

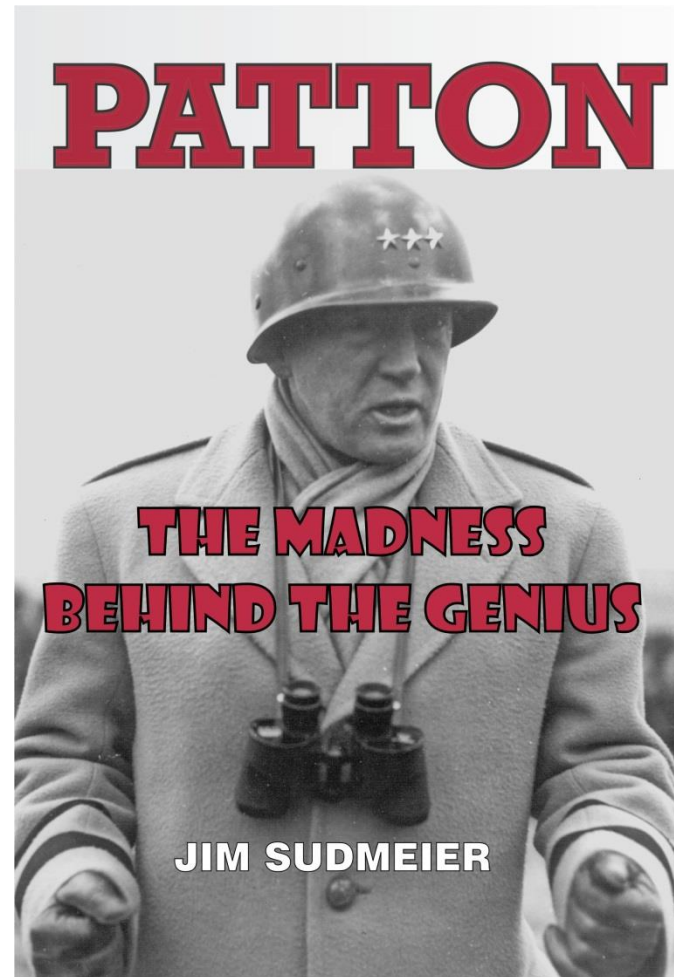


The General and the Giant
German Railway Gun:
Patton's Brush with Death in France

by Jim Sudmeier

Luck Area Historical Society
Luck Museum, Nov. 13, 2018

My book, 254 pages, 800 endnotes, 38 photos & maps,



Patton's Appeal

- Handsome, charismatic
- Humor, wit
- Athletic (Olympics)
- Flamboyant
- Powerful
- Inspiring, morale builder



Patton's Downside

- Quick-tempered, moody
- Hog for glory, headlines
- Aristocrat, snob, racist
- Mistreatment of his soldiers
- Lack of empathy (no PTSD)
- People user, exploiter
- Not a team player



Opinions on Patton's mental health

- Eisenhower – “mentally unbalanced”
- biographers Blumenson & D'Este – “dyslexic”
- biographer Blumenson – “attention-deficit”
- biographer Farago – “if not mad, highly neurotic”
- historian Crosswell – “bipolar disorder”
- grandson Totten – “traumatic brain injury, PTSD”
(all the above are guesswork, non-scientific)
- I had advantage to use psychiatrist's manual (DSM-5)
& diagnosed narcissistic personality disorder (NPD)

Characteristics of Narcissistic Personality Disorder (NPD)

- NPD is different from normal self-esteem, confidence
- adult toddlers, 2-3 years old emotionally
- overclaim victories, overestimate abilities
- blame others for mistakes, thus don't learn
- after impressive beginning, trail of destruction
- military leaders must be kept on a short leash

SOME OTHER THINGS ABOUT
GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON
YOU MAY NOT HAVE KNOWN

Patton's voice



Married the Money, 1910

- Boston-bred heiress, writer, musician, Beatrice Ayer
- Five times richer than Patton
- In 1910 Pattons worth \$45 million
- Flaunted wealth, supreme confidence, able to take risks



Patton's eleven year affair with Jean Gordon

- Half niece of Patton's wife Bea
- 30 yrs younger than Patton
- Affair in Hawaii, 1935, right under Beatrice's nose
- Jean was with Patton during WWII as a Red Cross girl
- Weeks after Patton's death and visit from a furious Beatrice, Jean committed suicide in NYC



US soldier killed in WWI by Patton

Letter to wife Beatrice:

“I think I killed one man here, he would not work so I hit him over the head with a shovel.”

Later same day Patton wounded by machine gun bullet to the left hip, hospitalized for months.

Patton lobbied for and received DSC medal.

Striking US soldier is court-martial offense.

My Patton Biography

- Definitive, most complete of all Patton biographies
- Reviewer "Buy this Patton biography first"
- Patton's NPD diagnosis key to understanding his enigmatic behavior

Patton's Third Army Sweep across Europe, Aug, 1944 - May, 1945

WEST EUROPE

AUGUST 1944 - MAY 1945

➔ Patton's Third Army



Did Patton “lead from the front”?

- Google search leads to 16,000 hits
- In Sicily he lived in the Royal Palace for over 6 months in 1943.

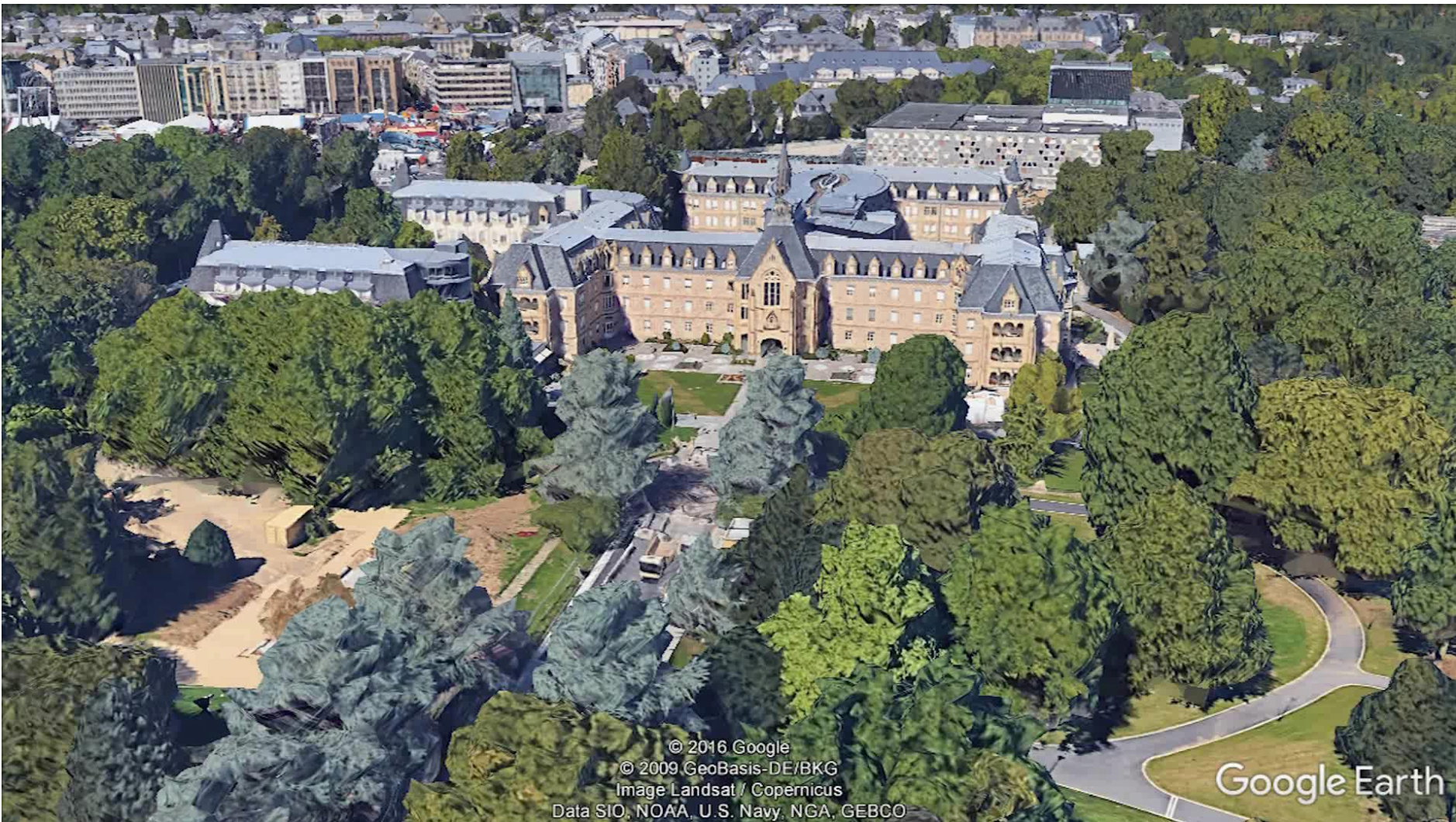
Royal Palace, Palermo, Sicily, 6 months, 1943



