

from Hekkens to Ottersum was open, and the craters were being filled to make it passable to heavy traffic. This road, however, was under observation, and the Engineers found that movement on it drew volumes of mortar fire. A similar situation existed around the bridge site (779465) at Gennep which the sappers of 153 Bde were working hard to complete so that the high ground to the south could be attacked (Ibid, Appx 47, Serial 24). This attack began at 1420 hours, and went in with on the left 5/7 Gordons and on the right 1 Gordons (Ibid, Serial 38). By 1720 hours, 1 Gordons had taken their first objective in the region of Gennepheide (7944), with 5/7 Gordons 1000 yards on their left south of the railway (Ibid, Serials 42 and 43). Both battalions then pressed on, and by 2300 hours 153 Bde was on its objective at Heyen (7843) and on the high ground to the east. 5/7 Gordons was also firm on the bare hills west of Zand Kulen (8044). Meanwhile, 154 Bde's patrols had reached Kessel (8546), and an attack was arranged to take place during the night of 12/13 Feb, with the object of seizing the high ground south of the village (Ibid, Serials 36 and 49). Inside the forest 7 A. & S.H. of 154 Bde had made good progress, and were by this time firm on the wooded hill north of the Niers River some 1500 yards east of Kessel, in contact with 158 Bde on the left (Ibid, Serials 43, 32 and Main H.Q. Ops Log, Serial 63).

111. The operations of 53 (W.) Div had also met with considerable success, despite the strong opposition encountered in many places. Midday saw 7 R.W.F. and 1/5 Welch both held up, the former among the defence works just north of the divisional right boundary, the latter along the boundary some 2000 yards west of the edge of the forest. This delay, however, was not of much duration, as 71 Bde was moving up to assist in the advance (Ibid, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 12 Feb 45, Serials 24 and 27). On the northern fringe of the Reichswald, 2 Mon, 4 Welch and 6 R.W.F., all of 160 Bde, were driving south-east, and by 2400 hours, 12 Feb, had reached the area of Horstmannshof (9051) with 2 Mon on the eastern edge of the forest opposite Staatsforst Cleve (9150) with 4 Welch; 6 R.W.F. were still in the vicinity of the Asperden - Cleve road behind the two forward battalions (Ibid, Main H.Q., Ops Log, 12 Feb 45, Serials 75, 84, 95 and 103). By this time 71 Bde had joined in the fight and advanced past 158 Bde, who had been counter-attacked on their right but were holding firm. These attacks were all beaten back, yet not without difficulty, as the supporting British armour found the going in the forest heavy (Ibid, Serial 72). Eventually, after a determined effort by both infantry and tanks, 158 Bde was firmly astride the Asperden - Cleve road, west of Klosterhufe (8948) and some 2000 yards to the north (Ibid, Appx 48, folio 12, 0/473 Sitrep). It had been a hard day's fighting, but both 158 and 160 Bdes had inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy.

112. South of Cleve, 43 (W.) Div's attack had made excellent gains. On the right, 214 Bde attacked with 1 Worc R. and 7 Som L.I., and at 1230 hours both units reported their respective objectives taken. While 1 Worc R. consolidated near Dahnhor (9153) and 7 Som L.I. improved its positions south of Hau (9152), 129 Bde commenced its move up to pass through (Ibid, Appx 47, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 12 Feb, Serials 26, 31 and 32). Around Hau the enemy reacted with some vigour, and counter-attacked 7 Som L.I. with infantry and tanks. However, these achieved no success, and 129 Bde pushed past 214 Bde to resume the advance, with 4 Som L.I. directed on to the wooded Bedburg feature. While 129 Bde advanced, 15 (S.) Div had broken out of the Cleve sector by way of the newly built bridge in the town. A mobile group composed of 7 Searorth and 4 Armd Coldm Gds struck out south along the Cleve - Calcar road, and by 1800 hours had reached the high ground (9352) east of Bedburg after a stiff fight. This advance protected the left of 4 Som L.I., who by 2400 hours had reached their objective against considerable opposition. Meanwhile both 4 and 5 Wilts had been steadily edging forward

gaining ground to the east preparatory to swinging their effort in a southerly direction. The tactical positions in this sector provided a fairly satisfying picture, especially as the 15 (S.) Div mobile column on the left had captured Hasselt (9453) and Qualberg (9254), where they were now ordered to consolidate and hold until further notice (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 13 Feb 45, Serial 3). Directly to the east of Cleve, 15 (S.) Div Recce Regt was probing into the area between Qualberg and Kellen, which Nth N.S. Heights of 9 C. Inf Bde now occupied (Ibid, 12 Feb 45, Serials 20 and 23).

113. The intentions for 13 Feb were for 51 (H.) Div on the night, at first light, to position one battalion astride the main Heekens - Cleve road, to picket the Gennep - Heekens highway, and to seize a bridgehead over the Meers and take Kessel, with a view to deepening further the area south of the river. 53 (W.) Div was to complete the clearance of the Reichswald to the eastern edge and down to the bridge at Asper (8846), while 43 (W.) Div continued its advance to the south-east to capture the high ground east of Staatsforst Cleve and clear the forest itself. 130 Bde would move up into the centre of the Reichswald with the possible role of supporting 53 (W.) Div. On the right, 3 Cdn Inf Div was to maintain its present positions along the Rhine, but with a thinned out line. The Canadians were also to ensure the defence of Cleve against counter-attack. 15 (S.) Div was ordered to remain in concentration, but to be ready to provide a brigade group to operate under command 43 (W.) Div if required. 688 Cdn Div was to remain in reserve, though on six hours' notice to move up. (CNR 45/First Cdn Army/C/H; Docket V, February 1945; L.O. Reports 130800A; 13 Feb 45)

114. As First Cdn Army pressed on, it had become apparent that the enemy was committing his reserves with some enthusiasm, yet without any marked success. All counter-attacks had been repulsed and all gains held; prisoners, who totalled over 4500 for the operation so far, had been generally willing to disclose what information was required. Hence it was possible to plot the enemy's order of battle. Here is the way it appeared to Army Intelligence on 12 Feb:

Between TORST CLEVE and the river MEERS 19 Para Regt is firmly identified, with, surprisingly, 111/2 Para Regt. This battalion was switched across the length of the REICHSWALD since it wriggled out of MEEDDELAAR E7448. One of its brothers, 11/2 Para Regt, was fighting at HEKKENS cross-roads E8347 yesterday and probably withdrew across the MEERS with 20 Para Regt, and the other, 1 Bn, with scanty help from the remnants of 1/1222 CR and Bn RIEGELS, has offered little resistance to an advance from GEMER to HEIJEN E7843. Although 130 Division's front on the MAAS is shrinking, it is still wide to be held by 1221 CR and 11/1223 CR.

Evidence of two more divisions which may put in an appearance in this battle was received from other parts of the front. The first is 6 Para Div, 1 and 11/16 Para Regt are already in at CLEVE, having left the LAND VAN ALBENA from 2 February on. Today a prisoner was taken at E3453 in the BOMMELERWAARD, who proved to be the interrogator's dream. As a former battalion

runner of Bn KOOH, he had picked up all the news, and his account of known facts lends weight to the reliability of the rest. 6 Para Div, he says, was already on 4 February beginning to disengage, in anticipation of an attack in the NIJMEGEN area in which it would be used to counter attack. It was, however, to be a gradual process, with time for refitting. 1 and 11/16 Para Regt had been withdrawn and already sent EAST; followed by a battalion of 18 Para Regt, which has not yet in fact been identified. Regt JCHS, with 111/16 Para Regt, Bn KOOH and 1409 Fortress B, was to remain in the BOMMELERWAARD, and 17 Para Regt from the BIESBOSCH to HEUSDEN E25 with all battalions up. 111/16 Para Regt was the next to be relieved; it was identified at CLEVE today. 17 Para Regt would be later, and its replacement would probably be Volkssturm, as a Volkssturm battalion had already arrived in UTRECHT; this is interesting, as there has been no previous indication that the Volkssturm would guard any but their own homes. Finally, this most valuable talker said that most of 6 Para Div artillery had left on the night 9/10 February. The whole division may, in fact, be expected to appear in the REICHSWAALD sector, but its arrival will probably be spread over a period. It will also be some time before the divisional HQ can take control.

(First Cdn Army Int Summary,
No. 227, 12 Feb 45)

115. Thus, from the various prisoner of war sources the following formations appeared to be in contact, 19, 20 and 21 Para Regts of 7 Para Div, 16 and 18 Para Regts of 6 Para Div, and three battalions of 7 Para Regt, artillery from 2, 6 and 7 Para Divs, 6 Pz Gr battalions of 50 Pz Gr Div and four of 116 Pz Div. Since many of these formations, however, did not so far appear to be complete, it must be assumed that they were being committed to battle immediately on arrival. If and when these forces were complete they would undoubtedly represent considerable strength, probably some 10 to 12,000 troops of good quality, possibly supported by 120 to 150 tanks and tracked guns. Further reserves still available, apart from the balance of the formations already listed, might well be elements of 346 Inf Div and odd assault gun, wehrer brigades, or anti-aircraft guns, in ground roles. These were shortly expected to arrive at the scene of battle from Holland or from the south. The organization of these enemy forces was not yet clear. First Para Army was doubtlessly in charge of the battle and 86 Corps was probably the local headquarters, although a Panzer Corps Headquarters might be controlling 15 and 116 Divs at present. (Ibid)

116. 13 Feb was another dull day for 3 Cdn Inf Div. The main object of discomfort, both physically and from the operational point of view, was the rising water, which on 9 Cdn Inf Bde's front had become so serious that the various headquarters had to move several times (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 13 Feb 45). These adverse conditions did not, however, totally prevent offensive action on our part. Early that morning S.D. & G. Highrs had "DU" Coy in Warbeyen (9457), where a short fight took place and thirteen prisoners were

taken before withdrawal again to Kellen (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, February 1945: Appx 5, Ops Log, 13 Feb 45, Serials 3 and 5; W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 12 Feb 45). Later during the day, H.L.I. of C. readjusted its company perimeters; "C" Coy occupied Spyck (9260), "B" Coy established itself in Griethausen and "A" Coy dug along the east to west dyke between Griethausen and Brienon, which "D" Coy firmly held (W.D., H.L.I. of C., 13 Feb 45). Nth N.S. Highrs spent an inactive day, although one patrol which penetrated as far as the crossroads south-east of Warbeyen ran into some opposition and suffered one fatal casualty (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 13 Feb 45). Of 8 Cdn Inf Bde, which was still holding the river line on the left, N. Shore R. received orders to begin moving back into the rear areas, leaving Q.O.R. of C. with under command "B" Coy C.H. of C. to maintain the watch on the water barrier (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 13 Feb 45). "A" and "B" Coys N. Shore R. completed the move to Nijmegen by 1800 hours, "C" and "D" Coys were due to withdraw the following day (W.D., N. Shore R., 13 Feb 45). 7 Cdn Inf Bde did not move out of Cleve (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 13 Feb 45).

