

MS # B-274

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Generalleutnant

165th Infantry Division
(3 Feb - 1 Jul 1944)

70th Infantry Division
(1 Jun - 8 Nov 1944)

Defense of Walcheren Island,
and Belgium and Holland

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Biography

I was born on 31 August 1884 at Germersheim in the Palatinate. My father and my three brothers are officers. After having graduated I attended the War Academy in Munich. In 1905 I was appointed Lieutenant in the 15th Infantry Regiment at Neuburg on the Danube.

1914 - 1918 I served as regimental and brigade executive, battalion commander, and regimental commander.

1919 - 1939: I served for three years in each of the following capacities: company commander, aide-de-camp to an infantry commander, captain in the staff of a battalion, battalion commander.

For eight years I was in charge of the training of recruits and then I became commander of a frontier guard regiment.

1939 - 1944: 2 1/4 years commander of the 388th Infantry Regiment (of the 24th Infantry Division).

Employed at the West Wall and in Norway and Northern Russia (Corps "Dietl").

1/2 year commander of a replacement training regiment at Friedberg (Hesse).

1 1/4 years in charge of the military and domestic administration of Amiens, Marseilles, Mariupol, and Lille.

3/4 year commander of the 165th Reserve Division and the 70th Infantry Division in Holland.

On 1 July 1942 I was appointed brigadier general and on 1 August 1944 promoted to major general.

On 7 November 1944 I was taken prisoner.

Preface

On 3 February 1944 I took over the command of the 165th Reserve Division, which was stationed on the right wing of the LXXXIX Army Corps and the Fifteenth Army. The location was Southern Holland, in the Province of Zeeland, and on the islands of Walcheren and Northern and Southern Beveland. With the exception of the Division Staff and the Regimental Commanders, the Division was relieved by the 70th Infantry Division during the months May - June 1944; by battalions it was concentrated north of Antwerp and subsequently employed in the combat area of the Fifteenth Army. The 70th Infantry Division was newly activated, and all its members suffered from stomach diseases.

In August 1944 the 70th Infantry Division was committed in the group of islands (Walcheren and Beveland), in September at Gent but minus one infantry regiment, which had remained in the island of Walcheren, and subsequently it was committed in the old sector until combat activity ceased on 8 November 1944; during this period the Division was one infantry regiment and one artillery battalion below T/O strength.

Re "I.1" of the directives:

From middle of May 1944 I expected the Invasion to take place where it actually took place.

My reasons for believing so:

The invasion forces were concentrated along the southern coast of England, the main body at Portsmouth and Southampton. A landing would presumably only take place at one point between Calais and Cherbourg. An attack over a broad front, that is landings at several points with the purpose of binding down our

neighbors and reserves were unnecessary as the superior enemy air forces had destroyed our transport system and annihilated our reserve units. In the sector Calais - le Havre we had our best fortifications. Generally, we expected the invasion to take place between the Somme and Seine Rivers. The element of surprise did not exist here. A surprise landing might rather take place in the sector le Havre - Cherbourg, which owing to the numerous cliffs was rather unfavorable for a landing and consequently less fortified. There was no large harbor in the sector, but on the other hand the Cherbourg tongue of land formed a natural basin, which was protected against wind and tide from the West. After the landing a bridgehead would presumably be established, from which a thrust would be launched as far as Avranches. After that we could expect the Cherbourg tongue of land to be cut off and our front rolled up from the rear! A short land front and a long front on the sea could be established with many landing sites and the large harbor of Cherbourg. A second thrust could be launched through Rennes on St. Nazaire. The Bretagne tongue of land would presumably be cut off and our front rolled up from the rear, and again a short land front and a long front on the sea could be established with the key harbor of Brest. From this area it would be possible to launch a thrust in the direction of the East with a strong right wing resting on the Loire River, and after a second landing in Southern France the operative right wing could be thrown against Lyon.

Fourteen days before, I discussed my views not only with my First General Staff Officer but also with higher ranking General.

Re "I.2" (Map 1: 250 000).

The group of islands is situated north of the Schelde Estuary at the entrance of the harbor of Antwerp. By the Isthmus of Bath it is connected with the Continent. The islands of Walcheren and Southern Beveland are connected with each other by the Sloe Dam. Both islands lie for the most part three meters below the surface of the sea. The north and south coasts of Walcheren were protected by dunes against the tide, which sometimes rose about 5 meters; some of the dunes were up to 70 meters high but they were rather narrow, only in the northern part of the island about 1 kilometer broad. Besides, the coast was protected by concrete walls, the south and east coasts were exclusively protected by such walls. In October 1944 aerial mines thrown by the enemy knocked holes in the walls at four different places and thereby caused inundation of almost the whole island. Strong dikes protect the north and south coasts of Beveland against the tide, and the rear is divided into "polders" to prevent a possible tidal wave from spreading all over the island. From Vlissingen a narrow-gauge railroad and an excellent road leads through Middelburg - the capital of Walcheren and the Province of Zeeland - and Goes to the Continent. The roads, which mostly ran along the tops of the dikes, were excellent, but traffic outside the roads was considerably hampered by streams and ditches; this was particularly the case in the island of Walcheren. The group of islands with its very fertile soil produced a great quantity of grains, vegetables, and fruit intended for export. Horse and cattle breeding was particularly far advanced. Apart from a few parks and numerous large orchards, woods only exist in a narrow strip of land, about three kilometers long and situated east of Domburg.

The sector of the Division from Westkapelle to Woensdrecht (inclusive) was 65 kilometers deep and up to 25 kilometers broad. The total length of the coast of the individual islands was about 200 kilometers.

Our principal mission was "to repel an enemy attack from the West and, in cooperation with the artillery of the adjoining division in the South, to block the Schelde Estuary and the harbor of Vlissingen. For this purpose we fortified the west coast of Walcheren from Vrouwenpolder (inclusive) to Ft. Rammekens (inclusive) as "fortress-like" as possible with a series of concrete strongpoints and pockets of resistance constructed by the troops themselves; the northwest coast of Southern Beveland and the southwest coast of South Beveland were only fortified with small individual strongpoints, and in between the troops had dug fortifications themselves.

The troops constructed fortifications with what material they had, as follows: on the Isthmus of Bath and along the line about three kilometers east of the west coast of Northern and Southern Beveland fortifications were constructed, facing the East, the Walcheren Canal north of Middelburg and the Southern Beveland Canal were fortified on two sides and Goes on all sides.

a. Strongpoints.

Along the main coast and in the rear we had the following, placed in a series or group of bunkers, which were safe against fragments and shells up to 15 centimeters:

all our naval coastal batteries, except the battery of 22-cm. guns stationed east of Domburg,

three heavy (cal. 15-cm.) and a part of the light batteries of the division,

almost all antitank guns, mortars, and infantry guns, which were used along the coast as defense weapons against a possible landing, armor-piercing and heavy infantry weapons (emplaced at the antitank ditch), the crews of the guns and the heavy infantry weapons, observers, signal posts (radio and telephone), the tactical headquarters of the division, the infantry and artillery regiments, the "Seekommandant", the naval coast artillery, and the anti-aircraft artillery battalion, a part of our reserves, ammunition and food rations.

The walls of the bunkers were up to one meter thick, the roofs up to 2.5 meters. Some of them were covered with armored plates, many had revolving turrets, a great many had armored doors, and they were all equipped with heating, ventilation, and gas traps. All strong points had installations for perimetrical defense, and were surrounded by wire entanglements and mine fields.

b. Pockets of Resistance.

Between the individual strong points and at all other positions the troops built pockets of resistance having trenches, bunkers, and machine-gun emplacements which were made safe against fragments by means of iron rails, wood, stone, and earth.

c. Wire Entanglements.

All strong points and pockets of resistance, batteries, and individual emplacements of artillery guns and heavy infantry weapons were surrounded

by a wire entanglement which was 50 meters deep.

d. Obstacles on the Foreshore.

At the outset wooden poles, about 20 to 30 centimeter thick, iron poles and rails were driven into the earth, later on we used triangular timber obstacles made of 30 centimeter or thicker wood and held together by means of iron clamps. We placed waterproof antitank mines and shells at the obstacles, and in between we put a wire netting - in so far wire was available.

Concrete blocks filled with mines and explosives were buried in the ground at varying depth.

e. Antitank Ditches and Walls.

In continuation of existing streams we dug a ditch filled with water. It ran along the coastal road halfway between Vlissingen - Zoutelande through Koudekerke - Kleine Abeele (1.5 km. south of Middelburg) in the direction of Fort Rammekens. The ditch was 10 kilometers long, 8 to 10 meters broad, and 1.5 to 2 meters deep. In continuation thereof we constructed a 1.3 kilometers long, 2.5 meter high, and 1.5 meter broad concrete antitank wall.

f. Mine Obstacles.

Around the individual strongpoints and pockets of resistance we placed mine belts, in front of the main line of resistance along the north-west and southwest coasts of Walcheren we had several rows of mines, and in the rear, particularly east of Westkapelle, we had large mine fields, consisting of antitank and antipersonnel mines (Teller and Schuetzen mines). They were fenced in and indicated by warning signs. For our own traffic

small paths were left open. In the rear large areas were covered with dummy mines.

g. Air Landing Obstacles.

In all areas for suitable landing of parachutists or airborne troops - particularly in Walcheren and South Beveland - we placed trunks, which were 15 to 30 centimeters thick. We dug them into the ground at intervals of 15 meters, 1.5 meters below and 3 meters above the surface. At some places we had wire between the trunks and in addition antitank or improvised mines. The wood for these obstacles were partly taken from the avenues in the neighborhood, partly from the woods south of Bergen-Op-Zoom, or even outside the sector of the division. This material was brought up by railroad, truck, or ship.

In addition, we made the former airfield 2 kilometers south of Middelburg unsuitable for landings by means of ditches and obstacles made of earth.

The "fortress-like" constructions (the concrete buildings, anti-tank ditch and wall) were built by Organization "Totd" and private construction firms. The plans for the constructions were made by the Fortress Construction Staff of the LXXXIX Army Corps, and a Special Construction Staff of the Division controlled the construction of the fortifications.

