

ACTION REPORT

IRBORNE DIVISION

MAY 1945

May 45

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May 45

MAPS

G.S.G.S. 4416, GERMANY, scale 1/100,000, Sheets L5, L6, M5, M6.

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SECTION I -- NARRATIVE

By nightfall, April 30, 1945, the 82d Airborne Division had established a small bridgehead east of the ELBE River in the vicinity of BLECKEDE, GERMANY. This bridgehead had been established by the 505th Parachute Infantry in a splendid example of coordination and river crossing technique by a veteran regiment.

During the night of April 30-May 1, the plan was to build up sufficient forces from the 504th Parachute Infantry, which was arriving by train approximately five hours from the Elbe River, so as to attack out of the bridgehead with that regiment by daylight. One battalion of this regiment arrived at the bridgehead by 0430 hours and with a full appreciation of the value of time it jumped off at 0500 hours, the regiment being reinforced during the day by the later arrival of its other battalions. Troops completing the 4 - 6 day train trip from the Cologne area were immediately entrucked and taken into the bridgehead. Then, after being briefed and issued ammunition, they were committed to the attack. It was obvious that the German was disintegrating rapidly and it was of the utmost importance that regardless of the physical condition of our troops, the momentum of our drive be maintained until the enemy was completely destroyed or overrun.

With characteristic speed and courage, the 504th Parachute Infantry arrived at its objective by mid-morning and shortly after noon had reached the Forst Correnzien. On its left the 505th Parachute Infantry, despite the fact that it had been constantly moving for almost a week, drove ahead and reached its objective, the Forst Correnzien, by mid-afternoon of May 1. Speed was the keynote, and the pressure was kept on the enemy during the night of May 1-2. The Division Reconnaissance Platoon seized the very important bridges at Buckau and Hosiern and held them until relieved by advancing forces the following morning. Reconnaissance was pushed eastward by all units, the 504 engaging its armor with some enemy in the Forst Leussow at approximately 2100 hours, May 1.

The 325th Glider Infantry had been brought up during the night of May 1-2, briefed and prepared for commitment. It and the 504 jumped off before daylight after a short night of reorganizing and preparation, and advanced with the mission of seizing the line Ludwigslust-Doenitz, some 25 miles distant. Sufficient tanks and trucks were made available to the 504 to motorize a battalion. Combat Command "B", of the 7th Armored Division, was to be used with the 325 after the initial breakthrough and the seizure of Lubtheen. The troops had been driving hard for some time and all the units were going to the maximum of their ability. The German resistance in spots was intense and bitter, costly in lives. In other places none existed.

Overall, it appeared that our plan of attack was justified. The developments of May 2 confirmed this, although in the form they took they were surprising. Jumping off at 0500 hours, May 2, all units moved ahead aggressively. Resistance was spotty to negligible. By mid-morning units arriving generally east of Forst Leussow found themselves overrunning groups of bewildered enemy with hardly any will to resist, who thought that we were still at the Elbe while they were fighting what appeared to be a retrograde action with the Russians. By noon Combat Command "B" and the 325 had captured Ludwigslust and the 504 had captured Doenitz. Both units immediately moved to gain contact at Idena.

Many units of the German 21st Army were being cut off and surrounded. The hospitals and rear installations of the 21st German Army were apparently endeavoring to continue functioning. Many German service units, hindered by

thousands of refugees, found themselves within our positions. With very few exceptions they surrendered without resistance. After two years of intense and, at times, very costly fighting with the German Army, the spectacle that began to unfold itself was an unbelievable one. German command and control became completely paralyzed and entire units were being captured intact.

By late afternoon a group of staff officers of the German 21st Army, representing Lt. Gen. Tippelskirch, commanding that army, arrived at the 82d Airborne Division's CP at Ludwigslust and endeavored to arrange the surrender of their casualties, allied prisoners, and some service units. Since these had already been captured, the offer was ridiculous on its face, and they were told so. They were further told that the attack would be continued and their army would be destroyed when we gained contact with our advancing Russian allies. I was informed at this time that the Russian forces were approximately 10-20 miles to the east.

They then offered, in the name of the commander of the German 21st Army, the surrender of that army to our forces, but not to the Russians. They were told that this too was impossible, that since the Russians were our allies they would surrender unconditionally to both of us, and they were again told that there was to be no delay since we were continuing the attack with the purpose of destroying their army. The staff departed stating that they would transmit this information to General Tippelskirch. During the late afternoon and early evening German units continued to be overrun. Many came into our lines to surrender. There appeared to be no control of the German forces within their own ranks, except in small formations.