117. Meanwhile, the battle east and south of Cleve had not been easy, for the enemy was hitting back harder, especially on 51 (H.) Div's sector, where on the morning of 13 Feb, 1 Gordons began to move south from Heyen (7843) and 5/7 Gordons east towards Hommershum (8244) (W.D., "C" Ops H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 49, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 13 Feb 45, Serial 31). At about the same time on the left, 5 Seaforth were sent to take up positions on the Hekkens - Cleve road some 2000 yards north-east of Hekkens, which they reached at 1530 hours (*Ibid*, Serial 54). The advance of 1 and 5/7 Gordons had slowed up against stiff resistance, and at 1700 hours the report came in that both these units were being heavily counter-attacked (*Ibid*, Serial 60). While these enemy efforts were being dealt with, 154 Bde announced the plan of attack which was to take them south of the Niers. 7 B.W. was to cross the river 500 yards east of Zelderheide (8147), and drive eastwards to capture the high ground south of Viller (8346). 1 B.W. would then pass through to seize the hill (8445) above the station (8444), clearing the road Viller - Kessel and Viller Station (8444). 5 Camerons would then come under command 154 Bde, remaining on the Hekkens - Cleve road, and one battalion of 152 Bde would relieve 7 A. & S.H. the following night at 2015 hours (*Ibid*, Serial 80). The plan worked well. By 2200 hours 7 B.W. were all across the river, and moving east against slight opposition, while by midnight 13/14 Feb, they had captured the first objective south of Viller and the three companies of 1 B.W., already south of the river, were moving eastwards to pass through (*Ibid*, Serial 86).

118. 53 (W.) Div's progress during the day took them to the eastern edge of the forest, which was by last light securely held from the north opposite Beyershof (8853) and Niederdamm (9151) with 4 Welch and 2 Mon; down past Wilhelminenhof (9149) with 6 R.W.F. to the area east of Klosterhufe, which was firmly in the hands of 1 H.L.I.; and 4 R.W.F. from Am Klosterhufe (9048) to Schotzenhof (9047), with 1 Ox Bucks in reserve to the rear. South-west of here 7 R.W.F. was on the fringe of the forest facing the Asper Bridge (8846) with 1 E. Lan R. on their right north of the river opposite Grafenthal (8746), linking up with 7 A. & S.H. on the river line east of Kessel (*Ibid*, Serials 42, 43, 44, 53, 55, 74 and 82). 1/5 Welch was at the moment in reserve for 158 Bde near the clearing at Klosterhufe (8948) (*Ibid*, Serial 82).

119. The breakout by 43 (W.) Div from Cleve to the east and south had proved equally successful. By 1400 hours 5 D.C.L.I. of 214 Bde had passed through 7 Som L.I. and taken the northern part of Niederdamm (9151) and 5 Wilts of 129 Bde, having gone past the area of Bedburg Asylum (9252) (which was already held by 4 Som L.I.), swung south and reached Roland (9351). A little later 4 Wilts attacked south again towards Neuenhaus (9350), and had two companies on this objective by 1630 hours (Ibid, Serials 51, 55 and 56). On the left the 15 (S.) Div column composed of 7 Seaforth and 4 Armd Coldm Gds were patrolling out in all directions from Hasselt (9353), while 44 (L.) Bde had passed to command 53 (W.) Div (Ibid, Serial 63). The evening of 13 Feb brought several changes in plan and dispositions for the units in this sector. 130 Bde moved up to relieve 129 Bde, 5 Dorset began taking over from 4 Som L.I., on whose left 12 K.R.R.C. of 8 Armd Bde had begun to operate, clearing the woods immediately east of Bedburg. 4 Dorset and 7 Hamps were now concentrated north-west of Hau prior to assuming their new relief roles (Ibid, Serial 72). On 214 Bde's front 5 D.C.L.I. had been pulled out from Niederdamm, leaving an observation post under control of 7 Som L.I. (Ibid, Serial 70). The wood of Staatsforst, Cleve had received a severe pounding from the air (Ibid, Serial 74).

120. During the night of 13/14 Feb, the offensive continued. On the right, 154 Bde of 51 (H.) Div attacked successfully across the Niers River, with 7 B.W. in the lead. 1 B.W. then passed through them, and by 0600 hours were firmly established just east of the wood east of Villier, having taken about 100 prisoners (W.D., "CW" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 53, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 12). In the centre 53 (W.) Div, who had completed the clearing of the Reichswald, spent a quiet night, as did the units of 43 (W.) Div, who were conducting routine patrols (Ibid). The going on the battlefield was now very difficult in some places and many of the troops were tired. Two fresh formations, however, were on the way to join the fight; 52 (L.) Div and 32 Gds Bde were already on the move (Ibid; and Main H.Q. Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 7).

121. But the enemy now began to retaliate, and at about 0930 hours, 129 Bde reported a counter-attack against the positions being held by 4 Wilts north-east of Staatsforst, Cleve (First Cdn Army Main H.Q. Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 24). This was followed by similar reports from 154 Bde to the west of Kessel (Ibid, Serial 29), but 153 Bde who had also experienced some fierce opposition during the night, reported an easing situation on its front (Ibid, Tac H.Q., Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 23). By midday the enemy's efforts had all been turned back, and new orders were issued to the battling units. South-east of Cleve in 43 (W.) Div's area, 4 Wilts of 129 Bde were to launch an attack to the south as soon as possible to seize the rising ground east of the northern corner of the Staatsforst, Cleve. In preparation for this new venture, 130 Bde was moving up to relieve 5 Wilts with 4 Dorset and 4 Wilts with 7 Hamps (Main H.Q. Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 38).

122. By 1200 hours, 14 Feb, while 43 (W.) Div prepared to move forward, 46 (H.) Bde of 15 (S.) Div had gone forward on the left with the object of taking Rosendahl (9452) and then of firming up with 2 Glas H. on the ring contour (9651), south-west of Moyland (9751) (Ibid, Serial 40). The village of Rosendahl was in Scottish hands by 1250 hours and 2 Glas H. pushed on towards Moyland (Ibid, Serial 46). Over on 51 (H.) Div's front a reshuffle had taken place. 2 Seaforth of 152 Bde relieved 7 A. & S.H. along the Niers River, and the forward companies of 1 B.W., which had been

taking severe punishment for the past hours in the Viller area, were withdrawn to less dispersed positions (AFR: 45/30 Brit Comps/C/H, Docket IIR: folio 149, 0/484 Sitrep). At this point 32 Gds Bde arrived on the scene, with instructions to capture Hommersum (8244) and link up with 154 Bde, while 5 B.W. of 153 Bde simultaneously advanced to consolidate in the woods Op den Berg (7942) (W.D., H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 53, Main H.Q., Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 56). Both 154 and 152 Bdes were ordered to remain for the day in their present positions (Ibid, Serial 62).

123. On the left flank 9 Cdn Inf Bde had spent the morning regrouping for a fresh attack to clear the area Warbeyen - Hurendelch (9559), and so dominate the Rhine Ferry (9659) to Emmerich. The attack went in at 1200 hours, and starting from the Nth N.S. Highrs' forward positions east of Kellen, the three companies from left to right, "C", "B" and "A" advanced in Buffaloes. "A" Coy first cleared the region of the track junctions (938574) without trouble, then "B" and "C" Coys mopped up Warbeyen. "B" Coy now swung north towards the Creamery (9457), while "C" Coy pushed north-eastwards to Hurendelch. Past this point, resistance increased, and a new assault to clear the river bank had to be put in at 1700 hours, as "B" Coy moved up towards the village of Hurendelch from the west. After some bitter fighting the Nth N.S. Highrs consolidated their gains. "A" Coy remained firm at Warbeyen with "D" Coy on its left. "B" Coy consolidated at the road and dyke junction (965597) and "C" Coy in Hurendelch. The cost of this operation had not been heavy. Nth N.S. Highrs lost three killed and eight wounded, while the enemy prisoners and wounded alone mounted to 25, in addition to those killed attempting to cross the river. The enemy's response to this advance came quickly, in the form of heavy mortar concentrations on "B" and "C" Coys who were fortunately by this time well dug in (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 14 Feb 45). The remaining battalions of 9 Cdn Inf Bde had little to report. S.D. & G. Highrs were still west of Kellen, but preparing to move out. H.E.T. of C. had not moved from their positions about Spyck, Griethausen and Bienen (W.Ds., S.D. & G. Highrs, H.E.T. of C., 14 Feb 45).

124. That same day, on 8 Bde's front, the programme of moving N. Shore R. Back had been completed. The entire unit was now concentrated near Mijmegen (W.D., N. Shore R., 14 Feb 45). Their old positions were now controlled by Q.O.R. of C., who had "D" Coy in Kerendon (8164). The battalion's area was quiet, apart from a short but severe shelling of Millingen, which caused some casualties earlier in the day (W.D., Q.O.R. of C., 14 Feb 45). 7 Cdn Inf Bde was still billeted in Cleve, where the task of combing out the cellars had been completely successful. Regina Rif did a certain amount of readjusting within its own area, as S.D. & G. Highrs of 9 Cdn Inf Bde were to be withdrawn from their positions north of Cleve. As a result "A" Coy shifted to the waterworks (8956), and "B" Coy to the brick works (9156). R. Wpg Rif too had an uneventful day, the only excitement being provided by a few enemy jet planes which dropped some ill-aimed bombs. (W.Ds., R. Wpg Rif, 1 C. Scot R., 14 Feb 45)

125. By the evening of 14 Feb, the attacks of 51 (H.) Div, 32 Gds Bde and 15 (S.) Div and 43 (W.) Div were well under way; 46 (S.) Bde, having already launched 2 Glas H. towards Moyland, and 9 Cameronians east from Bedburg (W.D., "C" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 53, Tac H.Q., Ops Log, 14 Feb 45, Serial 43). 9 Cameronians thrusting along the road parallel to 2 Glas H. reached the road junction (950513) some 1200 yards south-east of Honigsberg (9452), and firmed up to establish flank contact with 43 (W.) Div, while 7 Seaforth moved up to push on the following

morning (Ibid). Luck had not been with 43 (W.) Div whose 129 Bde had attempted to push south. The attack by 5 W.Mts was stopped cold at the start line by the enemy's intense shelling, which killed among others the Commanding Officer; the effort had to be called off temporarily (Ibid, Serials 41 and 48; AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III: folio 148, Sitrep 0/495). The attack to the west, however, met with better fortune: 32 Gds Bde captured Hommersum and 5 B.W. of 153 Bde reached the high ground south of Heiland (7941) (Ibid). The task of capturing Kessel and bridging the Niers River still had to be accomplished, and this attack was allotted to 7 A. & S.H., who intended to carry it out during the night 14/15 Feb (AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/C/F, Docket III: Operation "VERITABLE", para 91).

