen front; 1 Cdn Corps was to undertake an assault crossing of the lower Rhine near Arnhem, capture that place and secure a bridgehead about it. General Crerar also explained that if this operation was successful it would speed up the start of the rail and road bridges at Arnhem and he concluded "... for that very reason it is also important to the Army Group as a whole". (Ibid, para 11)

4. Besides the Ijssel crossing, 2 Cdn Corps would have another onerous task; that of developing an armoured thrust into north-east Holland to clear the enemy from that area in preparation for the advance of the Army into northern Germany. To accomplish all this would require a large force and so the Army Commander assigned to 2 Cdn Corps 1, 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs, 4 Cdn Armd Div, 2 Cdn Armd Bde, and by way of extra fast moving fire power, the two Canadian armoured car regiments (1 Cdn Armd C. Regt (R.C.D.) and 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt). This formidable mass constituted, in General Crerar's own words, "a very strong corps". (Ibid, para 12). With most of the available Canadian fighting formations operating under Lt-Gen Simonds' command the greater part of the other Canadian Corps would, for the time being, be composed of British troops. Lt-Gen C. Foulkes now had 5 Cdn Armd Div and 49 (W.R.) Inf Div, and in another few days 5 Brit Inf Div was to be placed at his disposal.* (Ibid).

* Actually 5 Brit Inf Div never came under command 1 Cdn Corps as previously planned (General Crerar's Despatch, 27 May 45, op cit).

5. In his directive to Generals Foulkes and Simonds on 2 Apr, General Crerar reiterated his plans for the two corps which he had set out in his previous directives on 10 Mar and 24 Mar 45. (Sec Report No. 186, paras 182, 183). He also added that Lt-Gen Simonds would have prior call on the resources which could be made available by First Cdn Army and 84 Group R.A.F. With these immense resources behind him Lt-Gen Simonds' intention for 2 Apr was to send 4 Cdn Armd Div to the north-east to the area of Bornic and Delden, which he had taken over from 30 Corps, to relieve elements of 43 (W.) Div there. His two infantry divisions were to continue northward, 2 Cdn Inf Div "positioning" a brigade group about Doetinchem, then one further north about Hengelo and Vorden and finally level with Zutphen and to the east, (about Almen - Veldwijk - Warken). 3 Cdn Inf Div was intended to keep up a parallel progress on the left flank of the corps. It was to hold the area from Beek to Elten with one brigade, and try to push out toward Zevenaar. The second brigade would be centred around Wehl; the third brigade was to get to the area immediately south of Zutphen, including Baak, Toldijk and Steenderen. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, April 1945: Appx 5, Intentions, 2 Apr 45)

6. Early on 2 Apr these plans began to take shape, and as 2 Cdn Corps exerted pressure to the north Lt-Gen Foulkes' troops also swung into action to clear the "island" between Nijmegen and Arnhem, thus ensuring the security of Lt-Gen Simonds' left flank.* At this time the dispositions of 2 Cdn Corps were as follows. On the extreme left 9 Cdn Inf Bde together with elements of 7 Cdn Recce Regt and 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt were holding a line from the village of Elten north-eastwards to the area of Loerbeek. 7 Cdn Inf Bde was holding Kilder and pressing close on Wehl with Regina Rif, while 8 Cdn Inf Bde had its battalions in rear of 9 Cdn Inf Bde's positions with R. de Chaud moving up to pass through Wehl with the object of forcing the Oude Ijssel near Laag - Keppel. Between 7 Cdn Inf Bde and the Oude Ijssel the divisional reconnaissance regiments were in full control with 7 and 8 Cdn Recce Regts in contact south of Wijnbergen. In the centre the forward troops of 2 Cdn Inf Div (R.H.C. and R. de Mais of 5 Cdn Inf Bde) were strongly established north of Doetinchem, which had been taken by Calg Highrs with the assistance of 8 Cdn Recce Regt. 6 Cdn Inf Bde was at this time some 6000 - 7000 yds to the rear, with S. Sask R. in Terborg, Camerons of C. near Etten and Fus M.R. around Veldhunen and Ulft. South-west of Ulft, but ready to move up, was 4 Cdn Inf Bde with orders to advance on the axis Terborg - Zelhem - Hengelo - Vorden and secure a bridgehead over the Twente Canal. (W.Ds., H.Q. 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 Cdn Inf Bdes and Units, 1-2 Apr 45; AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/H,

* This operation, known as "Destroyer" called for a two phase attack, the first by 49 (W.R.) Inf Div on the right commencing at 0600 hrs 2 Apr; the second by 11 Cdn Inf Bde on the left and timed to start at 1730 hrs or later. (AEF: 45/1 Cdn Corps/C/F, Docket I, folio 1: Summary of Ops 1 Cdn Corps, 1-14 Apr 45; also AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V: April 1945: Liaison Officers Reports, 01200 A).

Docket I: Ops Log, April 1945, Serial 2619; also see map "A" attached to this report, "Situation of 2 Cdn Corps and Flanks" at 0200 hours, 2 Apr 45). The present task of 2 Cdn Armd Bde was to provide immediate support for the advance northward. To this end 10 Cdn Armd Regt was supporting 2 Cdn Inf Div, 27 Cdn Armd Regt was supporting 3 Cdn Inf Div, and 6 Cdn Armd Regt was still west of the Rhine but under orders to cross the river shortly. (W.Ds., 6, 10, and 27 Cdn Armd Regts, 1-2 Apr 45)

7. On the right between Doetinchem and Ruurlo "D" Sqn 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt had been roaming freely for the past twelve hours and, together with the Royals of 8 Brit Armd Bde, had secured most of the vital points as far as the outskirts of Lochem, which troops of 30 Brit Corps (129 Bde of 43 (W.) Inf Div) were investing. (W.D., 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt, 1-2 Apr 45). The remainder of 43 (W.) Inf Div was occupied in sweeping eastwards along the south bank of the Twente Canal past Diepenheim. On the extreme right Gds Armd Div were fighting in Oldenzaal and east of Enschede. Behind the Guards, in the area of Groenlo, 3 Brit Inf Div was concentrated and ready to follow up the armoured advance. (AEF: 45/Second Army/C/D, Docket I). The intention of 30 Brit Corps was to continue its thrust to the northeast using Gds Armd Div, with 3 Brit Inf Div in close attendance while the Wessex Division would, on relief by 4 Cdn Armd Div, advance to seize Hengelo and safeguard Lt-Gen Horrocks left flank. (Ibid).

8. 4 Cdn Armd Div was by this time divided into two strong battle groups. Lion group (Brigadier J.C. Jefferson, D.S.O.), consisted of H.Q. 10 Cdn Inf Bde, 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt, 21 Cdn Armd Regt, Alq R., A. & S.H. of C., 10 Cdn Indep M.G. Coy, 9 Cdn Fd Sqn R.C.E., 15 Cdn Fd Amb and 14 Cdn A. Tk Bty. The task of this group was first to establish itself in the Ruurlo - Lochem area, relieving whatever units of 43 (W.) Inf Div remained there, and then seize crossing places over the Twente Canal to the east and west of Lochem. Tiger group comprising H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde (Brigadier R.W. Moncel, D.S.O., O.B.E.), 22 and 28 Cdn Armd Regts, Lake Sup R. (Mot), Linc and Welld R., as well as 23 Cdn Fd Regt (S.P.), 96 Cdn A. Tk Bty and 12 Cdn Lt Fd Amb, was to pass through Lion Group and advance eastwards against Delden. (AEF: 45/4 Cdn Armd Div/C/F, Docket I: Folio 13, "The Final Punch", Ops and Activities of 4 Cdn Armd Div, 30 Mar - 5 May 45). From their first concentration area east of the Rhine at Speldrop and Bienen the battle groups were allotted another more advanced concentration area about Westendorp (0975), and early on the morning of 2 Apr Lion Group began its move northward; meanwhile Tiger Group stayed back some distance waiting for developments ahead. (Ibid, and W.Ds., G.S., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Div and Bdes, 1-2 Apr 45).