At about 2100 hours Lt. General Tippelskirch arrived at my CP in Ludwigslust and after some discussion unconditionally surrendered his army to the 82d Airborne Division. He too desired to stipulate that his army would surrender on the ground where it was and that upon cessation of hostilities this division would accept his troops as their prisoners. This was rejected and he was told that his army would be destroyed by ours in conjunction with our Russian allies and that his unconditional surrender would be valid when his troops were physically within our lines and not until then. An added paragraph stipulating this was added to the unconditional surrender, which was signed at about 2200 hours.

This ended for this division approximately two years of very hard and costly combat, combat in which many lessons were learned, lessons that were applied and paid handsome dividends in the closing days of the fighting. The combat discipline of the units of the division, their appreciation of the need to drive ahead, and their willingness to drive ahead, regardless of their physical condition, particularly in the infantry regiments, was never more apparent. Once his initial covering forces along the Elbe River were overrun, the German was never given an opportunity to offer an organized defense, and the lives saved and complete victory achieved were far beyond any measure of value in terms of sweat and labor.

Combat Command "B", under the command of Colonel Haskell, participated brilliantly in the final day of the attack. Throughout the entire three-day attack, the division was very ably supported by Squadron "A" of the 4th Royals which provided 25 "Buffalos" to assist in the crossing at Bleckede.

SECTION II -- CHRONOLOGY

1 MAY: The attack moved from right to left, the 504th Parachute Infantry jumping off at 0500, the 505th at 0552 and the 121st (Reinforced) at 0600. The attack gained up to nine miles in an easterly direction against light opposition, and the Division front at the end of the day was along the general line SUCKAU-160278-150240-STAPEL-KEETZE-PRIVELACK. The Division Reconnaissance Platoon captured ROSIEN (1527) and kept contact with the British 6th Airborne Division at 013356 at 0630 hours, the 121st Regimental Combat Team (Reinforced) was relieved from attachment to the 82d and reverted to control of the 8th Infantry Division.

The Division Command Post moved from BLECKEDE to NEUHAUS (1325). By the close of the day all remaining elements of the Division had detrained and were en route to forward assembly areas. Corps engineers completed a bridge at DARCHAU (112203) by 1830 hours, and 82d Airborne Division traffic was diverted to that

bridge. Artillery fired 20 missions, 1,128 rounds during the day. Total of 696 prisoners were counted during the period.

Operations Instructions No. 9, issued during the day, provided that the attack continue on 2 May with the 325th Glider Infantry passing through the 503rd Parachute Infantry. Combat Command "B", attached from the 7th Armored Division, was to prepare for offensive action in the 325th sector.

2 MAY: The attack was continued at 0500, and both the 325th Glider Infantry and 504th Parachute Infantry reached initial objectives by 0615. With 2d Battalion, 325th, attached, Combat Command "B" (Task Force HASKELL) attacked at 1000 along the main road toward LUDWIGSLUST (5132) and seized the city by 1210. The Division Reconnaissance Platoon suffered some casualties but succeeded in clearing the NARM, UAST and LEISSON Forest areas of enemy. The Division established a general line along the NEUE WIDE Canal North to 500370 and prepared to link up with Russian forces as contemplated in Operations Instructions No. 10, issued 020030 May. The Division Forward Command Post moved to LUDWIGSLUST.

The Commanding General, 82d Airborne Division, accepted the unconditional surrender of the Twenty-First German Army at 2130 from Lt. Gen. Von TIPPALSTIRCH. The surrender terms were signed at LUDWIGSLUST. (See Annex No. 3).

A total of 1,420 prisoners were counted during the day, but the mass movement of the German Twenty-First Army through the lines had begun before the period ended. Because of the rapid advance, few artillery rounds were fired during the day. The remainder of the organic artillery closed with the forward elements by the end of the day.

The task of handling the large numbers of prisoners and of displaced persons began with establishment of the DELLIEN and ZIEZT Camps under control of 503rd Parachute Infantry as outlined in Operations Instructions No. 11 issued at 022400 hours.

3 MAY: Firm contact with advancing Russian forces was made during the day. First contacts were made by Troop B, 87th Cavalry Squadron, attached, with the 191st Russian Infantry Division at REPTIN (9946) at 0925 and by the 82d Airborne Division Reconnaissance Platoon with the 8th Brigade of the 8th Russian Mechanized Corps at GRABOW (5526) at 1025 hours. A conference was held late in the day between Commanding General 82d Airborne Division and General Firstovich, Commanding General 8th Mechanized Corps. The Division Command Post was consolidated at LUDWIGSLUST.

The Division's main activity during the day was the direction of prisoners and displaced persons to the rear. No count of prisoners taken was possible, but it was estimated that the surrendered German Twenty-First Army totalled approximately 144,000 men. (For brief discussion of the Twenty-First Army see Section III, INTELLIGENCE PHASES, and for summary of captured materiel see SECTION IV, SUPPLY AND EVACUATION.) Operations Instructions No. 12 established the front line and a cleared area between the American and Russian Forces.