Did Patton “lead from the front”?

In Luxembourg City, he lived in a palace for
first 3 months of 1945

Fondation Pescatore in Luxembourg City



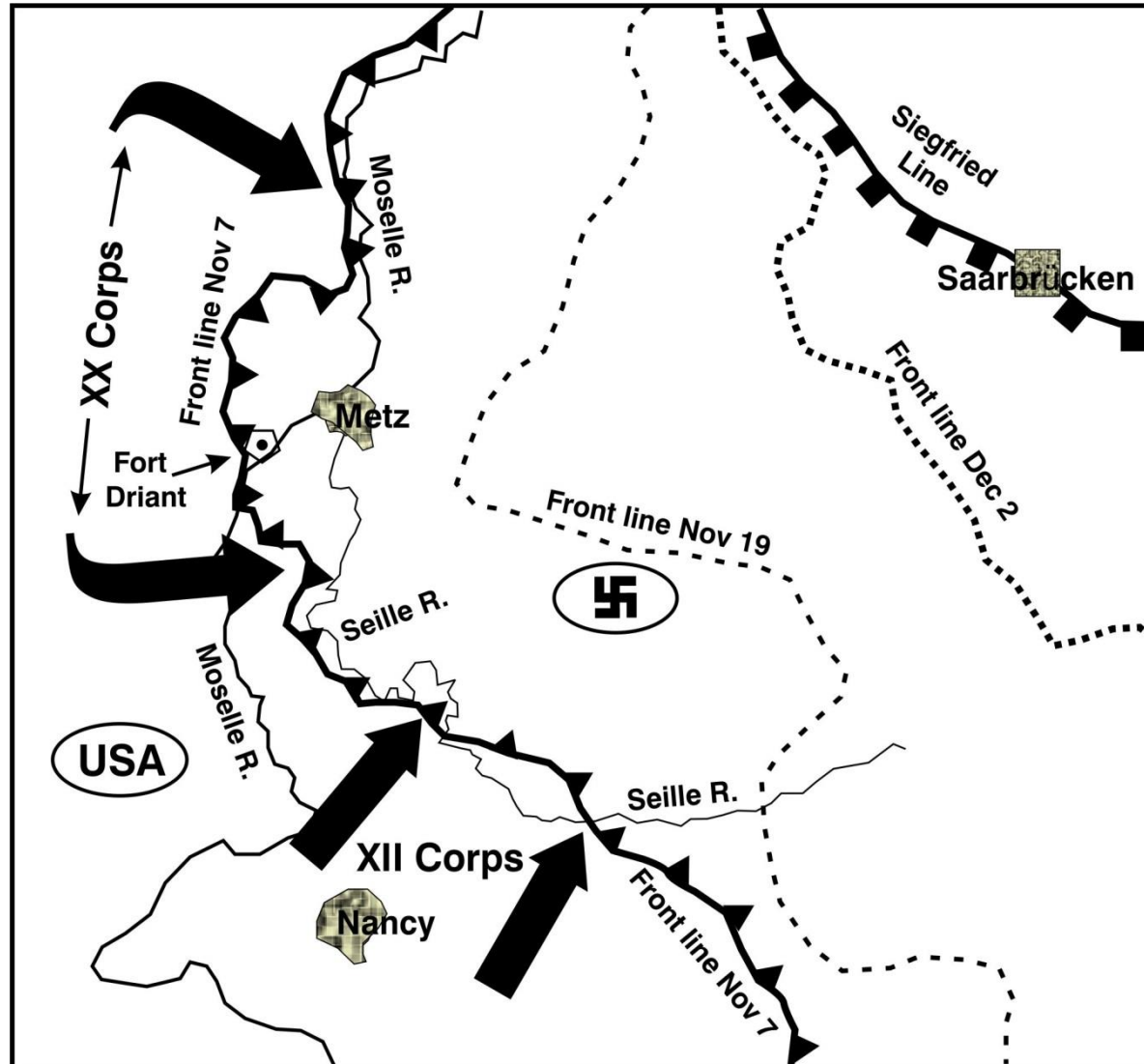
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Image Landsat / Copernicus
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO

Google Earth

Trip to Nancy, France, Feb. 2016

- Wife Gillian Henry and I went to Nancy to help solve a mystery that nobody could answer.
- Gen. George S. Patton and his U.S. Third Army lived there for 9 weeks towards the end of 1944. In which house was his residence or CP?
- How comfortable and safe was his Nancy CP?