9. Thus the advance of 2 Cdn Corps against the **Twenty-fifth German Army** was to be made in echelon formation, with Second British Army on its right plunging deep into the Reich along the axis Hengelo - Nordhorn - Lingen. On the eastern flank of 2 Cdn Corps would be 4 Cdn Armd Div directed on objectives many miles ahead. In the centre 2 Cdn Inf Div's

* 4/Summ: C.I.G.S./2/6, C.I.G.S. War Office Summary No. 302, 0715 hours 3 Apr 45, Map "A" attached.

modest aim was to cross the Twente Canal, while to the west and working up along the Ijssel River the "Water Rats" of 3 Cdn Inf Div would be directed on Zutphen. The advance of the armour would be, it was estimated, 48 hours ahead of 2 Cdn Inf Div and 72 hours ahead of the "Water Rats". This difference in time would keep the three formations in their relative positions in the echelon. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Div, April 1945; Appx 8, notes on forthcoming Ops, 3 Apr 45, see also Hist Sec Report No. 19, Operation "Plunder" 145-148 inclusive for enemy picture, 1 Apr 45)

7 CDN INF BDE'S ATTACK ON WEHL AND
THE EXPLOITATION WESTWARD, 2-3 APR 45*

10. Meanwhile on 3 Cdn Inf Div's front the operation to seize Wehl had begun. At 0400 hours Regina Rif sent two companies forward, each with a section of Wasps under command. The plan of attack was based on the information gained by the battalion's patrols during the past few hours. The attack went in after a heavy artillery and mortar concentration, "B" Coy on the right of the main road into the town, "A" Coy on the left. The objective of these two sub-units was the southern portion of the village. Once it was in our hands the remaining companies would take on the northern half. On account of the darkness it was not deemed advisable to use armour for the initial phase. Opposition to the advance was fairly stiff, but by 0600 hours "A" and "B" Coys were consolidating and the second phase went in supported by tanks from 27 Cdn Armd Regts. "C" and "D" Coys met determined resistance but, by 0930 hours, had gained their objectives. An official account of the attack states:

The methods of the enemy in this particular rearguard were effective. A few average troops with stern N.C.O. leadership, well supported by S.P. guns and mortars meant a serious delay and caused at least one brigade to deploy and one bn to attack.

(AEF: 45/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/F,
Docket V: Folio V, Op "PLUNDER"
(Capture of Wehl) prepared by
Regina Rif, 31 May 45 and Report
No. 26: Op "PLUNDER" by 7 Cdn Inf
Bde)

The success of Regina Rif at Wehl was most commendable, since in about five hours fighting the Reginas had trounced a force of over 200 enemy and taken over 70 prisoners. (*Ibid*, also W.Ds., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde and Regina Rif, 2 Apr 45).

* Reference maps: G.S.G.S. 4083, Holland, 1:50,000, Sheet 40 - Arnhem.
G.S.G.S. 4414, Eastern Holland, 1:25,000, Sheets 4002 - Zevenaar and 4003 - Doetinchem.
Also Appx "B".

11. By this time 1 C. Scot R. had been ordered forward with instructions to dispatch a company battle group (with tanks, carriers and mortars) to capture the bridge across the Oude Ijssel at Laag Keppel (9678). These orders however were soon changed and the entire brigade was switched westwards in the direction of Zevenaar and Didam. The thrust northwards now became the responsibility of 8 Cdn Inf Bde. (AEF: 45/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket V, Report No. 26, as above). The first unit to move west from Wehl was R. Wpg Rif led by "C" Coy and supported by tanks and some self-propelled 17 pr guns, but the enemy was apparently not in any way awed by the sight of this war column. The advancing troops were met with a hail of fire as soon as they left the village, and deployment became necessary. The battalion Commander, Lt-Col L.R. Fulton, D.S.O., now ordered "C" Coy to hold its ground, "A" Coy to clear the woods to the left of the main axis, "B" Coy to continue along the road, and "D" Coy to swing out to the right to secure the right flank. For the next few hours small arms fire hindered progress but by midnight "D" and "B" Coys had cleared their allotted areas and "C" Coy had reached the crossroads 1,000 yards east of Loil (9074). Casualties so far had been light and prisoners few. At about 0100 hours 3 Apr, "A" Coy pushed on through to occupy Loil followed by "D" Coy. The occupation here was of short duration for at 0400 hours orders were received to move on to Zevenaar. The R. Wpg Rif pushed off at 0530 hours, passed through Didam which was now held by 1 C. Scot R., and by 0800 hours were in the town. The remainder of the day passed without incident except for routine patrols, one of which, by "D" Coy, travelled about 1200 yards up the north-west road from Zevenaar but found no sign of the enemy. Meanwhile "A" Sqn 7 Cdn Recce Regt, which had for the past twelve hours been working along the flank Wehl - Loil, worked boldly to the north and by the morning of 3 Apr was tapping the southern approaches to Doesburg. (W.Ds., R. Wpg Rif, 7 Cdn Recce Regt, 2-3 Apr 45; also Op "PLUNDER": 7 Cdn Inf Bde Report No. 26 as above).

12. 1 C. Scot R's. advance on Didam was carried out in the best traditions of the military text books. Having gathered forty prisoners* in the original task from which they were recalled earlier on 2 Apr, the Scottish had set out for Didam at about 1800 hours and had advanced cross-country between the Winnipegs' axis and the railroad to the south. The first sign of opposition in the woods bordering the railway line was quickly dealt with by "C" Coy, which was leading, and after a short fierce fight the infantry gathered another twenty prisoners for the loss of four men. The move continued but after a while "C" Coy was again fired upon. This time the flame-throwers were whipped into play and the enemy crumbled. No longer hampered, the battalion consolidated near Holthuizen (9173) and patrolled to contact, bagging a further thirteen demoralized enemy soldiers. The next step westwards was Didam and "A" and "D" Coys were instructed to press on by way of Loil to the north, while the other two companies took the shortest direct route from Holthuizen. Shortly after midnight Lt-Col L.S. Henderson set out to follow "B" and "C" Coys and by 0500 hours 3 Apr 1 C. Scot R. were solidly settled in Didam having collected yet another twenty-five prisoners en route. (W.Ds., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 1 C. Scot R., 2-3 Apr 45).

* 858 Grenadier Regt, 346 Inf Div, AEF: 45/3 Cdn Inf Div/L/F, Docket I: 3 Cdn Inf Div Int Summary No. 93, 2 Apr 45.

13. Regina Rif had, so far, not moved from Wehl, but early on 3 Apr Lt-Col A.S. Gregory was asked to clear the woods south-west of the village and along the roads leading to the north-west, this being but a part of the brigadier's plan to ensure that the complete area between the river Ijssel on the north and west, the River Oude Ijssel on the east, and the Pannerdensche Kanaal and the Rhine on the south was free of the enemy. A good portion of this ground was already known to be clear, but the balance was sub-divided so that each battalion and the supporting squadron of the Reconnaissance Regiment had definite zones of responsibility. This task was completed on the morning of 4 Apr. (W.D., Regina Rif, 3 Apr 45; also 7 Cdn Inf Bde, Op "PLUNDER", Report No. 26, as above).

8 CDN INF BDE REACHES THE OUDE IJSSEL, 2-3 APR 45^{*}

14. While Brigadier T.G. Gibson's formation had been employed west of Wehl, 8 Cdn Inf Bde had struck out for Laag Keppel and the bridging sites across the Oude Ijssel. This advance began at 1300 hours on 2 Apr with Q.O.R. of C. leading the way. "C" Coy on the left did not have much trouble in covering the first thousand yards of the main road but the supporting tanks had a few tense moments in disposing of an enemy self-propelled gun which took our troops on as they crossed the start line. By 1400 hours both "C", and "B" Coy which was operating on the right, had gained sufficient ground to allow the other sub-units to pass through; "A" Coy took up the attack left of the road and "D" Coy went past "B" Coy on the right. The enemy here did not seem to be too well organized; certainly he showed no stomach for close quarter fighting; he would snipe until the Canadians closed in, then surrender (W.Ds., N. Shore R., Q.O.R. of C., 2-3 Apr 45; also AEF: 45/3 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket V, Special Report No. 30: Op "PLUNDER", Q.O.R. of C., Phase 2).

15. The next few hours saw "A" Coy blast its way beyond Eldrik (9577). The tanks had pressed on ahead of the infantry, "brewing" everything in their path and setting a fast pace for the foot soldiers. An enemy mortar position was overrun intact and by the end of the day seventy-five prisoners had been taken. N. Shore R. had by this time also moved up to attack westwards. At midnight "A" Coy was firm around the crossroads at Eldrik (north of Vogelhorst (9576)) with "D" Coy around the farm some 600 yards east of Eldrik. To the rear "B" and "C" Coys held the road from Fokkenkamp (9575) to Kelder (9675). (Ibid). The advance by Q.O.R. of C. was resumed at 0130 hours 3 Apr when "B" Coy was launched through "A" Coy to attack the southern half of Laag-Keppel (9678). The troops found the bridge across the river demolished but firmed up near it until relieved by R. de Chaud, at 0630 hours (Ibid).