126. Although the ground operations had seemed to bog down slightly, the day's fine weather had been a blessing to the air forces: it had been the first fine day of the last six. It was a climax comparable by observers to those great days of the previous year when the Germans were caught in the Trun gap. In an area of not more than 300 square miles, there were over 800 fighter bomber attacks; and between the rivers from Emmerich in the north to Krefeld in the south a continuous stream of aircraft through the hours of daylight left nothing of the enemy safe on the ground (First Cdn Army Int Summary, 14 Feb 45). Besides all this 2 Gp R.A.F. attacked Uden, Weeze, Straelen and Nieukerk with 122 aircraft. VIII U.S.A.A.F. dropped 98 tons of high explosives on the Wesel road bridge and destroyed one of the spans, and IX U.S.A.A.F. put 166 planes on Geldern, Kevelaer, Xanten and Coeh (AEF: 45/21 Army Gp/C/F, Docket III: Operation "VERITABLE", paras 95 and 96). The excellent flying weather made close support an easy task, and all day targets had been engaged south-east of Cleve. These included strongpoints, S.P. guns and tanks, O.P.s. and pockets of Infantry in houses or trenches. "Cabrank" operated effectively during the day, especially on the front of 51 (H.) Div, where about 32 separate attacks were made, some only 300 yards from the leading troops on the ground. In other sectors various pre-selected targets were taken on. These included the villages of Asperden and Hassum, and an ammunition dump in the Hochwald. Altogether, 84 Gp flew 804 sorties on this memorable day. (Ibid, and First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 229, 14 Feb 45)

127. The first phase of Operation "VERITABLE" was almost completed, and though the enemy had been pushed back on his left and right, there was every indication that he intended to hold the centre. Thus a regrouping was necessary, and the G.O.C.-in-C. First Cdn Army issued his instructions for the second phase of the offensive (General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45). It was to be resumed on a two-corps front, and General Simonds had already been warned that he would take over the left sector within 48 hours (First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 229, 14 Feb 45; and W.D., G.S. 1 Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 14 Feb 45). Meanwhile the floods in the Roer valley still prevented the launching of the Ninth U.S. Army's operation "GRENADE", and the enemy was free to reinforce his line against the advance of First Cdn Army. This was obviously the reason why General Crerar's troops were finding it so difficult to gain ground. Nevertheless, Field Marshal Montgomery was ever anxious not to lose momentum, and in his own words:

In order to maintain the maximum impetus, I ordered 11 Armoured and 52 Divisions to be transferred to Canadian Army from Second Army forthwith. An American reserve division relieved 52 Division on the Meuse front near Venlo. The difficulty was to deploy

additional strength through the Reichswald Forest in view of the communications, but I wanted to make certain that General Crerar had at his disposal all the resources he could use for the battle.

(Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein, Normandy to the Baltic, pp 239 and 240)

128. That General Schlemm's former apprehensions were justified was now painfully apparent to the German high command:

With the increase of pressure from the forces under Canadian Army resulting in the piercing of the Siegfried Line, and the capture of Cleve E 95 and Gennep E 74, it was obvious that further reserves were needed. On the 10 Feb 45 Para Regt of 6 Para Div, which apparently had been one of Schlemm's reserves since early February, had been thrown in in front of Cleve but had not succeeded in preventing the loss of the town. The realization that all of 30 British Corps was now against them convinced Army Group this was not merely a holding action. As a result Schlemm was given 47 Panzer Corps, with its two armoured divisions, on the 12 Feb 45. This Corps took over from the Niens River to the Rhine and their first task was to recapture Cleve. Schlemm says he gave this order with his tongue in his cheek realizing that von Luttwitz with the forces available would be hardly likely to succeed in pulling this off. Chiefly the attack was designed to provide more time for the building of defences south of the Reichswald which were soon to be most urgently needed. 86 Corps, responsible for the remainder of the Army front to the Maas, was merely to hold their positions and prevent an encirclement directed south-east. Permission was given to Straube of 86 Corps to fall back from time to time as the circumstances warranted. These withdrawals, of course, could only take place with the consent of higher authority. Schlemm was not happy about Straube whom he described as "langweilig" (a bore). He was anxious to get 2 Para Corps up into the battle, particularly because he valued the ability of its commander, Eugen Meindl, but this was not permitted at this stage.

In addition to 16 Para Regt, 7 Para Div, 15 Panzer Grenadier Division and 116 Panzer Division as reinforcements, Schlemm had also committed 655 Anti-tank Battalion with about 25 equipments of 7.5-cm or 8.8-cm calibre, two of his reserve parachute battalions called Hutz and Krahs, and two

battalions of 346 Inf Div. These latter had come from Western Holland, and although Schlemm tried to get the complete division this force was all that was allotted to him. About the 13 Feb, 84 Inf Div which had received an intensive pummeling, was pulled out of the line for four days to be rested and reorganized and given some 700 reinforcements that Schlemm had been sent.

(Special Interrogation Report,
Gen Alfred Schlemm)

129. During the night 14/15 Feb, 30 Corps Headquarters announced its intentions for the following day. 51 (H.) Div with 32 Gds Bde under command was to occupy Hassum and Kessel; 53 (W.) Div was to maintain its hold on the Reichswald and to dominate the Goch - Cleve road. The tasks allotted to 43 (W.) Div were the capture of the high ground east and south-east of Staatsforst Cleve as well as the clearing of the Staatsforst itself; with subsequent exploitation towards Goch. 15 (S.) Div was to continue to operate in the direction of Calcar and occupy the area of Moyland. The highlight of the directive concerned 3 Cdn Inf Div, which was to pass to command 2 Cdn Corps at 1200 hours on 15 Feb. A Corps reserve was to be maintained in the form of Gds Armd Div less 32 Gds Bde, and it would remain on eight hours' notice to move into the battle. (AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/I, Docket III(b); Intention O/492, dated 142310)

130. By 0800 hours, 15 Feb, the situation showed that part of the intention had already been carried out, for on the right, 153 Bde of 51 (H.) Div had 5 E.W. some 500 yards south of Heyen (7843). 32 Gds Bde firm in Hommersum (8244) and 7 A. & S.H. in Kessel, which had been entered against moderate opposition (W.D., "G" Ops H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945, Appx 56, Main H.Q., Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serials 16 and 21). 129 Bde of 43 Div had also resumed its advance; 5 Wilts passed through 4 Wilts, and despite heavy resistance were now on their objective north of Berkhofel (9449); while 214 Bde, having cleared the northern exits of Staatsforst Cleve, returned to their former positions, but left elements of 43 (W.) Div Recce Regt's standing patrols (Ibid, Serial 16 and AEF: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III. Sitrep O/495, folio 148). The divisional intention was for 130 Bde to pass through 129 Bde and seize the high ground (9548) south-east of Bremen Kamp (9448) (W.D., "G" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945, Appx 56, Tac H.Q., Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 4). This attack got under way generally at about 1100 hours with on the right 7 Hamps on the left 4 Dorset (Ibid, Serial 21). By this time on either flank, 51 (H.) and 15 (S.) Divs were exploiting their gains. On the right the armoured cars of Derby Yeo had reached Heiland (7941) without opposition, and were pressing on to the east, while on the left in 15 (S.) Div's sector, 9 Cameronians were almost up to the ring contour south-west of Moyland. On their northern flank 7 Seaforth, pushing on towards Moyland, were at present being held up by mines some 1000 yards from the town. (Ibid, Serial 23)

THE ENTRY OF 2 CDN CORPS INTO THE OFFENSIVE - 15 FEB

131. Now that General Crerar's forces were standing well ahead of the first phase line on the left and right, the time had come to bring 2 Cdn Corps into the battle. In the view of Lt-Gen

Simonds the best possibility for its employment would have been in a surprise crossing of the Rhine west of Annhem, where the Germans were now very weak. Following an amphibious crossing of the river the Corps would then work up the right bank parallel to 30 Corps. But the Army Commander ruled out the plan, indicating that the main effort of the Army Group must be to clear the country between the rivers south of Cleve (AEE: 45/2 Cdn Corps/C/I: Appreciation of Corps Commander, 14 Feb 45; W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 13 Feb 45). It had been necessary to hold the Corps in reserve in the early stages owing to the congested approaches, and the difficulty of anticipating the pace of our advance. It had not been thought possible to fight both Corps until Goch had been cleared, and the route from Gennep opened for the use of 30 Corps. The advance had progressed more slowly than had been hoped; 9 Feb had been forecast as the best possible date for the completion of Phase I, but Goch still lay in enemy hands. General Simonds now assumed responsibility with 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs, and it was intended that he should project his operations from Cleve towards Uden and Calcar, but owing to the flooded condition of the roads in the northern sector, 30 Corps' supply routes had to be used jointly by both Corps, and delay resulted (W.D., "G" Ops, First Cdn Army, February 1945, Appx 93: Appreciation of Take-over by 2 Cdn Corps, 1 Feb 45; W.D., G.S., H.Q. 2 Cdn Corps, 15 Feb 45; and General Crerar's Despatch, 5 Apr 45). The road originally opened by 2 Cdn Inf Div from Nijmegen to Cleve now being impassable because of the flooding between Wyler and Kranenburg, a ferry service with nine ferries was organized to carry priority traffic across water sometimes between eight and ten feet in depth. Great care had to be taken in navigation to avoid hedges, fence posts and other underwater obstructions. (AEE: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/RCE/C/D: C.R.E. Account, 8 Feb to 12 Mar)

132. As part of the general regrouping, 52 (L.) Div - which now came under command of 30 Corps from Second British Army - took over 51 (H.) Div's front on the right, and was directed towards Weeze; the Highland Division, following the capture of Asperden (16 Feb), was to attack Goch; if required, from the north-west. On their left, 53 (W.) Div was ordered into reserve, and 43 Div was to capture the high ground dominating Goch from the north. 15 (S.) Div, which was fighting its way ahead towards Moyland and had reached a point (9651) more than half way from Cleve to Calcar, was ordered to form a firm base for the operations of 2 Cdn Corps. The division was then to advance south through 43 (W.) Div and capture Goch. 3 Cdn Inf Div was to initiate these operations on 16 Feb, but on the following day it was to side-step on the Cleve-Uden axis, while 2 Cdn Inf Div was to carry on the attack towards Calcar. (AEE: 45/30 Corps/C/I: Draft of 30 Corps Op Instr 48, 15 Feb 45)

133. 2 Cdn Corps now consisted of 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs and 2 Cdn Armd Bde. Of these formations 2 Cdn Inf Div and 2 Cdn Armd Bde were more or less concentrated; 4, 5 and 6 Cdn Inf Bdes were all in Nijmegen but under orders to move; 4 Bde on 16 Feb, to be followed by 6 Bde on the 17th; 5 Bde was to bring up the rear later. (W.D., H.Q. 4, 6, 5 Cdn Inf Bdes, 15 - 17 Feb 45) 2 Cdn Armd Bde also received its marching orders when 10 Cdn Armd Regt was placed under command 2 Cdn Inf Div. The rest of the brigade was to follow in due course (W.D., H.Q. 2 Cdn Armd Bde, 15 Feb 45). 3 Cdn Inf Div, however, was at that time more widely dispersed. The bulk of 8 Bde was still guarding the Rhenish flank; 9 Bde had H.L.T. of C. in the region of Griethausen, S.D. & G. Highrs around Kellen, and Nth N.S. Highrs to the east between Warbeyen and Hurendeich (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde and Units, 14 - 15 Feb 45). The three regiments of 7 Bde were comfortably established in Cleve, with Regina Rif in the north, 1 C, Scot R. in the centre and R. Wpg

Rif in the south of the town (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde and Units, 14 - 15 Feb 45). In addition 46 (H.) Bde came under command of 3 Cdn Inf Div that day and was to be committed to action augmented by 10 H.L.I. of 227 Bde (First Cdn Army, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 48). 7 Cdn Recce Regt was at about this time moving up to operate on the left flank (W.D., 7 Cdn Recce Regt, 15 Feb 45).