When the invasion started on 6 June 1944, 75 percent of the constructions were finished, and when the group of islands was attacked in October 1944 the work was complete. The troops made all obstacles themselves, mines were only laid by the engineers.

The demolishing and blocking of the harbors and the preparations for same was the task of the Navy.

Re "I.3".

On 6 June 1944 at 0145 hours the Division was placed in a state of enhanced alertness. Orders for this were given in code over the telephone by the Headquarters of the LXXXIX Army Corps.

Re "I.4".

On 6 June 1944 between 0800 and 0900 hours the Headquarters of LXXXIX Army Corps gave me by telephone the first information about the invasion and where it took place.

Re "I.5".

Apart from the orders for "enhanced alertness" I did not receive any special orders.

Re "II.1".

At the beginning of January 1944 the 165th Reserve Division, activated in the Recruiting Area "V Stuttgart", was transferred to Holland from the area around Dijon - Besancon, and stationed in the island of Walcheren and South Beveland on the right wing of the LXXXIX Army Corps and the Fifteenth Army, between the 719th Infantry Division (to the right) and the 712th Infantry Division (to the left).

In addition to its tactical commitment and its mission, the division was in charge of a 3 months' training of replacement troops of all age classes - among them many belonging to "Category Reserved" - intended for commitment on the Eastern Front. The result of this was that the Division was subordinated

to two different commands: tactically to LXXXIX Army Corps and the Fifteenth Army, and, as regarded the service with the troops, to the LXIV Reserve Corps (under General der Pioniere Sachs) and the Commander of the Replacement Army.

Being a reserve and training division it was organized as follows:

Division Staff.

Three infantry regiments of two battalions each. Each battalion consisted of three rifle and one machine-gun company.

One artillery regiment of two light battalions, with three batteries to each.

Personnel and material for training with heavy infantry weapons.

After its tactical commitment in Holland the Division was reinforced by:

One Fuesilier Battalion, in tactical respect generally subordinate to an infantry regiment.

One Army Artillery Battalion, consisting of three heavy (cal. 15-cm.) batteries, in tactical respect subordinate to the artillery regiment of the Division.

One Engineer Battalion of three companies
and one light bridge-construction column,

One Signal Battalion of two companies,

One Reconnaissance Detachment (motorized),

Military Police Detachment.

} placed immediately
subordinate to the
Division.

The 13th and 14th Companies (one with infantry guns and one Panzer Jaeger Company) with each infantry regiment,

One battalion of fortress cadre crews,

One Armenian and one East (Russian) Battalion, tactically subordinate to an infantry regiment.

At the beginning of May 1944 the 70th Infantry Division was ordered to relieve the 165th Reserve Division. In several recruiting areas of Germany men suffering from stomach diseases were assembled in companies or battalions, and in mid-May 1944 they were transferred to the 165th Reserve Division, which billeted them north of Antwerp and in the eastern part of the island of South Beveland. With regard to duty they were subordinated to a small working party of the Division, and tactically to the Division. The relief took place from the end of May to the end of June. In the meantime the units of the 70th Infantry Division were examined by a commission, consisting of the commanders of the regiments and the independent battalions and medical specialists. Those completely unsuitable for service at the front were singled out, assembled in one battalion and employed by the Headquarters of LXXXIX Army Corps in the fortress area of Antwerp. Instead of them, healthy officers (particularly company commanders) and men were retrained for the benefit of the 165th Reserve Division, but the commanders of the division and regimental staffs were not changed. Until their commitment in the positions the new units were mainly trained, and in addition we used them for the digging of positions in the rear and for the construction of air-landing obstacles. After the relief on the 1 July 1944 the numbers of these suffering from stomach diseases were about: in the Division Staff 0, the Regimental and Battalion Staffs 50%, Infantry 90%, Artillery 75%, Engineers 10%, Signal Company 30%.

At the beginning of the invasion the following troops were employed (Map 1: 100 000):

On the Island of Walcheren

The command post of the Division Staff was situated one kilometer southwest of Middelburg.

The Infantry Regiment, which was commanded by Oberst Staebble, had its command post at Midder Reduit one kilometer northwest of Vlissingen.

One battalion had its command post at Ritthem, its companies were stationed as follows: one company from Fort Ranmekens (inclusive) to Fort de Ruyter (exclusive), one company in East and West Souburg and put at the disposal of the Regiment, one machine-gun company in the sector of the battalion adjoining to the West.

One battalion had its command post at Vlissingen and its troops held positions from Fort de Tuyter to Dishoek (inclusive).

The Infantry Regiment, which was commanded by Oberst Reinhardt, had its command post at Serooskerke, its troops were located as follows:

one battalion, with command post two kilometers southeast of Zoutelande, held positions between Dishoek (exclusive) and Zoutelande (inclusive), tactically it was subordinate to the Regiment "Staebble".

One company served as battalion reserve.

One battalion had its command post two kilometers east of Westkapelle and its troops stationed from Zoutelande (exclusive) as far as two kilometers northeast of Westkapelle.

One Fuesilier battalion, with command post one kilometer east of Damburg, adjoined them and held positions as far as two kilometers northeast of Domburg. Then followed one company of battalion reserves and one East Battalion holding positions as far as Vrouwenpolder, where the command post of the Battalion was situated. One company was stationed in the northwestern part of North Beveland. The Engineer Battalion had its command post at St. Laurens. Each company had its special task, particularly laying of mines.

One light bridge construction column was stationed at Middelburg.

Sketch 2. The Artillery Regiment:

Command post one kilometer southwest of Middelburg, one light battalion in the area south of Aagtekerke and one at Buttinge, where also the command posts of the battalions were situated.

One heavy battalion was located between Middelburg and Vlissingen, with its command post two kilometers south of Middelburg.

The Signal Battalion:

Command post at Middelburg, the companies were employed with message centers. Elements were stationed on the northern part of Middelburg.

The Fortress Cadre Crews:

One battalion of the Permanent Fortress Regiment "Geyer" was distributed along the west coast of the Island of Walcheren to handle the heavy infantry weapons. The Staff of the Regiment served with the LXXXII Army Corps in Antwerp, and was subordinate to it as regarded discipline, but tactically it was subordinate to the 165th Reserve Division and later on to the 70th Infantry Division.

Sketch 3. The Navy:

"Seacommander" was Kapitaen zur See Aschmann.

Command post at Vlissingen.

Coast Artillery Battery: command post at Domburg, six Navy coastal batteries along the north and southwest coasts.

Antiaircraft Battalion:

Command post four kilometers northwest of Vlissingen, two heavy and three light batteries around Vlissingen - mainly for the purpose of defending the harbor.

In South Beveland

Infantry Regiment (under Oberst?). Command post at Goes. One battalion (the Armenian Battalion) was stationed from the southwestern point of the island four kilometers northwest of Borsselem (command post there) as far as Coudorpe (exclusive).

One battalion, with its command post at Oudelande, was stationed from Coudorpe as far as the southeastern point of the island three kilometers southwest of Hoedekenskerke. One battalion had its command post at Kruiningen. It was the training battalion of the 165th Reserve Division, with one company at each of the following places: Woensdrecht, Krabbendyke and Kruiningen. In addition they had security detachments and Navy antiaircraft artillery, which was situated in the harbors of Wemeldingen and Hansweerft and at the canal bridge south of Vlakte.

Artillery:

One motorized platoon of Heeres artillery equipped with 17-cm. howitzers. They were stationed one kilometer southeast of Sloedamm. (In August extracted from the Fifteenth Army).

In North Beveland

One company of the East Battalion was stationed in the northwestern part of the island.

We had further: one light battery of a Heeres antiaircraft battalion at Middelburg, one east of the Sloedamm, and one at the canal bridge at Vlakte.

In case of an enemy attack from the West the two infantry regiments, stationed in Walcheren, were supposed to keep the possession of the island. For this purpose they were reinforced with fortress cadre crews and static weapons and, further, they would get support by navy and division artillery.

The coast was the main line of resistance. Our task was to prevent the enemy from landing, but if he should succeed in landing weak elements, our local reserves and the crews of the neighboring strong points which were not attacked should repel them in a counterthrust. If strong elements were landed it would be the task of the tactical reserves to box them in until we could start our counterattack. The fortress area of Vlissingen was to be defended to the last man if the enemy should penetrate into the northern part of the island.

In case of an enemy attack from the East we had to maintain the possession

of the east coast of the island and of the Walcheren Canal on both sides of Middelburg as far as Veere in the North. This had to be done in cooperation with the troops holding the fortress area of Vlissingen - even if other parts of the island were lost.

The bombardment of enemy ships on the high seas was the task of the "Seacommander" of his "Artillery Commander". But as soon as the enemy was within the range of the division artillery the Seacommander and his units were subordinated to the Division Commander, with the task of bombarding sea and land targets. The same was true of the elements of the Heeres anti-aircraft artillery battalion, which was employed in the sector.

The reinforced infantry regiment in South Beveland was to keep the possession of the southwestern coast if the enemy broke into the Schelde Estuary, and, in case of a loss of Walcheren, the west coast of this island and particularly the dam of communication.

In cooperation with the troops holding the area on both sides of Vrouwenpolder the reinforced company was to prevent the enemy from penetrating into the bay area.

In case of an enemy attack from the East the reinforced infantry regiment in South Beveland was to keep the possession of the Isthmus of Bath, later on the canal and the strong point at Goes, and at last a line about three kilometers east of the west coast of the island.

The amount of ammunition for our artillery was adequate, for heavy and light infantry weapons abundant and, further, we had food reserves for eight weeks.

A few days after the invasion we expected a second invasion on both sides of the Schelde Estuary. The Division was placed in a state of supreme alertness by the Army via Corps Headquarters, and not until six weeks later was the degree of alertness reduced. Meanwhile, we had been relieved. The following units were committed: The 1018th Infantry Regiment with one tactically subordinate battalion of the 1019th Infantry Regiment in the northern part of the Island of Walcheren, the Staff and two battalions of the 1019th Infantry Regiment in the fortress area of Vlissingen, and the 1020th Infantry Regiment in the Island of South Beveland.

In July and August the new units were initiated in their sectors and speedily trained and, further, the construction of positions and foreshore obstacles was continued. During this period the Armenian and East Battalions and, further, two companies, consisting of the retained riflemen not suffering from stomach diseases, had to be assembled and given up to Fifteenth Army.