16. The venture by N. Shore R. west from Eldrik was highly successful; by 2359 hours the battalion was firmly astride the road about 1500 yards west of Eldrik and patrolling

* Reference maps: As for para 10. Also Appx "B".

west towards Bevermeer (9178) (although this area had been reported clear by 7 Cdn Recce Regt) and north to the Oude Ijssel. (W.D., N. Shore R., 2-3 Apr 45). Later, on the morning of 3 Apr, N. Shore R. swung on to the northern route, having received orders to concentrate prior to attempting a crossing of the river. (Ibid, also 3 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 3 Apr 45, Serials 10, 25). As soon as Brigadier J.A. Roberts heard that the bridges on his front were useless, he ordered R. de Chaud up to relieve Q.O.R. of C. whose patrols to the waterway had been driven back. This relief had hardly been completed however when R. de Chaud was hastily embussed and directed to move back around and through the 2 Cdn Inf Div positions above Doetinchem with the object of entering the eastern part of Laag Keppel from the north. (Op "PLUNDER", Q.O.R. of C., Special Report No. 30, Phase 2).

THE OUDE IJSSEL IS CROSSED BY 8 CDN INF BDE, 3 APR 45*

17. As R. de Chaud set out on its long journey, N. Shore R. managed to get a platoon across the river which is approximately twenty-five yards wide at a point south-west of Hoog Keppel (9479). (Map G.S.G.S. 4414, Sheet 3903 - Steenderen). This bridgehead was established without undue trouble and the reinforcement of it began immediately while engineers started a bridge. Q.O.R. of C. on the right also crossed the river unopposed early that afternoon and settled comfortably in the north-west section of the town. (Ibid: and W.Ds., Q.O.R. of C., 5 Apr; also 3 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 3 Apr 45, Serials 33, 56). At this point, R. de Chaud made its appearance north of the Oude Ijssel only to find that Brigadier W.J. Megill's 5 Cdn Inf Bde had bounded forward with great dash from its positions north of Doetinchem and were in solid occupation of most of the area previously allotted to R. de Chaud. (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde, 2-3 Apr 45).

18. It may do well at this time to point out that the exploitation of 5 Cdn Inf Bde was not part of any co-ordinated effort with Brigadier Roberts' troops. It came about purely from initiative on the part of 5 Cdn Inf Bde, which appreciated the immediate needs of the flanking formation and having carried out its own task successfully proceeded to exploit solely to assist its neighbour. It can be placed on record as a first class example of unstinted co-operation by troops who were already weary from several days fighting but who nevertheless had an ever-open eye toward the common object. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, April 1945, Appx 3, Ops Log, 3 Apr, Serial 13). Both N. Shore R. and R. de Chaud lost no time in going forward; by 1900 hours R. de Chaud had reached Drempt (9180) and N. Shore R. was firmly consolidated on either side of the highway south of Hoog-Keppel. (3 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 3 Apr 45, Serials 80-85)

* Reference map: G.S.G.S. 4414, 1:25,000, Eastern Holland, Sheet 3903 - Steenderen. Also Appx "B".

19. The security of the line Hoog-Keppel - Wehl - Zevenaar - Didam freed 9 Cdn Inf Bde from further duty south of the Oude Ijssel, and at 1230 hours on 3 Apr Brigadier J.M. Rockingham's battalions, led by "B" Sqn 7 Cdn Recce Regt and S.D. & G. Highrs, began the trek which was to carry them along the axis Doetinchem - Hummelo - Toldijk - Baak and on to Zutphen. Maj-Gen R.H. Keefler's intention was for 9 Cdn Inf Bde to establish a firm base north of Baak (9788) preparatory to a set-piece attack on Zutphen. 8 Cdn Inf Bde was to hold Laag-Keppel with one battalion, the high ground north-west of Laag-Keppel with a second, while the third unit took on Doesburg. Brigadier Gibson's formation was to complete the clearance of its present area. 7 Cdn Recce Regt was to protect the divisional flank. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V, April 1945: Liaison Officer Reports, 031500).

3 CDN INF DIV ADVANCES TO SECURE THE LEFT FLANK:
THE APPROACHES TO ZUTPHEN, 3-4 APR 45*

20. The S.D. & G. Highrs had had no trouble securing their first objective on 3 Apr - the bridge (9582) across the stream north of Hummelo was captured intact without opposition and by 1650 hours the Glengarrians had consolidated with their forward troops at Toldijk. Nth N.S. Highrs then passed through their "A" Coy and by following the highway north reached the road junction (9687) near Baak. Since opposition was non-existent, the other three companies quickly covered the intervening ground to consolidate to the right and rear of "A" Coy. (W.Ds., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, S.D. & G. Highrs, Nth N.S. Highrs, 3-4 Apr 45). Patrols were immediately sent out in all directions; one carrier section contacted troops of 2 Cdn Inf Div on the right flank, another journeyed westwards to Bronkhorst, which was found clear of enemy, and "D" Coy moved through that village to guard the river crossings beyond it. At this point a short, sharp action occurred when "D" Coy, in conjunction with the carriers, cleared the dykes. While "D" Coy was thus employed, "B" Coy exploited to the north-west of Baak. (Ibid).

21. By midnight the brigade was generally firmed up except for "D" Coy of Nth N.S. Highrs, which had an uncomfortable time under heavy shellfire on the left and suffered several casualties. (Ibid). H.L.I. of C. having passed through the North Novas earlier got as far as De Elter (9691), a tiny hamlet on the east bank of the Ijssel river, but here the enemy was encountered in greater strength and the leading elements of H.L.I. of C. dug in on the line which ran roughly from De Elter eastwards to a point some 800 yards north of De Zwaan (9791). Patrols were laid on for the night and the battalion probed the enemy's line. (W.Ds., H.L.I. of C., 27 Cdn Armd Regt, 3 Apr 45). The many long stretches of open ground which the infantry themselves could not explore were well taken care of by "C" Sqn 7 Cdn Recce Regt, whose small scout cars roamed far and wide on either side of the advancing foot soldiers. (W.D., 7 Cdn Recce Regt, 3 Apr 45; also 3 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, as above, 3 Apr, Serials 59, 63, 4 Apr; Serials 8, 9, 10, 13).

* Reference map: G.S.G.S. 4414, 1:25,000, Eastern Holland, Sheet 3803 - Zutphen. Also Appx "B".

22. On the following day, Brigadier Rockingham's men went forward again. As H.L.I. of C. made slow but steady progress on the left, S.D. & G. Highrs were swung around them to the right, their objective being the area of Leesten (9793). With "B" and "C" Coys leading, the troops slugged their way forward all day, meeting fanatical resistance from young Germans, who, according to one prisoner, had only recently arrived from central Germany. By 1700 hours, however, "C" Coy was across the road north-east of Leesten, with "B" Coy at Overkamp (9793) to the west. Opposition was extremely tough and crocodiles were requested in order to induce the enemy to give ground. In due time "A" and "D" Coys supported by crocodiles, were committed, with the result that by 2135 hours, the battalion was well settled on the stretch of road above Leesten. (W.D., S.D. & G. Highrs, 4 Apr 45). Meanwhile the Nth N.S. Highrs had gone into action on the right of the Glengarrians, and were on the way towards Warnsveld (9694). After a short delay due to the absence of armour, "A" and "B" Coys commenced their advance along the west side of the Vorden - Zutphen railway. (Ibid).

23. The leading troops debussed in the small woods astride the highway near Heekendaal (0092), then moved forward on foot at 1730 hours, accompanied by some tanks of 27 Cdn Armd Regt. "A" Coy followed the highway, "B" Coy the road to the right of it. Of the two routes, the left-hand one provided the more difficulties, for the houses along it harboured many a determined sniper, and each building had to be carefully approached and cleared. The resultant delay complicated matters, especially since "B" Coy had met hardly any resistance and was well ahead on the right. The right column therefore was ordered to hold until the left caught up. By 2300 hours, "A" Coy was able to report that its position was "slightly south-east of the hospital" near Groot Graffel (9794), and that 18 fanatical young prisoners had been taken. At this stage the rear companies were ordered to close up and, as soon as they had done so, the advance was taken up again. (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 4 Apr 45). But, as we shall see, the sealing off of Zutphen by way of Warnsveld was to be a long, trying and bloody business. (Ibid).

8 CDN INF BDE DRIVES NORTH TOWARDS ZUTPHEN, 3-4 APR 45*

24. While 9 Cdn Inf Bde covered the southern routes towards Zutphen 8 Cdn Inf Bde had been extremely busy. Having reached the northern bank of the Oude Ijssel on 3 Apr, all these battalions were able to enjoy a short rest. R. de Chaud was at Drempt (9280) probing the defences of Doesburg which lies to the west; N. Shore R. was firm west of Hoog Keppel and the "Queen's Own" occupied the woods

* Reference maps: G.S.G.S. 4414, 1:25,000, Eastern Holland, Sheets - 3902 - Doesburg, 3803 - Zutphen, 4003 - Doetinghem, and 3903 - Steenderen. Also Appx "B".

between that place and Laag Keppel to the south-east. The period of respite however was not to be a long one; for on the morning of 4 Apr, N. Shore R. was directed to the north to relieve Nth N.S. Highrs of 9 Cdn Inf Bde. The New Brunswick infantrymen moved off and by 1200 hours were occupying a quiet position (963868) astride the highway half way between Baakschemark (9786) and Covik (9486). From this position standing patrols of "A" Coy were placed far to the west near Bronkhorst and "C" Coy went some distance forward to relieve elements of H.L.I. of C. Here the N. Shore R. remained until relieved by C.H. of C. (M.G.) on the next day. (W.D., N. Shore R., 4-5 Apr 45).