134. The general Canadian Corps plan was for 46 (H.) Bde to continue the task allotted to it by 15 (S.) Div and supported by 3 Armd S.C. to capture the high ground (9649) above the main crossroads (9648) in the region of Louisendorf (9549 - 9949) (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serials 42, 49 and 76). Once this was achieved 7 Cdn Inf Bde would pass through riding in Kangaroos, supported by a regiment of 6 Gds Armd Div (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V: February 1945, L.Os. Reports 151730). In the afternoon of 15 Feb definite instructions for the attack were given to the battalions involved. The attack was to be made, with, on the right, R. Wpg Rif, supported by two squadrons of armour; their task was to seize the hilly ground about Louisendorf (9648, 9748), while on the left Regina Rif with one squadron of tanks under command cleared the woods (9650 - 9750) south of Moyland. This was a narrow strip of forestland, covering an escarpment which ran for several miles parallel to the Cleve - Calcar road, and about halfway between the two towns (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 15 Feb 45). The operation was to be carried out in two phases. First "B" and "D" Coys, Regina Rif with one squadron of tanks, would consolidate in the road which ran north-east through squares 9450, 9552. At this point R. Wpg Rif were to go through to their objective. In the second phase, "A" and "C" Coys, Regina Rif, accompanied by the armour would push on to the area of Roskamp (9749). 1 C. Scot R. would follow up the attacking units. H Hour was tentatively set at 1000 hours, 16 Feb. (W.Ds., Regina Rif, R. Wpg Rif and 1 C. Scot R., 15 Feb 45).

135. Meanwhile, as the Canadian troops girded themselves for the coming battle, the issue west of Moyland was being forced by 15 (S.) and 43 (W.) Divs. On the axis of the Cleve - Moyland road, the proposed plan of committing 227 (H.) Bde was cancelled; instead 10 H.L.I. had been put under command 46 (S.) Bde, which by 1800 hours was still trying to extend its positions towards Moyland, Rozkank and Louisendorf against strong opposition coupled with very heavy shelling. Late reports from this brigade stated that the task would not be completed by first light, 16 Feb (First Cdn Army, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 48, and Main H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 76). As darkness descended upon the battlefield, 46 Bde was persisting in its all-out effort to gain ground. 7 Searforth on the left were held up on the road north-west of Moyland near Tilmersmannskath (954522). 9 Cameronians had not yet reached the ring contour at 962514, and 10 H.L.I. were heavily involved in their drive to the south-east. 1 Glas H. were moving up gradually behind 7 Searforth. (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serials 1 and 4). Success, however, was imminent, and at 0600 hours, 10 Feb, 10 H.L.I. declared that they were making good headway. 7 Searforth had also tired out the opposition and were approaching the 9 Cameronians' objective - the ring contour (9651) - from the north-west with 1 Glas H. following up in spite of their having been counter-attacked during the night (ibid, Serials 3 and 4).

136. By the morning of 16 Feb, 43 (W.) Div was able to report success. The attack by 130 Bde through 129 Bde had, after a bad start due to enemy shelling, progressed favourably. 4 Dorset had gained their intermediate objective by 1800 hours, 15 Feb, where upon 7 Hamps passed through, with the understanding that if they

were successful, 5 Dorset would push on past them. 129 Bde was withdrawn into divisional reserve (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 52). But a dense fog which set in early that morning slowed the advance down, and a new plan was evolved whereby 214 Bde would resume the attack as soon as 130 Bde consolidated (First Cdn Army Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serials 10 and 12). By comparison, the situation to the south-west was quiet. 53 (C.V.) Div merely readjusted some of its positions in 71 Bde's sector, where 1 H.L.I. and 1 Oxf Bucks inter-changed localities. 160 and 158 Bdes, resting after their hard struggles in the Reichswald, had nothing to report (Ibid, Serial 10 and Ibid, 15 Feb 45, Serial 40). The Highland Division, which had spent most of the day reorganizing, had also improved some of its positions in following up the reconnaissance by 2 Derby Yeo, and the morning of 16 Feb saw 153 Bde with 5 B.W. near Heiland (7941), 1 Gordons in the vicinity of Zwarte Heide (8041) and 5/7 Gordons in reserve just south of Gennep (AER: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V, February 1945, L.Os. Report, 160800).

137. Neither 154 nor 152 Bdes nor 32 Gds Bde had made any moves. 154 Bde was still trying desperately to bridge the river at Kessel, which 7 A. & S.H. held in spite of two counter-attacks launched against them. 32 Gds Bde also experienced some violent reaction from the enemy, but all efforts made to dislodge the guards failed (AER: 45/30 Corps/C/H, Docket III: folio 146, Sitrep O/500). As a result of "tidying up" the battlefield in this area, it had not been possible to attack Hassum as previously planned. However, the capture of that place was included in the intention for 16 Feb, which called for 32 Gds Bde to seize the high ground about Mull (8243) beginning at 1330 hours, and to follow this with the capture of Hassum before first light on 17 Feb. 154 Bde would be committed to clear the area about the station (8444), after which 152 Bde was to pass on to take Asperden, Hervorst (8945) and the Asper bridge (888466) (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 15 Feb 45, Serial 77).

138. The weather during the last twenty-four hours had closed again and no flying had been possible, yet in spite of this advantage the enemy made little response to our advances. It is possible that the absence of any real counter effort was due to the fact that he was building up, and waiting for the newly arrived formations to pick up their strength. It was well known that 84, 6 Para, 346, 116 Pz, 15 Pz Gr, 7 Para, 2 Para and possibly 8 Para and 160 Divs had formed the opposition this past day, but it was difficult to define just what proportion of each formation was present in the battle area. It seemed clear that General Student had been left to his own resources and that he was drawing on every division but 190 and 231 for this battle, and it was unlikely that new troops would appear in action until these resources were used up.

Instead a mobile reserve must be built up against the American Armies. In this project the enemy's chief embarrassment is finding infantry to hold lines for mobile reserves to lie behind. Even before the ARDENNES battle he was losing prisoners from his infantry to the Americans at an alarming rate. That is continuing and although there are infantry divisions which seem to be possible, they promise very little real strength. The best are, of course, the battle-shattered 3 and 5 Para Divisions which are still engaged but might come to our battle. A survey of

divisions, some of which may be available is included in Part III under Reserves. Of these, those in XIX Army namely 2 Mountain, 16 Volksgrenadier, 30 SS, 159, 189, 198, 338, 708 and 716 were engaged in the COLMAR pocket until 3 February and should NOT all be required in defence of the right bank of the RHINE. He may therefore be able to maintain a faded and worn facade of infantry divisions in front of the RHINE.

(First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 230, 15 Feb 45).

THE ATTACK ON MOYLAND WOOD - 16 FEB

139. 2 Cdn Corps made little headway during the morning of 16 Feb. 46 (S.) Bde were still encountering severe opposition, and an enemy counter-attack shortly after 10 H.L.I. reported the objective north of Louisendorf forced them to withdraw slightly. 9 Cameronians, though experiencing fierce resistance, repelled the German effort, holding on to their ground until 7 Bde crossed the start line at 1330 hours (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serials 50 and 55). A heavy stonk on all known enemy positions and objectives by field and medium artillery preceded the attack, which showed every sign of becoming muddled as 46 (S.) Bde were still fighting in the region of the Regina's forming up place (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 16 Feb 45). The R. Wpg Rif supported by two squadrons of S.G. (Scots Guards), however, who were to carry out phase one, got well away. "AU" and "CU" Coys crossed the start line in Kangaroos together and at about 1400 hours "CU" Coy, who had covered some 1500 yards, were on their objective (960497), with "AU" Coy followed by "BU" Coy passing through. The three companies pressed on to within fifty yards of their final objectives and then debussed to assault on foot. By 1700 hours the battalion had secured its objectives in the neighbourhood of the Louisendorf crossroads (9648) and consolidated about the farm (9649) 500 yards to the north-east of the intersection. Though the advance had been subjected to heavy shelling and rocketing, casualties had been remarkably light: only in the direct assault was a heavier price paid in men, though the tanks suffered no losses (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 16 Feb 45). 240 prisoners were taken (Ibid).

140. The success of R. Wpg Rif was not matched by Regina Rif on the left, for the Reginas experienced trouble as soon as they crossed the start line. The opposition came from the rectangular wood (9551) opposite Trippenberg (9450), and it became necessary to clear this wood before any further attack could be made. "BU" Coy was promptly despatched to carry out this task. "AU" Coy then passed through them and secured the spot height 962514, and "CU" Coy began to clear eastwards along the southern edge of the wood. It was "CU" Coy who made most headway; they reached the south-eastern fringe and, not knowing just where "AU" Coy was, its commander consolidated with a platoon in the woods north-west of Rosenboom and the rest of his company in the buildings of the settlement (973503). But actually the enemy had not been caught off balance, and very cleverly, as "CU" Coy came forward, the Germans merely retired from the low ground in front of the advancing Canadians to the higher land on the left. When our troops had passed, the enemy closed in behind them, and in a

fierce counter-attack, overran the Regina platoon in the wood. "B" Coy by this time was following up, but on reaching the open ground north of the wood they met with such volumes of fire from the front, left and right that further advance was out of the question. The men were pinned down, and eventually withdrew under cover of darkness. It was then decided to abandon the attack until the next morning. (AEE: 45/7 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I, Memo of Interview No. 5, "The Clearing of Moyland Wood by 7 Cdn Inf Bde", pp 1 and 2). In the late afternoon 1 C. Scot R., the reserve battalion, had moved up behind R. Wpg Rif, and was now dug in on the high ground to the west of R. Wpg Rif (9549) (W.D.: 1 C. Scot R., 16 Feb 45).