4-19 MAY: Operations Instructions No. 13, issued 4 May, divided the Division area into sectors of responsibility, and systematic searches of the area to "screen" all personnel were begun. Normal military governmental duties were carried out. A Division Memorandum dated 7 May provided for establishment of additional Displaced Persons Centers. (See Annex No. 6 for locations of Prisoner of War and Displaced Persons camps). These camps were closed one by one as their usefulness ended.

Minor changes were made in the Division front and the cleared area between the American and Russian lines through consultation of commanders concerned. These changes are reflected in Annexes Nos. 6 and 7.

Among events during the period were the following:

a. Public funeral services on 7 May in LUDWIGSLUST for 200 of the approximately 1,000 bodies found in a concentration camp near LUDWIGSLUST. German civilians performed the necessary labor, and citizens of the city were ordered to attend the services which were held by American army chaplains. (See Annex No 4).

b. Formal meeting at 82d Airborne Division Headquarters on 7 May of General DEMPSEY, commander of the British Second Army and General GLASHIN, commander of the Russian Forty-Ninth Army.

c. A formal exchange of visits at American and Russian Headquarters, including dinners at the 82d Airborne Division Headquarters on 17 May for the Commanding General of the Russian Fifth Guards Cossack Division and his staff and on 18 May for the Commanding General of the Russian 385th Infantry Division and his staff.

19 May-011200 June: The 82d Airborne Division relieved the 8th Infantry and 7th Armored Divisions of part of their occupational areas late on 19 May. Operations Instructions No. 14, issued 18 May, divided the divisional area into new sectors of unit responsibility. The changes involved some movement of unit Command Posts.

During this period the Division Commander presented Legions of Merit and Bronze Stars to a number of Russian officers and enlisted men, and Russian commanders presented Soviet decorations to several 82d Airborne Division officers and men. The Division's first quota of personnel to be redeployed to the United States left for base camp during May, and a second quota left the Division area on 1 June.

Evacuation of prisoners of war remaining in the Division's stockade began on 27 May. Approximately 22,000 were evacuated daily by train and truck to British Second Army prisoner of war enclosures during a four-day period 27-30 May, after which slightly more than 4,000 prisoners remained in the Division enclosures.

The 82d Airborne Division was alerted late in the month for movement back to its base areas near RHEIMS, FRANCE. Advance parties were sent out, and movement of the Division's main body began by rail and truck on 1 June. The 82d Airborne Division was relieved of responsibility for its area by the 5th British Division at 011200 June 1945.

SECTION III -> INTELLIGENCE

Preface: When the 82d Airborne Division crossed the ELBE River on 30 April it encountered and identified units of the former Battle Group KRIK which by now had been reshuffled and emerged as Brigade WALTERS, which consisted of Regiments WUSCHNER and BAUER and Artillery Brigade JANZEN attacked. Interrogation developed information that Regiment WUSCHNER was made up of II Naval Battalion, operating as Battle Group KLOSE, and the I Police Battalion masquerading as Battle Group Ahrens.

Among units identified on 1 May was Regiment Bauer, composed of Battle Groups KRUSE and KLEVE, and the 1020th Landeschutzen Battalion.

As the advance progressed, rear elements of the Twenty-First Army were encountered and overpowered, identifications including the 5th Jaeger Division, the 4th SS Pansergrenadier Division "Polizei" and the 606th Infantry Division. Enemy units were inclined to offer little resistance to our advance, and the end was reached with the surrender of the entire Twenty-First Army by Lieutenant General von TIPPELSKIRCH at 2130 hours 2 May 1945 at LUDWIGSLUST, GERMANY, 95 miles Northwest of BERLIN, to Major General James M. GAVIN, commander of the 82d Airborne Division.

Troops surrendered by the Twenty-First Army represented an almost inseparable conglomeration of over 2,000 different units. The Army formerly had been the Fourth and was made up of remnants of the Ninth and Twelfth German Armies. The main units included the 5th Jaeger Division, the 4th SS Panzergrenadier Division "Polizei", SS Battle Group Solar, and the 606th Infantry Division, all making up the III Panzer Corps. Also surrendered were elements of XVII Corps Oder consisting of a Parachute Division, the 1st Naval Division, and SS Division LANGEMARK.

In and around these units was a heterogeneous mass of station complements, supply troops, cadres, naval personnel, and a large number of units that may be classified only under the heading of "miscellaneous".

Interesting enough, the commander of the Twenty-First Army and his ranking staff officers were poorly informed as to the total troops and units under his command. General TIPPELSKIRCH's estimate of 150,000 troops to be surrendered was reduced to 144,000 by 82d Airborne Division estimates.