25. Q.C.R. of C. had also journeyed further north. At 1300 hours 4 Apr, the rifle companies set out, "A" to occupy Eekhoorn (9285), "B" to Zwaarte Schaar (9283), "C" Coy to Rodenburg (9284) and "D" along the Hoefkenschestraat (9383). "A" and "C" Coys were the only ones to have any trouble; an enemy self-propelled gun engaged the advancing troops from the other side of the Ijssel river and each sub-unit suffered four casualties. The night came and passed without further incident, apart from a few moments of heavy shelling which did no damage. The general inactivity of the past twenty-four hours was to be appreciated all the more before the clearance of the river-bound area ahead would be complete. (W.D., Q.C.R. of C., 4 Apr 45; also 3 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 5 Apr 45; Serial 1). Further to the south, west of Drempt, R. de Chaud having patrolled boldly towards Doesburg, reported the old city strongly held by elements of 951 Grenadier Regt of 361 Inf Div: (Ibid), also First Cdn Army Intelligence Summary No. 280, 6 Apr 45).

THE INTENTIONS OF 7 CDN INF BDE, 4 APR 45*

26. The tasks which awaited 7 Cdn Inf Bde were dictated mainly by the fanatical resistance from 3 Para Trg Regt which 9 Cdn Inf Bde was meeting on the road to Zutphen. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/L/F, Docket I: Intelligence Summaries; No. 278 Para 3; 279, Part II, Para 3 (a)). In order to relieve the pressure in that area, it had been decided to send Regina Rif across into 4 Cdn Inf Bde's bridgehead (on the Twente Canal) and attack westwards, clearing that area between the canal and the railway as far as the railroad junction west of Eefde (9677) and also with the object of seizing the bridge site east of Eefde. Another unit (R. Wpg Rif) was to thrust out from the present area held by Camerons of C. west of Almen, (0196) and would secure the line of the road running north and south from the bridge west of Huize de Voorst (9796). This road, it was planned, would be the start line for a later assault on Zutphen by 8 Cdn Inf Bde. 1 C. Scot R. would be in reserve but prepared to carry out a crossing of the Berkel stream (9895) from the Nth N.S. Highrs area north-east of Warnsveld. H Hour for Regina Rif's attack through 2 Cdn Inf Div was set for dawn 5 Apr. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde and units,

* Reference map: G.S.G.S. 4414, 1:25,000, Eastern Holland, Sheet 3803 - Zutphen.
Also Appx "B".

4 Apr 45). With the new operation at hand, Brigadier Gibson's battalions moved from their positions between Wehl and Zevenaar during the afternoon of 4 Apr and darkness found them concentrated south-west of Vorden (0390) preparing for the next day's battle. (Ibid).

OPERATIONS BY 2 CDN INF DIV, 2-4 APR 45^x

27. Probably the most spectacular Canadian effort during the first few days of April was that of 2 Cdn Inf Div, which now began a long period of incessant movement along various and widely separated axes. From the very beginning a hot pace was set by Maj-Gen A.B. Matthews' troops, and as time passed the advance provided a parallel to the celebrated pursuit through France during the previous year. (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket II, Monthly and Weekly Summary of Ops, 1-2 Apr 45). The columns set out at about 0700 hours and passed through Doetinchem led by "B" Sqn 8 Cdn Recce Regt, followed by the R. Regt C's. battle group. Progress was good; only odd batches of enemy were met and these were quickly bypassed. Hengelo^{**} (0384) was declared clear during the morning. The advance continued up to the bridge south of Vorden, but here there was some delay for the enemy had carried out a successful demolition. The "Recce", however, had found another means of crossing (0390) to the east and, as the engineers began to repair the bridge on the main axis, the infantry column followed the diversion. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Apr 45). date?

28. By noon the leading troops had reached the Berkel river (some 1500 yards south of the Twente Canal) to find that our armoured cars were guarding the single usable bridge (0297). Over this small structure the column was able to approach the main canal opposite Harfsen (0199). Fortune was not on our side however; the bridge over the Twente Canal, though intact, was obviously prepared for destruction, and the enemy on seeing the reconnaissance cars began a fire fight which was to last for over two hours. During all that time he was prevented from blowing his charges, and it appeared that with reinforcements our troops might be able to safeguard the crossing place. But this was not to be; as the advance elements of R. Regt C. came up to thicken the fire of the "Recce", the Germans blew up the bridge literally in their faces. Despite this disappointment, the Commanding Officer of R. Regt C. at once ordered extensive patrolling to determine whether other means of crossing existed. Against stiffening opposition, R. Regt C. deployed along the Canal bank while

* Reference maps: G.S.G.S. 4414, 1:25,000, Eastern Holland, Sheets 3903 - Steenderen, 3804 - Lochem, 3803 - Zutphen, 3703 - Bathmen, 3704 - Holten. (Also Appx "B").

** This is a small village south of Twente Canal. It is not to be confused with the town of Hengelo (3607) near Enschede.

Brigadier Cabeldu formulated his plans for the crossing. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Apr 45).

29. At 1700 hours the brigade commander outlined his plan. R. Regt C. was to make the assault at 1830 hours and clear as far as the line of the railway 600 yards to the north of the canal. While this was being done the engineers would commence bridging operations. R.H.L.I. was to concentrate as reserve battalion north of Vorden but was required to provide a company to reinforce the main effort by R. Regt C. Essex Scot was to position its men southwest of Almen (0296) so as to counter any threat from Zutphen where the enemy was believed to be in considerable strength. The task of the reconnaissance squadron was to remain at Almen until after dark, then to act as right flank protection. The tanks were to be in direct support of R. Regt C. for the attack (*ibid*). Later, as R.H.L.I. and Essex Scot vacated their positions to assist in the expansion of the bridgehead, the battalions of 6 Cdn Inf Bde would come forward to take over from them. (*Ibid*; also W.Ds., 6 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 2-3 Apr 45)

30. At 1830 hours, R. Regt C. began crossing the Twente Canal against moderate opposition and the engineers started to erect a bridge (0197) (near the one which had been demolished). By 2300 hours "D" Coy R.H.L.I. had joined Lt-Col R.M. Lendrum's four companies on the northern bank of the obstacle. By this time, however the enemy had recovered his balance somewhat and had begun to mortar and shell the proposed bridgesite so heavily that our sappers were forced to take cover and abandon their work temporarily. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 3 Apr 45). While Brigadier F.N. Cabeldu's infantry was settling its claim in the new bridgehead, 6 Cdn Inf Bde was allotted the task of tapping the approaches to Zutphen on the divisional left flank, as well as filling the great gap in the line of communication left by 4 Cdn Inf Bde's spectacular advance during the past morning. S. Sask R. arrived first to take over from R.H.L.I. while that unit prepared for its move into the bridgehead; the change over being complete by 1800 hours. (W.D., S. Sask R., 2 Apr 45). Following this Fus M.R. took up positions just west of Hengelo while Camerons of C. established themselves around Keienburg (0083) further south. (W.Ds., Fus M.R., Camerons of C., 2-3 Apr 45).

31. During the night 2/3 Apr, R. Regt C. continued to firm up its gains despite the shelling and the proximity of the enemy, who persisted in harassing our troops with small arms fire. By daylight the small bridgehead was quite secure, the shelling had almost ceased and the engineers were working fast to provide a means by which the supporting weapons might cross the Twente Canal. A class 40 raft was finished at 1000 hours, whereupon the builders turned their hands to the erection of a class 40 bridge. (2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, *op cit*, 3 Apr, Serial 2811). 6 Cdn Inf Bde had spent the hours of darkness in patrolling towards the west; in these sorties some prisoners* fell into our hands and gave sufficient information to indicate that the way to Zutphen was by no means open yet (*ibid*: Serials 2790, 2792, 2795, 2798).

* 361 Inf Div; 1 Para Trg Bn. (First Cdn Army Intelligence Summary No. 277, 3 Apr 45).