141. In the meantime, 4 Cdn Inf Bde with 10 Cdn Armd Regt advanced to the Cleve area. Large scale movement was impossible along the northern route, and it had been necessary to guide the fresh troops in by way of Look - Gennep - Hekkens, and through the Reichswald, in order to reach the assembly area south and east of Cleve. That this meant crossing the supply lines of 30 Corps at a time when most of its formations were engaged in heavy fighting, is indicative of the difficulties involved. (AEE: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F: Weekly Summary of Ops, 12-17 and 18-24 Feb 45; W.D.s., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 16 Feb 45).

142. After a somewhat inactive day of 15 Feb, 30 Corps had started to move forward again on the morning of the 16th. On the far right, 52 (L.) Div, which had just come into the battlefield, began to pass through 51 (H.) Div with 157 Bde leading, leaving 156 Bde concentrated at Gennep (First Cdn Army, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serial 10). In 51 (H.) Div's area, the bridging of the river at Kessel was not completed until 1120 hours, at which time 154 Bde was ordered to prepare itself to clear the northern approaches to Hassum (Ibid, Serial 27). By this time, the infantry and tank attack on Mull (8243) by 5 Coldm Cds of 32 Gds Bde had begun, and by 1410 hours forward elements of this battalion were at the gates of the village. It was then decided to attack Hassum with 1 W.G. that night, after which 152 Bde was to pass on towards Asperden and Hervorst (Ibid, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serial 38). Mull was captured by 1550 hours, and the enemy counter-attacked, but were driven back under a hail of well directed artillery fire (Ibid, 79 and 83). The afternoon was half spent when 157 (L.) Bde advanced with right 5 K.O.S.B., left 5 H.L.I., but good progress was made against moderate resistance, and at 1919 hours, 5 K.O.S.B. were established on the south-eastern edge of the large wood, 500 yards north of Papenheuel (8139) with 5 H.L.I. on their left, fast approaching the clearing at Broedersbosch (8240). 1 Glas H. then commenced its task of mopping up between its two sister battalions and pushing past them to the south (Ibid, Serials 84 and 88).

143. Late in the evening of 16 Feb, both 154 and 152 Bdes of 51 (H.) Div resumed their advance, and by midnight 1 B.W. of 154 Bde had reached a point about 1500 yards north of Hassum (8543), while 2 Seaforth of 152 Bde had seized Asperden (8845) and were waiting for 5 Cameronians, now at Grafenthal (to the north), to drive on eastwards. (Ibid, Serial 82; 2 Cdn Corps, 16 Feb 45, Serial 8). In the area between the forward elements of 152 Bde at Asperden and 7 Cdn Inf Bde at Louisdorf, 53 (W.) and 43 (W.) Divs had been far from idle. 1 Oxf Bucks of 71 Bde seized and consolidated the road (8947) east of Asperberg (895473), 7 R.W.F. leaped forward to the woods (892476) north-east of the Asper Bridge (8846), while 160 Bde patrolled constantly to the western edge of Staatsforst Cleve to report finally no presence of the enemy (Ibid). East of here 130 and 214 Bdes of 43 (W.) Div

had overcome earlier difficulties and also gained some ground, and they now presented a formidable salient into the enemy's line. 130 Bde reached its objective south of Bremenkamp (9448) at 1500 hours with 5 Dorset forward on the left, and 7 Hamps to the right and rear, thus making a firm base as 214 Bde sprang southwards. (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 16 Feb 45, Serial 65). The attack went very well; at 2000 hours both 7 Som L.I. and 1 Worc R. were on their objectives on the high ground (9346 - 9446), some 2000 yards east of Pfalzdorf (9146), and 5 D.C.L.I. went through them to a new objective (945449) overlooking Heldhausen (9444). (Ibid, Serial 87). At this point the intentions for the morrow were given out; 4 Som L.I. would follow up 5 D.C.L.I., and 129 Bde was to relieve 7 Som L.I. and 1 Worc R. at first light, 17 Feb. 4 Dorset of 130 Bde was to clear the north-east corner of Staatsforst Cleve and link up with 53 (W.) Div, while 43 Recce was to screen the north of the woods. (Ibid, Serial 97)

144. The situation of 3 Cdn Inf Div with 46 (H.) Bde under command, had not changed by 0800 hours, 17 Feb. It was now intended to launch 46 (H.) Bde against Loyland, and to pass 4 Cdn Inf Bde through 7 Bde with the object of crossing the Goch - Calcar road in the region of Verkalt (9646) on the afternoon of 17 Feb. At last the Canadian brigades, which had for so long been cooling their heels, were to enter the battle zone. The order was issued for 6 Cdn Inf Bde to move off on 17 Feb. with under command 27 Cdn Armd Regt (who were eventually to be employed by 3 Cdn Inf Div). 5 Cdn Inf Bde was to follow on 18 Feb, 8 Bde on 19 Feb, and 9 Bde on the 20th (AFH: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V: February 1945, L.Os. Report 162000A), 52 (L.) Div would continue to operate on the right with 157 Bde directed on Afferden and on Groote Horst (8639). 51 (H.) Div would, after the capture of Hassum, prepare to operate against Goch from the north-west. In the centre 53 (W.) Div was to isolate Staatsforst Cleve from the west and south and link up with 43 (W.) Div, while the latter dominated the forest from the north and cleared it from the east. 15 (S.) Div and 6 Cds Armd Div were to rest in reserve. (W.D., "C" Ops, H.Q. First Cdn Army, February 1945: Appx 61, folio B, Intentions 17 Feb 45)

145. The first 24 hours had seen the enemy launch several determined but unskilled counter-attacks. Similarly it had seen our troops win back the lost ground, regain the momentum and thrust aside the enemy, whose order of battle was obviously now a complete shambles, with each passing hour giving promise of further headaches to the German High Command. According to recent identifications the enemy appeared to have run short of tactical reserves, for he was throwing in parachute oddments at an alarming rate to bolster the rapidly failing ability of 116 Pz Div (First Cdn Army, Int Summary No. 231, 16 Feb 45).

Of the forces presumed to be available to him, only 19 Para Regt, the Infantry of 346 Div and 11/21 Para Regt are not firmly located. As such they constitute his reserve, but the presence of 346 Div is conjectural; it must be delayed or diverted, since it has not been flung piecemeal into the battle, as is the enemy's apparently unavoidable habit. The question of the identity of the troops with which the enemy now must man the RHINE from PANNERDEN E8368 to EMMERICH E96 is still to be solved.

(Ibid)

146. The air effort had been blessed with good luck, for the day having started overcast and dull, transformed itself into brilliant sunshine, and was put to good use. 84 Gp were quick to resume the onslaught which had suffered a precious day's interruption.

The activity was entirely in the battle area, SOUTH and SOUTHEAST of the REICHSWALD, and directed mainly at ASPERDEN E84 and HASSUM E84, two points of major importance in the line of the Army advance. Both were heavily bombed and strafed and there is little doubt that life there this afternoon was not only uncomfortable, but also very uncertain. The usual type of targets elsewhere in the battle area were attacked - strongpoints, gun positions, blockhouses and the like, and troops - in one instance a group of 50. Later in the day leaflets were dropped.

(First Cdn Army, Int Summary
No. 231, 16 Feb 45)

147. The attack of 7 Cdn Inf Bde was resumed at 1000 hours, 17 Feb, when "B" and "D" Coys of Regina Rif, heavily supported by artillery, attempted to clear the offending woods. This attack, however, became disorganized and Regina Rif were forced to make a slight withdrawal and re-position the companies. The Reginas were then ordered to maintain their present area and wait for 2 Cdn Inf Div's 4 Bde to pass through on the right later (W.D., Regina Rif, 17 Feb 45). As the battalion dug in facing the road which runs south-west from Moyland, R. Wpg Rif seized an opportunity to push "C" Coy out to occupy the buildings at Point 40 (969487), which the scout platoon had reconnoitred and found clear, and later the carrier platoon to the left of "C" Coy on the north-east - south-west track which ran across "C" Coy's area. In addition a single platoon from "D" Coy was ordered to the crossroads 500 yards south-east of the main battalion position (crossroads 961489) (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 17 Feb 45). Slightly to the north-east, 1 C. Scot R. went over to the attack at 1500 hours, when "A" and "D" Coys moved forward through "B" Coy to capture the high ground overlooking Heseler Feld (9749). The two companies moved across the open fields to approach the objective from the west and encountered heavy fire from the left flank. Nevertheless both companies reached their respective targets by 1700 hours, and Lt-Col L.S. Henderson, D.S.O., ordered his anti-tank guns up and directed "B" Coy to the area of the farm (969497), directly west of the objective. The attack had not been cheap, six killed and 26 wounded being the cost (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 17 Feb 45). Throughout the night all three battalions of 7 Cdn Inf Bde underwent severe shelling, mortaring and rocketing, and the enemy kept up a constant stream of sniper fire. Nevertheless, patrols operated forward and to the flanks to prevent infiltration and to contact friendly troops (W.Ds., 1 C. Scot R., R. Wpg Rif, Regina Rif, 17 Feb 45). Since 7 Bde had had such a rough time in getting ahead, it had not been possible to launch 4 Cdn Inf Bde with 10 Cdn Armd Regt until the situation of 7 Bde was firm. The 4 Bde attack was therefore postponed (W.D., H.Q. 11 Cdn Inf Bde, 17 Feb 45). On this day (17 Feb) 6 Bde arrived from Nijmegen and concentrated east of Han around the Bedburg institutions (9252) (W.D., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, 17 Feb 45).