Among the ranking officers who surrendered were the following:

- Lieutenant General von TIPPELSKIRCH, CG Twenty-First Army, and his staff.
- Brigadier General von BIEDERMANN, CG of a group of straggler and equipment collecting points.
- General Theodor PETSCH, CG Wehrkreis IX (Kassel).
- Major General Rudolf SCHUBERT, former CG of Wehrkreis XVII (Vienna).
- Brigadier General Kurt KEYSER, CG of HAMBURG and CG of sector "Lower ELBE" as far as DORNITZ.
- Brigadier General Franz Joseph GROBHOLZ, CG of Wehrmacht Ordnungstruppen (PM) of Twelfth Army.
- Brigadier General ROSSKOFF, CG of 606th Infantry Division.
- Brigadier General Dr. CONRAD, JA, Twelfth Army.
- Brigadier General LUSCHNIG, CG of Engineers, Twenty-First Army.
- Brigadier General WAGNER, CG, Twenty-First Army Artillery.
- Colonel MULLER, Chief of Staff, 606th Infantry Division.
- Colonel von G RDECKER, CO of Division L.B.V.

With the cessation of hostilities on the Division front, intelligence activities were concentrated on the problem of security. CIC and IPW teams concentrated on the task of "screening" prisoners of war, displaced persons and civilians, segregating SS personnel and investigating war criminals. The CIC and IPW teams were stationed at or near the different camps to facilitate these activities. A total of approximately 15,000 prisoners of war, displaced persons and civilians, all told, were "screened".

Close liaison was maintained between intelligence teams and the Military Government detachment. The Nazi Party organization was eliminated in the area, and the higher party officials in each town were evacuated to the British Second Army for further investigation.

In each town within the Division area the police force was subject to special scrutiny. The Mayors of LUTHERSEN and NEUHAUS were removed. The Mayor of LUD IGS-LUST committed suicide.

There were no cases of subversive activities and no proved cases of sabotage. So-called werewolf activity was not in evidence.

SECTION IV -- PERSONNEL

Aside from the normal routine of G-1 activities, the G-1 Section was concerned primarily with the problems incident to the capture of many thousands of German prisoners of war, and the supervision of the evacuation of liberated Allied prisoners of war, and the evacuation of displaced Allied nationals.

A minimum estimate of the number of German prisoners of war who surrendered

to the 82d Airborne Division has been set at 144,000, during the period subsequent to the crossing of the ELBE River and the rapid advance to a junction with the Russian forces between LUDWIGSLUST and GRABOW, Germany. The climatic disintegration of German formations in the area of Division responsibility presented an unparalleled situation. The surrender of enemy units was so rapid that it was impossible to concentrate the defeated foe in Division Collecting Points without seriously depleting its outnumbered strength to provide sufficient men to control and process the tens of thousands of Germans.

Prisoners were disarmed and returned to the rear to the XVIII Corps (Airborne) PW Cage, vicinity of BEVENSON and HIMBURG, Germany on foot and in such German military vehicles as would run. During the first two days, these vehicles traversed the roads from LUDWIGSLUST to NEUHAUS over the pontoon bridge at ELEKED and on to the Cage in an apparently endless stream, bumper to bumper, and loaded to overflowing with the bedraggled remnants of the German Army. The concentrations at the PW Collecting Point at HIMBURG were incredible. In single fields, more than 10,000 enemy soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder awaiting disposition. When traffic across the ELBE River was frozen and the areas of Division responsibility were finally delineated, tens of thousands of prisoners taken by the 82d were already in the area of the adjacent division to the west of the 82d Airborne Division. Those within the Division area were immediately segregated in numerous PW Camps and counted. The total on hand was found to be in excess of 44,000. This number was increased to exceed 69,000 when the 82d took over part of the area of the 8th Infantry Division.

These Camps were organized and operated by Divisional units. Evacuation was organized by the G-1 Section in liaison with 8th Corps (British), and commenced on 27 May with rail movements which were completed by 30 May. Arrangements for this grand-scale evacuation were effected by the G-1 Section.

More than 10,000 liberated Allied prisoners of war were processed through Division Collecting Points to American and British Army points at LUNEBURG, WILDESCHEN and HAGENOW.

More than 20,000 displaced nationals, both Eastern and Western, from co-belligerent and conquered countries, were processed through Division "DP" Camps. These persons were assembled by "freezing" all those who lacked transportation, and by arrangement with the Russians. In the Camps they were segregated by national groups, quartered, fed and de-loused. At the earliest opportunity, they were moved to various Second British Army Distribution Points at LUNEBURG, GALLA, HAGENOW, SOLINGEN or SALTAN, from which Centers they were dispatched toward their homelands.