32. The immediate intention, however, was to get the rest of 4 Cdn Inf Bde into the bridgehead, and to bring 5 Cdn Inf Bde up to concentrate near Hengelo (8284), leaving Brigadier J.V. Allard's battalions to contain the western flank until such a time as 3 Cdn Inf Div could move up some of its troops into that area. (3 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 3 Apr 45, Serial 16: W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 2-3 Apr 45). Actually, the general delay, though caused to some extent by the bridging restrictions, was also due to the fact that neither R.H.L.I. or Essex Scot **could move into the bridgehead until fully relieved** by 6 Cdn Inf Bde; while the latter formation would not be free for that task until 8 Cdn Inf Bde had advanced sufficiently to take over the operations against Zutphen. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 & 9 Cdn Inf Bdes, 2-4 Apr 45).

33. By midday on 3 Apr the enemy had begun to react against the R. Regt C; first with patrols, then at 1400 hours with heavy bombards over the entire front. This was followed by several counter-attacks aimed at the right flank of R. Regt C., but these were effectively dispersed by the supporting artillery with considerable loss to the enemy. During the afternoon all the battalion's "F" echelon vehicles managed to get over the canal, together with "B" Sqn 10 Cdn Armd Regt and a squadron of 8 Cdn Recce Regt. The enemy, however, continued to shell the area, concentrating mainly on the rafting and bridging sites; all this caused a great deal of delay in getting fresh troops over to the northern bank of the canal. At about 2000 hours a company of R.H.L.I. was ferried over, and for a while it appeared that at last the operation would go on unhindered; but at 2100 hours the German guns were lucky enough to register on the rafts. Fire then became so heavy and so accurate that it forced the engineers to stop work, thus bringing about another delay, for the rafts had to be repaired before any further ferrying was possible. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 3-4 Apr 45)

34. After an effective counter-bombardment by our own artillery and the supporting tanks of 10 Cdn Armd Regt, the damaged ferry was refitted, enabling the remaining sub-units of R.H.L.I. (now relieved by S. Sask R.) to cross the canal and take up positions on the left of R. Regt C. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, R.H.L.I., R. Regt C., 3-4 Apr 45; also 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 3 Apr 45, serials 2902, 2907, 2917, 2923, 2929, 2941, 2942). In the early hours of 4 Apr, Essex Scot **also crossed the water barrier and, although the troops were subjected to fairly heavy small arms fire and some shelling, Lt-Col J.E.C. Pangman was able to report "on objective"** at 1118 hours. (W.D., Essex Scot, 3-4 Apr 45). Essex Scot **now held the most forward position, centred on Harfsen** (0199), with R.H.L.I. on the left astride the railway facing west and R. Regt C. on the right facing east and north-east from Groot Asselt (0298) to Jude Horst (0298). (2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 3 Apr 45, serial 2966, 4 Apr, serial 3061)

35. 4 Cdn Inf Bde with 19 tanks and one squadron of 8 Cdn Recce Regt was now holding a firm bridgehead covering an area over 2000 yards long and 1500 yards deep. Behind the infantry brigade was a newly built class 40 bridge quite capable of handling the heavy traffic rapidly accumulating for the proposed "break out" to the north. The priority for crossing the Twente Canal was, first, the balance of 10 Cdn Armd Regt, and second, the balance of 8 Cdn Recce Regt preceding the infantry of 5 Cdn Inf Bde. In the meantime Brigadier Cabeldu's instructions were to patrol vigorously to the north and east with the object of ascertaining the enemy's strength and of preventing him from stabilizing his positions. The brigade commander's intention was to use 8 Cdn Recce Regt to seize the bridge sites over the Schipbeek Canal on the roads from Laren (Bridge 0706) to Holten (1010) and Laren (Bridge 1105) to Markelo (1504) so that 5 Cdn Inf Bde could advance northward to capture Laren (0600) and Holten. At this same time the possibility of passing a brigade over the canal at Lochem was being explored. (First Cdn Army Liaison Officers Reports, as above, April 1945, 41300B)

36. By midday, 4 Apr 45, the fighting columns of 5 Cdn Inf Bde were on the move to the wooded concentration area near Klein Dochteren (0695) about 5000 yards north-east of Vorden (0290). (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 4 Apr 45). 6 Cdn Inf Bde's activities for the past twenty-four hours had been confined to patrols, long moves by road and short-term reliefs of other units--not exactly interesting operations for hardened infantry fighters, but nevertheless essential to the maintenance of continued pressure up forward and the long vulnerable lines of supply to the rear. At approximately 1930 hours on 3 Apr, after a day of incessant patrolling to test the approaches to Zutphen (during which Camerons of C. seized the town of Steenderen) the greater part of 6 Cdn Inf Bde moved north again. Camerons of C. established themselves between the Berkel stream and the Twente Canal some 1500 yards west of Almen, Fus M.R. took over the old Essex Scot positions along that part of the road Zutphen - Lochem which extends east from the road and railway junction (001947) towards Het Werksche (0195). This position is in the angle formed by the Berkel stream and the railroad leading south to Vorden. S. Sask R. was not shifted from their positions (just north-east of Veldwijk (0192)) astride the Vorden-Almen road. (W.D., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 3 Apr 45). The open section of the flank east of Almen and between the waters of the Berkel and Twente Canal was still the responsibility of 8 Cdn Recce Regt, which was in the process of being passed into the bridgehead. Below Almen, in the woods, the remainder of 10 Cdn Armd Regt waited for an opportunity to join in the battle ahead. (W.Ds., 8 Cdn Recce Regt, 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 3-4 Apr 45)

37. The latter part of 4 Apr saw 5 Cdn Inf Bde begin to pass through Brigadier Cabeldu's bridgehead. The leading battalion, R. de Mais, crossed the bridge north of Almen late in the afternoon and struck out along the main axis to Laren, to be followed by Calg Highrs and R.H.C., who were closing up to concentrate in 4 Cdn Inf Bde's forward area. (W.D., H.Q. 5 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 4 Apr 45).

Brigadier Megill's intention was to take Laren that night and then drive on to seize Holten. As soon as Laren fell, one battalion of 4 Cdn Inf Bde would move east along the canal to establish a bridgehead so that a class 40 bridge might be built north of Lochem. Following this 7 Cdn Inf Bde would cross the canal and push out westwards from 4 Cdn Inf Bde's sector. (First Cdn Army Liaison Officers Reports, op cit, 041930B; 2 Cdn Inf Div Ops Log, 4 Apr 45, serials 3059, 3061, 3071, 3075, 3085, 3087, 3091)

1 CDN CORPS OPERATIONS TO SECURE THE LEFT FLANK
OPERATION "DESTROYER", 2-4 APR 45[✱]

38. Before continuing the story of the Canadians' headlong advance further northward into Holland and finally into Germany itself, it is necessary to describe what had taken place on Lt-Gen Simonds' western flank, where 1 Cdn Corps had been given the responsibility of clearing the remainder of the "Island" west of Nijmegen. This attack, which involved 49 (W.R.) Inf Div with 11 Cdn Inf Bde ~~under command~~, began early on 2 Apr.^{✱✱} (W.D., H.Q. 11 Cdn Inf Bde, April 1945, *Auth: Amdt No. 1 2/2 Nov 50 by O.D.H.S.* Appx 5, Report on operations, 28 Mar - 5 Apr 45)

39. The front line of 49 (W.R.) Inf Div was at that time being held by 56 Inf Bde, whose troops covered the soggy ground from Aam (7170) on the left to an area which included Heuvel (7369), Baal (7568) and the eastern outskirts of Haalderen (7569) on the right. It was from Haalderen that the initial attack was made by 7 D.W.R. of 147 Inf Bde. The British troops went forward at 0400 hours and made good progress against moderate opposition. By 0900 hours, 7 D.W.R. was established on the secondary roads and among the orchards west of Gent En Kapel (7965) and an hour later 11 R.S.F. passed through directed on Flieren (7867) and the Angeren (7770) - Hulhuizen (7966) road beyond. Meanwhile 7 D.W.R. patrolled vigorously to the west and south to occupy the factory (7863) at the bend of the river Waal (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket I, Ops Log, 2 Apr 45, Serials 10, 23, 32, 49). As the advance of 11 R.S.F. swung north along the road to Angeren, 1 Leicesters made a double thrust out from Gent En Kapel at 1300 hours. On the left 1 Leicesters followed the road to Doornenburg (8067) but the right hook was more spectacular in that one company loaded into L.C.A.'s. at Kommerdijk, (7765) took to the river and attacked Hulhuizen from the south. While the Leicesters went about their task of clearing the area of Doornenburg, 4 Lincolns, the leading battalion of 146 Inf Bde, was brought forward

✱ Reference maps: G.S.G.S. 4083, 1:50,000, Holland, Sheets 39 - Rhenen and 40 - Arnhem.