At the end of August General von Salmuth, Commander in Chief of Fifteenth Army, was replaced by General der Infanterie von Zangen.

Commitment of the Main Bulk of the 70th Infantry Division at Gent

(Map 1: 250 000)

Sketch 1. On 4 September 1944 Fifteenth Army ordered the Division Staff, the 1018th and 1020th Infantry Regiments, the Engineer Battalion, two light artillery battalions, the Signal Battalion, and one reconnaissance platoon to be withdrawn and employed along a line Breskens - Deynze - southern edge of Gent - Wichelen (four kilometers west of Termonde) with the task of keeping the bridges across the Lys Canal and the Schelde River open for the divisions

retreating from the South to the North, and, further, to prevent the enemy from crossing these rivers.

The Regimental Staff (under Oberst Geyer) and two fortress cadre crews were at the same time withdrawn from their former sector Breskens - Blankenberge and, like the Division, placed immediately subordinate to Fifteenth Army.

The crossing of the Schelde River and the march on Gent took place unhampered by the enemy and without losses, whereas the leading elements of both regiments had to fight their way to Gent through groups of partisans.

The Fortress Cadre Regiment occupied the Lys Canal from Deynze to St. Martin (9 kilometers of Deynze). The bridges were protected by engineers of the Division Engineer Battalion, who also made preparations for their demolition. Adjoining them the 1018th Infantry Regiment occupied the Lys Canal and - reinforced by alarm detachments from Gent - the southern and southeastern outskirts of the town and the Bend of the Schelde River at Heusden. On 6 September the 1020th Infantry Regiment, and particularly the Fusilier Battalion subordinate to it, were repeatedly attacked by enemy tanks when they marched into their sector in the area north of Wetteren and suffered here heavy losses in men and material. The Commander of the Regiment was seriously wounded. Brigadier General Bruns, former commanding officer of Gent, took over the command of the Regiment. Elements of the regiments and the engineer battalions occupied the crossing sites in the sector assigned to them - they had to fight for the bridge at Wetteren - and established communication with the neighbor at Termonde. The artillery, emplaced northwest and northeast of Gent, gave an effective support to the two regiments, both when they occupied their positions and when they had to

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defend them. Here the artillery was reinforced by two batteries of railway guns at Sleydinge. The command post of the Division was at Evergem, that of the Fifteenth Army at Middelburg, the former command post of the Division.

A few days after the commitment of the Fortress Cadre Regiment was relieved by elements of the ? Division and marched to Walcheren to reinforce the 1018th Infantry Regiment. The 1018th Infantry Regiment fought its way back after heavy fighting for the possession of the bridges in the southern and southeastern parts of Gent, it was also heavily engaged in the center of the town, the districts around the railroad station and the harbor and, at last, behind the canal sector in the northwestern outskirts of Gent. After having demolished the bridges across the Schelde River, the 1020th Infantry Regiment retired and placed its combat outposts along the line: northeastern outskirts of Gent - Lokeren and its main bulk in the sector Doornzele - Wachtebeke - Moerbeke.

On 10 September 1914 the Fifteenth Army ordered that the 70th Infantry Division be withdrawn and transferred to its former sector in Walcheren, North and South Beveland. The Division Commander had to proceed his Division to Middelburg. In the meantime Oberst Steinmueller took over the command of the portions of the 70th Infantry Division sent in north of Gent. At the same time they were placed immediately subordinate to the Corps Headquarters of the LXXXVI Army Corps under General der Infanterie von Obstfelder.

Recommitment and Engagements of the 70th Infantry Division in its former Sector

(Map 1: 100 000)

On 11 September 1914, when I reported to the Commander in Chief of Fifteenth Army at Middelburg, I received the following order:

"The 70th Infantry Division will be withdrawn and employed exclusively on the Island of Walchuren, the 712th Infantry Division will be stationed in North and South Beveland (under Major General Neumann), and the 64th Infantry Division (under Brigadier General Eberding) in the Breskens Bridgehead. These areas are fortress areas and consequently they have to be defended to the last man against attacks from the sea or the land, and above all the enemy must be prevented from penetrating into the Schelde River. The divisions will be subordinated to the LXXXIX Army Corps, with command post at Hoofdplaat (8 kilometers southeast of Breskens), later on at Middelburg."

From 15 to 22 September the Division was relieved in the combat area of Gent and placed between other troops of the Fifteenth Army with the main body at Breskens and elements at Terneuzen, across the Schelde River and - the above mentioned order having been altered - in its former sector in Walcheren, and North and South Beveland. The 712th Infantry Division was stationed north of Antwerp.

Sketch 5.

Walcheren: Division command post, engineer battalion, artillery regiment, signal battalion, and reconnaissance platoon were situated as before.

The 1019th Infantry Regiment: the command post was situated at Midden Reduit one kilometer north of Vlissingen, the troops were stationed in the fortress area of Vlissingen.

The 1018th Infantry Regiment: the command post was placed at de Groota Preladt two kilometers northeast of Westkapelle, the troops adjoined those of the 1019th Infantry Regiment and held positions as far as three kilometers northeast of Domburg.

The Permanent Fortress Regiment "Geyer": had its command post at Serooskerke, its troops adjoining the 1018th Infantry Regiment and held positions as far as Veere (inclusive). One company was stationed on North Beveland.

The Fuesilier Battalion: command post at Middelburg, one company was stationed on the Isthmus of Arnhemuiden.

North Beveland: One company of the Permanent Fortress Regiment "Geyer".

South Beveland: The 1020th Infantry Regiment with command post at Goes. One Battalion on the south coast from the southwestern point of the island 3 kilometers northwest of Borsselem as far as Ellewoutsdyk (inclusive).

One battalion with two reinforced companies along the canal, and one reinforced company on the Isthmus of Bath.

During the engagements around Gent the Division had about the following losses:

Dead and wounded	12 %
Sick	15 %
Missing	8 %

During our crossing of the Schelde River and also during our preparations for it, we suffered losses in men and material owing to enemy air raids. Furthermore, the infantry had to leave all horses and vehicles and a part of its heavy weapons in the Breskens Bridgehead. The ration and combat strengths of the Division were now reduced by one-third. Later on 350 men arrived, all of them suffering from stomach diseases, they were almost all of them assigned to the Fuesilier Battalion. We continued to improve our

positions, Arnemuiden was made a hospital village and was clearly designated as such.

At the end of September the Division had to give up one infantry regiment and one light artillery battalion. The Commander of the Division decided that the 1018th Infantry Regiment should be given up. They were sent into the combat area north of Antwerp and did not return to the Division. The 1019th Infantry Regiment took over one part of the sector of the 1018th Infantry Regiment as far as Westkapelle (inclusive) together with static heavy infantry weapons and fortress cadre crews located there, and the remaining portion of the sector as far as Veere (inclusive) was taken over by the Permanent Fortress Regiment. The light artillery battalion was regrouped in such a way that one battery was able to cover the sector Westkapelle - Zoutelande, and two batteries covered the sector Dishoek - Vlissingen.

At the same time enemy attacks - particularly air attacks - on the group of islands started. The Sloe Dam between Walcheren and South Beveland was repeatedly bombed, now and then the railroad and road traffic was disrupted, and for a long time it was considerably hampered. During an air raid on the bridge across the South Beveland Canal south of Vlaken the railroad was destroyed, the roadway heavily damaged, and the railroad and canal dams broken through at several points. But ships were still able to pass through the canal. The road traffic was re-routed to the bridge two kilometers south of Wemeldingen. Eight days later the above-mentioned bridge could be re-opened for railroad traffic.

At the beginning of October the enemy bombed the fortress-like strong points in the coastal sector north of Vlissingen, particularly the Navy coastal

batteries, the antiaircraft batteries, and the division command post southwest of Middelburg. The losses in men and material were comparatively small.

Hard north of Westkapelle there was a concrete wall intended to protect the country against the tide. On 3 September several hundred aerial mines with time fuze knocked a 30 meter broad hole in the wall. More than half of the houses were destroyed, and 250 civilians, mostly women and children, were killed. The crews of the strong points did not suffer any losses. The tide broadened the hole, and the village and its surroundings were inundated. We gathered all civilian and military personnel available, and succeeded in constructing a dam 9 kilometers long, 1.7 meters high and at the base 1.5 meters wide, which was supported by sticks and fascines. It took us ten days to construct this dam, which ran along a line Zoutelande - Meliskerke - Mariekerke - Het Klooster (one kilometer northwest of Gripskerke) - Ostkapelle, and thus we stemmed the high water, which had reached the said line. The strong points placed on the tops of the dunes were not inundated, and only a few lower situated bunkers had to be evacuated. The batteries emplaced in the inundated area were moved to other emplacements in time.

During mid-October the concrete wall at the northwestern edge of Vlissingen and the narrow dam one kilometer southwest of Fort Rammekens were destroyed by 500 to 600 aerial mines with time fuze. The tide inundated at once the area in the vicinity of the wholes, later on a part of Vlissingen and the terrain as far as West and South Souburg, and at last the whole terrain as far as the tank wall and the tank ditch.

Some days later the wall was smashed at a place between Vrouwenpolder and Veere and the entire island was inundated with the exception of the part north of the line Vrouwenpolder - Ostkapelle - Domburg, the dunes along the

northwestern and southwestern coasts, those parts of Middelburg and Vlissingen lying on a higher ground, and the thoroughfare connecting the two towns. Furthermore, the intermediate terrain was protected against inundation by the Walcheren Canal from Veere to Middelburg, the dam hard south of the road Middelburg - Moeiwland, and the elevated terrain from Nieuw Land to Fort Rammekens in connection with the tank wall.

As the inundation progressed, the 1019th Infantry Regiment, reinforced by one permanent fortress battalion, held those parts of the harbor and the town of Vlissingen which were not inundated, further, the main strong points on the tops of the dunes along the southwestern and northwestern coasts of Walcheren as far as Domburg; one permanent fortress battalion adjoined the Regiment and held positions as far as Vrouwenpolder. The command post of the Regiment was located in a strong point one kilometer north of Dishoek.