The segregation and transfer of Displaced Persons within the Division area and from the Division area was accomplished with minimum use of Division transportation, although often numbers in excess of 1500 were moved in a single day. G-1 maintained liaison with British-Russian Liaison Groups and Contact Points at SCHWABIN, NEUSTET, and LUDWIGSLUST and GRABOW. All British transport conveying Russian nationals to the Russian lines was reported to G-1 with advice as to the number of lorries expected to return empty. "DP" camp commanders had their camps organized so that groups of any nationality could be assembled for movement on an hour's notice of availability of vehicles. The British would route their returning empties to any designated Camp, receive their loads and clearance papers to cross the ELBE, and move these people to designated Reception Centers. When the 82d Airborne relinquished control of the area to the 5th British Division, all Displaced Persons were concentrated at TILES. Of the 2,000 remaining, 1,800 were Italians, no facilities having been arranged by higher headquarters for the evacuation of Italians.

The sudden and dramatic termination of the war was further emphasized by almost immediate implementation of the Army Readjustment and Redeployment program. Six officers and 344 enlisted men were selected from among those with high adjusted

service rating scores. Although instructions did not require it, the Inspector General cooperated with G-1 to inspect records prior to departure on only 24 hour's notice. This initial group was moved from LUDWIGSLUST, Germany to Base Camps in the REIMS area by truck and then to the Reception Depot near Le Havre by train.

A few days before the Division was scheduled to move from the LUDWIGSLUST area to Base, a second Readjustment and Redeployment quota of 2 officers and 295 enlisted men was received. Allotment was made to units in accord with their ratios of high ASH scores to the Division total in the priority groups of scores. Units were given 48 hours in which to accomplish the processing of administrative records. The imminence of the move precluded allotment of trucks to move this personnel to Base, and the entire group was moved in three days by air. All details, from movement schedules to preparation of passenger manifests and the loading of the aircraft being supervised directly by officers of the G-1 Section.

Division casualties during operations in May east of the ELBE River were as follows:

	Officers	Enlisted Men	Totals
Killed in Action	0	15	15
Injured in Action	0	3	3
Wounded in Action	3	60	63
Missing in Action	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
TOTALS	3	82	85

SECTION V -- SUPPLY AND EVACUATION

During the first week of May, 1945, the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-4, and related agencies continued to support the Division during its tactical operations East of the ELBE River, those operations having commenced with a crossing of the river on 30 April. G-4 controlled traffic over the ELBE River bridge at BLECKEDE during the first 72 hours after the crossing.

Following the surrender of German forces, troops of the 82d Airborne Division made a systematic, thorough search of the Division area, and all salvageable enemy equipment was collected in a number of dumps established throughout the section. This equipment consisted in the main of large numbers of assorted vehicles, vast stores of ammunition and innumerable minor items. All such equipment was inventoried carefully and complete records were maintained and later turned over to the British 5th Division which relieved the 82d.

Approximately 300 enemy vehicles were registered with G-4 and utilized by the troops in servicing the thousands of prisoners of war and displaced persons quartered in camps within the Division area.

The task of rationing, billeting and moving prisoners of war and displaced persons within the area was largely a G-4 problem. Special rations were issued to the various nationalities of displaced persons, and special reduced rations were issued to prisoners of war.

At the close of the month G-4 was completing arrangements for moving the Division from the LUDWIGSLUST area back to its base camps in the SISSONE-LAON area.

The following major items were among equipment and supplies collected in the Division salvage dumps:

Assorted trucks and passenger cars	1,911
Half-tracks	81
Tanks	11
Motorcycles	145
Flak Wagons	21

Artillery pieces, all calibers	35
Guns, 88mm	11
Guns, T, 37mm	655
Guns, AA	972
Mortars, 60mm	17
Mortars, 81mm	402
Guns, Machine, MG34	537
Pazookas	19
Rifles	12,111
Artillery Ammunition	247,705 rds.
Panzerfausts	16,061
Small Arms ammunition	10,546,055 rds.
Grenades, all types	16,266
Radios, transmitting	117
Radios, receiving	50
Generators	57
Wire	175 miles
Kitchens	7
Busses	7
Locomotives	15
Tractors	5
Generators	3,000

NOTE: The above figures do not include a large number of vehicles and much equipment evacuated across the ELBE River and out of the Division area immediately after surrender of the German Twenty-first Army.

SECTION VI -- SIGNAL

At the beginning of May it was felt that the axis of communication would be toward LEUSSOU or LOSSEN and wire teams began laying field wire in that direction but available open wire was surveyed when the Division Command Post was located at LUDWIGSLUST. It was found that by making a number of repairs the commercial overhead open wire could be used for the 25 mile Division main axis of communication.

A switchboard was left at NEUHAUS and served the Division units in that area for the rest of the month. This installation was called the "Champion Switch" and later handled telephone calls to the two bridges over the ELBE River, "A" at D. CHAU and "B" at BLECKEDE for which the Division was later responsible.