✱✱ See Appx "C".

on the left and at 1600 hours passed through 11 R.S.F. to continue the drive on Angeren. (Ibid: Serials 73, 77, 91, 96). After offering some resistance on the outskirts of the village, the enemy gave ground and by 2000 hours 4 Lincolns were past the town and reaching towards 'tZand (7571). An hour later some of the British troops were around the road junction north-east of 'tZand while others pressed on in the direction of Huissen (7672). (Ibid: Serials 140, 145)

40. Success on the right flank now enabled 1/4 K.O.Y.L.I. to take the offensive at 1930 hours. At that time the Yorkshiresmen moved through 56 Inf Bde's front line north of Bommel (7367) and began to advance on 'tZand from the south. Progress was slow however, and by midnight the troops were still some distance short of 'tZand and out of contact. While the K.O.Y.L.I. consolidated about the road junction (7570) west and north of Weertsburg (7569) 4 Lincolns were busy mopping up in Huissen. (Ibid). Up to this time the bag of prisoners was not large; only one officer and 103 other ranks had been taken*. (Ibid: April, 1945, serials 2, 73). The intention was now to secure the areas of Huissen, 'tZand and Rijkerswaard (7272) with 146 Inf Bde so that fresh troops could be passed through to Elden (7375) and Malburgen (7575) to the north.*** 147 Inf Bde was entrusted with the task of crossing the Neder Rijn east of Doornenburg at 1000 hours on 3 Apr with the object of seizing Pannerden (8267) and linking up with those other elements of the Canadian Army which were operating west of Emmerich. So that juncture might be facilitated, a squadron of 49 Recce Regt was dispatched with orders to cross the Rhine via the Emmerich bridges and to probe westwards from the Canadian positions around Elten. (Ibid: 3 Apr, serial 12).

41. During the morning of 3 Apr, 146 Inf Bde made good progress. On the right, 4 Lincolns firmed up at Huissen and patrolled eastwards to the river while further to the west 1/4 K.O.Y.L.I. cleared 'tZand and resumed the advance unhindered except by mines and a few road obstacles. At 0730 hours the "Light Infantry" had reached the road leading from Huissen to Elden and were ready to push on to Malburgen. West of 'tZand, the Hallams, mounted on tanks, were advancing on Rijkerswaard, which fell without much trouble before noon. (1 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 3 Apr 45, serials 799, 806). By that time on the southern flank 1 Leicesters had forced the river east of Doornenburg and captured Pannerden unopposed. (Ibid, serial 828). It seemed that the enemy had vanished, for the advance was not contested at any point for the rest of the day. The Hallams entered Elden in mid-afternoon and immediately extended their holdings north and west of that place. 1/4 K.O.Y.L.I. got into Malburgen and to top off the operation the Lincolns also crossed the eastern water barrier at the ferry site east of Huissen and together with elements of 49 Recce Regt took Hoogeind (7873) and Westervoort (7875). Once that area was clear the Lincolns withdrew to Huissen,

* For these operations 11 R. Tks came under divisional control from 1 Cdn Corps. (Ibid: 2 Apr, serial 161).

** 952 Grenadier Regt: 361 Inf Div: (First Cdn Army Intelligence Summary No. 276, 2 Apr 45).

leaving the Recce in charge at Westervoort. (Ibid: serials 833, 839, 845, 848)

42. As nightfall drew near, the situation all across the 49 (W.R.) Inf Div front was most satisfactory. On the far right 1 Leicesters of 147 Inf Bde, having contacted 7 Cdn Recce Regt of 3 Cdn Inf Div as well as their own Recce east of Pannerden between Geitenwaard (8566), and Kruisdijk (9665), had returned to Doornenburg. 11 R.S.F. remained in Angeren flanked by 4 Lincolns in Huissen. 1/4 K.O.Y.L.I. was firm on the road Huissen - Malburgen while on the extreme left Hallams were in full control of the area Elden - Kronenburg (7274) with strong company positions facing to the northeast. 56 Inf Bde's positions had not changed, although all its units patrolled to contact forward, especially along the left divisional boundary from Aam to the northern exits from Rijkerswaard. The lengthy open space however was closely watched over by S.W.B. (Ibid)

11 CDN INF BDE'S PART IN OPERATION "DESTROYER",
2 - 4 APR 45*

*Auth: See Amdt No. 1 item No. 2
2/2 Nov 50 by D.A.H.S.*

43. \ Meanwhile on the left flank of 1 Cdn Corps, 11 Cdn Inf Bde, ** under command 49 (W.R.) Inf Div since 0800 hours 28 Mar 45, ✓ had been moving forward. At about 2130 hours, 2 Apr, Ir R.C. advanced from the area of Zetten (6172), C.B. Highrs from Homoet (6672) and Perth R. from Snodenhoek (6971). One Squadron of 3 Cdn Armd Recce Regt (G.G.H.G.) supported each of the battalions in the attack, which was a silent one, although 17 Cdn Fd Regt and 1 Cdn Med Regt were on call to supply artillery concentrations when required. The open flank south-west of Zetten was under the eye of elements of 49 Recce Regt, which had orders to exploit westwards along the line of the railway, thus preventing any interference to the effort of Ir R.C. (W.D., G.S. H.Q. 5 Cdn Armd Div, 2 Apr 45). Simultaneously Ir R.C. launched "A" Coy to take the road junction above Indoornik (6173); C.B. Highrs sent "C" and "D" Coys northwards astride the Homoetsche Straat (7272) to secure the junction (736733). Perth R. went forward using two parallel axes; "A" Coy along the Hollander - broeksche Straat (7373) and "D" Coy along the Groote Molen (7271), to firm up about one thousand yards up the road. No opposition was encountered by any of the units; by 2300 hours all these first objectives had been reached. (W.D., H.Q. 11 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 2 Apr 45)

* Reference maps: G.S.G.S. 4083, 1:50,000, Holland, Sheets 39 - 'aHertogenbosch, and 40 - Arnhem.

** See Appx "C".

44. The advance was resumed in the darkness. On the left the Irish led off with "C" and "D" Coys, the latter passing through "A" with Randwijk (6075) as the objective while "C" Coy approached the village from the west. It was at this point that the first signs of resistance appeared; but the troops were not to be stopped easily. With the aid of an anti-tank gun the position was carried and eight prisoners captured. The right-hand thrust was equally successful and by 1030 hours 3 Apr both companies were on their objectives in Randwijk having suffered no loss. (W.D., Ir R.C., 2-3 Apr 45). In the centre C.B. Highrs were held up for a time while a bridge was put across the deep ditch (7372) (the Eldensche Zeeg) intersecting the Homoetsche Straat, but at about 2350 hours a way over the obstacle was completed by the engineers and "A" Coy pushed through on the left directed on Heteren (6375). At the same time "C" Coy was ordered to move up along the centre line and the carrier platoon was then placed in rear of "A" Coy to protect the left flank. Both sub-units made rapid progress and by 0330 hours 3 Apr the two forward companies were on the selected objectives, "B" lining the south bank of the Neder Rijn at Hoogeweide (653752) and "A" in Heteren. The only opposition came from a small group of Germans on the outskirts of Heteren and this was quickly disposed of. (W.D., C.B. Highrs, 2-3 Apr 45)

45. The Commanding Officer's next action was to get his supporting weapons up to "B" Coy and to close up the gaps between his rear and foremost troops. All this was accomplished by 0630 hours by which time a troop of tanks had positioned itself near to the battalion Command Post to provide close support in any emergency. The first sign of enemy retaliation appeared at 1100 hours when a section of Germans came in toward "A" Coy but they were badly shot up and forced to retire. The rest of the day passed quietly. (W.D., C.B. Highrs, 2-3 Apr 45). On the right Perth R. pushed forward to take Driel. In the house clearing operations which followed "A" Coy suffered some casualties but was able to capture a prisoner* who spoke of the havoc which our gun fire had wrought among his comrades. With "D" Coy firm on the eastern flank by 0630 hours, "A" Coy went about its task of rooting out the remaining resistance, supported by the tanks of 3 Cdn Armd Recce Regt. (Ibid)

46. Driel was consolidated by 1400 hours but the Germans seemed reluctant to leave the area. First "D" Coy was counter-attacked, then "A". Expressing their wrath, the enemy shelled the area heavily and raked our positions with machine-gun fire from the opposite bank of the river. The Perths, however, were able to reduce the distant opposition considerably with the aid of their F.O.O., who established himself in the tower of the local church and repeatedly called down heavy concentrations of fire on the offending weapons across the river. Before the day ended a further adjustment of positions took place; "C" Coy was brought up to **settle in** the vicinity of Baarskamp (6875) slightly to the rear of "D" while "B" Coy swung to the far right to man the dike north of Vogelenzang (6976). (W.D., Perth R., 2-3 Apr 45). Thus by