The command post of the Division and the Artillery Commander was transferred from Middelburg to S'Heer Arendskerke (four kilometers southwest of Goes), that of the Permanent Fortress Regiment was transferred to Ovezande. The permanent fortress battalion, until then employed in the area Vrouwenpolder - Veere, was transferred to the southern coast of South Beveland in the sector Ellewoutsdyk - Hoedekenskerke. This battalion and the battalion of the 1020th Infantry Regiment, which adjoined it, were both of them subordinated to the Commander of the Permanent Fortress Regiment.

The Fusilier Battalion was transferred from Middelburg to Kapelle (four kilometers southeast of Goes) and put at the disposal of the Division, the only light artillery battalion we had was sent into the area west of Rilland and the heavy one northeast of Borselem. Led by their own radio company they

gave an effective support to the 64th Infantry Division (under Brigadier General Eberding) when on 15 October 1944 the enemy landed on the coast east of Hoofd-plaat, starting from the bay west of Neuzen, and later on when he attacked this village and the area south of it. By command of Fifteenth Army the Division gave up two infantry companies and one platoon of engineers to the "Eberding" Division, and in cooperation with the Navy they supplied this division with material, ammunition, and food until the end of the engagements west of the Schelde River.

The Division gave up one infantry regiment, one artillery battalion, the Armenian and the East battalions, four infantry companies and one platoon of engineers; in addition, it had losses in men and material, particularly during the engagement at Gent, and many were put out of action owing to their stomach diseases. In order to replace the losses two battalions of the Permanent Fortress Regiment and replacement crews were assigned to the Division, but in numbers they only amounted to 25 % of the above-mentioned losses and as regards combat qualities still less.

The point of gravity of the defense was shifted from the island of Walcheren to South Beveland, not only owing to the inundation of Walcheren and the transfer of the Staff and elements of the Division caused thereby, but still more because of the progress the enemy attacks made north of Antwerp; but after the fall of the Breskens Bridgehead our defensive activities had to be spread over both islands as we expected attacks simultaneously from the East, the South, and the West. But the active forces of the Division were not adequate for the task. In order to reinforce the passive defense

we employed the Engineer Battalion, the Staff of which was situated at Kloetinge, and one company in each of the villages of Krabbendyk, Schore, and Ovezande. Their task was to construct tank obstacles not only at various points along the main road and the railroad embankment, leading to Goes, but also along other roads leading from the East to the South; further, they had to prepare the demolition of the canal bridges at Vlakte and south of Wemeldingen and the Sloe Dam between South Beveland and Walcheren.

The reorganization was completed about 20 October. At about the same time attacks on the combat outposts of the 1020th Infantry Regiment started east of the Isthmus of Bath. Under the command of the Commanding Officer of the Battalion, 6th Company of the 10120th Infantry Regiment and one company of the Fusilier Battalion held their positions for several days, although they were repeatedly attacked from the East and the South by tanks and infantry, supported by heavy artillery fire. They were both reinforced by one heavy machine-gun company and received support from two light batteries and one advance platoon of a heavy battery. Their positions were placed along the Dam from the bend 3 kilometers east of Bath as far as the railroad line and the road 2 kilometers west of Woensdrecht, where the sector of the 6th Parachute Regiment (Division "Schill") began. In cooperation with the crew stationed in the strong point at Bath they were afterwards able to slow down the speed of a strong enemy attack on the projecting triangular of the dam reaching as far as Slikken Van, but they were no more able to stop the attack.

By command of the Division the Fusilier Battalion (still consisting of two reinforced companies) was thrown in along the line: the road 1 kilometer southeast of Kruiningen - Oostdyk - Nieuwlande, starting from Kapelle.

They were able to repel a frontal attack, but could not prevent the strong enemy wedge, driven into the northern sector, from achieving a penetration and breakthrough north of the railroad line leading to Jerseke. The enemy then captured the harbor of Wemeldingen, which was held by weak troops, and the canal position covering the South and held by two reinforced companies of the 2d Battalion of the 1020th Infantry Regiment. After heavy engagements with motorized and tank forces our engineers demolished the canal bridge.

In the meantime, the enemy also attacked the southern coast of South Beveland. The first attempt at a landing at Ellewoutsdyk was repelled, the enemy suffered heavy losses, 15 enemy ships were destroyed before they reached the shore. Not until the following day was the enemy able to land, establish a bridgehead and gradually extend it to the East and the North. As the Fusilier Battalion, which served as special employment detachment (Verfuegungstruppe) of the Division, had been sent in already, one company of the 1019th Infantry Regiment and the 1st Permanent Fortress Company were withdrawn from the Island of Walcheren and placed in the canal positions from Kwadendamme to the coast in order to repel a threatening breakthrough along the road Hoedekenskerke - Goes and thus prevent the enemy groups, attacking from the East and the South, from uniting. Oberst Reinhardt - who in the meantime had been appointed Commanding Officer of the 1019th Infantry Regiment - was sent in, together with his command group, as commander of the new sub-sector, reaching from Ovezande (inclusive) to S'Gravenpolder (inclusive). He had his command post at Nisse, and that of the "Southwest" sub-sector, under the Commander of the Permanent Fortress Regiment, was transferred to S'Heerenhoek.

In the eastern sector the Commander of the 1020th Infantry Regiment organized the remnants of the 2d Battalion and the Fusilier Battalion at Kloetinge and southwest thereof for the purpose of blocking the roads leading from S'Gravenpolder, Schore, and Jerseke. The weak and tired forces were no longer able to stop the enemy, who attacked from the East supported by tanks. In case the enemy achieved a breakthrough by Goes in the direction of the connecting dam leading to Walcheren Island, the "South" group would be cut off.

In consequence of this we withdrew both "Kampfgruppen" to the line Nieuwdorp - Heinkenzand - S'Heer Arendskerke - Wissekerke - Waterloo - the northern coast two kilometers northeast of Oostkerke. The division command post was placed between the wide road and the railroad line 2.5 kilometers west of S'Heer Arendskerke, while we placed the artillery, three heavy batteries and two light ones, in the orchards on both sides of the main road. The wounded and sick were transferred from the clearing stations at Heinkenzand and Oostkerke to the hospital village of Arnemuiden. On the following day our artillery, a few antitank guns and tank obstacles stopped enemy reconnaissance assaults, carried out by means of tanks and armored reconnaissance cars. In the meantime the enemy cleared the rear from obstacles and made preparations for a new attack. The weak remnants of our infantry, scraped together in the main sectors of the 15 kilometer long front, were exhausted, the losses were heavy, the majority of our anti-tank guns was put out of action, artillery ammunition was scarce, mines and explosives were used up, and natural tank obstacles existed practically only in the northern sector. We could not reckon on replacements in men and

material, not even by sea. Our reconnaissance and supply services did not receive any support from our air force, and it did not support our troops, engaged on the ground. Consequently, the "Kampfgruppe" would not have been able to offer any effective resistance against the coming tank attack of the enemy. The Commander of the Division, therefore, decided to use the "Kampfgruppe" for the last and decisive defense of those parts of the island which were not inundated; they were to cooperate with the units of the 1019th Infantry Regiment which had remained on Walcheren, and the Navy coastal artillery.

On the next day - the weather being foggy - and during the night following, elements of the artillery and the train were conveyed over the Sloe Dam and sent in; later on followed the rest of the "Kampfgruppe", protected by strong rear guards. All our troops passed without difficulty and were not attacked by the enemy.

The division command post was placed at Middelburg.

The Permanent Fortress Regiment (command post at Nieuwland) was stationed along the eastern coast of the island. Elements of the 1st Battalion of the 1019th Infantry Regiment and remnants of the 2d Permanent Fortress Battalion held positions from Fort Rammekens to the connecting dam (inclusive).

(Two platoons of the 2d Company of the 1019th Infantry Regiment were placed in the pocket of resistance east of the dam).

Remnants of the Fusilier Battalion adjoined them in the North and held positions as far as the Walcheren Canal.

The 1020th Infantry Regiment held positions in the northern part of the island from Vrouwenpolder (exclusive) to Damburg (exclusive). Its command post was placed one kilometer north of Oostkapelle.

The Artillery Regiment had its command post at Middelburg, two light batteries were emplaced north of Arnemuiden, three heavy ones east of Nieuw-land.

The connecting dam was demolished, the area one kilometer around the hospital village (Lazarettendorf) was kept clear of all traffic and garrisons.

In the meantime enemy planes systematically dropped medium and heavy bombs on the town of Vlissingen - not on the harbor or the shipyard - and particularly on the Navy coastal batteries and the antitank batteries, which during the fight for the possession of Breskens had effectively supported the 64th Infantry Division; furthermore, the strong points along the western coast of Walcheren were bombed from the air, and after the fall of Breskens the enemy artillery shelled Vlissingen and destroyed the canal lock.

After the complete annihilation of the Navy coastal batteries and the antiaircraft batteries emplaced from Vlissingen as far as Zoutelande, I permitted the Seacommander to transfer his command post from Vlissingen to Vrouwenpolder, and the Commander of the 1019th Infantry Regiment took over the former command post of the Seacommander.

Protected by fire of his naval and air forces the enemy was able to land his forces at Westkapelle - but he suffered very heavy losses - and a short time later at Vlissingen; this happened at the beginning of November. After heavy engagements, in which also civilians of the town took part, the garrison was overpowered. We demolished the harbor of Vlissingen before the enemy

arrived and blocked it by sinking one large and several small ships and by laying mines.

The strong points between these two towns, their crews and guns had been almost annihilated by means of medium and heavy bombs and aerial mines. Individual concrete bunkers held on, but their surroundings were pittered with bomb craters. Almost all entrances and loopholes were buried, all fortifications, constructed by the troops themselves, all mine fields and wire entanglements were destroyed. Thus the enemy succeeded in gradually rolling up the row of dunes between the two towns, despite violent resistance offered by the weak garrisons.