The commercial telephone exchange was rendered inoperative upon the Division's arrival at LUDWIGSLUST. A survey of the commercial telephone system in the area showed that the following underground cables existed:

One 98 pair cable to Berlin.
(This cable went through a repeater station at Perleburg).

One 98 pair cable to Hamburg.
(This cable went through a repeater station at Vallahn).

One 8 pair cable to Vallahn.

One 98 pair cable from the Railway Station in Ludwigslust to the Railway Station at Hagenow.

In addition to the long underground cables, most of the towns in the immediate vicinity were served by overhead open wire. The LUDWIGSLUST local switchboard was Local Automatic and the trunks were served manually.

On the 16th of May, upon request of the Military Government, a few local phones for the town of LUDWIGSLUST were installed. Telephones were installed for doctors, dairies, food stores, fire stations, and the like at the time.

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Two pairs in the underground cable to Hamburg were used to connect Champion switchboard into the Hamburg local switchboard. HAMBURG was a large switching central, and this gave the Division an outlet into the main communication system of the Western Front.

In performing an occupational mission, the Division was again spread over an area much larger than its tables of equipment were able to handle. By repairing and utilizing commercial open wire and using commercial underground cable the normal division system was soon installed. A total of 375 miles of open wire was maintained to accomplish this.

Two telephone lines were put in to Headquarters of Soviet units, including line to the 121st Russian Corps and one to the 284th Russian Division.

XVIII Corps (Airborne) left the area on 22 May 1945, and the corps' communication responsibilities were transferred to the 82d Airborne Division. A Radio Link was established to the Ninth Army (US) and the Second Army (BR). Wire landline lines were established with the Ninth Army and the 8th Infantry Division. The British sent a radio team to the Division to enter the Second Army (BR) net, and the 82d also entered one of the Ninth Army Radio Command Nets.

SECTION VII -- MILITARY GOVERNMENT

On 1 May 1945, Military Government Office was located in BLECKEDE, Kreis of LUNEBURG. On 1 May 1945, Military Government moved with the Division across the ELBE River, and at 031800 May was in LUDWIGSLUST, the objective of the Division. Here began a phase of Military Government which ran the gamut of operations. Initially, Military Government was set up in LUDWIGSLUST and the entire area on a tactical basis. Law and order was the immediate need. This was attained by the appointment of 51 police to control the civilian disorder and uncertainty that prevailed.

The job that faced Military Government was an imposing one complicated by the presence of thousands of displaced persons and prisoners of war in the Division area. From this chaos developed, organization, and administration, law and order and a semblance of economic normalcy within a period of ten days.

An early discovery of a concentration camp at SOBIBELIN was made and prompt action was taken. Sick and under-nourished were moved to a newly established hospital in LUDWIGSLUST where they were given care, medical treatment, and proper nourishment. This Division Military Government Section initiated mass burials of the atrocity victims, holding ceremonies on 7 May 1945 in LUDWIGSLUST at an especially dedicated cemetery located on the grounds of the Duke of HANNOVER. Two hundred of these victims were buried, with services performed by American Army Chaplains of all religious faiths, and attended by the entire population of the community, General GOVIN and his Staff, and all available military personnel.

During the month more than 60,000 "Western" displaced persons were started on their journey home, being processed through displaced persons camps established by the Division at TREBS, MALLISE, and the Luftwaffe Field in LUDWIGSLUST. As the month closed, there remained only 91 "Western" displaced persons in the entire Division area. The Military Government Section initiated arrangements with Russian forces for movement of Eastern German refugees back to their homes. Approximately 5,000 such refugees were moved through the Russian lines by mutual agreement with the Soviet forces.

All the essentials of Military Government were accomplished. These included, establishment of law and order, removal and appointment of officials, re-establishment of the economic life in the area to include food rationing, labor, communication, public utilities, public welfare, and the establishment and operation of Military Government Courts supervising the civil administration and operation of more than 150 gemeinden.

Initially, upon occupation, immediate surveys of captured enemy food and medical supplies were made, such supplies being frozen in warehouses established by the G-4 Section. Demands were made upon the communities for food stuffs, clothing, medical supplies, operation and administrative necessities for the operation and administration of camps for displaced persons. Bakeries were re-established and put into maximum production, necessitating procurement of labor, raw food stuffs, fuel, and power. The entire productive facilities were placed at the disposal of the "DP" camps. A survey of the electric power for the area indicated that the sources were in the hands of our Russian allies. Notwithstanding, separate sources of supply of power were developed, such supplies being rationed for essential military and civilian needs.

In the course of the month, "V-E" Day occurred and Military Government's transition from operation under SHAEF's directives from "prior to defeat and surrender" to "after defeat and surrender" was accomplished in a routine manner.

