



1939

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Enclosure to the War Diary.

The preparation of the operations in the West, of A.K. XV,
between late October 1939 and January 1940.

- 1) On the basis of the first deployment orders of AOK 4 of the ensuing conferences between the Commander-in-Chief AOK 4 and the Commanding General AK XV, concerning deployment and tactical grasping of the 4th Army, the latter expressed his basic opinion in a communication to the Commander in Chief on 5 November 1939 (see enclosure 1).

This opinion has been submitted repeatedly to the Commander-in-Chief by the Commanding General, and by the Chief of Staff to that of the 4th Army, during November and December 39.

Early in January 40, the opinion gained ground with the Army to have the forces concentrated along similar lines as proposed by the Commanding General AK XV (see enclosure 1), provided there was sufficient time available.

- 2) Apart from basic deliberations on the commitment of the Army, a

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lively exchange of ideas about the commitment of the divisions in the sector which had been designated to the Corps took place in November and December 1939.

The following problems were in question:

- 1) A successive deployment of the divisions, depending on the enemy situation, in particular on the existence of fortifications in the Belgian border zone, with either the Pz. divisions or the infantry divisions in the first line of attack.
- 2) Frontal attack of the Pz. divisions and infantry divisions combined (enclosure 2, 3, and 4).

In the second half of December, AK XV gained the impression that the Belgian fortifications had reached such a stage that it would be necessary to deploy the infantry divisions first.

Until the first fortification line is completely pierced at Recht and Bochnholz, they are to open the way to the Pz. divisions for the swift advance to end across the Ourthe. (Enclosure 5).

The Army decided for the frontal attack of the combined Pz. and inf. divisions.

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The orders for the concentration, assembly and attack of AK XV were changed accordingly, on 8 and 10 January 1940.

- 3) The further operations from the Ourthe were not decided on for the time being in so far as the advance could be made either in the direction of Huy or Dinant.

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On 3 January, the Commander-in-Chief informed the chief of the Gen.St., AK XV (the Commanding General was on leave) that it is the Fuehrer's wish to strike the Pz. Divisions in the direction of the Meuse near Dinant. Since then, the Corps Command of AK XV has formed its plans in conformity with this task.

18 January

(signature) BOTH.

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The Commanding General of
AK XV

Jena, 5 November 1939.

(handwritten) mailed 6 November 1939
by Lt. Col. Gerhard v. BAUMKE (?)

My dear Herr General,

You were kind enough to listen to my explanations when the commitment and the formation of the army were discussed even where my reports exceeded the compass of my Army Corps. I therefore feel the urge and believe to be duty-bound to state once more my opinion about the deployment of the Pz. Divisions after I have carefully considered all maps which are available at present, all descriptions of the terrain which are on hand, and all the information about the enemy which has been received so far.

The swift breakthrough to the Ourthe has been set as the target for the Pz. divisions by the Ob.d.H.; this river must be crossed already on the first day, if possible, if there shall be hope of effecting the crossing unimpeded by French forces. This leads to the conclusion that the Pz. divisions must be deployed where they will find the best roads, the least difficulties in the terrain, the weakest resistance by enemy fortifications, and, finally, the shortest way to the Ourthe.

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The sector allotted to AK XV does not offer space enough for a parallel deployment of two Pz. divisions as desired by the Ch.d.H. One of the two divisions would be held up in the Salm district at the latest and would have to wait for infantry divisions.

The deployment of the 5th Pz. Division, as planned in the sector AK VIII, likewise, of necessity, leads to the Salm-district whose grounds are particularly rich in difficulties. I hold it to be impossible that this district, even if only weakly defended, can be passed by the 5th Pz. Division with such a swiftness, that the Ourthe can be reached in time. There is small hope, therefore,

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for the cooperation of the 5th and 6th Pz. Divisions in the Salm-district.

Much more favorable for the speedy advance of motorized divisions are the conditions between the Upper Salm and the Upper Ourthe, meaning beyond the line between Boichholz and Lamorchon in the direction of Lierneux (6th Pz. Division) and Samree (7th Pz. Division). This advance route runs nearly parallel to the rivers which come from the Ardennes and therefore crosses only few valleys; the opposing rear fortifications can be circumvented. The advanced line of fortifications can be pierced by the two Pz. divisions in concerted action. The road conditions are favorable; apart from the main roads of advance namely

for the 6th Pz. Division the road St. Vith-Fowies-Lierneux-Grandmenil-Durbuy, and

for the 7th Pz. Division the road Chateau Rouland-Beslingen-Cherain-Wibrin-Samree-Say-Hotton

there are good secondary roads for diverging movements and for the deployment of the long columns. Both divisions would be commanded uniformly by AK XV.

The advance would be speeded up if it is not started from the bulge on both sides of Manderfeld which recedes farthest to the East, but more in the South from Winterscheid and Luetzkaempfen.

The 63rd Inf. Division would form the second line and advance via St. Vith-Vielsalm, unless put under the command of AK II from the very outset.

I hope, Sir, you will not take amiss the frank statement of my opinion which has been only caused by the heavy care about the success of the operation and by the sincere endeavor to use the Pz. division to the best possible effect.

With the expression of my unlimited confidence in your person I am, Sir,

Yours very obediently

(initial) H.

TRANSLATION OF DOCUMENT No. NOKW-2720
CONTINUED

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To

General von KLUGE

Commander-in-Chief of the AOK #4

Cologne

17 January 1948

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSLATION

I, George H. GRANT, Civ.No.A-442694, hereby certify that I am a duly appointed translator for the German and English languages and that the above is a true and correct translation of the above document No. NOKW-2720.

GEORGE H. GRANT
Civ.No.A-442694.

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"END"