After the capture of the pocket of resistance east of the Sloe Dam the enemy advanced on same with tanks and artillery as fast to the point of rupture. Here our artillery put three enemy tanks out of action and damaged one. On the following day the enemy repeated his attack with strong forces and occupied the Sloe Dam, but he was pushed back by one platoon of engineers and one permanent fortress company. Not until the third day could he storm the dam after strong preparation by artillery fire, and establish a bridgehead. During the following night at low tide the enemy crossed the shallows between the islands south of the dam. He was led by Dutchmen. At dawn he penetrated into our positions on the eastern coast. At the same time he attacked the southern wing of our positions at Fort Rammekens, and despite violent resistance offered by our artillery, infantry, and engineers he advanced as far as Nieuwland - Arnemuiden, and finally he passed the hospital village, in which we had no garrison, and reached the eastern outskirts of Middelburg.

From 2 to 7 November - except for short interruptions - Middelburg was covered by artillery fire of all calibers, also by 33-cm. caliber from two battleships. The districts around the harbor and the railroad station were destroyed. All in all 34,000 civilians were packed together in the center of the town, which was not inundated. 7,000 used to "live" there, 12,000 came from the inundated districts of the town, and 15,000 from the inundated parts of the island. In addition we had our supply troops, many wounded, not only in the town hospital but also at other collecting stations. On 7 November in the afternoon the enemy surprisingly penetrated into the town from the West with amphibian tanks. Until 8 November at noon a strong "Kampfgruppe" offered resistance in the district around the railroad station, and a weak one fought south of the town along the road leading to Vlissingen.

On the same day superior enemy troops overpowered a "Kampfgruppe", sent in north of the railroad at Kleverskerke, later on also the remnants of the 1020th Infantry Regiment and the permanent fortress crews in the northern part of the island at and east of Lomburg.

As I do not have the necessary documents at my disposal, I am unable to give information about the losses of the Division and its subordinate units during the engagements in South Beveland and Walcheren.

/DASER

Allendorf, October 1946

Wilhelm Daser
Generalleutnant

First Supplement to the report on the commitment of 165th Reserve Division and the 70th Infantry Division in Holland 1944.

1. Supplement

Organization and Commitment of a Division, the Members of which suffered from Stomach Diseases.

Beside the numerous cases of heart ailments, sciatica, and rheumatism, the number of those suffering from stomach diseases was unusually high during this war.

However, different the cause and effect of these diseases are, one thing is common in all those suffering from them: they have pains in their stomachs and intestines, the entire is or feels sick. By means of a medical examination it is generally possible to ascertain the extent of the disease. Slight cases can be cured by observing a diet, more serious ones by resting in bed and appropriate treatment, organic stomach diseases might be cured by means of an operation.

The case is more difficult if the stomach disease is a nervous one. Those suffering do not know if the disease is due to bad nerves or if the opposite is the case. Their subjective troubles are many, the results of a medical examination as a rule poor. Constantly they report sick and are a burden to the troops. Many units, therefore, gathered them in special wards already at the beginning of the war. They were closely controlled, had to observe a diet, and were not allowed to smoke, and many recovered

quickly. More serious cases were treated in hospitals, and when the men recovered they were transferred to the replacements. In the rear and in Germany they crowded the hospitals. They did not even need or claim special treatments, but they also wanted to be exempted from any training or working duty. Finally, such cases were not only gathered in special wards but also in special hospitals, and the replacement units had special companies for them. Thus the "Stomach Companies and Battalions" came into existence. The employment in the rear was the next step. In 1943, for example, a "Landesschuetzen Battalion" only consisting of men suffering from stomach diseases was employed in the military government area headquarters of Lille, France, as railroad guards, and they were quite a success.

Later on such "stomach battalions" were assigned to divisions committed in the East or the West not only in quiet sectors but also in the front line.

I do not possess detailed information about the qualities of these battalions, but according to reports of the division commanders they did not meet the requirements of the front: marching, digging, fighting, unfavorable weather conditions, cold and rain, hunger and thirst. In battles they failed.

Was it right in May 1944 to activate an entire division consisting of these sick people and place them in the group of islands of Walcheren and North and South Beveland at the entrance of the harbor of Antwerp, that is to say, in a sector which sooner or later was bound to become a center of gravity when the invasion started? The 165th Reserve Division had been employed there since January 1944. On 1 February 1944 I took over the command. On pp. 11 to 12 I gave a description of organization, commitment, and

tasks. It was repeatedly requested that the division be converted from a reserve and training division into a static one with the strength and equipment of a normal division. Some officers were too old, others had not yet recovered from their wounds, but as to combat experience and combat qualities they were far superior to the sick officers of the 70th Infantry Division. The non-commissioned officers of the 165th Reserve Division were excellent, they were carefully selected for the training of our replacements. In April 1944 the cadre personnel of the reinforced 165th Reserve Division and the replacements, which so far had completed their training, were completely initiated, trained in the use of the defensive weapons and instructed how to defend their positions. They came, all of them, from the provinces of Wuerttemberg and Baden which made them feel that they belonged together. Their division really constituted a firm unit, and only a change of name was sufficient to convert it into a static, active division with infantry regiments (two battalions to each) and artillery regiments (two battalions to each). The reasons for the formation of an entire "stomach division", and its commitment - which from the outset was intended only to be a static one - on a still quiet front are to be found in the disproportion between the large number of those suffering from stomach diseases and the very strong demand for soldiers - demands which could not be met owing to the great number of men unsuited for military service. The fact that the LXIV Reserve Corps was disbanded at the same time was not decisive for the commitment of the 165th Reserve Division in this front line, but above all the favorable possibilities for obtaining special food, which Holland offered, decided the issue. Essential was probably also the fact that this front was expected to remain quiet. But in any case the climatic conditions - moist air, fog, a

high level of ground water - and the fact that the positions were placed in the immediate neighborhood of the beach were very unfavorable for people suffering from stomach diseases. When they constructed the obstacles on the fore-shore they often had to stand in water up to their bellies. At the beginning of May 1944 the 70th Infantry Division was ordered to relieve the 165th Reserve Division, except for the division staff and the commanders of the regiments. This division consisted exclusively of men suffering from stomach diseases, they came from three different recruiting areas of Germany, and they were already organized in battalions and companies. The division was concentrated and organized in the area north of Antwerp and in the eastern part of the island of South Beveland. The first elements arrived in the middle of May, the last ones in the middle of June. They were sheltered in the villages; as regards to duty they were subordinated to a small division staff for special employment, formed by the 165th Reserve Division and located at De Donck (5 kilometers north of Antwerp), as to tactics they were subordinated to the Commander of the 165th Reserve Division. The new units were organized with three infantry regiments of two battalions each, the artillery had one regiment of two battalions. They were inspected by a commission consisting of the Division Commander for Special Employment, the commanders of the regiments and independent battalions, the doctors of the 165th Reserve Division, and specialists. Those completely unsuitable were singled out and brought together in one battalion which was employed with the LXXXIX Army Corps in the fortress area of Antwerp. When a relief took place later on the healthy officers and men of the 165th Reserve Division were held back, the positions as company and battery commanders were filled with healthy officers, and the engineer battalion was formed with sound and well-educated people.

The relief was postponed in order to have one more division as tactical reserve of Fifteenth Army behind the 165th Reserve Division as long as possible. The relief began by companies at the end of May and was completed at the end of June. Meanwhile training had to be carried on. For this purpose the infantry borrowed Italian rifles from Army stores, the artillery had one horse-drawn battery. The training of the engineer and signal units was conducted by the Division Commander for Special Employment, who was helped by the commanders of the regiments, battalions, and independent battalions, and the officers of the 165th Reserve Division. Furthermore, the troops were used in the construction of positions and airlanding obstacles in the rear. The training of the infantry in the use of the heavy weapons could not begin until after the relief had taken place. The number of the numerous cases of stomach diseases increased, because the soldiers had to stand in water when they constructed the obstacles on the fore-shore.

On 1 July the percentage of those with stomach diseases were approximately:

Division Staff 0 %

Staffs of regiments and battalions 50 %

Infantry 90 %

Artillery 75 %

Engineers 10 %

Signal Battalion 30 %

The Division received the following special rations: white bread, no legumes (peas, beans), but instead of that vermicelli and greens as a supplement to the scanty meat rations, potatoes only in the form of mashed potatoes and fruit only as stew or jams. Fish was not distributed as fishing had been discontinued for reasons of security. The doctors suggested that smoking be

prohibited, but I did not follow their advice as it would be impossible to prevent the soldiers from smoking owing to their connection with the civilian population, other units of the Division, and other branches of the Wehrmacht.

In July and August the Division was busily occupied with the improvement of the coastal fortifications, the digging of obstacles on the fore-shore (the engineers with the laying of mines), combat, alarm, and march training, while the reserve units constructed pill-boxes and air landing obstacles. Output, discipline, and spirit were excellent.

At the beginning of September the Division was committed on both sides of Gent, except for the 1019th Infantry Regiment, which remained in the fortress area of Vlissingen. On our march to Vlissingen and from Breskens to our new positions - in total about 60 to 80 kilometers - we did not have many casualties owing to sickness. But the losses were very heavy during the engagements with numerically and materially very superior motorized and tank forces against which we only had a few antitank guns, some of them motor-drawn but most of them drawn by Dutch horse-drawn vehicles. The Fusilier Battalion alone lost about 300 men. The moral effect on the men was very great. It must be kept in mind that they had spent several years in hospitals, and that here they received their baptism of fire.

During the engagements here and our retreat from South Beveland and the almost inundated island of Walcheren in October and at the beginning of November 1944 it became evident that a "stomach division" is only to a certain degree able to meet the requirements of positional warfare, and that it will be bound to fail when facing an enemy, who is numerically and materially superior.

Despite this the enemy suffered very heavy losses during the fight for the possession of the Schelde Estuary - which he himself repeatedly admitted, he even announced the number of the casualties - and especially when he landed at Westkapelle, Vlissingen, and Ellewoutsdyk. These losses cannot be placed exclusively to the credit of the Navy, as the official Army communique did, owing to the fact that the coastal artillery of the Navy around Vlissingen was completely annihilated already before the landing of the enemy and that around Westkapelle almost put out of action by systematic bombardment.