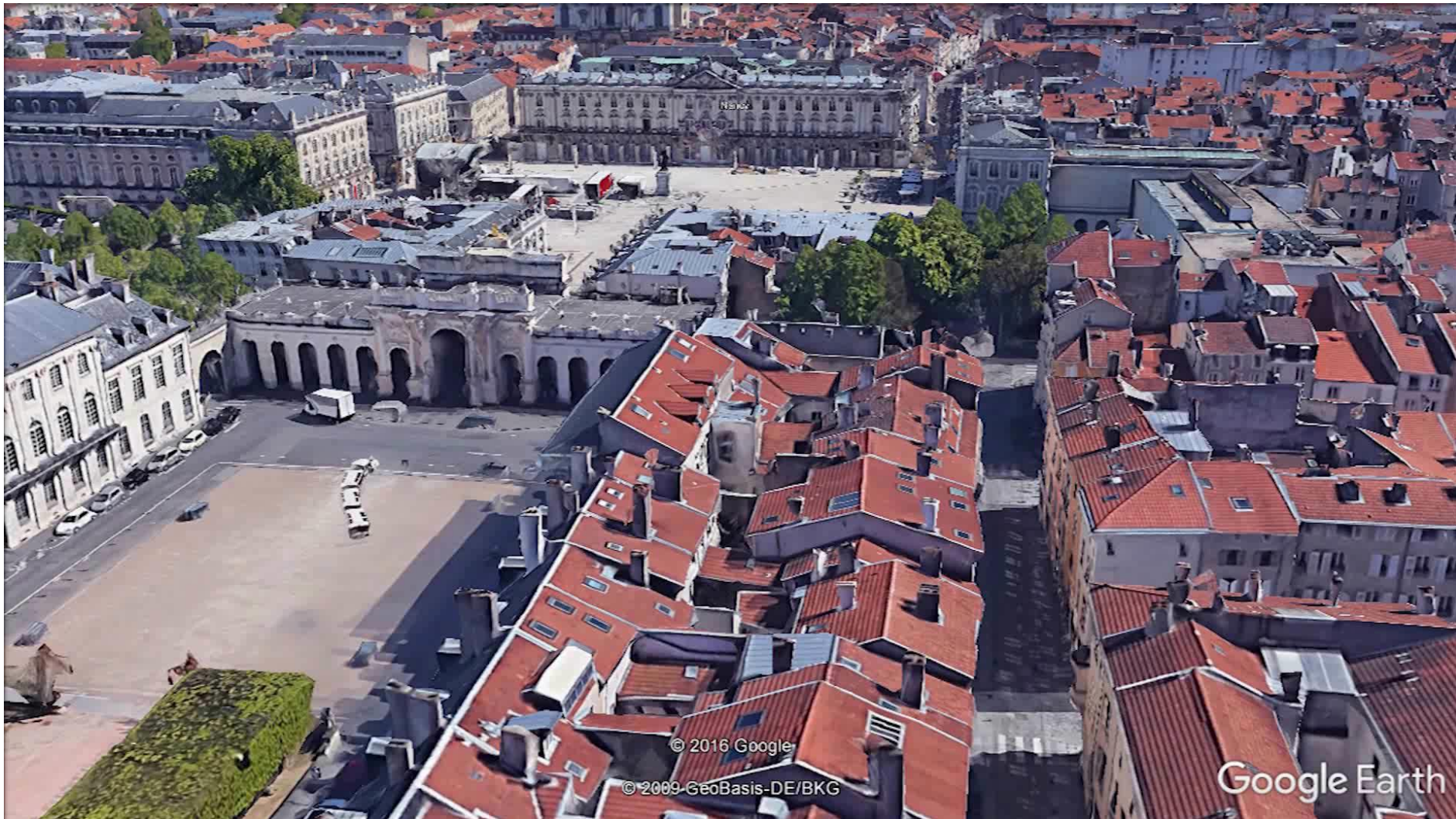
Classic Double Envelopment of Nancy by Gen. Eddy's XII Corps, Sept 15, 1944



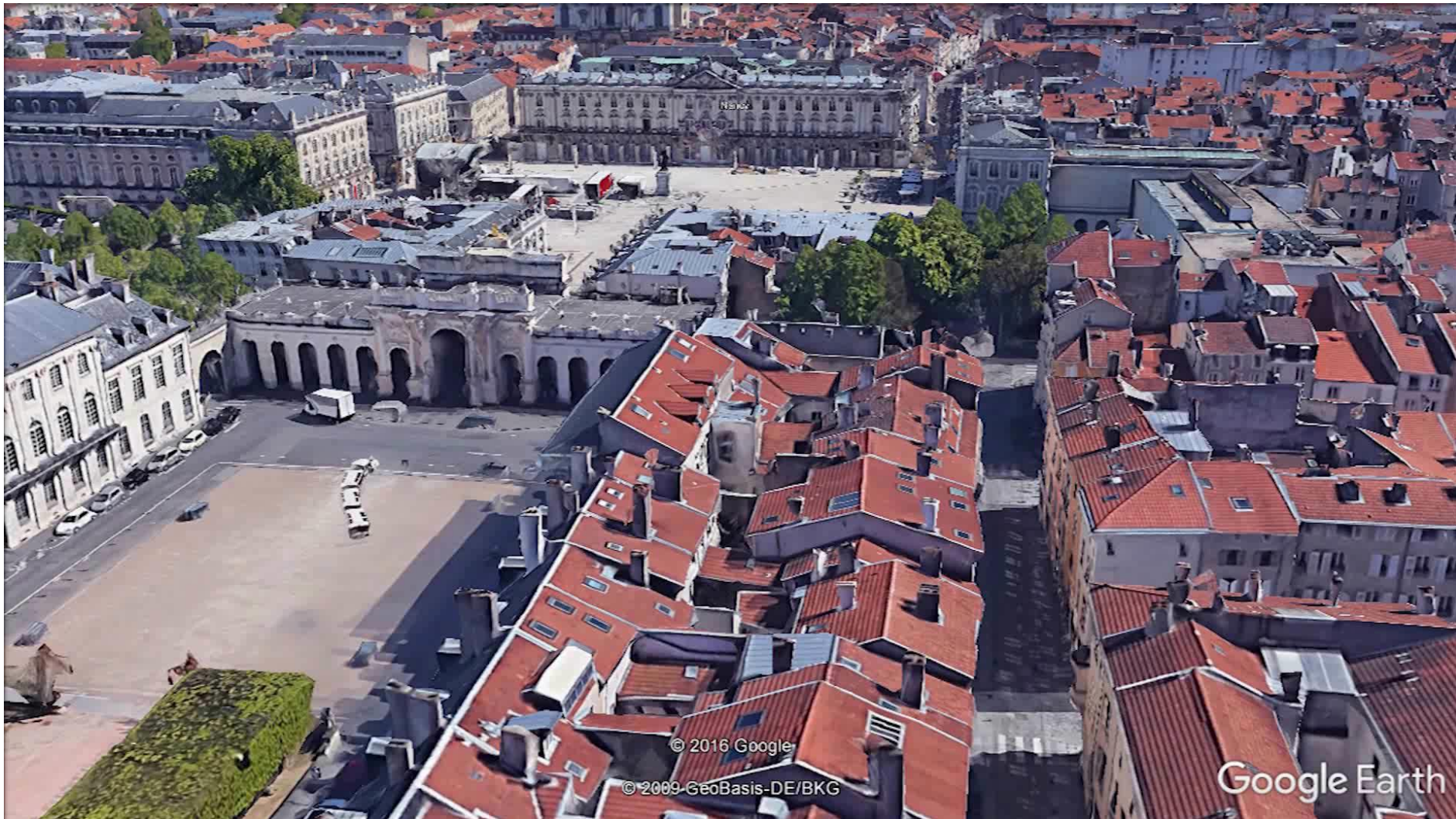
Nancy, France

- 100,000 people (400,000 more in suburbs)
- Capital of territory Lorraine
- Battleground for centuries changing hands with Germany
- Ruled by King Stanislas of Poland 1736-1766
- Built Place Stanislas at city center