* 361 Inf Div: (First Cdn Army Intelligence Summary No. 277, 3 Apr 45).

midnight 3/4 Apr, 11 Cdn Inf Bde had completed its operation to close up to the Neder Rijn. (W.Ds., Perth R., C.B. Highrs, Ir R.C., 4-5 Apr 45; and AEF: 45/5 Cdn Armd Div/C/D, Docket II; folio 10, Report on Operations 11 Cdn Inf Bde, 28 Mar - 5 May 45)

4 CDN ARMD DIV CROSSES THE TWENTE CANAL, 2-4 APR 45*

47. While the infantry divisions had been advancing against solid resistance, 4 Cdn Armd Div** had rolled up to the Twente Canal. By first light on 2 Apr, 10 Cdn Inf Bde's Lion Group was concentrated in and around Ruurlo and in due time Brigadier Jefferson was instructed to take over Lochem from 129 Brit Inf Bde, which had been clearing the town. While waiting for the order to move up however, the Brigadier had dispatched reconnaissance patrols up to the water obstacle to determine the state of the bridges. Of these patrols, one reported that the two bridges across the Berkel stream and the Twente Canal above Klein Dochteren (0496) were still intact. The Brigadier at once ordered a force of infantry and tanks to proceed to them, but again the enemy was too quick; as the troops arrived at the bridges, both were blown up and rendered useless. (W.D., H.Q. 10 Cdn Inf Bde, 2 Apr 45). By this time the change-over with the British troops in Lochem was under way and by 1630 hours the Canadians were settled in their new locations. A. & S.H. of C. and 29 Cdn Armd Recce Regt occupied Lochem while Alq R. concentrated around the water tower (0995) on the high ground to the south. It was estimated that about 300 of the enemy were in position on the north bank of the canal and during the late afternoon and evening, the area was enlivened considerably by both machine-gun and shell fire from that direction. (Ibid). The extensive patrol program which was kept up overnight failed to contact any opposition on either flank and as the hours passed the harassing fire from the north decreased. Then at midday, 3 Apr, the Brigadier was told that no bridgehead would be attempted at Lochem; instead, 4 Cdn Armd Bde with Linc & Welld R. under command was to cross at Delden (3007) (a small town about 13 miles north-east of Lochem) that night and Lion Group would be relieved by elements of 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt in order to allow the infantry brigade to move east to concentrate near Geesteren (1794) behind the Armoured Brigade. (Ibid, 3 Apr 45)

* Reference maps: G.S.G.S. 4414, 1:25,000, Eastern Holland, Sheets 3804 - Lochem, 3904 - Zelhem.
G.S.G.S. 4083, 1:50,000, Holland, Sheet 34 - Gronenlo, Sheet 28 - Almelo, Sheet 22 - Coevorden.
G.S.G.S. 4416, Central Europe, 1:100,000, Sheet N1 - Almelo, P1 - Bochoit.

** See Appx "D".

48. The task of 4 Cdn Armd Div in the northward sweep was fourfold. Maj-Gen Vokes' first task was to get across the Twente Canal. Then he must build up his force in the region of Borne (3312) and Delden, before carrying out the second part of the operation - the seizure of Almelo and the turning of the whole Delden - Borne - Almelo triangle into a firm base. The third stage would be to push mobile columns out to Neuenhaus, (4733) and Emlicheim (4045), in the little corner of Germany which projects into Holland north of Almelo, and to Coevorden in Holland at the north-western corner of this projection. The fourth stage of the operation would be a two-pronged thrust on two axes; on the right from Meppen (7055) to Papenburg (7798) and Leer (8015), and on the left from Emmen (4363) to Nieuwe Schans (6409). But the first essential for 4 Cdn Armd Div was a bridgehead over the Twente Canal. (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Div, April 1945; Appx: Notes on forthcoming Ops, 3 Apr 45)

49. With this particular task in mind, Brigadier Moncel's armour had been closing up to the waterway. The column passed through Terborg (0570) at 1030 hours, 2 Apr, and shortly after midday, having left Lt-Col R.C. Coleman to garrison the market town of Ruurlo with Linc & Welld R., the tank formation was ordered to proceed to Diepenheim (1801), relieve the troops of 43 (W.) Inf Div which were in the town and then to position itself to dominate the Canal crossings south of Goor (2105). There was little information to be had regarding the enemy. An officer's scout car patrol which Brigadier Moncel had sent on ahead the night before to explore the routes and to size up the situation, reported that the Germans had pulled back across the canal and that bridges over the obstacle were demolished. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde, 1-2 Apr 45, AEF: 45/4 Cdn Armd Div/C/F, Docket I, folio 1, Memorandum No. 7: The Final Punch. Operation and Activities, 4 Cdn Armd Bde, 30 Mar - 5 May 45)

50. The journey to Diepenheim though unopposed, was a difficult one. In the first place not all the bridges on the route were capable of bearing the weight of the mighty Shermans; secondly the echelons of the British Division ahead cluttered the roads and liaison officers had to search for openings in the congested traffic to get the column through; and finally our troops had to accept the wrath of the local British commanders and provost who demanded an explanation of why their centre line was being used. By night-fall the administrative and movement crises had blown over however and the armoured brigade was in its allotted area around Diepenheim, where the take over from 43 (W.) Inf Div was effected. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde and units, 2 Apr 45)

51. At 2325 hours on the night of 2 Apr, Maj-Gen Vokes sent a message to Brigadier Moncel, the commander of 4 Cdn Armd Bde, and advised him that 43 (W.) Inf Div (on the right) would endeavour to clear Delden, Borne and Hengelo, and the north side of the canal. 4 Cdn Armd Bde would then bridge the waterway, and proceed northward. In the event of the operation by 43 (W.) Inf Div not proceeding quickly enough, Brigadier Moncel would be responsible for forcing a crossing and establishing his own bridgehead. For this essentially infantry task, Maj-Gen Vokes would send him Linc & Welld R. to make the assault. Thirty-six assault boats would be available for the crossing. (W.D., G.S., H.Q.

4 Cdn Armd Div, April 1945: Appx 7, Message, 2 Apr 45, G.O.C. to Comd H.Q., 4 Cdn Armd Bde). Progress by 43 (W.) Inf Div was steady, but so very slow that Maj-Gen Vokes decided that the attack should be launched at 1900 hours, rather than wait for further progress by the British, or the original deadline of 2100 hours. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde, 3 Apr 45)

52. The original conception of the operation was a single crossing on a battalion frontage, but Brigadier Moncel decided that it would be worthwhile to attempt another crossing with a company of Lake Sup R. (Mot) at the lock gates a thousand yards west of the main effort which would take place near the large bridge south-west of Delden. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde and units; and Linc & Welld R., 3 Apr 45). At 1900 hours, with the support of the whole divisional artillery, bolstered by 19 Cdn Fd Regt (S.P.) and a medium regiment, Linc & Welld R. sent two companies across the canal; "C" Coy on the left, "A" Coy on the right. Within fifty minutes both companies were on their first objectives on either side of the wood between the canal and the railway. Resistance on the right was light, but on the left "C" Coy was sternly treated as it was consolidating. At about 2100 hours "D" Coy was passed through "A" to secure the line of the railroad. But no sooner had it done so than the enemy began to retaliate heavily on both flanks. "C" Coy was counter-attacked from the north, but the enemy was not able to stand up to the violence of the gunfire which was called down; "A" Coy was also finding it hard to follow up on the right. Nevertheless by 0215 hours 4 Apr, the assaulting battalion's positions were firm, and while the flanking sub-units held and "D" Coy exploited beyond the railway line towards Delden, Lt-Col Coleman committed his fourth company to assist in the exploitation northward and to ease the pressure on "C" Coy which was still having trouble. (W.D., Linc & Welld R., 3-4 Apr 45)

53. Meanwhile the motor battalion had been carrying out operations which may well be placed on record as classic for this type of unit. Having been relieved of its local responsibility by a battery of 5 Cdn A.Tk Regt, "A" Coy, Lake Sup R. (Mot) commanded by Maj R.A. Colquhoun began crossing the Twente Canal 500 yards west of the locks at approximately 2300 hours, 3 Apr, supported by two medium machine-gun platoons, the mortar platoon, a section of Wasps and one squadron of 22 Cdn Armd Regt. The assault, which went with clocklike precision, was heavily supported by our artillery. The first platoon to cross the obstacle lined the dike and took on the enemy's sniper posts which were providing most of the opposition; the second and third platoon then crossed and fanned out to the east, their objective being the locks themselves. The locks were taken against light opposition and the first platoon over the canal was passed through to contact Linc & Welld R. west of Delden. This was not possible however owing to the heavy small arms fire, and the contact force returned to assist in consolidating the approaches to the locks. At about the same time engineers set about the task of bridging the waterway behind them. (W.D., Lake Sup R. (Mot), 2-3 Apr 45). The bridge was completed at 0600 hours