Beside, the 64th Infantry Division in the Breskens Bridgehead, the 70th "Stomach or White Bread" Division was engaged at Ellewoutsdyk, where the Navy had no coastal artillery at all, and at other places on the Schelde Estuary. From 20 October to 8 November they repelled enemy attacks from the East and, after the fall of the Breskens Bridgehead, attacks from the East, South, and West. To be fair it must be admitted that for one additional week they blocked the entrance of the Schelde Estuary and with this the access to the harbor of Antwerp, so vital for further operations, aiming at an advance on the Rhine. I do not include the time which the enemy used in mine sweeping of the harbors.

If the 165th Reserve Division had been converted in time, at the latest by May 1944, it would have been able to offer a much more effective resistance; but the main body of the "Stomach Division" fought better than could be expected - according to the estimate of the enemy, under most unfavorable conditions. Despite this, the answer to the question if the formation and commitment of this division in Holland, and especially at Gent, was correct must be in the negative.

/DASER

Allendorf, October 1946

Wilhelm Daser
Generalleutnant

Second Supplement to the report on the commitment of the 165th Reserve Division and the 70th Infantry Division in Holland 1944.

Non-Evacuation of the Population

Before the war about 100 000 people lived in the province of Zeeland; in the area of the Division, Walcheren, North and South Beveland, there were about 75 000.

Shortly before the war and after the first engagements, about 2 000 of them voluntarily left the island and went to the interior zones of Holland. In January 1944, shortly after the commitment of the 165th Reserve Division, posters and newspapers called upon the population to leave the islands, particularly Walcheren, and find shelters in the homes of relatives and friends in the interior, at least as far away as South Beveland. Compulsory measures were neither carried out nor threatened. They had practically no success at all, only furniture and household utensils were moved. The Dutch, and especially the Dutch farmers, stick to their houses and do not leave them unless they are compelled to do so.

In March 1944 the inhabitants, especially those of Vlissingen and Middelburg, were for the second time called upon to leave their towns voluntarily. Only a few hundred persons complied with the appeal, and went to North and South Beveland. In May 1944 a partial evacuation of the "fortress area of Vlissingen" was carried out in cooperation with the Dutch mayors. About 2 000 persons had to leave their homes. They did not leave the group of

islands, however, but stayed in the northern part of Walcheren and in South Beveland.

At the end of August 1944 the Commander of the Division and the representative of the Reichskommissar had completed the plans for a compulsory evacuation of the area of the Division. According to these plans the following persons had to be evacuated to the interior zones of Holland: those inhabitants of the towns who were not urgently needed by the remaining population and the occupation forces (for example those who worked with the post offices, the shipyard at Vlissingen, the power stations, or were bakers, butchers, doctors, midwives etc.) and all those who were needed for work on the farms.

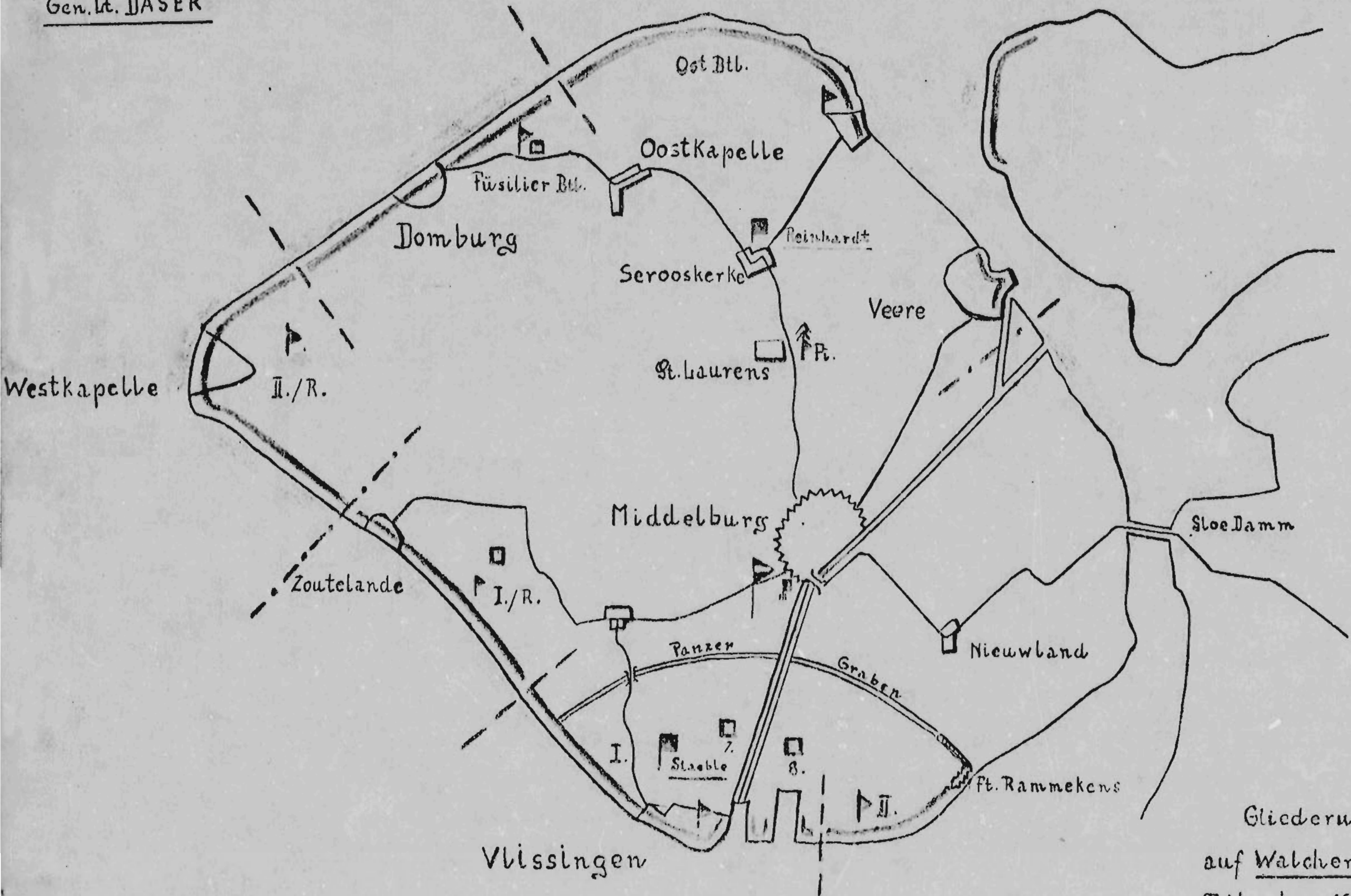
The evacuation was not carried out because, at the beginning of September, the 70th Infantry Division was transferred to the vicinity of Gent. Elements of the Fifteenth Army and remnants of the Seventh Army followed, after having been sluiced through Walcheren and South Beveland and having crossed the Schelde River at Breskens and Neuzen. For these movements all roads had to be kept open and all means of transportation were needed (railroads, ships, horse-drawn and motor-drawn vehicles etc.).

Requested by Fifteenth Army, the Reichskommissar of Holland visited the Division Commander at S'Heer Arendskerke and, later on, the chief magistrate (praefect) of the Province of Zeeland at Middelburg in order to discuss the last possibility of an evacuation of the civilian population and make preparations for same. Through the International Red Cross we submitted the suggestion to the enemy that the engagements of the of Isthmus of Bath and at

MS # B-274

Woensdrecht, south of Bergen op Zoom, be stopped until the civilian population of the almost inundated island of Walcheren and of South Beveland were evacuated to the east. The suggestion was refused. According to statements made by the Praefect during the conference at Middelburg and also in our own opinion, the food rations of the civilian population, which were drawn from their own supplies and those given to them by our own troops before the engagements were finished, were adequate. The supply with drinking water was also possible, despite the inundation of Walcheren and the shelling of Middelburg.

/DASEF.



1:100 000

Gliederung der am 6. 6. 44. auf Walcheren eingesetzten Teile der 165. Res. Division.