Place Stanislas



Place Stanislas (cont'd)



Nancy ideal for Third Army

- Little damage during attack
- Germans vacated the city in haste
- Large casernes (barracks) for housing HQ staff

Third Army occupying Casernes in Nancy



German Railway Guns

- Developed during US Civil war
- Used extensively during WWI
- Only Germany continued developing
- Largest was 800mm (“Fat Gustav”)
- Most common was Krupp K5 280mm
- 560 lb shell from K5 fired Mach 3 up to 50 miles
- Crew of 100, several locomotives, boxcars
- Easily capable to fire across the English channel

Demo of Krupp K5 Railway Gun



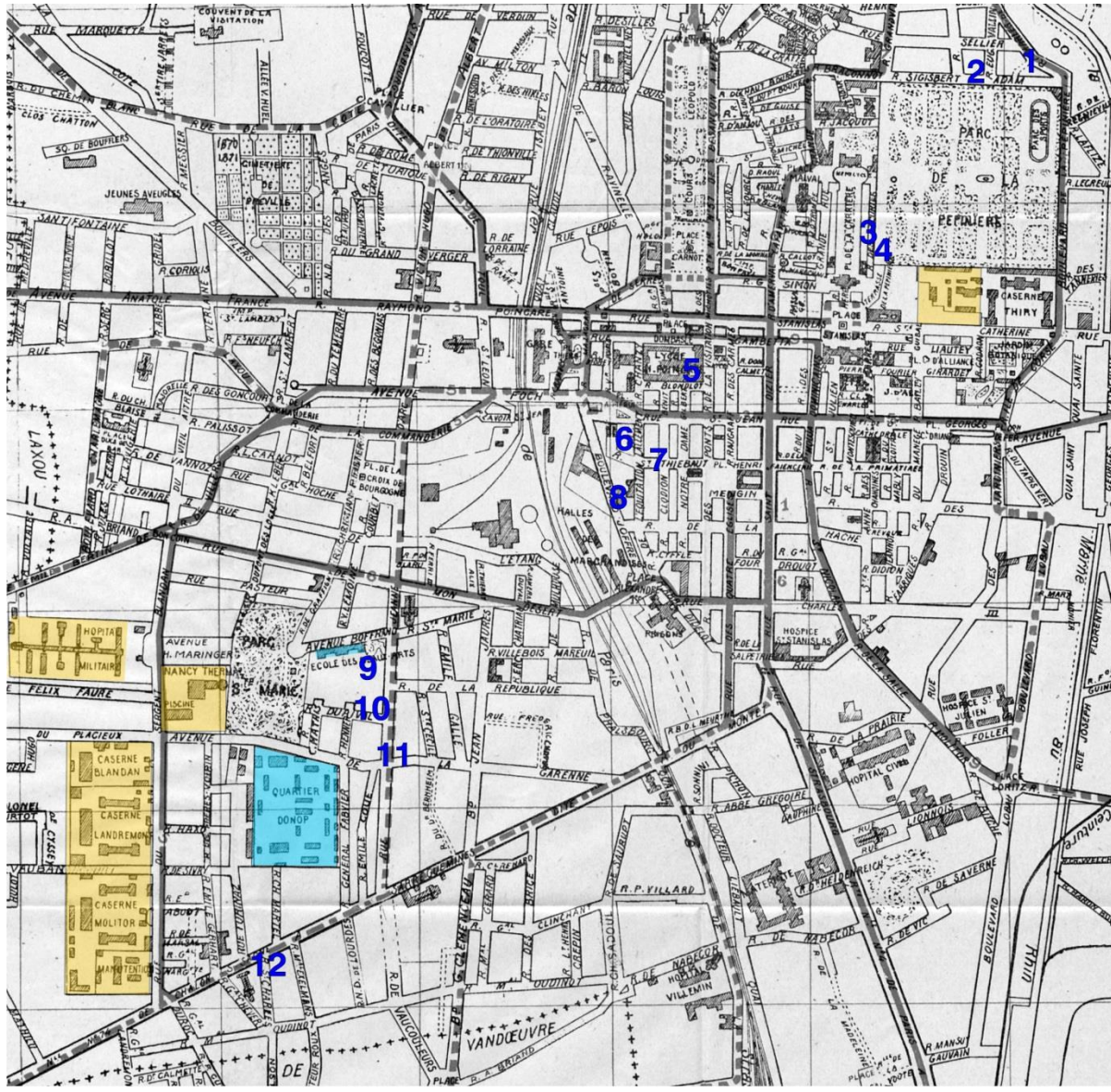
Aiming of German Railway Guns

- Range determined by charge, angle elevation
- Limited lateral adjustment of 1 degree, thus required use of curved tracks for accuracy
- Forward observers (spotters) required
- Not all tracks strong enough to absorb recoil

Oct. 11, 1944, Shelling of Nancy

- Early morning (2 AM) Germans stitched across Nancy with 12 shells
- Shell #9 missed Eddy's XII Corps HQ (Forward Echelon) by 50 yards, destroying a theater

Map of Nancy 1940 - Oct. 11 shelling in blue



Simulation of Oct. 11 Shelling



Shell #9 destroyed Theatre de la Passion



Oct. 24, '44, Germans Fired 16 Shells at Nancy Patton's Description

On the early morning of October 24, the Germans opened fire on Nancy with a 280 mm. gun or howitzer, continuing to fire until 0445. Three of the shells hit in the immediate vicinity of our quarters; none, I should say, more than thirty-five yards from my house. One struck the house exactly across the street from us, and the angle of fall was such that it could not have missed the roof of General Gaffey's room by more than a few inches. Nearly all the glass in our house was broken.

Oct. 24 Shelling Description (cont'd)

I heard quite a lot of screaming in the ruins and, taking my flashlight, went across the street, where I encountered a Frenchman pulling vigorously at the leg of a man who seemed to be stuck in the ruin. Taking the other leg, I joined in the good deed, with the result that the man began to scream and eventually to choke and finally ceased all noise. On investigation, we found that his head was stuck under a table and we had almost pulled it off. Aside from a sore neck, he was uninjured.

Oct. 24 Shelling Description (cont'd)

While this was going on, an old lady, caught in the ruins farther back, kept screaming, and my French friend kept reassuring her in this fashion: “I implore you, Madame, do not derange yourself; be calm, be tranquil. Try to realize that the great General Patton is himself occupying himself with the removal of the bricks so that you, too, may be saved. He has further had the humanity to send for a doctor and an ambulance. I again urge you to be tranquil.” While we were getting the untranquil lady, the third near-miss arrived and threw quite a lot of rocks on us. I really believe that I was more frightened that night than at any time in my career.