ANNEX No. 1 TO
820 AIRBORNE DIVISION
AFTER-ACTION REPORT
FOR MAY 1945

UNIT COMMANDERS AND BARRING STAFF OFFICERS

Commanding General
Assistant Division Commander
Division Artillery Commander
Chief of Staff

G-1

G-2

G-3

G-4

Adjutant General

Chemical Officer

Chaplain

Finance Officer

Headquarters Commandant

Inspector General

Judge Advocate General

Ordnance Officer

Provost Marshal

Quartermaster

Signal Officer

C.O., 325th Glider Infantry

C.O., 504th Parachute Infantry

C.O., 505th Parachute Infantry

Executive Officer, Division Artillery

C.O., 319th Glider FA Battalion

C.O., 320th Glider FA Battalion

C.O., 376th Parachute FA Battalion

C.O., 456th Parachute FA Battalion

C.O., 80th Airborne Anti-Aircraft Battalion

C.O., 307th Airborne Engineer Battalion

C.O., 82d Airborne Signal Company

C.O., 307th Airborne Medical Company

C.O., 407th Airborne Quartermaster Company

C.O., 782d Airborne Ordnance Maintenance Company

C.O., 82d Parachute Maintenance Company

C.O., Division Headquarters Company

C.O., Headquarters Battery, Division Artillery

C.O., Special Troops

C.O., Division Reconnaissance Platoon

C.O., Division Military Police Platoon

--Major Gen. JAMES M. GVIN

--Brig. Gen. IRA P. SMITH

--Brig. Gen. FRANCIS L. H. CH

--Col. ROBERT H. J. JONES

--Lt. Col. ALBERT E. ISLAND

--Lt. Col. ALBERT E. ISLAND, JR.

--Lt. Col. JOHN W. JONES

--Lt. Col. ALBERT G. JONES

--Lt. Col. WARRICK E. JONES

--Lt. Col. JOHN P. JONES

--Major GEORGE B. WOODS

--Lt. Col. WILLIAM E. JOHNSON

--Capt. GEORGE J. CLARK

--Capt. WILLIAM E. JONES

--Lt. Col. NICHOLAS E. ALLEN

--Lt. Col. MAYO E. STINEY

--Major FREDERICK G. MCCOLLUM

--Major PAUL E. VAUPEL (fr 23 May)

--Lt. Col. JOHN W. JONES

--Lt. Col. ROBERT E. JONES

--Col. CHARLES E. JONES

--Col. ROBERT E. JONES

--Col. WILLIAM E. JONES

--Col. ALBUR W. BRIDGITH

--Lt. Col. JAMES G. TROD

--Lt. Col. PAUL E. RIGHT

--Lt. Col. ROBERT E. DEPTUNE

--Lt. Col. WAGNER J. D'ALLESSIO

--Lt. Col. RAYMOND E. SINGLETON

--Lt. Col. EDWIN A. BODDLE

--Capt. RICHARD E. NERF

--Major JERRY J. BELDEN

--Major SAMUEL E. MAYS

--Capt. JEFF DAVIS, JR.

--Capt. WYLLIS COOPER

--Capt. ROBERT B. PATTERSON

--Capt. TONY J. BABIL

--Major WILLIAM E. JOHNSON

--1st Lt. JOSEPH V. DIMASI

--Major FREDERICK G. MCCOLLUM

--Major PAUL E. VAUPEL (fr 23 May)

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ANNEX NO. 2 TO
82D AIRBORNE DIVISION
HISTORICAL NARRATIVE
FOR MAY 1945

UNIT	DATE ATCHD	SUB-ATTACHMENTS	DATE OF SUB-A	DATE OF RECEIPT SUB-	DATE OF RECEIPT FROM DIVISION
(Organic Units)					
80 Abn AA Bn	--	Btrys A, B, F, to 505 PI	--	040815	
		Btry C to 504 PI	--	040815	
307 Abn Engr Bn	--	Co B to 505 PI	--	040815	
		I Plat Co C to 504 PI	--	040815	
2d Bn 325 GI Inf	--	CC "B" 7 Armd Div	021000	022400	
(Non-organic Units)					
666 QM Trk Co	--				
280 FA Bn	--	To Div Arty	--	170700	
580 AAA Bn	--			021000	
580 AAA Bn	231200	Div Arty	241200	050730 June	050730 June
3 Bn 13 Inf (8 Div)	--	To 121 Inf			011205
43 FA Bn (8 Div)	--				011205
605 TD Bn	--	Co A to 505	012330	020830	151500
		Co B to 325	020830	040815	
		Co C to 504	020830	040815	
		Bn to 307 Engr	042300	151500	
Sqdn A, 4 Royals (Br.)	--	Direct Supt., 505			021200
644 TD Bn	--	I Plat Co A to 505	012100		012100
121 Inf (8 Div)	--				011205
56 FA Bn (8 Div)	--	121 Inf			011205
Co C, 89 Cml Bn	--	121 Inf			011205
Co A, 89 Cml Bn,	--	To 504 PI		090800	090800
CC "B", 7 Armd Div	--	Co C, 814 TD Bn to 325	02 May	031030	041200
		Co D, 31 Tk Bn to 504	02 May	031830	
205 FA Group	031200	To Div Arty	042300	170700	170700
207 FA Bn	031200	To Div Arty	042300	170700	170700
768 FA Bn	031200	To Div Arty	042300	160700	160700