B - 274

Westkapelle

Domburg

Zoutelande

Vlissingen

Koudekerke

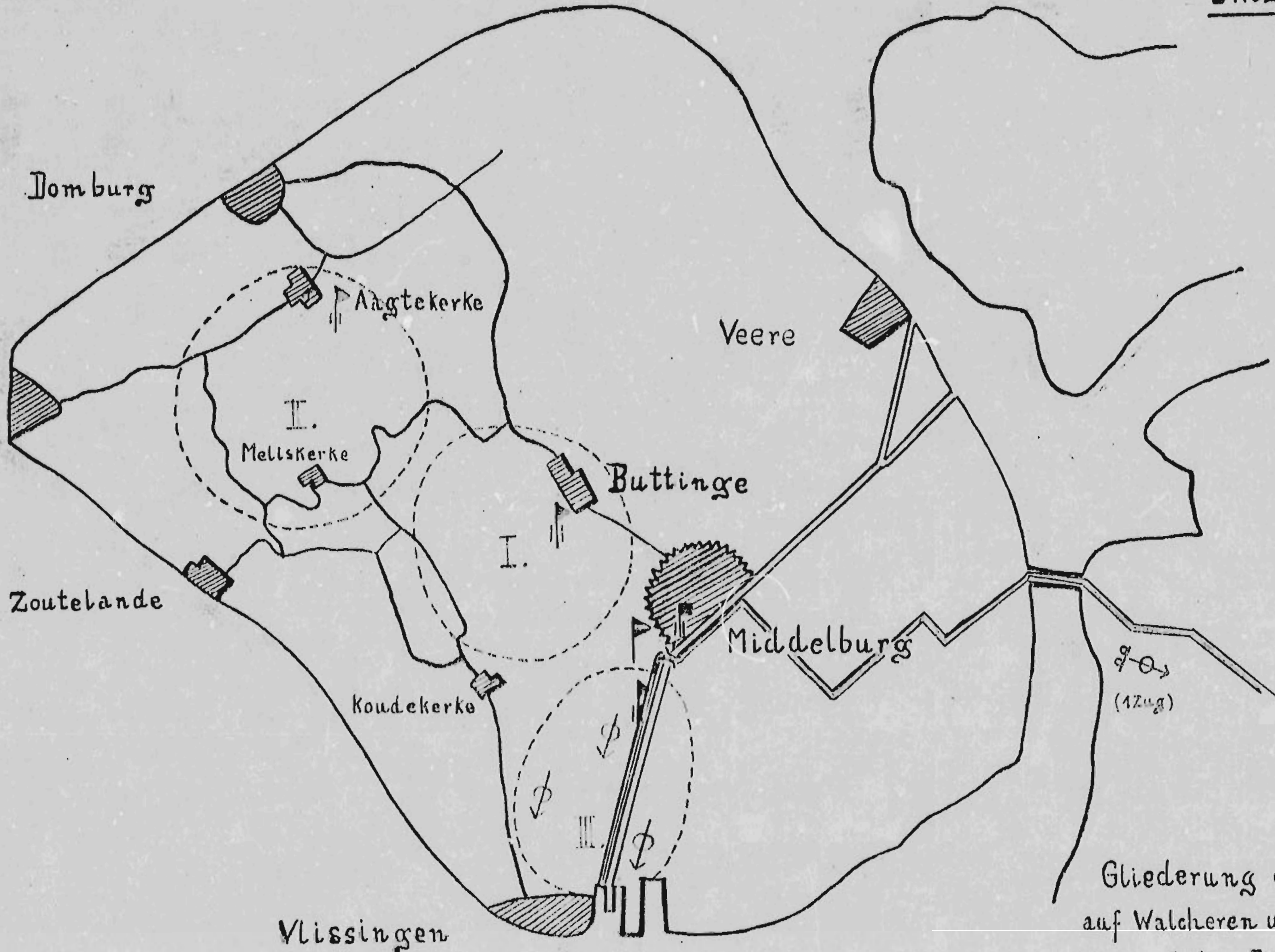
Mellskerke

Aagtekerke

Buttinge

Veere

Middelburg

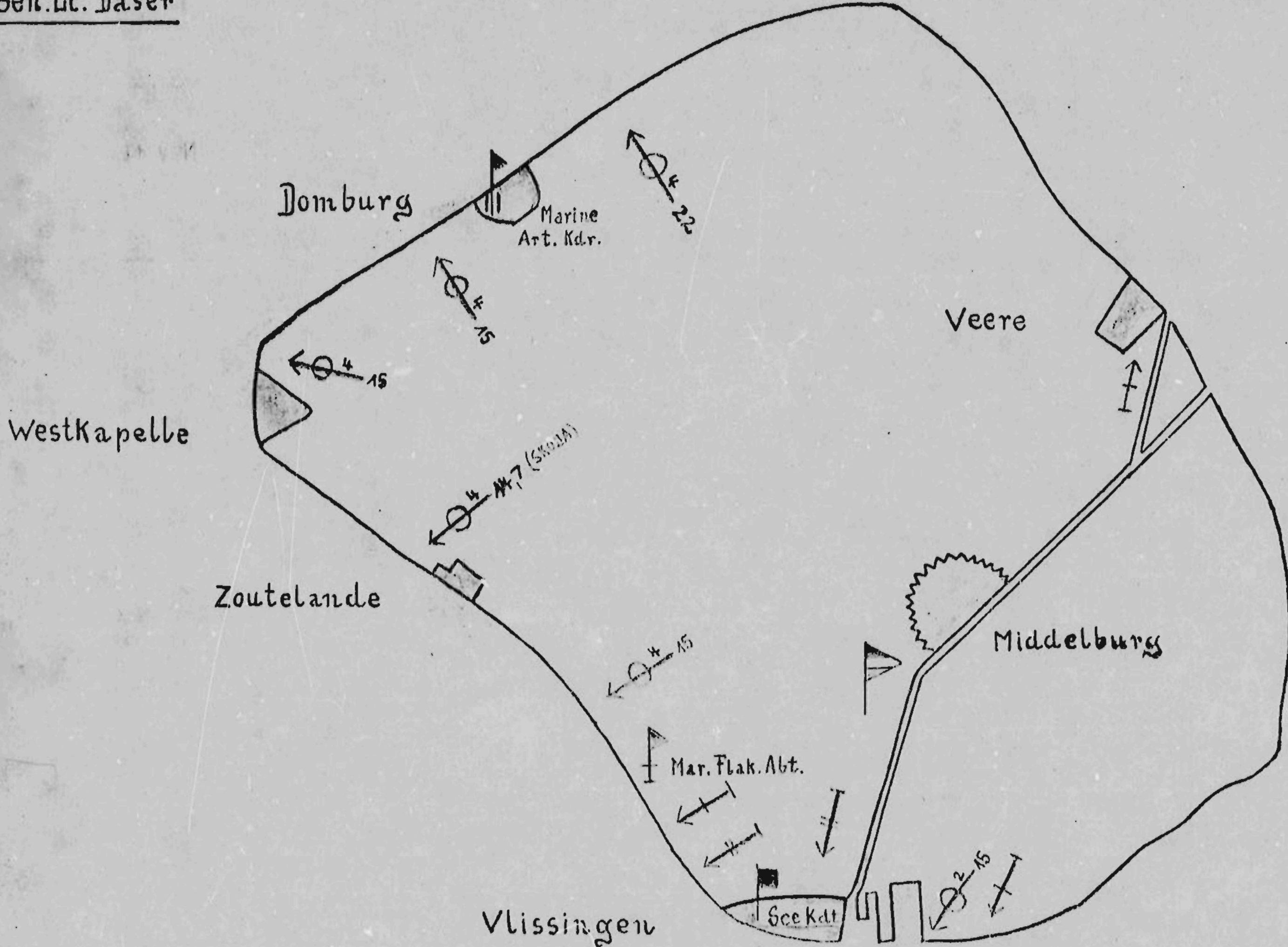


1: 400 000

Gliederung der am 6.6.1941
auf Walcheren u. Süd Beveland
eingesetzten Divisions u. Heeres

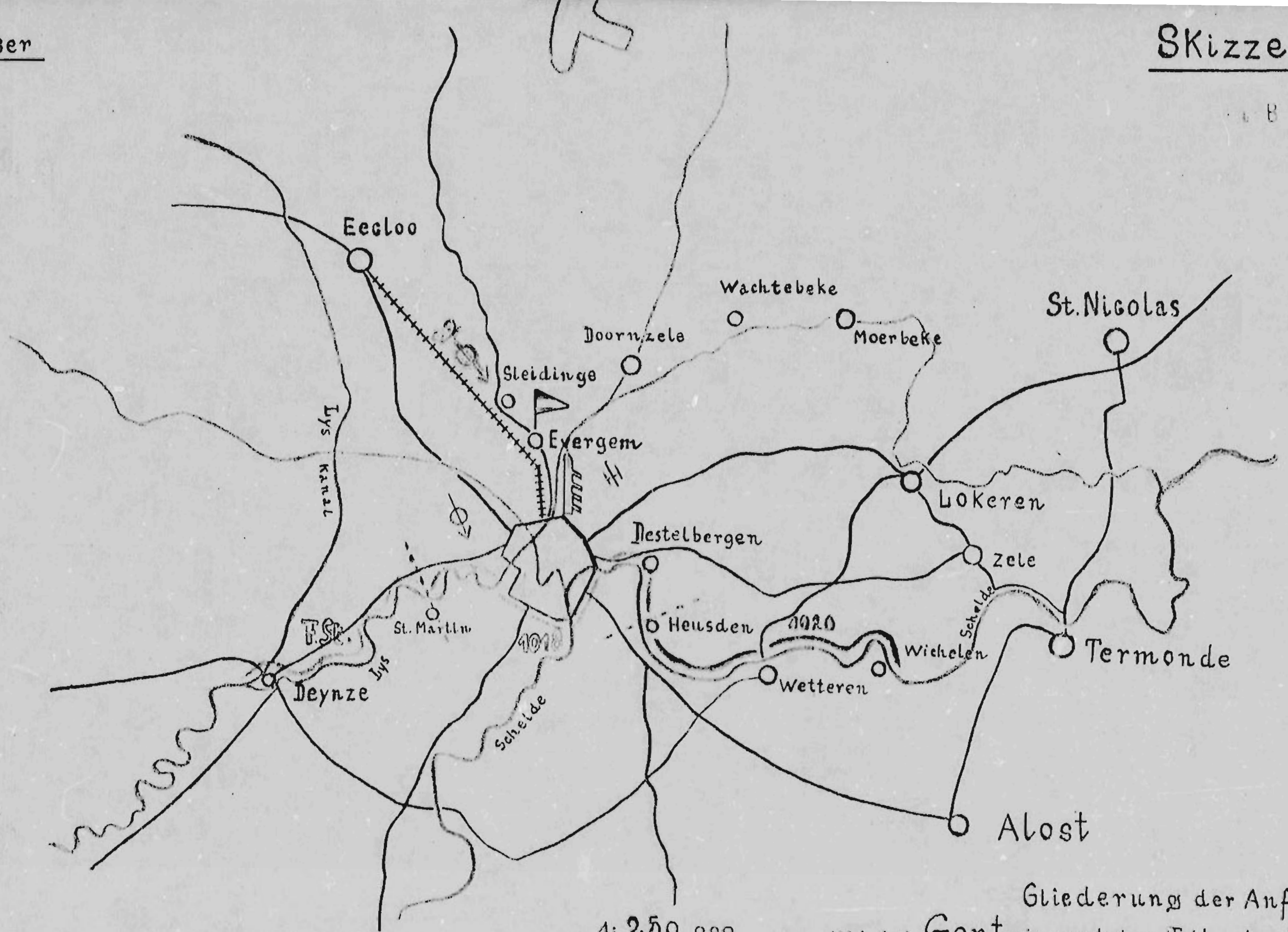
Artillerie

B-274



1:100 000

Gliederung der am 6.6.1944
auf Walcheren eingesetzten
Marine Küsten u. Flak Artillerie.