148. The intention for the 18 Feb was for 7 Bde to seal off the eastern end of the Moyland woods south of Hufche (9750), and then clear them in a north-westerly direction towards the

Regina Rif present forward line. Once this was done 46 (S.) Bde would assault Moyland. 4 Cdn Inf Bde would pass through 7 Bde on the morning of 18 Feb as soon as sufficient artillery support could be diverted from the attack on Moyland, and advance south-east. 6 Cdn Inf Bde would relieve 46 (S.) Bde for its task at Moyland, but should the Scottish Bde be unable to succeed, then the capture of the town would pass on to 6 Bde on 19 Feb. Amongst other contemplated changes was the relief of 9 Cdn Inf Bde by two battalions of 8 Cdn Inf Bde, so that the former could move to Cleve. From here it was intended to relieve 130 Bde of 43 (W.) Div and continue the attack towards Udem with 9 Bde. On its relief 130 Bde would change places with 8 Cdn Inf Bde, who would become the reserve brigade for 3 Cdn Inf Div. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V: February 1945, L.O. Report 162000 hours)

149. While 7 Cdn Inf Bde had been striving to push on south-east of Moyland, 30 Corps' effort had met with great success by all divisions. On the right, by midday 1 Glas H. of 52 (L.) Div had captured Afferden and 32 Gds Bde had cleared Hassum (2 Cdn Corps, Ops Log, 17 Feb 45, Serial 18). In the centre position, east of Kessel, 152 Bde was firm in the region of Asperden and Grafenthal (8740), with 5 Cameronians at Hervorst; while 7 A. & S.H. of 154 Bde had cut in behind Grafenthal, pushed on to the edge of the forest, and taken 100 prisoners. Directly east of the Reichswald, 53 (W.) Div was now in full possession of Asperberg (8947) after a heavy fight in which the enemy lost some forty dead (*Ibid*). All the forward positions in this sector had been improved, with 7 R.W.F. of 158 Bde just east of Asperberg, 1 Oxf Bucks of 7 Bde slightly to the north-east, and 1 H.L.I. now in reserve. On the left of 71 Bde, 160 Bde had made a big lunge forward from the area between the Reichswald and Staatsforst Cleve, through the latter feature to line the eastern edge with 2 Mon (*Ibid*). 43 (W.) Div was by this time heavily involved in the northern approaches to Coch, where 4 Som L.I. (under command 214 Bde) had made sufficient ground in the vicinity of Imigshof (9345) to enable a further attack by 1 Worc R. and 7 Som L.I. to pass south to the escarpment (9145 - 9244) north of Coch (*Ibid*). This objective was subsequently reached by 7 Som L.I. on the right flank of the attack, and at 1930 hours consolidation was almost complete. On the left, however, 1 Worc R. moving south-east across the Coch - Calcar road were meeting heavier opposition, and 5 D.O.L.I., who had continued to advance towards Buchholt (9543) during the afternoon, were pressing on despite fierce counter-attacks, their open flank being protected by 43 Recce Regt, who had already cleared up to the crossroads at Point 34 (9547). The area between 43 (W.) Div and 53 (W.) Div was by nightfall almost cleared, due to the efforts of 7 Hamps of 130 Bde, who were working south to the right of 7 Som L.I. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V, February 1945, L.Os. Report 171930A). To the west 53 (W.) Div had moved forward with 71 Bde in the direction of Pfalzdorf (9146); by midnight they lined the wooded track north of Hervorst from the bend in the Miers River (894466) to Ruppenthal with 1 Oxf Bucks, and east of this point for another 1000 yards with 1 H.L.I.; 4 R.W.F. was to the north astride the main road near Sandkuhlshof (9147). (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 18 Feb 45, Serial 6; First Cdn Army Main H.Q. Ops Log, 17 Feb 45, Serials 71 and 93)

150. The right flank was also developing well. 155 Bde of 52 (L.) Div went into action early in the afternoon of 17 Feb, and by last light 7/9 R.S. had reached the left part of their objective at the anti-tank ditch (841395) north-east of Kasteel Blakenbeek (9338) without interference. At the same time, the woods east of Broedersbosch (8240) were cleared by 5 H.L.I. of 157 Bde, and a squadron of 52 Recce Regt which had passed into Rempeld (8238)

was firm in that place, but unable to proceed further owing to heavy fire from the south. (First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 17 Feb 45, Serial 95). The general situation was satisfactory, for 5 K.O.S.B. had one company in the woods east of Rempeld, with the rest of the battalion moving up quickly (Tbid, Serial 96). General Horrocks' intention was now for 43 (W.) Div to advance on Goch, enter the town, and if possible push on as far as the river. 51 (H.) Div would then move on Goch from the north-west. However, if the enemy opposition was too strong the plan would be changed, 15 (S.) Div was to be brought in between 53 (W.) and 43 (W.) Divs and attack from the north, while the western assault by 51 (H.) Div would be launched on the night of 18 Feb. To the south and right 52 (L.) Div having considerable trouble, had been redirected to consolidate the south-east corner of the woods above Molennuis (8339), Croote Horst and as far south as the north-east corner of the large wooded area (8537) east of Heukelom (8237). On gaining these objectives 52 (L.) Div was to stand firm during the assault on Goch (AER: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V, February 1945: L.Os. Report "Intentions", 172000A).

151. While 30 Corps made preparations for its thrust on Goch, the Canadians were being subjected to severe shelling on the southern and western approaches to Moyland, against which no movement was undertaken until 1230 hours, 18 Feb. At that time Regina Rif of 7 Cdn Inf Bde again went forward to the attack, moving on to the woods from the south-west, with "A", "B" and "D" Coys (W.D., Regina Rif, 18 Feb 45). From the very beginning, the going was heavy against numerous machine guns well sited in the brush, and a devastating artillery bombardment which was evidently being provided by German guns from across the Rhine. "B" Coy on the right of the assault progressed slowly with the aid of Wasp flame throwers, despite the counter-attacks which kept coming in from the east. "D" Coy on the left was also having difficulty getting ahead. After several hours of hard fighting, however, the situation was well enough organized for "A" Coy to push past "B" and "D" Coys and consolidate slightly to the north. At this point it had been intended to pass "C" Coy through to the final objective (965513), but the state of the troops was such that further advance was considered inadvisable; instead one platoon of the already depleted "C" Coy was sent up to reinforce the positions of the three companies. (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 18 Feb 45; Regina Rif, 18 Feb 45)

152. In the meantime, 1 C. Scot R. was attempting to exploit to the south-east. At 1400 hours, "B" Coy commenced an attack on the crossroads at Roskamp with the object of pushing along the road running to the south-east. Here again the enemy's machine guns pinned the troops down, and although every effort was made to get ahead, movement was impossible. At 1700 hours the company was pulled back to dig in just north-east of "A" Coy's location at Heselen Feld. It had been a day of bloody fighting and heavy casualties for both Regina Rif and 1 C. Scot R., and while R. Wpg Rif had not actually made any definite assault, they too had come in for a good part of the enemy's violent retaliation with mortar, guns, and rockets (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, R. Wpg Rif, 18 Feb 45). Darkness found each of the battalions tired but well dug in and ready to meet any move that the enemy might make. Furthermore a Squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt had arrived on the scene to act in a counter-attack role. This task had originally been assigned to 27 Cdn Armd Regt, who were intended to relieve the Guards battalion which had so far been assisting 7 Cdn Inf Bde. 27 Cdn Armd Regt, however, had not yet arrived in this sector. (W.Ds., R. Wpg Rif, 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 18 Feb 45)

153. The hard crust of the enemy defences had shown little sign of cracking; he was well dug in, his positions were well sited, and he seemed to have ample mortar and gun support. In addition his troops had shown an aptitude for local tactical manoeuvre which had cost the Canadians severe losses. The value which the Germans placed on this high ground above Moyland was genuine, for once this feature fell, surely Moyland would follow and the road to Calcar would be open to the attacker from the north. New plans were forthcoming to keep the pressure up, and 7 Cdn Inf Bde was ordered to attack again on the morning of 19 Feb (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 18 Feb 45). This order was but a minor part of the general plan for which a large regrouping was in progress (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Docket 11: Operation "VERITABLE" Battle Narrative, AEF: 45/7 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket 1, Memo of Interview No. 5, The Clearing of the Moyland Wood by 7 Cdn Inf Bde). General Crerar had no intention of allowing his effort to lag, for as he remarked later:

As long as we continued to hold the initiative, it was clear that the Germans would be quite unable to sort out their forces and re-establish normal channels of command.

(General Crerar's Despatch,
5 Apr 45)

154. The reliefs which were a prelude to the regrouping were completed by the morning of 17 Feb. 9 Cdn Inf Bde took over from 130 Bde of 43 (C.I.) Div, the change over being carried out without trouble by S.D. & G. Highrs who relieved 4 Dorset; and H.L.I. of C., who occupied the position vacated by 7 Hamp. Nth N.S. Highrs, however, who were due to take over the area held by 5 Dorset, had considerable trouble, as only two of their companies arrived at the latter's lines (First Cdn Army, Tac H.Q. Ops Log, 18 Feb 45, Serial 59). The remaining companies in leaving Warbeyen ran into hidden mines, and two Buffaloes were blown up, causing some 28 casualties (W.Ds., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, Nth N.S. Highrs, 19 Feb 45). The area recently held by 9 Bde was thus turned over to 8 Cdn Inf Bde. N. Shore R. had moved from Nijmegen to relieve H.L.I. of C. at Griethausen, Wardhausen (8959) and Spyck (9260). R. de Chaud changed places with Nth N.S. Highrs, while Q.O.R. of C. remained in its extended lines along the Rhine bank (W.Ds., R. de Chaud, N. Shore R., Q.O.R. of C., 18, 19 Feb 45).

155. Thus 19 Feb saw a three way shuffle begin. 2 Cdn Inf Div directed 4 Cdn Inf Bde to pass through 7 Bde, which was still fighting in a north-easterly direction towards Moyland, and to attack the Goch - Calcar road. To the north-west 5 Cdn Inf Bde began to relieve 46 (S.) Bde in the upper part of the Moyland wood. 6 Cdn Inf Bde remained in reserve near Bedburg (AEF: 45/2 Cdn Inf Div/C/F, Weekly Summaries of Ops, 11 - 17, 18 - 24 Feb 45). Now that 7 Bde had 5 Bde on its left, 9 Bde on its right and 4 Cdn Inf Bde about to push through, a complicated interlocking of formations had been effected which would require careful handling if administrative and supply problems were to proceed without trouble. Furthermore 130 Bde was to cross over to the water-logged left flank between 20-22 Feb, in order to allow 8 Cdn Inf Bde to replace 6 Bde at Bedburg when that formation of 2 Cdn Inf Div was committed. (Ibid). Consequently the inter-corps boundary was changed to run along the northern edge of the Reichswald, through Materborn, across the Cleve - Goch road near Haw, and then south-east, leaving the Cleve - Bedburg - Udem road entirely to 2 Cdn Corps (Ibid, Army Trace, 19 Feb 45).

