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and Burglengenfeld, 27 April 1945

The photos, Aerials 1-1, -2, -3 and -4 were all taken on 27 April 1945. It is the Naab River that appears in each.

This is my reconstruction the circumstances of father's mission by air that day.

On 25 April, my father wrote that he was staying in a small hotel in Reichenschwand, instead of nearby Schloss Reichenschwand (the XX Corps 11th Command Post in Germany) with the general staff. A number of people from Köln were also staying at the hotel. He wrote, "It is a lot of fun kidding them – they don't know the real reason for our kidding tho for every crack they make means something to us and that helps me in my work."

He also wrote, "we are moving along fast now". He did not write again until 2 May. That was an unusually long lapse in correspondence,

On 26 April, the XX Corps moved to Burglengenfeld for its 12th Command Post in Germany in the offices of "ein Portlandsemetwerk". (See, XX Corps History , p. 343 below.) Viewing that area on Google Earth today, I believe the "werk" was on "Zementwerkstrasse" about 1.5 Km northwest across the Naab River from the Burglengenfeld fortification (according to the German Wikipedia, the fortification is called "Burg Burglengenfeld" or "Burg Lengenfeld").

On the 27th, the Corps PWE (prisoner of war enclosure) relocated to Roding, about 4 Km southeast of the command post. The PWE was never located at the headquarters site, but within about 5 to 10 kilometers. The reason was security. If a prisoner escaped, he would not know the headquarters location. However, it is more probable that my father was stationed at the Corps headquarters

When the Corps headquarters advanced to Burglengenfeld, its military objective was capture of Regensburg some 20 Km directly south across the Danube.

At 0200 on the 27th, two infantry divisions, the 65th and the 71st, commenced assault crossings of the Danube on Regensburg, the former from the southwest and the latter from the north.

My father wrote a report that appears as Annex 5 to the Corps G-2 [Intelligence] Daily Periodic Report No. 261 for 27 April 1945, issued just before midnight that day. It began:

. . . [T]wo officer representatives of the 1st German Army passed through the line of the 65th American Infantry Division under a flag of truce . . . an Oberst (Col) of the Luftwaffe and an SS Sturmfueher (1st Lt.). Their mission was to obtain an agreement from the American command not to use a specified area for aerial or artillery targets due to the fact that within this area is a gas dump which, if hit by either of these could cause casualties not only to combat troops but also to civilians.

(A copy of Annex 5 appears below.)

The 65th Infantry command would have immediately alerted Corps headquarters of this development.

My father was dispatched as the Corps representative to translate, observe and report.

The 65th's command post was located in Deuerling, about 22.5 Km southwest of Burglengenfeld, west of the confluence of the Naab River with the Danube. Urgency and the obstacles of travel by land necessitated travel by air.

The meeting was probably at 65th's headquarters because "American authorities" were present; or it could have been at the Division's PWE somewhere not very far away, probably to the west. According to paragraphs 3 and 4 of the "SIDELIGHTS" section of my father's report, the German representatives were blindfolded while flown from and back to the front line.

My father's flight to and from Deuerling would have traced the most reliable geographic feature, the Naab.

I studied Google Earth satellite images of the course of the Naab, and believe his photos were taken on the return flight from the Deuerling area because their perspectives appear to be southwest to northeast along the Naab.

The photos were taken in this order: Aerial-1-4, Krachenhausen; Aerial -1-3, Kalmünz; then on landing approach to the zementwerk, northwest of the fortification, the plane circled around the fortification on the east and north: thus Aerial -1-2 and then Aerial-1-1.

Incidental notes about 27 April:

Though capture of Regensburg was the objective of the 65th Infantry, the city surrendered without a fight to the 71st Infantry at 1400 hours on the 27th.

General Patton visited the XX Corps headquarters to decorate the Corps' commanding general, Walton "Bulldog" Walker, with a promotion to lieutenant general. The three-stars he pinned on Walker were the same ones that Gen. Eisenhower had earlier pinned on Patton, now that Patton had been promoted to four stars. (See, XX Corps History, p. 383, below.)

The XX Corps now advanced down the Danube toward the next natural objective and defense line, the Isar River.