Patton's photo next morning



Enter Jerome Leclerc, an old friend and WWII buff who works at the Departmental Archives (5/30/2015)



Enter Jerome's friend and former Patton translator, 97 year old Isabelle Mangin



Address of Patton residence narrowed

- Rick Atkinson's Pulitzer prize-winning trilogy states that Patton lived at "Rue Auxerre"
- "Rue Auxerre" does not exist in Nancy
- Isabelle says Patton lived at Rue d'Auxonne, although she never visited him and didn't know the address
- Rue d'Auxonne is only three blocks long

I preferred grand house at #8 Rue d'Auxonne (6/4/2015)



Google Earth flyover of Rue d'Auxonne



Jerome produces police report with address of #5 Rue d'Auxonne during Oct. 24 shelling

COMMISSARIAT CENTRAL
DE POLICE DE
N A N C Y

9°) - 14. Rue Kléber. - angle de cet immeuble détruit. Dégâts matériels aux immeubles avoisinants (1 femme blessée : M. ALAIN, 60 ans, plaies à la tête et hémorragie aux yeux.)
NANCY, le 24 OCTOBRE 1944.

10°) - 51. Rue de la Commanderie. - étages supérieurs de cet immeuble complètement détruits. (2 blessés : Monsieur DESHIES Léon, 78 ans, blessé à la tête - Mme ALAIN Delphine, 60 ans, (golat d'obus à la hanche de la circonscription de NANCY

à
II°) Monsieur le PREFET DE MEURTHE-ET-MOSELLE
Terrasse de cet immeuble effondrée -
N A N C Y

13°) - Entre la rue St. Pierre et la rue ~~Henri~~ du Faubourg des Trois-Maisons (1 obus dans les jardins). On ne signale aucun dégât.

J'ai l'honneur de vous rendre compte que ce matin entre 2 H 30 et 4 H 30, une quinzaine d'obus de gros calibre sont tombés sur la ville de NANCY.

Les recherches continuent en vue de découvrir les autres points de chute qui seront signalés par la suite.

Dès maintenant, 13 points de chute ont été découverts aux endroits ci-après :

1°) - 21. Rue Jeanne d'Arc - I atelier du 2^e corps de logis situé dans la cour complètement détruit. (M. SUTER, Chef d'équipe de la Défense Passive a été tué).

2°) - Rue Albin Haller, en face la rue du Dr. Bleicher. - chaussée détériorée ainsi que la façade de l'immeuble sis 5. Rue du Dr. Bleicher.

M. le COMMISSAIRE DE LA REPUBLIQUE
M. le DIRECTEUR
M. le PRÉFET DE LA REPUBLIQUE
M. le MAIRE
M. le COMMISSAIRE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

3°) - 10. Rue Israël Sylvestre. - I hangar détruit.

4°) - 5. Rue d'Auxonne. - façade de l'immeuble complètement détruite. 2 blessés légers : M. GEORGES Raymond, 56 ans, et son fils Louis, 20 ans.

5°) - Sur la chaussée entre les immeubles II et 13 Rue Hermite. Une canalisation d'eau crevée, ainsi qu'une conduite de gaz. Les services publics compétents ont été avisés. La façade de l'immeuble N° II est détériorée.

The destroyed house at #5 matches Patton's photo

5 rue d'Auxonne today



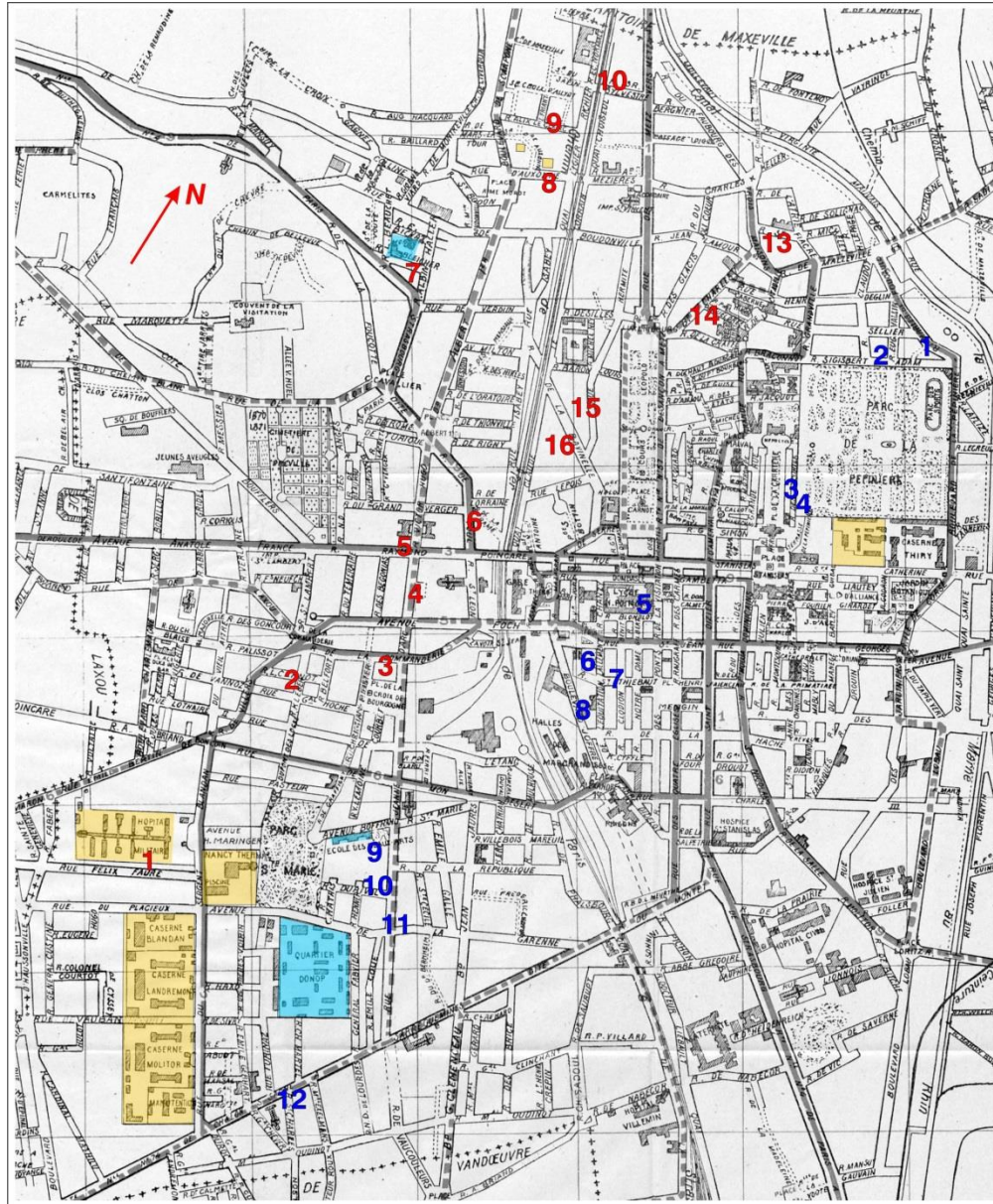
Overlaid by Patton Photo, Oct. 24, 1944



Now obvious choice is walled compound at
#4 Rue d'Auxonne across the street from shelled #5.
Now occupied by Dept. of Education (DSDEN)