THE THRUST TO THE SOUTH-EAST BY 4 CDN INF BDE, 19 - 23 FEB

156. By 0800 hours, 19 Feb, most of the reliefs had been completed. 5 Cdn Inf Bde took over from 46 (H.) Bde west of Moyland (9751), and 46 (H.) Bde returned under Command 15 (S.) Div 2 Cdn Corps, February 1945, Appx 3, Ops Log, 19 Feb 45, Serial 9). 9 Cdn Inf Bde were almost complete in the old positions of 130 Bde west of Staatsforst Cleve, and 4 Cdn Inf Bde was making final preparations just rear of 7 Bde's southern lines for its attack to the south (W.D., H.Q. 9, 7 and 4 Cdn Inf Bdes, 19 Feb 45; First Cdn Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 19 Feb 45, Serials 13 and 18). The first move was made by 1 C. Scot R., who attacked with three companies from their positions around Rosskamp at approximately 0800 hours. The plan was for "C" Coy to clear out the area of Bramerskath (9750) to the north, "D" Coy to advance into the low ground east of Rosskamp, with "A" Coy moving south to take out a strongpoint at the crossroads (977494) south of Hoesler Feld. The attack moved off, meeting terrific opposition, and very soon it was clear that the enemy here was much too strong. "D" Coy could not get past "B" Coy, and "C" Coy attacking to the north were cut off, gradually encircled and finally almost wiped out, only six men escaping from the holocaust into which these troops had plunged. "A" Coy, however, did manage to reach their objective (W.D., 1 C. Scot R., 19 Feb 45), and such gains as had been possible were consolidated to await the inevitable counter-attacks (Tbid). The left flank, now open after the disaster which had befallen "C" Coy, was quickly sealed by the regimental carriers and a troop of tanks from 10 Cdn Armd Regt. (Tbid).

157. Meanwhile, 4 Cdn Inf Bde had also gone over to the offensive, which by measure of the ferocity of this fight for the Goch - Calcar road was one of the most intense local actions of the whole operation. Originally, the intention had been to secure the prominent feature south of Calcar, but during the 24-hour period immediately preceding the attack, there were several changes in plan. These changes were essential because of the present threat to the left flank from the enemy's positions in the woods which 7 Cdn Inf Bde was trying to clean out. Until these woods were in Canadian hands no road existed in that area which might be used as a maintenance route (AFT: 45/4 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I: Memo of Interview No. 2 CD/4, The Struggle for the Goch - Calcar Road, Role of 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 19-20 Feb 45). The first alteration in plan occurred when it was decided to seize the ridge south-west of Calcar: this was then changed to be the area directly south-east of 1 C. Scot R.'s position. The final decision came when General Simonds directed that 4 Cdn Inf Bde would capture the sector bound in on the north-east by Schroanenhof (986472) and the road junction 500 yards due west, and in the south-west by Brunshof (968460) and Kramerbergshof (964466) (Tbid).

158. The attack was to be made on a two battalion front, with Essex Scot on the right, R.H.L.I. on the left, each unit having two companies up and two in reserve. The forward objectives of Essex Scot were the areas of Brunshof and Gottern (9746), while the follow-up companies were to establish themselves on the Goch - Calcar road immediately to the west. The objectives given to the forward elements of R.H.L.I. centered on Schroanenhof and the scattered farmhouses just north-east of Ebben (9846). The reserve companies were to consolidate in the area of Noll and 700 yards along the Goch - Calcar road to the north-east and south-west. The reserve battalion, R. Regt of C., was to occupy the four main road junctions directly to the north-west of the forward battalions (AFT: 45/4 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket I: Memo of Interview No. 2 CD/4). The attack was to be made

over open country with Kangaroos of 1 Cdn Carrier Regt to lift the two forward companies of each battalion. For support, 4 Cdn Inf Bde had 10 Cdn Armc Regt less one squadron, Tor Scot R. (A.G.), fourteen field and seven medium regiments, as well as two batteries of heavy artillery. The kangaroo force was divided into two columns, directly supported by a squadron of armour. This meant that the leading troops would proceed straight to their objectives at tank speed, while the reserve companies moved forward on foot as speedily as possible, leaving R. Regt C. to mop up in the rear of the assault. (Ibid., and W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 18 Feb 45, R.H.L.I., 17 Feb 45)

159. The plan of artillery support included a rolling barrage supplied by the guns of ten of the field and six of the medium regiments, lifting at tank pace (i.e., 100 yards every two minutes). The rest of the guns would thus be free to take on all known enemy targets on the high ground to the east, and in front of the advancing infantry. The task assigned to Tor Scot R. (A.G.) was to engage the enemy in the areas of Brunshor and Gotten with medium machine gun fire and 4.2-in mortars. The success of the operation depended on whether the armoured vehicles could negotiate the boggy ground on the way to the objective. (An alternative plan was conceived should the armour be unable to advance, but since the tank and kangaroo commanders were confident that they would have no trouble, the attack was scheduled to go in as first planned.) Between 1030 and 1130 hours on 19 Feb the assaulting regiments moved up to the forming up places. (AEF: 45/4 Cdn Inf Bde/C/D, Docket 1: Memo of Interview No. 2 CD/4)

160. The troops had little trouble in forming up, and at 1200 hours they crossed the start line - the road running north-east to south-west through the Louisendorf crossroads. The artillery poured its shells into the enemy positions as our men advanced over the boggy ground across which the movement of the heavier tanks and kangaroos became increasingly difficult. Soon after the waves of infantry left the starting point, several armoured vehicles bogged down, but the remainder pressed on (Ibid). It became clear as time passed that though the enemy had been taken by surprise, he had a strong anti-tank screen in this sector which included many 88-mm guns in well-sited positions and ably protected by infantry of 12 Para Recce Regt (Ibid). On the left, in R.H.L.I.'s sector, both guns and mines extracted their toll of Canadian armour, and while for the most part the kangaroos were able to debuss their infantry near to the objectives, they were not able to progress further because of the tremendous volume of anti-tank fire coming from the enemy guns (Ibid).

161. As the battle progressed, communications became interrupted, especially with Essex Scot whose two forward wireless sets were knocked out, and who, until a third set was brought up, were only able to communicate to Bde H.Q. through the artillery's network. Before 1415 hours, however, both battalions were part way on their allotted objectives after a stiff fight. The enemy was not long in retaliating; the first counter-attack came in frontally and from the south, by a considerable force of infantry supported by tanks. Heavy fighting continued, and at 1530 hours R.H.L.I. were still some 200 yards short of the objective, while on the right, Essex Scot were within a short distance of Gotten. The struggle reached a peak of fury as the forward battalions attempted to mop up their respective areas, amid a hail of fire from the enemy's mortars. By 1800 hours the situation appeared well in hand for R.H.L.I., Essex Scot, and R. Regt C., who were now complete on their own positions in reserve; but as the evening wore on more counter-attacks began to come in against the Canadians, and all supported

by heavy artillery and mortar fire, which caused many casualties. At least seven of these attacks were thrown in against our troops, each with renewed vigour, and at about 2300 hours Lt-Col Pangman of Essex Scot reported that the situation about him was becoming critical: his forward area had been overrun and enemy tanks were firing on his headquarters. At about the same time R.H.L.I. was fighting fiercely to beat off two counter-attacks against its left flank which had penetrated the forward defences and were slowly overrunning "C" Coy. Lt-Col W.D. Whittaker immediately sent out his counter-attack force to restore the situation.

162. At this most anxious moment, Brigadier Cabellu conferred with Maj-Gen Matthews, C.O.C. 2 Cdn Inf Div, who at once put Camerons of C. of 6 Cdn Inf Bde at the disposal of 4 Cdn Inf Bde to take over the R. Regt C.'s firm base should the latter be needed to assist in maintaining the forward line. Shortly after midnight the Brigadier ordered "D" Coy R. Regt C. up to help the Essex Scot, who by now were out of contact, due to the terrific amount of fire which enveloped the battalion headquarters area. R.H.L.I. were in almost as bad a state, for some enemy tanks had cut in to outflank Lt-Col Whittaker's positions on the left, and were exerting a good deal of pressure on 1 C. Scot R. on 3 Cdn Inf Div's front to the north. The silence of Essex Scot was finally broken at 0315 hours, when "D" Coy sent a message through R. Regt C. to say that only thirteen men remained in the company; all contact with the other companies and battalion headquarters had been lost and that they must withdraw. This bad news was offset in part by a message from R.H.L.I. at 0400 hours saying that their counter-effort had been successful and the situation of "C" Coy had been put right. R.H.L.I. was now positioned with "A" Coy at 400 yards north of Ebben (9746), "B" Coy at Schroanenhof, "C" Coy at the road junction 600 yards west of Schroanenhof and "D" Coy consolidating at Wns (9847) (W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, R.H.L.I., 1 C. Scot R., 20 Feb 45. History of Essex Scot R.). Meanwhile Camerons of C. had been put under command 4 Cdn Inf Bde, and were standing by for a counter-attack role (W.D., Camerons of C., 19 Feb 45). "B" Coy had already gone forward to relieve "D" Coy, R. Regt C., when the latter advanced to aid the hard pressed Essex Scot (Ibid, 20 Feb 45). A second company, "A", was despatched to the Royals' positions early on 20 Feb, but did not remain there; it was sent on to reinforce R.H.L.I. (Ibid, 20 Feb 45). In view of the heavy commitment of 4 Cdn Inf Bde, H.L.I. of C. was also placed under command 4 Bde at 1200 hours, 20 Feb 45 (W.D., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Feb 45).

163. Brigadier Cabellu now arranged a counter-attack by R. Regt C. on to the Essex positions in the hope that quick action might recover a good many of the Essex Scotsmen who were pinned down in the area. After some discussion, a deliberate attack was planned to begin at 0900 hours supported by a new fire plan. While final preparations were being made for the attack by R. Regt C., the enemy again threw in a large force of infantry and tanks against R.H.L.I. A troop of tanks from 10 Cdn Armd Regt was immediately sent to bolster the infantrymen, and the enemy was driven back with huge losses. R. Regt C. went over to the attack at 0930 hours, the objectives being the near objectives of Essex Scots' thrust of the previous day. Soon after 1030 hours, Lt-Col R.M. Lendrum of R. Regt C. reported that some of his troops had reached this area, and that the Commanding Officer of Essex Scot had been contacted. Unfortunately the men of R. Regt C. were unable to hold on to this ground and clear it sufficiently to allow the Essex Scot headquarters to be evacuated. This headquarters had been experiencing tense moments, some 18 all ranks having spent the night of 19/20 Feb and the following morning in a small cellar into which the enemy had poured A.Tk shells at close range. This

fire, together with the many artillery concentrations which had fallen in the locality, had made it a veritable hell out of which no man was able to escape until noon, 20 Feb, when an L.O. managed to reach 4 Bde Headquarters with a story of terrible hardship and extreme heroism (History of Essex Scot R.)