The 13th Armored Division crossed the Danube on the 28th, passing through the 71st Division. Combat Command "B" advanced along Highway Eight through Straubing and reached the Isar River at 1830 hours. On the afternoon of the 29th, two companies of armored infantry crossed and engineers started bridging.

Combat commands attacked southeast and met scattered resistance of small arms, machine gun, and 88mm fire. On reaching the Isar River on the 29th, one combat command reconnoitered the north bank and relieved units of the 80th Division at Landshut. The 13th Armored Division, less detachments, had reached the Isar at Landau. No bridges were available and the lead combat command at Plattling prepared

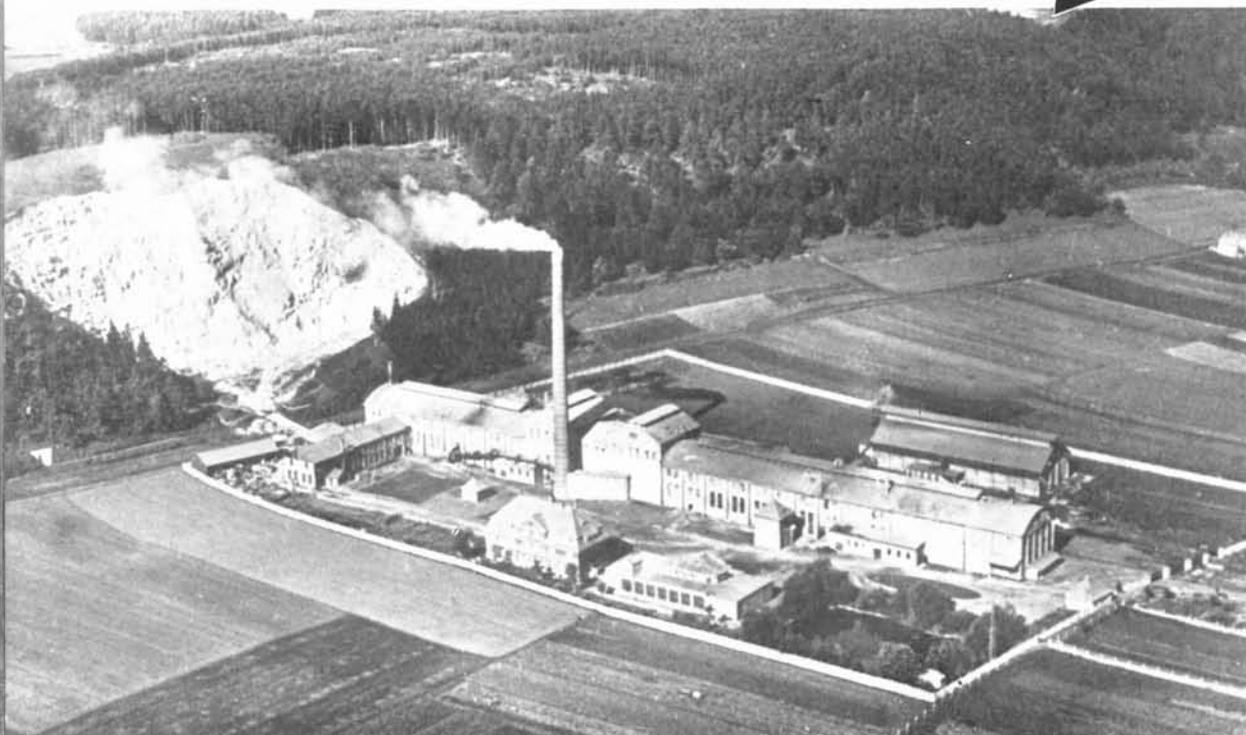
to attack next day.

The 71st Division continued southeast and parallel to the 65th Division. Resistance was scattered and irregular. A battalion of SS troops at St. Aubing waited until the armor passed, and then put up a short fight. In order to reach the Isar and assist the armor in crossing, two regimental combat teams were shuttled forward and reached the Isar on the 30th. From high ground on the opposite shore the enemy directed artillery fire on the Division but the Division's own artillery came up and quieted the enemy.

One regiment crossed at three points near Landau, which was lightly contested and captured on the 30th. Zulling, a neighboring village, surrendered at once, and other towns were subdued quickly. Assault boats were used to provide an improvised bridge over which light vehicles were driven that night. The Division was over the Isar!