Map of Nancy 1940 - Oct. 24 shelling in red



Dud near military hospital pulled up from 20 ft under ground

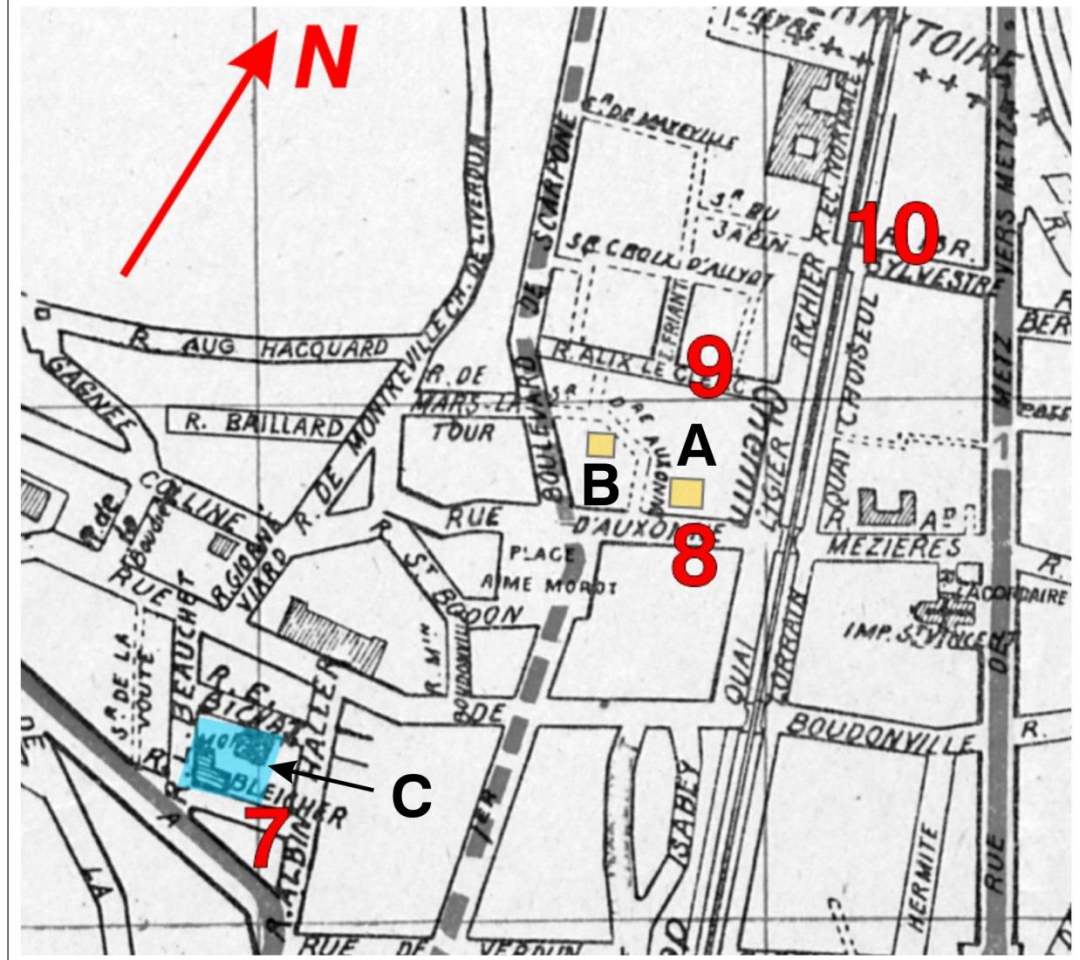


Expanded 1940 map near Patton CP

A = Patton CP, 4 rue d'Auxonne

B = Staff HQ, 10 rue d'Auxonne

C = XII Corps HQ, rear echelon



4 shells closest to Patton on Oct. 24



Inquiries as to history of #4 Rue d'Auxonne from current occupants in Education Dept. (DSDEN)

1. Aug. 28, 2015 – I emailed director (in French)
2. Sept. 7, 2015 – Jerome meets director by chance
3. Oct. 6, 2015 – I emailed director (in English)
4. Jan 18, 2016 – Jerome emails him about our coming visit
5. Jan. 21, 2016 – I email (in French) re coming visit
6. Jan. 27, 2016 – I email (in French) showing our results
7. Feb. 2, 2016 - I email (in French) we are in Dijon;
8. Jerome also emails photo of Marlene Dietrich & Patton
9. Feb. 3, 2016 – Jerome has received phone call from DSDEN, emails me that we can visit there today at noon

Photo of Patton and Marlene Dietrich, said to be in Paris. Jerome's friend visiting, suggests Nancy.



© Deutsche Kinemathek – « Marlene Dietrich Collection Berlin »
Photo Teddy PIAZ, PARIS

Tour of #4 Rue d'Auxonne a la Frederique



#4 Rue d'Auxonne in 2000 with two modern wings added in 1991



#4 Rue d'Auxonne in 1950 with turret



#3 and #5 Rue d'Auxonne. "Annie" in #5 vehemently denied her house of 25 years had ever been damaged. Jerome showed her the proof; eventually she was convinced.



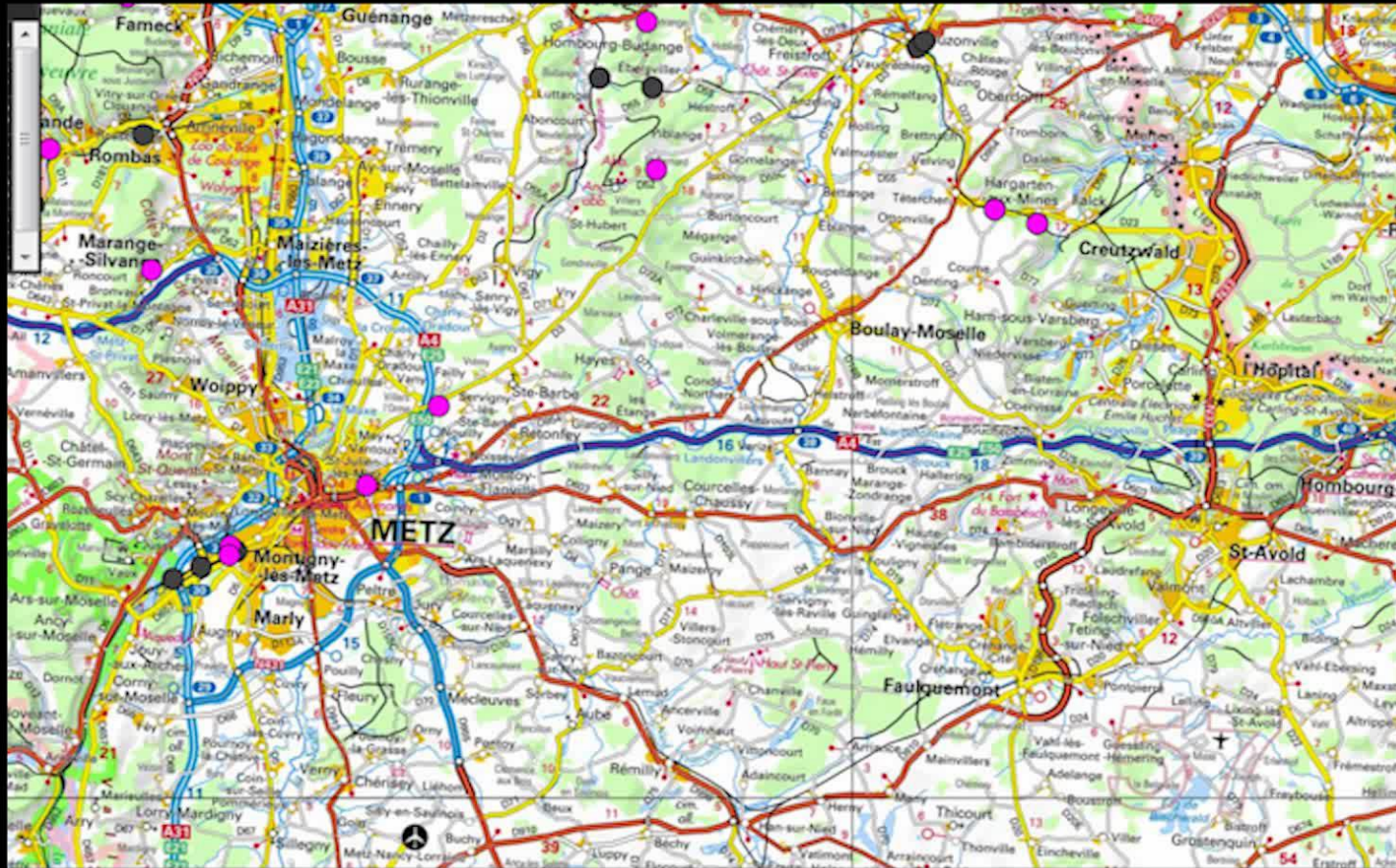
We walk all over Nancy photographing
buildings hit during Oct. 24 shelling



