

# SCHWABISCH HALL, GERMANY

day 54

Veering south, on Monday, April 16, CC B with CC R and the 254th Infantry were ordered to capture Schwabisch Hall, located approximately



*Present day Schwabisch Hall*

nine miles southeast of Ohringen.

As they moved further south, the terrain changed. Now entering the Danube River Valley and Bavaria, the path became much more rugged. They were leaving the flat crop fields behind with each passing mile.

By Wednesday, April 18, CC A, which had been traveling slightly behind, moved to a forward position. Now six tank columns, two in each combat command, were quickly approaching Schwabisch Hall.



*Schwabisch Hall*

Situated in a hilly area of southern Germany once known as Swabia, Schwabisch Hall was a medium-sized town full of buildings resembling Swiss Chalets. It sits on the banks of the Kocher River, which forks in several places as it snakes through the town, cutting it in two halves. The greatest part of Schwabisch Hall is located to the east of the Kocher River on ground which rises high above the river bank.

Just outside of Schwabisch Hall, Melvin's tank column was forced to cross a large sloping field and move from one narrow country lane to another to avoid an abatis of felled trees nearly a hundred yards long. The lower road was elevated about four feet higher than the field. A wall of logs was utilized as a retainer wall to brace the road against erosion and collapse. With no ramp or other obvious means of gaining entry to the road, the gunner was ordered to load his 76mm gun with a high explosive shell and fire, nearly point blank, into the retaining wall. Two high explosive shells later, the log retaining wall was reduced to splinters with a naturally sloping earthen ramp which the Sherman used to climb up and onto the roadway.

In the late evening of April 18, CC A rolled into Schwabish Hall unchallenged after navigating an array of roadblocks, mine fields, and blown bridges which had to be breached.

Bypassing Schwabisch Hall after leaving CC A behind for the capture, CC B continued south approximately eight miles directly to Schwabich Gmund.

This town, like its sister city, Schwabisch Hall, is surrounded

by remnants of an old city wall enclosing a city of chalet-like architecture. Gmund sits at the confluence of two rivers, the Rems and the Josefsbach River.



*Schwabisch Gmund*

Arriving just west of Schwabisch Gmund, CC B managed to capture two bridges intact which crossed the Rems River. On the morning of April 20, after crossing the bridges and regrouping, CC B continued east past Schwabisch Gmund leaving





*Schwabisch Gmund*

CC R and the 114th Infantry to enter and stabilize the old city.

Meanwhile, by this time CC A had entered and successfully captured Schwabisch Hall and had now hurriedly rejoined CC B. The two combat commands crossed the Fils River just southwest of Gmund and raced to capture Kirchheim on Sunday evening, April

22. The collective strength of the two combat commands easily overpowered the light resistance encountered at Kirchheim.

Within two days CC B had covered thirty-two difficult miles with little to no rest as well as the cap-

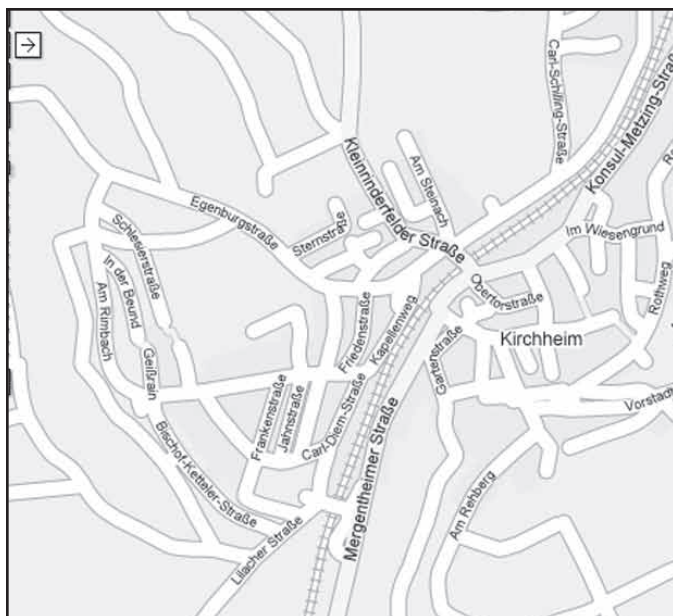


*Holy Cross Cathedral - Schwabisch Gmund*



*Schwabisch Gmund*

ture of Kirchem and 400 German soldiers, obliterating the German army in this region. The 10th Armored Division was now poised to strike east to the Danube River and spear much deeper into southern Germany.



*Present day Kirchheim*