The XX Corps' Twelfth Command Post in Germany was located in Ein Portlandsementwerk in Burglengenfeld, April 26th - 28th.

Burglengenfeld



S E C R E T

HQ XX CORPS
IPW TEAM NO 69
27 April 1945

Annex No 5 to G-2 Periodic Report No 261.

PARLIAMENTARY

NEGOTIATIONS.

On 27 April 1945 two officer representatives of the 1st German Army passed through the lines of the 65th American Infantry Division under a flag of truce. This party consisted of an Oberst (Col) of the Luftwaffe and an SS Sturmfuhrer (1st Lt). Their mission was to obtain an agreement from the American command not to use a specified area for aerial or artillery targets due to the fact that within this area is a gas dump, which, if hit by either of these, would cause casualties not only to the combat troops but also to the civilians. The area which they had so designated formed a rough hexagon including the villages SCHIEBLING (U2235) - MANNSDORF (U2332) - WAHLSDORF (U2131) - HERRNGIERSDORF (U1730) - LANQUAID (U1633) - PARING (U1633). They stated that this area had been cleared of all military personnel and that in event of a withdrawal no member of the Wehrmacht would be permitted to retreat through it.

The American authorities stated that they could not guarantee safety in this small area due to the fact that it canalized our avenues of approach from whichever direction we should decide to attack. Furthermore, the safety factor involved was too small, the area being only about 5 kilometers in diameter; thus it would be impractical to attack in the direction of this area without there being some element of danger from stray projectiles. In addition, it restricted the effectiveness of air support capabilities for the same reasons. It was believed that an additional ten kilometers distance in radius should be added to that of the original perimeter in order to assure a proper safety factor. It was pointed out that if the larger perimeter were not evacuated by the Wehrmacht, our advance would continue to reduce opposition where found, and, if German interest lay in the protection of civilians, the military evacuation of the larger area was the best way to insure it.

The Wehrmacht representatives did not have the power to guarantee the evacuation of the larger area and suggested that arrangements might be made after their return through radio communication. This arrangement could not be accepted since permission had not been obtained from Higher Headquarters.

Though no locations could be ascertained by pin-point, it was admitted by the German officers that the dump was located in one of the wooded areas of the originally proposed neutral zone.

SIDELIGHTS.

1. Though the SS Sturmfuhrer may have been sent as an interpreter, during the discussion it was noted that his role was probably dual, namely to insure that the Oberst of the Luftwaffe made no false moves.
2. Another observation was the marked difference between these officers and those in our PWE. These officers still carried the markings of their imperious Nazi arrogance.
3. During the ride to and from the air strip the Oberst mentioned that while he did not know for sure whether he would be returned to his commanding officer safely, he felt that "the bullet which will kill me has not yet been cast", and in any case, "should I be killed it would be in the cause for the German people". His escort replied simply, "It is a pity that so many must die for so few".

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S E C R E T

4. After dismounting from the plane the Oberst asked permission to remove his blindfold in order that he might see the pilot to thank him as well as to see the plane in which he had flown. This permission was obviously denied him though he was assured that the pilot looked like any other good American, and as for the plane he was asked whether he had not seen enough of our planes by this time.

5. As the Oberst boarded the vehicle upon departure he remarked "Auf Wiedersehen (Until we meet again)". His escort answered, "Hoffentlich, Auf Wiedersehen -- in Amerikanischer Gefangenschaft" (I hope we will meet again -- At the American PWE).

Lichten
LITTEEN 106
Interrogator



Aerial-1-4
Krachenhausen



Aerial-1-3
Kallmunz

A SALUTE to the Commanding General is herewith recorded.



The formation was held at the Portland Cement Works in Burglengenfeld, Germany.

THE PROMOTION OF THE XX CORPS COMMANDER TO THE RANK OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL WAS ANNOUNCED ON THE 27TH OF APRIL, 1945. THE ORDER WAS READ BY THE ADJUTANT GENERAL OF XX CORPS, AND GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON, JR., THIRD ARMY COMMANDER, PERSONALLY PINNED ON GENERAL WALKER THE THREE STARS OF LIEUTENANT GENERAL. THESE SAME STARS HAD BEEN WORN BY GENERAL PATTON WHO HAD RECEIVED THEM IN LIKE MANNER FROM GEN. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ALLIED FORCES.