Walk all over Nancy (cont'd)



Extrapolated search for “Nancy Gun” RR tunnel



Teterchen tunnel is 1000m long. We suspect the “Nancy Gun” was destroyed here on Oct. 28, 1944



We asked for any WWII information at the
city hall of Falck, France, near Teterchen



Mayor Pascal Rapp invited us into his office. Few people knew about German activities in the tunnel.



Third Army search for Nancy Gun hideout

- Sound and Flash teams of XII Corps FAOB
- Signal Radio Intelligence (SIGINT) units
- Lt. Col. Daniel Kennedy alone understood German coordinate system from intercepted Nancy Gun firing transmissions. Wins Bronze Star from Patton
- P-47 fighter-bombers dispatched from Patton's private air force, XIX Tactical Air Command (TAC)

Rare color footage of 377th Fighter Squadron



After-Action Report of 377th Fighter Squadron

28th: Another one of the bad weather missions. Took off at 0940 and set course at 5000 feet after forming as we climbed through a cloud layer at 1000 feet. Climbed to about 13,000 on the way out going on oxygen. No flak as we crossed the lines over a 10,000 foot overcast. Ripsaw One vectored us to our target above the stuff; the high layer stopped just short of the target and we could see the tunnel through about 8/10 th clouds at 300 feet. Red one and two went down first while the rest of the squadron orbitted above the cloud. We had five hundred pounders with four second delay fuses so Red one and Two buzz-bombed the West end of the first section of the tunnel, all four bombs entering the tunnel and exploding. The smoke poured out of a ventilator on top of the hill and out of the East end of the tunnel. As Red three and four came in to bomb

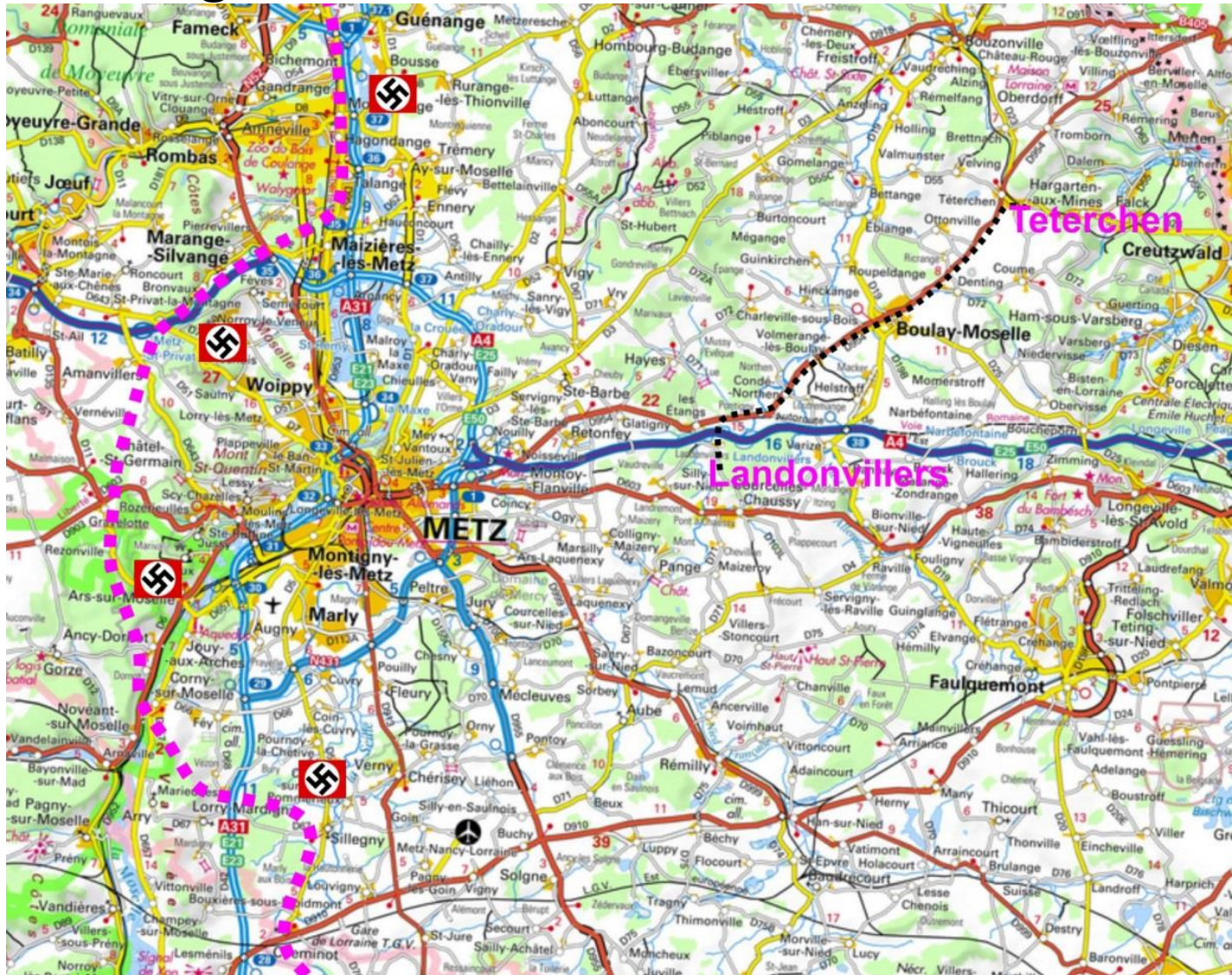
After-Action Report of 377th Fighter Squadron (cont'd)

out of the East end of the tunnel. As Red three and four came in to bomb the East end, One and Two strafed three flak cars and an ammunition car that was firing on the second element, silencing the guns and setting two on fire. All other flak positions in the vicinity, about four of which were firing at the time, ceased fire when the flak cars were strafed. Meanwhile Yellow flight came under the overcast by elements and bombed the tunnel, getting good hits on the entrance and inside. Red first element and Yellow first element then went to work on the locomotives in a marshalling yard just East of the tunnel, strafing thirteen locomotives, about fifteen cars, and a roundhouse. At this time Red leader was hit by flak and headed home. Yellow leader took over but had to head out immediately due to lack of gas. Red and Yellow flights had done the work on the tunnel, so Blue flight brought their bombs home. Red Leader and Red two came out on the deck with only one gun position firing at them, and that firing into one of their own towns. Uneventful return to base.

