

WORMS, GERMANY

day 33

Melvin was placed with another M4 Sherman tank crew. Unfortunately this tank was in little better condition than the previous tank that had carried him

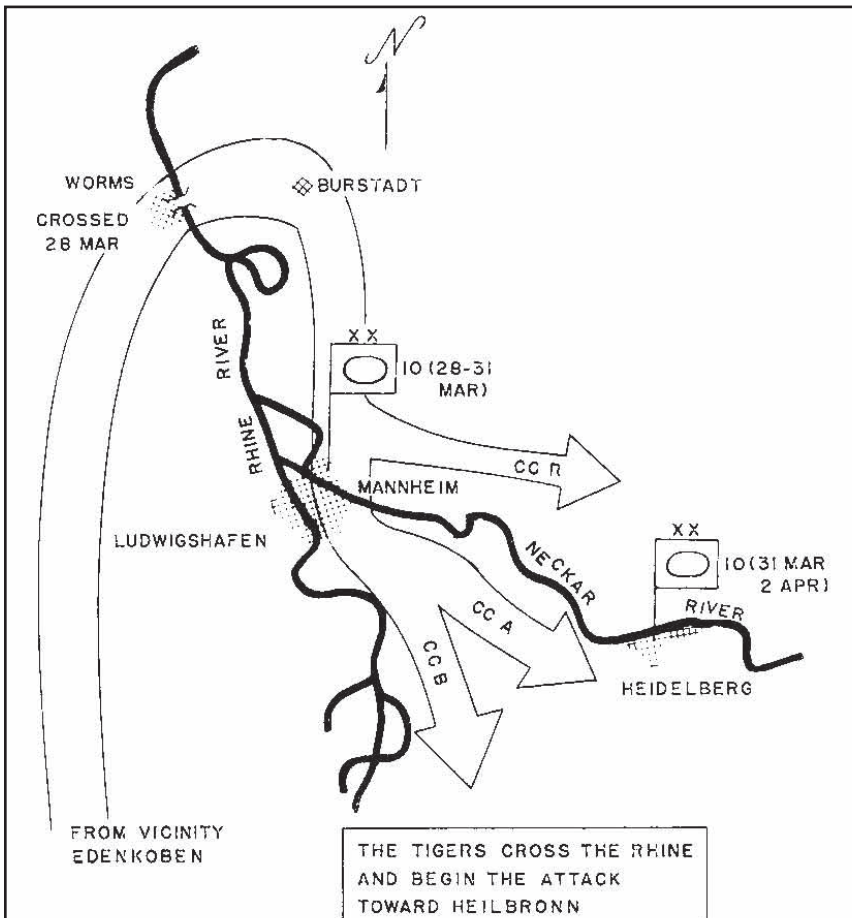


Present day Worms

through Eh-rang. This tank had developed a fairly serious transmission fluid leak and was spilling flammable fluid onto the floor of the driver and co-driver compartment. Should this tank take a shell, or even a well placed .50 cal tracer bullet, it would become like a skillet full of burning ba-

con grease. There was no time to repair the tank in the field. The 10th Armored was pushing the Germans vigorously, and there was no time, no mechanic, and no additional armor to spare in order to take this tank out of action and replace or repair it. Melvin found that if he placed several wool blankets on the floor, he could soak up enough of the fluid to lower the risk in the event of another fire. So a lengthy trail of transmission oil soaked wool blankets was left behind.

In order for the 10th to continue east in pursuit of the





Typical pontoon bridge

Germans, the Rhine River, which ran south to north, had to be crossed. By Wednesday, March 28, the 7th Army engineers had completed construction of two pontoon bridges across the Rhine at Worms, north of Ludwigshaven.

The 10th was now assigned to the VI Corps. Crossing the Rhine River was considered the end of the Saar-Moselle Triangle and the beginning of a new campaign.

By this point, the 10th Armored Division had become severely undermanned. Not having received replacements since Melvin's arrival in February, the 10th was now at less than 50% strength. Oddly, this factor worked somewhat in their favor. It allowed them to move and

react more swiftly attacking and gaining more territory than if they had been at full strength. Once again, it reaffirmed the reason the German army came to refer to the 10th Armored as the “Ghost Division”.

The northern U.S. divisions were having a more difficult time clearing their territories, so troop replacement priority was given to those divisions. In the south, the VI Corps now consisted of only three divisions, the 10th Armored, the 63rd Infantry, and the 100th Infantry. A plan was conceived involving the three combat commands of the 10th Armored. CC R and CC A would travel east, on either side of the Neckar River. CC B would move directly south through Schwetzingen until it met with the 1st French Army, then turn due east and meet up once again with CC A and CC R.