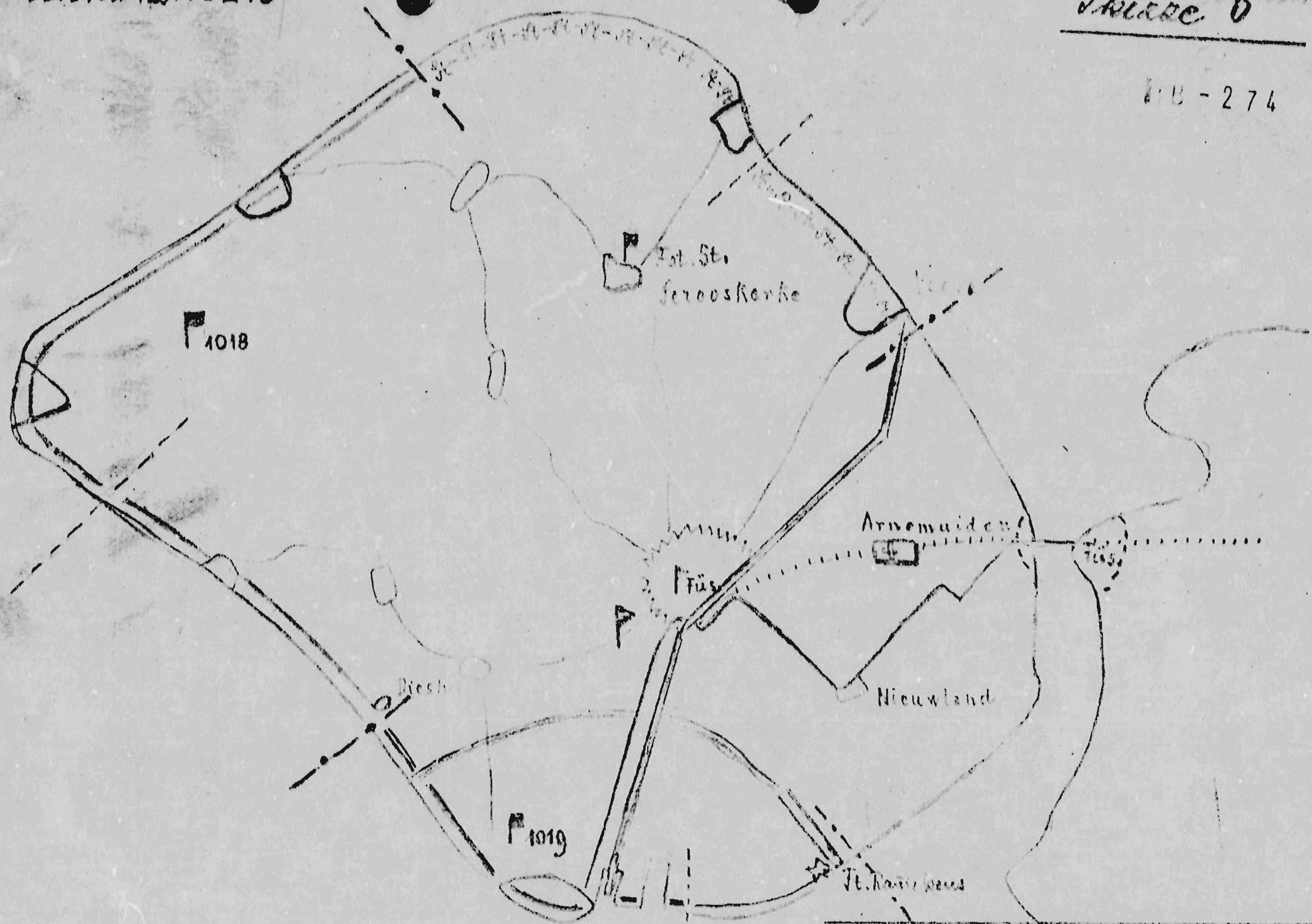
1: 250 000

Gliederung der Anfang Sept.
1944 bei Gent eingesetzten Teile der 70. J.D.

Ku Gen. Lt. DASER

Skizze 5

111 - 274



1:100000

gezeichnet von Gen. Lt. DASER
im J. 1711
St. Nieuwland

MS * B-274.

-a-

Sketch 1.

East Bn.,
Oostkapelle
Muesilier Bn.
Domburg
Serooskerke Reinhardt
Veere
Westkapelle II./R. Engineers
Laurens
Middelburg Sloe dam
Tank ditch Nieuwland
Staeble Port Rammekens
Vlissingen

Order of battle of the elements of
the 165. Reserve Division, sent in
in Walcheren on the 6 June 1944.

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-b-

Sketch 2.

Domburg

+
Aagtekerke

Veere

Wentkapelle

Meliskerke

Buttinge

Zoutelande

Middelburg

Youdekerke

(one platoon)

Vlissingen

Emplacement of the Division and Army Artillery
sent in in Walcheren and South Beveland on the
6 June 1944.

MS * B-274.

-c-

Sketch 3.

Domburg

Navy Artillery Commander

Veere

Westkapelle

(Skoda)

Zoutelande

Middelburg

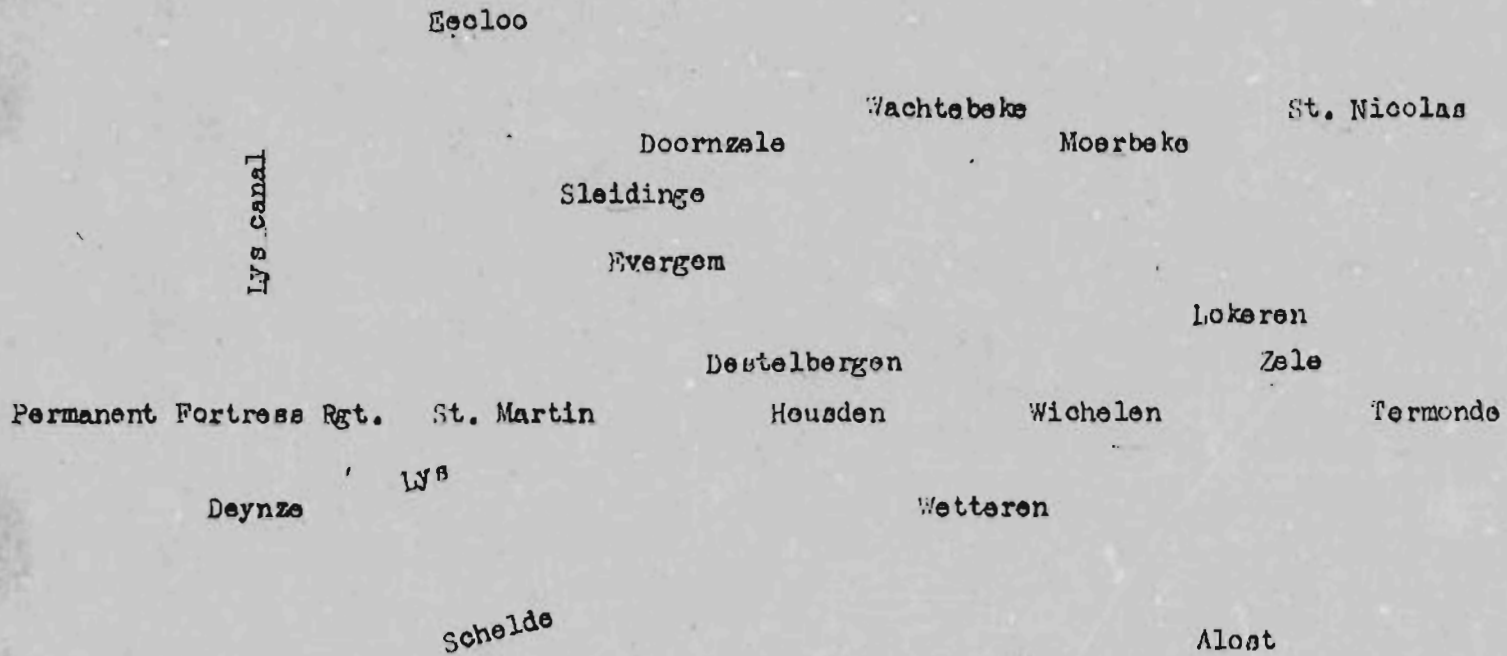
Antiaircraft artillery of the Navy

Vlissingen

Sea Commander

Order of battle of the coastal and antiaircraft artillery of the Navy

sent in in Walcheren on the 6 June 1944



Order of battle of the elements of the
70. Inf. Div. sent in at Gent at the
beginning of September 1944.

Staff

Sketch 5.

Permanent Fortress Bgt.

Veere

Serooskerke

Arnhemuiden

Musilier Bn.

Musilier Bn.

Diephoek

Nieuwland

Port Rammekens

Order of battle of the elements of
the 70. Inf. Div. sent in in Wal-
cheren at the end of September 1944.

Domburg Staff

Westkapelle

Goes

s Heer Arendskerke

Fusilier

Bergen op Zoom

Kapelle

Vlissingen

Staff
Ovezande

Hoedekenskerke

Woensrecht

Staff

Bath

Ellewoutsdyk

Explanation:

Inundation

Order of battle of the units of the
70. Inf. Div. sent in in Holland
on the 20 October 1944.

LEO FRER. GEYR VON SCHWEPFENBURG

Allendorf, 17 April 1947.

Additional remarks to the work of Generalleutnant DASER.

The idea of activating a division consisting exclusively of people with stomach ailments was absurd; the commitment of this Division in the Atlantic Wall proves Hitler's reckless exorbitant charge on men.

It may be practical and suitable to unite soldiers with stomach ailments into companies and battalions, according to the nature of their diet, and to commit them for easy service in the rear area. But a whole division of soldiers with stomach ailments is inappropriate even for position warfare, when great demands are put on fortification, training, and combat.

The Division had to give up completely in mobile warfare, because the most important arm - the infantry - had the highest percentage of stomach patients, that is 90%. During the short commitment in mobile warfare in Belgium, the Division had, as it was expected, more casualties by sick people than for bloody reasons. The Division had to be taken away from the front.

The stubborn fight of the Division in the defense of the coasts is amazing. Psychologically it can be explained only by the self-sacrifice of the single soldiers.

A second landing of the Allied on both sides of the Schelde river a few days after the landing in the Normandy was very unlikely, as it

was not able to be connected strategically with the first landing.

Anyway, a second landing was not in question until later, when the German reserves were tied down at the Normandy front, and the Allied did not obtain any progress at this front.

The author belonged to the 100 000 strong Army; he has a strong personality, and is a good organizer and an excellent instructor.

/s/LEO FRHR. GEYR VON SCHNEPPENBURG.