164. Since the first attack by R. Regt C. had met with so little success, the Commander 4 Cdn Inf Bde arranged a second effort to evacuate the remainder of Essex Scot. By 1400 hours the spot had been reached by carriers of R. Regt C.; the wounded were taken out and the weary Essex Scot headquarters staff were relieved. During the afternoon stragglers from Essex Scot who trickled back were reorganized. From a total of 25 officers and 540 other ranks who took part in the initial assault, only 17 officers and 395 other ranks were accounted for. The enemy continued to plaster the ground with shell and mortar fire, and at 1715 hours he launched a fresh attack from the north and north-east on R.H.L.I. Brigadier Cabeldul's reaction was to send forward the reserve squadron of 10 Cdn Armd Regt and elements of Camerons of C., and by 2000 hours after several fanatical attempts to push R.H.L.I. off this position, the German troops pulled back, their ardour dampened by the stoic resistance. As Camerons of C. went in to aid R.H.L.I., H.L.I. of C. took over their ground, the reserve positions previously intended for R. Regt C. into which Camerons of C. had settled the full battalion earlier in the day (W.Ds., Camerons of C., H.L.I. of C., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Feb 45). H.L.I. of C. then took over all Camerons of C. tasks, and the latter unit reverted to command of 6 Cdn Inf Bde (W.Ds., H.Q. 6 Cdn Inf Bde, Camerons of C., 20 Feb 45). No more attacks were forthcoming, however, and so ended two days of ferocious fighting. 4 Cdn Inf Bde had attacked, been counter-attacked many times and partially overrun, but it had, in the words of its own War Diary:

Counter attacked and returned, proud holders of the ground won, ground strewn with the enemy's dead and equipment.

(W.D., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Feb 45)

The infantry battalions, and especially R.H.L.I., had been an outstanding example of ably led, well trained troops, who by sheer guts and perseverance had taken and held an objective against the best the enemy could put against them (W.Ds., H.Q. 4 Cdn Inf Bde, R.H.L.I., Essex Scot, R. Regt C., 10 Cdn Armd Regt, 19-20 Feb 45).

165. The success of 4 Cdn Inf Bde in crossing the Coch - Calcar road greatly improved the position of 7 Cdn Inf Bde, which was still battling for the Moyland wood. In this sector, S.D. & G. Highrs had arrived to take over from R. Wpg Rif on the evening of 19 Feb. A change in command took place when Brigadier J.C. Spragge, D.S.O., left for England, and Lt-Col A.S. Gregory, O.C. Regina Rif, assumed temporary command of 7 Cdn Inf Bde. Apart from shelling and mortaring, Regina Rif had not experienced any tactical change (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 19-20 Feb 45). Most of the day's action had been in front of 1 C. Scot R., who were counter-attacked in considerable force in the early hours of 20 Feb. This attack having been dealt with, the enemy soon mounted another which was stopped within 70 yards of "B" Coy's forward troops, where the enemy proceeded to take cover in dead ground, but from which even the heaviest artillery concentrations could not budge him. Finally, Wasp flame throwers were called forward, yet

they too found the ground much too boggy and were unable to operate (W.Ds., 1 C. Scot. R., 19-20 Feb 45; H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 20 Feb 45). A new plan was now formed for R. Wpg Rif to pass through and clear the woods on 21 Feb, using as a start line the road below the Moyland Woods south-west of Langenhorst (9650); "B" and "D" Coys were to attack and capture the high ground astride the road leading south-west from Moyland; "A" and "C" Coys were then to go through the forest and consolidate with "A" Coy south of Langenhorst and "D" Coy on the wooded hill at Point 30 (970504). From there "D" Coy would take up the advance again to seize the neck of the woods to the east at Bramenkath (975504), and "B" Coy, having handed over to "A" Coy Regina Rif, was to situate itself on the forward northern slope of the feature west of Langenhorst. The artillery, M.C. and mortars were to act on a timed programme while the anti-tank guns and tanks were instructed to provide close support over open sights. H Hour was set at 1000 hours, 21 Feb 45 (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 20 Feb 45).

166. The night of 20/21 Feb passed quietly, a welcome change to what had gone before. The morning of the 21st saw final arrangements for the attack completed, and at 1015 hours R. Wpg Rif went forward (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde and units, 20/21 Feb 45). The first step was by "B" and "D" Coys, who worked their way through Regina Rif and advanced north to within 600 yards of Moyland. "A" and "C" Coys then began clearing the main wood parallel to the start line, and "A" Coy Regina Rif moved up to relieve "B" Coy of the Winnieps as planned. Resistance was fierce at all points and prisoners were few. Nevertheless "A" Coy managed to reach the high ground north-west of Rosenboom (9750), while "C" Coy cleared the buildings in this hamlet. One of the hottest fights took place when the depleted "C" Coy under Major C.S. Platts assaulted an enemy strongpoint with the aid of flame throwers. 200 paratroops had been reported here, but after the fierce engagement only five were taken out alive (W.D., R. Wpg Rif, 21 Feb 45). But by now the troops had suffered such heavy casualties that it was necessary for "B" Coy Regina Rif to take over from "D" Coy R. Wpg Rif, allowing the latter to proceed to settle in Rosenboom, while "C" Coy Regina Rif withdrew slightly to the west (969503). The night brought with it the usual counter-attacks from the enemy, who tried hard, though unsuccessfully, to push "D" Coy out of its position (W.Ds., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, R. Wpg Rif, 21 Feb 45). The gains of the day had been held and the way to Calcar, which had taken so long to reach and had cost so many lives, was open, for now the Moyland - Calcar road was effectively dominated by 7 Cdn Inf Bde (W.D., H.Q. 7 Cdn Inf Bde, 21 Feb 45).

167. By this time the remainder of 2 Cdn Corps was in the process of readjusting itself completely. It had been announced on 20 Feb that after the attack by R. Wpg Rif, 7 Cdn Inf Bde would be relieved by 4 Cdn Inf Bde and would concentrate as divisional reserve. Further to this, R. de Chaud and M. Shore R. would be relieved by 130 Bde of 43 (W.) Div on the night of 20/21 Feb, and O.O.R. of C. 24 hours later. 8 Cdn Inf Bde was then to be ready to pass through 9 Cdn Inf Bde to attack on the axis Cleve - Keppeln - Udem. A change was also slated for the battalions of 9 Cdn Inf Bde. H.L.I. of C. was to take over from R. Regt C. on the night of 20 Feb; the next day S.D. & G. Hughs would be relieved by Essex Scot, and lastly Nth N.S. Hughs was to assume responsibility of the positions on the night of R.H.L.I. Thus 2 and 3 Cdn Inf Divs would each be on a one-brigade front. A certain amount of switching was also to be done by 7 Cdn Recce Regt, whose Squadron at Huisperden (9655) was to be relieved in part by 8 Cdn Recce Regt and by the Netherlands Companies. On completion of these changes, 7 Cdn Recce Regt was to concentrate in reserve for 3 Cdn Inf Div. (AEF: 45/First Cdn Army/C/H, Docket V; February 1945, L.Os. Reports 201100A, 211130A). The armoured forces were to be added to by the

arrival in the battle zone of 6 Cdn Armd Regt, whose present task was to be handed over to 18 Cdn Armd C. Regt (Ibid).

168. A portion of the regrouping was completed by the morning of 22 Feb, and 4 Cdn Armd Div, having relinquished its positions along the Maas River to 1 Pol Armd Div, passed from under command 1 Brit Corps to 2 Cdn Corps (Ibid; L.Os. Reports 210900A, 220900A). The changes between 8 Cdn Inf Bde and 130 Bde along the river, and by 7 and 8 Cdn Recce Regts at Hulsberden were both completed by 2200 hours, 21 Feb (First Can Army, Main H.Q. Ops Log, 21 Feb 45, Serials 41, 61 and 85). Forward on the left flank 5 Cdn Inf Bde had R. de Mais and Calg Highrs, who had earlier eased into a position south of R. de Mais to conform with R. Wpg Rif's attack. Both these units patrolled vigorously to the east, and finding Moyland clear the former battalion sent in two companies to occupy it during the night 21/22 Feb. By midnight 21/22 Feb, Nth N.S. Highrs relieved R. Regt C. to the right of R.H.L.I., and R. Regt C. occupied a new position between 1 C. Scot R. and R.H.L.I. (2 Cdn Corps Ops Log, 22 Feb 45, Serial 3). It was now the task of Nth N.S. Highrs to recapture the ground lost earlier by Essex Scot and during the morning a plan was formed to achieve this (W.Ds., H.Q. 9 Cdn Inf Bde, Nth N.S. Highrs, 22 Feb 45).

169. For this assault Nth N.S. Highrs had under command "C" Coy S.D. & G. Highrs, "D" Coy H.L.I. of C., and in support "C" Coy C.H. of O. (C.G.), two troops of "A" Sqn 1st Hussars, and one S.P. troop of A.Tk guns. The plan was for "C" Coy Nth N.S. Highrs to capture and hold the crossroads at Kranenbergshof (965466) and the built-up region of Brunshof, while on the left "A" Coy was to secure the ground between Taubenhof (9746) and Hofmannshof (9746) (W.D., Nth N.S. Highrs, 22 Feb 45). H Hour was set for 1100 hours, and air support was promised in addition to aid supplied by artillery and mortars. The operation was delayed some 30 minutes waiting for the Typhoons, which eventually arrived at 1129 hours (Ibid). One minute later the two companies of Highlanders crossed the start line behind a heavy artillery barrage, with the Typhoons in close attendance. Both companies reached the objective without trouble, in spite of a heavy enemy artillery and mortar barrage which enveloped the infantry, but which did not deter them from holding on to the newly gained ground (Ibid). The enemy guns continued to pound the Canadian position throughout the day, yet no counter attack was launched; the absence of the latter no doubt being due to the presence of the Typhoons which dived repeatedly to discourage with machine gun, cannon and rocket any movement on the enemy's part. Our casualties for the attack were nine killed and 31 wounded, but against this must be credited the finding by "A" Coy of seven men of the Essex Scot who had been cut off by the enemy counter attack two days before (Ibid).

170. By first light 23 Feb, 2 Cdn Corps was completely regrouped. During the previous day 5 Cdn Inf Bde had moved fully into the line, with Calg Highrs relieving Regina Rif and R.H.C. taking over from R. Wpg Rif (W.Ds., H.Q. 5 and 7 Cdn Inf Bde and Units, 21-23 Feb 45). To the right of 5 Bde, 4 Cdn Inf Bde had redispersed R. Regt C., who took over from 1 C. Scot R., while Essex Scot moved up into the area previously occupied by S.D. & G. Highrs, and was now reserve battalion situated between R. Regt C. and R.H.L.I. but slightly to the rear (W.Ds., S.D. & G. Highrs, R. Regt C., R.H.L.I., Essex Scot, 22-23 Feb 45). Upon its relief 7 Cdn Inf Bde assumed a reserve role and concentrated just east of Bedburg. Some of these changes were only temporary; 5 Cdn Inf Bde was due soon to be relieved by 129 Bde of 43 (W.) Div; they were then to concentrate in the vicinity of Bedburg, where 6 Cdn Inf Bde had been held for some days past in readiness for a new operation.