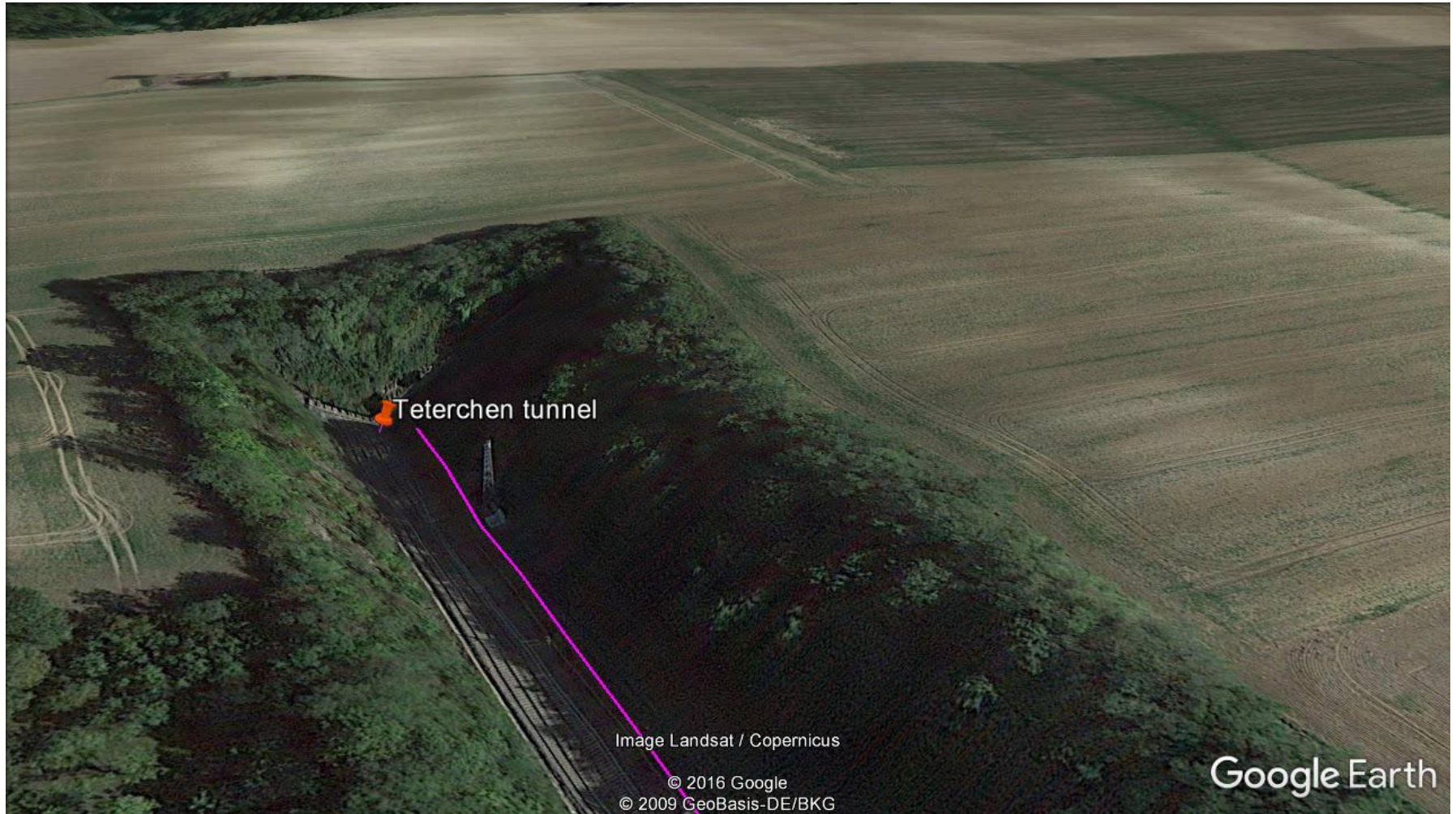
Nancy Gun kill confirmed

- Nancy was never shelled again.
- Interview one month later by 95th Infantry Div. with station master from nearby Hargarten
- “Bulls-eye bomb skipped into tunnel, burst behind the gun, buckled the carriage, killing 12 men. Wreckage moved out next night never to return.”

Nat'l Archives (College Park, MD) reported
eyewitnesses of RR guns traveling
at night from Teterchen to Landonvillers



Nocturnal ride from Teterchen to Landonvillers reduces Nancy shelling from 41 to 32 miles



In 2017, 98 year-old Isabelle Mangin was awarded the Legion d'Honneur

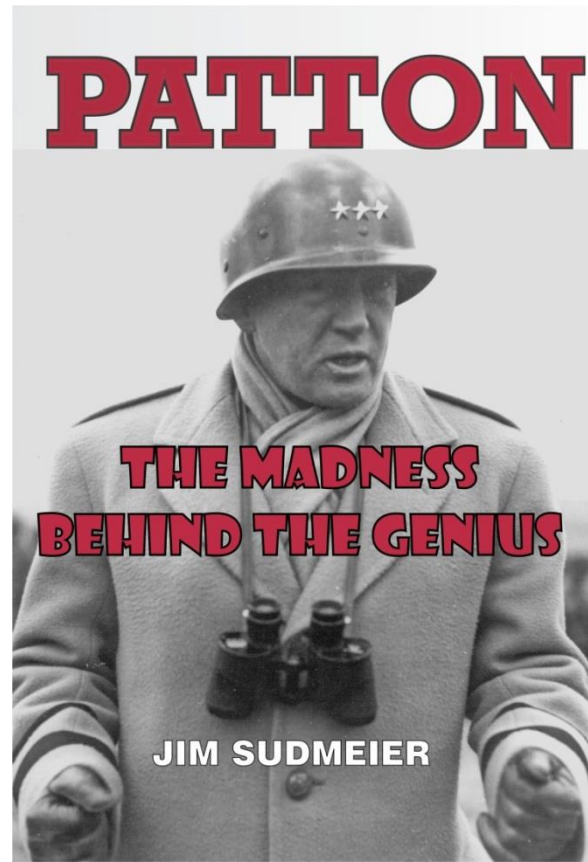


Due to our research published in British Journal *After the Battle*, Vol. 176, 2017 A commemorative plaque will soon be placed on #4 Rue d'Auxonne



After the Battle 176 - \$10

Patton paperback available only thru Dec. 31 in Luck Museum and on Amazon.com , \$17.95 (\$5 donated to museum).
(Starting mid-2019 only hardback ~\$25 or more)



See also jimsudmeier.com

Acknowledgements

- Jerome Leclerc – co-author, *After the Battle* 176
- Isabelle Mangin – Patton translator
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