4 Apr, by which time Lake Sup R. (Mot) had reconnaissance elements working their way north, while the remainder of the battalion concentrated in readiness to exploit from the bridgehead. It will be seen that the capture and completion of this bridgehead had momentous consequences. (Ibid; W.D., 8 Cdn Fd Sqn, R.C.E., 3 Apr 45)

THE ARMoured BRIGADE BREAKS OUT TO THE NORTH, 4 APR 45*

54. At approximately 0830 hours "B" Coy Lake Sup R. (Mot) moved across the canal and swung eastwards towards Delden, which was firmly under control of Linc & Welid R. From here the motor company set out in the direction of Almelo. Shortly after "C" Coy also moved up, passed through Delden and headed for Borne and having reached that place without trouble (see para 57) continued its advance. In quick time Zenderen (3114) was entered and the company firmed up and began patrolling northwards. At about this time "A" Coy was sent forward along the left flank to occupy Bornebroek (2612). The operation went on apace during the day, the build-up proceeded favourably over the only available bridge at the lock-site. At 1300 hours 22 Cdn Armd Regt crossed the Canal to support "A" Coy Lake Sup R. (Mot) on the left flank of the operation; an hour and a half later 28 Cdn Armd Regt followed the "Grenadiers" and drove on to the area of Borne to the assistance of "C" Coy. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde and units, 4 Apr 45). Thereafter the speed of the advance was so swift that most of the bridges to the north were seized intact, the Delden - Borne - Almelo triangle was quickly swept over, and by nightfall a good sized force of infantry and tanks had entered Almelo which, with the exception of a few snipers, was reported clear. (R.A. Spencer, History of the Fifteenth Canadian Field Regiment, p. 241)

55. The opportunity for a large-scale breakout was at hand and, in order to assist the armoured brigade in consolidating its base, Maj-Gen Vokes had put A. & S.H. of C. under Brigadier Moncel's command to clear out the wooded areas bounding the Schipvaart stream directly north of Delden. Later in the evening, 21 Cdn Armd Regt reverted to command from Brigadier Jefferson's formation and by 2230 hours was crossing the main bridge which the engineers had built at Delden that afternoon. In addition to the advance of the main force, great progress was made by "B" Sqn 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt, which had also been placed under command 4 Cdn Armd Bde. Crossing the canal at 1600 hours, the armoured cars went north-eastwards to the Almelo - Nordhorn Canal, searching for crossings over which the division could pour on its northward course. Four miles to the east of Almelo they found what they wanted, (bridge 3318) and guarded it all night for exploitation in the morning. (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde, 4 Apr 45)

* Reference maps: As for para 47.

56. By midnight 4/5 Apr 4 Cdn Armd Bde was conveniently disposed for the widespread operations about to follow. Elements of 22 Cdn Armd Regt together with "B" and "C" Coys Lake Sup R. (Mot) held Almelo, "A" Coy of the motor battalion, having been transferred from the left flank, was now firmly astride the main road on the south-eastern outskirts of Almelo supported by two squadrons of 28 Cdn Armd Regt. A. & S.H. of C. after clearing the woods north of Delden was on the way to complete the mopping up in Almelo while Linc & Welld R. had assumed control of the Brigade's left flank and was now ensuring the security of the bridges over the Twente Canal against interference from the west. (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde and units, A. & S.H. of C., Linc & Welld R., 4 Apr 45; also 4 Cdn Armd Bde, Bde Comd Net Telephone messages, 4 Apr 45, serial 102). The intention of 4 Cdn Armd Bde for 5 Apr was to thrust light motorized forces preceded by the armoured cars north to the hamlets of Neuenhaus and Emlicheim, and on to the larger town of Coevorden with a view to building up each place with an armoured regimental group (W.D., G.S., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Div, April 1945: Appx 81, A.C.V. 1 Log, 4 Apr 45, serial 71). But there was some disappointment ahead for it was soon discovered that the bridge secured by the armoured cars was not strong enough to bear the thirty-ton weight of the Shermans. (Ibid, A.C.V. 1 Log, 5 Apr 45, serial 11; W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Armd Bde, 5 Apr 45)

LT-GEN DEMPSEY'S OPERATIONS ON THE RIGHT FLANK, 2-4 APR 45*

57. The good going experienced by the Canadians up to and beyond the Twente Canal was being similarly enjoyed by the British formation on our immediate right flank and by the American Armies to the south. In Lt-Gen Dempsey's sector, ** 30 Brit Corps, while handing over the ground south of the Twente Canal and west of Hengelo to Lt-Gen Simonds' troops, discovered that Hengelo itself was too strongly held to permit a direct crossing of the Canal into the town. This being the case, 43 (W.) Inf Div launched 130 Inf Bde supported by some tanks of 8 Armd Bde through Enschede (recently taken by the Guards Armd Div). On the night of 2/3 Apr, Maj-Gen G.I. Thomas' infantry then turned left to attack Hengelo from the north-east and south-east. By early evening, after hours of bitter fighting, 7 Hamps and 5 Dorsets were established in the north and southern parts of the old town and while these two units mopped up the remnants of the garrison, 4 Dorsets passed on to the north-west to capture Borne by last light. (AEF: 45/Second Army/C/D, Docket I; also W.D., H.Q., G.S. First Cdn Army, April 1945, Appx 13, folio 39, Sitrep 040900B; & folio 48, sitrep No. 508)

* Reference maps: G.S.G.S. 4416, Central Europe, 1:100,000, Sheets P1 - Bocholt, P2 - Munster, N1 - Almelo, N2 - Osnabruck.

** See Appx "G".

58. In following the order to drive onto the Dortmund - Ems Canal, Gds Armd Div had passed through Oldenzaal (4413) on the morning of 2 Apr, bridged the Almelo - Nordhorn Canal during the afternoon of the same day and attacked Nordhorn (5426) that night with 32 Gds Bde. Occupation of the town went on far into the night and the Brigade reached the Vochte River which runs through the northern outskirts. The main bridge was, of course, demolished; but some distance to the north another structure was discovered by the guardsmen, who took quick advantage of it. The Brigade then went on to Lingen, (7136) where, as before, the main bridge over the Ems River was out of commission. Again the guardsmen located an alternate route over which it was intended to pass 3 Brit Inf Div (which so far had been following the armoured division and had been taking over its newly-won areas). Meanwhile the right flank thrust by Gds Armd Div, echeloned slightly to the rear, had been having a hard time. After meeting fierce opposition all through 2 Apr in Gildehaus (5710), 5 Gds Armd Bde lunged on to Bentheim (6011). Bentheim had for some time been the home of a German Officers Training School and naturally enough the fanatical members of it put up a terrific fight which stopped the guardsmen "cold", for the time being at least. The situation clearly demanded an infantry assault, and this task was passed on to a brigade of 3 Brit Inf Div, (Ibid: Appx 8, folio 116; Appx 13, folio 62, Ops Summary 289A; also AEF: 45/Second Army/L/F, Docket I, 31 Mar - 4 May 45: Second Army Intelligence Summary, No. 304)

59. As 3 Apr drew to a close, therefore, operations had developed in such a way that the front was echeloned on a general east-to-west line from Osnabruck (2107) to Riesenbeck (9206) with 8 Brit Corps, Rheine to Gronau (5102) with 12 Brit Corps, and from Enschede to the Canadian right flank with 30 Brit Corps. On the far right opposition as a whole was loose and unco-ordinated, progressively increasing in quality and co-ordination towards the left. In that part of the front, the enemy's fighting spirit showed no sign of giving way before our superior numbers and greatly superior equipments, in fact at most of the vital points resistance was fanatical in the extreme. (AEF: 45/Second Army/C/D, Docket I)

60. A major task for Lt-Gen Dempsey at this stage was to occupy some additional advanced airfields in order to provide immediate close air support and speedier reconnaissance, these were especially needed for 8 Corps, which was operating far to the east. These badly needed airstrips were mostly in the 12 and 30 Corps areas, but on the enemy's side of the fence and denied to our use by the intense opposition being offered to those two formations. Thus this situation would only be rectified when either Lt-Gen Horrocks or Lt-Gen Ritchie or both, broke through the left. (Ibid)

61. With the American Armies events were also moving with dramatic rapidity. By 3 Apr forward elements of Lt-Gen Simpson's forces, driving hard towards Hanover and the Elbe, had penetrated to the Weser south-east of Minden (AEF: 45/21 Army Group/C/F, Docket II, Notes on Operations of 21 Army Group, p. 52). On the same day Ninth U.S. Army reverted