ANNEX NO. 3 TO
82D AIRBORNE DIVISION
AFTER-ACTION REPORT
FOR MAY 1945

(Record of the Unconditional Surrender of the German 21st Army to the 82d Airborne Division, 022130 May 1945)

HEADQUARTERS 82D AIRBORNE DIVISION
Office of the Division Commander

LUDWIGSLUST, GERMANY
2 May 1945

I, Lieutenant General von Tippelskirch, Commanding General of 21st German Army, hereby unconditionally surrender the 21st German Army, and all of its attachments, and equipment and appurtenances thereto, to the Commanding General of the 82d Airborne Division, United States Army. This unconditional capitulation is valid only for those troops of 21st Army which pass through the American lines.

LUDWIGSLUST, GERMANY
2. Mai 1945

Ich, General der Infanterie von Tippelskirch, kommandierender General der 21. deutschen Armee, übergebe hiermit bedingungslos die gesamte und deren Zubehör, an den kommandierenden General der 82. Fallschirmjäger Division, Vereinigte Staaten Armee. Diese bedingungslose Kapitulation gilt nur für diejenigen Truppen der 21. Armee welche die amerikanischen Linien passieren.

/s/ von Tippelskirch
von Tippelskirch
General der Infanterie

LUDWIGSLUST, GERMANY

Accepted.

/s/ James. M. Gavin
JAMES M. GAVIN
Major General, U. S. Army

ANNEX NO. 4 TO
82D AIRBORNE DIVISION
AFTER-ACTION REPORT
FOR MAY 1945

Funeral services were held on the morning of 7 May at LUDWIGSLUST for 200 of the approximately 1,000 men whose bodies were found at a German concentration camp at WOBBELIN. German civilians of every social strata and occupation in LUDWIGSLUST removed the bodies from the concentration camp and prepared them for burial, dug the graves, and filled the graves after the services. The rites were attended by citizens of the city, a representative group of captured German army officers, and several hundred officers and men of the 82d Airborne Division. The following purpose of the services was read by Major (Chaplain) George Woods, Division Chaplain:

"We are assembled here today before God and in the sight of man to give a proper and decent burial to the victims of atrocities committed by armed forces in the name and by the order of the German Government. These 200 bodies were found by the American army in a concentration camp four miles North of the city of LUDWIGSLUST.

"The crimes here committed in the name of the German people and by their acquiescence were minor compared to those to be found in concentration camps elsewhere in Germany. Here there were no gas chambers, no crematoria; these men of Holland, Russia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and France were simply allowed to starve to death. Within four miles of your comfortable homes 4,000 men were forced to live like animals, deprived even of the food you would give to your dogs. In three weeks 1,000 of these men were starved to death; 800 of them were buried in pits in the nearby woods. These 200 who lie before us in these graves were found piled four and five feet high in one building and lying with the sick and dying in other buildings.

"The World has long been horrified at the crimes of the German nation; these crimes were never clearly brought to light until the armies of the United Nations overran Germany. This is not war as conducted by international rules of warfare. This is murder such as is not even known among savages.

"Though you claim no knowledge of these acts you are still individually and collectively responsible for these atrocities, for they were committed by a government elected to office by yourselves in 1933 and continued in office by your indifference to organized brutality. It should be the firm resolve of the German people that never again should any leader or party bring them to such moral degradation as is exhibited here.

"It is the custom of the United States Army through its Chaplain's Corps to insure a proper and decent burial to any deceased person whether he be civilian or soldier, friend or foe, according to religious preference. The Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces has ordered that all atrocity victims be buried in a public place, and that the cemetery be given the same personal care that is given to all military cemeteries. Crosses will be placed at the heads of the graves of Christians and Stars of David at the heads of the graves of Jews; a stone monument will be set up in memory of those deceased. Protestant, Catholic and Jewish prayers will be said by Chaplains Wood, Hannan and Hall of the 82d Airborne Division for these victims as we lay them to rest and commit them into the hands of our Heavenly Father in the hope that the world will not again be faced with such barbarity."

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